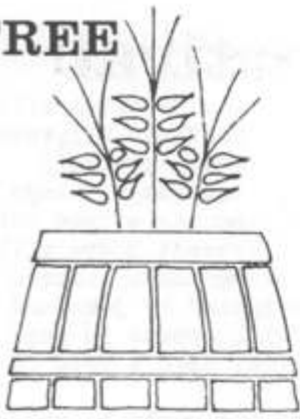


FREE



# The Campaign For Real Ale HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

May 1978 • Number 4

## Whitbread For Choice?

Over the last 20 years or so, Whitbread possibly more than any other brewery company has been renowned for its skill in buying up small local breweries, up and down the country, phasing out the well-loved local beers to replace them with the fizzy Tankard and Heineken (usually more expensive than the local beers which were replaced), and selling the old breweries, at a nice profit, for property development. They're still doing it - their own historic City of London brewery at Chiswell Street, which was closed in 1976, has recently been sold for £40 million for 'office development'. No doubt a similar fate is in store for the former Rhymney and Dutton's breweries, in South Wales and Blackburn, both of which Whitbread are to close this year. A less well known part of Whitbread's property dealing activities has been their selling of pubs. These are the pubs which apparently have not been showing enough profit - yet strangely, there are some people who still feel that a living can be made from running a pub and selling good ale.

### Free Houses and Real Ale

In the area of the Hertfordshire North branch of CAMRA alone, ten ex-Whitbread pubs are now Free Houses (there are more in South Herts) and perhaps it is not coincidental that no less than eight of these are apparently prospering from the sale of real ale. Among these are such popular haunts as The Fox and Duck at Therfield, Inn on the Green at Datchworth, Countryman at Chipping, Coach and Horses at Royston, Highlander at Hitchin and, most recently, Chaise and Pair at Barkway. Indeed, those six pubs between them are selling 13 real ales from nine different breweries - none of which is Whitbread.

### Failing to Meet Demand

Perhaps those in charge at Whitbread might care to ponder on these points and ask themselves:-

- 1) What is the future in closing down breweries and replacing local beers with gassy keg products which people are increasingly less willing to drink? and
- 2) Because demand for these chemical mixtures is decreasing, what is the ultimate future in Whitbread selling off their... (contd page 2)

## Hattersley's Plans

The Prices Commission is to draw up a brewers' charter over the next six months with the aim of giving Britain's pub-users a better deal. More pub swaps may be on the way to break up monopolies and the brewers have agreed to consider letting landlords sell rival brands of draught beer - something CAMRA has been striving for.

Mr Hattersley, Prices Secretary, is also to examine 'with particular care' any further proposals for mergers between brewers (although this doesn't seem to include such people as Ellerman Lines and Northern Foods, two companies recently involved in take-over bids for independent breweries). All in all it's good news for British beer drinkers - now we must see how many of these plans are implemented - in the past we have seen how the big six tend to stick together at times like these, under the threat of Government action, and how often a watered down solution satisfies the Commission. However, let's be optimistic.

### BEER PRICES PEGGED

Further good news - Britain's breweries have agreed to peg beer prices until the end of 1978.



# Local Guide

The Hertfordshire guide to real ale is selling well after the press launch last month which was held at The Crown in St. Albans, with over 3000 copies already sold. The 56 page guide lists all known real ale outlets in the county and includes pub illustrations, town maps and a fold out map of Hertfordshire and many articles - on your local brewers, CAMRA, real ale etc. Price 30 pence. The guide is now available in many of the county's pubs and bookshops or from Dave Burns, 11 Turpins Chase, Oaklands, Welwyn (send a 9" X 5" SAE and a 30p cheque/postal order made out to CAMRA Hertfordshire South branch). There are quite a few additions and changes already:

**Bishop's Stortford:** The Baker's Dozen - add

Courage Director's and Everard's Tiger Bitter.

**Datchworth:** The Inn on the Green - add Everard's Tiger Bitter; delete Theakston's.

**Harpenden:** The George - now sells Ind Coope Burton Ale and Bitter on handpumps.

**Hatfield:** The Wrestlers - now sells Ind Coope Burton Ale and Bitter on handpumps.

**Hertford:** The Duncombe Arms now has Greene King Abbot Ale on gravity.

**Potters Crouch:** The Holly Bush now has Ind Coope Burton Ale on handpump.

**Potters Bar:** Willyotts Manor - add Ruddle's County and McMullen's Country Bitter.

**St. Albans:** The Acorn now has Ind Coope Bitter on handpumps.

**Old Hall Green:** The Bayhorse - add Ruddle's County (handpump). Director's now on gravity.

**Therfield:** The Fox and Duck - add Everard's Tiger

**Tyttenhanger:** The Barley Mow now has 12 handpumps. Latest addition is Everard's Old Original. Mac's draught beers have been withdrawn. GreeneKing KK Light Mild replaces the Mac's AK. John Blackwell, who will be helping us with the Herts Beer Festival once again by supplying the license and ordering beer, is hoping, in late June, to run another 'all the beers from one brewery' weekend.

