

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1985

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 81

11 PM – YES AND NO

Last month saw the annual attempts being made, in Magistrates' Courts throughout the county, to bring Hertfordshire into line with most of the rest of the country and to allow pubs to stay open until 11pm on Monday to Thursday evenings, as well as Fridays and Saturdays.

In Hitchin the attempt was successful, and as from March 1st local pubs can now remain open until 11pm every night except Sunday. It was successfully argued here that pubs in nearby Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire already enjoy the 11pm extension, while local pubs were suffering by comparison.

However, reasoned arguments cut no ice in St Albans, where the magistrates refused to reconsider their decision of 12 months ago that 10.30pm is the latest time that local people are trusted to drink on Mondays through to Thursdays. The magistrates were asked to consult with the public on a change in the local law, but refused to do this.

CAMRA recognises that not all pub landlords, or their staff, would find it convenient to remain open until 11 pm, but strongly believes that those who wish to do so should be allowed to. Indeed, we have repeatedly said that in the 1980s there should be much greater flexibility in the restrictive licensing laws which rule our lives today, and which were introduced

specifically to curb drunkenness in munitions factories during the First World War!

● STOP PRESS ●

As we go to press, the good news is that Hertford and Cheshunt Magistrates have now also agreed to an extension of drinking hours until 11pm weekdays. Evidence presented to the Hertford court said that the Metropolitan Police had reported that, with this extension elsewhere, there was a reduction in drink-related offences.

All change at Allied

It's all change at Benskins. As part of a major re-shuffle in the Allied Breweries empire, Managing Director Peter Bentley has moved on to take up a similar position at Joshua Tetley in Yorkshire, while his place at Benskins is taken by David Longbottom, formerly Tetley's sales director. The Newsletter knows a number of Yorkshiremen who wouldn't say no to regular supplies of Tetley's Bitter here in Hertfordshire, if Mr Longbottom happens to be able to obtain some...

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kebabs

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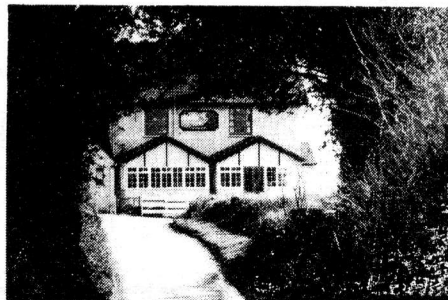
'Deli-Stiks' are an all year round food, which can be easily prepared in a variety of ways, eg. Frying, grilling, by micro-wave oven and even indoor & outdoor B.B.Q.'s.

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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

COMPETITION

WHITBREAD'S BREWERIES by H A Monckton

Either an appalling indictment of the way a grasping would-be monopoly can bring within its many-tentacled grasp a host of fine old independent breweries - or a fascinating insight into the widespread roots of one of our national brewing concerns. Either way, 'Whitbread's Breweries', a 56-page family tree covering the 300 and more independent firms that all became part of the Whitbread empire, deserves a place on the bookshelf of any beerdrinker with more than a passing interest in the brewing industry.

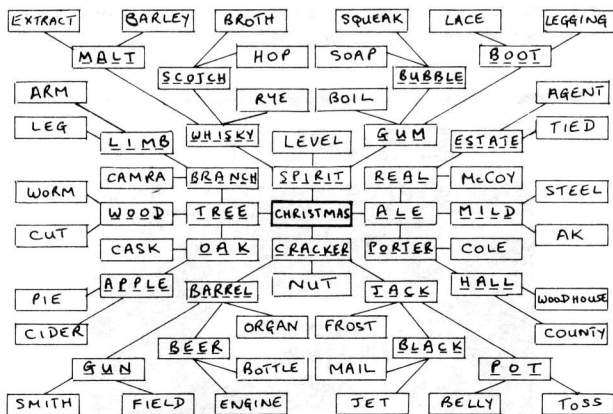
Written by Whitbread's own archivist, the book is not entirely free from error - T W Kent of St Albans did not take over Bingham Cox's brewery, for example. But the book is thoroughly recommended to anyone even vaguely interested in brewery history. 'Whitbread's Breweries' is not on sale to the public, although a limited number of copies are available from the brewery. Newsletter readers can, however, acquire the reviewer's own copy by correctly answering the following three questions, all of which involve local breweries now swallowed up under the Whitbread banner. Send your entries to the Editor (address on back page) - the first correct entry opened on April 12th wins the prize.

