

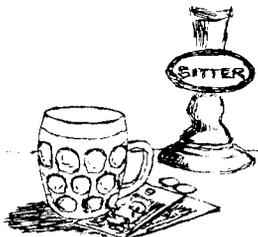
FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1980

NUMBER 34



Prices up again

Last month saw yet another round of price increases in pubs in the county. 4 pence on a pint from Ind Coope has been followed by similar increases from other companies. The average price of a pint of ordinary bitter is now over the 50 pence mark. In February 1977 the, then, South Herts Newsletter reported on the latest round of price rises in an article entitled "How Long To The 50p Pint?". As usual the big brewers were picked out as being the biggest offenders, putting 2-3 pence on a pint. The increases nowadays are more often in the 4-5 pence range.

How long to the £1 pint?

Although written less than 4 years ago the article goes on to say that "Some Ind Coope houses are now charging as much as 39 pence for a pint of Burton Ale. Many of the stronger brews have gone up by as much as 6 pence a pint in the last year, and at the current pace drinkers will soon be paying an unwelcome fifty pence for a pint." Macs Country bitter was selling for around 26 pence a pint then and although it too has recently gone up by around 3-4 pence a pint it still compares well with other beers on sale. Greene King beer is generally the cheapest available at the moment, but it is probably just a matter of time before that too goes up with the rest.

More on prices

A MAC'S LANDLORD at the Queen's Head in Sheering, Essex has refrained from putting on the last price increase which, he says, would have added 5 pence to a pint. Alan Carr, the landlord, who currently sells his Country bitter for 49 pence a pint, is obviously reluctant to see the beer go over the psychological 50 pence barrier. One Mac's landlord has even suggested that the Company reduce prices, even if only temporarily. This could provide a valuable boost to sales at a time of recession when increases do not always offset the loss in trade that they bring. It's not often realised that price increases imposed by the brewers do not always help the publican and the number that have been forced into an early retirement in recent months is an indication of how bad things are getting.

MANCHESTER BREWERS, BODDINGTONS have yet again been the object of praise for their financial record. In a report in the financial pages of a national daily last month, the Company were yet again singled out as a good example of how profitable the small brewers can be. "While other breweries have diversified into hotels, leisure centres, and goodness knows what else - Boddingtons has stuck to brewing beer, and not only to brewing, but to traditional cask-conditioned ales, spurning the obvious temptation to go into keg varieties" the article says. In addition to this, however, the Company has increased its profits by 30% in the 6 months to the end of June and held its barrelage sales, despite the national trend of reduced sales. In addition, even after a recent increase of 3 pence per pint, the price of a pint of their bitter is still well under 40 pence a pint - as low as 37 pence in the public bar.

THE EEC is trying to mess around with our beer again. This time it could push the price up by 6 pence a pint or more. The move, which involves "equalising" the tax on wines and beers is to be discussed at the end of October by the EEC finance ministers in Luxembourg. Currently wine is taxed at a rate equivalent to five times the tax on beer in this country. The proposal would change this to around three times and stop what other member states (you can bet France is behind all this) consider is discrimination by Britain against wine consumption. Although this could mean cheaper wine, as we all know it will probably just mean more expensive beer. The Brewers' Society intend to make representations against the plan but what will probably happen will be a gradual changeover in the system so that increases are phased in slowly and the long suffering customer will not notice amongst all the other price rises which seem inevitable in the coming years.

QUICK ONES



BREWERS TO BE Alan Swannel and Peter Stacey, are still on the lookout for premises in Hertfordshire after their application to start brewing in an old barn in Abbot's Langley was refused by the local council. Herts South Branch member. Alan says that they may have better luck with sites in St Albans which they are looking at. Sadly, the proposed name for their beer, Chiltern Ale, has been grabbed already by another brewery which has just started up near Aylesbury.



HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH has the good fortune of having one of the most welcoming pubs in the region in their area. In the Courage Eastern 'Friendly Pub Competition' Percy Bidwell, manager of the Good Beer Guide listed King William IV in Sawbridgeworth, came tops as the friendliest barman chosen from a field of 1600. The brewery itself could probably take a few pointers from him.



