

**FREE**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

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## Two Cheers for Mac's



McMullen's have recently opened their first pub in central London, the Nag's Head in Floral Street, in the heart of trendy Covent Garden. Situated opposite the Opera House, next door to Bertorelli's Restaurant, and close to the Market and Transport Museum, the Nag's Head could hardly be better placed to attract a good trade. Apparently, Mac's have owned the pub for many years, but until recently it has been leased to Whitbread. With the increasing shopping and tourist potential of Covent Garden, Mac's have indeed been wise to take over this valuable establishment for themselves.

The Brewery have obviously spent a great deal of money renovating the Nag's Head, and the inside is in the accepted and pleasant "Victorian" style beloved by brewers at the present time. Externally, the signboards and etched windows appear somewhat amateurish by comparison with the sophisticated efforts of the big brewers in this area, but this is only a small criticism.

Sensibly, much is made of reasonably-priced bar food, and (before we forget that this is a CAMRA publication), McMullen's Country Bitter and AK Mild are available on handpump. Most of us in Hertfordshire would, I am sure, share the view that these two good and honest beers ought to find a place in the affections of beer connoisseurs in London's competitive real ale market—the extent of the competition can be demonstrated by the fact that there is, amazingly enough, a Watney pub a matter of yards from the Nag's Head selling no less than 5 different hand-pumped real ales.

But hold on. Have not McMullen's for years told their customers that the correct way for their beers to be served is by carbon dioxide top pressure? Have they not actively dissuaded their tenants from installing handpumps, and have they not prevented their managers from serving the popular AK on handpump? Why then are they permitting their showpiece London pub to serve beers by what, to McMullens, is a less than perfect method of dispense?

I can only guess the answer, but presumably McMullen's have installed real ale rather than gassy beer in their showpiece London pub because they truly believe that this is what the public wants. Now, by the same logic, if the public can have what they want in London, why can they not have it in Mac's home territory of Hertfordshire? Why, for example, is the combination of a pint of good hand-pulled AK and a reasonable lunchtime bar meal almost impossible to find in Mac's brewery town of Hertford?

There are innumerable town-centre pubs in Hertfordshire which would benefit from the sympathetic "good ale and food" treatment given by McMullen's to the lucky drinkers of Covent Garden. For starters, how about the White Hart in Hertford, Wine Lodge in Ware, Black Bull in Buntingford or Peahen in St Albans? Come on Mac's; you have shown that you can do it—now let's all have a share.

Peter Lerner

\*McMullen's are not the only regional brewery to have recently opened a pub in London. Breweries ranging from local favourites Greene King, Tolly Cobbold and Charles Wells, to Tadcaster brewers Sam Smith's and Wiltshire's Gibbs Mew have recently opened pubs in the capital. This can only mean increased choice for the beer drinker.

### Pathetic

Every so often the national press, when they have nothing else to print, concoct a story about "CAMRA members" spending all evening drinking half-pints of mild, being sick all over the landlady's dog or, in the latest fable about a pub in Southsea, Hants, "annoying" keg beer drinkers by "making remarks" to them.

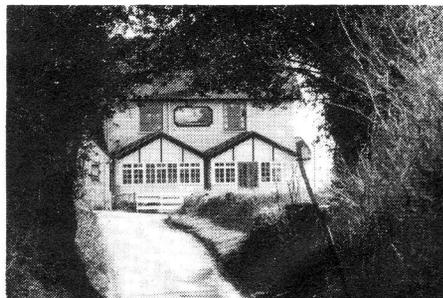
How, I have always wondered, are these people recognised as CAMRA members? Do they produce their membership cards before annoying people? Do they carefully blow their noses on their CAMRA monogrammed handkerchiefs before stuffing them down people's throats?

