

FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1984

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 79

MICKLES GO UNDER

The small independent brewery company, Mickles of Walkern, has ceased trading.

Mickles were established a couple of years ago at Dog Kennel Farm, Lilley, near Luton, and became quite well known in the local free trade for their Birch and Oak Bitters. Unfortunately, the local Council did not approve of their presence at Lilley, and the brewery was forced to seek new premises.

Eventually, Mickles rented part of the former maltings of S. Wright's old brewery at Walkern, near Stevenage (now a soft drinks factory) and re-commenced brewing operations there, but the upheaval of the move and the time needed to make a new start clearly lost the company much of its former trade.

At their best Mickles beers had a pleasant, individual flavour, but towards the end of the company's life the quality was by no means consistent, and the beer was hard to find.

CAMRA, and we suspect the local free trade, will miss the element of choice offered by Mickles, but the moral for the new wave small-scale independent brewers must be that a high quality, consistent product is required, backed up by professional marketing and guaranteed availability.

WHO'S THE REAL WALLY?

by Roundsman

I couldn't believe it when I was shown a cutting from a Hitchin newspaper. Here was Letchworth landlord Bill Jamieson congratulating himself for removing real ale from his pub, and describing real ale drinkers as "Warm Beer Wallys" who talk about the miners' strike, drive "funny-shaped Citroens" and wear "old tweed jackets with holes in their elbows".

My first thought was that if Mr. Jamieson persists in serving his beer warm then he shouldn't be surprised at the customers he gets. Then I thought that as, whichever way you look at it, the miners' strike is probably the most important event happening in this country, it is not surprising that people in pubs might be talking about it. Then it struck me that the only person I know who drives a "funny-shaped Citroen" is an exceptionally attractive young lady who probably wouldn't wish to be seen dead in Mr. Jamieson's pub. But, so as to be charitable, I felt that I should go straight away to make the acquaintance of the outspoken Mr. Jamieson and his swinging hot-spot in Letchworth.

The pub was not too difficult to find, despite the fact that someone had forgotten to switch the outside lights on. Outside the door was a sign proclaiming the availability of Webster's Yorkshire Bitter - not by any means one of my favourite real ales, but sufficient for the first pint of the evening. However, upon entering and noticing an absence of handpumps, I was told by the barmaid that it had been taken out the previous week owing to lack of demand. Strange, I thought, so it wasn't the Warm Beer Wallys who were persistently asking for real ale; quite the reverse it seems. Still, as I've said, if you will serve your beer warm. . . And as if to reinforce my thought,

Continued on back page

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THE BARLEY MOW



TYTTENHANGER GREEN

WE HAVE THE LARGEST SELECTION OF REAL ALES IN HERTFORDSHIRE

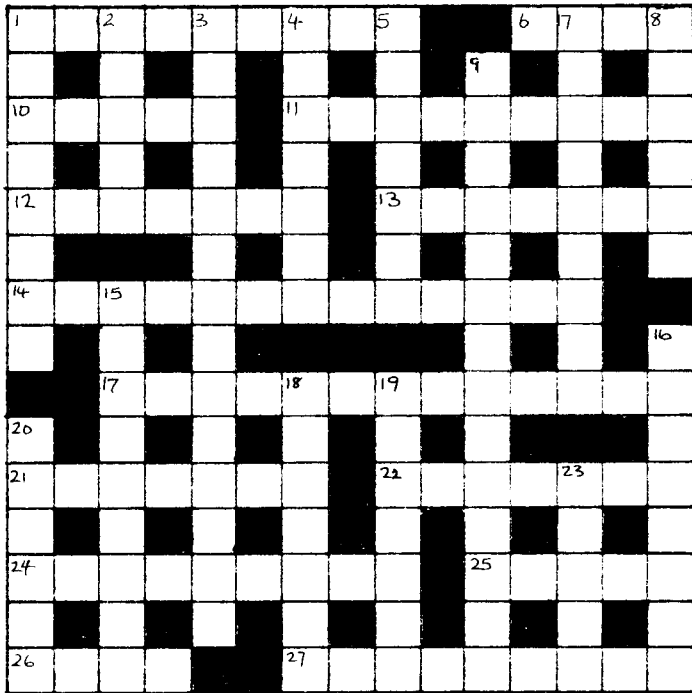
We also pride ourselves that they are all in the best of condition. Why not try our menu of hot and cold meals at lunchtime?

We are always first so come and try our indoor Beer-B-Q

PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES INCLUDING MINIBUSES

PUZZLE PAGE

The sender of the first correct solution opened on February 8th will receive a copy of the new **1985 Good Beer Guide**. Please mark envelopes 'December Crossword'.



