

**FREE**



# The Campaign for Real Ale

## HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1981

NUMBER 37



## PUBS CRISIS

by Martyn Cornell

**Thousands of pubs** will be shutting by 1985, under the twin impact of supermarket drink sales and rocketing prices, say brewing industry experts. Beer sales fell by almost six per cent last year, a massive decline, and only the second time consumption had actually dropped in ten years. Meanwhile supermarket beer sales are likely to reach 20 per cent of the total market during the '80s, compared with just seven per cent at the moment. All this will put even more pressure on the poor landlord, who is already unable to match the brewery-subsidised prices of beer on the supermarket shelves. Author Gwylmor Price Williams, whose comprehensive £25 tome entitled *Drink in Britain 1900-1979* has just been published, said recently: "The supermarket sale of beer is one of the most remarkable phenomenons of the day. My prediction is that we'll end up with something like the Beeching cuts - this time on the pubs. There are about 70,000 pubs today, and soon it will be much less. Pubs will be shutting by the thousands by 1985".

### Depressed sales

At the same time, with figures from the Brewers Society showing a 5.9 per cent drop in beer consumption, stockbrokers are raising the spectre of another depression in the brewery industry like the one that took place in the '50s, when beer sales fell by 27 per cent.

The timing could scarcely be better for the publication of CAMR's brand-new policy document, designed to show how the drinker and the publican could both get a much better deal than they do now, called *Whose Pint Is It Anyway?*

The thoroughly-well-argued booklet calls for the "demerging" of the Big Six breweries, Whitbread, Allied, Watney, Bass, Courage and Scottish and Newcastle, into their component parts. Only this way, as Ind Coope have partly conceded with the revival of the old names Benskins, Taylor Walker and the rest, will competition be encouraged and prices kept down, and drinkers kept in pubs.

The booklet, available from CAMRA HQ at 34 Alma Road, St Albans, also urges the relaxation of the landlord's tie to the brewery; limiting the size of breweries' tied estates, and modifying the licensing system, again to encourage more competition by preventing local monopolies.

### Monopoly

The stultifying results of monopoly can be clearly seen locally in Baldock, where 13 out of 15 pubs are owned by Greene King, and only three out of 16 sell real ale. In Hitchin however, where six different breweries own pubs in the town, there are four times as many places selling real beer for only twice as many pubs.

- One way drinkers can help the landlord, and do themselves a good turn too, is by shunning fizzy supermarket canned beer when they want a drink at home, and going down to the local with a plastic container for a fill-up with draught beer - real, of course! Greene King pubs actually supply containers for take-home draught beer, and other breweries including Ind Coope-Benskins are introducing the service.



**EAST ANGLIA**

## CHANGING HANDS

The sixth, and last, of Ind Coope's new beers to replace their old ordinary bitter has appeared in Hertfordshire pubs.

The latest brew, unlike the others, which revived old names like Benskins and Taylor Walker, keeps the appellation Ind Coope Bitter, and comes from Burton, not Romford.

Like the others, however, it is brewed to an OG of 1037. But although Ind Coope say its taste was designed to appeal to drinkers in their East Anglia region, it will be available in pubs in other areas that are not taking the other new beers like Benskins.

Most pubs in the county getting the new beer, which will only be available on handpump, already have real ale. One brand new outlet that has been announced, however, is the Hatfield Arms in Old Hatfield.

Meanwhile plans are apparently well advanced to "Benskinise" KK mild, with new pump clips and so forth emphasising the Watford origins of the beer. At the same time, however, Ind Coope are also planning to bring down keg Tetley bitter from Leeds - apparently to right fizz with fizz against Bass's keg Stones bitter from Sheffield and Watney's imports of Wilson's keg from Manchester.

M.C.

## WELCOME IAIN

CAMRA has been without a full-time administrator since the departure of John Ord last year, but all that has changed with the appointment of Iain Dobson last month. Iain's accountancy experience and previous CAMRA activities - he was a founder member of Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch - made him a good choice for the job. He has already visited the branches in the area and they would like to join in wishing him all the best in his new post.