A NEW BEER from Charles Wells called Silver Special has been introduced to meet the need for a "lower-priced beer in the present economic climate". Described as a "light-gravity" brew, it will be cheaper than the Company's IPA. The "Recession Special", however, will only be served on top-pressure.



FINALLY, the newsletter has been inundated by readers writing in who were disappointed when switching on to watch the film "The Taking of Pelham 123" last month. Many thought that it was going to be a guide to the rudiments of drinking presented by Peter Lerner, CAMRA's liaison officer for Rayment's brewery.

WARNING

BY
H.M. GOVERNMENT:

Drinking Abbot
can seriously damage
your
knee ligaments

BADGES

Herts South Branch's badge machine is open to offers! Pubs, clubs, darts and football teams, fund-raising events - badges made to your own design.

No minimum quantity.

For details contact Eric Sim on Hatfield 60647

PAGE TWO OPINION

This month Steve Bury writes on two subjects which particularly concern him – bad beer and complaining about it. If there's an aspect of beer and pubs which particularly annoys you, write and tell us about it.

Ullage – the bad beer story

Oxford English Dictionary – Ullage, the amount by which a cask, etc., falls short of being full.

This definition of ullage gives the impression that when a brewer supplies beer to a pub that the barrels are not full. The truth is that ullage and the ullage money system are the biggest factor in the supply of bad beer to customers. Ullage falls into the unspoken area of brewing and health as it is not, as the dictionary states, an amount of fresh air in the cask, but an amount of beer.

When barrels leave the brewery they are first sterilised and then filled with beer. Some publicans argue that their barrels are short, but this has nothing to do with the point I wish to make.

OPINION

Here we are on delivery day, supplied with X gallons of beer in full casks. The publican does his regular maintenance and cleaning of his equipment and is now ready to start serving the first new barrel. On a normal pipe run, to get the pressure up, at least one bucket of beer and froth is pulled through. In the case of long runs it could be two and during the week, as new casks are opened, bucket after bucket is filled. A standard bucket holds 1 gallon, and to throw this down the drain would be a large loss, so where does it go? The answer is, sometimes – back into the barrel. Why does this happen when the brewery will pay ullage money for any beer put into an empty cask and returned? Ullage money is less than cost and to sell this beer means profit. Some tenants may get no ullage money, depending on the brewer. If you put the ullage back, why not the slops from the drip trays? All this beer may go into the mild, but a better profit can be made by putting it into the best bitter. How often is beer drawn off into dirty buckets, and with what goes into the slop trays, etc., the possibilities are infinite. Think of the problems that may be caused by disinterest and greed in a free house with a large variety of beers. After two weeks of putting ullage back anywhere but into the original casks the beer is worse than mediocre. Example are so obvious – your taste buds tell you. Once they start why not go all the way – lager, keg and water can all go into a spilled cask. Ullage filters are in regular use; if the brewers do not supply them they can easily be obtained or made. You may well think that this article is based on imagination, but think again. When you get a bad pint complain because if you don't and drink it, cross your fingers and pray you don't get a streptococcus infection – that hurts even worse.

Bad beer – part two

Ind Coope beers have gone up, on average, 4 pence a pint and this is only the start of a new round of price rises by the brewers. The price of a pint of ordinary bitter will be 50 pence plus in Hertfordshire with few exceptions (*most Macs and Greene King pubs – Ed*). The time has come to ask again what we are getting for our money. In the last two years when prices have rocketed, standards have dropped equally fast. The beer and service appears to go from bad to worse; cloudy beer, dirty glasses and beer, as well as short measures are now commonplace.

Stop accepting shoddy goods – if you can't see through your pint or it suffers from suspended animation, complain. Don't be embarrassed by others complaining; in 10 years I have only twice seen an unjustified complaint and yet hundreds of cases where people drink bad beer, saying so, and doing nothing about it. Let's show some courage for a change (this includes me) and insist on getting what we're paying for – good, clear, flavoursome, naturally conditioned beers.

Steve appears to live in a sort of drinker's hell. Is his experience yours, or do you think he is overstating his case? No doubt many landlords would violently disagree with him. Whatever your views, send them to me and I'll try to print them in a future issue – Ed.

