

FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale

HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FEBREWERY 1980

NUMBER 25

CHARLES SWELLS

Charles Wells, the independent brewers, are planning to spend over £½ million this year on a major expansion at their Havelock Street brewery, Bedford.

The extension will be the third since the brewery opened in 1976, when it was estimated that capacity would be sufficient until 1982. This year's expansion will make it possible for the company to brew an additional 368,640 pints of beer a week — more than the total production at the old Home Lane brewery, Bedford, when it closed at the end of 1975.

Currently at Havelock Street the brewery is producing almost a million pints a week. The company said that the reason for the expansion is to "meet the phenomenal demand for beer in take-home packs, particularly through supermarkets."

New pub

They have also splashed out on an attractive old coaching inn, **The Old King's Arms**, High Street, **Hemel Hempstead**, purchased from McMullens of Hertford.

The pub, which has been closed for some time, reopened on the Thursday before Christmas. It is the first Charles Wells pub in Hemel, but many local people have already acquired a taste for Bedford-brewed beers because the Brewery supplies the new town's leisure centres.

Handpumps serve Draught IPA and Draught Fargo. The pub is being managed by Mr Rod Barton, formerly of the King William IV at Kempston, Bedford, the previous landlord moving to the Peahen Hotel in St. Albans. *Watch for more inroads by Wells into Herts.*

● *Bombardier, the new traditional Charles Wells draught bitter which at present is available only through the free Trade, is on its way into the public-houses.*

The brewery intends to go into full production with Bombardier early this year, and it is expected that from February it will be on sale in Charles Wells houses.

LOCALE

This is the name given to a pub survey that will cover every outlet in Hertfordshire (real and fizz). It is not a CAMRA survey-but one undertaken by the Advisory Unit for Computer Based Education — the task being a training exercise for teachers using computer systems. Results however will provide invaluable information to local CAMRA branches, whose members are already helping with the detailed survey work. Information will be readily available for 'call-up' on the Unit's computer system, so if you want a pub on the B1000, with a garden and public bar that sells Greene King XX on gravity and has live jazz on a Sunday lunchtime — then it can be made instantly available! The survey is being conducted on a kilometre grid square basis and help in the work would be gratefully appreciated. If you are interested in lending a hand contact Mike Aston at the Advisory Unit for Computer Based Education, 19, St. Albans Road East, Hatfield. Tel. 66121.

PUB OF THE YEAR

The small but immensley popular **Plough at Ley Green** near **Kings Walden** has been voted **Pub of the Year** by the **Herts North CAMRA** branch. The pub was one of the two chosen by the branch last year to show to visiting CAMRA members from Tyneside a prime example of a typical Hertfordshire country pub. It also comfortably beat all its rivals in the voting in the January branch meeting.

Landlord and Landlady Jack and Barbara Day who serve up all four **Greene King** draught beers in the friendliest possible fashion will be presented with a **CAMRA mirror** at a special social on **Monday, March 3rd. at 8pm.** Jack is applying for an extension and food will be served. **Everyone welcome.**

Dear All,

Sue and I would like to send our warm thanks to all of you from CAMRA who gave their time and support over the big 'Pig Roast' Weekend for Muscular Dystrophy.

You will be pleased to hear that we have now collected a total of over £1,000 of which £440 was raised over the 'Pig Roast' Weekend. Again thank you for your time and hard work. We hope you all have a Very Good New Year and hope to see you in our house.

All the best,

Alan and Sue.

The Old Bulls Head, Ware.

Still on the theme of the invaluable charity fund raising work done by our local pubs, the Crown Hotel in St Albans recently raised over £100 for the city's Cell Barnes Hospital, as a result of a sponsored pool tournament held at the pub. Well done all those involved.

Good thinking....

The Horsham brewery, King and Barnes has introduced new polythene "pub porters" for customers wanting to take draught beer home. Two sizes are being made available to take a maximum of 5 litres and 2.5 litres. Ind Coope might think of it in 10 years time.

