

**FREE**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1983

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## Steak-ing a claim

The pub landlords' trade newspaper, "Morning Advertiser", has recently reported that regulars of Welwyn Garden City's **Beehive Inn** are raising a petition to prevent the owners, Whitbread, from converting it into a Beefeater Steak House. Pub manager Keith Balls describes the Beehive as "one of the most picturesque pubs in the country". Whitbread's reported comment is that no decision has been taken, and that even if the pub did become a Steak House, it will remain a pub. We shall see. But it is worth noting that there is already one Steak House (sorry, pub) in this county that is so keen to welcome its former customers that it employs doormen to "discourage" anyone who is not smartly dressed. And another Steak House, not far indeed from Welwyn Garden City, has gone so far as to remove all its pub signs and change its name. CAMRA is 100% for choice and our members are, by and large, certainly not averse to eating steak. But the brewers might care to remember that their growth and profits depend on maintaining a stock of ordinary pubs, for ordinary people to have an ordinary drink.

## Real Take-away for Stortford

A real ale off-licence in Stansted Road is soon to be the latest welcome addition to the local scene for Bishop's Stortford beer drinkers. Despite the predictable opposition from local publicans, Mr. David Cooper was granted a licence to open the off-licence at the magistrate's court in February.

Mr. Cooper already runs a similar off-licence in Harlow and we wish him every success in his Hertfordshire venture.

## Calling all Tegestologists

Are you a beer-mat collector? If so, you are a tegestologist. Do you want to meet other tegestologists? Then you'll be pleased to know that the British Beer-Mat Collectors Society is now holding regular meetings at the Dimsdale Arms, Hertford. At these meetings, enthusiasts from Hertfordshire and London swap mats and take part in a raffle,

and the mysterious "mat sandwich".

All are welcome to attend these meetings, the next one to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th April. For future dates, watch the "What's On" column. Your local contact for further information is Anthony Orme, Balls Park College, Hertford, who will be pleased to hear from you. Anthony would like to acknowledge the great help offered by McMullen's in setting up these meetings.

## Watch out — there's a gremlin about!

Regular Newsletter readers will be only too aware of the existence of gremlins — particularly the sub-species which inhabit printing houses and shuffle type, consume crossword clues, etc. The OED defines a gremlin as a 'mischievous sprite imagined to frequent aeroplanes and to cause mishaps (RAF slang)'. However, I recently came across a fuller and more intriguing explanation. According to RAF legend, the name was invented by members of Bomber Command in North India in the 1930's. The only book in the Mess was *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, and the only available drink was Fremlin's Ale. A continual intake of both could well have had an effect on both men and machines! Must have a word with Whitbread about this...

CT

## For your information . . .

The latest in the series of Watford Museum Information Sheets is now on sale at Watford Museum. Entitled "Practical Brewing", it gives a short summary of the brewing processes, from malting to fermentation. It also relates the brewing processes to home-brewing techniques, and gives hints for the home brewer. This sheet is priced 45p. There are now 4 Watford Museum Information Sheets, the other three being:-

1. Brewing in Watford
2. Watford and the Peasants' Revolt
3. A Landscape History of Cassiobury Park

A fifth is in production, giving information on bottle making, illustrated with examples from the Museum Collections.

## Pints 'n' Litres

Real ales to take away

GREENE KING IPA & ABBOT ● ADNAMS EVERARD TIGER ● MICKLES ALES ●  
from 56p per pint

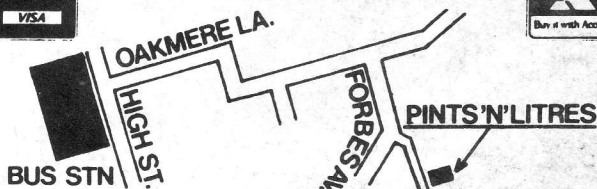
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BRIGHT POLYPINS AND CASKS ALWAYS AVAILABLE ● from 53p per pint

