

FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale

HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1981

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UNDOING THE TIE?

Proposals have been made by the EEC which could herald a change in the tied house system operating in this country.

The preliminary proposals, if brought into operation, would end all ties on wine, spirits and bottled beer. No mention has been made of draught beers despite CAMRA's suggestion that tied house licencees should be allowed to stock another draught beer of their own choice. This, more than the EEC's proposals, would do more for the customer to help to reduce many of the monopolies which already exist around the country.

The EEC is now awaiting the reactions of any interested bodies such as CAMRA, the Licensed Victuallers Association, the Brewers Society and Government. Only then will it make its final decision. Needless to say CAMRA will be making its point loud and clear: that until some method of improving the range of draught beers in pubs is introduced then the real burden of the tied house system – lack of choice and local monopolies – will still remain.

COMMENTING on a year of record takings for the tourist industry, despite a fall in the number of visitors to Britain, Sir Henry Marking, Chairman of the British Tourist Authority, made a number of suggestions that would help this – one of our most lucrative 'exports'. One of these was to change our ridiculous licensing laws which foreigners, he said, found "niggling" and unnecessary. And so say all of us!

QUICK ONES

A call to arms

Hertfordshire's first home-brew pub since the turn of the century is now brewing regularly at the Bridgewater Arms in Little Gaddesden – and boss Bill Woods has declared himself "overwhelmed" by the demand.

The brewery at the pub, using equipment supplied by the Mendip brewery near Bristol and expertise from a redundant Whitbread Luton brewer, started turning out Bridgewater Best, with an OG of 1035 and a price of 49p per pint, and Earl's bitter, OG 1042, 60p per pint, early last month. The recipe has been amended slightly as regulars at the ex-Trust House Forte free house express their opinion, but sales are doing very well indeed.

Meanwhile, not too far away at Frithsden, the Alford Arms brewhouse alongside the Whitbread tied pub also launched its first brew last month. With an OG of 1036.4, and selling at 20p per pint (those were the days!), not surprisingly the new beer sold out very quickly. However, the Alford is currently closed until October 12 for extensions and alterations.

All the same, the experiment – which is said to have cost £40,000 so far – bodes well for Whitbread's surprise entry into the home brew pub scene. The brewhouse at the Alford Arms, which uses two converted cellar tanks as fermenting vessels, a malt extract mash and a special bottom-fermenting beer yeast, is amazingly clean and clinical – quality control is probably better than many big brewers could manage. If the experiment works, so it is said, the Alford Arms could prove to be only the first of many Whitbread own-brew pubs.

A first for Herts

The first ever beer festival with ales from five different Hertfordshire breweries is being held in Letchworth on Friday October 16 and Saturday October 17.

The organisers, North Herts CAMRA branch, have ordered beer from Rayments of Pelham and McMullens of Hertford, the county's two old-established brewers, the Victoria brewery, Ware, Hertfordshire's first new brewery for 90 years, and the county's two new home brewers, the Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesden and the Alford Arms, Frithsden.

Other beers ordered include Batemans, Jennings, Adnams – and "something interesting from the West Country", according to branch chairman Martyn Cornell.

The festival is taking place in the function hall behind the Three Horseshoes pub, Norton, Letchworth. Tickets cost £1.50, which includes a free pint of beer, entertainment will be on hand both nights, food is available, and tickets can be had from the Three Horseshoes itself, the Jug and Firkin off-licence in Alberts Street, Stevenage, Martyn Cornell on Stevenage 60675 or Martin Connelly on Hitchin 52907.

Song and ale

Real ale fans who also enjoy lively folk music may be interested in the Folk East Festival being organised by EFDSS in Hertford on Saturday, 24th October, when several folkie events will be taking

Continued on back page

DON'T MISS THE MINI BEER FESTIVAL BEING HELD AT THE THREE HORSESHOES IN NORTON ON 16th AND 17th OF THIS MONTH. SEE BRANCH DIARY FOR DETAILS.