Across

- 1 Where friends, perhaps about half of them, are in home-brew pub? (9)
- 6 Victoria's town, whence all refreshing elixirs originate (4)
- 10 Ale brewed in outskirts of Rotherham, which is part of this (5)
- 11 Having had too much fried suet pudding (9)
- 12 Olde English drinking upset liver - need this cover? (7)
- 13 Some plants generally give you the sack when in this place (7)
- 14 New town awash with Trophy - it's not worth a lot (13)
- 17 Frees apparent problem with a clip (5-8)
- 21 Its villagers bought their pub and displayed poster on new start-up (7)
- 22 Musical cask goes to one's head (7)
- 24 Midnight in paradise - unfortunately get run down (9)
- 25 Small rise results in fall on knee, looking the wrong way (5)
- 26 Angry lover-boy's return (4)
- 27 Pomp endlessly dull person ostentatiously showed (9)

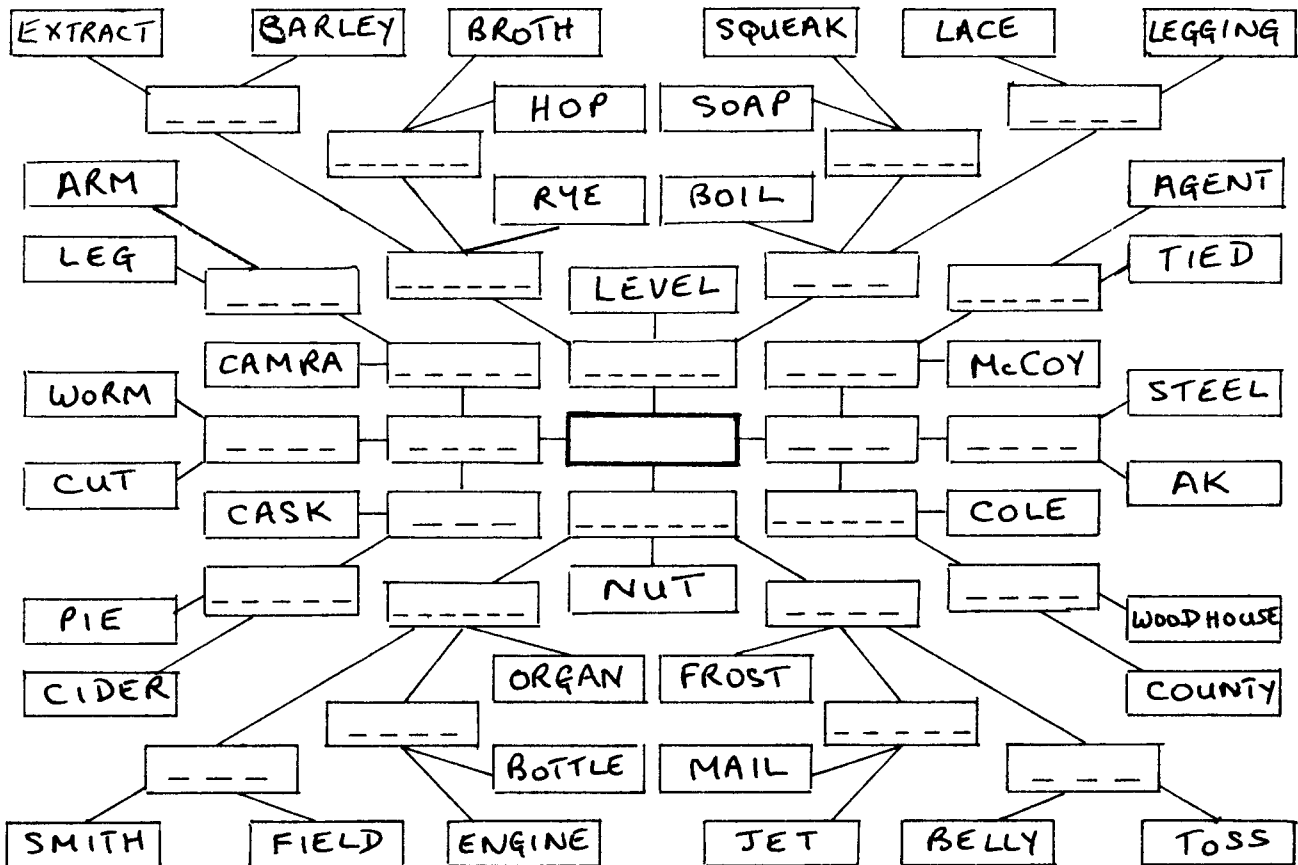
Down

- 1 'Tis true I'm short of nothing for a change (8)
- 2 Reflection after I played game (5)
- 3 Deem the Pelhams transferred to the other side of the county? (5, 9)
- 4 Make out a record on the Queen's new beginning (7)
- 5 Where one of the Two Brewers is, and not what's drunk there (7)
- 7 R.A. has tank repaired - that'll keep them warm (9)
- 8 Donkeys lose their head in water movements (6)
- 9 Very afraid, a number hide mistakes and cheat (6-8)
- 15 Papers have unusually poor circulation with such a cruel boss (9)
- 16 A bad paper's coverage of the satellite's return in small pieces (8)
- 18 Elopers lose heart taking off from here (7)
- 19 Home of the Bushel & Strike has a tree in fine condition (7)
- 20 Dirty digger's suit? (6)
- 23 It requires CAMRA, they say, to follow hop cultivation (5)

'CONNECTIONS'

An extra puzzle this month, to tide you over till February. The sender of the first correct solution opened on February 8th will receive a **1985 CAMRA Beer Drinkers' Diary**. Please mark envelopes 'Connections'.

