

**FREE**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1982

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NUMBER 49

## Benskins revisited

by Eric (Condor) Sim

A recent survey has shown that Ind Coope Benskin (Watford Ltd) have made further advances into establishing themselves as one of the more progressive large brewing concerns in increasing their outlets dispensing traditionally dispensed cask conditioned ale.

### Better than average

At the last count over 460 of their 600 odd pubs were serving Real Ale which represents 77% against the National average of around 55%. It is interesting to note that of the 600 pubs a mere 90 are managed houses but of these 92% serve Real Ale.

A breakdown of the figures show that in Hertfordshire 83% of the 320 pubs serve Real Ale including 96% of the 46 managed houses.

A further breakdown covering the Hertfordshire South Branch Area 89% of the 150 pubs serve the real thing and of the 30 managed houses only one has remained fizz only (I am sure our philanthropic editor will give a prize to the first reader to identify and convert this loner).

This compares favourably with the 420 pubs in the South Herts area where 76% are Real and even more so when one considers that only 54% of the 60 odd McMullen pubs are prepared to serve unpressurised beer.

### Revamped KK

It is interesting to note that the old Romford KK mild has been revamped with its own Benskin KK pump clip and a much improved palate. As yet only 16% of the Real Ale pubs in South Herts serve KK and I feel this could be improved if Benskins were to supply it in firkins as they are now doing for Burton Ale.

It is pleasing to note that of the 25 out of over 500 Benskin tenants who were recently rewarded by the brewery for increasing their 6 monthly barrelage by more than 10 barrels that two of them, Mick Cairns of the Farmers Boy, St Albans and Alan Parker of the Old Bulls Head, Ware, installed KK on the recommendation of the local CAMRA branch.

In reading this article one must not allow Benskins to become too complacent, especially as their increases are not confined to more Real Ale pubs as their recent price increases of 4p to 6p per pint has shown.

Reports are coming in of certain olde worlde pubs charging 70p for Benskins and 80p for Burton Ale. At this rate we could lose track of the real ale scene as we will not be able to afford to survey them.

For more news of Benskins see **Benskins Heritage** on page 2.

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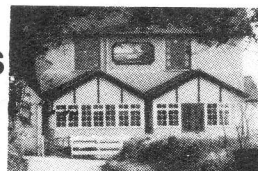
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## THE BARLEY MOW

VARIETY IS  
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TRY OUR  
15 REAL  
ALES

TYTTENHANGER GREEN

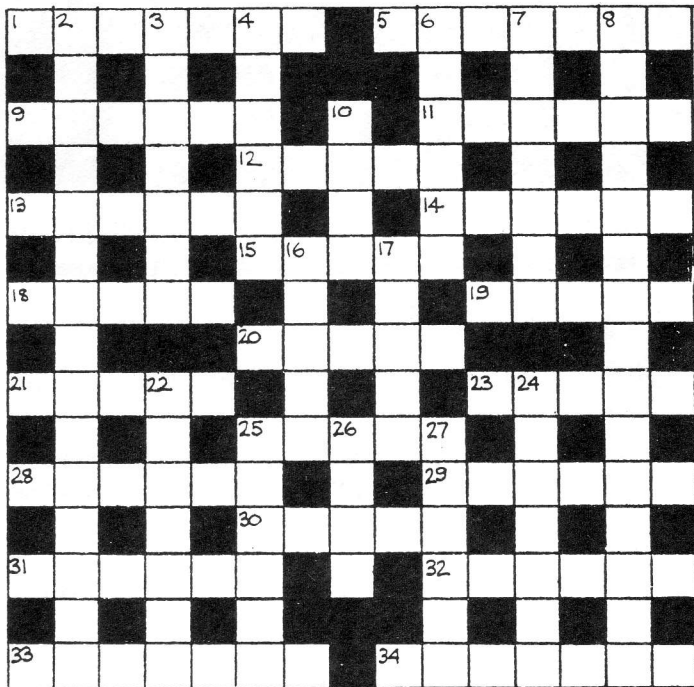
In addition to our normal range there will always be a cask on the bar from our range of guest beers which could be one of the following:  
**Eldridge Pope, Bourne Valley, Donnington, Arkell, Archers, St Austell or Brakspear's 6X**

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**

# COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on April 16th will receive copies of two crossword books. All entries must be marked MARCH COMPETITION. Results and solution will appear in the May newsletter.



