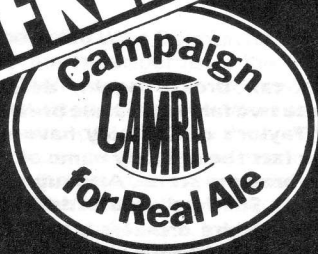


FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1982

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 56

Bottom of the Class

In the enormous real ale boom since 1976, while other brewers have rushed to cope with public demand and put traditional beer back into their pubs, one big name has been left far behind—Greene King.

The figures are now appalling. In North Herts, where the Biggleswade company owns 75 pubs, almost three times as many as the next biggest company, 70 per cent of non-Greene King pubs sell real ale—compared with only 32 per cent of Greene King ones.

That represents only 24 real Greene King pubs in all, a sorry contrast with Ind Coope—Benskins, who manage 24 real ale pubs out of only 26, Whitbread do better than the Abbot brewers, with 27 real out of 46, 58 per cent, McMullen have 17 pubs out of 29, or 57 per cent, Charrington, Wells, Rayment and Truman all have between 60 and 75 per cent of their pubs selling real ale. Even Rayment—a Greene King subsidiary—have 100 per cent real ale in their North Herts pubs, while 84 per cent of free houses in the area offer it. Only Watneys have a worse record. Can it really be that everyone else is out of step except our Johnny?

The figures look even worse when contrasted with 1976, when the very first Herts beer guide came out. Then only 6.3 per cent of non-Greene King pubs in North Herts sold real ale, while 22 per cent of Greene Kings outlets offered the proper stuff.

Since then Greene King have changed from having by far the best record on real ale to the one with almost the worst. The other companies which include four of the biggest brewers in Britain—haven't put in handpumps right left and centre just because CAMRA asked them. They know there's money in giving people real ale. Why do Greene King persist in not giving the public what they want? It is doing a disservice not only to their drinkers, but to their landlords, who are losing out to the real ale pub run by Whitbread or Ind Coope or McMullens just down the road.

This not giving the public a proper service has another serious aspect. All the non-real ale villagers left in North Herts have one or more Greene King pubs. The town with the smallest percentage of real beer pubs, Baldock, is almost totally monopolised by Greene King. Their policies are, in some cases, totally depriving drinkers of the choice between real ale and keg. If you live in Lilley there are two pubs to go to, but both sell only fizz Greene King. In Benington, Graveley, Great Wymondley, Breachwood Green, Holwell, Hormead, real ale would be available again if only Greene King installed handpumps for their beer.

Almost as numerous are the places where every pub except the Greene King one sells unpressurised ale. Ofley, Braughing, Shephall in Stevenage, Ickleford have 15 pubs between them of which the four Greene King tied houses—one in each place—are the only ones not to supply real beer.

The tragedy is that Greene King beers on handpump, properly looked after, are unbeatable—Abbot is justly famed, IPA is delicious, XX dark mild is superb, and KK light mild is extremely refreshing.

When are Green King going to wake up, do the right thing by their landlords and drinkers, and recognise the real ale revolution is here to stay?

Martyn Cornell

Pints 'n' Litres

- ★ Real ales to take away ★
- served by handpump from our refrigerated cellar
- ★ ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS POLYPINS NOW ★
- for example

