

**FREE**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

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## NEWS

### REAL ALE DEFINED

The Oxford English Dictionary has now accepted CAMRA's definition of Real Ale, for its next edition. It is:

**"REAL ALE — a name for draught (or bottled) beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide; also called 'cask-conditioned' and 'naturally conditioned' beer".**

So if anyone tries to tell you that real ale is something different, they're wrong. And that's official.

### Ind Coope Burton forms Guild of Master Cellarmen

The latest scheme to help the flagging sales of Burton Ale (Ind Coope's premier bitter) comes from their Burton on Trent brewery — the 'Draught Burton Ale Guild of Master Cellarmen'.

At a special presentation at Burton on 30th September, Ind Coope Burton Brewery Marketing Management told an assembled gathering of CAMRA reps their plans for the introduction of a new licensing system for the sale of Burton Ale. Briefly, landlords who sell Burton Ale will be receiving applications to join the scheme. Provided the landlord's Burton Ale is of a standard approved by Ind Coope Technical and Area Managers, the landlord will then receive a licence number and then undergo a 3-month initiation period, overseen by Ind Coope Burton's Head Brewer (which should keep him occupied for the next ten years!) On passing, the landlord receives a plaque and a licence disc for display behind the bar. The licence is reviewed annually, and will be withdrawn

if standards are not maintained. The brewery presentation handout concludes, 'The Guild of Cellarmen will give the landlord an added incentive to keep and serve traditional ale at its very best, and will give our customers the promise of the high quality traditional pint of best bitter they have the right to expect'. Splendid sentiments, and a scheme which could well be adopted by Benskins and Ind Coope Romford — if this year's beer quality has been anything to go by.

All of which leads me to suggest the following improvements:—

1. That the quality of Burton Ale which leaves the brewery be improved to that dispensed in the brewery's hospitality room — the Roebuck pub some 20 yards away proves that it doesn't travel well!
2. That it reaches the pub in a shorter time than at present so that the licensee does not have to join the Magic Circle as well as the Guild to serve a drinkable pint.
3. That the price charged in the pub encourages customers to become acquainted with Burton Ale and remain so.
4. That the pub's cellar is kept at the correct temperature for cask ales (a failing in all too many Benskins/Ind Coope houses).

If the Burton Brewery can achieve the above improvements, then I am sure they will have a winner and we, the customers, can all join the Guild of Master Drinkers.

Jim Axford

Benskins Brewery Liaison Officer

### The Newsletter regrets . . .

. . . that, due to rising production costs, it is necessary to increase rates for advertising to £7 per 2.5cm column. The rate for new subscriptions is also increased from this month, to £2.25 for 12 issues.

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## BOOK REVIEW

'Greene King: a business and family history', by Richard Wilson. Bodley Head and Jonathan Cape. £12.50.

Every beer-buff knows, as Michael Jackson said, that novelist Graham Greene is the brother of the ex-chairman of Greene King. But did you know that Christopher Isherwood, writer of the book that became the film Cabaret, is a second cousin of the brewing family? Or that Greene King once nearly merged with Shipstone's of Nottingham? Or that the date 1799 outside every Greene King pub is almost certainly not the year Benjamin Greene started brewing in Bury St. Edmunds? Or that for 60 years Greene's brewery owned no pubs at all?

All this and more is revealed in a fascinating new book called, simply, 'Greene King: a business and family history'. The author, Richard Wilson, was clearly given every assistance by the company, including a free run of their records — even board minutes. He has comprehensively ransacked other sources from the West Indies to Norfolk, to provide what must be one of the best brewery histories ever written. The standard set for other writers will be hard to beat.

Mr Wilson, lecturer in economic and social history at the University of East Anglia, is not afraid to pull a few skeletons out of the Greene King cupboard. He reveals, for example, the Greene son who fathered 13 children on the island of St Kitts before dying of fever at the age of 19. The character studies of other members of the two families — many scarcely less eccentric — are admirably well researched.

But the book does not neglect to show how Greene's and King's breweries grew in rivalry almost next door to one another in Bury St. Edmunds, how they amalgamated almost out of necessity, and how the combined company continued to grow to become one of the dozen biggest breweries in the country.

All the while — and particularly in the last 20 years — the overriding aim has been to remain strong and independent, as Mr Wilson makes clear in his book. CAMRA has disagreements with Greene King on several subjects, especially over the use of CO<sub>2</sub> top pressure. On the company's desire to remain free and independent, however, there is nothing but heartfelt praise and thanks. Just as much praise is due to Mr Wilson, for an excellent chronicle of the brewers of some of the best real ales in Britain.