My wife and I, who are well-known to be straightforward, clean-living people, once experienced this singular type-casting for ourselves. Having made a special journey to welcome a new landlord to the area, and to deliver his Newsletters, we were greeted with: "Oh, CAMRA. We had some of your people in the other day. Big fellows they were. Put their feet on the table, and stole one of my ashtrays." On closer questioning, it turned out that they were obviously CAMRA members because they were wearing t-shirts, and the stolen ashtray advertised Harp Lager—a must for any serious beer-drinker's collection of stolen goods!

We in CAMRA, who are merely trying to increase public enjoyment of pubs and beer, do resent this kind of treatment after a while. After all, we know that not all landlords spend their time snarling and moaning, and not all journalists spend their time manufacturing fatuous rubbish.

Peter Lerner

### THE BARLEY MOW



TYTTENHANGER GREEN

TRY OUR 15 REAL ALES

We hope that everybody likes the new decorations and feels just as much at home as they did before.

We have a small function room to seat up to 20 people. This is bookable for private lunches and evening parties. We will also be happy to reserve tables at lunchtime.

# COMPETITION

To mark the retirement of Dave Burns as Newsletter Editor, our competition this month takes the form of a quiz on items which have appeared within these pages during his period of editorship (issues 29-57). Some are hard, and some are easier. Entry is open to all readers, except those named D. Burns.

1. Which pub was rumoured to be becoming a Berni, but actually became a Beefeater?
2. Which beer was described by an executive of the company which produces it as "Bland—a committee beer, designed not to offend anyone"?
3. What became The Huntsman, and what happened to The Fox?
4. Where was the "Real Ale Ghost Town of Hertfordshire"?
5. Who celebrated 100, when CAMRA celebrated 10?
6. Where did the founder's pub turn into a shoe shop?
7. Who wanted to brew Albert Ale, but couldn't?
8. Who was challenged to W-AK-E UP and why?
9. Where was (and is) the county's first home-brew pub since the turn of the century?
10. What is the connection between beer and Dog Kennel Farm?

The sender of the first correct entry opened on March 10th will receive a prize of Michael Jackson's Pocket Guide to Beer. Please mark entry February Competition. No other enclosures please except names and addresses.

The winner of the November crossword was Sandie Lerner of Watton-at-Stone.

The solution was:

Across: Robinsons, Gases, Bargain Basement, Drum, Dictator, Heartburn, Overt, Night, Threshold, Painting, Stub, Middle of the Road, Straw, Drayhorse.

Down: Rabid, Bermuda, Neat, Owns, Stationary, Guest House, Sceptre, Saturated, Statute Law, Burtonwood, Handpumps, Grinder, Outdoor, Badge, Etna, Mesh.

## JOIN CAMRA NOW

Full Membership £7 (£10 overseas)  
Joint husband/wife membership £7

### Standing Order Form

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

To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert name of your bank here)

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 £7/10\* and annually on this date until further notice.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Bank A/c Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Bank Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*delete as appropriate

Send to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW

# QUICK ONES

## Rayments Branch Out

The good news for admirers of Rayments BBA is that, from mid-February 1983, this excellent beer will be more widely available in free pubs in Cambridge, Essex and London.

In a surprise move, Greene King are to supply BBA to their free trade depots in these areas, which means that free trade pubs will be able, if they wish, to stock BBA alongside Greene King IPA. At the same time, new pump clips and promotional material will be produced for BBA, stressing the separate identity of Rayments and dropping all Greene King symbols.

Well done, Rayments and Greene King, for a bold and imaginative move. However, let it not be forgotten that some 5 years ago CAMRA members picketed a Greene King Annual General Meeting with leaflets asking that Rayments' separate identity should be maintained, and their beers made more widely available. At that time, CAMRA was roundly criticised by Greene King for daring to venture such thoughts. Now, after five years of patience and quiet persuasion, the voice of the consumer has once again proved that it is not powerless.

