

FREE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

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CIRCULATION 5000

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QUICK ONES

Greene King, Whitbread Deal

As a result of the complex beer-swaps so beloved of the brewing industry, cask Greene King Abbot Ale will appear in selected Whitbread pubs. Previously Whitbread have had little success in introducing a strong draught beer of their own, and Abbot should fill the gap nicely.

In return, Whitbread will supply their own bottled Gold Label to Greene King for that company's pubs. Gold Label, originally brewed by Tennants of Sheffield, is a fearsomely strong barley wine with an original gravity of 1094 - 1102. It will replace Greene King's own barley wine, Audit Ale, whose sales have been decreasing in recent years.

Birthday Treat

Herts North Branch's 10th birthday celebration, at the Crooked Billet, Symonds Green, Stevenage, saw a few surprises. The Greene King pub was chosen for the event because it was the scene of several early branch meetings, and later the branch successfully campaigned to save the pub, when the site appeared to be threatened by redevelopment.

The revelries were attended by branch members old and new, and a real surprise was the arrival of one of the branch's founders, Terry Higgs of Hertford. Terry told us that he was pleased with the way the branch appears to have developed, and that he is still a loyal CAMRA member, regularly sampling the real stuff in local hosteleries. Other welcome faces from the past were former branch chairmen Martyn Cornell and Dennis Robertson, and one-time yard of ale champion Sandra Ward, who revealed that she had been signed on to CAMRA by none other than Terry Higgs.

The final was the revelation of a beautifully decorated birthday cake, lovingly prepared by Rosemary Barber, a recent addition to the branch's ranks. As it enters its second decade, CAMRA's Herts North branch will be delighted to welcome as a member anyone

who lives north of a line between Harpenden and Bishops Stortford, and enjoys real ale, real pubs, and belonging to a really successful consumer movement.

ANOTHER EXHIBITION

If your appetite for information about pubs and breweries of the past has been whetted by the "Here for the Beer" exhibition touring the county, you will find a trip to Bradford very worth while. In the city's glorious Cartwright Hall CAMRA, SAVE Britain's Heritage and Bradford Art Galleries have combined to set up the exhibition "Time Gentlemen Please", which traces, by means of superb photographs and drawings, the development of pubs from Victorian times up to today. Accompanying the photographs are displays of breweriana - posters, trays, pomp clips etc - recalling breweries which have long ago disappeared.

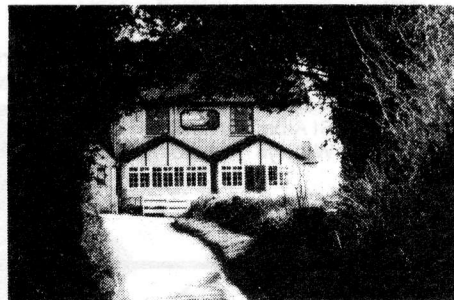
"Time Gentlemen Please" continues until 13th January next year: visit it, before you forget what pubs used to be like.

The longest wait - 2

After reading the August Newsletter, a CAMRA member in Stevenage told me of a visit he and two friends had made to the *Inn on the Green*, Datchworth. It was a hot Sunday lunchtime some time ago, before the pub changed hands. They waited almost fifteen minutes for the barman to come from the other bar to serve them. When he finally arrived they ordered three pints, and he went back to the other bar, never to be seen again. After another twenty minutes they left, and had a pleasant drink at the pub opposite. Apparently this was quite a regular occurrence at the time, this particular barman being an old boy with a terrible memory. It had been suggested that paying in advance might be the answer - but on occasions he had been seen wandering about trying to find out whose pound notes he had...

Steve Bury

THE BARLEY MOW



TYTTENHANGER GREEN

WE HAVE THE LARGEST SELECTION OF REAL ALES IN HERTFORDSHIRE

We also pride ourselves that they are all in the best of condition. Why not try our menu of hot and cold meals at lunchtime - what about pre-Christmas lunch?

**PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES
INCLUDING MINIBUSES**

BROCKET ARMS

— Ayot St Lawrence —

*Drink in the rural atmosphere of
George Bernard Shaw's haunt*

A well-sampled real ale pub
with beers from

**Everard • Greene King
Marston • Wadworth**
plus guest beers

Meals available seven days a week

Enquiries welcome ☎ Stevenage 820250

'HERE FOR THE BEER'

The 'Here for the Beer' exhibition, mentioned briefly in the August Newsletter, has now left Watford museum at the start of its 16-month tour of Hertfordshire venues. It is currently at the Lowewood Museum until 17th October, when it moves on to Watersmeet, Rickmansworth.

As well as being very informative, the exhibition is full of interesting photographs and entertaining anecdotes. One of the twenty aspects of the brewing industry featured in the main body of the exhibition is that of Quality Control. Here it is revealed that an early method of deciding whether a beer was of sufficient strength or not, was for the ale 'conner', or taster, to sit on a bench onto which the beverage had been poured. If his breeches stuck to the bench, the beer was judged to be sufficiently potent!

As well as details of Malt, Malting and Hops, the other vital ingredient - Water - is discussed. At the beginning of the 1890s both McMullens, having just opened their Hartham Lane Brewery, and Wells of Watford, prided themselves on the pure cold water they obtained from artesian wells - greatly preferable to the somewhat polluted product available from the Thames.

On the subject of beer bottles and tops we learn that the crown cork bottle top, now the most widely used method, was patented by an American, William Painter. There are several beautiful glass beer bottles on display from the defunct W & S Lucas Hitchin brewery. In contrast, other more modern beer containers are on view, including a Benskins draught bitter pack for carrying real ale from the pub - and from the late-lamented Swannells brewery at Kings Langley the now-familiar plastic 'carry keg'.

A display on pub brewing cites CAMRA as having influenced the trend towards pubs brewing and selling their own beer, and mentions the three examples that we are fortunate to have in Hertfordshire.

Our favourite refreshment would never reach our lips without vital 'workforce', and there is a fascinating collection of photographs depicting, amongst others, the staff of McMullens brewery preparing for an outing in the early 1900s, and the Benskins tug-of-war team at Wembley, sporting Benskins Watford pullovers, the fore-runners of today's brewery sweatshirts. There are noble looking photographs of distinguished local brewers and their families, notably Joseph Benskin and W S Lucas. The latter, we learn, was both a brewer and a Quaker - a strange combination! Fortunately for the lovers of his beers, he didn't allow his beliefs to interfere with the production of the liquor that gave him his living.

Many other aspects of the brewing industry are studied in this exhibition: cooperage, the brewing process, transport and progress in the industry through the centuries. Many different brewer's souvenirs, pub signs, windows and old photographs can be seen - there is seemingly something to interest everyone.

Future venues for the exhibition are as follows:

15/9/84 - 17/10/84	Lowewood Museum, Hoddesdon
20/10/84 - 17/11/84	Watersmeet, Rickmansworth
29/12/84 - 26/1/85	Hitchin Museum
2/2/85 - 2/3/85	Oakmere House, Potters Bar
9/3/85 - 6/4/85	Royston Museum
13/4/85 - 11/5/85	County Hall, Hertford
18/5/85 - 15/6/85	Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead
6/7/85 - 20/7/85	Council Offices, Bishops Stortford
27/7/85 - 24/8/85	Stevenage Museum
5/10/85 - 2/11/85	Hertford Museum
9/11/85 - 7/12/85	St Albans Museum
14/12/85 - 18/1/85	Welwyn Hatfield Museum

FLINTS WINE BAR

Market Hill, Royston

☎ 47512

MARSTON PEDIGREE & OWD RODGER
on handpump

Home-cooked food available all day
Monday to Saturday

Closed Sunday

PUB OF THE MONTH

The Two Diamonds, Stevenage Old Town

Built on the site of the Great Fire of 1807, the **Two Diamonds** was opened in 1880 by a Mr and Mrs Diamond - hence the name. 100 years later, the licence was taken over by Ron and Joyce Kirby. Fears that the pub would be spoilt by the owners, McMullens, proved groundless, and only a few essential alterations have been made, so the unique character of the pub has remained. Today, when beer drinkers talk about Stevenage, the **Two Diamonds** is bound to be mentioned.