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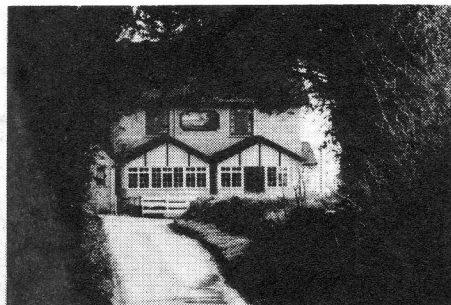
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## THE BARLEY MOW



TYTTENHANGER GREEN

TRY OUR 15 REAL ALES

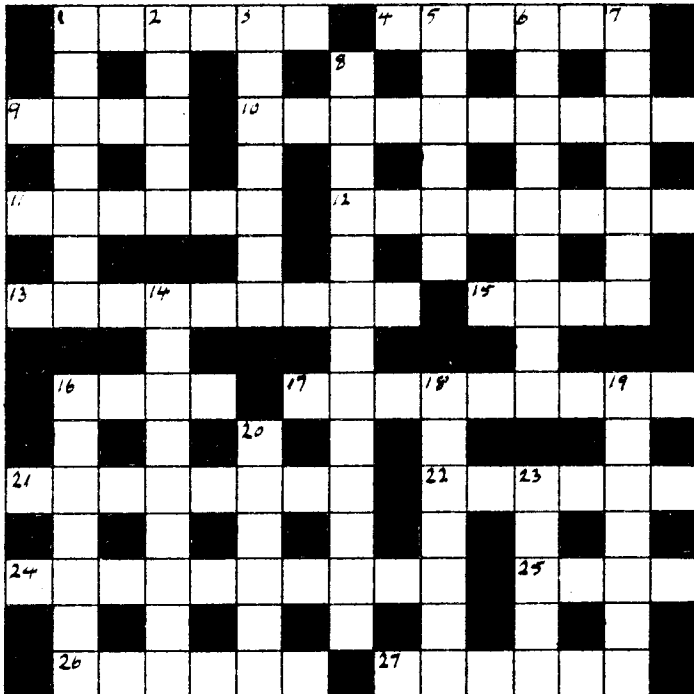
We do many different things during the year but one thing we still pride ourselves in is that our beer is the best in the County.

Our barbecues will be starting in April

PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES  
INCLUDING MINI BUSES

## COMPETITION

The sender of the first correct entry opened on 13th May will receive a copy of Michael Jackson's Pocket Guide to Beer. No other enclosures please except names and addresses.



### Across

- 1 & 9 I search IPA out in N Herts pub (6,4)
- 4 A shining example of Burton-brewed bitter (6)
- 9 See 1 across
- 10 It allows you to see spirit measure's never inaccurate (5,5)
- 11 & 16 She knew *The Millstream* well (6,4)
- 12 It gets my rile up if beer is brewed like this (8)
- 13 Writer's grateful for one inn on short list here (9)
- 15 Many more than one girl drink? (4)
- 16 See 11 across
- 17 A short peg served properly — it comes out of a barrel (9)
- 21 Kind of turn in turbulent air — hope you get great feeling (8)
- 22 With more capacity, Ruddle's chief invested in fizzy beer (6)
- 24 Policeman perplexed about end of riot — it's not over yet (10)
- 25 Wild animal, one that squeezes stomach of quadruped (4)
- 26 Small reverse in egg production is something to be made up (6)
- 27 Fix price of Bass — I zealously held it (6)

### Down

- 1 China tea missing in upper class stately home abroad (7)
- 2 & 3 Wash-spoiler, right? They could be (5,7)
- 5 Balance a half of Lees on head? Get away! (6)
- 6 Dispirited, what you do when your team's losing (9)
- 7 Book-ends of tracery something not seen before? (7)
- 8 Unusual risk-taker with beer won't come out when asked (6-7)
- 14 Smooth ale unexpectedly far from popular (9)
- 16 Used useless, faulty urinal every day (7)
- 18 Card-sharpers for Dorset? (7)
- 19 Too old for lover, a gentleman gives it up (7)
- 20 Starts to go round all Pirton's pubs, asking for Italian brandy (6)
- 23 Burns drops his last DD (5)