PL

## Talisman loses its charm

If you used to have a quiet pint at the Talisman whilst waiting for a train at Hitchin station, hard luck. It has now been turned into a novelty pub and renamed Jeans, with denim upholstery, blackened windows and continuous disco music and light show. Gone is the bar billiards table, in are video screens and games. Gone are the pies and sandwiches, in are beefburgers and fried chicken. One consolation, though—Wethered Bitter and Flowers Original are now available on handpump.

## A real locals' local

In complete contrast, a Whitbread pub in nearby Preston, the Red Lion, has been bought by the local villagers in order to stop it being extended to become a steak bar. Over 80% of the village's households clubbed together to raise £95,000 of the £135,000 asking price. The pub is closed at the moment for redecoration, but should be open again at the end of February. It is believed that it will be a free house selling real ale. Ray Scarbrow, who was planning the changes to the pub, is now taking over the Good Beer Guide-listed Green Man at Cuffley.

Martin Connelly

## Keep Doing the Rounds

Rayments of Furneux Pelham report that a fair number of people have already completed the Rayments Round; that is, they have drunk a pint of BBA in each of Rayments' 23 pubs, and claimed their free mug or t-shirt. One of the first to send in a completed card was, in fact, your Newsletter's new Editor.

No closing date has yet been announced for this promotion, so you still have the better weather of the spring and summer in which to enjoy your round of Rayments pubs in Hertfordshire and Essex. We understand that all of the 23 landlords will be pleased to welcome you.

You will need a special Rayments Round card to participate. These are obtainable either from a Rayments pub or direct from the company at The Brewery, Furneux Pelham, Buntingford, Hertfordshire SG9 0LE.

PL

## THE ROYAL OAK, BUSHEY

Free House

★ 6 Real Ales □ Food ★  
★ Guest Beers ★

★ Happy New Year ★  
to all our customers

**Departures. . . .**

Regular Newsletter readers will have noticed that the previous edition (Number 57) was the last to be edited by Dave Burns, who has happily filled the demanding role as editor since June 1980 (issue number 29). During his reign as editorial king, Dave has seen the circulation increase from 3500 to 5000 copies per edition, and has maintained a publication of high quality. Among his memorable headlines are "Guide—Shock Horror" (January 1981) and "Merry Christmas" (December 1980). The latter headline was so popular that it was repeated by public demand in December 1981.

Dave is moving from Welwyn to Ware but will continue to be active in CAMRA circles, not the least of his jobs being editorship of the next Hertfordshire Real Ale Guide. Hopefully, he will still be setting his mind-boggling puzzles for Newsletter readers—first guess what the clues are, then do the puzzle.

Also moving on is the Newsletter's star columnist and brewery historian extraordinaire, Martyn Cornell. It was Martyn who, in these pages, revealed to an astonished world that the revered founder of one of the county's most traditional breweries started his career by being fined £5 for poaching, in the local magistrate's court. Martyn is a former Chairman of Hertfordshire North branch but his work has, unfortunately for us, taken him to Surrey.

**. . . and Arrival**

And now it's a pleasure to introduce our new Editor, who is Cathy Totman. Cathy is by no means new to publications about beer, as she has been Production Editor for CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for the past three years. Cathy lives in the famed brewery village of Furneux Pelham, and what better recommendation could there be?

**What's Brewing at Barley?**

**Hertfordshire North branch's only pub brewery, the enterprising Fox and Hounds at Barley, near Royston, has added two new beers to its range.**

Joining the original Nathaniel Special, a lightish bitter with a gravity of 1034-5, is a much darker beer known as Nog, having a gravity of 1039-1040. Landlady Rita Nicholson tells me that her customers seem to prefer darker beers, and Nog is now outselling Nat's P. A strong, dark and sweet Christmas Brew was also available during the festive period, and the pub hopes to continue with occasional strong brews. Rita is especially keen to find the recipe for Old Pharoah, a strong ale known to have been brewed at the Fox and Hounds when it was a home-brew pub over 100 years ago. The Fox and Hounds is a historic building with a superb "gallows" inn-sign, a lively atmosphere and an excellent range of ales, many of which are brewed on the premises. It must be worth a detour for anyone in the northern part of the county.

