

**FREE**



The Campaign for Real Ale

# HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1979

NUMBER 22

## MORE BIG SIX AGGRO



**Big brewers have again led the way in the latest round of beer price increases, and this time the aggravation has spread from the drinker to the publicans, who have also condemned some of the latest hefty increases. Courage began the rot with their 3p increase in the price of a pint early last month, and were soon followed by Watneys and Scottish & Newcastle announcing similar increases. The result is that for the pub user, prices have risen 3 times in 9 months, and with Courage, the price of a pint has gone up by 26% in a year. Why.....?**



Courage complain that inflation and increased costs have forced the rises — yet smaller breweries have managed to peg their prices. Even Greene King, one of the largest 'independants', have no plans for increases. Courage have lavished millions on their new chemical beer factory at Worton Grange, Berks, and their parent Company, Imperial, are going ahead with a £210 million takeover bid for the Howard Johnson motel group in America. As Joe Goodwin, CAMRA Chairman said, 'Drinkers are still paying for the big companies' inefficiency, high transport costs and costly promotional campaigns. It all proves that there is a need for some government body to monitor price increases. The hard pressed pub user deserves some protection'.

## Cheapest in Europe

On the other side of the coin, teetotal president of the National Union of Licensed Victuallers, Gerald Richardson, replies that the British pint is the cheapest in Europe. 'You at CAMRA are one side of the bar and we are the other', he said in a recent interview in CAMRA's monthly newspaper, *What's Brewing*. 'The average licensee just doesn't get the reward for the unsociable hours worked, and we need good money to keep good staff. Last year wages rose by 27% and there will be a similar increase this year', he added. What are your views?

Meanwhile, other brewing giants Allied Breweries, have again been hit by pre-Christmas industrial trouble, an event which is becoming an annual feature in Keith Showering's diary. This time the inevitable shortage of draught beer has been well predicted by publicans, who have been quick to ensure supplies of 'foreign beers' in order to keep trade bouyant and satisfy the customer. Which are they fed up with; Allied's industrial trouble, or their beer....or both?

## FARGONE CONCLUSION?

Rumours are circulating that Bedford brewers Charles Wells are thinking of withdrawing Fargo, their strong premium bitter, in favour of the weaker Bombadier.

Charles Wells landlords are currently being surveyed by the brewery to find out which of the two beers they would prefer to sell alongside the ordinary Eagle bitter.

Bombadier, introduced earlier this year for the free trade only, is half-way in strength between Eagle at 1035 degrees OG and Fargo at a powerful 1050. Many drinkers are finding Fargo too strong, especially for lunchtime drinking, and a Bedford landlord who introduced the beer into his pub for the first time recently sold only eight pints in a week.

However a spokesman for the brewery said that no decision on the future of the beers will be made until after the landlord survey is completed.

He said: 'Fargo is going very well, but we think Bombadier would go well in tied houses too. At the moment we're testing landlords' reaction'.

Meanwhile, a set of twelve colourful beermats showing different types of eagle has won Charles Wells the prize for beermat of the year. The award, won in the previous two years by Ind Coope for their Burton Ale sets, is given by the British Beermat Collectors' Society.

Martyn Cornell

## CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

Val Page produced the major upset of the conker season by winning the South Herts CAMRA Conker Championship held recently at the Royal Oak, West Hyde.

After a marathon 30 minute first round tie against fellow female Wendy Casey, she then 'conkered' an unbelieving Eric Sim at the semi-final stage. In the final, a limp-wristed Tony Burns, suffering from a tough game of squash only hours before the event, proved no match for his female opponent growing in confidence all the time.

The secret? 'I polish my conkers before every match', said a jubilant Val.

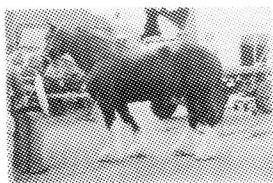
There's no answer to that.

Thanks to the Royal Oak for refreshments and sweeping up.

## BEST WISHES...

To North Herts committee member Steve Barber, for a speedy recovery after being admitted to Stevenage Hospital for a stomach operation following a burst appendix. 'Hope you're back drinking soon Steve.'

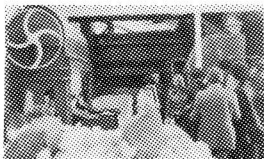
# VISIT TO YOUNG'S by Garry Grey & Steve Bury



Considering that there are 46 Young's pubs within 3 miles of the Ram Brewery, Wandsworth, it is amazing that we only encountered the Kings Arms on the way from East Putney Underground station to the Brewery Tap.