# LETTERS

## From "Disgruntled" of Croxley Green

'Bog Standard' about sums up last month's newsletter. Are we that short of news that nearly all the articles were irrelevant to the Campaign for Real Ale? As this newsletter is supposed to reach the parts that What's Brewing does not, relevant information can be reprinted. What's happened to the national Courage campaign? Our Mac's campaign? Prices survey of St Albans? We seem to have become the Campaign for obscure foreign bottled beer and English loos.

The content of the newsletter reflects two things; an attempt to appeal to as many people as possible (not everyone wants to read a lot of heavy campaigning information), and also what actually gets written and submitted to me. In the first instance I would be more than happy to hear from readers as to what they would like to see in the newsletter. In the second, if anyone wants to produce articles and features about individual campaigns then I'll be happy to include them. I have no intention of writing every word in the newsletter. Not only would it make a lot of work for me, it would, more importantly, produce a very boring publication which reflected my views, and not those of the local CAMRA membership.

As for the items which you mentioned, little or nothing has happened in these campaigns which is worthy of mention. If, however, anyone would like to produce a short piece of any of them I'll happily include it in a future newsletter. I look forward to the next offering from Croxley Green. — Ed.

## CAMRA'S FIRST TEN

CAMRA's first ten years is to be celebrated in July with a charity fund-raising week of events in and around its "home" City, St Albans. Running from the 5th to the 11th attractions will include a dartstournament, draws and raffles, pub crawls, a fancy dress drink-a-pub-dry evening, a real ale disco, a folk evening, a barbecue, a beer festival and lots more. It's hoped that as many of the City's real ale pubs as possible will take part by putting up teams, staging events and helping to raise funds. The organisers are also looking to brewers and local businesses to sponsor prizes and provide financial support so that as much of the money raised as possible can go to the charities chosen.

Other local organisations are being approached and already the local Licensed Victuallers Association has expressed an interest since it is their 100th anniversary this year.

The emphasis of the week is to be on fun and fund-raising for charity. If anyone is interested in taking part, has any ideas for events or would like more information, they should contact the overall organiser Steve Bury, on Radlett 3106 (home number). Steve is particularly interested in hearing from local clubs, societies, pubs and businesses with ideas, offers of sponsorship or whatever.

## STICK TO MILK, KIDS

A health warning sticker could soon be necessary for Greene King Abbot and Ruddles County — "not suitable for nursing mothers".

The latest issue of the British Medical Journal carries a report from a doctor in Buntingford, East Herts, about a mother in his care whose breast-fed baby started losing weight and becoming dehydrated when she came out of hospital.

The mother and baby went back into hospital for tests, and the young 'un began to thrive again. But when they both went home, the troubles returned.

It turned out that the mother and her husband were fans of real ale, particularly Abbot and County, and when they went down the local pub, that's what Mum drank. However, in hospital no beer was available. As soon as the mother cut out drinking real ale, her baby's problems disappeared.

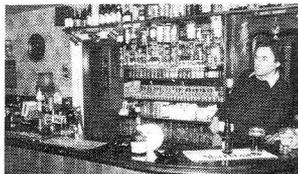
Our medical correspondent suggests that it was the amount of alcohol in the beers that gave trouble, rather than the fact that they were real, and he believes that strong keg beer would have the same effect, with an additional problem for the baby — wind.

But the story does suggest a suitable advertising slogan for Ruddles and Greene King — "The beers that really do reach the part other beers don't."

M.C.