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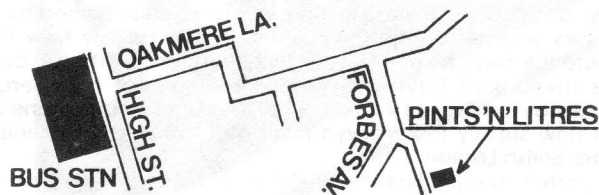
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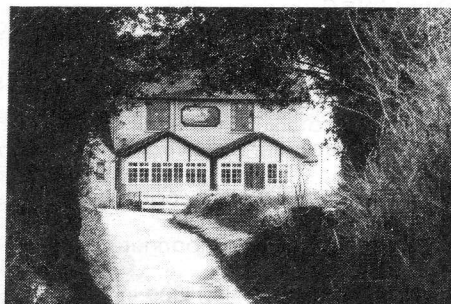
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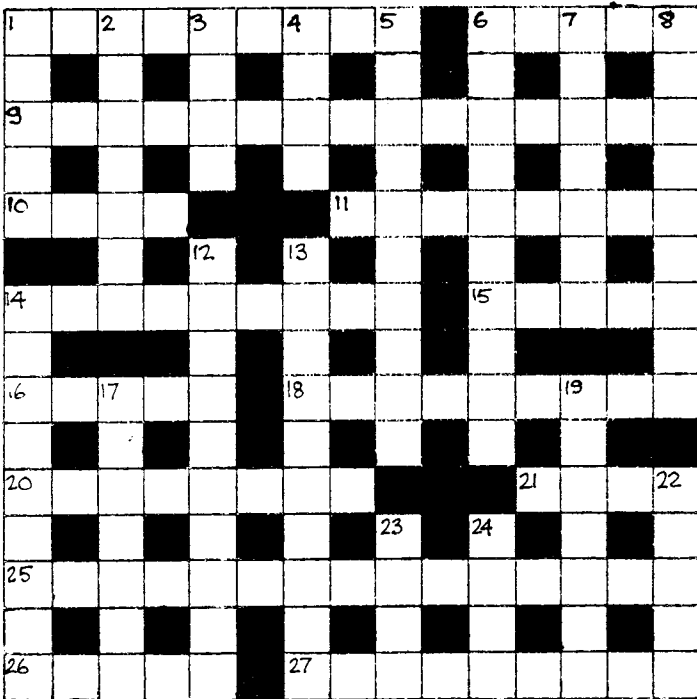
TRY OUR 15 REAL ALES

We will be reopening on November 25th after our renovations. We now think the pub looks great — come along and see for yourself!

**PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES
INCLUDING MINI BUSES**

COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on December 10th will receive a copy of Michael Jackson's Pocket Guide to Beer. Entries must be marked October competition. No other enclosures please except names and addresses.



Across

- 1 They use barley for beer in Stockport and water elsewhere (9)
- 6 N & O are two which together make one to cause a laugh (5)
- 9 Bet Brian manages to get involved where the cheap stuff
- 10 Cylindrical barrel finally filled with spirit (4) is (7,8)
- 11 Corruption in police returns - what I say is taken down (8)
- 14 Keg beer might cause this: run the bar differently (9)
- 15 River in St Albans, mentioned in Old Testament, is open to
- 16 There's no **Sun** now - that's a strange thing (5) view (5)
- 18 Short held with difficulty at the limit of consciousness (9)
- 20 Picture a pint drunk with gin (8)
- 21 A bit left in Shipstone's first barrel (4)
- 25 Risky place to be, except in politics? (6,2,3,4)
- 26 It might be used when drinking in the street naked (5)
- 27 Road shyre? Yes, but that's spelt wrongly (9);

Down

- 1 Getting a bird into trouble is crazy (5)
- 2 Where shorts are popular... (7)
- 3 ... like this or not (4)
- 4 Has snow drifted? (4)
- 5 Still gets nasty air to circulate (10)
- 6 This is better than tumbledown huts, e.g., by Yorkshire river (5-5)
- 7 Unusual respect shown sometimes by the Crown (7)
- 8 A tart's due to become sodden (9)
- 12 Something obligatory a twat let us do wrong (7,3)
- 13 One place where beer's brewed is another and what it sometimes comes from (10)
- 14 Many drinkers of real ale may consider such dispensers to be indispensable (9)
- 17 Keen student finds brewing partner in **King George** and **Queen Elizabeth** (7)
- 19 What we're shown at closing time in the beer garden? (7)
- 22 Hall & Woodhouse beers have no right to this emblem (5)
- 23 Volcano before erupting skywards (4)
- 24 Comes home partly for engagement (4)

The winners of July and August's crossword were Nigel Meadows of Plough in Datchworth and G. T. English of St Albans Telephone Exchange.

The solution was as follows:

Across: Beehive, Fairway (Tavern), Stir, Readership, Funnel, Tidiness, Statement, Asset, Ditch, Whodunnit, Reindeer, (Tavern), Cricketers, Goat, Red Lion, Useless.