For Garry, it was the first visit, but I must admit that I have had the honour twice before. Because we all like a few pints of Young's and tell our friends about it, something was bound to change..... the major expansion and building forced by the new demand is now complete, though unfortunately a lot of old character has gone from the Brew House.

We started at the top in the milling room, where the old grist mill and the new Rolls Royce powered one stand side by side; but so, unfortunately, do sacks of malted barley and sacks of maize. The maize is used to 'put a head on the beer', explained our guide Mrs Butler. (Don't mention adjuncts, in fact don't mention the maize).



## New plant



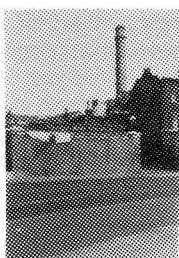
We then proceeded down to the coppers, built in 1869, where we saw spent hops being loaded onto a lorry. A little further on in the fermentation room, several stages of fermentation could be seen. One vessel contained

beer almost completely brewed, showing the top fermenting yeast, which is not often experienced outside the trade by homebrewers.

A new barrelling plant has replaced the wine and spirit store, now moved to premises across the street. A large quantity of wooden pins (36 pints) were being cleaned, which we presume are only used at Christmas and for 'Winter Warmer'. No one at the brewery confirmed this, nor did they give us an idea of how much beer is still delivered in wooden casks.

## First overhaul

The two famous beam engines with their 'LIGNUM VITAE' bearings were unfortunately not in use, as the newer model, built in 1867, is having its first overhaul! The older engine, built by the same Wandsworth firm in 1835 has never had a fault of any kind. Also inoperative were the coopers, farriers and blacksmith, but we were lucky enough to see 'Albany Cooper' — at 18½ hands, the largest Shire Horse in Britain. The famous Young's dray horses — black with white feet — deliver to all their tied houses within 3 miles of the brewery. In the exercise yard there is an excellent collection of animals and birds, including of course, the mascot ram. The goat was in a particularly stropy mood. The yard (for all keen historians) is surrounded by stone sleepers from the first horse-drawn railway built in 1801.



## Plentiful supply

Round the corner of the yard the sampling room comes into view, looking rather like the White Swan in Bushey, or similar minute hostelry. Special, Bitter, and Dark Mild (Extra Malt Ale — the only brew that seems to lack a 'Young's taste') were in plentiful supply, and were soon flowing quickly from the impressive array of wooden casks. Later in the afternoon there appeared to become a shortage of glasses, as our hosts prepared for the sudden rush of brewery employees at knocking-off-time. However, this does not deter your average CAMRA member, who would always find a receptacle at the North Pole to put some Young's Special in.

The brewery are building 2 new tied houses, one of which will be the Prince William Henry in Southwark. I'm sure they will do a good job on them both. At around opening time the party moved to the Brewery Tap, following this with a visit to a Fleet Street pub well-known for its sawdust and tourists, before meandering home after a very enjoyable day off work.

## MUSEUM STRUGGLES

The beauty of the Stamford Brewery Museum is that it is housed in the brewery buildings of the former Melbourns All Saints Brewery, which closed in 1974, and that most of Melbourn's brewing equipment is still intact.

Curator Ivan Burgess has painstakingly recreated the feel of a Victorian Brewery and the Museum is therefore a real alternative to the Bass Brewery Museum at Burton-on-Trent which is more of a museum in the accepted sense. For anyone who has not had the opportunity to explore a working brewery, Stamford is the nearest thing!

## Future in Doubt

The trouble is the brewery is closing — for the winter at least — as Hertfordshire CAMRA members found out on their recent visit at the end of September. In fact it was the last party booking before the closure.

The reasons for the close, as usual, are locked away at boardroom level but one wonders whether owners, Samuel Smith's are really approaching this venture with the right attitude. An obviously disappointed Ivan Burgess explained that he felt the Museum was just taking off — with over 20 trips lined up and constant visitors, it seems he has a right to feel disheartened.

Last winter, in all conditions, Ivan managed to keep the Museum open, but only this year has he had 'the ready' to advertise purposefully — something which has borne fruition in the number of future party bookings.