Martyn Cornell

## GREENE KING COMPETITION

This month's competition is a special one, to mark the publication of the excellent book 'Greene King: a business and family history'. The sender of the first correct entry opened on 16 December will receive a copy of the book, signed by the author, R G Wilson.

There are three questions to answer, one or two of which readers might find a little difficult, but each can be solved by using a little research and initiative.

1. Rayments is now Greene King's only brewery in Hertfordshire. Until 1965, Greene King also brewed elsewhere in the county. Where?
2. Greene King was established in 1887 by the amalgamation of two Bury St Edmunds family breweries: E Greene and Son, and FW King and Son. The present Managing Director is Martin Corke. Is he a descendant of the Greenes or of the Kings?
3. In the last few years, Greene King have brewed a draught Christmas Ale. It might have been equally appropriate to call it Christmas's Ale. Why?

Please send your answers to Greene King Competition, 14 Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire SG14 3SN. Solution and winner's name will be published in the February Newsletter.

## ROUNDSMAN

### End of a Round

Rayments Brewery recently announced that their Rayments Round promotion had come to an end, so those with incomplete cards have lost their chance to obtain a special mug or t-shirt. Rayments are well pleased that almost 400 people have successfully completed the round. Not so pleased is our columnist "Roundsmen" who, with or without his so-called "companion" was unable to visit The **Cellarman** and **Rose and Crown** in Bishop's Stortford, or the **Royal Oak** at Albury, in time. No doubt the landlords of those pubs are even now sighing with relief. Roundsmen threatens to return to our pages next spring with some incisive consumer reports on the state of pub gardens, for which he will change his name to "Groundsman". Landlords, be warned, and get weeding.

## Pints 'n' Litres

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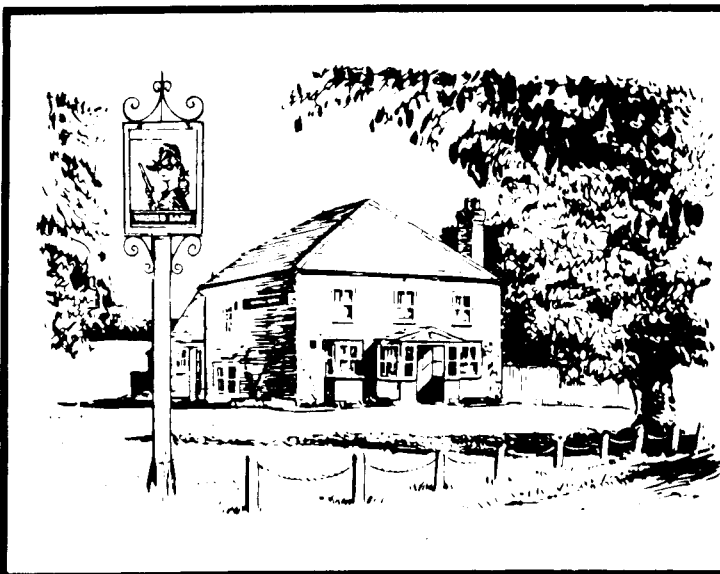
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### Competition ... continued

The winner of the September crossword competition was B R Clemmatt of Wood Green. The solution was: **Across:** Number One, McCoy, The real, Tarnish, Exile, Wine-press, Sleeping Partner, Detergent, Cramp, Harvest, Disable, Koala, McMullens. **Down:** Unstressed, Imbecile, Severe, Roll, Melting-Pot, Improper, Active, Myth, Winter-time, Strip-tease, Parmesan, Near Beer, Tartan, Castle, Hake, Damp



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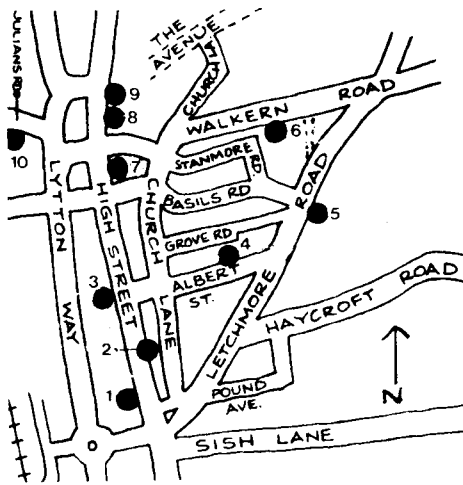
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# STEVENAGE PUB CRAWL



Whenever Stevenage is mentioned, one tends to think of vast housing estates full of screaming kids, with pubs to match, and indeed much of Stevenage is actually like that. However, the old town centre still survives, providing a service for those of us who prefer to live (and drink) a little more peacefully. So let's have a look at the pubs in the Old Town.