## THE WINDSOR CASTLE High Oak Road, Ware

WARE  
4505  
IF YOU CAN'T  
FIND US RING  
FOR  
DIRECTIONS



A FRIENDLY LITTLE LOCAL

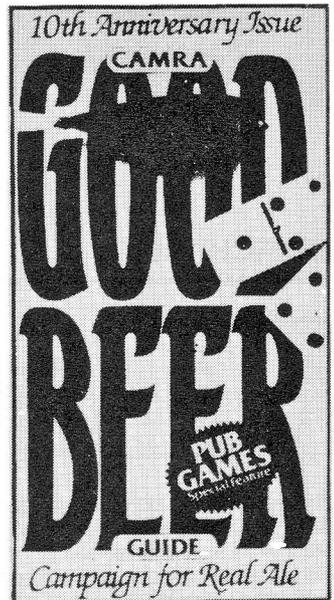
# BOOKS

Three new books have recently appeared which should be of interest to all pub users. Two are published by CAMRA, the third by the Egon Ronay organisation.

## Good Beer Guide 1981

This year's 10th Anniversary issue of the Good Beer Guide packs in over 6000 of the very best pubs in the country selling traditional draught beer. In addition to the entries, the details of how real beer is made and the excellent full colour map section there is an interesting and informative section on pub games written by Timothy Finn, author of Pub Games of England.

The GBG is a must for all travellers and holiday makers pointing out the best beer and the best pubs, wherever you are. It's available from your local CAMRA branch, some local pubs or from CAMRA head office at £3.50 (£3 to members) including postage and packing. Orders should be sent to CAMRA (GBG Sales), 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts.



## Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire



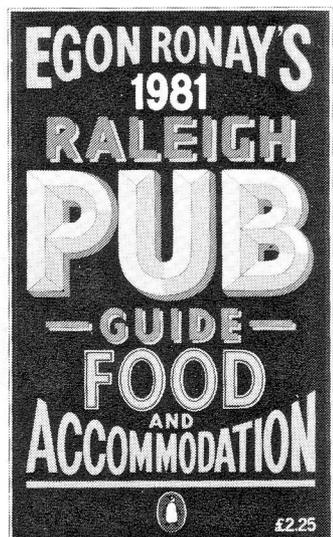
## Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire

The sixth edition of Hertfordshire's own guide to real beer is bigger, and more informative than ever. Over 80 pages and 500 pubs selling traditional draught beer plus maps, photographs and brewing histories. All that for 60 pence — nowadays almost the price of a pint (cheaper than a pint of lager!). Nearly all pubs have comments and a list of facilities (games, meals, garden, etc.) enabling the traveller or local to choose the sort of pub they want.

Copies of the guide can be obtained from local bookshops or real ale pubs or from your local branch representative by sending 60 pence plus a stamped, addressed 9" x 5" envelope (p stamp) for each copy. Please allow more postage and a larger envelope for multiple copies as this saves a lot of aggro and expense for the branches.

Egon Ronay's Raleigh Pub Guide aims to direct the reader to pubs where excellent quality food can be found. In addition details of accommodation, opening times and a list of beers available is given for each entry. Real Ale is mentioned although after inspecting several known pubs this is not always to be relied upon. Both the Silver Cup in Harpenden and the Robin Hood, Enfield are both fiz pubs but each has Real Ale indicated. In addition no mention is given in the preface as to what the guide means by Real Ale — obviously their definition is open to question.

With guides such as these having a cover price of £2.25 and packed with advertising (there's even a 25 page Talbot pub crawl supplement) the Good Beer Guide always seems good value — you don't pay for any unnecessary extras (which, in theory at least, should keep the price down). Some of the above may not worry everyone who buys the guide, however, as its use is mainly to direct one to pubs selling good food. A brief survey of known pubs suggests that it does that quite adequately — just don't be certain you'll find real ale just because it says so.



## QUICK ONES

### ANOTHER 10th ANNIVERSARY

Tuesday 10th March sees the tenth anniversary of the arrival of Bill and Marie Sawkins at the Bell, Therfield. They were to prove particularly helpful in the early days of the North Herts Branch. The Sawkins would be pleased to see all old and new friends at the celebrations to be held on the evening of 10th March.



### BRANCH CHALLENGE

Hertfordshire South Branch would like to re-issue their challenge to any pub or club team to play bar billiards, skittles, dominoes, crib, indoor hang-gliding – you name it. Interested parties should contact Nigel Meadows on Potters Bar 50498.



