

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE



NOVEMBER 1985

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 88

JOIN US ON THE MARCH FOR INDEPENDENCE

Brewery take-overs are big business again.

In the last few months Lancaster's Yates and Jackson, Hull's North Country Brewery, the Black Country's Simpkins, and Liverpool's Higsons have all lost their independence and have been taken over by bigger brewing companies. What is worse, the first three breweries on this list have been closed, thus reducing local drinkers' choice of ales at a stroke.

Now the national companies, most of which have slumbered for the past ten years, are waking up to the possibility of capturing a nice local independent brewery or two.

Currently, Scottish and Newcastle Breweries - the giant McEwan, Youngers and Newcastle combine - are bidding to take over Blackburn, Lancashire brewers Matthew Brown. Matthew Brown own some 550 pubs in Lancashire and Cumbria, where their Lion Ales are popular. They also own the nationally famous Theakstons, brewers of Old Peculier. Thanks to vigorous opposition by both companies, their employees - and CAMRA - the deal has been referred to the Government's Monopolies and Mergers Commission, who will announce next month whether or not it can go ahead. If it does go ahead, drinkers can without doubt say goodbye to some or all of the well-loved Lion and Theakston Ales, as it is inevitable that the Scottish big boys will close down some or all of the companies' four operating breweries. If the deal is prohibited by the government, it will be a triumph for the customer, as it seems that no-one, except the Board of Scottish and Newcastle and their accountants, wants to see Mathew Brown and Theakston disappear.

So what can we do about it here in Hertfordshire, 200 miles from the nearest Mathew Brown pub? We can voice our protest by joining in a march which CAMRA is organising in St Albans on **SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER**. It will start at CAMRA's Headquarters in Alma Road, and finish at Scottish and Newcastle's southern headquarters in Victoria Street. The march will start at 11am, and is aimed to express the customers' view of big brewery take-overs.

So why bother about an obscure Lancashire company whose beer you have never drunk? Because if Scottish and Newcastle are allowed to get away with this one, your favourite local breweries and mine are likely to be swallowed up by giant and ugly predators. Already, the financial pundits are predicting bids for Greene King, an independent company who, like Matthew Brown, desperately want to remain independent.

IF YOU CAN SPARE ONE HOUR TO SHOW THE BIG BREWERS, AND THE GOVERNMENT, THAT BREWERY TAKE-OVERS ARE NOT IN THE CUSTOMERS' INTEREST, THEN PLEASE JOIN US IN ST ALBANS ON SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER.

If this deal goes through, Matthew Brown and Theakston may well just become memories, like Fordham's of Ashwell, Adey and White of St Albans and the scores of other once-proud companies which have been ruthlessly taken over and closed down by Scottish and Newcastle and their conglomerate competitors. At best, they might end up like Benskins, a name artificially kept alive with beers trucked in from another county.

For further information please contact Danny Blyth on St Albans 67201 (working hours).

Peter Lerner
CAMRA Hertfordshire Area Organiser.

BROCKET ARMS

Ayot St Lawrence

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

A well-sampled real ale pub

**Greene King IPA & Abbot
Hook Norton • Old Hookey**

Wadworth 6X

Youngs SPA

Bed & Breadkfast

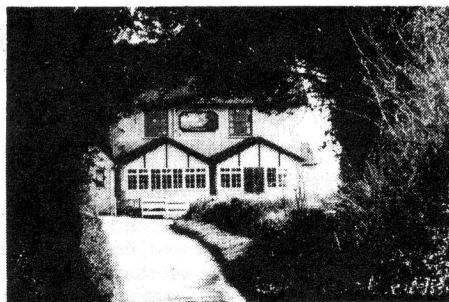
Evening meals Tuesday to Saturday

Buffet lunches served every day.

Enquiries welcome ☎ Stevenage 820250

Dogs on leads, but no motorcycles.

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.

Food always available.

Book now for your pre-Christmas lunch.

**PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES
INCLUDING MINIBUSES**

QUICK ONES

SAY IT AGAIN, SAM

As beer prices continue to rocket throughout the county and the country, Samuel Smith's of Tadcaster, Yorkshire (brewers of Old Brewery Bitter and Alpine Lager) have announced; "In these days of rising costs we have tightened our belt as an independent brewery, and will NOT be increasing any of our beer prices before the next Budget. The quality and strength of our beers will be strictly maintained." Full marks to the Yorkshiremen.

HEALTH WARNING ON DRINK REJECTED

The Government has rejected calls from anti-alcohol groups for a health warning on alcoholic drinks similar to that used on cigarettes. Health ministers have made it clear that they believe the majority of drinkers use alcohol within reason and without damage to their health. Meanwhile, at the AGM of the British Medical Association, doctors came out in favour of higher taxes on drink, a ban on advertising booze and for the strength of drink to be indicated at the point of dispense.

But the Governments declared policy of favouring voluntary restrictions against outright bans, means little hope of advertising legislation that would please the doctors.

However, moves are afoot for drink to be labelled according to strength, with the Government dropping its previous objections over an EEC initiative that beer, sherry and wine should be labelled according to percentage volume of alcohol.

The Government has tabled a Commons motion calling on MPs to support this move.

FIVE YEARS AGO

November 1980's Newsletter announced that recent price increases had caused the price of a pint to go above the 50 pence mark, and asked "how long to the £1 pint". The answer: less than five years, mates.

The same edition congratulated the Planning Committee of East Herts Council on insisting to McMullens that their new pub at Hooks Cross, near Stevenage, must not be "just another new town pub". Well, it's built now - what do those who have visited it think?

INDISPENSIBLE NEW BEER BOOKS

CAMRA is pleased to announce that it has recently published two new vital books on beer.

First, there is the 1986 edition of the unrivalled **Good Beer Guide**, packed with information about 5,000 of the best of British pubs, serving the best of British beer.

Then, an entirely new venture in association with publishers Longmans, the **CAMRA Dictionary of Beer**, which features information on beers and brewing in Britain and all over the world - a real Who's Brew of the beer world.

The Good Beer Guide costs £4-95 and the Dictionary just £2-95. Both are available from good bookshops, or in person or by post from CAMRA at 34 Alma Road, St Albans, AL1 3BW. Make cheques payable, please, to CAMRA Ltd.

PROTECTIVE ATTITUDE

Steve Clarkson of Birmingham recently wrote to CAMRA's national newspaper, What's Brewing, about his experience when asking for that superb bottle-conditioned pale ale, Worthington White Shield:

"On a pub crawl in Preston we made a stop at a newly-renovated fun pub whose theme was a sort of nineteenth century Parisian decadence, Follies Bergere. The beer was all bright, Brew Ten, Toby Light etc.

It being my round, I asked the barmaid for pints of bitter for my friends, and then asked if the pub served White Shield. The serving wench blushed to the roots for her peroxide, leant over the bar and, thoroughly embarrassed, whispered: "I think they're in a machine in the gents."

BEER FESTIVAL

A beer festival is being held at the Rickmansworth Sports Club, Park Road, Rickmansworth on Friday 22nd November starting at 7.30pm. There will be approximately 12 beers and admission is £2 including the first pint. Details from Marion Birch Rickmansworth 773913.

PUB OF THE MONTH

North Herts

The Bull, Watton-at-Stone

North Herts branch Pub of the Month award for November goes to John Hammond of the **Bull**, Watton-at-Stone.

One of our longer serving licensees, John has been running the **Bull** for 16 years. It is very much the local in Watton and the present building dates from 1604 although there was an alehouse on the site before this. Being an old coaching inn you will be able to warm yourself against the open fire which increases the cheerfulness found here. Testimony to the pub is the fact that they have a regular of seventy years still enjoying his drink.

So come along on the 28th November, try the Benskins and see why.

Peter Clarke.

South Herts

John Bunyan, Coleman Green

The second of the newly constituted Herts South Branch Pub of the Month award went to the **John Bunyan** Coleman Green.