Most evenings see the bar full of darts and domino players, plus customers practising the ancient art of conversation - no juke box or recorded music to blast the ear drums! Two handpumps serve superb Macs AK like it is going out of style (who said mild doesn't sell?), whilst another dispenses Country Bitter. A recent innovation is the beer garden - a small yard at the back of a pub, which is the home of the largest and friendliest white rabbit I've ever met.

The **Two Diamonds** has been voted Pub of the Month for October by CAMRA North Herts branch, and to celebrate this, a social evening has been arranged for Wednesday 24th October from 8pm onwards. During the evening a certificate will be presented in recognition of the hard work that Ron and Joyce have put into the pub.

This is the second pub in Stevenage to have been voted Pub of the Month in 1984, which says a lot for the ale-sipping possibilities there. With eleven houses offering traditional beer, it's a great place for a pub crawl!

John Law

BEER BARREL - OFF LICENCE

Under new management - formerly the 'Jug & Firkin'
67 Albert Street, Stevenage Old Town ☎ 726093

REAL ALES TO TAKE AWAY

ADNAMS · EVERARD · MARSTON · BANKS & TAYLOR



COLLECTORS' CORNER

British Beermat Collectors Society

One Tuesday night every other month, the *Dimsdale Arms* in Fore Street, Hertford plays host to the British Beermat Collectors Society. The hired upstairs room becomes charged with the excited banter and joviality of the south east's top beer mat collectors (or tegetologists - meaning 'collectors of small mats/rugs' in Latin!). The evening is given over to beer mats: beer mat swapping, beer mats for sale, beer mats as raffle prizes and last - but by no stretch of the imagination least - an auction of older and very collectable beer mats. As the money hits the coffers (to be used to buy up more collections by the society, to auction for the benefit of collectors), the pint pots are emptied and the banter gets louder still. The evening is quite a gathering, and everyone goes home with at least a few more mats to add to the heaps already collected - there is something magnetic about hoarding drip mats, as any 'dripsomaniac' will tell you - a great feeling for Britain and her beer heritage can be built up by making a good beer mat collection.

Over the past two years I have presided over several gatherings at the *Dimsdale*. Non-members are cordially invited to join us for one, or all, of our Autumn meetings, all of which will kick off at 7.30 pm on the following dates: *9th October, 13th November, 18th December*.

I will give you more details of these meetings, and more 'tegetological twitterings', as the year unfolds. If you would like more details about the British Beermat Collectors Society, or if you have a box of mats in your attic you want to get shot of for a fiver, then drop me a line at 186, Bentley Road, Sele Farm, Hertford, or ring me on Hertford 553364. I look forward to hearing from you.

Anthony Orme

Birthday brew

Collectors take note! Greene King are to brew 100,000 bottles of a special light ale to commemorate the 80th birthday, on October 2nd, of writer Graham Greene. The beer will be brewed at Bury St Edmunds and will be named after the novelist, who is a relative of the brewing family.

