

FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale

HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1979

NUMBER 23

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS?!

Best wishes to all our readers this Christmas, but for the majority of us who celebrate the festive season with a few more pints than we normally have, will it be such a happy one, as, say nine years ago? That was only 1971 — that's right, the date on the bottom of the price list shown opposite — when mild was 10p a pint. So that means that your round this Christmas is going to be about 400% more expensive than it was in the year of decimalisation, which sounds a bit horrifying. And remember that although Ind Coope — whose prices are featured opposite — have stuck to their promise of holding their prices until 1980, come February of next year the story may well be different.

On a more merry note however, city experts have forecast a possible cut price war in the sales of lager. This could occur due to spare capacity at big six brewing plants resulting from their sums boys making a mistake about the predicted growth of lager.

Price list courtesy of the White Horse, Potters Bar.

Archers 'convert'

Further promotion for real ale has been given in the radio serial 'The Archers'. This follows the recent troubles that Sid Perks, the landlord of the Bull in Ambridge, had with his handpumps serving 'Shire's' ale.

In an episode in late November, John Tregorran was heard to say to Jennifer Aldridge, in an unnamed pub, "I'm a convert to this real ale. It's a change to find a pint I really like — I've drunk far too many pints of really ghastly beer".

A new member for the Borchester branch?

At this point let's have a look at how the 'other locals' are doing.....Down the road from Emmerdale Farm, the Woolpack in Hotton has not been given much publicity lately, but the handpumps there are reported to still be in action. However, the situation at the Rovers Return, Coronation Street, is still grim for real ale drinkers, with the Newton & Ridley's still on top pressure. Things are much the same at the Crossroads Motel bar too, although a couple of months ago amongst Sandy Richardson's plans to 'liven the place up' could have meant installation of handpumps in his disco bar. Things seem to have 'fizzled' out though.

WANTED!!:

A full set of washers for a Gaskill and Chambers "Dalex" beer engine. The large rubber top and bottom washers plus the leather pipe connection washers are needed please contact Steve Bury on Radlett 3106.



IND COOPE



MAXIMUM PUBLIC BAR PRICES

DRAUGHT BEER

	PER HALF PINT
DRAUGHT DOUBLE DIAMOND	7p
SKOL INTERNATIONAL	7p
BEST BITTER	6p
MILD ALE	5p
WATNEY RED BARREL	7½p

BOTTLED BEER

	PER SMALL BOTTLE
DOUBLE DIAMOND	9p
SKOL INTERNATIONAL	10p
ORANJEBOOM DE LUXE	12p
NIGHTCAP STOUT	7½p
BROWN PETER	7p
LIGHT PETER	7p
JUBILEE STOUT	9p
MACKESON'S STOUT	9½p
GUINNESS	9½p
	PER NIP BOTTLE
DOUBLE DIAMOND	7p
TRIPLE 'A'	11½p

15 February 1979

BAN THE CAN

CAMRA has launched a campaign against the sale of beer in cans and non returnable bottles by calling the government to introduce a tax on all non returnables.

WIN A PIN OF ALE IN OUR CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

SEE PAGE THREE >

STARS AND BARRELS

A LOOK AT BREWING IN BOREHAM WOOD

BY MARTYN CORNELL

The film industry had still to arrive in the area when, in May 1910, a group of businessmen took over an old Hertfordshire family concern, and renamed it the Elstree Star Brewery.

But it was the stars of the silver screen who were to make a bigger impact on Elstree than the Star Brewery. Despite roots that stretched back more than 70 years, to the days of William IV, the brewery lasted less than two years after its renaming, before finally fizzling out.

Meat-and-beer business

The Elstree Star Brewery was actually in Borehamwood, in Theobald Street, where brewing had been going on since at least 1835.

There had been one brewery in Elstree, run in the 1820's and 1830's by a man called William Fitch in the building that latter became the Fishery Inn.

But the Theobald Street brewery was started by the local butcher, Thomas Olney, around 1835. Olney continued to run his combined meat-and-beer business, supplying drink to local families, right down to at least 1866.

Butcher and brewer was not that uncommon a combination of trades in Victorian England. But by 1870, when the brewery was being run by one John Cockburn, the carnivorous side of the business appears to have been dropped.