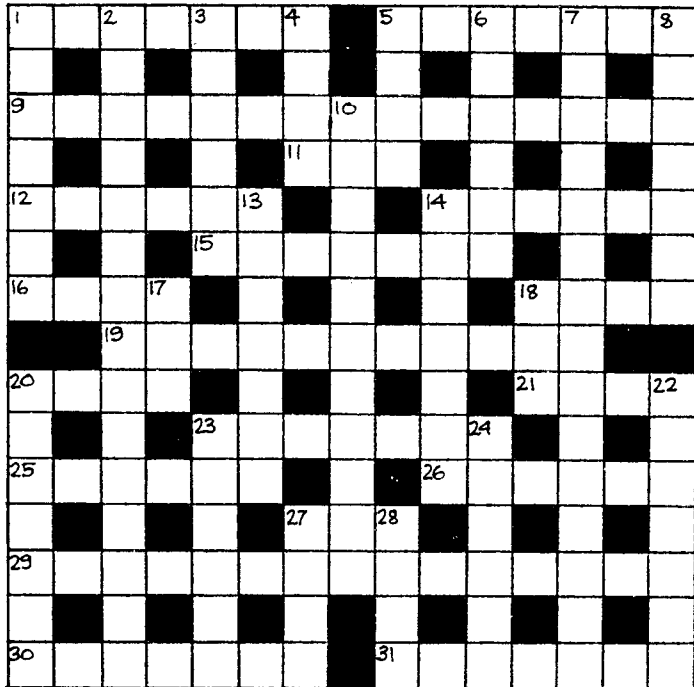
COMPETITION

Judging by the number of entries for last month's crossword either the clues were too difficult or everyone was on holiday! Our only entry was also correct so a copy of Capital Ale will soon be winging its way to Kevin Summons of Abbots Langley – who, incidentally, complained that it was too difficult. Let's hope more of you can manage this month's. The answers to the September crossword were:

Across: Victoria bitter, Ringwood, Scan, Leasways, Annal, Sue, Ore, Incidental music, Ode, April, Limericks, Pail, Timeworn, Shove Halfpenny.

Down: Verulamium, Cannon, Orwell, Isolating, Inlaw, Excesses, Atom, Avid, Excellency, Parochial, Rump, Cotleigh, Derm, Asleep, Reborn, Ensue.

A copy of Capital Ale again to the first correct solution opened on 19th October. Please mark entries COMPETITION.



Across

- 1 Cricketer's call back to Lincolnshire brewer (7)
- 5 Toper is drunk – that's the answer (7)
- 9 Our tart got fined, improperly going about her business (7,3,5)
- 11 Took part in session, half of best with one in (3)
- 12 Froth of Hartley's three quarters drunk (6)
- 14 Blessed are its perpetrators (6)
- 15 Mixing ale a sin? Not here in Avon (7)
- 16 Attendant loses his head – could be the Tap (4)
- 18 Success is never amiss (1,3)
- 19 I strain ale mash with nothing in it to make it economical (11)
- 20 Coventry, say – you'll see it in its outskirts (4)
- 21 Go off somewhat resourcefully (4)
- 23 Hampshire brewers giving nothing for one in dubious conditions (7)
- 25 Beginning of nuptials restrained by cost? Not for him (6)
- 26 Make casks from these broken vats and even bits of kegs (6)
- 27 Hedgehog has innards supplanted by a witch (3)
- 29 John Bull is rubbishy beer (word of Mr Ind) (6,2,7)
- 30 Lessen cereal portion's basic ingredient (7)
- 31 Extra payments make me against sitting in PSVs (7)

Down

- 1 One of many Guinness make use of, but not at Park Royal (7)
- 2 Good quality brew of Hutt's resins with unfermented liquor pitched
- 3 Would she offer assistance with men around? (6) in (15)
- 4 Local head often sang in a medley (4)
- 5 A couple of Ridley's, then Old Timer (no milder mixture) might
- 6 Irishman in a film (6) give trouble (4)
- 7 Usually, have best stout around ten? There's no need to (5,3,7)
- 8 Bar on fire: people inside leave after start of emergency (5,3,7)
- 10 She'd wrongly allow men in her cooler (6,5)
- 13 Cost includes a couple of Adnams and one light can (7)
- 14 They help avoid sickness, for example, drinking beer in a ship (3-4)
- 17 Flower girl might (3)
- 18 This is silly – Burton beer without a head (3)
- 20 Qualified message to collect Pale Ale caps (7)
- 22 Desires to change lives (7)
- 23 Shield observed protecting King Charles (6)
- 24 Bee's target is ants swarming around me ... (6)
- 27 ... and four are caught by that chap, their next target (4)
- 28 Tack taken by rugby authority in our country (4)

LETTERS

Not a letter to the Newsletter but one to the Morning Advertiser, the publicans' paper, which illustrates some of the problems that CAMRA has to deal with. Sadly, enough landlords are still ignorant (or dumb) enough to write letters like the one reprinted below. No doubt the author, a publican from Cheshire, has 'been in the trade for 30 years and knows it all backwards.' His offering, entitled "Is 'real' ale just a big con?," goes as follows:

SOMEONE has got to say it and it may as well be me. The word "real" as in "real ale" or in CAMRA was originally, through lack of knowledge, a bad choice of word or, alternatively, the biggest con perpetrated on the industry since Adam was a lad.