1. What now covers the site of Adey and White's brewery, St Albans?
2. What did the J W stand for in J W Green's brewery, Luton?
3. What was the name of the brewery at Ashwell that continued to bottle Bass and Guinness for J W Green's after it was taken over in 1952?

Winners of the November competition were Nigel and Charlotte Meadows of the Plough, Datchworth. The correct solution was: Across - Inn on the Green, Pinhole, Prairie, Horn, Alford Arms, Test, Asteroidal, Datchworth, Oust, Strawberry, Fare, Abreast, Atheist, Fumeux Pelham. Down - Innards, Nook, Needles, Hop-pole, Grandson, Error, Needs, Upshot, Means, Exact, Tar, Showcase, Overtax, Terrace, Uranium, Twenty, Staff, Rarer, Shah.

The winner of the December crossword competition was Neil Campbell of Croxley Green. The solution was: Across - Frithsden, Ware, Realm, Surfeited, Overlie, Herbage, Twopennyworth, Paper-fastener, Preston, Hairpin, Disparage, Knoll, Sore, Splendour. Down - Forsooth, Image, Hemel Hempstead, Discern, Northaw, Astrakhan, Eddies, Terror-stricken, Oppressor, Granular, Runways, Ashwell, Spades, Photo.

There was more than one possible solution to 'Connections'. First out of the hat was PC Barron of Stevenage. The solution is shown below.



QUICK ONES

Pub crawl of Bourne End

At the end of January the Mid-Chilterns Branch (alias the thirsty five) held a two-pub social in Bourne End. This small community straddling the A41 between Two Waters and Berkhamsted also boasts a motel, but we decided to concentrate our efforts on the two adjacent inns.

Our first stop was the **Anchor**, a five-hundred-year-old listed building with low ceilings and bags of character. A *Good Beer Guide* entry this, with Benskins and Burton Ale on handpump.

After a pleasant half hour or so we made the short trip to the **White Horse**, almost next door. This attractive old inn belonged to Allied until 1980, when it was sold off and became an enterprising free house, appearing regularly in the *Good Beer Guide*. Then McMullens, having sold their only pub in the area to Charles Wells a few years ago, decided to renew their interests in the extreme west of the county and purchased the **White Horse** early last year. After a somewhat inauspicious start, the pub seems to be thriving. It has been enlarged and carefully modernised, but still retains some of its old charm. A feature of the inn is its range of malt whiskies, between fifty and sixty - but the thirsty five stuck to the AK mild and Country Bitter, both on handpump, at 79p and 86p respectively and both in good form.

An enjoyable evening was had by all, and both pubs were certainly worth a visit.

Barry Bonnick

Another Ind Coope shake-up

Do you remember when half the county's Ind Coope pubs became Benskins, the other half remained as Ind Coope pubs operating as Ind Coope East Anglia, and serving Burton-brewed Ind Coope Bitter instead of Romford-brewed Benskins? The idea was to continue to provide choice, so as to reduce Ind Coope's apparent local monopoly.

Well, now it's all change once again at Ind Coope, and Ind Coope East Anglia is no more. Their pubs have been reshuffled amongst other branches of this vast organisation, and the key to it all is.... the postcode! Most Hertfordshire Ind Coope pubs, those with AL, EN or SG postcodes, will become Benskins - so restoring at a stroke the apparent local monopoly, but under a different name. However those in the eastern part of the county with a CM postcode will become "Ind Coope and Allsopps", supplied with Burton-brewed beer from a headquarters in, wait for it, LE (or Leicester, as it's known to non-postmen).

