

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1982

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 52

LOOSENED TIE UNLIKELY

It looks as though the brewery tied house system is to remain intact – at least as far as the EEC is concerned.

It was hoped that recommendations by the European Community's advisory committee on restrictive practices and monopolies would bring about some relaxation of the current system. Representations by CAMRA's Monopolies Committee had suggested that tenants should, at least, be allowed to stock one additional draught beer, not provided by the controlling brewer, of their own choice. Even this limited amount of additional freedom seems unlikely to be recommended by the committee. It looks as though the tie on wines and spirits may be relaxed. At the moment the proposals, which are being draughted to run for the next 10 years, are being sent out to interested parties for comment.

Meanwhile, one brewer is looking at ways of relaxing the tie. See "Benskins loosen up" inside.

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.

SOUTHERN CROSS HOTEL, LANGLEY ROAD, WATFORD
TELEPHONE: WATFORD 25168

THE BARLEY MOW

VARIETY IS
THE SPICE
OF LIFE



TRY OUR
15 REAL
ALES

TYTTENHANGER GREEN

YOU CAN STILL BUY A PINT FOR ONLY 57
PENCE!

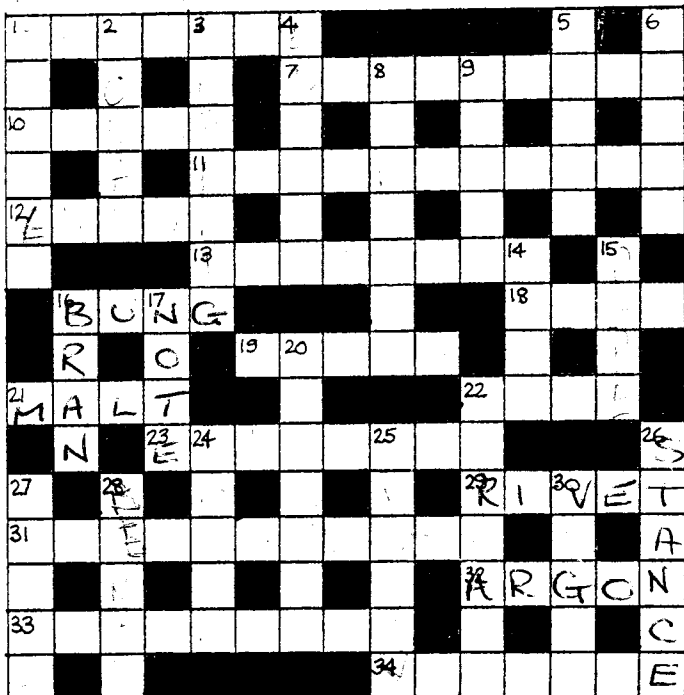
We now have ample car parking space available to make it easier to use our garden facilities. Barbecues most evenings from 8.30 on – weather permitting.

Finalist in the St Albans' Council Health Department's "Clean Food Competition" for pubs in the St Albans area.

PLEASE NOTE – NO COACHES
INCLUDING MINIBUSES, EXCEPT BY
APPOINTMENT

COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on July 12th will receive a copy of Capital Ale – the guide to traditional beer in London. All entries must be marked JUNE COMPETITION. No enclosures other than your crossword entry please as they will probably be overlooked since I don't open all the envelopes.



Across

- 1 and 3 down Welis without water would have this imminent problem situation (7,7)
- 7 Only insect in river, one not previously seen (9)
- 10 Staggered, we hear, coming from the Goat (5)
- 11 Mashing real brew with art – heavenly liquid found here (5-6)
- 12 Boredom provided by drunken nuisance (5)
- 13 Standard co-operative in the usual manner (8)
- 16 Leaving aside non-drinkers, butt s initially no good without this (4)
- 18 With tender back he throws a lovely dart (4)
- 19 Heavy is intoxicating if the number involved is greatly increased (5)
- 21 Essential ingredient of our normal tipple (4)
- 22 Sort of apple tree? (4)
- 23 and 15 down Do they brew Old, Pedigree, and a bit of Porter? Yes and no (8,4)
- 29 Some beer I've tasted could be described as pop (5)
- 31 With no right, Scotch reel he danced in light material (11)
- 32 Some of the atmosphere in bar gone (5)
- 33 Nothing to drink? Let's swear – that's not right (9)
- 34 French 2-star's distinctive nature (7)

