

**FREE**



# The Campaign for Real Ale

## HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1980

NUMBER 35



# Merry Christmas

As CAMRA moves into its tenth year prospects for the real ale drinkers look better than they have for a long time, despite the short term effects of the current recession. The economic climate, however, hasn't stopped the formation of the many, new small breweries which have sprung up over the last few years. 1981 brings with it the prospect of a new brewery in Hertfordshire (see Quick Ones).

Over the last ten years our own local brewers, along with many others in the country, seem to have gone from strength to strength. This is mainly due, CAMRA believes, to the fact that they have continued to produce good traditional draught beer at reasonable prices. The Campaign sends its best wishes to all those small brewers, and in particular, McMullens, Rayment's and Greene King. Of all the bigger brewers Ind Coope have made the greatest efforts to remedy some of their previous mistakes and to give the drinkers what they want. A Merry Christmas to them and all the other real ale brewers supplying the county.

Greetings also to the hundreds of landlords throughout the shire who have been serving us with not only our favourite tippie, but also with the welcome that makes the British pub what it is. Last, but certainly not least, a very happy Yuletide to all our readers, fellow CAMRA members, and everyone who has helped and supported the Campaign over the years. We're looking forward, not only to Christmas and the New Year, but also to another successful 10 years for CAMRA. Cheers!

**CHRISTMAS ALE FANS** will have a double delight this year with the introduction of Greene King's Christmas Ale and the appearance for the second year of Mac's seasonal offering. The McMullen's Christmas brew is essentially the same as last year's: a dark 1070 beer, not quite as sweet as many of its type and, for my money, much the better for it. It doesn't surprise me that many pubs will not serve people with too much of this stuff!

The Greene King beer, strangely enough, will only be available through Rayment's houses. The beer is around 1060 OG and is effectively a naturally conditioned version of St Edmund Ale. Both beers are now in the pubs. I suggest you get out and try them, before it's too late.

### THE LAST BELL FOR ALF & JOAN

There are not many pubs in the land that can boast that they have appeared in every Good Beer Guide since 1974 and in South Hertfordshire there are only a handful of pubs where the branch has had continued support since that date.

#### Winning streak

The Bell and Crown, in Cowbridge, Hertford, is one of these pubs. Alf and Joan have always been willing to host our branch socials and darts matches and Alf's well kept Country Bitter and AK mild were no doubt a major factor behind the branch's astonishing run in 1975-76 of 10 consecutive darts matches without defeat. And Joan's excellent spread of food at matches was always worth looking forward to.

#### Pub of character

The Bell and Crown has never pretended to be more than a good, honest pub, with no frills – but a lot of character (it seemed that the records on the juke-box were immortal – Telstar by the Tornados was always a favourite of mine) and it was therefore with a tinge of sadness that the branch learnt that Alf and Joan would be leaving at the end of November.

#### Best wishes

As a branch, we would like to sincerely wish them all the best for the future (they will continue to live in Hertford) and would like to put on record our thanks for all the hospitality and all the good times we've had since the branch was formed.

#### Footnote

Despite rumours to the contrary, the future of the Bell and Crown seems assured, at least for the moment, as McMullen's have appointed new tenants, whom the branch would like to welcome.

Les Middlewood

### No real ale off-licence for Stevenage

Stevenage magistrates have refused to grant a licence for what would have been Hertfordshire's first real ale off-licence. CAMRA's sister company, CAMRA (Real Ale) Investments Ltd., planned to open an off-licence in Stevenage Old Town, selling beers directly from the cask, including Adnams, Samuel Smiths and possibly Batemans, together with interesting and unusual bottled beers from all over the country and abroad.

So, on the 3rd November, the company's Executive Director, Chris Hutt, together with two Hertfordshire North branch members, Martin Connelly and Peter Lerner, told the magistrates that Stevenage would gain a new facility which would be welcomed, well used, and which could not be found closer than Cambridge or London.

