

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE

Campaign  
CAMRA  
for Real Ale

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## BREWERIES BUBBLING UP EVERYWHERE

**The small brewery boom continues unabated in Hertfordshire.** The fourth new brewery in nine months got underway on a farm near Hitchin last month, the fifth, another pub brewery, should be starting right now in the village of Barley – and that makes seven breweries in the county in all, the biggest number for more than 30 years.

Mickles brewery, at Dog Kennel Farm, Lilley, started by four friends from Potters Bar, set several records when it opened. It was the first new brewery to be built in North Herts for more than 110 years, and the first farm-based brewery in the county since 1899.

Meanwhile, despite an entry to the contrary in the 1982 Good Beer Guide, the home brewery at the Fox and Hounds, Barley was still not in operation last month. But according to landlady Rita Nicholson, the equipment, supplied by Turner's Star brewery in Norwich and capable of producing 2½ barrels at a time, has been installed.

Rita said: "We are due to take some training in working the brewery for a few days in Norwich, and then we'll come back and start here, hopefully, about the middle of April.

"Our first beer will be an ordinary bitter, with an OG of around 1036, and then we'll see how it goes from there."

Meanwhile the small brewery disease has spread to neighbouring Bedfordshire, with the opening of the first mini-brewery in the county in Dudley Street, Luton.

The Coney Hall brewery, as it is called, is being run by an ex-student at Luton College of Technology, and though, at the time of writing, the beer had not been officially launched it was available in the college bar and at the Hatters Club, Luton.

See Many a Mickle on page 3.

### STOP PRESS . . . STOP PRESS

#### Another new brewery for Herts!

News has just arrived of the county's latest small brewing venture. Th Hedgehog Brewery, started by Mr A.F. Day and his wife April, has been set up in an old shoe shop in Watford. The shop used to be a pub so the cellar has proved invaluable. "Neither of us are brewers, but April used to be a tea-lady before we were married", quipped Alf. At first they will brew just one beer, Clarke's Special, which will have an original gravity somewhere between 1030 and 1055. "Current production is six pints," says April, "but we hope to raise that to seven or eight by the end of the week." Distribution is being kept down to pubs within a 150 mile radius and their dray, a converted 1970 Ford Transit sporting the brewery's logo of a hedgehog rampant over a tea-urn, can often be seen being towed into pub carparks and various garages in the county.

Quality, as usual, is a major problem for the small brewer, since Alf is only 4 feet 6 inches tall and can't see over the sides of the mash tun. "We realise that there may be a few duff batches in the first few months, but we should be able to increase this number considerably by the end of the year," says Alf. "We have a considerable price advantage over our larger competitors, however, with the beer costing only 6 or 7 pence a pint to brew you should be able to pick up a pint of Clarke's for under 80p."

CAMRA's liaison officer with the brewery, who drank the whole first week's production himself, says the beer has a "light, hoppy bite". We look forward to trying the beer when April can get down to Boots for some more malt extract.

### THE BARLEY MOW

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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.

Our car park is being greatly enlarged.

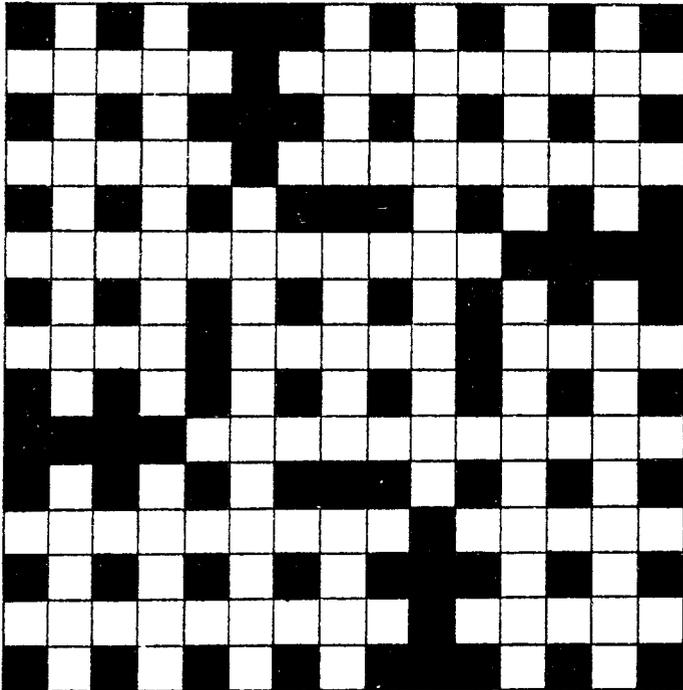
PLEASE NOTE – NO COACHES  
INCLUDING MINIBUSES, EXCEPT BY  
APPOINTMENT

# COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on May 14th will receive a copy of the 1982 Good Beer Guide. All entries must be marked APRIL COMPETITION. Please ensure that you enclose your name and address – 3 entries for the February competition came from anonymous sources! Results and solution will appear in the June newsletter.