RURAL RIDES

Number 1 in a new series...Ardeley to Great Munden

Between the valleys of the rivers Beane and Rib, in the gently rolling landscape stretching from Stevenage across to Buntingford, stands some of the finest and most unspoilt countryside in Hertfordshire. This area repays exploration, and will reward you with glimpses of lost villages, ancient houses, forgotten tracks and wildlife of all descriptions — all within 40 miles of the centre of London.

This area is also exceptionally rich in unspoilt country pubs selling traditional beers, and this article will guide you to five of the best of them. They can be reached along a route covering no more than 8 miles. While it is up to you to choose whether to travel on foot, by bicycle, on horseback or in a car, motorists are recommended to be moderate in their consumption of alcohol, as the roads are narrow and winding.

Reputation

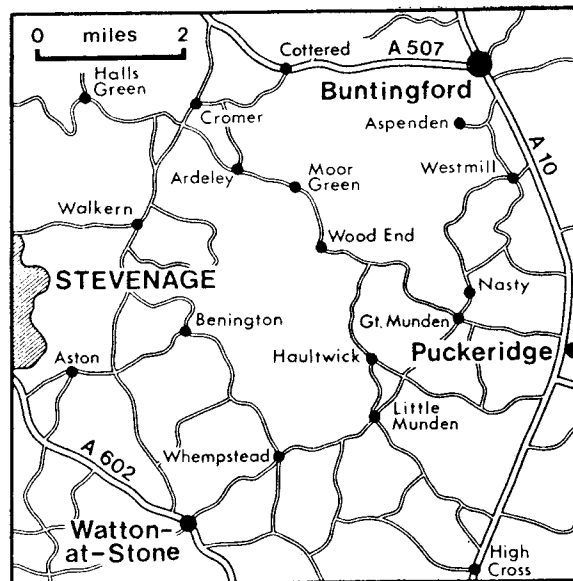
The start of the journey is **Ardeley**, a picturesque small village of old houses whose pub, the **Jolly Waggoner**, stands invitingly at the junction of two lanes. Gerry Greaves, the landlord, took over the tenancy last year, and is already gaining a reputation for good home-cooked food and good beer — Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale direct from the cask. Mr Greaves is a graphic designer and his artistic skills are put to good use on, among other things, the pubs own sweat-shirts proudly worn by the regulars.

Bidding farewell to the waggoner and his horse, proceed eastward and gently uphill until you reach **Moor Green**. Here the landscape opens out to extensive common grassland on either side of the lane, and this is one of the highest spots in this part of the county, popular with hot-air balloonists and kite-flyers. Moor Green's pub **The Goose**, is an unspoilt gem, hardly altered since McMullens bought it a century ago. The weatherboard lean-to at the side was once a smithy. Mr Fred Wilson has been the tenant of this little pub for 21 years, and his keen interest in horse breeding is reflected in the pictures on the walls of the bar. Unfortunately for us (but luckily for him). Mr Wilson will be leaving the Goose for a well-earned retirement this spring, so take the opportunity before he departs to meet him and try his excellently kept Mac's AK, served straight from the barrel.

Home from home

Pausing to admire the Goose's unusual three-dimensional inn-sign, travel eastwards and downhill along the lane until a T-junction is reached. You are now in the hamlet of **Wood End**. Just to the right of the junction is the **Chequers**, the local pub, sweetshop and home from home. Regular readers of the Newsletter will know that this happy state of affairs will not last for long, as after Mrs Elsie Smith retires from the pub in the spring, Greene King are to sell it and its future is uncertain. Enjoy, therefore, while you can, a selection from Greene King's best beers — XX Mild, IPA and Abbot Ale — and if you are a darts player you will be sure to find a challenge at The Chequers.

Reluctantly saying goodbye to the Smith family's pet dog and cats, go back to the road junction and proceed straight forward. Along an undulating lane bordered by high hedges, you will come to a cross-roads; turn right and along an even more winding and narrow lane, to the settlement of **Haultwick**. Don't ask for "Halt-wick" if your lost — the locals call it "Artic". No problem finding the village pub, though — the **Rest & Welcome**. Licencees



Rob and Marianne Silvester have transformed this McMullen house into one of the liveliest and most popular pubs in the area. Traditionalists may mourn the loss, a couple of years ago, of the ancient corrugated iron outside toilets, but will be refreshed by the fine Mac's AK and Country Bitter, drawn by the first handpumps to be found on our trip.