But there was also opposition – from another off-licence in the Old Town, and from the licensees of two or three local pubs. Surprisingly, the objectors did not wish to encourage fair competition, but wanted to quash it. The existing off-licence told us that they already sold 40 bottled or canned beers (all filtered and pasteurised), and the pubs told us that there was no demand for cask-conditioned ale from the cask to take away, and anyway, if there was a demand, it could be supplied by them. If there was really no demand one wonders why they feared the new venture so much that they had to object to it!

The magistrates considered the arguments, and refused the licence application without giving a reason. We understand that an appeal is to be lodged to the County Court.

We are certain that there is a demand for a real ale off-licence in this part of the county, and wish CAMRA (Real Ale) Investments Ltd. every success with their appeal.

Continued on back page

**JOE GOODWIN**, CAMRA's national chairman, died suddenly at his home last month. Joe, who was just 32, died of a sudden asthmatic attack, an illness from which he had suffered since childhood. Involved not only in CAMRA but also in local politics, he will be sadly missed by the many people who came to know him over the years.

# LETTERS

## From Ms R L Hawkes, Arlesey, Beds.

I was recently at the Baldock Real Beer Festival 1980 where I picked up a copy of the CAMRA Newsletter and, since I am a part-time barmaid at the Green Man, Ickleford, I was very interested to read so much about McMullen's beer. Although I agree with many of your comments, I really must protest at your point: "staff in these pubs almost always jump for the fizz tap as soon as you order a pint instead of offering you real or fizzy." I ALWAYS offer a choice of beer when anyone orders a pint and so, to the best of my knowledge, do my colleagues. In fact, I always try to sell the real ale, particularly to undecided customers. So, Mr Burns, give us a break – perhaps if you don't run us down so much, more people might come and sample Mac's CB and find out what they've been missing! – Ed.

*Full marks to the Green Man! The day I received Ms Hawkes' letter I was passing near Hitchin so I stopped (rather sneakily) at the Green Man to test her statement. Sure enough, I was offered the choice of either top-pressure or handpumped beer. I don't deny that there are other worthy exceptions where both types of beer are offered. Sadly, the initial experience of many of the contributors to this newsletter was otherwise. Recent experience suggests that, perhaps, things are changing. It's certainly in CAMRA's interests to see the sale of handpumped Mac's beer go well, so we would certainly endorse your suggestion that people should get out into the pubs to try handpumped CB and find out what they've been missing. – Ed.*

## From "Trev", Hertford (name and address supplied)

I could not agree more with Steve Bury's advice on what to do with beer that appears to be sub-standard – ask for it to be changed.

Some years ago, when our choice of pubs to drink in was severely limited (remember? – just one in St Albans, none in Watford or Hatfield, etc) I would usually tolerate a cloudy or slightly off pint so as not to discourage the landlord from selling real beer. I drew the line, though, after a visit to the Farmer's Boy, Langley (long before it was revamped with the now excellent beer) when all three of the beers on sale (both milds and IPA) had a marked vinegary taste. My letter of complaint to Greene King brought a courteous reply explaining that this was the very reason they considered top pressure to be the ideal means of service ("it does not affect the flavour of the beer" they said – and I think they still actually believe that).

Nowadays it seems that we are heading back towards the state existing in the 50s when all pubs served real beer and a lot of it was atrocious. In my recent experience the worst culprits are Whitbread houses where Wethereds has been installed. In most cases this will be the first time such pubs have handled real beer for many years, or more likely it has been completely new to the landlord. One often finds that Wethered's is "not on at the moment", or when it is on it's off. Then develops the old routine – not enough people drink it, so it goes off, and because it's off, nobody drinks it. Enter Tankard, Trophy and BB (do the older drinkers asking for the latter as "Flowers" really think it bears any resemblance to the original?)

I also find that the multi-beer free houses more often sell less than perfect beers compared with the tied pubs. There are, of course, many exceptions to this, and it is especially welcome to see the rider to the advertisement in recent newsletters for the Barley Mow at Tyttenhanger Green to the effect that suspect beer will be changed without question.