The "Encyclopaedia Britannica" states that "ale is a beverage made from the fermented infusion of malt usually flavoured with hops." CAMRA in its wisdom says that ale is not "real" unless it is cask conditioned, in a wooden cask and served through a spigot or some such antiquated piece of equipment.

The inference here, then, is that 84% of draught beers sold in UK is not "real", it is synthetic and we the purveyors of the said beer should undoubtedly be concerned about the Trade Descriptions Act.

Malt, liquor, sugar, yeast and hops. *Hardly a change in the basic ingredients for hundreds of years.* It is a beverage with an authenticated history of more than 4000 years and was well-known to the Assyrians and other ancient peoples. The method of production has been modernised through necessity, but the process is virtually unaltered. *The sealed metal cask is a great step forward, if for no other reason than consumer protection. Nothing goes back into a metal cask, and the consumer receives his beer as it left the brewery.*

Tapping, venting, fining, tilting and worst of all draining and filtering: come now gentlemen, contamination or at least upset beer can happen during any one of these operations. For consumer protection, the wooden (*sic*) cask against metal is no contest.

"Viewpoint" (August 20) tells us that the so-called "real" ale accounts for 16pc of total UK consumption. This could probably be cut in half, because most beer drinkers will accept a pint of bitter in good faith by any other name. It is tragic that some brewers have seen fit to pander to this very small minority section of the drinking public and I truly believe that CAMRA is a very small splash in a very big pond, and the ripples will soon die out.

The italics are mine and mark either total inaccuracies (CAMRA does accept beer in metal casks and even kegs can be tampered with) or completely fatuous statements (the ancient Assyrians – as though they mattered anyway – fermented maize, they didn't make beer). If the letter had appeared in the April 1st edition of the MA then to even print such a load of rubbish might have been understandable – consequently the publication itself must take part of the blame for affording it the space. Readers of this publication can sit back and laugh, or just marvel, at the ignorance of someone in the licensed trade. It gives an indication, though, of the sort of things that the Campaign is up against at times.

Old Bulls Head, Ware

GRAND OPENING OF "INN GAMES"

We are pleased to announce the opening of our Pub Games Shop immediately adjacent to the bars. Timothy Finn the country's leading exponent on Pub Games and indoor games, will be personally signing autographed copies of his book "Pub Games of England" **Saturday 10th October, 1981**

John and Tess

invite you to the

ROYAL OAK

Bushey

for the best in food and real ale
free house
01-950 2865

Hold that tiger

Two recent events, the decision by the Aylesbury Brewery Co to take Everards Tiger bitter in its pubs, and the run of frequently duff Benskins bitter this summer, could have some interesting consequences.

ABC is the semi-independent wing of Ind Coope which proved such a financial success, far out-performing the parent company, that it inspired the break-up of Ind Coope into other small semi-independent groups – Benskins, Taylor Walker and so on.

Historically ABC had always taken "outside" beers, namely draught Bass, into its pubs, even when it was wholly owned by Ind Coope. ABC now has its own Ind Coope Burton-brewed bitter, but that didn't stop it deciding, this year, to let its landlords take Everards Tiger if they wanted. By all accounts Benskins at Watford has exactly the same arrangement with Ind Coope as ABC does – in other words, if Benskins wanted to take in other brewers' draught beers, it could.

The Watford men are certainly worried about the poor Benskins bitter that the Romford brewery has been producing this summer, and they have been allowing some landlords to take Ind Coope bitter – brewed at Burton – instead of Benskins.

Rumours have been circulating – it was said that Romford had been warned if they didn't get it right, then production would be transferred to the old Ansells brewery in Birmingham. This canard can be firmly hit on the head – Ansells is now little more than a shell, with all the brewing equipment gone.

But Benskins boss Peter Bentley is supposed to have said when Benskins bitter was first launched that if Romford could not deliver consistently good beer – and its reputation has never been that good – then he could and would go elsewhere for draught beer for Benskins pubs.