## Across

- 1 His song is out of tune: it probably keeps the Kcp happy (7)
- 5 Visitors might appreciate its Castle and cathedral (7)
- 9 They'd give you a seat and pint in Wilts (6)
- 11 Partially dissuades potential tyrant (6)
- 12 Those people start to eat a *Topic* (5)
- 13 To drive forward is correct, changing hands at last (6)
- 14 Mixed drink served in pubs and modest surrounds (6)
- 15 Small creature escapes from xylem metastasis (5)
- 18 Reversing vehicles is clever (5)
- 19 It is found as a rule wild around Madagascar's capital (5)
- 20 Go too fast around the oceans (5)
- 21 Pub, the *Queen*, next to the *Bull* (5)
- 23 Floats, damaged by rocks (5)
- 25 Saw these on edge? (5)
- 28 Impede progress in Birmingham perhaps (6)
- 29 Suit in coat badly cut (6)
- 30 Become liable for dog after pub doesn't close (5)
- 31 Stays after time to take a seat and have a drink (4,2)
- 32 Admirer of rubbish stood for office in annual meeting? Quite the reverse (6)
- 33 New Warwickshire brewery needs scrutiny about contents of ales ... (7)
- 34 ... and another has Wendy in raptures in fringes of Guildford (7)

## Down

- 2 Mistune strain with Terry Lightfoot, initially? That could make or
- 3 One of B.R.'s many supporters (7) break me (15)
- 4 Bar maker? (6)
- 6 The most mature inhabit freehold estate (6)
- 7 A Watney's beer held in awe misguidedly? Money down the drain
- 8 Dull crazy country where John Smith's is 100% real? (5,6,4) (7)
- 10 Japanese emigrants appear content (4)
- 16 It provides national emblem, a plan overlooking the French (5)
- 17 One that happened in '70? (5)
- 22 What Flashman did himself (7)
- 24 SHAPE requires 60% increase in defense HQ's walls (7)
- 25 Toy with soft sound replacing loud three times (6)
- 26 Teacher keeps in every one (4)
- 27 Harass thrower's second dart (6)

In 1 across in the February crossword the word "rubber" should have read "robber".

Winner of January's competition was Roger McCann of Milton Keynes. The solution was as follows:

**Across:** Trip, Boa, A happy new year, Oar, Ale, Log, Molasses, Pint, Lea, Prefab, Mead, Backstabber, Ewe, Noises, Stunning, Adnams, Eire, Spin, Deadly.

**Down:** Travellers cheques, Pay close attention, Bled, Atrophied, Alarm, Edges, Trent, Pea, Leer, Brews, Bridge, Everard, Dee, Add, Spy.

# BENSKINS HERITAGE

by Peter Lerner

Benskins, the newly-revived local arm of Ind Coope, have recently decided to select twelve of their pubs for special attention under the title of "Heritage Inns".

The pubs have been selected by an historian and are claimed to represent part of England's heritage. Each guarantees a warm welcome, comfortable surroundings, good food, and handpumped Benskins Bitter—none of which can be bad. Seven of the twelve are in Hertfordshire.



Ye Olde Fighting Cocks, St Albans

Perhaps older St Albans residents might have misgivings at the inclusion of the octagonal Ye Olde Fighting Cocks, whose interior was badly mauled about, not so long ago. It's still interesting, but what might it have been like if brewery "designers" had not given it the treatment? Another St Albans Heritage Inn is the half-timbered White Hart. The Old Bell in Hemel Hempstead's old High Street, and the Boar's Head in Bishop's Stortford are two solid and ancient towncentre hostelries, as is the very attractive White Swan in Hoddesdon. Perhaps more unusual choices are two village pubs, the Red Lion in traffic-plagued Stanstead Abbots, and the Bell at Cottered, one of several thatched pubs remaining in East Hertfordshire.



The White Swan, Hoddesdon

Outside this county, the remaining pubs to be selected are the superb fifteenth-century Kings Arms at Amersham; the Black Lion at Leighton Buzzard; the restored Edwardian Painter's Arms in Luton; the timber framed Eight Bells at Saffron Walden; and the Coach and Horses, outside Newport in Essex.