Coming from the south (where the New Town and the railway station are situated), the first pub you'll spot is the Coach & Horses. Ignore it — all the beer (Whitbread) is fizz. But over the road is the **Marquis of Lorne** (1), where Greene King Abbot, IPA and KK Mild are served by handpump in both saloon and public bars.

Suitably refreshed, you should now have the energy to cross the High Street to the **White Hart** (2), run by a jovial Welshman who knows how to keep an excellent pint of Benskins, along with Ind Coope Burton Ale and a guest beer from the Allied range, all pulled by handpump in both bars. The pub also serves good food, or there's a chip shop next door so you won't starve. Cross the High Street again to the **Red Lion** (3), another Greene King house, where the XX dark mild is particularly recommended, and only 60p per pint in the public bar. The back bar is frequented by bikers and heavy metal freaks, but don't worry, they won't

bite! As a large placard in the window will tell you, this pub was CAMRA North Herts branch's Pub of the Year 1983.

Dragging yourself out of the Red Lion, cross over the High Street yet again and proceed up Albert Street to the **Prince of Wales** (4) on the left hand side. This is the first McMullens pub on the crawl and is well worth a visit, if only to see the antics of the cat who guards the till in the single bar. The friendly atmosphere is rather like that of a good East End of London pub. Handpumps were installed by the present landlord to serve AK Mild and Country Bitter. Further up Albert Street is a butcher's selling real sausages, an off-licence selling real ale, another chip shop and a fizz Greene King pub. Turn left here and you'll see the **Dun Cow** (5), a two-bar Whitbread house serving Flowers Original on a single handpump in the saloon.

A short cut up an alleyway (see map) will lead you to the **Royal Oak** (6), where you can sample Macs Country Bitter from a handpump, but no AK Mild, which is on CO<sub>2</sub>. Macs have done a good job on refurbishing the public bar. Proceed along Walkern Road to the High Street, and on your left you'll find the **Moat House** (7). If you're with a friend make sure it's his round, as the Rayments BBA and Websters Yorkshire Bitter are very expensive.

For a complete contrast to the Moat House, go north along the High Street for a few yards to the **Two Diamonds** (8), named after Mr and Mrs Diamond who first opened the pub over 100 years ago. If you can't manage all 10 pubs on this crawl, whatever you do don't miss out this one, as it's the most unspoilt pub in Stevenage and the Macs AK and Country Bitter are superb. Almost next door is the **Yorkshire Grey** (9). This two-bar Greene King pub, once noted for its landlord who didn't like crowds (3 or more was a crowd!), has recently been leased to Clifton Inns, and sadly they are planning to alter drastically the character of this quiet pub, although real ale will still be available. While a trendy type, one-bar pub would be welcome in Stevenage, it seems a great shame to spoil someone's local. Wouldn't it be better to build a new pub — possibly on the site of a shoe shop or a hairdressers — Stevenage has far too many. At present Greene King IPA and Abbot are available on handpump at the Yorkshire Grey.

Dicing with death to cross the main road, you'll finally arrive at your last pub, the **Mallard** (10), where a good pint of Wethereds can be sampled in another quiet pub. The Mallard was originally built to serve Stevenage railway station, but this has since been moved to the New Town. A pity, as you've probably got to walk back there to catch your train home — never mind, there are plenty of pubs on the way!

John Law

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# BENSKINS

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## WHAT'S ON AT YOUR PUB

Many thanks to all contributors this month, especially to Alison Macfarlane without whose last-minute phone call this column would have been much shorter.