## Bad Decision

Sam Smith's it seems are not happy with the financial return they are accruing from the museum. After one year? Are they not prepared to stake an investment over a lengthy period of time? It is obvious that a project such as this would take a little time to stand up to financial viability — and if they are looking at the Bass Museum they would have had to have invested another 6 or 7 times as much.

The horse and dray, favourites with children, have already departed and the interesting bar, probably the Museum's biggest potential money maker, will have to close if Ivan loses his staff. As a visitor, I can't help thinking that Sam Smith's have made a bad decision here. The museum is a winter without doubt and would, I suspect, have proved Smith's wrong this winter. And finally, Stamford has a number of Sam Smith's outlets — what better a showpiece for the company's beers and pubs than a museum?

## Patience

We would like to thank Ivan Burgess and the Stamford Brewery Museum for a superb visit and informative film show, and hope that Sam Smith's can be convinced that, if they will only be patient, the financial stability will surely come.

Meantime, if you were thinking of visiting the museum, which is well worth a visit, I'm afraid you'll have to wait until next year — opening date to be announced.

By LES MIDDLEWOOD

*NB The plight of the museum is not the only black spot against Sams. Remember that a few years ago they brewed 4 real ales and no lager? Now they brew only one real ale and two lagers. They refuse to use anything but wooden casks and handpumps for Old Brewery Bitter, when alloy casks and electric pumps would probably enable them to maintain a better quality of beer in free trade outlets. They have bought several 'prestige' real ale houses around the country and replaced each one's range of popular real ales with just one — OBB. Melbourns are still an independant company, their pubs selling Sam Smith's beers.*

# AROUND THE PUBS

Hertfordshire's newest inn opened its doors on the first of the month, in a previously publess housing estate.

But for real ale drinkers, the area will continue to remain dry. Sadly the IPA bitter in Charrington's new **Oak Tavern, Panshanger**, Welwyn Garden City, is served up under carbon dioxide pressure.

Ironically the landlord and landlady at the new pub, John and Denise Holder, who have come straight from a Charrington's Good Beer Guide pub, the **White Admiral** in Harlow. And while both are very proud of their new pub, they admit that they would have preferred to sell handpumped beer.

The problem, apparently, is that the pub was built without a downstairs cellar, and Charrington's decided that top pressure was the only way to deliver the IPA to the bar. One beer is served up by electric pump — but that is bright, filtered Stone's bitter.

With the withdrawal of the handpumps from the **Hedghog** in Welwyn Garden City, there is now no real Charrington's beer to be had anywhere in the area



The fight to save the **Chequers at Wood End** as reported last month, looks to have been lost. Greene King have announced that the hamlet pub will close when landlady Elsie Smith retires. 'It's just too uneconomic', said a spokesman, 'and we run a similar pub, the **Jolly Waggoners**, just up the road'. The pub will be sold with a licence if possible. Our best wishes go to Elsie for a happy retirement, and condolences to daughter and son in law who will not now be able to take up the running of the pub.



A meeting between McMullens and CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer for the Hertford brewers, Richard Steward, has resulted in the good news that there are to be more 'real' Mac's pubs by the end of the month. The following top pressure houses will be receiving handpumps for Country Bitter (but not AK mild):— The **Crusader** in **Roydon** (Essex), the **Cricketers** in **Enfield**, and perhaps most important, the **Bull Hotel** in **Redbourn** where real ale is particularly thin on the ground. The **Dimsdale Arms** in **Hertford** continues its long wait for a handpump, but the situation there should be clearer when the alterations have finally been completed.

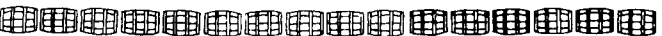
Rumours that Macs might be producing a traditional Christmas Ale have been squashed for the present, but don't rule out a special brew for 1980. The only bad news is that they have decided to sell the **Old Kings Arms** in **Hemel Hempstead** — the only Macs in West Hertfordshire, indeed the only real Macs for miles.



A bit more news on the revamped **Stag** in **Watford** — the new **Courage** outlet reported last month. The commendable refurbishment of the interior was in fact done by gov'nor Eddie Spillane, and not by **Courage**. Round the corner at the **Wheatsheaf** a landlord has again installed his own pumps — this time for Ind Cope Bitter and Burton Ale. His trial of selling handpump Bitter alongside the fizz equivalent proved to be an overwhelming success for the traditional method of dispense.