Down

- 1 True – this is drunk around southern bit of Kent (6)
- 2 Drink extracts of hock (keg and tank) (5)
- 3 See 1 cross
- 4 Burns, perhaps, tried different layout when nothing sent in (6)
- 5 What you won't hear from worker on shiftwork after getting up (5)
- 6 Brewer known by originally high gravities? (5)
- 8 Help for head production, in brewery and pub? (7)
- 9 Caught right in the back – that's a drag (5)
- 14 One still to be observed high up? (4)
- 15 See 23 across
- 16 Transport system an aid to movement? (4)
- 17 School faces up to mark (4)
- 20 Organic problem near: a chemist partially solves it (7)
- 22 Second extra note about jugged hare, maybe (7)
- 24 A light ale's mixed with a drop of Ruddles (5)
- 25 Divine right to go in a semi-conscious state (6)
- 26 It might be taken up difficult ascent (6)
- 27 Farmer's cow likes to look gloomy, you see (5)
- 28 In December the sea-bed is visible (5)
- 30 Various extracts, greens and noodles begin to satisfy one (5)

The winner of April's competition, and a 1982 Good Beer Guide, was P.J. Knowler of Much Hadham. The solution was as follows:

Across: April, Zealously, Ocean, Blameless, Cacophonous, Iota, Muted, Echo, Hide-and-Seek, Untenable, Froth, Recollect, Vaunt.

Down: Spectator, Disavowal, Yell, Plum pudding, Quilt, Glass, Whimsically, Nitre, Jet-stream, Three Tuns, Knead, Xenon, Luck.

QUICK ONES

Waterside watering holes

Benskin's latest in a series of mini pub guides has just been published listing their houses along the Grand Union Canal in the west of the county. Entitled Canalside Pubs, it is an attractive little fold-out guide to 18 of their pubs, similar in format to the list of historic pubs which we reviewed in the March newsletter. Copies should be available from Benskins or, presumably, the pubs themselves. For some reason pubs such as the Old Barge by the canal in Hertford receive no mention, but nevertheless, this should prove very useful for boaters and walkers alike.



The Three Horseshoes, Winkwell

Champion ales

Last month's very enjoyable Chiltern Beer Festival, held in Hemel, featured a Beer of the Festival Competition. In fact, it featured 3 beers – best mild, best ordinary bitter and best strong bitter. Best mild was adjudged to be Truman's new Prize Mild (although I can personally vouch for the excellence of the Greene King XX – Ed); best strong bitter was a tie between the ever popular Fullers ESB and Ruddles County; and best bitter was taken by the county's very own Victoria Brewery with their bitter. Special mention should also be made of the Chiltern brewery and the Sussex brewery whose bitters were also short-listed. It's good to see the small brewers doing so well in competitions such as this. The 'finalists' were selected by the public using voting slips and the 3 most popular brews from each section were then judged in a blind tasting by a panel of "experts". These included Michael Jackson, journalist and author of the World Guide to Beer; Tim Amsden, CAMRA's national chairman; and Roger Protz, editor of the Good Beer Guide.

JUG & BOTTLE SERVICE AVAILABLE

FREE JAZZ SUNDAY LUNCHTIMES

The Goat Inn

VARIETAS CONDIT VITAM

JUNE'S GUEST ALES INCLUDE:-
Ned Belchers Bitter; Gales HSB;
Dorset Original IPA; Turners Royal Flush
TRADITIONAL CIDER NOW ON
HANDPUMP

Extensive lunch menu – Good Food Guide recommended.
 Family room weekend lunchtimes.

'CAPRA SUPPER THEATRE'
Every Tuesday Night
 Reservations recommended – Tel: St Albans 60881

WIN A POLYPIN OF GOAT BITTER
Ask at bar for details

Malt – The Hertfordshire grape

“I buy the best malt – Hertfordshire malt” – that is what Charles Barclay of Barclay Perkins, then the biggest of the London brewers, told a House of Commons committee in 1809, echoing the opinion of others – including Daniel Defoe and Queen Elizabeth I – over hundreds of years.

Indeed, the cultivation of barley in Hertfordshire goes back two millennia, quite probably to before the Roman invasion. Certainly a 1st century AD coin of Cunobelin, Shakespear’s Cymbeline, whose kingdom covered Hertfordshire, shows on one side an ear of cultivated barley, indicating where the kingdom’s wealth lay.

The Celts, who were partial to their ale, would have discovered early on that Hertfordshire’s light, well-drained chalky soil, particularly in the north of the county, grew a light, thin-skinned barley that was much easier for early maltsters to turn into good malt for brewing than barley grown on heavier soils.