CONGRATULATIONS . . .

to Hertfordshire North Branch members Jane Conroy and Gary Cundall, who were married on 4th October. Jane and Gary first met at a Herts North branch social at the Star, Furneaux Pelham and have been stary-eyed about each other ever since.

Also congratulations to the Newsletter's ace feature writer, Martyn Cornell, who has won the supreme accolade of the British Beermat Collectors' Society, the handsome Bob Burden Trophy, for an article which he wrote for the Society's Magazine. (*I didn't know Bob Burden was handsome – Ed*).

Finally to the Planning Committee of East Hertfordshire District Council, who have not only refused consent to knock down the old Star Brewery in Watton Road, Ware, but have also told McMullens that if they want to build a new pub at Hooks Cross, near Stevenage, it must be specially designed for the site, and not just another new town pub.

SPORTS ROUND

Watch Out Sevvy!

Herts South Branch Superstars fail in the first 18 at golf, but do well on the 19th.

The sportsmen of the Herts South Branch of CAMRA continued in their quest to prove that they are more than just elbow-bending beer drinkers by taking on the Abbot John, Wheathampstead at golf last month.

Unfortunately they had to give way to "local knowledge" on the exacting Mid Herts course on Gustard Wood Common and lost by two closely fought matches to nil.

This now levels the score between the Branch and the pub as the Abbot John were soundly thrashed at cricket in July. A play-off at shove ha'penny was abandoned as the landlord had lost his halfpenny. The next encounter is to be in December when the sport is to be real table tennis and not, as Eric Allen had hoped for, video ping-pong.

There is no truth in the rumour that our sporting Newsletter editor has formed a team of space invader experts to take on those pubs who cannot afford to install a bar billiards table. (*I'm very happy to hear it – Ed*)

Eric Sim

Conked Out

Despite the cats and dogs falling from the sky a good number of Herts South branch members made the journey to one of the branch's furthest outposts last month for the annual conker championships. Despite the fact that the editor forgot to put the name of the pub into last month's newsletter, over 30 people spent the evening proving that the game of conkers really does involve putting a nut on the end of a piece of string – and a conker on the other.

The first round went quickly, with the ladies doing well yet again. Sadly, last year's champion, Val Page, wasn't there to defend her title though. By the semi-finals we were down to Pam and Eric Sim (mercifully not drawn against each other) and Elaine Jones and Malcolm Mitchell, both locals of the pub. The locals won through to the final. The exciting three leg finish, which had everyone on the edge of their barstools, was won by Malcolm (who obviously isn't much of a gentleman), although the crowd were somewhat biased toward Elaine, who proved a worthy runner-up.

As the cliché goes, an excellent evening was had by all, not least because of the beer and food laid on by the landlord and landlady. Everyone is now looking forward to next year's event. Oh yes, the pub. The Royal Oak at West Hyde. I wouldn't like to forget the name twice running!

DEUTSCHLAND ÜBER ALES

3 – Düsseldorf Alt

An Englishman, drinking *Altbier* in one of the bars of Düsseldorf *Alt Stadt*, will probably feel more at home than in most cities in Europe. The blend of old and new, the restaurants and pizzerias, the trendy disco-bars and wood-panelled beer houses recall the same cosmopolitan air of Bristol or London. Inside the old beer houses, some of which still brew on the premises, the atmosphere is simple and convivial. The customers sit at scrubbed tables, engaged in animated conversation or simply relaxing over a drink. Waiters serve you at the table – anything from a gut-busting meal (Germans have amazing appetites) down to a beer. And beer here means only one thing – *Altbier*.



Altbier – so called because it is produced in the "old" way, i.e. top fermented – is usually served straight from the barrel, stood on the bar. Although rather more malty than many English ales, the colour (a rich, deep copper) and its taste are not dissimilar. The beer is of average strength (about 3½% alcohol), and very, some would say too, drinkable. It's traditionally served in small, cylindrical glasses of 20cl capacity, although some bars serve 40cl measures. Cost, incidentally, around 65 pence a pint, in the city. Considering German salaries, which are far higher than here, English beer prices don't look so good.