Your favourite Andover Brewery, Bourne Valley, are selling their beer a lot closer to Hertfordshire than you may think. Over in the Chilterns, just north of Chesham, is a little village called The Lee, where the excellent **Cock & Rabbit** is selling its own individual real ale called 'Crabbit' (an ace fruity bitter — ed). The brew is produced and delivered by the dynamic duo at Bourne Valley — James Lynch and John Featherby — especially for the pub.



The local branches of CAMRA was saddened to learn of the death, last month, of **Mrs Mona Peck**, landlady of the **White Horse** in **Hertford**. Mona — as everyone new her — was something of a character and will be missed by the many people who use the popular pub — one of the first 'real ale meccas' in the county. Our condolences go out to her husband Mick and we offer him our best wishes for the future.

Work is coming along nicely at the **Bluecoat Boy**, soon to challenge the **White Horse** as a tree house. Initially on sale from handpump will be Greene King Abbot and Mild (Not sure which one yet) plus Rayment's BBA.

*75% of these pubs are supposed to sell OBB served without pressure, but sources within the trade hint that container OBB served on handpump is commoner than we are given to believe. So, while we appreciate what Sam Smiths have done (for themselves as well as the drinker) to make real ale available, we should remember that no-one's perfect.*



News of a couple of Whitbread pubs in the **St Albans** area. The **Cock** in Hatfield Road is one of seven of the brewery's pubs that will change to **Courage** in the new year, in the latest pub-swap deal between big-six brewers. The remainder are houses in the Luton area. Up the road, on the south side of Harpenden, is a Whitbread pub run by Terry Lightfoot of Jazz fame. The picturesque **Three Horseshoes** is soon to have **Wethered's Bitter** on handpump.



The **Green Man** at **Widford**, a real Macs pub, is selling some scrumptious 'Braughing Bangers' according to South Herts Real Food Officer, Dave Burns. Meanwhile, he also informs us that the 50p a pint Adnams is nearly here with the news that the **Chequers** at **Wareside** is selling their bitter for 48p. American Express?

## LOOK FOR THE PUMP CLIP..



## CAMRA-WORD SOLUTION

The answers to CAMRA-WORD No. 2 are as follows:

**Across** 6)Nuthampstead 8)Billet 9)Canal 10)Opening 11)Worst 13)Flows 15)Marston 17)Danish 19)Stems 20)Belhaven Bill

**Down** 1)India Pale Ale 2)Stolen 3)Tasting 4)Epic 5)Stingo 7)A Glass Of Mild 12)Hansons 14)Weight 16)Step In 18)Hive

The next CAMRA-WORD should appear in December — watch out for a special Christmas prize!

## MAKE A NOTE

The 1980 edition of the CAMRA Calendar is now available from CAMRA HQ, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans. It is full of fine brewery sketches and costs only £1.50.

# PUB NEWS

**Hertford** — Charrington IPA is an addition in the Two Brewers.  
**Pirton** — The Motte & Bailey will soon have Younger's No. 3 on Sale.  
**Potters Bar** — Wylloyts Manor, under new management once again, now only has Charrington IPA left on handpump.  
**Reed** — The New Tolly Cobbold real ale — Old Original — is available on gravity at the Cabinet.  
**Rickmansworth** — The Rose and Crown at Woodcock Hill is a new real Ind Coope house selling. Both Bitter and Burton Ale on handpump.  
**St Albans** — Handpump (not air pressure pump) Truman Tap is now on sale at the Crown Hotel. The Duke of Malborough has Ind Coope Bitter in addition to Burton Ale. The Goat Inn is currently selling Hook Norton Bitter and Wadworth's 6X in addition to the usual range of handpump beers. Ind Coope Burton Ale will shortly be available at the Verulam Arms. Apologies to the Rose & Crown, which was omitted from the list of outlets for Ind Coope KK Mild.  
**Welwyn Garden City** — Why not join Welwyn Garden Squash Club and put out the fire after a tough game with a few pints of handpump Courage Directors.  
**For some inside stories on the pubs in your area, turn to page 3**

## BRANCH CONTACTS

**Hertfordshire North Branch**  
 Peter Lerner ☎ Ware 830616  
**Hertfordshire South Branch**  
 Dave Burns ☎ Welwyn 7805  
**Herts—Essex Borders Branch**  
 John Hurrell ☎ 01-529 7495



## CAMRA — WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Basically, the chance to keep drinking the real ale you obviously enjoy! CAMRA is the organisation that kept real ale available — and a powerful voice in demanding that it stays available too.