A brochure describing the twelve Heritage Inns and their history is available from each pub, or (with a stamped addressed envelope) from Benskins' offices in Watford. Benskins plan to produce further brochures about canal-side pubs, music pubs, and pubs with childrens' rooms. Benskins are sincerely to be congratulated as a wing of a national brewing combine who have seen the light after the wholesale big brewers' butchery of pubs during the 1960s and early 1970s, and who recognise that historic buildings do not look at their best when bedecked with plastic. However, let us hope that Benskins' management realise that all their pubs are unique and have heritage and traditions, whether or not they happen to have old beams or a thatched roof. The humblest village local or back-street town boozier should not be neglected at the expense of their more favoured counterparts.

# MEMBERSHIP

## JOIN CAMRA NOW!

There's never been a better, or a more important, time to join the Campaign for Real Ale. The subscription is just £7 per year – around the price of one pint each month for the year. For that you get to join "Europe's most successful consumer organisation", you receive What's Brewing, the Campaign's lively monthly newspaper; discounts on CAMRA products (the Good Beer Guide alone is £1 cheaper to members); and you get to take part in the many activities run by local branches – socials, beer festivals, campaigns and the like.

Now in its tenth year, if we are to maintain the achievements of the previous decade, CAMRA needs to be stronger than ever. It is now the only organisation which speaks for the pub user. Help to protect good British beer in good British pubs. **JOIN CAMRA NOW!**

Fill in the form below and send to: The Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3BR. If you wish to pay by standing order please insert the name of your bank and account number. Otherwise simply fill in your name and address.



I/We wish to become members of the Campaign for Real Ale (Limited).  
I/We agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

To ..... (your bank)  
Please forward to Barclays Bank Limited, 3 High Street, St Albans (20-74-09) for the credit of CAMRA Ltd., (Subscription Account) No. 50187887, now the sum of £7 and annually on this date until further notice.

Name .....  
Address .....  
Bank a/c number .....  
Bank address .....  
Signed ..... Date .....

The Hertfordshire Newsletter.

## 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

# Pints 'n' Litres

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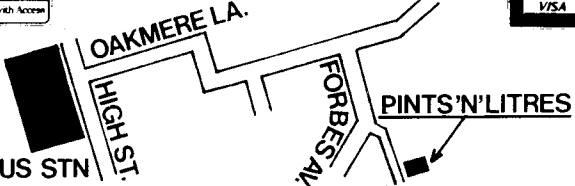
Also large range of trad. ales in bottles and cans.

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# QUICK ONES

## Greene King thrive, despite keg and lager

Greene King's half-yearly financial report shows an increase in turnover of 14%, and increased sales of cask beers. However, sales of keg beers (including lager) and bottled beers are reported to be down. So much for the new and much-heralded Yeoman Keg, recently introduced with such a flourish by Greene King. CAMRA have always told Greene King that they should stick to producing their excellent traditional beers and concentrate on serving them by traditional methods. Apart from the Yeoman diversion, this is just what the brewery have been doing recently – and their own figures prove that their actions, and our advice, are correct!

## New pub for Stortford

Trumans have applied to East Hertfordshire Council for permission to convert an historic farmhouse, near Bishop's Stortford, into a pub. Piggotts Farm lies close to the massive Thorley Park housing development and Trumans obviously hope that their pub will attract the whole family. The plans show that the pub would have one very large bar, with central fireplace, and a separate childrens' room. A separate building outside the pub will be used as a skittle alley, and there would be a beer garden. Food will obviously be a major feature of the pub, as the plans show a large kitchen and food store.

This promises to be an exciting and imaginative use for a fine old building; let's hope that Trumans, who are clearly paying close attention to getting all the details right, decide to let Stortford drinkers have the opportunity of sampling the whole range of their newly-introduced real ales (two bitters and a mild) at Piggotts Farm.


## Grand result

Over £1000 was raised at the auction held at the Goat, St Albans last month. The money, raised in aid of the disabled, will be added to a similar amount already accumulated from sales of the pub's "Not the Royal Wedding Ale" ale. Star of the show was a ½ pint corked bottle of Gales Royal Wedding Ale which fetched £85 – by all accounts a bargain! Many more single bottles went for double figures, with beer mats, labels and other brewery memorabilia fetching similarly high amounts.

## Help required

Whilst on the subject of aid for the disabled, the newsletter has received a letter asking for help in that direction. A reader, Edward Doherty, himself disabled, has asked if someone would be interested in driving him from St Albans into the Regent's Park area of London (car provided) at about 9.30 on Monday mornings, returning by tube, or whatever. Mr Doherty is offering expenses – plus an agreed amount of real ale! Interested parties can contact him at weekends on Rugby 815105.