There are several breweries, in and around Düsseldorf, producing *Alt*. Three in the city are home-brew houses: *Im Füschchen*, *Zum Üerige* and *Schuhmacher*. One of the best known of the larger brewers is *Hannen* whose *Altbier* is available in this country. Unfortunately, though, German beer for export is usually pasteurised so that it's rarely as good here as it is there. A more unusual *Alt* is brewed by *Pinkus Müller* in Münster. Unlike the others this is a pale straw colour and has a slightly lighter taste.

Next month – *Kölsch*

THE CORNELL COLUMN

by Martyn Cornell

This month Martyn looks at one of the county's long dead brewing companies, Christie's of Hoddesdon, in –

THE COMPLEAT CHRISTIE HISTORY

Few breweries can boast an unsolicited testimonial from Izaak Walton, author of the Compleat Angler and father of English sporting fishing.

One of Walton's favourite drinking places was the Thatched House Inn, Hoddesdon, which the great angler declared was "very remarkable" for its home-brewed ale.

Around 1700 the Thatched House was acquired by William Plomer. Under William, who died in 1728, and his son Robert the brewhouse at the inn was built up into a thriving brewery business, until the inn itself disappeared altogether.



Early references to the brewery as such are few, and it is not definitely mentioned until 1736. However, in 1725 the Plomers were involved in a lawsuit with the people of Hoddesdon over the water supply from Rawdon House, which was apparently drying up. Rawdon House supplied both the town and the brewery with its water right up until wells were dug at the brewery in the 19th century – so it seems probable that as the brewery expanded, and its water consumption rose, problems were caused which forced the local townspeople to go to court.

As it happens, Robert Plomer, who became a rich and influential man and one of the first brewers to be High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, married Hester Rawdon, only child of the last Sir Marmaduke Rawdon of Rawdon House. The marriage does not appear to have been happy – Hester was 20 years younger, and when Robert died, in 1742, she scratched his name out of the family bible.

After Robert's death the brewery passed to Rene Briand, who was at first in partnership with a Mr Dalloway. Briand died in 1781, and the brewery was bought by William Whittingstall, one of three brothers who were all to make their mark. George Whittingstall later owned the long-established Watford brewery, while James made a fortune at the time of the Napoleonic Wars from his mill at Hitchin.

Following William's sudden death in 1803, James and George sold the brewery to William Christie and his partner George Cathrow. Christie, born 1744 in Fifehire, died in 1811, but the brewery continued to be known as Christie and Cathrow, although the bank founded by the partners in Hertford around 1807 was sold in 1814.

Free ale

Cathrow, who lived at Great Amwell, extended the brewery and added several more pubs to its tied estate. When he died, in 1842, his will stipulated that a barrel of beer should be kept permanently topped up, fixed to a stand in Hoddesdon High Street opposite the brewery, with an iron pot chained to a post for every passer-by to help himself.

Similar magnanimous gestures were made by brewers in several other Hertfordshire towns, but the local Hoddesdon innkeepers, particularly at the Bell, protested loudly at the threat of their livelihood. The free barrel began as good strong ale, was reduced to table beer, and finally, after a few years, abolished altogether.

Changing hands

After 1842 the brewery was bought by John Back from Surrey and Robert Hunt, who took into partnership Peter Christie, William's nephew, and apprentice at the brewery for some years. Back and Hunt had also contracted to buy John Moses Carter's brewery in St Andrew's Street, Hertford. When legal complications were sorted out, the Hertford brewery was closed, and its 40-odd pubs – including the White Hart, Stevenage and the Three Tuns, Hertford – were added to the Hoddesdon brewery estate, while the brewery itself was completely rebuilt.

Hunt retired from the business in 1860, Peter Christie died in 1865 aged 73, and Back retired shortly afterwards. The brewery then passed entirely into the hands of Peter's son, Charles Peter Christie, although it had run as C.P. Christie & Co. since at least 1862.

Charles Peter, born in 1829 and educated at Eton, was described by his contemporaries as a man of strong will, and a strict disciplinarian. But he built up the business of the brewery until it was the fourth largest in the county. He also helped the town of Hoddesdon, with all sorts of varied projects.