Starting round the outside and working towards the centre, find the word that connects the given words leading into it. Examples: MOTHER and FEATHER would lead to GOOSE (Mother Goose, goose feather); PLOUGH and FLAKE to SNOW (snow plough, snow flake); etc. Each word found then becomes one of the clues to the next word, the last four leading finally to the word in the centre. Dashes indicate the number of letters.



BRANCH OUTING

North Herts trip to Essex

On Saturday November 3rd, twelve CAMRA members set out by minibus for a trip around the pubs of Essex, leaving Stevenage two minutes ahead of schedule. The first bit of excitement came when we were stopped by the police, who asked "Where are you going?" Jonathan Fynn, our driver, replied "Well, it's a sort of organised pub crawl." "Can I come with you?" was the next question! The actual reason for the stoppage was to ascertain if we were hunt saboteurs - as if we'd be daft enough to sabotage a hunt when the pubs were open!

Despite this short delay, plus a traffic jam in Saffron Walden, we arrived at the first pub on time, the **Crown** at Little Walden. Here we all sampled Maulden's Special Bitter (brewed in Sudbury) direct from the barrel, while the pub cat, a large Siamese, had its tummy rubbed.

The next pub also had a cat, but this one didn't want to know about humans, having more important things on its mind. It suddenly shot across the bar and disappeared behind the piano, re-emerging with a mouse in its mouth. (*Sounds like a case for the hunt saboteurs! - Ed.*) Not surprisingly, the landlady immediately ejected both cat and mouse. Oh yes, the pub. We were in the **Rose & Crown** at Hempstead, the birthplace of Dick Turpin and a free house, listed in the 1985 *Good Beer Guide*. I sampled the Steward & Patterson's Bitter from Watney's Norwich Brewery.

Hellions Bumpstead was the next port of call, for a pint of Greene King IPA at the **Three Horseshoes**. On arrival the doors were locked, but the landlady heard our minibus and opened up, allowing us into a nice, quiet two-bar pub. On then to Great Sampford, where we were to visit the **Red Lion**, our first Riddleys house of the day. A real local's pub this one, but the amazing thing is that it was recently rebuilt after a fire. The exterior is really superb, while inside we were served Bitter and the stronger HE. A shop is incorporated into the building, making the pub a viable business, an idea that could be tried elsewhere.

Some of us sampled a quick half in the **Bull** over the road, a free house and more up-market than the other, but not a bad pub with a public bar and a real fire. I sampled the Adnams, which was in very good form.

As we had plenty of time left, we decided to pay a quick visit to the beautiful village of Finchingfield, where we called in at the **Fox**, a free house where I sampled Charringtons IPA. I didn't like this place much - it was a bit too touristy and food-orientated. The other pub in the village, the **Red Lion** (Riddleys), was much better - a real local which has been in the *Good Beer Guide* for ten years.

On then to our last village, Blackmore End, where there were two pubs to visit. The **Bull**, where I tried the Adnams, was a typical low-beamed inn (a free house) with a real open fire. The other pub, the **Red Cow**, was well worth a visit, with fine Ridley's Ales served by gravity. Like almost all Ridley's pubs this has the standard outside toilet. After saying goodbye to the landlord and his enormous cat, we motored off towards Braintree, calling in at a preserved railway en route.

After a good meal (Martin Daw had two!) we all met back at the minibus and set off for the short drive to Great Saling, where the GBG-listed **White Hart** opened on time. This Tudor pub sells Riddleys Bitter by electric pump, which was superb, but the pub cat didn't approve of us. Not far away, on the A120, was the **Saling Oak**, another Ridley's pub and really a basic roadhouse. Here we were entertained by a coachload of Watford supporters on their way home from Ipswich.

We left the main road to find the **Green Man** at Mill End Green, a cosy free house, with an unusual real fire and handpumps serving a variety of beers including Maulden's Bitter. The quality well justified its *Good Beer Guide* entry. Next stop was the **Prince of Wales** at Broxted, an isolated free house unfortunately modernised. The handpumped Websters, Tetleys and Adnams were in fine fettle though.

Finally, after getting lost, we arrived at the **Old Mill** in Takeley, another GBG-listed pub and a Charringtons tied house, where M & B Springfield Bitter was on sale and in excellent condition. Sadly, much of the building was given over to eating and the rest was crowded, but the singer wasn't bad. One of our group thought he was so good that he had to be dragged back to the minibus for the trip back to Stevenage, where we arrived in time for a couple of last pints in the **Red Lion**.

Altogether an enjoyable day out, but not a sober one!

John Law

LETTERS

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is certainly going places! From the Marketing Manager of Farsons Brewery, Malta:

Dear Ms Totman,

We have recently received a copy of Issue No. 74 of the "Hertfordshire Newsletter", and we were pleased to read the article "Supping in Malta" which refers at length to beers brewed by us and also to drinking habits in Malta.