Unfortunately this is not the case in most pubs. Any criticism of the beer (however quietly or politely expressed) is often met with such retorts as: "Nobody else has complained", "I'm drinking it", and "That won't do you any harm". The latter may well be true, but it can cause temporary discomfort at a later stage, to the parts of the body that all beers affect. I usually approach the problem of replacing beer by trying to appear to be an ordinary (i.e. non-CAMRA "expert") drinker. Nearly every publican resents drinkers giving the impression that they know more than he about beer, despite the fact that this is for many of them true. If I am served a cloudy or hazy pint my approach is "Is this alright?", and for the, happily rarer, vinegary offering; "This doesn't taste quite right". This invariably brings a replacement which may or may not be an improvement. If it is not, I say so again. I have no compunction now in persisting with complaint and I believe that if everybody adopted a similar approach the general standards would rise.

Finally, a personal gripe: I am fairly often first in a pub for a particular session (especially weekend lunchtimes) and very, very few landlords or staff appear to pull off enough beer to ensure that the first pint drunk is as good as those subsequent. No doubt they are afraid to exceed their ullage allowance, but they've lost my early custom, at least.

*Another in your list of replies would be familiar to those who frequented a particular pub in the east of the county. In the recent past, when the beer was not as consistent as it is now, "They're drinking it in the other bar" was the usual answer to anyone questioning the quality of the beer, which was off more often than not. The forceful tone in which this statement was made not only quashed further argument but ensured that it could be given with equal truthfulness to customers in either half of the pub. – Ed.*

## From Steve "Ullage" Bury, Shenley.

What has happened to the Red Lion, Radlett, a Trust House Hotel that at one time was a thriving two bar establishment with cheap and well kept beer? This GBG pub first lost its public bar to become a waiting room for people using the steak house. Henekeys closed the bar on weekdays due to lack of trade which was hardly surprising considering that the dartboard was replaced by an oil painting and the street door bricked-up and filled with fake barrels. Next went the two handpumps supplying GK Abbot and Bass leaving only the lounge bar with real beer. The range at this time was Abbot, IPA, Ruddles County and Bass. The now shell-shocked customers who had lost their public bar and amenities were being supplied with beer of inconsistent quality. There had always been difficulties due to the cellar being a brick built hut in the car park with a 120ft pipe run. Customers complained but were always, in my experience, stating the obvious and stated that the problems were often caused by inexperienced staff.

The final blow came just after our branch meeting when not one pint of decent ale was available even after two month's notice. The new manager was told that the existing range of draught beers was to be cut from 4 to 3, Courage Directors was installed with Greene King IPA and Bass. The general consensus of opinion was that the quality of the beer could only improve with fewer different beers to look after. The trouble is that most of them didn't get a chance to find out as for some reason the management had a purge and a large number were barred. The customers that have gone are from all age-groups and backgrounds and the bar is now like a vacant film set – with all the old action and atmosphere gone.

*What do you say Henekeys? – Ed.*

## DEUTSCHLAND ÜBER ALES

### 4 – Kölsch



Köln, or Cologne, may have fewer attractions than many other German cities, but there is little doubt that Kölsch is one of them. In the centre of this largely industrial city stands the huge gothic cathedral, built between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the central station nearby and intense construction work being carried on just down by the Rhein, this isn't one of the quietest or most relaxing places around. There are, however, in true German style, plenty of busy tourist cafés, and smaller backstreet bars where you can sit, in relative peace and quiet, and enjoy one of the several Kölsch beers brewed in the city.

The style of the bars is not unlike those in nearby Düsseldorf, home of *Alt* mentioned in last month's newsletter. *Kölsch* and *Alt* have their similarities too. Both are top-fermented, medium strength beers, with a distinctly malty taste. There the similarities end. *Kölsch* is light and straw coloured, with a slightly sour, hoppy bite. It's generally served in tall, thin glasses, straight from the barrel. The city has a dozen or so brewers producing the stuff, making it an ideal stopping-off point for those wanting a bit of variety. Some of the bars brew their own on the premises, most of them seem to offer the same high standard of service that you come to expect in Germany.