## ALPHABETIC JIGSAW

Each answer starts with a different letter of the alphabet. Fit them in where they will go.



- A Girl of the month (5)
- B Balls seem unusually free of guilt (9)
- C Liquidated U.N. cocoa shop, being too noisy (11)
- D Is a promise kept by backward boy a denial? (9)
- E What you get from reflective chorale (4)
- F It makes up heads of Felinfoel, Robinsons, Okells, Theakstons and Hartleys (5)
- G Usual container for beer – barmaid serves by gravity (5)
- H Kids need a 'he' to play this game (4-3-4)
- I Radio talk included letter from Greece (4)
- J High winds resulting from rocket emission (3-6)
- K Was responsible for joint attack, weakened badly without three openers (5)
- L Good chance of finding it in central Uckfield (4)
- M Mr. Heath, after making U-turns initially, is dumb struck (5)
- N Explosion? It represents a part thereof (5)
- O You'd have difficulty with canoe here (5)
- P Peeled spuds and dumpling, makeshift Christmas dish (4-7)
- Q Retire embracing lover without too much on – it keeps the bed warm (5)
- R Remember about prayer (9)
- S Part of the gate post crate replaced (9)
- T These turn out good beer in Shropshire (5,4)
- U Indefensible tunnel Abe constructed (9)
- V Boast about deposit in Geneva, untaxed (5)
- W Fancifully, how Lord Peter behaves, we heard (11)
- X Gas showing 0-10 reverse (5)
- Y Shout in pain, caught by volleyed return (4)
- Z Lazy louse, even after shake-up, wouldn't work like this (9)

The winner of February's competition was Steve Parmenter of North London. The solution was as follows:

**Across:** Border Brewery, Banks, Container, Cartridge, Hocks, Shoals, Stropy, Mapping, Flourey, Comma, Saucerful, Assailant, Allot, Transposition.

**Down:** Ownership, Disorganisation, Recedes, Renders, Weather forecast, Runic, Aback, Frosty, Portfolio, Maclay, Gas lamp, Fourths, Cloth, Miser.

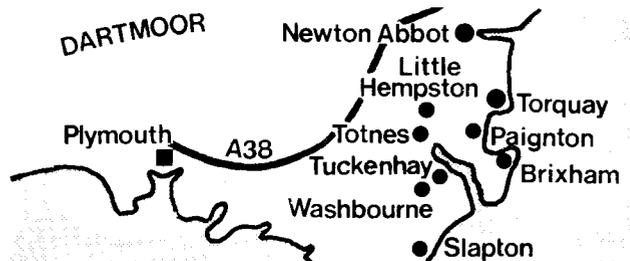
# HOLIDAY INNS

## First in a series of places to drink during the English "summer". This month Martyn Cornell looks at Torbay

More than a million people go on holiday to Torbay every year. But though the major attractions are sand, sea and sun, and the area is dominated by Big Six brewers Courage, there is still plenty of good drinking to be done in this particular part of South Devon.

The local Courage brewery is at nearby Plymouth, taken over in 1970, and quite a few pubs in the district serve up Plymouth brewery real ales. Sadly the delicious Heavy, a dark mild, despite its Scottish-sounding name, is harder to find. One place which does sell it is the Crown and Sceptre in Pettitor Road, St Marychurch. The pub also sells Courage Directors from the company's Bristol brewery.

In Paignton the Coverdale Hotel, Dartmouth Road, just down the road from the Bus Station, also sells Directors from Bristol, and hand-pumped Courage Best Bitter from Plymouth, as does the Globe in Fore Street, Brixham, a friendly pub in the centre of town with a decidedly nautical flavour.



If you're looking for the beers from South Devon's own small brewery, Blackawton, outlets tend to change, but one place that certainly was doing it was the Spinning Wheel on Paignton's Esplanade, opposite the Festival Theatre, where they also have – or had – Palmer's IPA and BB from Dorset and Draught Bass, all straight from the barrel.