The presentation took place on September 24th with 16 branch members present and McMullen's Brewery being represented by Mr.R.Partridge. Gill and Eddie Comley have been at the **John Bunyan** for four years, since moving from the Wine Lodge in Ware. One of the first things Eddie did was to install handpumps for the AK and Country and so well did he keep his beer that he went in the 1983 GBG and every edition since then including 1986.

The **John Bunyan** is also well known for its home-cooked food which is always available during pub opening hours.

The Pub of the Month scroll now takes pride of place along with their kitchen and cellar commendations.

Thanks very much Gill and Eddie for your hospitality especially the super food you put on.

ES

PLANNING NEWS

Only months after it was bought from Benskins as a free house, an application has been submitted to convert the **Bell** at Widford into a private dwelling. This is a Grade I listed building with literary associations with the essayist Charles Lamb, and it is likely that there will be objections to the application.

Another free house, the **Inn on the Green** at Datchworth, proposes a small extension to the pub.



BERKHAMSTED BREWERY

There would be no doubt of the winner in a competition to name Hertfordshire's least-known brewery - The Berkhamsted Brewery would take the title without a shot being fired.

Until this summer even dedicated Hertfordshire CAMRA members did not know of the brewery's existence - though it has been in operation since September 1983.

The lack of awareness about the Berkhamsted brewery is not due to obsessive secrecy on the part of its owners, though they never advertise its existence and its beers are available only from the brewery itself or in five or so West Herts off-licences.

But the Berkhamsted brewery is only a minor sideline to the main business of its owners - making small breweries for other people. Peter Shardlow and Robin Richards run a company called Inn Brewing at Bourne End, between Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted, and at the last count they had installed 27 mini breweries, from Downham Market, Norfolk to San Francisco, and from Australia to Budapest. Messrs Shardlow and Richards had 60 years of brewing experience, mostly with Whitbread, between them when they set up Inn Brewing on the Bourne End industrial estate in 1982. Ironically Peter Shardlow, who left Whitbread as group production director, had designed the big new Luton brewery in the 1960's, the first of the huge keg-only breweries - now he and Robin Richards were catering for the real ale backlash.

A year after they started the pair decided to install their 16th brewery actually on their own factory site, partly as a demonstration brewery for potential customers, partly to develop recipes for people they had sold mini breweries to. The Customs and Excise people gave them an excise licence to brew without paying duty for purposes of research. But about ten barrels a week are brewed for sale to the outside world - though there are no plans to market it, or to make regular supplies to pubs.

Because most sales are to people who want polypins for parties that night, the beer is sold chilled and filtered, though it comes with plenty of condition. The main brew is Berkhamsted Best, a hoppy malty bitter with an OG designed to be 1041 - though if you buy directly from the brewery Peter or Robin will be happy to tell you exactly what strength was achieved on that particular gyle. Occasionally they brew Castle Bitter, at an OG of 1036, and sometimes the brewery sells off one of its experimental brew.

The three new Hertfordshire breweries that started up in an attempt to crack the free trade - Mickles, Swannell's and Victoria - have all ceased trading, mainly because they could not fight the big brewers' monopolies. Only the new brewers in the county for whom brewing is more of a sideline - Hertfordshire's three home-brew pubs, and the Berkhamsted Brewery - have survived. The future looks good for the Berkhamsted Brewery, even if few people have heard of it.

M.Cornell

PUB CRAWL OF OLD HEMEL

Old Hemel is a very historic part of the town. St. Mary's Church dates back to Norman times and the market square to the times of Henry VIII. At Piccotts End, just up the road is a museum showing wall paintings done by the Pilgrims Fathers on the way to Plymouth. (Graffiti is nothing new).

This is an ideal place to start a pub crawl. The **Boars Head** serves a very reasonable priced pint of Benskins, the Landlord here still mourns the loss of KK Mild and has replaced it with Friary Meux.

Next stop about 300 yards (sorry metric lovers) down the road is the very imposing **Marchmont Arms**. This Victorian building serves Charringtons, I P A and Draught Bass which can be enjoyed in the garden overlooking the Valley of the River Gade.