## THE SOUTHERN CROSS



### WATFORD'S PREMIER REAL ALE FREE HOUSE

Six Real Ales always on – from a selection including Ruddles County, Fullers London Pride, Everards Trad Tiger, Adnams, Youngs, Sam Smiths etc.

Polypins to order – or take home from the Cask.

Extensive Pub Menu – our own Special Beefburgers and Toasted Sandwiches – Lunch and Evening.

Sunday Roast Lunch only £2.75. Children welcome – only £2.00 for the youngsters.

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TELEPHONE: WATFORD 25168

## Yeoman – CAMRA censures Greene King

The latest beermat produced by Greene King to advertise Yeoman, their recently-introduced keg bitter, claims that the beer is brewed "in the traditional Greene King way", and has the "full, clean flavour of a traditional bitter". This description has annoyed many beer-drinkers, when it is clear that there is nothing "traditional" about this very ordinary keg beer.

At the request of local CAMRA Branches, Vaughan Hully, CAMRA's liaison officer with the Bury St Edmunds Brewery, has written to the company in the following terms:

"The only purpose of such a claim can be deliberately to misinform your customers as to what they are in fact getting.

"The previous record of Greene King in differentiating between cask-conditioned and keg beers at point of sale has been impeccable, and has often been quoted by CAMRA as an example that other, less scrupulous brewers, should follow. It is therefore doubly disappointing to find such 'dirty tricks' from a company previously believed to be above stooping to such measures".

Vaughan goes on to ask that if Yeoman fulfils all the claims made for it, then in what respects are the public to believe that it differs from the truly traditional Greene King IPA? "It is IPA which fulfils the claims made for Yeoman: Yeoman patently does not."

Memo to beer drinkers: if you don't like keg beer or instant mashed potato, stay away from Yeoman: if you like Greene King's real ales, stick to IPA or Abbot. The choice is yours. P.L.

## Give the beer drinker a budget break, Sir Geoffrey

In 1979, the Hertfordshire Newsletter was exclaiming incredulously that "the 50p pint could soon become a reality". Today, prices of 60p for a pint of bitter and 70p for stronger beers are accepted without the raise of an eyebrow. Yet did you know that some 20p in the price of every pint goes to the Government in tax? With every Budget that goes by, the Government claws back more money from the beer drinker . . . and the next Budget will be on March 9th.

What can we look forward to this year? Well, if CAMR has its way, Sir Geoffrey Howe will give the beer drinker a break, by not raising taxes on beer in his Budget. This will make sense for the hard-pressed drinker; for the landlord, whose pub is emptying as prices increase out of his control; and indeed for the Treasury itself. For as prices rise and pubs empty, the Government's share of the tax falls short – and beer sales have already fallen by three million pints a day since 1979.

Throughout February, CAMRA members have been busy all over the country, putting posters in pubs and inviting people to sign our petition to Sir Geoffrey Howe, asking him to put NO MORE TAXATION on beer. The hundreds of thousands of signatures will be delivered to Sir Geoffrey at 11 Downing Street on 4th March.

If you agree that further increases in beer prices will not only hurt your pocket, but also irretrievably harm our pub trade by threatening thousands of emptying local pubs with closure; and if you didn't get a chance to sign our petition, then please write NOW to your MP and demand that he doesn't let Sir Geoffrey squeeze your pot dry. P.L.

## Truly Good News

Big Six brewers Truman have launched an entirely new range of draught cask conditioned beers – including a cask dark mild.

The surprise appearance of the new beers came after a letter was written to Truman's landlords by the company admitting that their previous cask beer, Truman's Tap, had not done nearly as well as they had hoped.

The letter said: "The brand name has proved to be inappropriate, as it infers weakness, while the strength at 1039 OG falls between the strong beer and ordinary beer markets".

The company also admitted that the air pressure pumps used for Tap when it was first launched had given the beer a poor image with drinkers.

The new range consists of Truman Best Bitter, OG 1045, Truman Bitter, OG 1036, and Truman Dark Mild, all served up by handpump – though converted 11-gallon kegs are believed to be used to store the beer.

The Man in the Moon and the Pyramid in Stevenage both have the new Bitter and Best, and both are apparently waiting for the mild to arrive.