With Düsseldorf just an hour's drive away, a very pleasant day can be spent drinking *Alt* in the morning, and *Kölsch* in the afternoon. Or better still, one day on *Alt*, and the next of *Kölsch*. Or even better . . .

Next month – *Bock*

## DON'T DO IT!

Les Middlewood, previous editor of this illustrious publication has finally succumbed to the pleasures of the flesh. Dare we say, after a lifetime of celibacy, he married Pat Breen on Saturday 6th December somewhere in Abbey Wood.

The reception featured (in alphabetical order) Batemans Mild, King & Barnes Bitter, Shepherd Neame bitter, with attendance by local CAMRA members. The honeymoon is in Salisbury (not Rhodesia) or Stonehenge. We can supply the name of the hotel on request at a price!

All branch members send their best wishes for the future and may they produce plenty of recruits for the Campaign!

by Martyn Cornell

## Christmas cake and ale

A merry Christmas to both my readers (hello Mum). To help make this a real ale Christmas I thought I would pass on a recipe for a real ale Christmas cake, using Guinness, one of our few surviving bottled real ales. It has to be bottled Guinness, because it's the yeast that makes the cake rise, but the taste is in no way bitter. Instead it's a superb, rich, moist affair that will have you believing this is what angels must eat each day.

The ingredients are 8oz butter or marg (this is a non-metric cake), 8oz soft brown sugar, 10oz plain flour, 2 teasp. mixed spice, 4 eggs, 8oz raisins, 8oz sultanas, 4oz walnuts, 4oz mixed peel – and a half-pint bottle of Guinness.

Cream the butter and sugar thoroughly, stir in the flour and spice slowly, and add the lightly-beaten eggs a little at a time. Mix in the chopped nuts, peel and fruit, and add four tablespoons of the Guinness until the mixture is a soft dropping consistency.

Put the mixture into a greased cake tin, and bake for one hour in a low oven, gas mark 3, and then for an hour and a half in a very low oven, gas mark 2. The cake will not rise much, and it may need even longer to cook than 2½ hours – check by inserting a knife until it comes out crumbly rather than sticky. When the cake is cooked, and cool, remove it from the tin, turn it upside down, place on a plate and pierce the bottom a number of times with a skewer. Then pour the rest of the half-pint of Guinness over it, allowing it to soak in. Finally wrap the cake in foil, or place in a tin, and keep in a cool cupboard for AT LEAST two weeks, preferably three or more. Then remove it from its hiding place, and eat – not forgetting to send me a bit.

**PS** All you home bread makers out there – have you ever tried making your loaf with ale, Guinness or whatever? Substituting the liquid part of the recipe with the same quantity of beer produces a moister, longer lasting, better tasting loaf. It's an ideal way to use up that home brew that didn't quite work out, although I wouldn't advise using beer that tastes unpleasant. In Germany a traditional Pilsner Loaf is made, uniting the two traditional uses of yeast (great stuff!). How about the Mac's Malt Loaf or the Rayment's Raisin Bread? (Apologies for butting-in to your column, Martyn. Carry on) – Ed.

## Book vouching

Talking of Christmas, if you get a book voucher rather than a beer voucher in your stocking on the morning of the 25th, or you're wondering what to buy a boozy friend, there are quite a few good buys on beer in the bookshops – and one or two books to avoid as well.

One beautiful bar-table volume, is Michael Jackson's The English Pub. It's full of marvellous photographs and illustrations, mostly in colour, and well worth its £6 – which is, after all, only a pint a month till next Christmas these days.

Mr Jackson's World Guide to Beer is also well worth putting down on your list for Santa, especially as it is now out in paperback for, if my memory serves me well, £5.50. Dazzle your friends by discussing the difference between Hungarian Vilagos and Primus from Zaire.

