

THE
**HERTFORDSHIRE
NEWSLETTER**

FREE



FEBRUARY 1982

CIRCULATION 4500

NUMBER 48

QUICK ONES

Too good ...

...to last. That was the price 'freeze' announced by Ind Coope late last year. Although they promised not to up the cost of their ales until January, the increase, when it came, was quite a shock. Five pence on a pint in most pubs, needless to say some will try to make it more. The old days when local brewers such as McMullens had a definite price advantage are with us again, with Country and AK costing substantially less than bitter and KK. How long this state of affairs will last - who knows?

Little Wiggler

Congratulations to Chris Wrigley, wife of North Herts CAMRA branch committee member Dr Mike Wrigley, who gave birth to a bouncing baby boy last month. Mother and child were both, at last report, doing well.

George IV makes number five

For the first time, a town pub has carried off the title of North Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year - though it's a pub right on the very edge of town.

The winner, voted in at the North Herts branch January meeting on the chairman's casting vote, is the George IV, Baldock, the second Greene King pub to take the title, which just pipped another Greene King pub, the Farmer's Boy at Langley.

The George IV - so far out on the edge of Baldock that it's officially in the parish of Weston - is the only pub in the whole of North Herts to have appeared in every single edition of the Good Beer Guide, and one of the very few pubs in the country to have that honour.

A special celebratory social is being held at the pub on Tuesday, February 9.

Previous winners of the title since it began five years ago, include the Cricketers at Ickleford, the Plough, Ley Green and the Windmill, Charlton.

Going, going ...

Yet more from the Goat, one of St Albans' livelier pubs. Boss Peter Ransome, not content with raising money by selling over 350 bottles of his 'Not the' Royal Wedding Ale, is now planning an auction of breweriana - bottles, trays, mirrors, beer mats, you name it - to round off the exercise. So far over £1000 has been raised and the final sum will be sent to the Prince and Princess of Wales' Fund for the Year of the Disabled. Anyone wishing to donate stuff to the auction should contact Peter at the pub. For full details see the advertisement on page 4 of this issue.



Eric Sim, retiring Chairman of Hertfordshire South Branch, hands over cheques totalling £270 to Alan Parker, landlord of the Old Bull's Head in Ware. The money, raised in aid of Muscular Dystrophy research, came from sponsorship of branch members during the annual 24-hour pub games marathon held last November. Branch members and pub regulars gave themselves selflessly to be locked for a whole day in Alan's pub. The ordeal was made much nicer by Sue Parker's excellent hospitality. Thanks go to everyone who supported the event, financially or otherwise.

THE BARLEY MOW

VARIETY IS
THE SPICE
OF LIFE



TRY OUR
15 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 room is bookable for functions, individual tables may be booked for lunches Monday to Friday. The room is used for games in the evening and children are allowed in, if accompanied, on Saturday and Sunday lunchtime. We now also have a dartboard in the main bar.

**PLEASE NOTE - NO COACHES
INCLUDING MINIBUSES, EXCEPT BY
APPOINTMENT**

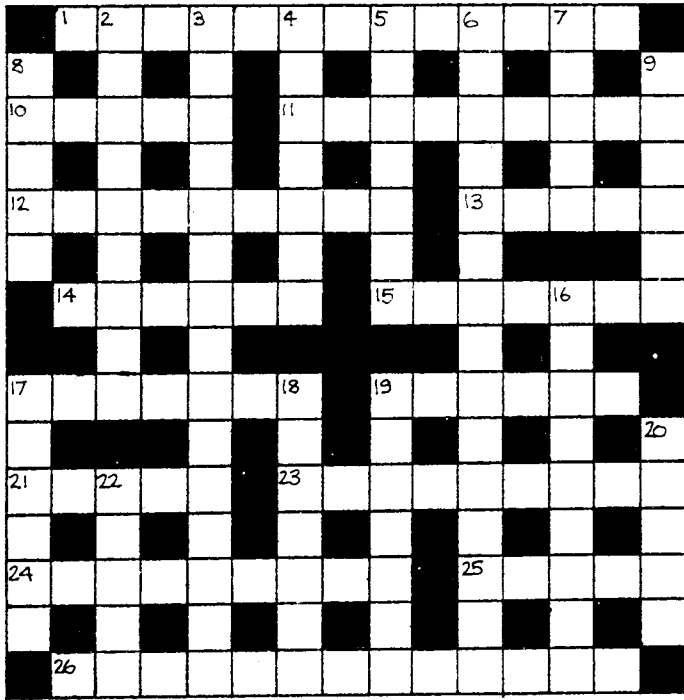
John and Tess
invite you to the

ROYAL OAK
Bushey

for the best in food and real ale
free house
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COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on March 12th will receive a copy of the new 1982 Good Beer Guide. All entries must be marked FEBRUARY COMPETITION. Results and solution will be printed in the April newsletter.