BLAKES

96 Queens Road, Watford

Morrells • Brakspears • Hook Norton
Draught cider • Wines

Plus two unusual guest beers

GOOD FOOD AT ALL TIMES

Open pub hours, 7 days a week

HAPPY HOUR

Each evening
5.30-6.30pm

25% off all drinks

Sunday
12-2pm

WHAT'S ON AT YOUR PUB

- 9 Oct **Hertford:** *Dimsdale Arms*. 7.30pm. British Beermat Collectors Society Meeting.
- 11 Oct **St Albans:** *Rose and Crown*. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 12 Oct **Stanstead Abbots:** *Crown*. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: *The Copper Family*. (Highly recommended - PL).
- 14 Oct **St Albans:** *Beehive*. 8.30pm. *Watson Sunday Music Club*. Live acoustic music in an informal setting.
- St Albans:** *Garibaldi*. Lunchtime traditional music session.
- 18 Oct **St Albans:** *Rose and Crown*. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 19 Oct **Stanstead Abbots:** *Crown*. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: *Tony Hall*.
- 25 Oct **St Albans:** *Rose and Crown*. 8.30pm. Traditional music session.
- 26 Oct **Stanstead Abbots:** *Crown*. 8pm. Hoddesdon folk Club - singaround.
- 28 Oct **St Albans:** *Beehive*. 8.30pm. *Watson Sunday Music club*. Live acoustic music in an informal setting.
- St Albans:** *Garibaldi*. Lunchtime traditional music session.

What else is on?

Contrary to popular belief, the "What's On" column is not just for the benefit of folk singers, morris dancers and their friends.

We give a free listing to any event, *provided* it is held in a pub which sells real ale, and provided details reach me at the address below, by the 10th of the preceding month. We would like to hear about all kinds of musical events - country, disco, heavy rock and jazz. We would love to hear about all society and club meetings held in pub rooms. We are anxious to hear about landlords' own special enterprises - pig roasts, barbecues, nights of debauchery.....

For reasons of space we shall have to limit your entry to no more than 15 words. If you feel that your regular or special events deserve greater prominence (and remember that 5,000 copies of this Newsletter are distributed every month), then we will be happy to discuss our advertising rates with you - please refer to the details at the foot of the back page.

Here's *your* chance to attract more people to *your* event at *your* pub. Why not make the most of it?

Peter Lerner

14 Hazeldell, Watton at Stone, Hertford SG14 3SN.

HERTSMERE BEER FESTIVAL

(in conjunction with CAMRA)

Oakmere House, Potters Bar

☎45005

- ☆ Fri 12 Oct - Folk evening ☆
☆ Sat 13 Oct - Biergarten evening ☆
☆ Sun 14 Oct - Traditional jazz ☆

Tickets nightly - £1.50 in advance
£2 on the door - Special offer £3 for 3 nights
Free glass on entry

Lifts up Herts.

Benskins Bitter • Draught Burton Ale

PUB NEWS

The **Plough**, Great Munden, is currently offering the complete range of Marston's cask beers, on rotation, including the highly regarded Pedigree and the unusual dark strong ale, Merrie Monk. Customer reaction will decide which of the beers becomes the regular.

The controversial Thorley Park estate near Bishop's Stortford has its first pub - a Charrington house called the **Marne** (after Stortford's twin town Villiers-sur-Marne). Beer range not yet known, but handpumps were visible in local press photos of the pub. Rayments' farmhouse conversion, on the same estate, is due to open in the new year.

The **Old Oak**, Hertford has closed its doors for good. A funeral procession marked this sad occasion, which was forced on Benskins by a road widening scheme. Ominously this is the fifth Hertford pub to close in six years, and the second in 1984 (remember the **Unicorn**?) Other news from Hertford - the **Plough** at the junction of London Road and Ware Road is temporarily closed for refurbishment. The pub, which has been under-used for some time, is to be re-opened as Benskins' latest venture into the dubious world of fun pubs. Lord help us! Meanwhile at Letty Green, the **Cowper Arms**, a rare non-real free house with considerable potential, has recently been sold. Let's hope that the decent thing is done and handpumps are installed soon.

Good and bad news from Royston: The **North Star** no longer sells real ale - the handpumps were taken out when the new landlord arrived. The **British Legion Club** (CIU), on the other hand, sells Greene King IPA and Adnams Bitter, at 58p and 62p respectively - a fact not previously reported. A new outlet for real ale is the Goldcrest Inn in Baldock, which has Younger IPA, Truman Best Bitter and Tetley Bitter, plus a beer garden and mini-zoo for the kids. The **Rye House** in Hoddesdon has stopped selling Trumans Mild and Bitter, and now has just the Best Bitter and Sampson. Also in Hoddesdon, the **Old Highway Tavern** has added Benskins Bitter alongside the Ind Coope Bitter, and the **Rose & Crown** now has Bulmer cider on handpumps. The **Angel** in Waltham Abbey is now open and is reputed to be selling real ale - confirmation please, anyone? The **Lord Nelson** in Barnet has been sold by Ind Coope as a free house.