### CRICKETERS MAKE IT FOUR

A **village pub** has once again carried off the title of North Herts Pub of the Year, awarded by the local CAMRA branch.

The winner for 1980 is the Cricketers at Ickleford, a former Whitbread pub which opened as a free house three years ago.

The pub is run by Gloria Robinson and her husband Frank, whose parents used to keep the Cricketers back when it was run by Green's of Luton. Indeed, the Cricketers has been in Frank's family for more than 150 years, a record which few pubs in the country can match.

Originally the pub had no bar, and all the beer had to be fetched in to customers from out the back. It also had a small general stores attached. When the Robinsons brought the pub the stores was turned into a bar, and the interior was done up in a way which still managed to retain the atmosphere of a comfortable village hostelry.

A celebratory social was held at the Cricketers on Wednesday February 25 when a CAMRA mirror was presented to the Robinsons by branch chairman Martyn Cornell.

Other winners of the title are the Cabinet at Reed, in 1977, the Windmill at Charlton and the Plough at Ley Green.

M.C.

**FOR SALE:** 270 original 1920's negatives of Benskins pubs. Ring Tom Rodwell (0442-832190) or write to 110 Flaunden, near Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

## 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.

Why not try our good value Saturday lunches?  
Steak and Chips £1  
Home-made Cottage Pie 70p  
Home-made Cheese and Onion Pie 50p

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

## THE CORNELL COLUMN

by Martyn Cornell

### Whitbread put a freeze of frees

The enormous success of pubs in Hertfordshire that were sold off by brewery giant Whitbread, and re-opened as real ale free houses, has not gone unnoticed at the company's Luton headquarters.

Many of the best-known free houses in the county, such as the Goat in St Albans, the Highlander in Hitchin, the Countryman at Chipping and the Inn on the Green at Datchworth, were disposed of by Whitbread, who apparently thought the pubs were uneconomic.

Now the enormous popularity of the real ale policies pursued by the pubs' new owners has meant a change in Whitbread's own policies. More real ale in local Whitbread pubs? No – no more pubs to be sold off in future with a licence attached. A case of, if we can't make a pub pay, we'll make sure nobody else can, either.

However, if Whitbread are jealous of the success of the free houses, as they apparently are, they have the answer in their own organisation.

The company owns nine breweries from Durham to Portsmouth that brew real ale. There is nothing at all to prevent it running "Whitbread free houses" in its own pubs, selling such beers as Castle Eden ale, Pompey Royal, Chester's Best Bitter from Manchester, Queen's Ale from Sheffield, or any of its other real beers – which would give a range and diversity any ordinary free house would find hard to match. They've started doing this in some other parts of the country then why not around here?

### Not originally Original at all

Talking of Whitbread, a little man who will be familiar to older drinkers has made a surprising come-back, although a long way from his birthplace.

Whitbread's subsidiary in Cheltenham is now brewing a cask-conditioned beer called Flower's Original, which is the name of a brew once produced by Flower's brewery at Stratford-upon-Avon.

However, the trademark appearing on beer mats and pump clips for the "new" Original is not the old Flower's Shakespeare, but the brewer-and-barrel figure of J.W. Green's of Luton, who once owned over 400 pubs in Hertfordshire.

When Green's took over Flower's and changed its name to that of the Stratford company, Flower's original Original became available in this part of the world too. How about reviving that tradition, Whitbread?



### Get your teeth into it

Hidden among the odd spoofs in the new Herts beer guide – I hear that Herts North CAMRA branch will be holding a meeting at the Lord Pelham, Watton, on April 1 – is one rather nice typographical error.

A missing letter t in the beer descriptions at the back of the guide means that Paine's EG is listed as "a biter".

However, since EG has an OG of 1047, and a fairly small number of pints will put you well under the table, perhaps that isn't such a bad description after all.

It must have been the same gremlin that had me describing Taylor Walker Mainline in last month's newsletter as a "dark milk", instead of dark mild.