Across

1. Two rights weedy rubber made wrong in Wrexham (6,7)
10. They share concern in the West Midlands (5)
11. It holds beer possibly in one cart (9)
12. Pen and paper, sort of (9)
13. Gives uncle more than one white wine (5)
14. Misbehaving so lash used in schools (6)
15. Pages in story out of place make one bad-tempered (7)
17. An M.P. is involved with pig in planning (7)
19. Part of trousers with yours and mine in - fine (6)
21. Butterfly stop (5)
23. Useful car, although rickety, good for many laps (9)
24. He could provide punch with dash of Asian salt (9)
25. Sounds like a great deal to hand out (5)
26. Rat poison isn't nasty, for a change (13)

Down

2. The responsibility of having wine-shop demolished right in the centre (9)
3. Training as I do, so this shouldn't result, but it could (15)
4. Unusual co-operation of Reds and EEC gets further away (7)
5. Queen, in tears, performs (7)
6. With chart, this could show Faeroes wet (7,8)
7. Of old characters in former Unicorn (5)
8. A defender and how he might be taken (5)
9. Less than nothing and six says it will be (6)
16. One minister often hasn't got one (9)
17. Royal campaign holds back Scotch ale (6)
18. Hit hard into space: that lit up the place (7)
19. Quarters shut for renovation (7)
20. Many in church wear it (5)
22. Poor Eric Sim, not in charge: he won't buy a round (5)

Those looking for 13 down in last month's competition need look no further:

Partly bleery, furtive glance (4)

One day we'll get the crossword completely correct, but don't hold your breath waiting! Apologies, yet again, for making life difficult for everyone.

The winner of the Christmas issue crossword, and a bottle of Victoria Brewery Wedding Ale was Ian Morley of Stevenage.

The answers to the December issue crossword were as follows:

Across: Altered, Deposit, Curacao, Ova, Panto, Nerve cell, Yule-log, Dene, Hectare, Roe deer, Rely, Sardine, Sun-helmet, Gored, Met, General, Seasons, Penrhos.

Down: Tunnel, Recoil, Daring, Decorker, Protegee, Stone-age, Eat, Ogre, Nova, China tea, Arpeggio, Elements, Dud, Stir up, Raglan, Inrush.

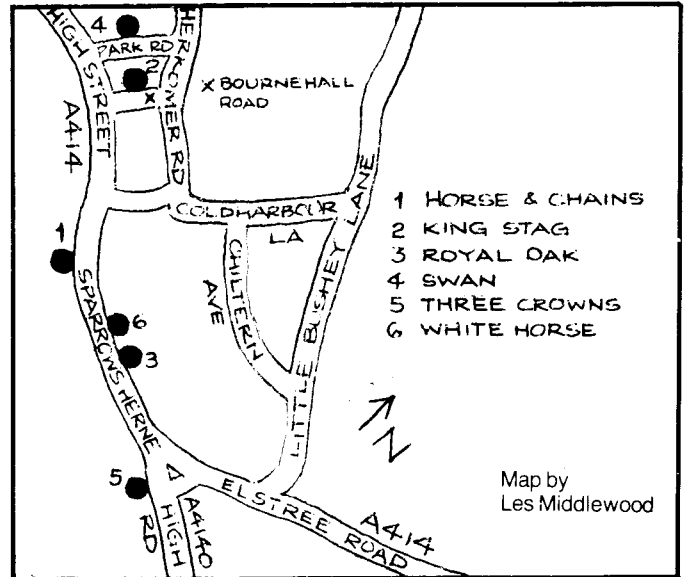
PUB CRAWL

Beating About the Bush

A crawl around Bushey with Jamie Hooper

Until three years ago, Allied Breweries owned a monopolistic 14 out of 16 pubs and handpumps remained in only one of them. The first chink of light came with the introduction of Ind Coope's Burton Ale, followed by the pub swaps in 1978. Next one pub was sold off to the free trade, at the same time as the new brewers in the area were realising the demand for traditionally-served, cask-conditioned ale. Finally, the decentralisation of Ind Coope has brought back not only Benskin's Bitter, but also a local management better motivated and much keener to respond to the requirements of the local consumer.

The position now is that 14 pubs (with a 15th due shortly) sell "real ale" with 13 different beers available at one time.