Organised chaos

Time to leave after your Haultwick welcome and well-deserved rest. Go back to the village green and turn right, then at a T-junction turn left. Passing through beautiful rolling open countryside, before too long you will reach the long village of **Great Munden** and on the left, **The Plough**. This is the only free house of our trip, and friendly licencees Stan and Bet Moore are justifiably proud of their Rayments BBA, Greene King KK Light Mild and Abbot Ale, all served by handpumps. A surprise awaits you in the lounge, where there is a full-size working Compton theatre organ — quite an experience on a Saturday evening, when there is always an expert at the keyboard. There are nearly always filling rolls available for the hungry traveller at The Plough, and often hot basket and other meals. Another unique feature of the Plough is that Ordnance survey Maps are on sale — ideal for re-tracing your route across east Hertfordshire. (Or you could always start at the Plough, buy a map there and follow the route in reverse).

Beautiful countryside and five fine pubs await you — all of the pubs have featured in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide and the landscape is some of England's best. Enjoy your trip!

by Peter Lerner

MILLERS LEAVE THE CHEQUERS

No, not the genial hosts of Woolmer Green (no relation) but Doug and Connie Miller of the Chequers, Sandon who left in January. After much trying of real ales there is now a steady demand for, in particular, Adnams bitter, thanks to their perseverance.

We wish the Millers well in their involvement in a Good Beer Guide free house in Norfolk and extend a welcome to the new landlord.

AROUND THE PUBS

The delightfully situated **Three Horseshoes** on **East Common, Harpenden**, emerged from its alterations and decorations just in time for Christmas and amongst all the obligatory pub artifacts, like horsebrasses, china plates with pictures on and a brass bugle, are two handpumps serving Wethered's Bitter/Trophy/Marlow Bitter at 48 pence a pint which will be 51 pence now with Whitbread's seasonable goodwill gesture.

The pub is still quite cosy with two open fires but alas, the dart board has gone; but I am sure it will still be well patronized in this rather salubrious area. Although a bit smooth for my taste I might be going back when the smell of new paint has gone and I can arrange a mortgage for a pint.

It was only Feb 77 that this newsletter predicted the 50 pence pint, a headline that was treated with some scorn by the local press at the time. That is 10 bob for a pint of below average strength beer, 1036 O.G., brought 30 miles from Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

A pint of McMullens Country, 1041 O.G., will still only cost you 36 pence in **The Bull in Redbourn**. Not in quite so picturesque surroundings as the Three Horseshoes, on the A5 or A5183 as they like to call it now, anyway, Watling Street in the middle of the village. This pub has recently undergone some quite extensive renovations; it does suffer badly from juggernauts thundering through the village, and I don't think white was a very wise choice of colour for the outside. The Bull is quite an old pub and the interior has been done up quite well. The public bar has been retained complete with dartboard. Only two handpumps have been fitted, one in each bar. Only Country was available on handpump when I visited, but I was told A.K. would be going on the pump in the Public soon, and the Country would remain in the lounge. Remember to specify you want beer from the pump, as both are also sold through gas taps. There is also a reasonably priced menu, and the chips are real potato — not those twiglets that come out of the freezer. My only complaint here is the piped Radio one.

On the eleventh of this month the **Brocket Arms** at **Ayot St Lawrence** opens its doors to the public again, after a lengthy closure through the winter. The brick and tile extension, added by new owner Toby Digby, houses a new kitchen area. There are plans for a small restaurant. The bar area has been extended slightly, with beers on sale being Youngs Winter, Greene King Abbot and IPA, and probably Everard's. The dart board has been retained and a beer garden added.

Although it appeared in early editions of the Hertfordshire Real Ale Guide, McMullens disconnected the handpumps at the **Three Horseshoes, Hooks Cross** (near Watton at Stone) some years ago. Now they have been re-connected, to serve Country Bitter only (why not AK also, you might ask with justification?) Ironically, at the same time as they were working on the handpumps, McMullens were also submitting a planning application to demolish the old Three Horseshoes, and replace it by a brand new pub on the same site. Strange indeed are the mental gymnastics of our local brewery.