It was reported in these columns last month that some landlords have been pouring Benskins down the drain these last few months because it would not clear – could this mean that hundreds of pubs from Watford to Hitchin will soon be offering a Tiger in the Benskins Redskins tankards?

Victorian Baldock

A little bit of Baldock lives on in every pint of Victoria bitter, West Hertfordshire's newest brew.

The secret is in the yeast, which has quite a convoluted history behind it. It all began when Greene King took over Simpson's brewery in Baldock back in 1954. The brewers at Bury St Edmunds found that Simpson's yeast was a much more vigorous strain than their own.

Thus when Simpson's finally closed in 1965, its yeast was transferred to the Greene King breweries at Bury and Biggleswade, and also to Greene King's subsidiary, Rayments of Furneux Pelham.

When Tony Burns and Allan Swannell wanted yeast for their own brewery in Ware after they started up this summer, they went to Rayments – and thus Victoria bitter is brewed with a direct descendant of Simpson's Baldock yeast.

However, for collectors of useless information – there is still only one Hertfordshire brewery in the eastern hemisphere!

... Made a loser outer me

The beer that made Milwaukee famous is now famous for something else – a prime example of how to drive away customers by putting profit before

taste.

Schlitz, one of America's best-known brewers, switched in 1976 to a cheaper brewing process, using corn syrup, of all things, in place of some of its barley malt. At the time the company was the second biggest brewer in the USA, but sales started sinking as drinkers began complaining about the new, poor taste.

Sales are now down 40 per cent, even though Schlitz are back to brewing the old-fashioned way, and the company is now only the fourth largest in the States.

Now Schlitz have announced the closure of their Milwaukee brewery, because of excess production – and to add to their injury the company has been taken over by another brewer, Heilemans of Wisconsin, once only a small Mid-West brewer which has grown big by keeping its regional brands alive.

There's a lesson here for someone.

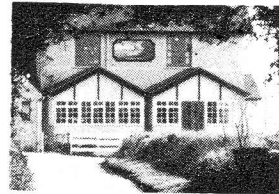


IMPROVE YOUR TAKE-HOME TRADE

Plastic take-home containers bearing a sticker saying 'Caution Real Ale in Transit' are available at 30p each from CAMRA – get in touch with your local branch contact (see page 4)

THE BARLEY MOW

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE



TRY OUR 14 REAL ALES

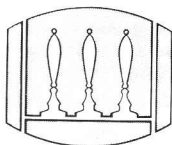
TYTTENHANGER GREEN

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.

The Barley Mow would like to be associated with and to recognise the front page article of the September edition of this newsletter bemoaning the quality of beer in many pubs. We would like to reiterate the statement which has appeared in our advertisement each month: Our aim is to sell the best beer in the county – if ever you are dissatisfied with it we will change it without question.

Customers have the right to choose where they drink and pubs which don't give this option should be avoided.

PLEASE NOTE – Absolutely NO COACHES, including mini buses, except by appointment.



JUG and FIRKIN

- * Superb real ale to take home from 46 pence per pint
- * Adnams, Batemans, Abbot and guest beers
- * Containers supplied - or bring your own and we'll fill it
- * Polypins and firkins for functions and parties
- * Quality draught cider from 40 pence per pint

67 Albert Street
Stevenage
Telephone 726093

(The Jug and Firkin is owned and managed by CAMRA (Real Ale) Investments plc)

PUB NEWS

Not much to report this month. Handpumped cider has appeared at the **Barley Mow**, Tyttenhanger in the form of Bulmer's traditional. This marks a new promotion by the Company for draught cider. It also looks as though some of the other cider makers are catching on to the idea. However, on a recent visit to Oxford, where quite a few pubs have sprouted pumps for the drink, some of the stuff being served is decidedly untraditional judging by the taste and look of it. Bulmer's, though, appears to be the genuine article in all the pubs taking it.

Handpumped cider is also available at the **Red Lion** in Offley. Bulmer's dry was available when visited, but medium is likely to be regularly served, at 50 pence a pint. Wethered's bitter and an interesting choice of grub are also to be had.

WANTED! DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?



He is a master of disguise, and many landlords in the South Hertfordshire area have become the victim of his hard-line campaign against fizzy beer and 'messed about' food. If you recognise him, contact the Newsletter Editor immediately. There is a reward for his identification (admittedly not much of one).