The brewery took its water from a well in the yard, and the liquor — brewer's name for water — was apparently pumped up a horse harnessed to a horizontal wheel. One man operating the primitive machinery lost his hand, crushed in the hub of the wheel — he had the hand replaced with an iron hook, and went off to work for a local coalman instead.

Tiny concern

Cockburn's brewery closed down some time after 1886, and most of the original buildings have now been demolished. But by 1889 a former Cockburn's worker, Alfred Parkins, had set up his own business across the road in two converted labourers' cottages next door to the Wellington pub.

The brewery, known alternatively as Parkins' Sons or Parkinson Brothers, was a tiny concern employing just four men. It had only two small pony drays to deliver the beer, pulled by ponies called Tom and Gipsy, and it had no tied houses at all. All the beer was sold direct to the public, and early advertisements emphasised that everything was brewed "exclusively for family use — orders by post receive prompt attention".

The advertisements also shown that Parkins was producing seven draught beers by 1891, AK tonic ale, XX intermediate ale and porter, all at one shilling a gallon, XXX strong, well-hopped ale and SS stout, both at one shilling and three pence per gallon, and XXXX very fine quality ale and DS double stout at one shilling and eight pence per gallon.

Sebacks then tragedy

In addition, by 1891 — though not in 1889 — the brewery was producing two sorts of bottled beer, LDA light dinner ale at two shillings and sixpence per dozen pint screw-top bottles, and NS nourishing stout at three shillings and ninepence per dozen pint bottles.

Parkins suffered a serious setback soon after he started business on his own, when a fire started by a man trying to revenge himself on the owner of some stables next door spread to the brewery, and destroyed his entire stock.

An even worse tragedy hit the family in 1897, when Alfred's oldest son Ted, a young man in his early 20's was killed while out on his rounds. At the bottom of Potters Lane,

Borehamwood, the pony hauling the heavily-laden dray out to Shenley suddenly bolted. The dray rolled up the bank at the side of the road, and a barrel of beer dropped down on poor Ted, crushing him. He was buried in Elstree churchyard, where his body still lies.

Alfred cops it

The disasters had their funny side occasionally, however. Old Alfred Parkin was obviously a man who did not believe in banks, and for safe keeping he used to hide his gold sovereigns in the brewery copper. One day the inevitable happened — someone lit the fire under the copper without looking inside, giving a whole new meaning to the phrase "hot money".

Alfred eventually died, in 1909, and the family wanted his second son, another Alfred, to carry on the business. Alfred junior, however, had had enough of brewing — he eventually became a railway worker — and the third son, Harry who at one time had been the brewery beer taster, preferred to carry on working as a carpenter.

So the brewery was sold off, to a company calling itself Elstree Star Brewery Ltd. But times were changing, and fewer and fewer people were keeping up the habit of having a barrel of beer at home, delivered by the passing brewer's dray. The Elstree Star waned, and on October 5 1911 a receiver was appointed to wind the company up.

The brewery buildings were sold to a local builder, Staples, and converted into a private residence, eventually to become offices for Shorts Lifts Ltd — a far cry from the days when the business was not lifts, but hops.

(With grateful thanks to Mr Ron Parkins.)

LATEST

Latest on the Chequers, Wood End, is that it is likely to remain open, under the tenancy of Jack and Elsie Smith, until next April, after which Greene King will sell the pub by tender to the highest bidder. An added reason to visit the pub before April is that, for the winter months, Greene King XX Dark Mild is usually available, straight from the barrel of course.

Meanwhile, Samuel Smith, the Tadcaster brewers and owners of the Stamford Brewery Museum, have told CAMRA that the museum will open to the public once again next Easter, and that the shire horse and dray will be on show as before.

ON THE RUN

Watch out for people offering cheap pints of Ind Coope Burton ale that "fell off the back of a lorry, mate" — it could leave you with more than a nasty taste in your mouth.

Someone stole a kilderkin — 18 gallon cask — of Burton from outside the Baton Pub in St Albans late last month.

But what the thief, or thieves, didn't know was that the barrel contained, not untapped beer, but ullage that was being sent back to the brewery.