**Watton-at-Stone** The Waggon and Horses - add Ind Coope Bitter on handpump.

## A SWAN TO PROTECT

Ind Coope are the freeholder of The Swan, Park Road, Bushey and the two adjacent cottages, nos. 21 and 23 for which they have applied to Herts-mere Council for outline planning permission. Just what this application involves is not clear. The tenants of the pub have been assured that there are no immediate plans for any extension apart from inside toilets (later this year) and the tenants of the two cottages will not be evicted. However, this view is not supported by other residents and customers of the pub. They have told me that the application is for the demolishing of the pub, the two cottages and rebuilding of a new pub and car park. Park Road has only limited access.

IC architect, Mr R.S. Gillman said that one of the cottages had become vacant and that their application is made with the view to what would be the Council's attitude towards redevelopment of the whole site before deciding on what to do with the cottage. This was for future planning and they had no immediate plans for any major changes to the pub. He agreed that the pub as it stands is well worth keeping (it's been in every edition of the Herts Guide!) and suits local needs.

We, in CAMRA, would like to point out that Swans are protected birds!

by Jim Axford.

# '78 Beer Festival

This year's Hertfordshire Beer Festival will be going ahead as planned at Hatfield Polytechnic on Friday 30 June and Saturday 1st July (both lunchtime and evening sessions). Things are still very much in the planning stages but it is hoped that about 25 different beers will be available, real cider, ploughman's lunches with entertainment being supplied by jazz and folk groups. Full details will appear in next month's Newsletter. Meanwhile, make a note in your diary.

If you are a CAMRA member and would be prepared to help staff the festival (even if only for a couple of hours) please contact Adrian Green, 104 Selborne Road, London, N14. (a.s.a.p)

## Whitbread

(from Page 1)...tied houses, to enable their competitors to gain a larger slice of the market by brewing better beers?

Might we suggest that the obvious answer is that Whitbread should stop playing property developers and concentrate on brewing good beer. Yes, all of four out of the 53 Whitbread pubs in North Herts sell good beer, transported specially (and no doubt expensively) all the way from Marlow. Whitbread has done local beer drinkers a great service by selling a number of their pubs to the free trade and thus allowing the choice of beers to increase; they could well do local drinkers and indeed their own licensees even more of a service by brewing once again decent local beers, which could be easily available and sold at a competitive price.

by Peter Lerner

## Visit to Ridley and Sons

Wednesday, 21 June is the date of the next Herts South branch brewery visit - to Ridley's of Hartford End, near Chelmsford, Essex. This will be a mini-bus visit (which will probably involve a few incidentals on the way!) for which details are available from Tony Burns, Tel: Welwyn 7805 (Home).

## Theakston Withdrawal

If you've noticed a certain lack of Theakston's in Hertfordshire recently this is because they have stopped supplying local distributors Scotgrange of Shefford. According to Mr Freer of Scotgrange, Theakston's will no longer supply beer in nine gallon casks and, anyhow, they are trying to expand in Yorkshire which means curtailing some of their activities in the South. It seems that Theakston's will still be delivering to London, where distributors are rumoured to be charging a substantial amount more for the beer.

## MORE REAL CIDER

The Rose and Crown, St. Michaels, St. Albans is soon to introduce real draught cider, so becoming only the third outlet in the whole of the county along with The Baker's Dozen, Bishop's Stortford and West Herts Sports and Social Club in Watford. The Rose and Crown sells all three Ind Coope cask-conditioned beers on handpumps: KK Light Mild, Bitter and Burton Ale.

## Stop Press

Herts South branch: Darts Match at The Abbot John, Wheathampstead (Ind Coope) 8pm. v the pub



# Ickleford Cheer

Last summer when Hilda and Horace Robinson, tenants of the Cricketers, Ickleford, decided to retire, a feeling of gloom spread throughout the village. Whitbread, who owned the pub, had indicated that as soon as the property was vacated it would be placed on the open market. Since 1851, when the Cricketers was described as an alehouse with grocery shop alongside, the beer then being supplied by the Baldock brewer Oliver Steed, the pub has remained within the same family. For many in the village, young and old alike, it had become almost a second home. Elsie Bygrave, who for a great many years had helped her sister Hilda to run the pub proudly told me "Before Whitbread we had Flowers, before that we had Green of Luton and prior to that Samuel Lucas of Hitchin and I've served 'em all"

## Petition Signed

The locals decided that to try and save their pub and ensure that it remained in the family, they must act immediately. A petition was drawn up, signed by almost everyone in the village and duly presented. For once local opinion was respected. The pub was sold to Frank and Gloria Robinson, son and daughter in law of the outgoing tenants.