Your readers would no doubt be interested to know that visits to the Brewery can be arranged through the P.R. Department on Telephone 40331.

The "Great Beer Festival" which our Company organises every year and reference to which was also made in the said article, will this year be held between the 25th and 28th July 1985. Any of your readers visiting Malta during that period would also be most welcome to four hours of continuous entertainment (from 8.00p.m. to midnight), good food and good beer at lower-than-normal prices. Entrance is free and Brewery souvenirs would also be on sale.

You may wish to pass on this information to your readers through one of the coming issues.

With best wishes to all CAMRA members in your region,

Yours truly,
A J Tabone

Meanwhile back in England, a Hertford reader has a 'stomach complaint':

Dear Sir,

An experience that happened to myself and a group of friends recently has caused me to feel frustrated enough to write to you.

Before driving back from a long weekend in the country, we decided to rendez-vous in the **Brocket Arms** at Ayot St Lawrence, a pub well-known for its restaurant and which carries a large advertisement in the Newsletter announcing 'Meals available seven days a week'. On arrival we were told that they did not serve food on Mondays. Is this the 8th day?

Had we known this earlier we would not have detoured to the middle of nowhere when we could have been, and indeed 30 minutes later were, eating steaks in the **Lytton Arms** at Knebworth. This is not an isolated experience. The same group of people wandered about St Albans one Sunday evening following signs such as 'Food always available', only to find that none was.

It is understandable that some pubs do not serve food all week, but it is not very impressive to offer a seven-day menu if you only serve on six.

'Hungry of Hertford'

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GREAT PINTS

No 1: 'Crackleybank'

We had been careering up the motorway all morning. 'Services 23 miles' read the sign. Some service! We preferred to slip off and sample some local fare.

It took us some time to find, but World's End Lane looked promising and, sure enough, there was the 'Loin of Pork' lying in wait, all clematises and geraniums. A cheerful bell ushered us into a low room where there seemed to be enough cling-film-wrapped sandwiches to feed an army. But we were quite alone for some time, until an elderly man in a cap shuffled in who owed something to the drawings of van Gogh's early period and was probably older. I ordered a pint of bitter and a shandy, and he went over to his staved barrels on stillages, mysteriously marked with chalk. "Could you tell me where we are?" I asked, by way of conversation. He drew himself up to his full height and answered in a firm tone, "Crackley Bank!" - as sure of his ground as a Parisian questioned beneath the legs of the Eiffel Tower. "Oh yes," I said without any attempt at meaning.

His beer was a craftsman's pint. Rich and tawny with a faintly sharp, astringent flavour and a creamy texture down to the last drop. We sat in the cool, low snug, watching a butterfly fluttering against a window pane that hadn't opened in a hundred years, and listening to the slow tick of the clock. Eventually we thought about a refill, which seemed as essential now as any drink I'd ever had - but we never saw him again.

I should have liked to have asked him what his beer was. Perhaps one pint of his nectar was all you were allowed, or perhaps it was all a dream.

Crackleybank? Well, it's on the map.

Eric Binns

This article is No 1 of an occasional series. Would any reader like to supply No 2? If you have especially fond - or amusing - memories of a particular pint, or a particular pub, let's hear about it. Send your contribution to the Editor - address on the back page.

QUICK ONES

Apologies

Sincere apologies are due to Ian and Brenda Freshwater of the North Star, Royston for incorrect information which appeared in the October Newsletter.

The Freshwaters did not remove the handpump on arrival at the pub in the middle of the year; it had already been removed by the previous tenant. On the contrary, a handpump has been installed dispensing Wethered's Bitter, and others are to follow for the sale of other ales from the Whitbread range.

The pub has already undergone some redecoration, and early next year the brewery is to invest some money on refurbishing and re-opening the downstairs garden bar. An aviary has already been installed and a minizoo is planned as a further attraction next year. Obviously Ian and Brenda intend to do all they can to restore this pub to its former popularity, particularly by welcoming all the family. Give it a try on your way to or from Royston station.

XX-tinction?

Because of falling sales, the Greene King XX dark mild on sale at the Red Lion, Stevenage, is being threatened with withdrawal. Can we afford to lose yet another outlet for this fine beer? The North Herts branch of CAMRA has decided to try and do something about it. Firstly, a social evening is being held on Tuesday 11th December, from 8.30pm onwards, at which our members will attempt to boost sales. Secondly, some special Mild publicity will be on display at the pub. However, if XX Mild is to remain it's up to you, the drinker, to get in there and drink it!

John Law

Bring out your breweriana

On Wednesday 13th February, Watford & District branch intend to hold a branch auction (venue to be arranged). Any donations of brewery souvenirs of any kind, beer bottles or any other items of interest will be much appreciated. Anyone interested in attending or making a donation please phone Marion Birch on Rickmansworth 773913.



Good beer is a tradition with us.

The McMullen family have been brewing beer since 1827, making us Hertfordshire's oldest independent brewery.