A spokesman for Hertfordshire Police said: "If anyone takes a drink from the barrel, it will have no lasting harmful effects but they would probably be rather ill for a time."

Police are not, however, believed to be looking for a man on the run.

Continuing our series on 'real pub entertainment', your favourite Newsletter editor furthers his case for being (tone) deaf, but nevertheless, a better music critic than Tony Blackburn. So, if there's any rock music fans reading this who also happen to like a decent pint of real ale, then this column is the one for you.

Live rock may not be traditional in some peoples' eyes, but it is certainly 'real'. I suppose it's a bit like Charles Wells Fargo — produced with modern technology and if served right — a bit mind-blowing. The South of Hertfordshire, benefitting from its position close to the big smoke, is favourite in having three public houses doubling as live rock venues and all three sell real ale! They may not be idyllic pubs in the majority of the public's eyes, but in providing a variety of live music throughout the week, played more often than not by local new bands who actually enjoy what they are doing, they provide a section of the beer drinking public with genuine entertainment in atmosphere they enjoy.

Plenty of Sounds

There's only one place that I can start really, as it's now a pretty famous venue, and I only live 50 yards away! The Horn of Plenty in Victoria Street, St Albans, is an Ind Coope pub selling Bitter and Burton Ale through handpumps that ex-South Herts CAMRA Chairman, Bob Norrish, helped to install some five years back. During this time the pub has built up a desired reputation for staging quality gigs in an atmosphere that is cosmopolitan, and friendly. With a different band on stage each night of the week, there is always a wide choice of rock, at varying levels of quality. My highlight in recent weeks has been the 'Never Never Band', a polished four piece group. They are often at the Horn on Mondays, and although having been described as 'punk Genesis', they are far more exciting and varied than that title suggests. They are just one end of a wide spectrum of sound, which spans from heavy metal bands such as local favourites 'Bleak House' through the Thursday night 'bluesy' spot, to 'interesting' new wave bands like seven piece 'Rubber Jonny'. Some December dates for your diary are:

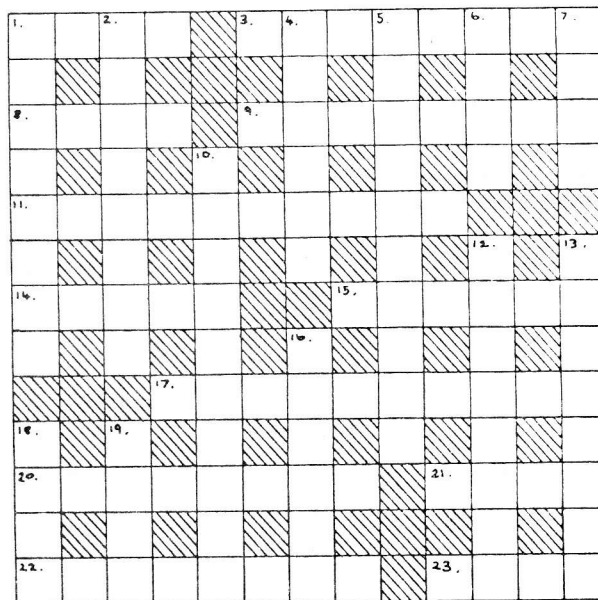
10th Never Never Band; 11th Brian Marshal; 12th Cue Tips; 13th Jazz-Rock; 14th Drivers; 15th Acne Attraction. Following week same bands except 17th which is to be announced.

Another Ind Coope, pub, the Red Lion, at the Aldenham roundabout on the A41 near Watford, stages live rock in its comfortable back room every weekend. Burton Ale is available on handpump in the main bar (but not the back room bar) of this large house, currently especially popular with 'bikers' — coincidentally, the music there tends to be generally heavy. Frequent visitors are St Albans based 'Clientelle', whose drummer Phil Goodfellow insists that they, at least, are not in this particular bracket of music. I found them difficult to place, the nearest comparison springing to mind being a sort of newish wave Deep Purple. Bands coming up soon are:—

December 14th Zeros; 15th Baj; 21st English Rouges; 22nd Ptarmigan; 24th Sid Sideboard and the Chairs.