Confused? So are we. Rumour has it that next year Ind Coope will be issuing a Good Postcode Guide to compete with CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

Brewed in Cambridge by Druids

Bedford brewers Charles Wells are the first independent regional brewery to set up a home-brew pub. Some of the big companies such as Allied, Watneys and Whitbread (owners of Hertfordshire's Alford Arms at Frithsden) have already spotted the potential and interest in own-brew houses, and Charles Wells are to be congratulated on spotting a worthwhile trend. Their first venture is the **Ancient Druids** near to the Grafton Centre in Cambridge. Visitors to the pub can watch the beer being brewed - the two ales go under the names of Kite Bitter and Druids Special.

Short shrift

Short measure rears its frothy head again. In a recent survey, the Somerset county Weights and Measures officers found 27 out of 42 sample pints of beer to be up to 10% short, and urged government legislation to protect the customer. As we have said before in this Newsletter, if you feel like giving your money away, ask the landlord to top up your pint and put something in the pub's charity box.

Drinking in Suffolk

Suffolk is a favourite destination for Hertfordshire holidaymakers or weekenders, whether visiting the coast, the beautifully-preserved cloth towns, or the magic brewery town of Southwold (once visited, never forgotten).

CAMRA branches in the county have recently produced an excellent guide to all the real ale pubs within its borders, titled "On the road to real beer in Suffolk", which costs only £1 and contains a well-drawn map, punchy and informative pub descriptions, nostalgic photos of old Suffolk pubs, and the cartoon adventures, in Suffolk dialect, of "Ale and Arty, or a Bor and his Beer". An A to Z of Suffolk brewers past and present completes an indispensable pocket-sized and good-value book. You can obtain a copy by post from Rae Gardiner, 632 Foxhall Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.

FLINTS WINE BAR

Market Hill, Royston

☎47512

MARSTON PEDIGREE & OWD RODGER
on handpump

Home-cooked food available all day
Monday to Saturday

Closed Sunday

QUICK ONES (continued)

Save the Swan

An inquiry into the future of the Swan, Pimlico is taking place at Hillside Hall, School Mead, Abbots Langley from 10am on 7th March. Whitbread applied to Three Rivers Council for permission to extend and alter this village local to provide a restaurant, but the Council in their wisdom refused to allow this to happen. The brewery have now appealed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, whose Inspector is to hear evidence from the Council, the brewery, and anyone interested in the future of this pub.

FIVE YEARS AGO

"We've saved the beer. Now let's save the pubs to drink it in!" was the cry from CAMRA's local Pub Preservation Officer in the March 1980 Newsletter, as two of the county's finest country pubs faced closure, and others were destined to end up as "faceless, plastic restaurant waiting-rooms". It's still happening - and your local branch of CAMRA is more than ever pledged to help you stop your local suffering such treatment.

On a lighter note, Harlow New Town's Chief Estates Surveyor explained to readers why all the town's pubs - Essex Skipper, Archer's Dart, Painted Lady etc - are named after butterflies and moths.

PLANNING NEWS

The Galley Hall at Hoddesdon, noted for its Christies Brewery signboards, is the subject of applications to Broxbourne Council for planning permission and listed building consent, for extensions and alterations.

Over in Borehamwood, Sovereign Hosts have applied to Hertsmere Council for permission to alter windows and to build extensions at the Bull and Tiger. Another fun pub?

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 the local council, where the submitted plans may also be inspected.

LETTERS

From the landlord of the Sportsman, Letchworth, recently converted to a fizz-only pub:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I really must ask you to permit me to reply to the article in the December edition of your journal written by your journalist who calls himself "Roundsmen". For the sake of intelligent debate and as we don't know his real name we must refer to this guy as "Wimpy the warm beer wally." Why "Wimpy"?

Well, there's got to be something wimpish about a man who wants to meet me but doesn't ask for me. Who wants to discuss my withdrawal of cask conditioned beer from the Sportsman Superpub but asks to be served with it when he visits. Who refers to giant, ugly, and painfully obvious high power speakers as "hidden". And who describes a lively 750 draught barrel a year pub, which sees more beautiful crummet in a week than a Bath Baker does in a year, as if it was the dark dingy reserve of sexist male juveniles.