One not to buy is the Short History of Ale by Jimmy Young (no relation). Not only is it riddled with mistakes – there are at least six in the paragraph on Barclay Perkins alone – but at £2.50 for 64 pages it's a right rip-off.

I cannot recommend the Penguin Guide to Real Ale, either, even if it is written by an ex-member of CAMRA's national executive. A dull, and rather stodgy discussion of the beer business. Much better is Richard Boston's beer and skittles, only 85p in paperback. Written in 1976, the book is now a trifle outdated, so fast has the scene changed in four years, but it is still well-written and well worth reading.

Don't touch Ale and hearty by one Alan Wykes – Mr W seems to think that all beer is "matured at low temperature and carbonated by running in CO<sub>2</sub>, to produce the sparkling beer that modern taste demands". Oh yeah? Speak for yourself Wykesy. However, since the author admits in his book that he doesn't drink beer, it's not surprising he can't write books on the subject.

Many people like Terence Foster's Dr Foster's Book of Beer, published at £4.95. I found its back-slapping approach rather off-putting, but there is a useful chapter on home brewing. However, the best home brew book published is still Home Brewed Beers and Stouts by Amateur Winemaker editor C.J.J. Berry, at 70p. Tells you how to crack malt, make real lager too, and almost half a million copies sold since 1963.

Finally for collectors, Keith Osborne and Brian Pipe's Beer Labels, Mats and Coasters is still available at £4. Keith Osborne, a short and pleasant lad, is in the Guinness Book of Records for his collection of 22,000 beer bottle labels.

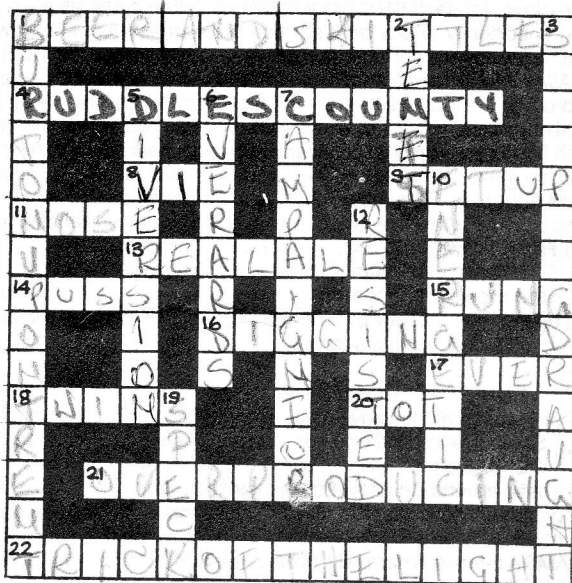
## Quatermass and the pint

Scientists in the pay of the big brewers are working on a few ideas even more horrific-sounding than Ben Truman Export.

One involves genetic engineering on the poor old yeast cell to make it work harder and faster. Fermentation currently takes about five days – the lads in the laboratories believe they could turn out a yeast that could do it in one. Ordinary yeasts also leave about 40 per cent of sugars unconverted into alcohol – a gene-engineered yeast could gobble up the lot. All this would mean more profit for the brewers, of course, but what about the taste of beer? Ah – since when did palates come before money-making?

## CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Apologies for the fit of insanity which brought about last month's competition, which was won by Nigel Meadows with almost 1600 words! I promise not to set any more like that. A CAMRA calendar will be winging its way to him in time for the New Year. TWO prizes (generosity rules!) this month for the first two correct entries pulled from the proverbial hat by the end of the month. I'm still not receiving many entries so if you do send a completed crossword in there's a good chance to win yourself something.