The Quayside Hotel, King Street, Brixham also has Palmer's IPA, as well as live music every night, while in Drew Street, out of the town centre, there is Draught Bass and Usher's Best on handpump at the comfortable Brixham Skipper, and the powerful Eldridge Pope Royal Oak at the Three Elms Inn.

Back in Torquay an experience not to be missed is the Gibbs Mew Bishop's Tipple at the Chelston Manor Hotel, Old Mill Road, Chelston. Bishop's Tipple is really a draught barley wine, and hard to find in Devon.

The Clarence Hotel, opposite Torre railway station, sells Ind Coope bitter and Burton from handpump, if you're feeling homesick, while the Tartan bar at the Rainbow Hotel in Belgrave Road, near the sea, sells Whitbread Bitter, also known as Flowers bitter, from the Cheltenham brewery, to quench the thirsts of summertime disco fans.

Some of the best drinking in the area is to be found away from the coast, at the busy market town of Newton Abbot, on the A380. The popular Dartmouth in East Street sells Courage Heavy, Directors and Best Bitter, and the Jolly Abbot in the same street does excellent food as well as Eldridge Pope Royal Oak and Whitbread bitter from handpumps.

Out in the country there are dozens of excellent Devon free houses, including a cluster around the head of the Dart estuary well worth the journey out from Paignton or Brixham. The Maisters Arms at Tuckenhay has a superb view of the river, and sells its own cider as well as Blackawton bitter. At Little Hempston, on the A381 out of Totnes, is the Pig and Whistle, which provides Wadworth's 6X as well as Blackawton, Bass, Palmer's IPA and Courage Bitter.

Blackawton's own inn, the Normandy, has a collection of pictures and relics from the D-Day landings, as well as, naturally, Blackawton bitter. You'll have to come back for the potent Blackawton Headstrong, however – it's strictly a winter brew. The brewery is open for people who want to look around or buy polypins of beer, tee-shirts or sweatshirts, though it's no longer in Blackawton itself but at nearby Washbourne – telephone Harbertonford 339 for appointments.

Further afield, the Tower Inn at Slapton, near the Slapton Ley nature reserve, serves up a maximum of 14 different draught beers, including two more small breweries, Colleigh and Golden Hill. Bishop's Tipple again, Arkells from Swindon and Eldridge Pope. But be warned – driving in or out of the car park means negotiating a gap only six feet wide!

Finally no drinker's guide to South Devon would be complete without a mention of the Old Cider Bar in East Street, Newton Abbot. If not the only pub in the country licenced to sell only cider and wine, it's certainly one of very, very few. The cider comes from enormous wooden barrels behind the bar, and while it's probably not the sort of place to take delicate aunts, the booze is very cheap. However, everything you ever heard about Devon scrumpy is true, it is deceptively strong, so enjoy it, but treat it with respect.

\*The local guide to Devon can be obtained for £1 (inc. p & p) from R. Adams, 5 St Leonards Road, Newton Abbot, Devon.

## Many a Mickle . . .

The premises of Hertfordshire's latest brewery were a pigsty when the would-be brewers first moved in – literally.

Fortunately any odiferous evidence of the former inhabitants has long been cleared up, and the converted pigsty at Dog Kennel Farm, Lilley alongside the A505 that now houses Mickle's brewery is as spotlessly clean as brewery premises should be.

The brewery has been started by four friends from Potters Bar, who have gone into partnership with the farmer, Peter Allingham, a man more famous for training race horses than brewing beer. Originally they were due to move into farm premises near Potters Bar itself, but that deal fell through. However, one of the four is a friend of Mr Allingham, who offered them premises on his farm, and the partners moved in and started work at the beginning of this year.

The brewery gets its title from the first names of the original partners, Mick Birch and Les Kent, and although Mick has now dropped out the brewery's standard beer will still be known as Birch Bitter, OG 1038.

All the equipment in the brewery is new, the plant was supplied by Hickey and Company of Blackheath, the aluminium casks are all new, not second-hand, and the partners even got a cooperage to make them their own brand-new wooden casks, stamped with their own name.

Les Kent, a former sales officer and now the company's brewer and only full-time employee, says it cost some £40,000 to set the brewery up. But the plant, which went in just about two months ago now, is "first class", says Les, and the partners have every confidence of being a success.