In all seriousness, if CAMRA is interested in serious debate when we live and work in an industry which is seeing more bankruptcies every year I would be more than interested in that. The problem is that CAMRA has publicised itself for years by insulting dedicated Brewers, Publicans, and members of the general public who simply like the taste of cold fizzy lager and Bright Beers.

Don't Warm Beer Wallys squirm when they get a taste of their own medicine!!!

Cheers,

Bill Jamieson

P.S. I do visit and like the Two Diamonds in Stevenage which is a happy little pub thanks to the folk behind the bar - Not CAMRA.

A response from a local licensee to Watford Watchdog's price review in the February newsletter:

Dear Ms Totman,

Your correspondent seems to assume a 'fairness' about brewery rent increases, which is not so. Brewers impose the maximum rents obtainable. The profitability of the house is determined by them in a most arbitrary way, denying legitimate business expenses allowable by VAT/Inland Revenue officers. All staff are deemed to receive only minimum pay, and one suspects that minimum rates are often ignored. Outside effects, e.g. local theatre and arts centre etc. turnouts, are ignored in their effect on staffing numbers.

The use of the word 'negotiation' in relation to brewers' rent assessments is the greatest abuse of the English language I have come across for some time.

The above may help to explain some of the price increases in Watford, and other neighbouring towns.

Yours sincerely,

(name and address supplied)

PUB OF THE MONTH

Plume of Feathers, Ickleford

North Herts Pub of the Month award for March goes for the second time to an Ickleford pub; the **Plume of Feathers** now joins the **Cricketers** in winning this award. The Plume has been a public house since 1800, although the building predates this and is thought to have been a wheelwrights shop. Regulars will not have noticed much change in landlords, as Reg Batson is only the fourth licensee in 100 years. Reg has been pulling the Wethereds and Flowers for the last eight years, as well as holding the right to graze two cows and two pigs on the village green. Reg and his regulars are also noted for their fund-raising activities for charity. So come along on 20th March and raise your glass.

Return thanks

Those who attended January's Pub of the Month social at the **Coach & Horses**, Royston will wish to join me in thanking landlord John Huby for arranging for the real ale to be sold at 50p a pint. Well done - we'll come again!

Peter Clarke

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.



PUB NEWS

More good news from Royston - the **White Bear**, a Whitbread house, now has Flowers Original on handpump. This is the first real ale for many years in a pub that must have one of the longest serving licensees in the county: Stan Wilson has been landlord since 1962. Contrary to previous reports, real ale is still on sale in the **Old Bull Hotel**, Royston, with Charrington IPA usually available on handpump.

The real ale scene in Buntingford has been enlivened with the recent re-opening of the **Crown**, a former Ind Coope pub. This attractive little free house has four handpumps serving Greene King Abbot and IPA, Fullers London Pride and Hook Norton Mild with, at the time of last visit, a cask of Fullers ESB on the bar. Another free house to be sold recently is the **Lord Louis** in soon-to-be-bypassed Stanstead Abbots, which fetched an incredible £175,000.

News from Watford - the **White Lion** in St Albans Road has Courage Best Bitter alongside the Directors. The Saloon bar has also been extended. Mixed fortunes for two real ale off-licences - **Merton Road Wine Stores** in Merton Road has unfortunately closed, whilst **Wine by the Case** (not Wine in Case as listed previously) has, in addition to the range of Godsons beers, a wide range of Continental and East European bottled beers. The off-licence is at 185 The Parade, on the Town Hall roundabout.

Brakspears Bitter is available at the **Bucks Head**, Little Wymondley. Congratulations to the **Hope and Anchor**, Welham Green - following their brewery Pub Garden award they have now also taken first prize in the Courage area Best-kept Cellar competition. Congratulations also to Chris and Ron Edwards of the **Buffalo's Head**, Puckeridge, on the recent birth of their son Simon.