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We are still the same small family

business we've always been. Still brewing traditional beer in Hertford. Every bit as genuine as we were when we started.

And the kind of welcome you get in our 150 or so pubs is as welcome as it's always been.

That's kind of traditional too.

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Brewers in Hertfordshire since 1827



Peter & Lesley Reynolds welcome you to



THE STAR INN
FURNEUX PELHAM



Rayments BBA ★ Greene King KK & Abbot

and wish you a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

☎ Brent Pelham 227

For the truly seasoned beer drinker there comes a time when a new *Good Beer Guide* is no longer an absolute necessity. We feel fairly confident of getting a decent pint wherever we happen to be, and we can usually amaze our friends by shooting off motorways at strange exits to find an excellent little hostelry just around the corner.

It's all taken years of dedicated study - the theoretical side carried out with a series of less than adequate maps in old *Good Beer Guides* and the practical and much more pleasant side leaning against bars up and down the land. We may not know all 5,000 pubs in CAMRA's 1985 *Good Beer Guide*, but we know more than enough to get by. So why pay out the equivalent of five pints and a couple of packets of peanuts for this year's offering?



Firstly, the powers that be have finally managed to get the guide out in time for Christmas this year, so you could always buy the guide for a less dedicated friend as a Christmas present.

Then you can always buy it as an exercise in nostalgia. Pubs you have known, loved and fallen over in will still be listed, bringing back fond memories (and perhaps some you would rather forget). Some pubs might have disappeared from the guide, leaving you disappointed or angry. Yes, reading through a county list can be quite an emotional experience.

But the main reason for buying the guide is still the amount of interest packed into the pages between the pub lists. Where else

will you find the Czechoslovakian for "I would like to drink to our friendship"?

The 1985 guide carries a review of CAMRA's year, a look at drinking possibilities around the world and the arguments in favour of one of CAMRA's main campaigning issues now, the relaxation of pub licensing hours.

Information on all the breweries is still included and everything seems much easier to read this year, including the map section. Extra illustrations, pictures and cartoons from Bill Tidy, one of CAMRA's oldest friends, and Ken Pyne all help to lighten the vast amount of facts packed into the *Good Beer Guide* and, of course, humour helps too.

Some of it was a little too rag-maggy and cliquy for me, but some of the best jokes were so subtle my copy already had its first beer stains on the cover before I discovered them. I won't give the game away, but it's worth even old GBG hands having a look at how to use the guide...

Despite all the extras, the main point of the guide will always be the pub listings, and the addition this year of a symbol for a quiet pub with no obtrusive electronic games, music or telly has to be a good idea.

No-one will ever agree on which pubs should be included or dropped, but this is where there is still room for improvement. If it is to be sold to the general public as a useful travellers' guide, then the geographical distribution of the pubs must be right.

Hertfordshire has one obvious gap to the north east of Buntingford, but the problem is more serious in a county like Devon. There, one of the most popular holiday coastlines between Plymouth and Kingsbridge, now has no single listing. The pubs do exist and have been included in previous *Good Beer Guides*. Local branches may feel there is a good reason for leaving them out, but the average holidaymaker is going to be less than thrilled to find no entries in such an area, as he seeks sanctuary and sustenance after a hard day on the beach.

Meg Davis-Berry

Our guest reviewer, Meg Davis-Berry, is Editor of 'Hertfordshire Countryside' magazine.

The 1985 *Good Beer Guide* is available from all CAMRA branches, many good pubs, most good bookshops, or by post for £4.50 from CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW.

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Border Revival

Calling all CAMRA members or would-be members in the Bishops Stortford, Hoddesdon and Cheshunt areas! The Herts-Essex Borders Branch is now once again fully active, with a busy programme of events. Contact Steve Marlow for further information at 67 Morningtons, Harlow, Essex, or phone Harlow 30450.

Sportsman at the Sportsman

Local sportsman Nick Stringer, Wasps and England rugby full-back, pulled the first pint at the opening ceremony of the recently re-vamped **Sportsman Hotel**, Chorleywood. The hotel offers eighteen bedrooms, an à la carte restaurant and cocktail bar. The Garden bar does hot and cold lunches and offers a Family Room complete with high-chair, paved patio and excellent childrens play area, a welcome addition to inns with facilities for families. The whole of the interior of this late Victorian building has been pleasantly decorated with lots of greenery and an overall sporting theme. The Huntsman bar is the traditional pub bar, on the lower level opposite the entrance to Chorleywood Station, and serves two cask beers, Draught Bass and Charrington IPA as do the upstairs bars. Welcome to Seamus and Christine Morgan who have moved from the City to manage the **Sportsman**, which has been transformed from a rather run-down inn to an elegant restoration of its former self.

Blow-up at Horn

Near neighbours of Benskins' St Albans music pub, the Horn of Plenty, are objecting to proposals to extend the pub's evening licensing hours, claiming that the late-night behaviour of the customers causes them intolerable nuisance. A local councillor attempted to visit the pub to discuss matters with the landlord - but was denied admission by the pub's bouncers!