With the advent of Wethered's Bitter on handpump at **Tom Tiddler's Tavern**, the newly-developed Symonds Green/Fishers Green area of **Stevenage** can now boast 100 per cent real ale, the other two locals being the Fisherman (Ind Coope) and Crooked Billet (Greene King). Try Tom Tiddler's Wethereds at the Herts North social on 27 February.

Fred Wilson, the landlord of Mac's Good Beer Guide-listed **Goose** at **Moor Green**, near Ardeley, is shortly to retire after 21 years service — the future of this lovely country pub is therefore uncertain.

The **Letchworth Hall Hotel** at **Letchworth** is now serving Paines EG on handpump to those who are suitably attired and able to afford the 50p per pint.

The **Woodman** at **Nuthampstead** has introduced Youngers No 3, and the **Jolly Sailors** at **Buntingford** Trumans Tap — both on handpump.

The **Cricketers** at **Ickleford** has re-introduced Everards Beacon Bitter — try some at the Herts North social on March 6th.

A nice bank of three handpumps have appeared in the **Hertfordshire Arms**, St Albans Road, **Watford**. Ind Coope Bitter is the first brew to be dispensed traditionally in the pub.

Yet another outlet for Wethereds Bitter in the city of St Albans, this latest convert being the **Beehive**, which is tucked away in a little passageway just off London Road.

Finally some deletions! The **Three Horseshoes** at **Hinxworth** and the **Anchor** at **Weston** no longer sell Greene King real ales on gravity. Both pubs now sell all draught beer on pressure — two steps backwards for Greene King.

Another casualty, this time in the south of the county, is the **Red Lion** in **Borehamwood**, where Ind Coope beer has gone back to top pressure because 'there's no demand for real ale' according to the landlord.

Special thanks this month to Bob Norrish and Peter Lerner.

PRIZE WINNER

The answers to the December CAMRA-WORD were as follows:

Across

1 Bowl; 3 Old Alloa; 8 Bass; 9 On Brains; 11 Castletown; 14 Addict; 15 Conner; 17 Wheatsheaf; 20 Water Jug; 21 Mini; 22 Morrells; 23 Eros.

Down

1 Babycham; 2 West Side; 4 Length; 5 A Brew-house; 6 Laid; 7 Also; 10 Black Horse; 12 Interior; 13 Griffins; 16 Samuel; 18 Swim; 19 Star.

The winner was a Mr Paul Tweedale of Harris Lane Shenely, who amazingly supplied a 100% correct entry — he even got the answer to 8 Across, which didn't have a clue! Sorry about the cock-up folks, well done Paul, and thanks to the other entrants who attempted an (almost) impossible crossword.

MEMBERSHIP



Why not join CAMRA and keep some of Britain's heritage alive.

I wish to become a member of CAMRA Ltd. I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign. I enclose £4.00 as my annual subscription. (£5.00 husband and wife)

Name Address

.....

Date / / 80 Signature

Send to CAMRA, 34, Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts.
Ask for details from The Membership Secretary.

MATCH OF THE DAY

On Sunday, December 23rd 1979, a joint Hertfordshire CAMRA Team took on the might of the Sir John Barleycorn Public House, Hitchin, in a football match of epic proportions.

Captain Nick Page won the toss and opted to kick into the wind in the first half, this provided CAMRA with problems throughout the half as they struggled to find a system of play to suit them against their more experienced opponents. The match was some twenty minutes old when Sir J.B. struck the first blow and the CAMRA defence was caught ball watching as the opposition put a shot into the net. Within fifteen minutes Sir J.B. scored two more goals and although CAMRA was beginning to put its game together it was a dejected team that stood in the falling snow eating their oranges at half time.