Peter Lerner

**Mike Tebbutt of Epping, an ex-CAMRA member, has an inflexible attitude to licensing hours. . .**

On a recent tour of real ale pubs in Hertfordshire with some friends we picked up your latest newsletter.

We were amused, somewhat cynically, by your front page article on flexible hours. As many of your readers will already be aware, many publicans operate flexible hours now! Many open when they feel like it, not when the public or law demands, and some even close by fast clocks, again illegally.

This causes annoyance and frustration for the traveller and tourist to an area who does not know the idiosyncrasies of local landlords. Total confusion would occur if flexible hours were introduced. I am all for longer hours but the public must feel secure that from Lands End to John O'Groats a drink can be purchased in any licensed premises within those hours.

Yours faithfully,  
Mike Tebbutt

P.S. On December 28th 1982 (Bank Holiday) six weary travellers turned off the A10 for a well-deserved pint of Maccs at the Rest and Welcome, Haultwick after a long drive, to find it closed for the day. They arrived at the next pub in time for 2.00 pm closing, whilst the other side of the A10 many were open until 3.30 pm. But being strangers, they werenot aware of these facts.

**Mr D M Tittle of Hitchin takes issue with Martyn Cornell's definition of real ale . . .**

Dear Martyn Cornell,  
I read with interest your article in No 56 of the Herts Newsletter. I cannot disagree more with your comments. I arrived in this area via the RAF in 1964. I started drinking Greene King at the Bird in Hand, I prefer it and always use a Greene King house.

The fact that the beer is delivered to the glass by means of a pressure on top of the beer, enough to balance the head distance to the dispenser, does not stop it being real beer. The difference between keg and real beer is in the brewery, whether it is bright beer in the pressurised keg or maturing beer in an unpressurised keg.

I feel that, like other societies, today CAMRA has outlived its purpose. You had a good and noble fight on your hands when you started and you won it. We now have plenty of real beer—matured in the keg, and it doesn't matter how it is delivered. You are now wasting your energy against windmills.

By the way, do you know anywhere where you can buy ALE—i.e. fermented barley liquor without hops?

Yours, buying my real beer in any GK pub,  
DM Tittle



**SIGN THE FLEXIBLE HOURS  
PETITION — at your local now!**



**BENSKINS**

**Lifts up Herts.**

Benskins Bitter • Draught Burton Ale

## PUB NEWS

More news from Whitbread houses. The **Twin Foxes** in Stevenage now has Wethered and Flowers Original, and the **St Nicholas Tavern** has Flowers Original and Bulmer cider, all on handpump. The new landlord at the **Three Horseshoes**, Smallford is selling Flowers Original, Wethered and Bulmer cider. Flowers can also be found at the **Jockey**, Royston, the **Swan**, Pimlico and the **Gibraltar**, Harpenden. Two new faces in Harpenden – at the **Engineer** the new owner has beers from Greene King, Adnams and Wells, whilst the new manager at the **Old Cock** hopes to get more pumps to include Truman mild and cider to his range of handpumped beers.

Hitchin has two new outlets – the **Radcliffe Arms** is now selling Flowers Original, and the **Horse and Jockey** in Old Park Road has Greene King IPA, both on handpump. The **Broadway Hotel** in Letchworth is selling Charrington IPA. Bad news for dark mild fans: Greene King XX has been replaced by KK light mild at the **Plough**, Ley Green. XX is now available in only three outlets in North Herts in traditional form.

The **Rising Sun** at Halls Green has closed – temporarily according to the sign outside, but it could be permanent. The **Shah** in Buntingford has become the **Railway Inn** (shouldn't it have been the Ayatollah?)