Unusually, none of the four is the sort of age one normally associates with small breweries – the youngest is 45. Les himself admits he has no experience at all of brewing as a business, and neither have the others, though Les says: "I've done loads of home-brewing".

As yet the partners – the others are Reg Hawkes, an accountant and the company chairman, Fred Gayler, who lives in Hants, and Charlie Miller – have been too busy setting up the brewery and ironing out the initial inevitable bugs to set up many outlets.

The brewery did manage to get its first brew on sale at the Luton beer festival at the end of February, but problems getting a full extract from their malt mash meant the next brew had to be poured down the drain.

However, by the time you read this Birch Bitter should be on sale at Pints 'n' Litres in Potters Bar, another off-licence in Chingford, the British Legion club in Potters Bar, where three of the partners are members, among other places. They should also be supplying the Frog and Firkin in London, and the brewery plans to be at the Basingstoke beer festival, as well.

Your columnist manage to sample a couple of pints of the first brew at the brewery, while chatting to brewer Les – and if the beer, dark and bitter, is as good in the future as it was then, Mickles should have no problem selling a Muckle of pints.

## Quaker notes

This column has been, quite rightly, slapped over the wrists by Letchworth historian Kenneth Johnson for presenting inaccurate explanations of why Letchworth Garden City was a "dry" town for so many years, and placing the blame on the Quakers.

There were actually eight referendums in Letchworth from 1907 to 1958 over whether the town should be wet or dry, and the first licenced bar

never appeared in Letchworth town centre until 1962.

But the force which managed to produce majorities against the demon drink year after year was not the Quakers, but the "militant mothers", as Mr Johnson calls them, of the British Women's Temperance Association, led by Mrs W.R. Eckersley, a Christian activist but not a Quaker.

Ebenezer Howard, whose ideas led to the founding of Letchworth as a garden city, was in favour of a public house in the town, controlled by the people.

But a public meeting in the town in 1906 voted 97-78 against a public house. The company which controlled Letchworth agreed to hold a referendum of the townspeople before any licence in the town would be agreed, and polls in 1907, 1908, 1912, 1920, 1924, 1933 and 1939 all gave applications for licenced premises the thumbs-down.

Even the 1958 referendum vote was only in favour of our licenced hotel bar, not a pub, and Mr Johnson says: "It is a fact that none of the subsequent alcohol outlets in the garden city has had the people's consent in the polls that were promised by the founders."

## BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch Martyn Cornell ☎ Stevenage 60675

Hertfordshire South Branch Maff Bury ☎ St Albans 3663

Herts-Essex Borders Branch P. Smith ☎ Epping 73677

## THE SOUTHERN CROSS



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## PUB NEWS

The **Jolly Sailors** in Buntingford has added handpumped Ruddles bitter to its range. This welcome real ale oasis on the A10 has also recently re-opened its restaurant, with a new chef and a new menu. Despite the changes the barmaids remain as gorgeous as ever!

We have recently received a list of outlets from Trumans for their new beers, Best Bitter, Bitter and Prize Mild. It looks as though most of their outlets are expected to take the handpumped brews and, although the list is probably incomplete, the pubs mentioned are the **Pyramid** (B, PM), the **Man in the Moon** (BB, B) and the **Gamekeeper** (BB, B), all in Stevenage; the Good Beer Guide listed **King Stag** (BB, B, PM) in Bushey; the **Chequers Inn** (BB), Redbourn; the **Partridge** (BB, B) and the **Pheasant** (B), both in Oxhey; the **Crown and Anchor** (BB, B) and the **Alexandra** (BB) in High Barnet; the **Old Cock Inn** (BB), Harpenden; in London Colney the **King's Head** (BB, B) and the **Golden Lion** (BB, B); both the **Royal Oak** (BB, B) and the **Leviathan** (BB, B) in Watford; the **Victoria** (BB, B), Cheshunt; the **Rye House** (BB, B) in Hoddesdon; the **Cat and Fiddle** (BB) in Radlett. As you can see it looks as though most pubs will be doing the two bitters, with the mild less readily available, but enquiries suggest that the list is by no means complete and that drinkers will have to go looking for themselves – certainly in the next few months. Many of the Truman's outlets in nearby Edgware, Enfield, Luton, Harlow and North London will also be serving the beers. The old days of Burton Ale are back with us again!

The **Spotted Bull** in Verulam Road, St Albans, has re-opened after 4 months renovation work with handpumped Wethereds as one of its attractions.