Down: Entrust, Heron, Verulam, Agenda, Rising Sun, An issue, Cart and Horses, Technical, Icefree, Detests, Inroads, Hereto, Vigil.

Needless to say there was a clue missing from September's crossword-15 down. The clue for this is: Reserve vessel found on bar? (3-6)

QUICK ONES

Bank's draught

Drinkers all over the country can breath again, despite appearances to the contrary those two famous real ale brewers Banks of Wolverhampton and Taylor's of Keighley have not merged-Banks and Taylor's is in fact the unlikely name of the latest arrival on the local micro brewery scene. Although the brewery is just over the border in Shefford, Bedfordshire, a point of major interest to Hertfordshire drinkers is that the beer may soon appear in your local Whitbread pub. Shefford Bitter is a well hopped, medium gravity beer and its first outlets in Hertfordshire were free houses the Highlander in Hitchin and the Cricketers at Ickleford and Whitbread tied house, the Sailor Boy at Walsworth. Hitchin.

The brewers are Martin Ayres, who was made redundant by Whitbread and Mike Desquesnes, an ex-builder, with initial help from Bill Urquhart, a brewery consultant. They face strong competition in the immediate area with Mickles of Lilley and Coney Hall of Luton having started brewing in the last six months. However they started off with a blaze of publicity, including items on television and they also have the advantage of the connection with Whitbread.

A Whitbread representative is reported as saying, 'We always try to help our former employees when we can, and a couple of area managers have decided to give Martins brew a try'. While the Sailor Boy is the only Whitbread pub selling the beer at the moment, it thus looks as though we can hope for more outlets in the near future.

Everything looks rosy on the Whitbread front at the moment, with this loosening of the tie, the Alford Arms home-brew pub, the introduction of Flower's Original alongside Wethered's and even rumours about the experimentation with brewing cask beer at Luton. However one word of warning—a hefty price rise recently left Wethered's selling for 70p a pint in many pubs, and the Shefford Bitter is 72p a pint in the Sailor Boy, compared with 62-64p in the free houses!

M.J.C.

Talking history

Herts Newsletter columnist Martyn Cornell is giving a talk next month on brewing in South West Herts to the Watford Industrial History Society.

The talk, which will cover the history of Benskins, Sedgwicks, Healeys and the other Watford brewers, as well as those of Rickmansworth and Mill End, is on Thursday November 18th at the Central Library in Watford, starting at 7.45 pm.

Because the talk is being sponsored by the library admission will be by free ticket, available from the library itself in Hempstead Road, Watford, either by personal application or sae.

All change at Paines

It's likely that we'll be seeing more of Paine's Ales in Hertfordshire's free houses, as the brewery has recently changed hands. In a surprising move, the malting and home-brew kit company which operated Paine's Brewery at St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, have sold the brewery and 20 of their 23 pubs to a consortium of Cambridgeshire businessmen who have links with the holiday and travel trade.

The company will be called James Paine Brewery Limited, and spokesman David Miller, a keen real ale drinker, has told CAMRA that the future of Paine's real ale is assured. In fact, there will be more of it, as the new owners hope to extend the brewery and increase production, particularly with a view to supplying the free trade.

P.L.

Harlow, Harlow, what are you Tewin?

Rayments and Greene King (Biggleswade) have swapped one pub each—to rationalise delivery routes. Greene King gain the Rose and Crown, Tewin, a top-pressure pub once owned by Trust Houses. Rayments take the Archer's Dart in Harlow New Town, where the beer is served by gravity from an overhead 'cellar'. The number of Rayments houses selling real ale therefore increases to 18 out of 24. As part of the same deal Greene King will now supply the Welwyn Football Club and Rayments the Ware British Legion.

For more news just write to: Daily Mail, Broadhead Lane, The City, London E.C.4.

THE CORNELL COLUMN

Real beer and potatoes

The entire West German nation is seething over the one move by the bureaucrats of the EEC liable to lead to Germany instantly leaving the Common Market and declaring World War Three—a threat to abolish their beer purity laws.