## Re-opened

The Cricketers re-opened as a Free House on Sunday 16th April. I visited the Cricketers during that evening and the whole village seemed to be in attendance; everyone present seemed pleased with the full scale alterations which had taken place during the winter months - many were insisting that the atmosphere had certainly remained intact.

## Paine's

Paine's of St. Neots are supplying the real ale, having installed handpumps to serve EG and XXX Bitter, certainly a welcome addition to these parts and judging by the large amounts being poured down many a thirsty throat that evening, a firm favourite already. So, good luck to Frank and Gloria and what a pleasure it is to hear of a local success story. by Denis Robertson

# London Bitter

Watney's new cask-conditioned bitter, named London Bitter, now being sold alongside Fined Bitter in many of Watney's houses has yet to make its appearance in Hertfordshire but will no doubt arrive shortly. Unfortunately, London Bitter, like Fined Bitter is being served in pubs by the air pressure system (also used by Truman's for their Tap Bitter) which local CAMRA branches do not find acceptable. We must hope that those Watney houses currently using electric pumps for Fined do not succumb to using these DCL air pressure handpumps.

# St. Albans Morris

If you are interested in Morris Dancing as well as real beer, you can see the St. Albans Morris Men at the following real ale pubs in the coming weeks (times in brackets):

Mon 22 May (8.15) Bricklayers Arms, Hogspit Bottom (9.15) Swan, Leyhill Common

Mon 12 Jun (9.15) Mops and Brooms, Borehamwood

Mon 19 Jun (8.15) Woodman, Wildhill.



# Running Rings

Sunday 25th April saw Herts South branch represented by two super-fit members for CAMRA's 'Run Rings Round Courage' protest and fund-raiser. The intention was to draw public attention to the demise of the Reading brewery as a result of the building of the multi-million pound monstrosity at Worton Grange (Off the A4) and the possible closure of Courage's breweries at London, Bristol and Plymouth. Worton Grange will produce no real ale.

## Nullified

Our devout pre-run training was nullified by a couple of pints of Brakspear's and the starting point - The Cross Keys, a Morland's pub not 200 yards from the brewery. The summers-day weather was more suited to drinking (Morland's Mild had sold out by 1pm) than running but an excellent turnout of roughly 100 gathered at the start shortly after closing time. Locals gawped at the motley collection, (which included a CAMRA fanatic dressed as the Courage Cockerel complete with beak and clawed feet) which held high banners attracting them to past, present and future Courage activities - the most important being Worton Grange.

## Taking its Toll

At 2.30 we were off! and it soon became apparent that the fully clad 'cock' would find the going a little tough. By 4pm, halfway in the scheduled three-hour event, he was not the only one. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile circuit began to take its toll of the field, with the enthusiasm of early laps being replaced by a more sedate (walking!) pace as the pavement seemed to become harder. A notable exception was No.99, the black and white mongrel. Branch support remained unceasing but by 5.15 the blisters and aching limbs proved too much for us both as we slumped to the pavement at the check point. We spent the remaining minutes watching the last brave runners stubbornly carry on - including the Macclesfield lad who completed an incredible 40+ laps.

## 37-Up

At the end of the day, organiser Dave McKerchar expressed his disappointment in the lack of TV and press coverage but with sponsorship takings touching £1000 described the event as a good success and hoped the cash could be used by HQ for national press advertising for the Campaign. However, we had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon which had seen a high degree of comradeship and fun and after completing 37 laps between us our only regret was the two hour wait for opening time.

by Nick Page & Val Sandy  
Congratulations to both and also to Bob White of Herts. North branch who completed fifteen energy-sapping laps.

# SWAPS IN MAY

It looks like the first 'Pub Swap' changes will be taking place later this month. The Hope and Anchor at Welham Green is expecting to change from Ind Coope to Courage on 24 May and is also expecting all three Courage cask-conditioned beers: Directors Bitter, Best Bitter and Dark Mild (which is great news!). Other pubs due to switch will no doubt be following shortly.