JOIN CAMRA NOW!

Membership 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

I enclose £7 (£10 overseas) for a year's full membership
 We enclose £7 for a year's joint full membership

FULL NAME(S)

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS

..... Date

Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real Ale Limited
 Send to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans,
 Herts AL1 3BW

New Year Party

The annual CAMRA Hertfordshire branches New Year Party will be held on Friday 4th January from 8pm till midnight, at Rickmansworth Sports Club, Park Road (bottom of Scotts Hill), Rickmansworth. Tickets, price £7, are available from Marion Birch, 14 Dickinson Avenue, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth. Tel. 773913. The price will include all drink, food and music. Various real ales will be available. All local CAMRA members and their friends are invited to what will be, if past events are anything to go by, an excellent party.

FIVE YEARS AGO

IN December 1979 the Newsletter told readers where to find real rock music in real ale pubs; scooped the Radio Times by reporting The Archers' John Tregorran's conversion to real ale (this was during his whirlwind affair with Jennifer Aldridge); re-told the history of Parkin's brewery of Borehamwood (closed in 1909); and related the tale of the stolen beer which was, to the thieves' possible regret, just ullage being sent back to the brewery.

All Change at the Cock

The end of September saw the departure of Ray and Sheila Coe from the **Cock** at Sarratt. They had been tenants for the past seven years, and had been regular *Good Beer Guide* entrants for the past five. The last couple of years saw an entry in the Egon Ronay Pub Food guide for Mrs. Coe's excellent homecooked lunches. This cosy pub in a lovely setting above the Chess Valley has always been popular with locals and visitors alike, and we wish all the best to new licensee Les Davies, who has moved the short distance from the **Cart & Horses** at Commonwood.

BOOZER'S BOOKSHOP

IF YOU are building up your own beer drinker's library, here are a few volumes you should not be without:

- The Traditional English Pub — A Way of Drinking by Ben Davis. **£12.50.** (An expert's eye view of our famous institution, complete with fine photographs).
- Bricks and Beer, **£2.** (A well-illustrated history of pub architecture produced for a London exhibition).
- Time Gentlemen Please! by CAMRA's Pub Preservation Group and SAVE. **£3.50.** (A critical examination of the fate — and future — of many of our finest houses).
- Pub Preservation Booklet. **90p.** (The Pub Preservation Group's guide to the threats facing the British pub).
- Hops and Hop Picking by Richard Filmer. **£2.65** (All you ever wanted to know about the history of beer's bitter ingredient).
- Cidermaking by Michael B. Quinion. **£1.10** (A guide to the traditional delights of scrumpy).
- The Traditional Cider Directory by David Kitton. **£3.15.** (An invaluable new guide to scrumpy, the pubs which sell it and the people who produce it).

All prices include postage and packaging, and are available from CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 3BW. Make your cheques payable to CAMRA Ltd.

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PUB OF THE MONTH

7

QUICK ONES

DECEMBER

Maiden's Head, Whitwell

Mind the Bull don't toss yo boys,
And the Swan don't pull you in,
The Maidens Head has often led
Young people into sin,
The Eagle's wings and claws are strong,
The Fox can bite you know,
The Little Lamb can butt and ram,
And the Woodman lay you low.

So goes the rhyme about Whitwell's seven pubs, although these days you'll no longer be able to get a drink in four of them. Mike and Barbara Jones have been running the **Maiden's Head** for three years, and both McMullens AK and Country can be found on handpump. The pub was once known as the Queens Head, but changed its name in 1774, although we are not sure why. It is a pleasant place to drink during the summer, with its half-acre garden, and there is also a collection of some five hundred keyrings hanging from the ceiling. This old coaching inn is North Herts Pub of the Month for December - come along and see for yourself why its outlasted most of the others.

'Riotous Behaviour - At the Hitchin Petty Sessions on Tuesday Albert Fox, Richard Crawley, William Crawley, George Crawley, William Andrews, Charles Andrews, George Andrews and Charles Hemmings, labourers living in the neighbourhood at Langley and Stevenage were charged with being drunk and riotous at Whitwell. The complainant, Police Constable Meadows, said on the evening of Sunday September 9th while on duty at Whitwell at 9 o'clock he saw the defendants go into the Maidens Head public-house. They made a great disturbance there, and he was sent for. He had them put out one by one, except George Andrews who went out on his own and was the quietest of the lot. When outside they refused to go away and he was assaulted. They stopped around the village until 10 o'clock, they were all drunk and had been turned out of two public houses. Since this affair his witnesses had been threatened. Corroborative evidence having been given, the defendants denied they were drunk and two said they were not there at all.

The case against George Andrews was dismissed: each of the other defendants were fine 10 shillings including costs. Fox, one of the ringleaders who had already been convicted 33 times, was fined £5 with the alternative of two months' imprisonment.'

The above story was taken from the 'Herts Advertiser' of September 22nd, 1888. It is to be hoped that North Herts' visit to the **Maidens Head**, 96 years later, will be somewhat quieter!