The Old Bell is next on the route, this pub is opposite the site of Hemels old market which is now a convenient car park. In this Benskins Heritage house you can enjoy Benskins Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale whilst admiring the 19th centry french wall paper, this pub is listed in the '85 GBG and the food is highly recommended. (Vegetarian included).

Next door but one to the **Old Bell** is **The Old Kings Arms**. One time a MacMullens house now run by Charles Wells-Eagle and Bombardier are probably the cheapest beer in Hemel. The **Kings Arms** has two bars, both quite similar.

On leaving the **Kings Arms**, cross over the road to the Old Town Hall (Bric a Brac Market here Thursday and Ssturdays) and go down the hill about 50 yards you come to th - **WhiteHart**, Ind Coope Bitter is available here, with the bar in the unusual position by the window. There are two passages to St. Marys Church behind it.

Finally back across the road is the **Rose and Crown**, Benskins Bitter is available with flashing lights and disco music.

Pete Freeman

CAMPAIGN STRENGTHENS

Three or four years ago it was fashionable to dismiss CAMRA; everyone said the CAMRA's job was done, real ale was widely available, especially in the South East. Such complacency was completely unfounded and today we are faced with a troubled brewing industry operating at 50% of capacity, high prices causing reduced consumption and brewery takeovers becoming rife, causing reduction in choice.

Over the past year CAMRA has not been idle, Scottish & Newcastle's attempted takeover of Hartlepool brewery Camerons was not wanted by the management who were very grateful for CAMRA's help to resist the offer and refer it to the Monopolies Commission. Scottish & Newcastle have moved their sights to Blackburn brewery Matthew Brown who have also turned to CAMRA to help them resist the takeover. This too has been referred to the Monopolies Commission and we have high hopes of success here too. We can only fight takeovers if the brewery does not want to be taken over, which unfortunately is not always the case.

A great deal of work is done by various committees within CAMRA. A nationwide campaign on beer prices received extensive publicity with questions being asked in the House of Commons. A lot of effort has been expended on the case for changing licensing hours and it is at last beginning to be a case of "when" not "if". The Pub Preservation Group continues to fight pub closures and the trendy desecration of the traditional English pub.

Membership appears to have passed through a trough and has been increasing consistently over the year as more and more people are realising that there is a job still to be done. The membership fee is unchanged yet again at £7 for the fifth year. Inflation over the same period is 30% so CAMRA membership is cheaper now in real terms than it ever has been, the recently introduced computerisation at Head Office has made CAMRA much more efficient.

So, come on and join us in campaigning for the beer consumer. The British beer industry needs careful monitoring and extensive persuasion to prevent it falling into the self-indulgence and self-destruction of the 60's.

London Drinker

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

BILL AND MARIE RETIRE

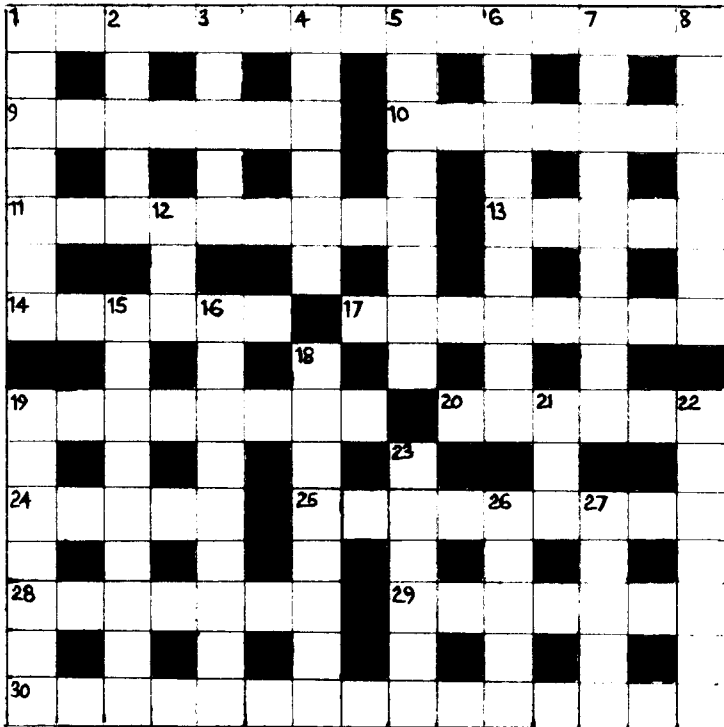
October saw the retirement of Bill and Marie Sawkins from **The Bell, Therfield** after 15 years. Bill and Marie were due to retire in two years time, but an imminent brewery rent rise helped them decide to retire early to their home in Staffordshire. Bill commented ruefully that he thought it unfair for village pubs to be compared with town pubs in setting rent levels.