WHAT'S ON AT YOUR PUB

The Plough, Great Munden presents a St David's Night Party on March 1st, and a St Patrick's Night Party on March 17th, both with late bar extensions. The pub's Compton Organ is in use on March 2nd, 3rd and 13th - on the latter evening there is a meeting of the Lee Valley Cinema Organ Society - while on the 15th the Plough presents Karl Smith, jazz pianist.

While on the topic of jazz, I happened to come across a superb little jazz session one evening at the **Grandison Arms**, Bramfield. I believe these are held every Friday, and on certain other evenings. Best check with the pub.

Hoddesdon Folk Music Club meets every Friday at the **Crown**, Stanstead Abbots. March guests are The Salami Brothers (8th), Tim Laycock (15th), Johnny Collins (22nd) and Eric (three people! - on the 29th), while on the 1st there is a Singaround.

St Albans is the place to go for traditional and acoustic music sessions. These are held on Thursday evenings at 9pm at the **Rose and Crown** (7th, 14th, 21st and 28th); and fortnightly on Sunday lunchtimes at the **Garibaldi** (3rd, 17th, 31st).

Subject to space, your pub event will be mentioned free of charge in this column if details are sent by the 10th of the preceding month to Peter Lemer, 14 Hazeldell, Watton at Stone, Hertford SG14 3SN.

THE ROYAL OAK, BUSHEY

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Reservations preferable ☎ 01-950 2865

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BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Wednesday 6th March

Branch Meeting at the Motte & Bailey, Pirton, 8pm.

Wednesday 20th March

Pub of the month social at the Plume of Feathers, Ickleford, 8pm.

Wednesday 27th March

Social at the Bird in Hand, Gosmore, 8pm.

Wednesday 3rd April

Social at the Rising Sun, Halls Green, 8pm.

Wednesday 10th April

Branch Meeting at the Fox, Aspenden, 8pm.

Contact Peter Clarke ☎ Stevenage 65957

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 5th March

Pub crawl of Sandridge, meet at Queens Head, 8pm.

Tuesday 19th March

Branch AGM at the Queens Head, Colney Heath, 8pm. Will all members of CAMRA living in the South Herts area please try to attend, and help get the branch active again. Please come along with your suggestions.

Contact Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 6th March

Social at the Swan, College Road, Leavesden, 8pm. **Please note change of venue.**

Wednesday 20th March

Branch AGM at the Wheatsheaf, Lower High Street, Watford (upstairs room), 8pm.

Wednesday 27th March

Games evening at the Swan, College Road, Leavesden, 8pm. All welcome.

Contact Tony King ☎ Garston 672587

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Tuesday 12th March

Branch AGM at the Royal Oak, Chipperfield, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 19th March

Branch social. Meet at the Earl Howe, Holmer Green, 8.30pm, then on to Prince of Wales, Little Kingshill.

Tuesday 26th March

Three-pub social. Meet at the Queens Head, Long Marston, 8.30pm, then later at the Red Lion, Marsworth and the Half Moon, Wilstone.

Tuesday 2nd April

Social at the Jolly Cricketers, Seer Green, 8.30pm, then later at the Feathers, Chalfont St Giles.

Tuesday 9th April

Social at the Full Moon, Hawridge, 8.30pm, then the Rose & Crown

Tuesday 16th April

8-pub crawl of Markyate. Meet Plume of Feathers, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 23rd April

Branch social. Meet Swan, Pimlico, 8.30pm, then the Old Palace, Kings Langley.

Contact Pete Freeman ☎ Hemel Hempstead 69773

Scraping the bottom.....

A local newspaper, noted for its inaccuracies, advertises the **Rising Sun**, Stevenage as a "friendly family pub with traditional rear ales".

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.**

Subscriptions: £2.25 for 12 issues. Send to address above. Cheques/POs payable to CAMRA Herts Campaigning Fund.

Advertising: £7 per 2.5cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact **Eric Sim ☎ Hatfield 60647** for details.

COPY DATE FOR APRIL EDITION MARCH 8th. FOR MAY EDITION APRIL 12th.

Printed and filmset by D & S Graphics, 61/63 High Street, Ware, Hertfordshire.