News from St Albans - Friary Meux Bitter is available at the **Fighting Cocks**, **Six Bells** and **Rose & Crown**. The **Blue Anchor** now has real AK on handpump alongside the Country Bitter. Talking of Macs - new beer mats for Country Bitter include the following line, commendably honest but disconcerting: 'Cask conditioned - OG 1039-1043 - CO₂ dispensed'. Presumably these are for selected pubs only? The **Woodside Leisure Centre** in Watford, for example, now has Country Bitter on handpump.

The **Mayfair** in Haldens, Welwyn Garden City has Brakspears Bitter, Wethereds Bitter and Flowers Original. The **Waggoners** in Ayot Green is now selling Fremains Bitter alongside Wethereds. **Blakes** of Watford are currently featuring an unusual range of weekly guest beers from all parts of the country, including Archers, Eldridge Pope, Ringwood, Belhaven, Jennings and Big Lamp (Newcastle).

Peter & Lesley Reynolds welcome you to



THE STAR INN
FURNEUX PELHAM



Rayments BBA ★ Greene King KK & Abbot

GOOD HOME-COOKED FOOD
MONDAY TO SATURDAY

☎ Brent Pelham 227

BRANCH DIARY

ALL HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCHES

Tuesday 9th October

Inter-branch liaison meeting, Queens Head, Colney Heath, 8pm. All members welcome. Details from any branch contact.

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Wednesday 17th October

Branch meeting at the Raven, Hexton, 8pm.

Monday 22nd October

Darts match v North Beds at the Plume of Feathers, Ickleford, 8pm.

Wednesday 24th October

Pub of the Month social at the Two Diamonds, Stevenage, 8pm.

Wednesday 31st October

Social at the Brewery Tap, Furneux Pelham, 8pm.

Wednesday 7th November

Social at the Goldcrest, Baldock, 8pm.

Wednesday 14th November

Social at the Bull, Therfield, 8pm.

Contact Peter Clarke ☎ Stevenage 65957

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 16th October

Harpenden pub survey. Meet at the Old Cock Inn, 8pm.

Monday 19th November

McMullen Brewery visit, 10 am. A few places left - contact Eric Sim for availability.

Contact Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 3rd October

Abbots Langley pub crawl. Start at the Royal Oak, Kitters Green, 8pm.

Wednesday 10th October

Social evening at the Villiers Arms, Oxhey, 8pm. All welcome.

Wednesday 17th October

Branch Meeting at the Three Crowns, Bushey Heath, 8pm. Free pint for all newcomers.

Friday 19th October

Weekend trip to Isle of Wight. Phone contact for details.

Wednesday 31st October

Halloween fancy dress social at the Tantivy, Queens Road, Watford, 8pm. All welcome.

Contact Tony King ☎ Garston 672587

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Contact Pete Freeman ☎ Hemel Hempstead 69773

THE ROYAL OAK, BUSHEY

Free House

★ 6 Real Ales □ Food ★
★ Guest Beers ★

Restaurant and carvery now open

Reservations preferable ☎ 01-950 2865

SPARROWS HERNE ★ ON THE A411

FIVE YEARS AGO

In October 1979 the Newsletter's reporters fearlessly exposed the St Albans publican who was selling keg beer through handpumps. This so incensed the landlord that he undertook a one-man invasion of CAMRA's national headquarters office, which also happens to be in St Albans, and threatened to tear limb from limb the hapless hack who happened to be in occupation at the time. Such is the power of investigative journalism.

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire North, Hertfordshire South, Watford & District and Mid-Chilterns branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches. The Editor gratefully receives articles or letters for publication. Send to **Cathy Totman, Flat 1, The Old Stables, Woodside, Hatfield, Hertfordshire.**

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