*The beers are also available at the Crown, St Albans. I would personally recommend the mild, which is very good. Nice to see what was once a very traditional style of beer for the London area making a reappearance from one of our bigger brewers. Although various keg dark milds have been available in the Capital's pubs, traditional dark mild has become a rarity. – Ed.*

### 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

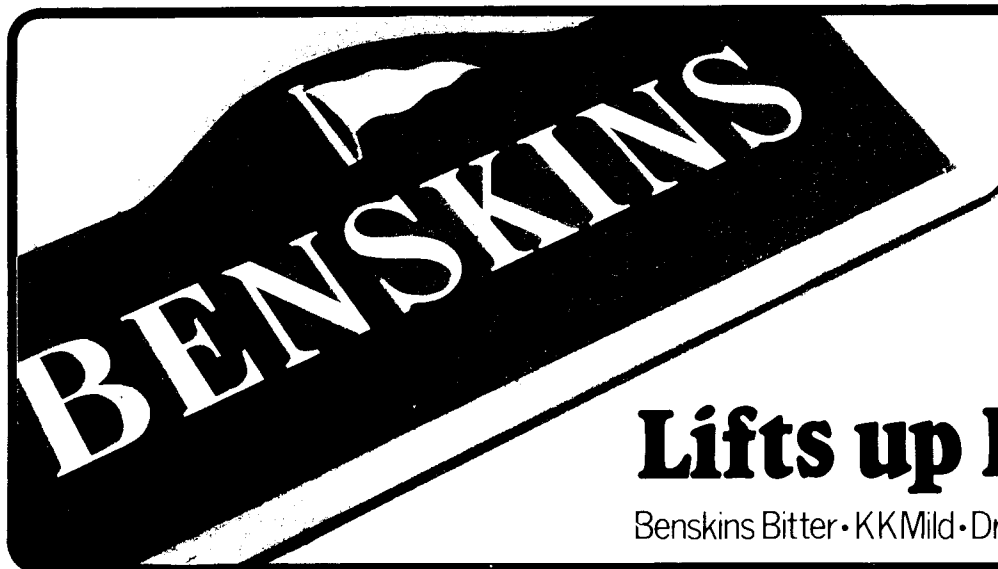
<i>Fillet steak – with garlic</i>	£5.35
<i>– with cream and brandy</i>	£5.95
<i>– plain</i>	£5.10
<i>Coq au Vin</i>	£4.45
<i>Beef Stroganof</i>	£4.85
<i>Grilled Halibut with lemon and butter sauce</i>	£4.35
<i>Guinea fowl cooked in red wine</i>	£5.35

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 gâteau</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



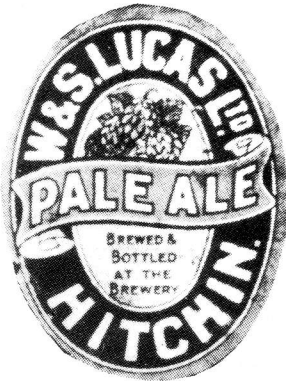
## Lifts up Herts.

Benskins Bitter • KKMild • Draught Burton Ale

## Lucas beers and Lucas aid

The big brewery that stood at the corner of Sun Street and Bridge Street in Hitchin lasted in the same family for around two hundred years – and much of the time the men who ran it felt heartily guilty about making money from such a concern.

Few brewing families have ever thrown up such an interesting and complicated set of characters as the Lucas's of the Sun Street brewery. They were members of the Society of Friends – Quakers – from its beginnings in the days of Charles II, and they remained deeply committed for seven generations. In that time they threw up successful writers, diarists, painters, poets, scientists, preachers, sportsmen and travellers, as well as farmers, brewers, bankers and businessmen.



The brewery was founded, according to Lucas family tradition, in 1709, in the time of the second William Lucas, born 1675, and the year before the birth of his son William Lucas III. (There were to be eight William Lucases all told). Hitchin historian Reginald Hine mentions that Lucas the Quaker was a wine merchant in the 1690s. William Lucas VI, writing about his joining the business in 1825, said that it had been in the family for "more than a century" even then.

The first firm mention of the family connection does not seem to come until 1732, however, when William Lucas, brewer of Hitchin, secured a mortgage on the now-closed Stag pub in Baldock. The Lucas family were apparently early on in partnership with another Quaker, Isaac Gray, and some writers say Gray had actually bought the brewery in 1720. At any rate, William Lucas III married Gray's sister Phoebe in 1740, and their son William IV was born in 1744.