# Mild Month

Many of you will no doubt have read our separate mild fact-sheet and perhaps even come along to one of the many socials organised this month or at least heard of the 'Make May a Mild Month' campaign organised this month by CAMRA. Mild is in danger! There is a real possibility that cask conditioned dark mild could disappear altogether from Hertfordshire with Greene King brandishing an axe over their excellent XX dark mild, which if chopped, will leave only two or three dark mild outlets in the whole of the county! Mac's, of course, brew a very popular light mild which is safe from extinction but Ind Coope's KK light mild is also threatened. Mild can be and usually is an excellent tasty and cheap drink - certainly worth preserving. If the big brewers will not produce (Watney's, Charrington's, Whitbread) or advertise (Ind Coope and Greene King) real mild for and in Hertfordshire, it is up to us to show them that a demand exists. Drink Real Mild and show the big brewers that they should think again.

## BELHAVEN FOR LONDON



Those wanting to taste Belhaven's beers would up to now have had to travel to Scotland for the privilege. Now three pubs in London are selling their beer: The Sun, Lambs Conduit Street; The Wine Lodge, Fenchurch Street and The Nag's Head in Hampstead. As one would expect for a beer that has come so far, it is quite expensive but is worth a try next time you are down in the smoke.

## A LITTLE KINDNESS!

It's amazing what flicking through a dictionary can reveal; for instance:

Hertfordshire kindness: Drinking to the person who immediately drank to one. Sounds a bit like Princess Anne but a custom well worth reviving, or perhaps you've been doing it all along without knowing!

Or you could try asking your landlord for a 'Pottle' of his best ale. Apart from being a small fruit basket for strawberries it is also the liquid measure of four pints. BOB NORRISH.



## Membership

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of beer and pubs throughout the country. Why not join and help us improve the lot of Britain's drinkers. For your £4 subscription you will receive a copy of the monthly 'What's Brewing', CAMRA's newspaper on what is going on in the world of beer.

### HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

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

Name . . . . .  
Address . . . . .  
Signature . . . . . Date . . . . .

Please send to: The Membership Secretary, The Campaign for Real Ale, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 3BW.

# What's On

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

- May 16 May Branch Meeting  
The Garibaldi. Albert Street, St. Albans. (Ind Coope) 8pm. The meeting will include a talk from Roger Protz, editor of 'What's Brewing' and The Good Beer Guide and will also feature an auction of brewery paraphernalia.
- May 20 A Saturday afternoon brewery visit to Hook Norton and evening in Oxford with the West Herts Pilgrims. Further details from Jim Axford, 117 Queens Road, Watford.
- May 23 Mild Social at The Woodman, Chapmore End (Greene King) 8pm. The only pub in Hertfordshire to sell both Greene King XX and KK Mild.
- May 30 Mild Social at The Old Rose and Crown, Watton Road, Ware (McMullen) 8pm.
- Jun 20 June Branch Meeting  
The Red Lion, Watling Street, Radlett. (Greene King and Bass) 8pm. National Executive member, Chris Bruton, will be giving a talk at the meeting.

## HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

- May 17 Mild Social at The Plough, Ley Green. (Greene King) 8pm.
- May 20 Mild Social at The Star, Furneux Pelham. (Rayment's) 8pm.
- May 21 Sunday lunchtime Mild Social at The Sailor Boy, Woolgrove Road, Walsworth. (Wethered's). This is the weekend of the Walsworth Festival.
- May 24 Mild Social at The George IV, London Rd, Baldock (On A6141)(Greene King) 8pm.
- Jun 14 June Branch Meeting  
The Old Bull Hotel, High Street, Royston (Charrington's IPA and Bass) 8pm.
- Jun 21 Social at The Plough, Wallington, near Baldock. (Greene King) 8pm.

## HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

- May 22 Mild Social at The Black Horse, White Roding (Ridley's) 8pm.
- Jun 10 June Branch Meeting  
The Three Horseshoes, Spellbrook, (Greene King and Rayment's) which now has a new licensee. AK will be available in the meeting room. 8pm.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A CAMRA MEMBER TO COME TO ANY OF THE ABOVE EVENTS - WE ARE PLEASED TO SEE NEW FACES, SO WHY NOT COME ALONG?

## Newsletter

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Herts South, Herts North and Herts/Essex Borders branches of CAMRA. Editor: Les Middlewood, 81a Linden Way, Southgate, London, N14.

### Branch Contacts:

- Herts North: Denis Robertson,  
Tel: Stevenage 782779 (Home)
- Herts South: Dave Burns,  
Tel: Welwyn 7805 (Home)
- Herts/Essex: Rob Candlish,  
Tel: Waltham Cross 32045 (Home)

The far west of the county is covered by Mid-Chilterns branch who produce their own monthly newsletter which is available from Tim Amsden, Mermaid Cottage, Hawridge Common, Chesham.