It was, after all, the one matter upon which the former independent state of Bavaria insisted upon before it would join the new German republic back in 1919—the adoption of the Reinheitsgebot throughout the entire nation. This law, dating back to 1516, makes it illegal to use anything other than malted barley, water, yeast and hops to make beer or lager. Most European—and British—beers use all sorts of other ingredients, which means they cannot legally be sold in Germany.

This is what upsets the Eurocrats, who say the law is a restriction on trade. The Germans, on the other hand, say it protects them from the chemical nasties, head retention boosters and so on used by other brewers, and the Reinheitsgebot will be tampered with over their dead bodies!

Incidentally, it was also illegal in this country to use anything other than barley, hops, yeast and water until 1847 when a law was passed allowing the use of sugar. It was generally assumed that this was due to pressure from the West Indian sugar plantations but as the diaries of William Lucas, brewer, show, the cause was actually the Irish potato famine.

The failure of the potato crop in Ireland because of the ravages of the potato blight meant that the price of wheat and barley rocketed as food grew scarce, and in an attempt to bring prices down the Government in the Queen's speech to parliament in 1847 announced that brewers and distillers would in future be allowed to use sugar in place of grain.

The move had the desired effect—the price of barley dropped—but unfortunately more than 130 years later it means our beers suffer greatly, in many cases, compared to the all-grain brews of Germany.

Latest information

It's a well-known fact that as soon as you have something printed categorically stating a 'fact', something else turns up to prove you wrong.

So it was with my series on Hertfordshire breweriana. I said the whereabouts of the 19th century jugskins jug stand were unknown—less than a week later I saw it, attractively framed, on the wall of the Pennant, next to Ind Coope Benskin's HQ in Watford.

I also said that Wells' Lion brewery in St Albans Road, Watford only had one known tied house, the Tudor Rose, also in Watford. I can now say, after a dig through Benskin's own files, that it actually had at least eight, including five around Clerkenwell and Regents Park, one in Easton Bray and one in Camberwell, as well as two off-licences, one in St Albans, and one near the brewery.

I am also pleased to say that after I wrote about the Herts breweries whose beer bottle labels had apparently failed to survive a gentleman rang me to announce that he had two examples of labels from one of the breweries I mentioned, Page's of Ashwell, taken over in 1921.

Anyone else got anything out there to prove me wrong?

QUICK ONES (continued)

Getting a Round

Another pub 'passport' scheme got off the ground last month. To qualify as a "Rayments Roundperson" you must drink a pint of BBA in each of their 23 pubs and have your passport card stamped. You'll then receive either a T-shirt or tankard on returning the card to the brewery. Not all Rayments houses sell unpressurised ale so a certain amount of 'fizz' would have to be tolerated. The round would, however, offer an excellent opportunity to make the Campaign's views known to the few remaining 'non-real' pubs they have.

For details contact the brewery or any Rayments pub.

Apologies for the non-appearance of the October newsletter which was due to factors beyond our control.

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PUB NEWS

Real McMullens is now available in Royston, although not at their own house. Instead Country bitter has appeared on handpump at the **Coach and Horses** free house.

Mann's IPA, Watney's real ale for the Midlands, is now on sale at what must be one of their most southerly outlets—the **Chaise and Pair** in Barkway has it on handpump alongside Websters Pennine bitter. Other outlets for Websters include the **Old Bell** in Harpenden; the **King William IV** in St Albans; the **Three Blackbirds** in Flamstead; the **Three Harts**, Stoneyhills, near Ware; the **Hadley Hotel** and the **Lytton Arms**, both in Barnet; the **Chequers** in Royston; and the **Wine Host** in East Barnet. No doubt more will follow—if they haven't already done so.

Hertfordshire's northernmost pub, the **Three Horseshoes** at Hinxworth, is now selling Greene King IPA on handpump. This pub was in the Good Beer Guide until 5 years ago, serving the beer on gravity. However, on renovating the pub Greene King took away the stillage space and top pressure only was served. It's now nice to see amends being made with the arrival of a new landlord.

The handpump at the **Royal Oak**, Chapelfoot, is not serving Wethered's, as reported last month, but Flower's Original.