Map by Les Middlewood

Six of the best

I have chosen half-a-dozen pubs in Bushey within easy distance of each other to provide a variety of beers and atmospheres for a pleasant night's crawl.

We start at the **Three Crowns**, one of the new Courage houses, in the High Road, Bushey Heath. Best and Director's are served in both saloon-type bars, which are crowded most nights with the 18-to-24-year-old age group. The new guv'nor makes you feel very welcome.

Next a walk downhill to the **Royal Oak**, a freehouse. There are six handpumps here, which serve a selection of the following bitters at any one time: Fullers Chiswick and London Pride, Young's Special, Sam Smith's, Marston's Pedigree, Bateman's, Devenish and Wadworth's 6X. This pub has undergone considerable refurbishment and is now a plush lounge bar only. Both factors, perhaps understandably, have resulted in some beers priced as much as 70p per pint.

Continuing down Sparrows Hearne, we come to Ind Coope's **White Horse**. Here, besides Benskin's Bitter, you can enjoy the more expensive Burton Ale. This is now available in only 2 out of the 8 Allied pubs in the area, a victim of the recession and the popularity of Benskins. This is a pleasant, quiet pub due to undergo renovations shortly.

Further down we have Charrington's **Horse and Chains**, a smart, comfortable horse brass and tack pub. Fifteen months after the landlord's first request, and further requests from your local CAMRA branch, handpumps have just been installed to serve the fruity I.P.A. The tenant is now hoping to add Bass to his range, but the brewery's local management have not, in the past, seemed keen to push this beer. We shall have to wait and see.

(With the unbelievable decision by Bass Charrington executives to close down the Union rooms at Burton upon Trent, the special method of brewing that gives the beer its particular taste, one wonders whether Bass will be a beer worth having by the time it arrives - Ed.)

We continue our stroll into Bushey Village proper and turn right into Bournehall Road, and arrive at Truman's **King Stag**, serving their Tap Bitter. Two contrasting bars here, a comfortable saloon noted for good pub lunches, and a traditional public. Finally, in the next street, Park Road, is my own local, Ind Coope's **Swan**. A tiny traditional terrace beerhouse, of a kind increasingly rare in the South. No carpets or frills, but an easy-going, down-to-earth boozier. The Benskin's bitter available here is the cheapest in the area. This pub is also a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide.

GOOD SUPPING!

Lots in a name

No Hertfordshire pub has ever had such a downright bizarre name as the little-known Fordham's of Ashwell house, the **Dumb Flea**, at Meldreth in Cambridgeshire – long closed, alas.

All the same, a collection of a good two dozen oddities can be culled from vanished Herts pubs, names guaranteed to set anybody's mind boggling when asked to think up a convincing explanation for their origin.

What, for example, was the story behind the **Pretty Lamp**, Baldock, closed just before the First World War? The idea of a beerhouse naming itself after some Liberty's nightlight to bring in the customers somehow doesn't ring true.

The **Sheepwash** beerhouse at Redbourn, closed 1913, is another name which seems more liable to put drinkers off than bring them flocking – too likely to encourage jokes about what the beer tastes like, one would have thought.

Similarly, even if it was clearly named after the well-known local landmark, would anyone really have wanted to put in for a pint at the **Asylum**, Leavesden? Probably not – contemporary reports describe it as decidedly unprepossessing, and it closed around 1900.

The **Devil's Head**, a pub mentioned by several writers at Royston, sounds a bit dubious too, though the name appears to be an unofficial joke on a rather badly-drawn sign at the **Buffalo's Head**, a beerhouse in the town which closed in 1916.

The **Cold Bath**, Hertford, where you could splash out on a pint right up until the 1950s, probably took its name from the swimming spot in the nearby river, rather than primitive ablution facilities at the pub itself, or even, as some have suggested, the nearby Baptist chapel.

Some odd animals have gone up on Hertfordshire signboards – what, for example, was the **Australian Cow** doing at Ashwell before it closed in 1915? Was it an ordinary cow that somehow got hung upside down? And what was the state of mind of the two landlords, one at Ashwell and one at Sandon, who called their pub the **Cuckoo**? Echoes of the Asylum here, one feels.

Some strange objects, too, found their way outside our pubs. The **Barley Oil Bottle**, at Boxmoor, sounds like an adjunct the CAMRA technical committee would definitely disapprove of. The **Chopping Knife** at Redbourn also seems a bit off – a warning, perhaps, of what might be produced if you ordered a drink and couldn't pay for it.