Moving further south, just over the border of Hertfordshire into Greater London, is the Duke of Lancaster, in Approach Road, New Barnet (close to New Barnert British Rail) Although this Courage pub frequently advertises its gigs in that well known music rag New Musical Express, it's a fairly new one, on me. Bands play on each night of the week in the large lounge bar, where Courage Directors is available on handpump. A claim to fame for the pub comes in the form that daddies of punk, the Stranglers, played a set there back in April 1978. Today, several of the bands that play the Horn, also perform at the Duke, but few different names to look out for are:—

by Sandie and Peter Lerner



Across

1. Landlords fill flowing ones (4)
3. Maclay's strongest draught (3,5)
8. Merry in Cardiff — has it gone to their heads? (2,6)
11. Fortified brewery? (10)
14. Devotee (6)
15. Ale tester with sticky trousers (6)
17. Does this Bishops Stortford pub also have real bread (10)
20. Every bar has one — not needed by CAMRA members (5,3)
21. Cooper without barrels (4)
22. Scholarly ale (8)
23. Greek Cupid (4)

Down

1. Showerings pet (8)
2. Famous American Story (4,4)
4. You don't have to go to great ones to find the answer to this clue! (6)
5. Ideal dwelling for keen drinker (1,4-5)
6. Placed in recumbent posture (4)
7. As well (4)
10. Welcome quadruped in Hertford's West Street (5,5)
12. Situated within (8)
13. Do you see these creatures after a night on Fuller's? (8)
16. John's brother? (6)
18. What else to do at Southwold (4)
19. Bright one at Furneux Pelham (4)

This months special Christmas prize is a polypin of Greene King XX Dark Mild for the first correct entry received. That's a whole 4½ gallons, or 40 pints if you like, of real ale to help see you through the festive season. Please send completed entries to Nick Page, 28 Inkerman Road, St Albans, Herts. The editors decision is final. Good luck!

December 11th Fool; 13th Comic Book Heroes; 14th Bleak House; 15th Features; 16th Red Night Sun; 18th Back From Nowhere; 19th Lemmings; 21st Fast Exit; 27th Clientelle's Christmas Party

In fact the current rock scene could easily be compared with the brewing industry of today. It is a time of growth by the smaller companies within the industry, after a period of monotony and monopoly by the big boys. In fact, St Albans has its own record company now — Waldo's Records. How long before the city has its first new wave brewery?

Nick Page

PUB NEWS

Barley — Following tasteful renovation and enlargement of the bar area at the Fox & Hounds, the pub is now open again with Wethered's Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale added to the range on handpumps.

Hertford — After extensive refurbishing former Ind Coope house The Blue Coat Boy has now reopened as a free house under the new name of the Sportsman, beers available on handpump are Rayment's BBA, Greene King mild and Abbot, all three beers are sold under the names of Bitter, Mild, and Strong Ale.

Potters Bar — Wylloyotts Manor in fact has Ruddles County left on handpump, and not Charrington IPA as reported last month.

Reed — Adnam's Olde is available at the Cabinet for the winter months.

Royston — Paine's EG is back again on handpump

St Albans — Another outlet for Wethered's Bitter is the Blacksmiths Arms.

Stanstead Abbots — The Red Lion now has Ind Coope Bitter on handpump

Therfield — Greene King KK is now on sale at the Bell

Water End, Hatfield — The Maypole also has Ind Coope Burton Ale on handpump.

Ware — Work on the Old Punch House is unfortunately behind schedule, so the opening looks like being into the new year.

Welwyn Garden City — Another clubs outlet for Courage Directors, this one being the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Social Club.

MAC'S XMAS ALE

Contrary to the report last month, local brewers McMullen **WILL** be producing a brew to celebrate the festive season. Tied houses have now placed their orders for the ale which uses a recipe for an old strong bottled Mac's beer. It will be a real ale, being dispensed by gravity from polypins, and will have a gravity of 1070 degrees. The following pubs have placed orders with the brewery.....