The winner of February's competition was Richard Graham of Wembley. The correct answers were as follows:

1. Wilbury Hotel, Letchworth. 2. Ind Coope Bitter, described by Peter Bentley, managing director of Benskins. 3. The Green Man, Goose Green, became the Huntsman. The Fox, Meesden, closed in August 1980. 4. Welwyn Garden City. 5. St. Albans Licensed Victuallers Association. 6. The Joseph Benskin, Watford. 7. Victoria Brewery (Bourne Valley were already using the name). 8. McMullens, for not putting enough AK on handpump. 9. Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesden. 10. Mickles Brewery.

## WHAT'S ON

26 April **Hertford**: Dimsdale Arms. 7.30pm. British Beermat Collectors Society Meeting.

continued in next column.

## GOOD BEER GUIDE

### Great Beer, Great Pubs

What do the following Hertfordshire pubs have in common? Greene King's **George IV** at Baldock; Benskins' **Swan** at Bushey; McMullens' **Bell and Crown** at Hertford and the **Farrier's Arms**, at St. Albans; Rayment's **Nag's Head** at Little Hadham; and the **Two Brewers** at Chipperfield and **Green Dragon** at Flaunden, both free houses.

The answer is that these are the only pubs in the county to have been featured in every edition of CAMRA's best-selling **Good Beer Guide**, since it was first published back in 1974.

Entries for the famous **Good Beer Guide** are judged purely on the high standards of beer which they serve, and are decided democratically by CAMRA members at Branch Meetings. Unlike some other guides, space in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** cannot be bought by landlords or breweries.

CAMRA's 1983 **Good Beer Guide** has recently been published, and is the best ever. It recommends over 6,000 pubs serving first-class ale in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands. It lists every real ale brewed in the country. The price, from all good bookshops, is £4.50. CAMRA members of course can obtain it at a substantial discount; come along to your local Branch Meeting and find out.

**And if you don't think that the Good Beer Guide includes the best local pubs, then join CAMRA, get involved in your local Branch, and make your own recommendations, which will be gladly received.**

Peter Lerner

### Plastic Frogs and Vineleaves

It's beer guide time again — the **1983 Good Beer Guide** has been around for a month or two and the new edition of **Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire** should be with us at any time. No doubt there'll be many more popping up all around the country. My favourite feature of these publications, and what sets them apart from mere lists of pubs, is the comments — the few lines at the end of each entry where the wit and imagination of the pub's surveyor is put to the test. Sadly, more often than not they fail, and the vast majority end up with the stock descriptions 'friendly street-corner local', 'plush 14th-Century coaching inn', 'sympathetically modernised' and so on. Pubs often seem to come in a variety of flavours — nautical, railway, Victorian are all popular; and wildlife, especially mynah birds, parrots, dogs and goats, all receive a mention. But the truly inspired comments are few and far between. Local guides have more scope — since they include both good and bad pubs the use of the subtle put-down provides plenty of opportunity for wit. But the **Good Beer Guide** supposedly contains only the best — and being complimentary is often more difficult. With this in mind I read through every comment in this year's **Good Beer Guide** to pick out the very best.

The title of this article comes from the **Queens**, Chorley in Lancashire. Nearby in Greater Manchester City Centre the **Unicorn** is apparently the 'HQ of Honourable Order of Bass Drinkers'. 'Churchill towers over customers' in the **Crown and Kettle**, and in 1971 **Sinclair's Oyster Bar** was 'Carefully restored — and raised 4'9½"!'