### Pulling a Fast One

The Common Market gets blamed for a lot of things, but using it as an excuse for not supplying a pub with real ale seems to be a new one.

However, if the landlord of a Hertfordshire pub supplied by Greene King is to be believed, one of the brewery's area managers is going around inventing spurious legislation in an attempt to keep fizzy beer going.

When the landlord asked if he could have a set of handpumps for his pub, the area manager in question supposedly replied: "It's not worth it – when the new Common Market rules come in, handpumps are going to be outlawed."

Somebody, somewhere, is having someone on.

## PUB NEWS

The **Prince of Wales**, Hertingfordbury, has recently been sold by brewers Ind Coope to become a free house. Pat and Dorothy Bailey moved in recently and installed a handpump to serve Benskins bitter. Burton Ale, KK and Adnams bitter will probably follow soon. Another welcome sign is that Dorothy's lunches and evening bar snacks feature real chips – actually made from potatoes! Alterations are planned, the pub remaining as two bars but with improved toilet facilities and an enlarged saloon. Further north the **White Horse** Weston has dropped Greene King Abbot Ale from its range.

The **Cock**, Stocking Pelham, almost on the Essex Border, now has a pair of pumps delivering Ind Coope bitter and KK mild, as well as Burton Ale on gravity.

In the Herts-Essex Borders branch area a number of recent changes to the current guide: the **Roman Urn**, Cheshunt has Ind Coope bitter on handpump; the **Britannia**, Waltham Cross has Ind Coope bitter and Burton Ale; the **Old Bull's Head** and the **Bricklayers Arms**, Bishop's Stortford, and the **Fish and Eels**, Dobb's Weir, are all selling handpumped Benskins bitter. In Essex, the **Spotted Dog**, Epping is selling Wethered's bitter on handpump and a pint of Courage best can be obtained in a likewise manner at the **Phoenix**, Harlow.

The **Harrow**, Kinsbourne Green, after much renovation work is now selling handpumped Wethered's bitter.

The **Waggon and Horses**, Great Amwell, mentioned in last month's newsletter as selling Ind Coope bitter, is, in fact, selling Benskins.

In the north of the county the **Motte and Bailey**, Pirton has replaced its Abbot Ale with Everards Old Original.

The **Three Horseshoes**, Letchworth, has added Bass and Crown to its range of real ale.

In Shenley, the **White Horse** is selling Benskins. Down the road, in Potters Bar, Watneys have moved into **Wyllotts Manor** in Darkes Lane. The future of any real ale here is uncertain.

The **Joseph Benskin** in Watford is up for sale. Sam Smiths, Fullers, Chef & Brewer and Whitbread are reportedly interested, although the plan is to convert this Benskins outlet into a shoe shop. No jokes about IC-Benskins putting their foot in it please. In the same area, both the **White Hart**, Bushey High Street, and the **Queens Arms**, Sparrow's Hearne, Bushey, are pumping up Benskins bitter. The **King Stag**, Bournhall Road is reportedly serving its Truman's Tap on a proper handpump as opposed to the silly DCL bicycle pump used in many Watney and Trumans houses.

**Gosling Stadium Sports Centre**, Welwyn Garden is selling its Tap bitter on a proper handpump.

Recently bought from Ind Coope, Fullers will be opening the **Boat**, on the Grand Union Canal in the late summer. Almost certainly this pub will sell real beer if Fullers follow their usual practice.

Two other outlets for real Truman's Tap are the **Hit or Miss**, Lower High Street, Watford and the **Pump House Art Centre** just around the corner in Local Government Road. The Centre is open free to the public.

The **Rising Sun**, Hammond Street, near Cheshunt, is selling Ind Coope Burton Ale and bitter by handpump. Visitors to the Harlow area might like to know that the **Sun and Whalebone** in Potter Street now has handpumps for Courage Best and Directors bitters. The pub sells a good range of food and the whole interior has been refurbished with a nice log fire and separate "restaurant" area. The licensees formerly had the Railway in Sawbridgeworth. You can find the Sun on the old London Road near its junction with the new road (A414) at the extreme south end of Harlow, near the M11 interchange.