- 1 November** **Tewin:** Rose & Crown. 9pm. Traditional music session.
- 2 November** **Ware:** Old Bulls Head. 8pm. Second Hand Folk Club. Derek Brimstone.
- 3 November** **St Albans:** Rose & Crown. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 4 November** **St Margarets:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Bob Walser
- 6 November** **St Albans:** Goat. 7.30pm. St Albans Folk Club. Singers Night.
- 9 November** **Ware:** Old Bulls Head. 8pm. Second Hand Folk Club. Singers Night.
- 10 November** **St Albans:** Rose & Crown. 8.30pm. Traditional Music session.
- 11 November** **St Margarets:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Stan Hugill.
- 13 November** **St Albans:** Garibaldi. 12.30pm. Traditional music session.  
**St Albans:** Goat. 7.30pm. St Albans Folk Club. Guests: Ewan McColl and Peggy Seeger.
- 16 November** **Ware:** Old Bulls Head. 8pm. Second Hand Folk Club. Tom, Dick & Harry.
- 17 November** **St Albans:** Rose & Crown. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 18 November** **St Margarets:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: Don and Sarah Morgan.
- 20 November** **St Albans:** Goat. 7.30pm. St Albans Folk Club. Guests: Fiddlebridge Band.
- 23 November** **Ware:** Old Bulls Head. 8pm. Second Hand Folk Club. Singers Night.
- 24 November** **St Albans:** Rose & Crown. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 25 November** **Puckeridge:** Buffalo's Head. French Night — French food and wines. Come in fancy dress.  
**St Margarets:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Singaround.
- 27 November** **St Albans:** Garibaldi. 12.30pm. Traditional music session.  
**St Albans:** Goat. 7.30pm. St Albans Folk Club. Guest: Clive Pigg.
- 30 November** **Ware:** Old Bulls Head. 8pm. Second Hand Folk Club. Martin Simpson.

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.

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### Benskins Licensees

Following our report in last month's issue concerning divorcee Francesca Thomas, who is campaigning to keep her ex-husband's pub, the Newsletter accepts that it is not Benskins' policy to only allow married couples to run their pubs, and that the company are happy to retain successful licencees whether married or single.

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

#### Wednesday 2nd November

Social at the Crown, Aston End, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 8th November

Branch AGM. Red Lion, Stevenage Old Town, 8pm **prompt**.

#### Wednesday 16th November

Walkern Campaigning walkabout. Start at the Yew Tree, 8pm.

#### Wednesday 23rd November

Pub of the Month, Cricketers, Ickleford, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 29th November

Social at the Coach & Horses, Royston, 8pm.

#### Thursday 1st December

Greene King XX Campaign in Baldock. Start George IV, 8pm.

#### Saturday 3rd December

Mnibus trip to Essex. Further details from John Law.

#### Wednesday 7th December

Social at the Rose & Crown, Baldock, 8pm.

#### Wednesday 14th December

Branch Meeting, Bull, Watton-at-Stone, 8pm.

Contact John Law ☎ Stevenage 721015

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

#### Monday 7th November

Committee Meeting, Barley Mow, Tyttenhanger, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 15th November

Branch Meeting, Magnums Wine Bar, Potters Bar, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 22nd November

Beer Draughts v Watford & District, Bull, Redbourn, 8pm.

Contact Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

### WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

#### Monday 31st October

Hallowe'en evening at the Tantivy, Watford, 8pm. Fancy dress if you dare!

#### Sunday 6th December

Committee Meeting, West Herts Sports Club, Watford, 8pm. To discuss Christmas festivities.

#### Friday 11th November

Social at the Partridge, Carpenders Park, Watford, 8pm.

#### Wednesday 16th November

Branch Meeting at the Fox & Hounds, Rickmansworth, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 22nd November

Social & Games evening at the Bull, Redbourn. 'Half-pint' draughts v South Herts branch, 8pm.

#### Tuesday 6th December

Games evening v Mid Chilterns branch, Swan, Leavesden, 8pm.

Contact Tony King ☎ Garston 72587

### MID—CHILTERN BRANCH

Contact Del Allen ☎ Chesham 76141

## PUB NEWS

Romford Brewers Bitter, from the Allied Group, is now available at the **White Hart**, Stevenage, the **Coach & Horses**, Royston and the **Buffalo's Head**, Puckeridge. The latter are now also offering a three-course meal, all home-made, on Wednesday nights at £3.25 a head. This is in addition to the usual range of unusual beers. The **Fox & Duck**, Therfield is selling Tolly Cobbold dark mild. Mickles Birch Bitter, brewed in Walkern, is available at the **Cabinet** in Reed. The **Three Horseshoes**, Norton has Mitchells & Butlers Springfield Bitter.

A new real ale outlet is the **Oliver Steak House** in The Parade, Watford, which has Ruddle County at 88p per pint. The **Church Farm Shop** in Aldenham has entered the real ale off-sales market, with Ruddle County, Brakspear PA and Special, and Bridgewater Bitter — all on draught — plus real scrumpy and vintage cider.

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire South, Hertfordshire North, Watford and District and Mid-Chilterns branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited. The views expressed 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, Flat 1, The Old Stables, Woodside, Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

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**Advertising:** £7 per 2.5cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. ☎ Hatfield 69337 for details.

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