The Sawkins, who will be best remembered for their fund raising for the R.N.L.I. and the local old people's charity, have been good friends of the campaign locally from the early days. The **Bell** has appeared regularly in the Good Beer Guide and through this, Bill related, they have made a great number of friends: Americans, Canadians and Dutch as well as Londoners. Bill and Marie tried to run **The Bell** as a good English pub and not turn it into a licensed restaurant; Bill is opposed to the idea of drinking and smoking alongside the eating of food in a pub. Prices have also been kept down during their tenancy - IPA was still 77p a pint when they left.

Bill and Marie expressed their "more than grateful thanks" to all CAMRA friends made over the years - they would be delighted to see them if ever they are in the village of Ipstones in Staffordshire (where the price of Bass has just gone up to 65p a pint).

We wish Bill and Marie a long and happy retirement.

JFF



The sender of the first correct entry opened on December 1st will receive a CAMRA bar towel. Please mark envelope November Competition.

Across

1. One eighth of pie content in Boxmoor (5,10).
9. We won't get confused going to north part of Stevenage (3,4).
10. Girl tells stories, we hear, to obtain make-up (7).
11. It shows that way in Royston (5,4).
13. Only five included in what you're trying to do (5).
14. Yuletide starts before time - this often? (6).
17. It's a nuisance having to interrupt shot, hang it! (8).
19. Farewell performance round piano in Pimlico, perhaps (4-4).
20. Proverbs written a long time after Christ's birth (6).
24. Barmen deduced there was some over (5).
25. He'd like a nice pure concoction (9).
28. The Leviathan, for instance, is unusually large (7).
29. Les and Pete get drunk - that's the object of many chasers (7).
30. Whitbread's display of patriotism on Herts-Essex border (3,5,3,3).

Down

1. After time, I'm going to find a girl - many landlords have one (7).
2. Often one of eight or what one needs, it's said (5).
3. Policeman - he's outside back a long time (6).
4. Extent of tumbledown single mother centres (6).
5. In March, a problem for board member (8).
6. He's abroad when drunk in Piccotts End (5,4).
7. Charles, maybe, going to a kind of party in Hemel Hempstead (5,4).
8. View necessary changes, leaving out St.Albans initially (7).
12. Rubbish going uphill (3).
15. A prohibition enacted - five hundred left (9).
16. Like final attempt to endure a hazard (4-5).
18. Being ignorant, a French King goes over part of Bible (8).
19. In summer, without hesitation, drink in Old Welwyn (7).
21. The Prince William is said to be one with atmosphere (3).
22. Genuine increase in trouble without one (7).
23. Gipsies taking part of kip after lunchtime session (6).
26. Turn over page and find nude displayed all round (5).
27. Throw out fish - it's swallowed ten pence (5).

Hertfordshire isn't as well blessed in pub games as some other counties, yet it nevertheless offers a fair selection, ranging from the ubiquitous darts, crib and dominoes to pool, bar billiards and shove ha'penny. In rarity are Aunt Sally, petanque, ringing-the-bull and table skittles. We have video games and pinball machines and, for the gamblers amongst us, fruit machines of various strains and pay-outs. But now Hertfordshire is being set alight by Britain's latest indoor craze.

It's free (at least usually) and absolutely necessary, offering the participant all the cunning and guile of chess and the frustration of the rubic cube. You can apply brute force or dexterity but concentration and co-ordination are vital and fine balance can, on occasion, enter the stakes to confound the bemused competitor.