Bengeo — Greyhound; **Borehamwood** — Mops & Brooms; **Brickenden** — Farmers Boy; **Broxbourne** — Bull; **Cheshunt** — Crocodile, Old Anchor, Malsters; **Chingford** — Royal Oak; **Eastwick** — Lion; **Enfield** — Jolly Farmers; **Flamstead End** — Plough; **Goffs Oak** — Prince of Wales, Wheelwrights; **Harlow** — Hare, Shark; **Hatfield** — Hiltop; **Hertford** — Salisbury Arms, Dimsdale, John O'Gaunt, White Hart; **Hitchin** — Angels Reply, Orange Tree, Ship; **Ickelford** — Green Man; **Kimpton** — White Horse; **Loughton** — Owl, Hollybush; **Moor Green** — Goose; **Mott Street** — Plough; **Ongar** — Stag; **Puckeridge** — White Hart; **Redbourne** — Bull; **Roydon** — Crusader; **St Albans** — Fariers Arms, Peahen; **Shearing** — Queens Head; **Stapleford** — Woodhall Arms; **Stevenage** — Two Diamonds, Royal Oak; **Theydon Bois** — Queen Victoria; **Waltham Abbey** — Queens Head, White Lion, Angel, Spotted Cow, Volunteer; **Waltham Cross** — Vine, Wheatsheaf; **Ware** — Crooked Billet, Jolly Bargeman, John Gilpin, Rifle Volunteer; **Weilpond Green** — Nags Head; **Welwyn Garden City** — Chieftan, Woodhall Off-License; **Widford** — Cricketers; **Wormley** — Old Star.

The only other Hertfordshire brewers, Rayment's of Furneux Pelham, will be selling their excellent BBA bitter in Polypins for the first time this Christmas. You can contact the brewery on Brent Pelham 254 for details.

DEADLINE

In an attempt to start the new year on a sound footing, we have decided to set a deadline for Newsletter copy, so that, hopefully, each future edition will be produced punctually and free from error (Typographically or factual). The date fixed is the 20th of the preceding month. We hope this does not deter all you budding journalists. Nick Page, 28 Inkerman Road, St. Albans ☎ 33810.

WHAT'S ON

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday December 4th

Social and shove h'apenny competition at the Old Fox, Old Bricket Wood. 8.00pm (Ind Coope).

Tuesday December 11th

Brewery trip to Ruddles, Oakham. Contact Tony King on 01 952 6080 for details

Thursday December 13th

Social and darts match at Rothamstead Station, Harpenden. 8.00pm. (beers include Greene King XX)

Tuesday December 18th

BRANCH AGM 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).

Wednesday January 16th

BRANCH MEETING at the Wheatsheaf, Lower High Street, Watford. 8.00pm (Ind Coope).

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Tuesday December 11th

BRANCH MEETING at the Chequers, Woolmer Green. 8.00pm (Ind Coope)

Wednesday December 18th

Christmas social at the Windmill, Charlton, Hitchin. 8.00pm (Charles Wells)

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday December 10th

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Tuns, Bishops Stortford 8.00pm (Rayments).

Saturday December 15th

Christmas social with all Essex branches at the Saracens Head, Great Dunmow. Ticket only —details from your branch contact.

FESTIVAL SUCCESS

A campaigning mini-beer festival organised by North Herts CAMRA branch last month turned out to be an extremely successful event.

The festival, held in Knebworth Village Hall, attracted a capacity crowd of 180 people, the beer ran out just two minutes before closing time, 15 new CAMRA members were signed up, and when all the sums had been done the branch found they had a profit of more than £80.

Landlord of the Chequers, Woolmer Green, Ian Miller, who organised the licence and did a lot of behind-the-scenes work, has been given a free year's joint CAMRA membership for himself and his wife by the branch committee as thanks for all his help in making the festival a success.

Good Auction

Meanwhile, after the branch's AGM had finished at the Wilbury Hotel, Letchworth last month, some 40 items of "breweriana" were auctioned, with the result that over £95 was raised for branch funds.

The most expensive item of the evening was a set of bottled beers brewed by Courage to celebrate particular events, including Princess Anne's wedding and Bristol City's promotion to the First Division. This set went for £10 after lively bidding by two CAMRA-member landlords (the only people who can afford to pay these prices?) A full bottle of Rayment's 1953 Coronation Ale was sold for £1 and was immediately drunk by the buyer (he is apparently none the worse for it), while a photocopy of CAMRA's very first Good Beer Guide, published in 1972, fetched £4. Peter Lerner