Two neighbouring pubs that eventually amalgamated, or a landlord who took the name of his old pub with him to his new one, produced some odd combinations of names. This is certainly what happened with the **Plough and Dial** in Hitchin, here the Dial was No. 2- Bridge Street and the Plough originally stood next door. Did the same thing happen with the **Lion and Wheatsheaf** in Ware, closed 1909? Even odder is the **Cock and Flowerpot** in St Albans, closed 1905. Ne'er the twain shall meet, however, in the case of the **Oriental Tavern**, Ware, closed 1908, with its hint of opium dens, and the **Western Inn**, Rickmansworth, no doubt with a hitching post outside.

An attractive name is an asset to a pub, as many landlords have realised – who wouldn't feel at home in the **Friend at Hand**, Bovingdon? Sadly, that one closed in 1930. The **Merry Month of May**, at Bushey, sounds like fun, too – instant images of sunny days and dancing Morris men. Indeed, landlords in the South West of Hertfordshire seem to have gone in for arcadian pub names – the still-open Land of Liberty at Heronsgate was originally the **Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty**.

Over in East Hertfordshire landlords tended to put their hopes and fears

up on their signs. The **Good Intent** at Sawbridgeworth was, perhaps, named by a cautious optimist starting out in the business – the **Labour in Vain** at Albury sounds like a long-suffering publican ready to throw in the bar towel. **Live and Let Live** was a popular name in the north of the county, with pubs of that name at Weston, Aston and Pirton, all now closed. Other pleas for peace before time were made by the **Rainbow and Dove**, the name of beerhouses at Little Berkhamstead and nearby Hertingfordbury, and the **Olive Branch** at St Ippollitts.

The **Charing Cross** at Ware was named after its owner rather than the railway station, though what the story is behind the **King's Cross** at Walkern I do not know. The **Buckingham Palace** in Stevenage, a small scruffy beerhouse in Middle Row, was another pub named after its owner, Charles Buckingham – Queen Victoria would not have been amused. However, the best pub pun in Hertfordshire is the **Baron of Beef**, Welwyn, thankfully still with us, whose first landlord was George Baron, a butcher.

Indeterminate

In reply to Mr Neil Powell of Baldock, the brewery that stood behind the Victoria pub in White Horse Street, Baldock was not James Ind's. It was founded by William Noy around the early 1730s, and by 1793 it was owned by William Penn, whose family controlled it up to the 1840s. It

Continued on next page

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

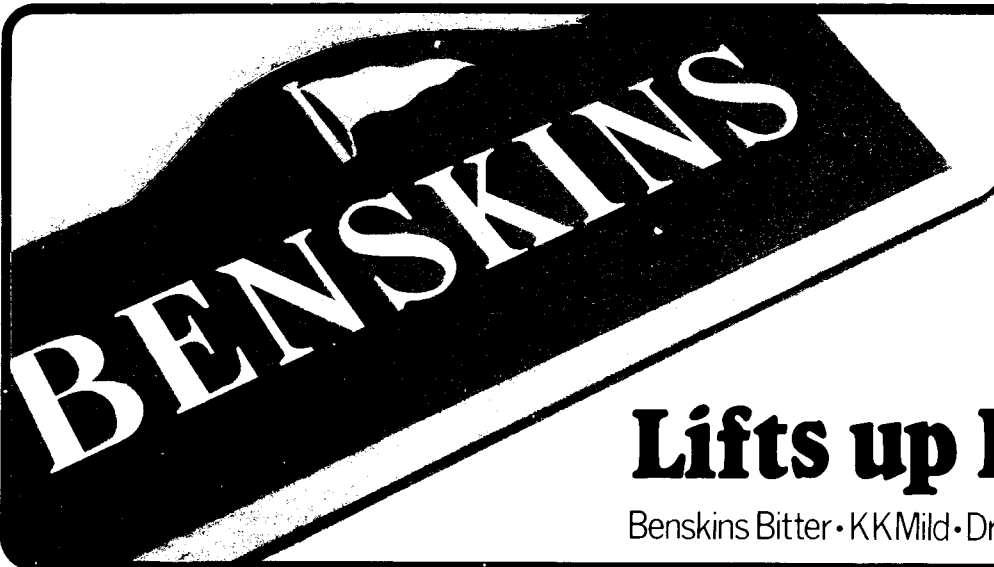
<i>Fillet steak – with garlic</i>	£5.35
<i>– with cream and brandy</i>	£5.95
<i>– plain</i>	£5.10
<i>Coq au Vin</i>	£4.45
<i>Beef Stroganof</i>	£4.85
<i>Grilled Halibut with lemon and butter sauce</i>	£4.35
<i>Guinea fowl cooked in red wine</i>	£5.35

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



Lifts up Herts.