### ACROSS

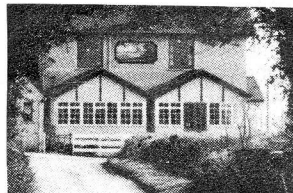
- Do insects surrounding coins and sports outfit give a publican's view
- Rutland? (7,6) of life? (4,3,8)
- Live around without novice to compete (3)
- Ready with another drinks increase (3,2)
- The bottom RH corner missing? Every ale should have a good one (4)
- See 7
- Animal in boots? (4)
- Step in another ungainly way (4)
- One horse in the ring causes manual labour (7)
- Always the first 4 of 6? (4)
- Doubles victories after set ending (5)
- A little one for the road? (3)
- Directing a play too much? – they're doing it with lager! (13)
- Optical deception caused by bottled beer? (5,2,3,5)

### DOWN

- One could go for the beer from here (6,4,5)
- Have firm belief in canvas around pole (5)
- Knock out ale? 8,7)
- Turns aside from bar with rough irons (9)
- Red raves about real ale (8)
13. What we should all do! (8,3,4,3)
- Lively Rene to receive one hundred (9)
- Opposed my mixed up relative meeting the journalist (8)
- Point at two gallons – that's only a drop (5)

## 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.

Our new 'facilities' are now open. The indoor toilets will save many a chilly walk during the coming months and our new, enlarged 'super-cellar' will enable us to keep our range of ales in the very best condition.

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

# QUICK ONES



**EVER THOUGHT OF OWNING A BREWERY** – or part of one at least? That's the offer being made by Allan Swannell in his latest move to open his brewery. Rising costs and delays have left him short of about £7000 and his plan is to sell shares in the new venture to anyone interested – CAMRA members in particular. "That will make it a truly local brewery" says Allan. As an incentive shareholders would receive, for each £100 block of shares, a free pin of ale each year and the opportunity to buy beer at trade price, direct from the brewery. Normal dividends will come in due course, as the company moves into profit. Allan thinks he has finally found his site in St Albans, an excellent point to cover the local free trade, and he reports a good response from prospective outlets. He will, he says, initially brew two beers; a medium strength bitter of around 1040 OG, and a stronger beer since he feels that the London market demands strength in its ale – witness the popularity of ESB and Abbot Ale. Other beers could follow as he becomes established. All he needs now is that final bit of cash. Anyone interested should contact him on Rickmansworth 72282, or write to 96 Kenilworth Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth. Allan is also looking for suggestions for names, both for the brewery and the beers, his initial idea of Chiltern Brewery having been taken recently by a new brewery near Aylesbury. Any ideas in that direction to the same address.



**A BUNCH OF LOONIES** spent 24 hours at the Old Bull's Head in Ware last month playing pub games. Two teams, one from Herts South Branch and one from the pub played each other at darts, crib, dominoes, skittles, shove ha'penny and staying awake in order to raise around £250 towards Muscular Dystrophy aid. Alan Parker, the landlord who specialises in thinking up hairbrained schemes like this one, and raised around £2500 last year, wants to make it an annual event. The CAMRA team won narrowly, but in any event the charity wins. We are now looking for volunteers for next year. A fair degree of insanity is a useful qualification.



**RED FACES AT BENSkins** were probably the result of a little incident at Stevenage recently. The White Hart in the Old Town, run by the very lovely Ian "Mine's a half of bitter" Miller, is currently adorned with the name of the pub on a sign on the left of the building in the company's traditional maroon and gold livery. A similar sign, for the other side of the frontage, in the same colours, was delivered to announce the name of the brewer. However, when it came to put the aforementioned article up on the wall it was realised that the signwriter had spelled the name 'BENSkins'. The result of too much Burton?



**CAMRA'S FAME** continues to spread. Dennis Ward, Products Organiser on Herts South Branch's Committee, has recently received a request for information from somewhere just a little outside the branch area. Canada to be precise. The writer, an emigré from Hertfordshire, has found the interest in real ale so great over there that he's trying to enlist the help of the Campaign over here to give him a hand. Branch socials in Vancouver – now that sounds interesting.



**A SQUAD OF DEDICATED DRINKERS**, led by Chinese-beer-loving landlord Ian Miller, of the White Hart, Stevenage, sampled the products of home-brew inns from Dudley to Gloucester in one two-day session last month.