The first public covered swimming baths in the county – and possibly the country – were erected alongside the brewery, warmed with water from the brewery itself. The first electric light installation in the district was made by Christies for the brewery and several nearby houses. C.P. Christie found the money for an art gallery for the town, and the first ever bridge over Dobb's Weir.

Christie took great pride in the brewery's horses, and on his instructions all the carters and draymen had to walk at their horses' heads for the first mile out of town, and on the last mile in. He also made sure that the whole

fleet of carts, drays and vans looked its very best for the traditional Whit Monday display by all the local breweries on Hartham, Hertford. The men would arrive for work at 5am, D.P. and his sons would come to inspect them at 10am all lined up with their horses and equipment gleaming and sparkling on a piece of triangular land in front of the Clock House, and woe betide anyone who had failed to polish the underside of a buckle. Then, under the eyes of a huge crowd of Hoddesdon folk, the whole spectacle would wheel right down Amwell Lane and jangle off to Hertford to be judged by the Mayor and Corporation of the county town.

Kicking Tom

About this time Christie's most popular beer, AK, sold for one shilling a gallon. This was mixed half and half with another of the company's beers, KT, or Kicking Tom, which sold for six old pence a gallon – and which at that price, despite the name, must have been pretty weak – for farmers to give to workers at harvest time. Harvesting was extremely thirsty work, and the usual allowance was a gallon of small beer a day per man. Anyone who did not drink beer was allowed 8d a day instead.

After C.P. Christie's death in 1898, the brewery was carried on as a partnership by his sons, until a private company was formed in 1903 with Charles A. Christie as chairman and three other Christies as directors. The brothers kept up their paternal image – that year's Christmas gift to all the 115 workers was a half crown, a packet of plums and a five shilling ticket for meat each.

At the same time the company had 124 pubs and beerhouses in Hertfordshire alone, including 16 out of 21 pubs in Hoddesdon itself, and others in Middlesex and Essex.

Hard times

After the First World War Captain Christie was sent off to learn the trade at a brewery in Kent. In April 1921 he came back to the Hoddesdon brewery, rising to become under-brewer and a director of the firm. Clearly when his father retired, Captain John was destined to take over the reins.

But the Captain was a sick man. He suffered terrible headaches from the wound he had received in the trenches in 1915, and had to take electric shock treatment to kill the pain. Eventually it became too much. In October 1927 he shot himself in the head at his home in Hoddesdon, dying in hospital some hours later.

The brewery was going through a rough time – a yeast infection had got into the beer, and even though the brewhouse had been tiled throughout in an attempt to get rid of it, the problem persisted. Captain Christie's suicide seems to have been the last straw for the family. A month after his death, in November 1927, it was announced that the brewery and its 159 pubs had been sold to the Cannon brewery of Clerkenwell, London.

The Christies had apparently offered the brewery to McMullens of Hertford first, but after due consideration McMullens turned it down. In April 1928 the Hoddesdon brewery was officially transferred to Cannon, after handsome gifts had been presented to each employee by the Christies – some were given pensions for life.

The Cannon people immediately set about demolishing the brewery, which once dominated the town, so that the only part that survives is the old brewery offices, still with a mural showing two naked cherubs harvesting hops and barley, but now turned into shops.

The purchase did not do the Cannon brewery much good, for two years later, in 1930, it was taken over in its turn, by Taylor Walker of the Barley Mow brewery, Limehouse. Taylor Walker were eventually acquired by Ind Coope, in 1959, adding to that company's domination of Hertfordshire.

There is, however, one pub that still proudly proclaims the virtues of Christie's ales – the Galley Hall, a sadly non-real inn where a tiled sign for Christie's beer on the front wall has survived all takeovers happily intact.

THE BARLEY MOW

VARIETY IS
THE SPICE
OF LIFE



TRY OUR
14 REAL
ALES

TYTTENHANGER GREEN

In addition to our normal range there will always be a cask on the bar from our range of guest beers which could be one of the following: Eldridge Pope, Bourne Valley, Donnington, Arkell, Archers, St Austell or Brakspear's 6X.

John and Betty Blackwell would like to apologise to customers for any inconvenience caused in the next few weeks as we carry out improvements to the pub to add inside toilets and increase the size of the cellar. This may mean that a few of our beers may not be available during this period. There'll still be choice enough though!