Dramatic change

After five minutes of the second half it was obvious in which direction the play would be flowing, as a dramatic change had come over CAMRA with a few changes of positions. Dave Andrews and Ralph Lawday began to dominate the midfield with Dave's mate marshalling the defence with all the cool of a seasoned professional. When Robin Scudder's looping shot crashed against the crossbar after ten minutes it looked as if CAMRA were doomed not to score, but soon afterwards Captain Nick won a tackle just inside the opposing half and passed outside to the wing, who then passed the ball to a waiting Tony Burns; the big man calmly chested it down and hammered it on the half volley into the back of the net — Hans Krankl watch out! Within a minute of this Nick was sent racing through the middle (and with only the keeper to beat) he shot embarrassingly wide. The pressure was really on Sir J.B. now but gaps were left in CAMRA's defence and a quick breakaway saw the home side take a 4-1 lead.

This did not deter the visitors who were inspired by some Franz Beckenbauer type runs from the heart of the defence by first half 'keeper Les Middlewood. His powerful surges left the opposition gasping with shock, his teammates gasping with admiration and himself gasping for breath.

Grandstand finish

Some twenty minutes into the half Tony Burns slotted a defence splitting ball through (is there no end to this man's talent?) to Ralph who gratefully accepted the chance to put his name on the score sheet to make it 4-2. This was the signal for Sir J.B. to really be put on the rack as CAMRA's incessant attacks wore them down. With ten minutes to go, some fine work down the left wing resulted in Nick's cross being fired into the opponent's net after some deft footwork fromTony Burns! It all looked set for a grandstand finish when a swift break and a defensive mistake gave Sir J.B. a 5-3 winning margin.

All in all it was an entertaining match that posed this question — how would Sir J.B. have fared if their hatrick scorer, a CAMRA member, had played for the proper side?
MEN OF THE MATCH: BOTH TEAMS FOR BEING DAFT ENOUGH TO PLAY IN THE SECOND HALF BLIZZARD.
Thanks for the game lads — you won't be so lucky next year!

Rob Scudder

BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch

Peter Lerner ☎ Ware 830616

Hertfordshire South Branch

Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

Herts—Essex Borders Branch

John Hurrell ☎ 01-529 7495



WHAT'S ON

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Wednesday 13th February

KK Social and mixed darts at the Verulam Arms, Lower Dagnall St., St Albans. 8.00pm. (Ind Coope)

Tuesday 19th February

BRANCH MEETING At the White Hart, Prospect Place, Welwyn. Special guest speaker — Chairman Joe Goodwin. 8.00pm (Wethered)

Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th February

Branch Weekend Trip to Belhaven Brewery. Fully booked.

Thursday 28th February

'Real Draughts' match against Rothamstead Experimental Station, Harpenden. 8.00pm prompt. (Black draughts will be Greene King XX and white either Adnams or Greene King IPA.)

Thursday 4th March

Darts match at the Baron of Beef, Welwyn. 8.00pm (McMullen)

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Thursday 14th February

BRANCH MEETING at the Wilbury Hotel, Letchworth. 8.00pm. (Greene King)

Wednesday 20th February

Social at the Chequers, Wood End, nr Ardeley. 8.00pm. (Greene King)

Wednesday 27th February

Campaigning Social at Tom Tiddler's Tavern, Stevenage New Town. 8.00pm. (Wethered)

Monday 3rd March

Pub of the Year award to the Plough, Ley Green — see page 1. 8.00pm (Greene King)

Thursday 6th March

Social at the Cricketers, Ickleford. 8.00pm. (Free House)

Wednesday 12th March

BRANCH MEETING At the Sun, Hitchin. 8.00pm (Charrington)

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday 11th February

Campaigning Social and darts match at the Boars Head, Hoddesdon. 8.00pm (Ind Coope inc KK)

Saturday 16th February

Day Trip to ~~Banger~~ Reading for a lunchtime session of Brakspears, Morlands, Wadworths and Fullers. (Plus your other old favourites Courage and Charrington). Fare is £2.91 from Paddington — meet on train at 10.45am.

Monday 18th February

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING At the Rose & Crown, Turners Hill, Cheshunt. 8.00pm (Ind Coope)

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 ¼ 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.

P.S. Don't forget copy deadline 20th of preceding month.

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STOP PRESS; Nic Egan drinks Adnams!