However, William III died in 1751, and it seems Gray ran the business until his nephew was old enough to take over. Certainly it was Gray who acquired the lease of what is now the New Inn, Holwell in 1768. The brewery, which stood on a site liable to flooding, was at least partly rebuilt in 1771, for leads found on the roof carried that date – and also the initials WL, indicating William IV was now in charge.

In 1796 William IV, a small man dressed in dark grey clothes but with silver buckles on his shoes, decided he had had enough of business, and although he was only 52 he retired, leaving the running of the brewery to his sons William V and Joseph. William IV was a good friend of Samuel Whitbread II, ironic in view of later events, and Whitbread would call to take Lucas to the poll in his parliamentary constituency, Bedford. Another good friend was fellow-Quaker John Pryor, boss of the Baldock High Street brewery, and coincidentally Pryor and Lucas died within a day of each other in 1819.

When his father died William Lucas V, who had strong moral scruples about the alcohol trade, left the running of the brewery to his brother Joseph. The brewery workers loved Joseph for the funny stories he would tell them, according to his nephew William Lucas VI, but the family felt the master was too familiar with the men.

William VI had been apprenticed to a chemist in London, but although his father did not want either of his two eldest sons, William or Samuel, to go into the brewery business, it was decided that the family property was so tied up in it, in William VI's own words, "they could not do otherwise".

William VI entered the brewery in 1825, his brother in 1835, and later they were joined by their cousin Joseph II, who ran the farming side. Samuel was an artist who succeeded at least once in exhibiting at the Royal Academy, and his brother allowed him to run the London end of the business, so that he could visit the studios in town and meet his fellow artists. Another brother, Francis, was a poet, and a partner in the Hertfordshire Hitchin bank of Sharples, Tuke, Lucas and Seebohm, later to form part of Barclay's Bank.

Around 1835 the Sun Street brewery had at least 40 tied houses from Dunstable to Ware and from Shefford to Welwyn, including at least 11 in

Hitchin. The water came from wells on the site, and William VI in his diaries writes of taking their temperature. He also tells of the practice of cooling the beer at night after it has been boiled, for this was before the days of efficient refrigeration.

Like so many brewers, the Lucas's were also involved in malting, and their maltings in Bridge Street in 1844 was the scene of the Lucas farm workers' Harvest Home. In 1855, at least, William VI was travelling as far as Wellingborough to show potential customers samples of malt.

The generosity of the Lucas's was almost legendary. William V, although he was a Quaker, used to donate half-a-hundredweight of plum pudding, ale to go with it and the use of his great barn for the annual Hitchin Baptist Sunday School treat. It was the custom that on St Thomas's Day, December 21, every year anyone who turned up at the brewery counting house before midday would receive one penny, though this was limited to one applicant per family, big crowds still gathered outside. Even at the end of the 19th century it was a tradition that on a certain Tuesday, usually in September, after the corn harvest, farm-workers whose masters were Lucas customers could gather at the brewery morning and afternoon and drink as much beer as they wanted.

Certainly the Lucas's never took advantage of the opportunity to grow rich from brewing, as many country brewers did in the 19th century, a fact which William VI recorded with pride when his father died. While other brewers were amassing huge tied estates, the Lucas's were actually selling pubs between 1840 and 1880, when they disposed of at least 10. Despite hints from other Quakers, and William VI's strong doubts recorded in his diary about the morality of the brewing trade, his son William VII entered the business aged 21 in 1853, and carried on when William VI died in 1861 aged 57. William VII was a sportsman, and he is said to have introduced lawn tennis to Hitchin. He was joined at the brewery by his cousin Samuel Lucas II, born 1840, and together they survived a crisis caused by arguments among their uncle Joseph's executors, which led to 17 pubs and two beerhouses owned by Joseph and leased to the partners being sold by auction in 1883 – of the 14 properties in Hertfordshire the cousins managed to buy back 10.

The Lucas price list for draught beers in 1886 was comparatively modest, with just six lines. IPA, XXX strong ale and extra stout, bitter, XX mild and porter, and comparatively expensive too, at 1/6d or 1/- a gallon – 11 draught beers were usual, and prices went as low as 8d a gallon. Nobody knows if the story is true that Lucas beers were still being brewed weak because of the family's religious convictions. All the same, one worried Lucas aunt is supposed to have asked her coachman around this time if he heard of many who became drunk on Lucas. "I've not heard of many what got drunk", was his considered reply, "but I've heard of a few what busted!"