Peter Clarke

JANUARY

The Coach & Horses, Royston

The **Coach & Horses** is situated right in the centre of Royston by the crossing point of the Roman roads Ermine Street and Icknield Street around which the town developed.

The building is of late 17th or early 18th century origins, and when first a public house was known as the King's Head. By 1786 when the pub was bought by the Royston brewers Phillips, it had become the **Coach & Horses**.

Through the familiar sequence of takeovers and mergers the **Coach & Horses** became, like all Phillips houses, a Whitbread pub in recent years. For the last few years, however, it has been a Free House, ably run by John and Brenda Huby. The bars and drinking areas have been considerably enlarged, all in keeping with the original building.

The ales, invariably in excellent condition, are usually from the Ind Coope range, but with occasional additions. Ind Coope Burton Ale and Benskins Bitter are generally to be found on the handpumps; frequent guests include Paines, McMullens and Ruddles.

This pub cannot be recommended enough, so why not join us for a few pints on the evening of 23rd January? It can be found easily if coming by road, and is only a short walk from coach stop or railway station.

JFF

The Pub of the Month award is made each month by CAMRA's Hertfordshire North branch, and is limited to pubs in the North Herts branch area.

Congratulations, Chris

All of her many friends in CAMRA send especially good wishes to Chris Miller, popular landlady of the Buffalo's Head, Puckeridge, who married Ron Edwards on 1st November. We wish Chris and Ron every happiness and all success for the future. Meanwhile, the Buffalo's Head remains one of the foremost pubs in the county for unusual and interesting ales. A recent favourite has been the superb Old Mill Bitter from Snaithe, Humberside, while during October the Buffalo's Head presented what is believed to have been the first appearance in the south of England of Hyde's Anvil Bitter from Manchester.

What price real ale in Harpenden?

A survey of Harpenden in October showed that 21 out of 22 pubs served real ale, compared with 13 in June 1982 - an increase of 61.5%.

Unfortunately, this was not the only high percentage increase. Compared with an average price increase of 25% over the same period in the South Herts area, the following figures were recorded for Harpenden:

George - Benskins Bitter from 62p to 82p (32.3%)

Gibraltar Castle - Wethered Bitter from 62p to 84p (35.5%)

Rose & Crown - Wethered Bitter from 66p to 86p (30.3%)

White Horse - Wethered Bitter from 70p to 92p (31.4%)

and Flowers Original from 74p to 104p (40.5%)

On the credit side, that well-known bastion of malt whisky, the **Crosskeys**, has held the increase for Wethereds down to 82p (from 66p) and the Flowers Original to 88p (from 70p).

The Websters Yorkshire Bitter in the **Old Bell** rose from 66p to 80p, as did the Trumans Bitter in the **Old Cock Inn**.

Ironically, the only non-real ale pub, the **Oddfellows Arms**, is offering McMullens AK and Country on top pressure at 66p and 71p respectively.

Eric Slim

PLANNING NEWS

Greene King have recently submitted proposals to East Herts Council to carry out internal alterations to the Black Horse in Hertford, a listed building, with a view to extending the bar area. Staying in Hertford, Benskins' plans to convert the Plough into a "fun pub" (The Warehouse) have taken a blow with the local council's refusal of permission for the addition of shutters, wet-look canopies etc. Meanwhile over in Harpenden, the notorious Host Group are also in trouble with the local council, who have asked them to take down various signs at The Old Bell, another listed building.

Having obtained permission to alter one listed building, the Bull's Head at Turnford, McMullen's have now applied to extend another, the Rose & Crown at Ware.

Information for brick connoisseurs - the latter pub is possibly the only one, anywhere, to be built in the unusual large Lego-type Hitch bricks.

Readers are reminded of their right to make comments on these and any other planning applications, which should be made by letter to the planning department of their local council, where the submitted plans may also be inspected.

☆ MAIDEN'S HEAD ☆

— WHITWELL ☎ 392 —

Mike and Barbara Jones invite
you to the warm and friendly
atmosphere of this old inn.

McMULLENS HERTFORDSHIRE ALES

▶ Bar snacks always available ◀

WHAT'S ON AT YOUR PUB

- 2 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Mike Newbold at the Compton Organ.
- 7 Dec **Great Munden: Plough. John Abson at the Compton Organ.**
Stanstead Abbots: Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Chris Coe.
- 8 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Colin Staple at the Compton Organ.
- 9 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. David Shepherd at the Compton Organ.
St Albans: Garibaldi. Lunchtime traditional music session.
- 13 Dec. **Great Munden:** Plough. Lea Valley Cinema Organ Society Christmas Party.
- 14 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. John Chapman at the Compton Organ.
Stanstead Abbots: Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: Heritage.
- 15 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Mike Newbold at the Compton Organ.
- 16 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Bob Freeman at the Compton Organ.
- 18 Dec **Hertford:** Dimsdale Arms. 7.30pm. British Beer Mat Collectors Society Meeting.
- 19 Dec **Furneux Pelham:** Star. Grand Christmas Draw.
- 21 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Public Bar Christmas Party.
Stanstead Abbots: Crown. Hoddesdon Folk Club Christmas Party with Adrian May and Chris Wager.
- 22 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough. Christmas Party, extension till 11.30pm.
- 23 Dec **Great Munden:** Plough (again!). Party night (again!). Extension till 11.30pm (again!).
- 31 Dec **Furneux Pelham:** Star. New Year's Eve Party, with buffet.
- 4 Jan **Stanstead Abbots:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club has a singaround.
- 11 Jan **Stanstead Abbots:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Pete Coe.
- 18 Jan **Stanstead Abbots:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: Rob and Silvia Mehta.
- 25 Jan **Stanstead Abbots:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Dick Miles.