Robinson's bitter is now on sale at the **Wicked Lady**, Wheathamstead, very nice too at only 61p a pint. All other beers are equally reasonable, plus real cider, at 58p a pint. The **King William IV** in St Albans, a Watney house, is now selling Ruddles County.

Finally, good luck to Bob and Daphne Lambard who have left the **Fox**, Kinsbourne Green to take on the tenancy of the **Hand and Crown** in Sawbridgeworth.

## What's On at Your Pub

A new regular feature of the newsletter will be a free monthly diary listing special events to take place at real ale pubs in Hertfordshire.

So if you are planning an indoor or outdoor function, contest or entertainment, send details by the 12th of the previous month to Peter Lerner, 14 Hazeldell, Watton-on-Stone, giving (in not more than 15 words) details of the pub, type of event, date and time, and we will do our best to include it. If you feel that your event deserves more than 15 words, remember that our advertisement deal is cheap and effective; see back page for details.

## 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

### Blakes Beer Cellar

96 Queens Road, Watford

- Wadworth 6X ● UXB ● Swannells ●
- Old Peculier ● Guest Beers ●
- Draught Cider ●

### GOOD FOOD AT ALL TIMES

Open pub hours, 7 days a week

LICENSED BAR & CATERING FOR OUTSIDE  
EVENTS

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday 2nd February (provisional)

Social at the George IV, Baldock, to celebrate the pub's 10 years in the Good Beer Guide, 8.00 pm

#### Wednesday 9th February

Branch Meeting at the Plume and Feathers, Ickleford, 8.00 pm

#### Wednesday 16th February

Social at the Buffalo's Head, Puckeridge, 8.00 pm

#### Wednesday 23rd February

Social at the Sailor Boy, Hitchin, to bid farewell to retiring landlord, 8.00 pm

#### Saturday 5th March

Minibus trip around Rayments Round – contact John Law for details (Stevenage 721015)

Contact Martin Connelly Hitchin 52907

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

#### Tuesday February 15th

Branch Meeting at the Barley Mow, Tyttenhanger, 8.00 pm

Contact Dave Andrews St Albans 66344

### WATFORD AND DISTRICT

#### Saturday 5th February

Lunchtime trip to Oxford

#### Saturday 12th February

WATFORD BEER FESTIVAL, Cassio College, Langley Road. Times applied for: 10.30-2.30; 3.30-7.30.

#### Wednesday 16th February

Pub Crawl in Watford. Meet at the Wheatsheaf, 7.00 pm.

#### Wednesday 23rd February

Group meeting at the Royal Oak, Abbots Langley, 8.00 pm

Contact Roger Wilson Rickmansworth 775311 (w) Rickmansworth 770830 (h)

### MID-CHILTERNERS BRANCH

#### Tuesday 8th February

Social at the Rising Sun, Berkhamsted, 8.30 pm

#### Tuesday 22nd February

Social – meet at the Bell, Bedmond, 8.30 pm

#### Tuesday 1st March

PUB OF THE YEAR 1982 – White Hart, Whelpley Hill, 8.30 pm

Contact Barry Bonnick Rickmansworth 775799

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Contact Pam Smith Epping 73677



## Beer Festivals

### February 12th WATFORD BEER FESTIVAL

See Branch Diary

### February 24th – 26th LUTON REAL ALE FESTIVAL

Luton College Refectory, Vicarage Street, Luton.

25+ beers and ciders featuring many Oxford/Wiltshire breweries, also a range of Belgian bottled beers. Food and pinball! Open Thur 24th 5.30-10.30 pm; Fri 25th 5.30-11.00 pm; Sat 26th 10.30-2.30, 5.30-11.00 pm (if beer lasts out!)

Helpers wanted. Contact Nick Oakley, Luton 28779 (h), 30663 (w)



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 WELL SPACED AND AS LEGIBLE AS POSSIBLE PLEASE.** Send to Cathy Totman, Hixham, Furneave Pelham, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

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