THE RED LION, OFFLEY For reservations telephone Offley 281 MENU

To start

<i>Frogs legs cooked in wine, parsley, garlic and mixed herbs</i>	£1.95
<i>Deep fried seafood platter</i>	£1.25
<i>Rough French pâté</i>	£1.10
<i>Scallops in butter, lemon juice and mixed herbs</i>	£2.20
<i>Scampi soup with brandy</i>	£1.10
<i>Smoked trout</i>	£1.60
<i>Homemade soup</i>	£0.75

For the main course

<i>Fillet steak – with garlic</i>	£5.35
– with cream and brandy	£5.95
– plain	£5.10
<i>Coq au Vin</i>	£4.45
<i>Beef Stroganof</i>	£4.85
<i>Grilled halibut with lemon and butter sauce</i>	£4.35
<i>Guinea fowl cooked in red wine</i>	£5.35

All dishes served with peas, french fried croquettes or new potatoes.

Extra vegetables: Celery hearts 70p; Asparagus £1.10; Broccoli 65p; Ratatouille 70p; Salad 65p

Desserts

<i>Chocolate gateau</i>	80p
<i>Apple pie and cream</i>	70p
<i>Ice cream</i>	55p
<i>Cheese board</i>	85p
<i>Special coffee from £1.20 Coffee 40p</i>	

All prices inclusive of VAT

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday October 13rd

BRANCH MEETING at the Rose and Crown, Market Street, Watford town centre (park in multi-storey). Speaker, Mr Crofton, Regional Director of Bass Charrington. 8.00pm prompt. (Bass and Crown)

November is our Mac's Month and a number of events will start in late October, in particular the pub surveys. Contact Nigel Meadows on Potters Bar 50498 for details.

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Wednesday October 7th

BRANCH MEETING at the Marquis of Lorne, Old Stevenage. 8.00pm start. (Greene King)

Wednesday October 14th

Social at the Catherine Wheel, Albury. 8.00pm. (Benskins)

Friday and Saturday October 16th and 17th

Mini Beer Festival at the Three Horseshoes, Norton. Admission by ticket only. Contact Martin Connelly (Hitchin 52907) or Martyn Cornell (Stevenage 60675) for details. See Quick Ones.

Thursday October 22nd

Social at the Plough, Datchworth. 8.00pm (Greene King)

Wednesday November 4th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by auction of breweriana at the Roebuck, Stevenage. 8.00pm prompt start. (Rayments) See Quick Ones.

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday October 12th

BRANCH MEETING at the Chequers, Wareside (near Ware). The new landlord of this freehouse is selling Everards and Adnams. 8.00pm start.

QUICK ONES

From page 1

place in the town. The Old Barge will be the venue for singing all day, and an afternoon extension will be in operation. The day's events there begin at 11.00am with a live presentation of "The Soldier's Muse" – songs and readings from the Civil War and includes a fight by two members of the Sealed Knot Society, and is followed by a singaround for all at lunchtime.

In the evening there will be a ceilidh at Balls Park College when a real ale bar will be in operation. The band is the Lumps of Plum Pudding, well known for their amusing and entertaining performances, and it is hoped that a good time will be had by all.

Tickets and enquiries to Royston 71371.

A health to the Prince of Wales . . .

More than 60 different Royal Wedding ales are among the items in the great North Herts CAMRA branch annual breweriana auction next month. The auction will be taking place at the branch AGM in the Roebuck, Stevenage on Wednesday November 4.

Stuff up for grabs includes large numbers of glasses, a pile of posters from over two dozen different breweries, fifteen different brewery drinks trays, bar towels, labels, ashtrays, badges, pumpclips, stickers, beer mats – including a very rare Benskin 1959 mat – antique bottles, commemorative bottles – and all those Royal Wedding brews.

Among the Chas and Di specials are the rare Whitbread celebratory issue, the Miners Arms bottle, one issue by the Pitfield brewery, London, the Albert Arms, Esher and the Penruddock Arms.

More details are available from Martyn Cornell on Stevenage 60675.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch Martyn Cornell ☎ Stevenage 60675

Hertfordshire South Branch Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

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 the Editor, CAMRA Ltd., or its branches. The Editor gratefully receives articles or letters for publication. **THESE SHOULD PREFERABLY BE TYPEWRITTEN AND DOUBLE-SPACED; HANDWRITTEN ITEMS SHOULD ALSO BE DOUBLE-SPACED AND AS LEGIBLE AS POSSIBLE PLEASE.** Send to D. Burns, 11 Turpins Chase, Oaklands, Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

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