And what's more, those pubs introducing this game have set aside a whole room, albeit small, for the player. It's a game for one and comprises the classic confrontation of human versus machine and like all the best inventions it's simplicity is its strength.

If I tell you that Bowater-Scott is one of the leading manufacturers and that the aim of this delightful pastime is to amass ten (or however many you require) approximately equal-size sheets of toilet paper, you will, I'm sure, realise that you have already unsuspectingly taken part in this jaunty little ruse.

The beclubicled novice can immediately be spotted by their touching lack of finesse - the first yank inevitably results in six-feet or more of toilet paper draped around the floor; the second attempt usually is partnered by effusive language and a crumpled ball of paper as time and again the elusively placed serrated edge is missed. The greatest novice exponent of this intriguing sport is undoubtedly Anne Drecks who managed, with one enormous spin of the reel, to unleash the entire roll twice round the Ladies, out through the door, through the public bar, four times round the pub garden, ending up firmly entwined around a beautiful silver birch. Her faithful puppy measured this miraculous attempt at 475 yards, three and a half inches. To date it's never been bettered.

A conveniently placed flushable waste-paper basket is always at hand for abortive tries, so keep trying until you achieve a 'Wipe', the sports technical term for a single symmetrical sheet. Ten 'Wipes' are known as a 'Full Pan' bettered only by a 'Royal Flush' which consists of ten 'wipes amazingly joined by a single strand each (only for the expert this one). A three-inch-round ball of paper is a 'dump' and a one-inch strip is a 'false start'. An unfortunate piece of single-ply is a 'fairy's wisp'.

The sport isn't without its gamesmanship. A 'bummer' is where the previous competitor has deliberately spiked the next's chances - the new 'end' has been infuriatingly rewound up inside the 'server' wasting several seconds and creating untold heartache for the excited oncomer. To be frowned upon this but like other popular sports the game has attracted an unruly element. A game can last a mere 35 seconds but the world's longest game lasted 4 1/2 years when a certain Mr B.Hind from Flushing in Holland used 26 reels consecutively before achieving a single 'wipe'. What was even more startling about this monstrous failure was that Mr Hind showed absolutely no embarrassment about his repeated trips to the bar for a new reel. With no attempt to conceal the reel under his jacket he shocked weary onlookers with his shamelessness. His game was over when a pitying rival in the adjacent cubicle donated his own 'full pan' out of charity. This selflessness represents the friendlier side of a sport which is fast overtaking darts as Britain's most popular pub game - it is estimated that over 50 million people have tried it at least once.

The winners elated chant of "Eureka" (sometimes sadly accompanied by the retort of "Nah mate, it must be you" from the other side of the cubicle) is now a familiar term of satisfaction heard far and wide throughout the Kingdom, and "I'm just going to peel a reel" is the phrase which heralds a new game.

Yes, **CONSTIPATION** is here to stay, so next time you're down the pub why not pop in and see if your landlord has had the nous to fit a 'server' in the Ladies and Gentlemen. Have a crack at it - you know it makes sense!

By the way, whatever happened to Izal or the Sports Page from the Sunday Express?

Les Middlewood

THANKS

South Herts Branch would like to convey their grateful thanks to Tim and Carol, new licensees of Fullers' **Garibaldi** in St Albans, for making their upstairs function room available to the Branch at very short notice for its September Branch Meeting. This change was necessary because the originally arranged and advertised venue, a Whitbread house, suddenly closed for redecorations without prior warning. The Branch would like to apologise to anyone who was inconvenienced by the last-minute change. Herts South will undoubtedly be making further use of the **Garibaldi's** hospitality, and other organisations wishing to use this pub's function room, one of the few left in St Albans area, should contact Tim or Carol at the pub.



In the July issue I wrote about 'lucky finds', and recently I was lucky enough to obtain a full bottle of Fordham's 1937 Coronation Ale at a Collector's Fair in Surrey. Unfortunately the label is rather badly damaged, as is the cork but the contents appear to be intact.