The Saxons, too, seem to have known about the quality of Hertfordshire malt. Early in the 10th century the manor of Ardeley was given to the dean and chapter of St Paul’s, London. Later, at least, the income for the manor was used “for maintenance of the keeper of St Paul’s brewhouse”. Manorial rents were generally paid in kind, and right up until the 16th century Ardeley was a big malting village – so this may well be the earliest known example of London brewers going for Herts malt.

The county was definitely supplying grain to London in 1247, and by 1339 there were complaints of severe damage to roads leading into and through Ware, because of the “unreasonable” loads of malt travelling in and out of the town.

Ware was ideally situated to become the centre of the malting industry, Ermine Street, now the A10, came down through the town, channelling barley supplies not just from Hertfordshire’s richest barley-growing areas, but also from Huntingdon, Northampton, Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk on the way to London. It also stood on the River Lea, another important source of transport. Ware maltsters soon acquired the skills that attracted even more business their way, and malting became Hertfordshire’s first major industry.

Historian Peter Mathias described the area around Ware and Bishop’s Stortford as the cradle of the malting industry in Britain, “the oldest and most mature malting area in the country”. Queen Elizabeth I preferred a slightly different part of the county – it is said that when the Spanish ambassador threatened to stop exporting their wines to England in retaliation for some English attack, the Queen replied: “A figge for Spain, so long as Royston will afford such plentie of good malts”. The Virgin Queen is also supposed to have drunk beer made from Hitchin malt for breakfast, and to have boasted of the quality of her “Hitchin grape”.

The Hertfordshire maltsters specialised in brown malts, roasted for longer in the kiln, and when in the 1720s the porter boom began in London, and the demand for dark malts increased rapidly, the county’s industry only confirmed its pre-eminence. Daniel Defoe, writing in 1724, said that Hertfordshire malt was “esteemed the best in England”. Ware malt commanded such a premium with the London brewers that Suffolk and Norfolk barley growers used to send their grain on the very difficult journey overland via Ware, rather than by ship, just so they could attach that town’s name to their product.

The opening of the Stort navigation in 1766 enabled Bishop’s Stortford maltsters to get at the London trade, and their business increased accordingly, but it never reached anything like the level of Ware. In 1788

Ware had 33 maltings. By the end of the century 5,000 quarters of malt a week were travelling to London from Ware – enough to produce more than 60 per cent of the capital’s beer.

The barley for all this malt came from at least nine different counties, and the trade threw up all sorts of specialist occupations, such as the malt factors, men whose job it was to buy the malt from the maltsters and then let the big London brewers have it on extended credit. Most of the maltsters themselves were fairly small businessmen, but one, James King, told a House of Commons committee in 1806 that he owned 12 malthouses, three in Ware, two in Hertford, two at Barkway, one in Royston and four in Baldock.

The brewers were beginning to realise, however, that Hertfordshire brown malt was not very good value for money – the browning process destroyed a lot of the starches – and one or two were already turning to places like Norfolk for their supplies. Most still preferred to pay over the odds for Ware malt, however, a fact which annoyed the rest of the country’s maltsters intensely. A Norfolk maltster, Crisp Brown, complained to that same 1806 committee that he bought some Ware malt for 78 shillings a quarter, and when five minutes later he told a London buyer it was his own from Norfolk he was offered only 72 shillings a quarter for it.



Even though other parts of the country were now able to supply malt as good as, or better than Hertfordshire malt, though grown on heavy soils, the sheer number of maltings and maltsters in Hertfordshire still meant it remained an important centre. A directory of 1838 lists 82 maltsters in Hertfordshire, from Baldock to Tring, 20 at Ware alone, and Ware at this time had 80 maltings in use. As Mathias wrote: “The tapering flues of the malt kilns at the end of the maltings gave as characteristic an appearance to the little Hertfordshire malting towns as did the oasts to a Kentish hop village.”

In 1870 John Cussans was still able to write that the parishes of Ware, Stanstead, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop’s Stortford “probably produce more malt than any other four parishes in the country”. Ware itself, he said, made “far more malt than any other town in the kingdom”, and the malt tax collected in Ware totalled £200,000 a year.

However, by 1890 there were only 29 purely malting concerns left in the county. At the start of the First World War the number was down to just ten (though the largest, Harringtons of Ware, had 11 maltings from Wheathampstead to Baldock). In 1937 the total had shrunk to eight. Now there are only four – Pauls and Sandars at Ware, who took over Harrington Page in 1965; Associated British Maltsters in Sawbridgeworth, formerly Taylors; French and Jupp at Stanstead St Margarets, and J.R. Page on the edge of Baldock, now owned by Paines of St Neots.