Benskins Bitter • KKMild • Draught Burton Ale

PUB NEWS

Over in Waltham Abbey, a new free house, the **Compasses**, has recently opened. Formerly an Ind Coope pub, it now sells Rayments BBA and Greene King Abbot Ale on handpump. Further east the **Three Horseshoes** in Great Pamdon is one of the first Ind Coope houses to start selling a range of the group's new beers. As well as KK on handpump and Burton Ale on gravity, both Ind Coope East Anglia bitter and Benskins bitter are on sale. Several more pubs are to follow the example.

The Cornell Column

From previous page

passed through several more owners until it finally closed in 1881, though it was not finally demolished until a couple of years ago. The brewer's house, now an antique shop, has hanging up in one room a fascinating plan of the brewery in its heyday.

Where exactly Ind's brewery was in Baldock I'm not entirely sure, though I believe Ind's maltings was the one on the corner of White Horse Street by the traffic lights now owned by a chemists wholesalers.

Baldock was quite an important brewing town in the 19th century. The concern that stood down Brewery Lane behind the old Star Inn, known as the Pale Ale brewery, controlled more than 60 pubs at one time, though they had nearly all been sold when Wells and Winch took the brewery over in 1904. With Simpson's brewery in the High Street, that meant for many years Baldock was one of the two or three biggest brewery towns in the county.

BOOK REVIEW

Mine's A Pint – What's Yours
by Bill Tidy, published by
Pavilion Publishing Ltd at £1.95.

MINE'S A PINT – WHAT'S YOURS?



Fans of Kegbuster in CAMRA's monthly newspaper, What's Brewing, will want a copy of this 64-page paperback on their hero's battles against the Grotty Hardmen as he fights the good fight for traditional draught beer. As sexist and irreverent as ever, full of busty barmaids and pubs with names like "the Cock in Hand", with snipes at beer bores, fizzy beer and tarted-up pubs, this book is for all lovers of Crudgington's 6X Gold Medal Bitter – although the price will set you back the price of 3 or 4 pints. Postal copies can be obtained for £1.95 plus 45 pence postage and packing from Pearl Books, 48 High Street, Pembury, Kent.

GRAND CHARITY AUCTION

Monday February 15th
8.00pm

all proceeds to the Disabled

ROYAL WEDDING & JUBILEE ALES

(including some rarer issues)

plus vintage port, wine, beer labels

AND GENERAL BREWERIANA

Limited space available –
entrance 50 pence each – on a first come basis

DONATIONS FOR AUCTION WELCOME
before February 10th please

The Goat Inn, Sopwell Lane, St. Albans, Herts.
(0727 60881)

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday February 16th

BRANCH MEETING at the Crown, Hatfield Road, St Albans with guest speaker Mr George, from Sam Smiths. 8.00pm prompt. (Free House).

Friday February 19th to Sunday 21st

Branch weekend trip to Eldridge Pope Brewery (amongst other things). For details contact Nigel Meadows on Potters Bar 50498.

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Wednesday February 3rd

BRANCH MEETING at the Station Hotel, Knebworth. The meeting room at this new venue is at the back, on the car park side. 8.00pm start. (Wethereds)

Tuesday February 9th

Pub of the Year social at the George IV, London Road, Baldock. 8.00pm. (Greene King)

Wednesday February 17th

Social at the Rest and Welcome, Haultwick. 8.00pm start. (McMullens)

Wednesday March 3rd

BRANCH MEETING at the Bull, Watton-at-Stone. Begins 8.00pm. (Benskins)

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday February 15th

BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at the Bull, Theydon Bois. 8.00pm prompt. (Ind Coope)

Monday February 22nd

Social at the Three Horseshoes, Great Parndon, Harlow. 8.00pm. (Benskins and Ind Coope)

Thursday March 4th

Paines brewery visit – an evening trip starting at 7.30. Still a few places left. Branch contact for details.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch Martyn Cornell ☎ Stevenage 60675
Hertfordshire South Branch Maff Bury ☎ St Albans 73663
Herts-Essex Borders Branch Terry Smith ☎ Epping 73677

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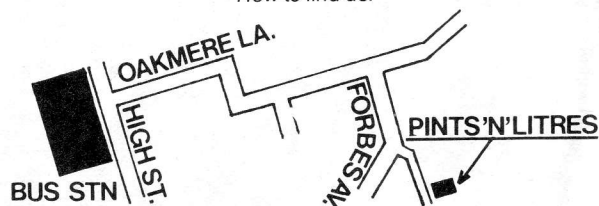
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