A new sort of pub is being tried by Ind Coope in East Herts – the semi-free house.

The pub chosen is the Buffalo's Head, until now an all-fizz house in the village of Puckeridge, just off the A10.

In future it will carry Ind Coope hand-pumped beers, including both Benskin's and Ind Coope bitter, but though the landlord will still be an Ind Coope tenant, he will be allowed to get his wines, spirits, soft drinks and bottled beers from wherever he likes – plus one "free" real ale as well.

Landlord of the **Buffalo's Head**, which coincidentally celebrates its 300th birthday this year, will be Ian Miller, formerly of the Chequers at Woolmer Green and the White Hart, Stevenage, both GBG pubs under his management.

Ian said: "It's an experiment by the brewery in a pub that's not been too profitable before.

"My plan at the moment is to have Victoria bitter as my regular "free" beer at the pub, with guest beers every five or six weeks or so that aren't available in London or the South East or that come from one of the other new small breweries.

# Pints 'n' Litres

**FULL FREE OFF LICENCE**

- ★ Real Ales to take away ★  
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**GREENE KING – ADNAMS – EVERARDS**

- ★ This month's guest beers ★

Wadworth's 6X (65p pint), Felinfoel DD (63p pint)

- ★ Special Offer – Mickie's Birch Bitter (45p pint) ★

- ★ Polypins and casks supplied to order ★

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## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTS SOUTH BRANCH

#### Tuesday April 6th

Wheathampstead District Pub Survey. Meet at Abbot John, Wheathampstead 7.30pm. (Benskins)

#### Tuesday April 13th

Interbranch Liaison Meeting (including Herts Guide) White Hart, Welwyn. Start 8.00pm. (Wethereds & Flowers)

#### Tuesday April 20th

BRANCH MEETING at the White Hart, South Mimms. Start 8.00pm. (McMullens)

#### Thursday April 22nd

Darts Match and Social, Farriers Arms, St Albans. Start 8.00pm. (McMullens)

#### Tuesday May 18th

BRANCH MEETING at the Cricketers, Redbourn. Start 8.00pm. (Benskins)

Contact: Eric Sim Hatfield 60647.

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Tuesday April 6th

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

#### Wednesday April 14th

Social at the Farmer's Boy, Langley, 8.00pm. (Greene King)

#### Wednesday April 21st

Good Beer Guide discussion for 1983 edition. Venue will be announced at April 6th meeting.

#### Wednesday April 28th

Joint social with the Cambridge Branch at the Royal Oak, Barrington. For transport details ring Martin Connolly on Hitchin 52907. (Adnams, Greene King)

#### Wednesday May 12th

BRANCH MEETING at the Motte and Bailey, Pirton, 8.00pm. These details are provisional. (Free House)

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

#### Monday April 5th

Social at the Rising Sun, Bishop's Stortford, 8.00pm (Truman's)

#### Monday April 19th

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Horseshoes, Great Parndon, 8.00pm start. (Ind Coope)

#### Monday April 26th

Darts versus the Chelmsford Branch at the Bell, Ongar, 8.00pm. (Free House)

#### Monday May 3rd

Social at the Old English Gentleman, Waltham Abbey, 8.00pm. (McMullen's)

#### Monday May 17th

BRANCH MEETING at the Bull, Much Hadham, 8.00pm start. (Benskins)

#### Thursday May 20th

Brewery trip to Shepherd Neame's. Coach arranged. Ring Epping 73677 for details.

### MID CHILTERN BRANCH

#### Tuesday April 6th

BRANCH MEETING at The Cock, Sarratt, 8.30pm. (Ind Coope)

#### Tuesday April 20th

Anti social. Plough, Jockey End (Markyate) 8.30pm.

#### Tuesday April 27th

Social at the Rose and Crown, Chesham, 8.30pm.

## TWO MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### May 6th - 9th

**THE CHILTERN BEER FESTIVAL** at the Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead. For details telephone Hemel 64451 or call at the Pavilion. Tickets in advance from the Pavilion for £1 – booking is advised – £1.50 on the door if available. Open 1pm to 5pm (Sat and Sun only), 7pm to 11pm. More information next month.

### April 14th - 17th

9th Cambridge Beer Festival at the Corn Exchange, Cambridge. Open 11.00-15.00 and 17.00-22.00 (21.30 Wed and Thur). 50 different real ales, real scrumpy cider, farmhouse cheese and real bread, and live entertainment. Admission 20 pence.

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 TYPED 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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