Many public houses were different in an earlier age: The **Honest John**, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire is a 'pleasantly converted labour exchange'; the **Butcher's Arms**, Balscote, Oxfordshire, 'a gem of a local, formerly the local abattoir', and the **Royal Oak**, Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire a '16th century pub, formerly a house of ill-repute' (an excise office?) Perhaps this has something in common with the **Toxteth** on Merseyside, which has a simple 'striptease on Wednesdays' after it — there could be room for a GBG symbol here. It certainly sounds a little more inviting than the **Kingsley Hotel**, Hemsworth, West Yorkshire, which has a 'taproom like a Wild West saloon'; and certainly safer than **Cresselly Arms Hotel**, Pontargothi, Dyfed, which has a 'coracle on ceiling for winter floods'!

Some of these pubby epithets are a sheer delight, either downright funny or intriguing. The landlord of the **Royal Oak**, Fuscombe in Berkshire has 'proclaimed the pub an independent republic'. 'Sweet Fanny Adams inquest' was held at the **Duke's Head**, Alton, Hants. At the **Ranche**, north of the border the 'floor gets steeper with every pint consumed'! Hyperbole notwithstanding, the **Station**, Thurso is a 'traditional Scottish farmers' bar; most northerly outlet in the UK (maybe the world)! 'Two pints in the Bush are worth one the the hand' at the **Bush**, Shimpling, Suffolk, and in the same county at Stonham Aspal the **Ten Bells** is described as 'not a bad shed'!

There are others, such as the Cambridgeshire pub that offers 'occasional Rossini'; but my favourite is that for the **Lal Moota**, in Moota, Cumbria. It reads 'Both regulars think it's great; ask about hedgehog ramp'. I can't wait to go there.

Dave Burns

Please send details of events (in not more than 15 words) by the 12th of the previous month to: Peter Lerner, 14 Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone, Herts.



## PUB NEWS

A new real ale house is the **Engine**, Ashwell, serving Flowers Original. Other pubs now selling Flowers are the **Rose and Crown**, Hitchin and the **Plume of Feathers**, Ickleford.

The **Green Man**, Offley is now a free house selling Flowers Original and Shefford Bitter.

The third brew from the **Fox and Hounds**, Barley is Hogshead Ale (OG 1042-43), a dark, lightly hopped ale, now regularly available. A stronger dark ale, Pharaoh (1054-55) has been brewed and will be available occasionally. The **Coach & Horses**, Royston, now has Paines 41 and XXX bitter. The excellent **Jolly Waggoner** at Ardeley has added Greene King KK to its range of beers served straight from the cask.

The **Brewery Tap**, Furneux Pelham, has changed hands again — a warm welcome to the new landlord, who is a very keen real ale man. Down the road at the **Star**, a third handpump has been installed, dispensing Greene King KK at 56p a pint.

The **Waggon and Horses** at Watton-at-Stone has been nicely decorated in Ind Coope colours and accordingly now sells Ind Coope Bitter, rather than Benskins, on handpump. The **Lord Pelham** in the same village, well known to readers of the last Hertfordshire Real Ale Guide, has sadly been demolished to make way for Watton's new station. Commented a spokesman for CAMRA's Pub Preservation Group: 'This pub will be sadly missed by drinkers from all over the county, as it has been for the last couple of years!'

Moving west, the historic **White Hart** in Hemel Hempstead has new tenants, Martin and Sue Roberts, who will be investing their own capital into extending the pub into vacant shop premises next door. According to a local paper Ind Coope will 'help', which is big of them considering that the pub is their most prestigious in the town.

Meanwhile, the **Bull** in Berkhamsted has been declared haunted. A bearded poacher named Fred and floppy-eared white rabbit make nightly visits to the manager's two-and-half year old daughter. . .