The brewery was turned into a limited company in 1896, with William VII as chairman, though he had retired in 1894. In 1902 it owned 43 Hertfordshire pubs, making it the twelfth largest in the county, including 17 pubs in Hitchin. The bottled beers at this time were naturally conditioned – rare, even then.

William VII, who lived in the Wratten, Hitchin, died in 1914, the oldest JP in the county. The family continued running the brewery through the First World War, but in September 1920 all the shares were bought by J.W. Green's brewery of Luton.

A new board of Green's men was put in, but the Luton company announced that Lucas's and its 52 pubs would continue to run separately – it even seems that a Lucas was working as manager. However, in 1923, the brewery, which employed 19 men, one woman and a boy, was closed down and its pubs amalgamated with Green's.

The brewery buildings survived until demolition in the early 1960s to make way for Crown House, and today the pubs are in the hands of Whitbread – and Hitchin beer, which Queen Elizabeth I used to drink for breakfast, is no more.

*John and Tess*

invite you to the

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## PUB NEWS

**First off**, Hertfordshire South branch sends its best wishes to Mick and Liz Sweet, late of the Good Beer Guide listed Verulam Arms in St Albans, who have just moved in to take over the **Cricketers** at Redbourn. Benskins bitter and Burton Ale are on sale at the moment with KK due to arrive shortly.

**The Railway Arms** in Nash Mills, an Allied tied house, has recently been closed. Although a fizz pub, such houses are the real ale outlets of tomorrow, and this area of the county has suffered more than its fair share of pub closures in recent times. Still over in the west, and the **Happy Hour** at Mill End, near Rickmansworth is now selling Draught Bass on handpump. The **Mayflower**, Hemel Hempstead, which has recently been swapped from Allied to Trumans is now serving Truman's bitter and Best bitter on handpumps.

**Local CAMRA members** send their best wishes to Mrs Cornhill, retiring landlady of the **Land of Liberty** in Herongate. Equally good wishes go to the new licensees Peter and Shirley Kent.

**40 pence a pint!** – yes, 40 pence per pint is the cost of McMullen's AK, if you drink at the **Rest and Welcome**, Haultwick between 7.30 and 9pm on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday evening. In fact, there is 10 pence off all draught beers (per pint) at those times. Mind you, the Rest and Welcome is worth visiting at any time. Licensees Rob and Marianne Sylvester run a lively country pub with excellent beer, and are particularly to be congratulated for raising a total of £821 for muscular dystrophy research last year – a superb feat for a small village pub.

**Farewell** to Gerry and Maxine Greaves, licensees of Greene King's **Jolly Waggoner** at Ardeley, who have done a great deal to revive the fortunes of this old country pub in recent years, successfully introducing good-value home-cooked food without destroying the rural atmosphere. This is probably the only one of Hertfordshire's pubs to have its photograph in The Times – featuring Gerry's dad behind the bar.

**A new conversion** to real ale is the **Fox** in Bishop's Stortford, an ex Ind Coope pub, and now a free house. The landlord, Tony Ranger, has bought the house after 18 years as a tenant. A small, basic pub, with a good, quiet drinking atmosphere – until the rugby club arrives! Rayments, BBA, Courage bitter and Directors are available on handpump. A new off-licence in Sawbridgeworth, as yet un-named, is selling Abbot Ale straight from the cask at 59p a pint to take away. The shop owner is the ex-landlord of the McMullen's Old English Gentleman in Waltham Abbey.

**New ownership** of the **Southern Cross Hotel** in Watford is going to mean a welcome increase in choice in the area. New boss, Mr Marcow, now has 6 handpumps installed on which he is selling Sam Smiths, Fullers London Pride, Young's Special, Ruddles County, Everards Tiger and Adnam's bitter. Eventually he hopes to have on sale a selection of 6 beers out of a larger range which should also include ales from Greene King, Marstons, Wadworths, McMullens and possibly more.

### Hertford pub news

Railway Street, Hertford, has lost its second pub in just over a year! Benskin's have closed the **Warren House**, just 14 months after McMullen's closed the **Punch Bowl**. Benskin's say they have yet to decide on what to do with the **Warren House**, so any interested buyers should contact the Estates Manager at Benskin's on WATFORD 28585. Could Hertford be gaining a Free House?