The **Fox** at Woolmer Green is now selling handpumped McMullen's AK and Country, making this an all real ale village. Victoria bitter is reportedly selling well at the **Jolly Sailors** in Buntingford.

The **Red White and Blue** in Bishop's Stortford, after years of asking, now sells Wethered's on handpump. Still with Whitbread, and still in Bishop's Stortford, the **Red Cow** also sells the same beer on handpump. Just outside the town the **Coach and Horses** at Thorley has introduced Ind Coppe East Anglia bitter.

The **George IV** at Great Amwell also sells East Anglia bitter.

The **Rye House** in Hoddesdon now sells all the new Truman real ales on handpumps, including the Prize dark mild.

The **Orange Footman** just over the border in Harlow now sells Trumans new bitter on handpump.

The **Chequers**, Wareside has added Mickles Birch bitter to its range of Tolly mild, Adnams and Victoria bitters.

Sawbridgeworth Wines has added Tolly Original to Rayments BBA and Abbot Ale on gravity. A new off-licence in Harlow, the **Jug and Bottle** adjacent to the Garden Tiger (a fizz pub) does a roaring trade in take-home beer, including BBA, Abbot and at least one guest beer—all on gravity.

More Whitbread news. The **Buck's Head**, Little Wymondley now has Flower's Original on handpump. The **St Nicholas** pub in Canterbury Way, Stevenage, has Wethered's bitter pumps. A pub apparently considered unsuitable for real beer when owned by Rayments, the **Rose and Crown** in Twinn, has had pumps installed for its Greene King ales – see Quick Ones. More real Greene King can now be found over in Watford at the **Estcourt Arms**.

A new pub, and a new real ale outlet, is the **Cottage**, in Welwyn Garden City, now selling Charrington's IPA on handpumps. Another new outlet for Mac's AK on handpumps is the **Globe** in Codicote.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday November 9th

Darts and social at the Unicorn, Hertford 8.00pm. (McMullens)

Tuesday November 16th

BRANCH MEETING at the Wheatsheaf, Watford, 8.00pm. (Benskins)

Monday November 22nd

Darts match versus the John Bunyan, at the Farriers Arms, St Albans, 8.00pm. (McMullens)

Tuesday December 14th

BRANCH MEETING at the Camp, St. Albans, 8.00pm. (McMullens)

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Tuesday November 9th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by auction of breweriana, at the Red Lion, Stevenage Old Town (upstairs room), 8.00pm. (Greene King)

Wednesday November 17th

Social at the Sailor Boy, Woolgrave Road, Walsworth, Hitchin, 8.00pm. (Wethered's and Banks and Taylor's)

Wednesday November 24th

London Pub Crawl. Meet on train (6.45pm at Royston, 6.55pm at Letchworth, 7.00pm at Hitchin, 7.06 at Stevenage) or at the Victory Bar, Waterloo Station at 8.00pm.

Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th December

Mini Beer Festival at the Three Horseshoes, Norton, Letchworth from 7.00pm onwards. Sixteen different real ales including the County's four breweries and three homebrew pubs. Tickets – £1.50 including a free pint – from the Three Horseshoes, the George IV in Baldock, the Jug and Firkin off-licence in Stevenage or phone Martin Connelly (Hitchin 52907) or Mike Wrigley (Letchworth 73515).

Hertfordshire North Branch Martin Connelly Hitchin 52907

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Tuesday November 9th

BRANCH MEETING at the Black Cat, Lye Green, Chesham, 8.30pm.

Tuesday November 16th

Anti-Social in Amersham. Meet at the Saracen's Head, Whielden Street, 8.30pm.

Tuesday November 23rd

Anti-Social at Chalfont-St. Peter, meeting at the Three Pigeons, Austenwood, 8.30pm.

Tuesday November 30th

Anti-Social, meeting at the Bell, Chartridge, near Chesham at 8.30p..

BRANCH CONTACTS

Hertfordshire North Branch Martyn Connelly Hitchin 52907

Hertfordshire South Branch Dave Andrews St. Albans 66344

Herts-Essex Borders Branch Pam Smith Epping 73677

Mid-Chilterns Branch Barry Bonnick Rickmansworth 75799

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