On the other hand old malting buildings can be found in almost every town in the county, their unmistakable outline – long and low, generally with a tall pyramid-shaped kiln at one end, and often with the vanes still attached on top – hiding a host of new uses. One at Kings Langley is now a church hall, another at Watford is a garage, a third in Stevenage is used as classrooms, one in the centre of Hertford has been converted into flats, while in Ware a brewery has started in one old maltings and an arts centre in another – all living monuments to the Hertfordshire grape.

BENSKINS

Lifts up Herts.

Benskins Bitter • KK Mild • Draught Burton Ale

PUB NEWS

Firstly good news from McMullens, starting with apologies to the manager of the **Camp** in St Albans. In our article the Best and Worst of St Albans, last month, we included the pub in our list of fizz houses. When the article was written that was certainly the case, but very soon after handpumps were installed to serve up Country bitter. The number of worst places to drink in the city has fallen yet again. Also Mac's pubs, the **Prince of Wales** and the **Wheelwrights**, close neighbours in Goff's Oak, near Cheshunt, have both had pumps installed for Country. The new tenant of the **John Barleycorn** in Coleman Green, near Wheathampstead, has put in his own pumps for Country and AK – a lively pub with recommended lunches and beer.

Another new outlet for Benskins KK is the **Stag** in the Swillett, Rickmansworth, which is serving the beer alongside Benskins bitter. The **Swan**, Pimlico, is selling Flower's Original as well as Wethered's bitter. Two more outlets for Flower's are the **Bridge House**, Potters Bar, and the **Green Dragon**, Potters Bar. The Green Dragon also has Fremlin's Tusker on sale – an unusual beer for this area.

McMullens have submitted a further planning application to East Hertfordshire Council to demolish the **Three Horseshoes** at Hooks Cross, on the A602 just outside Stevenage, and to build a new pub in its place. This popular pub is well worth a visit for the handpumped Country Bitter – while you're there have a good look at the building, and see if you can think of any good reason why it should be knocked down.



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Joint Husband and Wife Membership £6

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I/we agree to abide by the Memorandum and
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(Subscription Account) No. 50187887, now the sum
of £5/6* and annually on this date until
further notice.

Name _____ Bank A/c Number _____

Address _____ Bank Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

*Delete as appropriate.
Please use BLOCK CAPITALS

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday June 15th

Hertfordshire Liaison Meeting at the White Hart, Welwyn, 8.00pm.
(Wethered's and Flower's)

Tuesday June 22nd

BRANCH MEETING at the Fox and Hounds, New Road, Croxley
Green. 8.00pm start. (Greene King)

**The month of June is to be devoted to pub surveys for the new
Hertfordshire beer guide – contact Eric Sim on Hatfield 60647 for
details.**

Saturday July 3rd

McMullen's Tug-of-War Championships at the Mops and Brooms,
Well End, Borehamwood, 2.30pm. EVERYONE WELCOME

Tuesday July 6th

Darts versus Enfield and Barnet Branch at the Rose and Crown,
Essendon. 8.00pm. (Ind Coope)

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Branch contact for details

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday June 7th

Joint social with North Herts Branch at the Buffalo's Head, High
Street, Puckeridge, 8.00pm. (Benskins and Victoria – or possibly
other guest beer)

Monday June 14th

Joint social with South West Essex Branch at the Bell, Ongar. 8.00pm
start. (Free House)

Monday June 21st

BRANCH MEETING at the Garnon Bushes, Coopersale, 8.00pm.
(Charrington)

Monday July 5th

Social at the Rose and Crown, Hoddesdon, 8.00pm. (Wethered's and
Flower's)

Monday July 12th

BRANCH MEETING at the Three Tuns, Bishop's Stortford, 8.00pm.
(Rayments)

MID-CHILTERNS BRANCH

Tuesday June 8th

BRANCH MEETING at the Green Dragon, Flaunden. 8.30pm start.
(Free House)

Thursday June 17th

Anti-Social in Hemel Hempstead – meet at the Fishery, Boxmoor, at
8.00pm.

Tuesday June 29th

Social at the Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesden, 8.30pm. (Free
House with own brewery)

★ LAND SERVICES ★

Offering the construction of patios and
barbeques (the licensed trade is our
speciality) as well as tree felling/lopping and
general garden maintenance.

For details and prices phone

Bob Hewitt on Watford 39261

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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