Rumours abound that Ind Coope are soon to give the **Plough** in London Road the Cavalier Steak House treatment. Of that ilk it seems that the Cavalier chain have one of the best reputations so perhaps the rather uninspiring **Plough** may take a step forward.

Both the **Old Barge** and the **Sportsman** are undergoing alteration work. The **Old Barge**, canalside at Folly Bridge is being extended and refurbished and work will be finished in early March. Here, the saloon bar will fuse with the ex-restaurant but landlord Don Blackett is trying to ensure that the pub's current 'atmosphere' is retained by introducing high-back settles and small drinking areas. Don hopes to add Benskin's KK Mild to the Benskin's Bitter and Burton Ale that are already on sale. Work on Folly Bridge continues to thwart vehicle access to the Old Barge from the Town Centre (at least until the end of March) so follow yellow diversion signs to Folly Island.

The **Sportsman** at the eastern end of Fore Street, is being extended to include a restaurant. The existing bars will still tempt passers by. Finally, McMullen's have started work on their new lager brewery in Hartham Lane.

Les Middlewood

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday March 3rd

Bar billiards match versus the Fox and Hounds, New Road, Croxley Green. 8.00pm start. (Greene King)

#### Tuesday March 9th

Dominoes match versus the Baron of Beef, Mill Lane, Welwyn. 8.00pm. (McMullens)

#### Wednesday March 17th

BRANCH MEETING at the Old Bull's Head, Baldock Street, Ware. 8.00pm prompt. (Benskins)

#### Tuesday April 6th

Pub survey of Wheathampstead district – meet at the Abbot John, Station Road, Wheathampstead at 7.30pm. (Benskins)

#### Tuesday April 13th

Hertfordshire Interbranch Meeting at the White Hart, Prospect Place, Welwyn. 8.00pm. (Wethereds)

For details of any of the above meeting contact Eric Sim on Hatfield 60647.

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday March 3rd

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

#### Wednesday March 10th

First-time social at the Red Lion, Offley. 8.00pm start. (Wethereds)

#### Wednesday March 17th

First-time social at the Chequers, Anstey. 8.00pm start (Ind Coope)

#### Tuesday April 6th

BRANCH MEETING, upstairs bar, Red Lion in Stevenage High Street. Note Tuesday, not Wednesday. 8.00pm (Greene King).

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

#### Thursday March 4th

Paines Brewery trip. Pick-up at Harlow 18.00hrs. Ring branch contact for details.

#### Monday March 8th

BRANCH MEETING at the Chequers, Wareside, 8.00pm. (Free house – Victoria bitter)

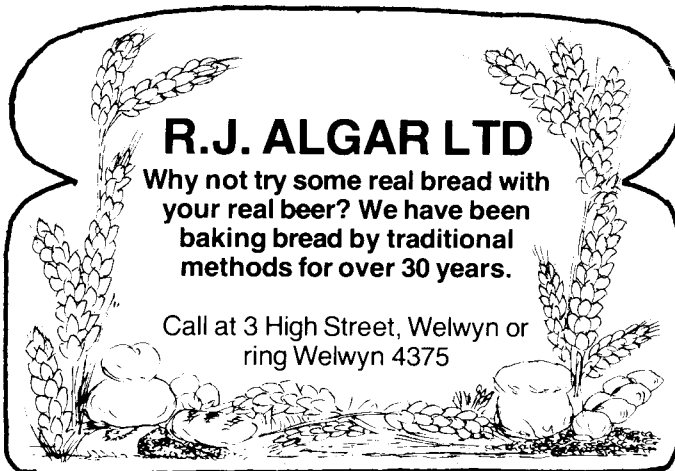
#### Monday March 22nd

Darts versus S.E. Essex branch at the Butcher's Arms, North End. 8.00pm (Ridleys)

#### Monday March 29th

Social at the Fox, Bishop's Stortford – a new real ale outlet. Say farewell to Pete Foster. 8.00pm (Free house)

**WOULD BRANCH SOCIAL SECRETARIES PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE COPY DATES AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE AND MAKE SURE THEIR DIARY ENTRIES ARE SUBMITTED BY THOSE DATES – OR EVEN BEFORE!**



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