Okay, CAMRA membership costs £4 a year. But what's £4 for adding your voice and safeguarding your favourite brew? You know the alternative! In addition, you receive your member's handbook, CAMRA'S lively monthly newspaper 'What's Brewing', discounts on many brewing books and products, and the chance to partake in brewery trips, get involved with Beer Festivals and mix in the company of Real Ale drinkers like you!

Join CAMRA'S ranks now by filling in the coupon below.....try three months trial CAMRA membership FREE — with no obligation to join! You will receive your handbook, What's Brewing etc, but if you decide not to join, simply cancel your standing order (at any time during the next three months and your money will be refunded).

Please enrol me as a member of CAMRA I understand I am under no obligation: if I do not wish to remain a member after three months FREE trial, I can cancel my order and my money will be refunded. If I wish to stay a member I need do nothing and I will automatically retain my membership until I cancel my order.  
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Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ After signature please return this form to  
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# WHAT'S ON

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

**Tuesday November 6th**  
 Social and darts match at the Hope & Anchor, Welham Green. 8.00pm. (Courage)  
**Wednesday November 14th**  
 Ladies vs Gents skittles match at the Rose and Crown, Essendon. 8.00pm. (Ind Coope)  
**Tuesday November 20th**  
 BRANCH MEETING at the Dimsdale Arms, Fore St. Hertford. 8.00pm. (McMullen)  
**Wednesday 21st November**  
 Trip around Ware Maltings in early evening. Contact Denis Ward on Ware 67463 for details.  
**Saturday 24th November**  
 Joint folk social with North Herts, Enfield & Barnet and Ranters Folk Club at the Dimsdale Arms, Fore Street, Hertford. 8.00pm. Admission 75p, guest artist — 'Midas', possible extension.  
**Tuesday November 27th**  
 Joint social with Mid-Chilterns at the Jolly Cricketers, Seer Green, Bucks. 8.00pm. (Wethered)  
**Tuesday December 4th**  
 Social and shove h'apenny competition at the Old Fox, Old Bricket Wood. 8.0pm. (Ind Coope)  
**Wednesday December 5th**  
 Brewery trip to McMullens, Hertford. Contact Tony King on 01 952 6080 for details.  
**Tuesday December 11th**  
 Brewery trip to Ruddles, Oakham. Contact Tony King for details.  
**Thursday December 13th**  
 Social and darts match at Rothamstead Station, Harpenden. 8.00pm. (beers include Greene King XX)  
**Tuesday December 18th**  
 BRANCH A.G.M. at the Goat Inn, Sopwell Lane, St. Albans. 8.00pm, followed by Christmas raffle draw. (beers include Hook Norton, Greene King XX and real cider).

## HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

**Saturday November 3rd**  
 BEER FESTIVAL at Knebworth Village Hall — admission by ticket only.  
**Wednesday November 14th**  
 BRANCH A.G.M. at the Wilbury Hotel, Letchworth, 8.00pm., followed by auction of breweriana. (Greene King inc XX)  
**Wednesday November 21st**  
 Social at the Maidens Head, Whitwell. 8.00pm. (McMullen)  
**Wednesday November 28th**  
 Brewery trip to McMullens, Hertford — places to be allocated at A.G.M. Evening social at the Catherine Wheel, Albury. (Ind Coope)

## HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

**Wednesday November 7th**  
 Joint social and league darts match vs South-West Essex at the Crown & Crooked Billet, Woodford Bridge. 8.00pm. (Charrington)  
**Thursday November 15th**  
 Campaigning social at the Cock & Magpie, Epping Green. 8.00pm (Courage)  
**Tuesday November 20th**  
 BRANCH MEETING at the Coach & Horses, Waltham Abbey. 8.0pm (McMullen)

## THIS EDITION

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced monthly by the Herts North, Herts South and Herts/Essex Borders branches of CAMRA. The editors would gratefully receive any item of news for future editions, but due to the improvement in type layout of late, may we ask for typed articles if possible to help shorten production time. We are now considering applications for 1/4 page advertisements (current newsletter distribution is 3000) and can be contacted at the following address for further discussion Val or Nick Page, 28 Inkerman Road, St. Albans ☎ 33810.