Our aim is to sell the best beer in the county – if ever you are dissatisfied with it we will change it without question.

AROUND THE PUBS

Quite a number of new real ale pubs this month. Several of these, however, have been serving the stuff for a few months now. What this highlights is the fact that your beloved editor, although great, is not omnipresent – at least not yet. Consequently, if you, dear reader, discover any new real ale outlets in the area please let me know. At the moment it would seem that everyone is assuming that someone else is doing it. Either that, or that somehow I manage to visit each one of the 1000-odd pubs in the county every month. Oh that I could! Please keep the information coming in.

First off this month is the **Black Horse**, Colney Street, now selling handpumped Benskins bitter. Courage Directors and Best Bitter flow through the pumps at the **Hollybush**, Elstree. The **Sele Arms**, Hertford has been sporting a handpump for Mac's Country bitter for a month or so now, and very nice the beer was too when visited recently. This, and other Macs managed houses which have been fitted with pumps recently, lend some backing to the rumours currently circulating that the company will be putting handpumped Country into all its managed houses. Certain people at the brewery deny this, others involved with the company don't. However, we've said it once and we'll keep on saying it – louder if necessary: what about AK on handpumps as well? It is, after all, Mac's best selling beer.

Another outlet for Courage – the **Fountain** in Parkway, Welwyn Garden City is doing its bit to redress the imbalance between supplies of real ale in the Garden City and Welwyn village. Handpumped Directors and Best Bitter are on sale. Apparently the landlord got sick of people going in asking if he sold real ale. If this is what results from that sort of activity then I suggest that more of us get out into those fizz pubs now to do likewise.

Possibly the best news of the month is that the recently refurbished **Swan** in Leavesden has had a set of pumps installed selling Greene King Abbot, IPA and XX mild.

Welcome to the latest convert to real ale in the northern part of the county, the **Rose and Crown** at Aston, near Stevenage, a lively and popular Mac's house. Country Bitter is available on handpump, but be sure you ask for real ale, as the pressurised version is also available. Memo to the Mac's area manager – how about providing a pump clip, so that the customers can tell that the pump is in use, and not just an ornament?

Good news just received is that the **Waggoners**, Ayot Green, near Welwyn Garden City is now selling Wethered's bitter on handpump. This cosy little pub is well worth a visit.

The **Red Lion**, Vicarage Road, Watford has just reopened after substantial alterations and is now selling Benskins bitter. The third phase in the installation of the beer is now under way which will mean the gradual conversion of a number of pubs over the coming years until the changeover is considered complete.

More news from Macs. A handpump has been spotted in the **John o' Gaunt**, the brewery's architectural masterpiece, in Hertford. Although the pump did have a clip on it, our investigator was out of luck as the beer was not on. It doesn't come as a surprise.

SILLY COMPETITIONS DEPT.

Last month's competition, "The Thirty-Nine Steps" brought the usual flood of entries (3) and I'm pleased to announce the winner, who is John Green of Port Vale, Hertford. John will be receiving a 1981 CAMRA CALENDAR IN DUE COURSE. The 39 breweries were: *Adnams, Bateman, Batham, Beard, Burt, Brain, Darley, Donnington, Eldridge Pope, Elgood, Felinfoel, Gale, Greene King, Greenall Whitley, Guernsey, Guinness, Harp (some people call it a brewery), Harvey, Holt, Holden, Home, Hook Norton, Hoskins, Hydcs, Jennings, Lees, Manns, Okell, Paine, Ruddle, Selby, Shipstone, Smiles, Tolly, Usher, Vaux, Wells (twice), Ward, Young.* As many people noticed, the Herts Newsletter Gremlin misspelled 'Bateman', but all our entrants managed to suss that one out.

This month's competition, again for a small prize, is as follows. How many words of four letters or more can be made from the following phrase.

TRADITIONAL DRAUGHT BEER

Each word may use any of the letters once only – and be English – my Penguin dictionary shall be the judge. I'd like lists of words too – a postcard saying simply "3,234 words" will not do. The person sending in the most words is the winner. Let's have more than three entries this time too!

BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch
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Hertfordshire South Branch
Eric Sim Tel: Hatfield 60647
Herts-Essex Borders Branch
Terry Smith Tel: Epping 73677

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Monday November 3rd

Darts match at the Windsor Castle, Ware. 8.00pm start. (Benskins)

Wednesday November 12th

Joint social with South Beds branch at the Harrow, Luton. Darts and dominoes too! 8.00pm (Charles Wells)

Tuesday November 18th

BRANCH MEETING at the Dimsdale Arms, Hertford. 7.30pm start – early start essential as there will be a home-brewed beer competition starting at 9.30. Bring some of your own ale along. (McMullens and Axford Depth-Charge Ale)

Saturday – Sunday November 22nd/23rd

Marathon games weekend at the Old Bull's Head, Ware. Come and see the editor play Space Invaders! Players needed for event which will last through all opening hours of both days. Anyone interested should get in touch with the branch contact. All proceeds in aid of Muscular Dystrophy Research. (Benskins)

Wednesday November 26th

Anti-social in St Albans. An attempt to survey every pub in the city in one evening! Consequently a good attendance is required. Meet at the Garibaldi, Albert Street at 7.30pm sharp. (Benskins)

Tuesday December 2nd

Darts match at the Hope and Anchor, Welham Green. 8.00pm (Courage)

Tuesday December 9th

Table tennis match versus the Abbot John, Wheathampstead. 8.00pm (Benskins)

Tuesday December 16th

BRANCH AGM at the Beehive, St Albans. Any motions, items for debate, or nominations for the Branch Committee should be sent to the branch contact before this date. 8.00pm (Wethereds)

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Wednesday November 12th

BRANCH AGM at the Sun, Hitchin, followed by an auction of breweriana. Please note that only members with up-to-date membership cards may vote at the AGM, but all are welcome to attend. (Charrington) See below.

Saturday – Sunday November 15th/16th

Weekend trip to Penrhos Court brewery, Herefordshire. For details contact John Law, Stevenage 721015.

Wednesday November 19th

Social at the Sailor Boy, Walsworth, Hitchin. 8.00pm. (Wethereds)

Wednesday November 26th

Social at the Marquis of Lorne, Old Town, Stevenage. Former Herts North Chairman, Bob Else, now manages this pub, so there will be a warm welcome and a good pint for all. 8.00pm. (Greene King)

Wednesday December 10th

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Horseshoes, Norton, Letchworth. 8.00pm (Charringtons)

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday November 3rd

½-price Beer Social at the White Horse, Roydon. (This is not a printing error). 8.00pm (Courage)

Tuesday November 25th

BRANCH MEETING at the Coach and Horses, Waltham Abbey. Guest speaker – Joe Goodwin, Chairman of CAMRA. 8.00pm start. (McMullens)

Monday December 8th

Interbranch darts match and social at the White Bear, Stamford Rivers (Essex) versus South West Essex Branch. 8.00pm.

A load of old —

If a three-foot-high cardboard cutout Father William figure is just what you want to decorate your living room, if you'd like a pair of labologist's underpants – swimming trunks decorated with designs from 1960s beer labels – come along to the third grand auction of breweriana at the North Herts CAMRA AGM, Sun Hotel, Hitchin, 8pm on Wednesday, November 12.

Other items in the auction include pump clips from breweries large and small, a map showing all the pubs belonging to the Castletown brewery, Isle of Man, a placard from the now-defunct Barnsley brewery, a set of 16 bottle labels from Boddington's of Manchester, a 1959 Benskins price list, full bottles of Chinese porter, commemorative brews and Jubilee beers, embossed bottles from local breweries, ash-trays, glasses and drink trays from breweries from Scotland to the Channel Islands, posters, bar towels, stickers, beer mats and dozens more.

The AGM will also feature a slide show showing branch members and others in sometimes odd situations – and a free pint to the first 36 people to turn up.

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire South, Hertfordshire North and Herts-Essex Borders branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of CAMRA or its branches. The Editor gratefully receives articles or letters for publication. These should preferably be typewritten and double spaced, handwritten items as legible as possible please. Send to D. Burns, 11 Turpins Chase, Oaklands, Welwyn, Herts.

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