Such a find is fairly unusual, and it suggests another, rather specialised, aspect of label, or indeed bottle, collecting to write about. Many collectors, especially among the newer converts, seek only to collect commemorative issues, and amongst these 'Royal' commemoratives are the most highly prized. Recent years have seen a boom in the production of special brews of bottled beers, which has gone completely against the current trend, which is very much away from bottled products. The boom was started by the very successful issue of bottled beers by several brewers to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen in 1977. The Royal Wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales provided a stimulus to the trend four years later, and since then the births of two princes of the Royal blood have also brought forth bottled souvenirs. Most of the labels issued for these brews are fairly easy to obtain, although some have proved particularly elusive to many collectors. Over the same period of eight years there have been many, many other special brews celebrating just about any event from a retirement of a brewery worker to the launch of a new car. Some breweries, indeed, seem to almost specialise in this sort of product, and the names James Paine and Burton Bridge come most readily to mind.

Much more keenly sought after by collectors are labels issued to mark the Queen's Coronation in 1953, like the one illustrated here issued by one of the County's largest brewing concerns of the time, McMullen's of Hertford. The company still survives. It goes without saying that even earlier 'Royal' commemoratives are even more rare, and more eagerly sought by collectors. I have in my collection some half dozen labels issued for the Coronation of King George VI, one for the Silver Jubilee of his predecessor on the throne, but, alas, none for King George V's Coronation in 1911.

Graham Tubb
66, High Street, Puckeridge
Editor of the Labologists Newsletter

The Summer Newsletter commented upon the trend of McMullens to convert their pubs from tenancy to magagement. Mac's attribute this change first to impending EEC legislation, and second, to difficulty formulating a satisfactory tenancy agreement. Conversations with representatives of other breweries have revealed no indications of any particular Common Market legislation which might make it necessary for McMullens pubs to be staffed by salaried managers rather than tenants, and most other companies seem to find no difficulty framing acceptable contracts with their tenants.

For the record, these are the McMullen pubs in Hertfordshire which, we are reliably advised, have transferred from being tenancies to managed houses, in the past few years:

Cannon Tavern	Ware
Coopers Arms	Hitchin
Crown	Hertford Heath
Harrow	Bendish
Jolly Fisherman	St Margarets
Oddfellows Arms	Harpenden
Queens Head	Stanstead Abbotts
Rising Sun	Halls Green
Robin Hood and Little John	Rabley Heath
Spread Eagle	Ware
Station Hotel	Ware
Tanners Arms	Bishops Stortford
Three Horseshoes	Sawbridgeworth
Woodhall Arms	Stapleford

We would welcome comments from readers as to whether or not the change has improved the standards of service in these pubs, or otherwise. One point for the real ale drinker; McMullens previously used to ensure that at least one real ale was dispensed in their managed pubs. In a large number of those quoted above, this is not so. Why?