Please send details of events, in not more than 15 words, by the 10th of the previous month to Peter Lerner, 14 Hazeldell, Watton-at-Stone, Herts.

PUB NEWS

The **Bell** in St Albans is one of a number of Whitbread pubs now serving Brakspears Bitter from Henley-on-Thames. Draught milk is also on sale in this pub, but neither of these make up for the peculiarly harsh decorative treatment to which this old pub has curiously been subjected.

The **Hadley Hotel** in Barnet has discontinued selling Hammertons Porter - apparently due to lack of demand. A new real ale outlet is the **Golden Lion** in Estcourt Road, Watford, with Ind Coope Bitter on handpump. The **Swan** in Park Road, Bushey now has Burton Ale alongside Benskins Bitter. Despite the advertisements for "Real Ale" in the window, none is now available at the **Otter** in Bushey Mill Lane, Bushey. A similar advert appears outside the **Swan Inn**, Lower High Street, Watford, but real ale is rarely if ever available here.

The **Royal Oak**, Chipperfield has Friary Meux on handpump alongside Benskins and Burton Ale, the latter on gravity. The **Crown & Sceptre**, Bridens Camp has Adnams Old to supplement its usual range of ales.

The **Coopers Arms** in Hitchin now has a handpump dispensing McMullens Country Bitter.

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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BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH
Contact John Law ☎ Stevenage 721015

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH
Contact Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Saturday 8th December

Day trip by minibus, incorporating West Bromwich Albion v Watford (if interested!) and sampling local beers. Phone branch contact for details.

Wednesday 12th December

Branch Meeting at the Fox & Hounds, High Street, Rickmansworth, 8pm. All welcome. Free pint for newcomers.

Friday 21st December

Christmas pub crawl. Meet George, Old Bailey, EC4, 5pm; Bishops Finger, West Smithfield, EC1, 5.45 pm; The Betsey, 6.30pm.

Saturday 29th December

Camramble. Meet Watford Junction 9.30 am, or Kings Langley 10.00 am. A chance to work off that Christmas flab! For more info tel. Garston 673164.

Friday 4th January

Hertfordshire branches annual New Year party. Rickmansworth Sports Club, Park Road, Rickmansworth (bottom of Scotts Hill). 8pm to midnight. All members and friends welcome. (See *Quick Ones*).

Wednesday 16th January

Branch Meeting at the Wheatsheaf, Lower High Street, Watford, 8 pm. All welcome - free pint for newcomers.

Wednesday 23rd January

Social evening at the Golden Lion, Estcourt Road, Watford, 8pm. All welcome.

Wednesday 6 February

Social evening at the Vine, Uxbridge Road, Mill End, Rickmansworth, 8pm. Bring a friend!

Wednesday 13th February

Branch Auction, 8pm. (See *Quick Ones*). Venue to be arranged - phone branch contact for details.

Contact Marion Birch ☎ Rickmansworth 773913

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Thursday 6th December

Social at the Crown, Little Missenden, 8.30 pm.

Friday 14th December

Christmas social at the Royal Oak, Chipperfield, 8.30 pm.

Monday 7th January

Social at the Kings Arms, Tring, 8.30 pm.

Thursday 17th January

Pub crawl. Meet the Old Swan, The Lee.

Friday 25th January

Social at the Anchor, Bourne End, 8.30 pm.

Contact Pete Freeman ☎ Hemel Hempstead 69773

From page 1

the bottle of Guinness which I ordered was served at what seemed like 30 degrees of frost.

So, you will be agog to learn, what of the bright, sparkling conversation in Mr. Jamieson's pub. Well, the total of 12 other customers, all male, were arranged in four little huddles. The conversation of three of the huddles could not be heard above the exceptionally mediocre disco music blaring from hidden speakers (but no-one was dancing). The fourth group of youths, who must have been little over 18, were self-consciously giggling amongst a nest of electronic machines, using repeated four-letter words of a type which would cause them to be banned from most decent pubs. Unfortunately, the jolly Mr. Jamieson did not appear to be around to take note.

A depressing start to the evening. I quickly made my way to the excellent **Two Diamonds** in Stevenage, where people of both sexes, all ages and from all walks of life packed the pub and were happily engaged in drinking real ale and pleasant conversation. I wondered if Mr. Bill Jamieson had ever been there. Who, I wondered, was the real Wally?