The **New River Arms**, Turnford, is a new Ind Coope bitter outlet. Just over into Essex the **Sun** at Broadley Common is doing handpumped Ind Coope as well. Just down the road the **Black Swan** has stopped doing its gravity Ind Coope and is now all-fizz. The **Spotted Dog**, Epping is a new Wethered's bitter pub, while the **Fox and Hounds**, Hatfield Heath now has handpumped Benskins, making the village 100% real, with all four pubs selling different brewers' ales.

For only the fourth time since it was built in 1911, a new landlord has come to the **Raven** at Hexton. Derek Jones took over at the end of January from Dennis Whittaker, who has retired to the Post Office a few doors away, having been at the pub for over 20 years. Members (and guests) can meet Mr Jones at the Herts North branch social there on April 5th and sample the excellent Wethered's bitter.

## IN MEMORIAM

Local CAMRA members were saddened by the news of the death of Sid Waller, landlord of the **Victoria**, Hitchin. Although a top pressure house, Sid gave great support to the local branch's Greene King XX campaign a couple of years ago. CAMRA sends its condolences to his family.

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

#### Monday March 9th

Darts practice at the Hope & Anchor, Welham Green 8.00pm (Courage)

#### Tuesday March 17th

BRANCH MEETING at the White Hart, North Mymms 8.00pm start (McMullens)

#### Friday - Sunday March 20th-22nd

Branch weekend trip – Fully booked.

#### Tuesday March 31st

Darts March v Bosch at the Tantivy, Watford 8.00pm (Benskins)

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday March 4th

Committee Meeting at the White Hart or Marquis of Lorne, Stevenage Old Town – All welcome (if you can find it!)

#### Wednesday March 11th

BRANCH MEETING at the Roebuck, Stevenage. A special raffle will be held, with prizes of rare "collector's item" bottles such as Gale's Old Basket Ale, North Country Humber Bridge Celebration, Hawthorne Brewery MG Anniversary and so on – proceeds to the Joe Goodwin Memorial Fund. 8.00pm (Freehouse)

#### Wednesday March 18th

Social at the Windmill, Charlton, 8.00pm (Wells)

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

#### Tuesday March 10th

BRANCH MEETING at the Phoenix, Harlow, 8.00pm (Courage)

#### Monday March 16th

Interbranch darts match versus N.W. Essex branch at the Green Man, Widford, 8.00pm (McMullens)

#### Monday March 23rd

Joint social with Enfield and Barnet Branch at the Welsh Harp, Waltham Abbey. 8.00pm start (McMullens).

## COMPETITION TIME

Congratulations Newsletter readers! There were over 30 entries for last month's competition – keep it up. Everyone realised that there were, in fact, *two* answers to the puzzle.

These were: *Twitbreads, Old Sludge, 1042, 60p*

*Rudleys, Gutter Ale, 1048, 54p*

*Drains, XXX, 1036, 40p*

*Grotneys, BHB or Prize Murk, 1054, 58p*

*Sling and Darns, Prize Murk or BHB, 1030, 42p*

Obviously a clue was missing, but where it went to I can't say. The winner was Mick Coe of Goffs Oak. His prize will be on its way shortly.

This month's competition is set by 'Anonymous of Hertford'. Below are 10 anagrams of well known beers listed in the GBG. First entry "out of the hat" by March 16th, with the correct beers will win a small prize.

- The anagrams:
1. BEST – FIND IT GREAT
  2. GRAIN LOO LID
  3. MOTOR ORANGES RANKLE
  4. DR. LEO IN POND
  5. EGG HIT LAD – HIM
  6. BEERY WORT DRIBLET
  7. I'D PURE CELLO
  8. DIM BAR BORE
  9. TEESDALE CLEAN
  10. NEW RAM WRITER

## BRANCH CONTACTS

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Herts-Essex Borders Branch Terry Smith ☎ Epping 73677

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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