Among the two dozen brews tried by the busload of CAMRA members and White Hart regulars were Old Swan bitter from the Black Country, Steamer from the Three Tuns, Bishops Castle, Dasher Downing's Draught from the Fox and Hounds, Stottesdon, and Hawthorne bitter from the Norfolk Hotel, Gloucester.

The trippers even managed to fit in a tour round the Penrhos brewery at Penrhos Court, an excellent meal at the restaurant alongside, and a pint of the new Hall's bitter on the way home.

Gannet of the trip award went to Dick "Two Dinners" Peace, and a certain well-known newsletter columnist is still trying to live down being 30 minutes late for the off.

M.C.

# BRANCH CONTACTS

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# BRANCH DIARY

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

**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 that date. 8.00pm start. (Wethereds).

**Friday January 9th**

Branch annual New Year Party at Bramfield village hall. 8.00pm start. Tickets from Nigel Meadows, 68 Hatfield Road, Potters Bar. Tel: 50498. Cost £5 per head – food and drink included.

## HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

**Wednesday December 10th**

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Horseshoes, Norton, Letchworth. New committee – new ideas? 8.00pm start. (Charrington, Bass)

**Wednesday December 17th**

Social at the Crooked Billet, Symonds Green, near Stevenage. Pre-Christmas celebrations at a favourite Herts North venue. 8.00pm (Greene King)

**Wednesday January 14th**

BRANCH MEETING at the Marquis of Lorne, Old Town, Stevenage. First ever branch meeting in the pub run by former branch chairman, Bob Else. 8.00pm. (Greene King)

## HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

**Monday December 15th**

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Tuns, Bishop's Stortford. 8.00pm.

# AROUND THE PUBS

Stanstead Abbots now has real ale due to the "Benskinisation" of the **Red Lion**. Although the Crown has been real for quite a long time, just on the other side of the railway level crossing, this is, strictly speaking, not Stanstead Abbots and is correctly listed in the local guide as St Margarets. So the Red Lion really marks a major breakthrough, since Stanstead Abbots had been one of the last remaining villages in the local branch's area to be completely fizzy. Will one or two of the nearby Macs pubs soon follow suit?

The **Green Man**, Offley, has always has a very attractive set of old handpumps, in working order – but since the old Luton brewery closed in 1968, Whitbreads have refused to supply the pub with any real draught beer. Now, happily, after many requests from the landlord, the brewers have changed their policy, and the pumps are being used to pull up Thomas Wethered Bitter from the cellar. The story has a moral for all Whitbread Landlords who want real ale, but have been told by the company they can't have it – keep on badgering, and eventually you'll win through.

It seems that the **Swan** in Leavesden is not selling Greene King XX mild as stated in last month's newsletter, but KK light mild. The error was caused by our observer spotting an XX pump clip on the handpump, being used probably because it appears that the company only produce clips for Abbot, IPA and XX. Why, I don't know.

The **Plough**, Ley Green, for a while one of the few pubs to sell all four Greene King draught beers, has now dropped the KK light mild. However, the redundant handpump is being used instead for Abbot, previously only available from a cask on the bar, and sales are reportedly booming.

The **Strathmore Arms**, St Pauls Walden, is serving Adnams' Old for the duration, and there is chance of draught Tally Ho appearing over Christmas. Old is also on sale at the **Crooked Billet** in Colney Heath and in a few other houses around the county.

## From page 1

In the meantime we must express our sympathies to those existing businesses who feel threatened by the proposed new venture. We suggest that they should be patronised – so visit Stevenage's existing off-licences and ask for a cask of real ale to take away, or bring your polyin to one of the town's pubs and ask for it to be filled with 4½ gallons of Adnams bitter – you may care to try it at 10.30pm on a Saturday. We would like to know what reaction you get.

The licensee who spoke loudest against the proposal proudly admitted that his pub sold no real ale – no wonder Stevenage residents aren't queuing at his door with containers waiting to have them filled!

Peter Lerner

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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