## DOING THE ROUNDS

*Continuing the diary of the travels of 'Roundsmen', an anonymous Newsletter reader who is attempting to visit all of Rayment's pubs and thus claim his free prize of a t-shirt or pottery mug.*

My next stop, the **Nag's Head** at Little Hadham has a formidable reputation for beer and food. Arriving at 12 noon on a Sunday lunchtime in a blizzard, my companions and I were a little surprised to find that the pub opened a couple of minutes late, and the welcome was only cool. Nevertheless, the fire was warm and the BBA, straight from the cask, delicious. However, I remember the Nag's Head as the friendly little place it was before it was extended in the 1970s, and I think I prefer it as it was then.

Over the border to Essex, for an evening visit to the **Dog and Duck** at Stansted. A lovely old unspoilt pub, with a choice of bars and drinking areas, a cheerful welcome and a superb if sweetish pint of BBA, this is a classic. What's more, the customers actually seemed to be enjoying themselves! Look out for the Essex weatherboarding, and the lovely three dimensional inn sign.

I remember the **Three Willows** at Birchchanger as a quiet little country pub and was surprised to walk in one Saturday evening to what looked like a restaurant in full swing. Obviously, it's been much extended and seems to be popular, but perhaps the restaurant, with its formal place settings, could have been separated from the pub rooms — my companion and I felt guilty for not ordering a meal. The cricket theme is everywhere including a delightful set of handpumps (beer from the wickets?). On our way out we glanced into the quiet public bar and saw a Fordham's Ashwell Ales mirror, at least 30 years old, which would turn a certain former Newsletter columnist green with envy. The BBA was sweet here too; surely they haven't changed the recipe?

Finally, this month, to the **White Horse** at Hatfield Heath. This has a lovely setting on the village green, and three bars to drink in. A comfortable and popular place, again full of cricket mementos and people who looked as if they had just finished an innings. A fine country pub and well worth a second look. Remind me when I've finished the Rayment's Round.

*Next month: Roundsmen's first pint of top pressure (fizzy) BBA.*

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday 6th April

Social at the Red Lion, Preston, 8.00 pm (free house).

#### Wednesday 13th April

Branch Meeting at the Three Tuns, Ashwell, 8.00pm (Greene King).

#### Tuesday 19th April

Social at the Jockey, Royston, 8.00pm (Wethered/Flowers).

#### Wednesday 27th April

Pub of the Year Social at the Red Lion, Stevenage (Greene King).

#### Monday 2nd May

Bank holiday lunchtime pub crawl of Pirton. Meet the Fox (Wethered) 12.30, or later at Motte & Bailey (free) or Cat & Fiddle (Wells).

Pubs open till late!

Contact **Martin Connelly Hitchin 52907**

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

#### Tuesday 5th April

Social and presentation for 10 years in GBG, Bell & Crown, Hertford, 8.00pm.

#### Tuesday 12th April

Darts v Watford and District, Tantivy, Watford, 8.00pm.

#### Tuesday 19th April

Prestel presentation, Hatfield Advisory Centre (opp. Police Station), 7.30pm.

Contact Eric Sim — Hatfield 60647

#### Wednesday 4th May

Social and presentation for 10 years in GBG, Farriers Arms, St. Albans, 8.00pm.

Contact **Dave Andrews St. Albans 66344**

### MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

#### Tuesday 12th April

Social and presentation for 10 years in GBG, Full Moon, Hawridge, 8.30pm.

#### Tuesday 19th April

Anti-social, Kings Langley, 8.30pm. Meet Langleys (ex Young Pretender).

#### Tuesday 26th April

Social and presentation for 10 years in GBG, Red Lion, Little Missenden, 8.30pm.

Contact **Barry Bonnick Rickmansworth 775799**

### WATFORD AND DISTRICT BRANCH

#### Tuesday 12th April

Darts v Herts South, Tantivy, Watford, 8.00pm.

#### Wednesday 20th April

Branch Meeting, Blakes Beer Cellar, Queens Road, Watford 8.00pm.

Contact **Jim Axford 01-759 7600**

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Contact **Pam Smith Epping 73677**

## 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

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, Furneux Pelham, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

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