A Full Pint, Please

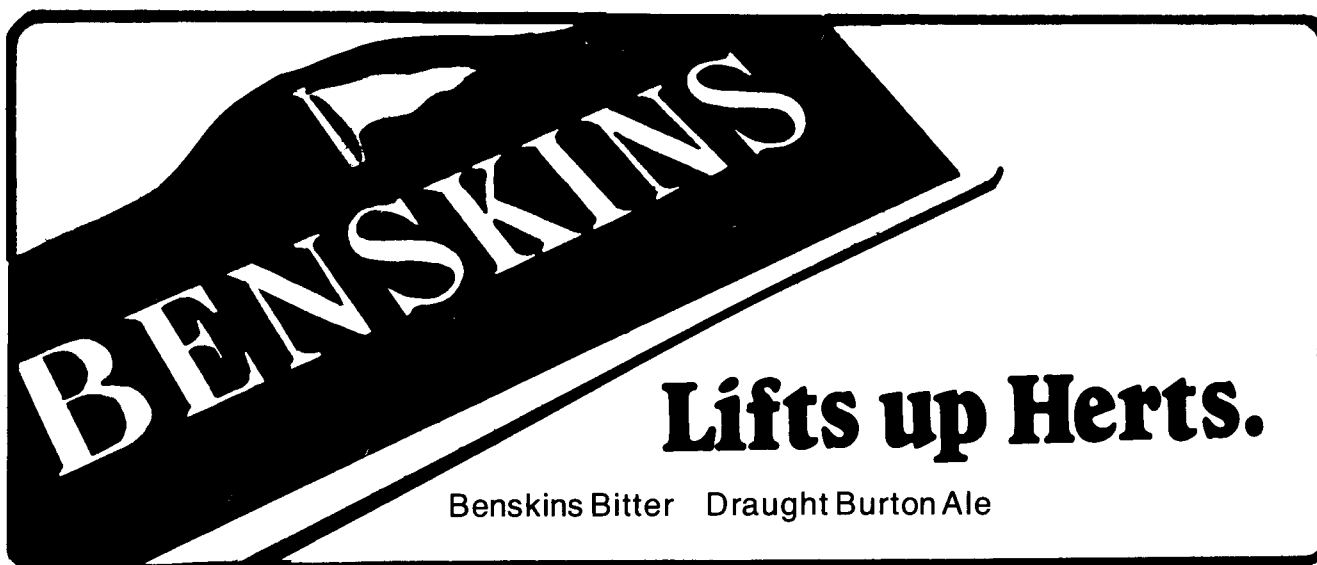
Ordering a pint of Benskins in Rickmansworth, recently I didn't receive the quantity I was expecting. When I asked for my glass to be topped up I was warned by a person who, through his appearance at least, gave all the indications of being licencee that "it's getting near the end of the barrel and there's a lot of muck in the bottom!" I sensed that person was reprimanding me for having audacity to expect a full pint for my 86 pence. Having supposedly come out to relax rather than enter into verbal disputes with discourteous bar staff I retreated with my pint and thought to myself that the apparent complete lack of any prices displayed in the bar would doubtless provide a second item of interest to the local trading standards department.

PUB NEWS

The **Eastcourt Tavern** in Watford is now selling Greene King KK Light Mild in place of XX Dark Mild.

The **White Hart** at Bedmond, not listed in "Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire", serves Benskins bitter on handpump.

Over at Hoddesdon, the **Rye House** is likely to close shortly, while it is converted into a disco pub by the infamous Host Group. The same organisation is proposing to convert a pub in London Colney into a night club, amidst much local opposition.



BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Thursday 7th November
Social at the Bay Horse, Old Hall Green, 8p.m.

Thursday 14th November

Branch A.G.M. at the Three Tuns, Ashwell, 8p.m.

All members in North Herts are urged to attend this meeting

Thursday 28th November

Pub of the Month social at the Bull, Watton-at-Stone, 8p.m.

Thursday 12th December

Branch Meeting at the Maidens Head, Whitwell, 8p.m.

Contact Peter Clarke ☎ Stevenage 65957

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 19th November

Branch meeting at the Cottage, Welwyn Garden City 8pm.

Tuesday 26th November

Pub of the Month at the Rose and Crown, Essendon 8pm.

Contact Adrian Jolliffe ☎ St Albans 69675

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Tuesday 12th November

Joint Social with South Herts Branch at the Silver Cup, Harpenden 8pm.

Friday 15th November

Herts branches weekend trip to Herefordshire including Westons Cider. Approx. £50 for Hotel and coach. Phone contact.

Wednesday 20th November

Branch Meeting followed by Auction at the Wheatsheaf, Watford, 8pm. Details Rickmansworth 770267.

Wednesday 27th November

Branch Quiz at the Wheatsheaf Watford 8pm

Wednesday 4th December

Social evening at the Horse and Chains, Bushey 8pm

Contact Tony King ☎ Garston 672587

MIDCHILTERN BRANCH

Tuesday 5th November

Social at the Queens Head, Long Marston 8.30pm

Thursday 14th November

Social at the Queens Head, Chesham 8.30pm

Tuesday 9th November

Social at the Potters Arms, Winchmore Hill, 8.30pm

Monday 25th November

Lunchtime brewery visit to McMullens, Hertford.

Thursday 28th November

Anti-social start at the Fisheries, Boxmoor, 8.30pm

Tuesday 3rd December

Social at the Swan, Northall, 8.30pm

Thursday 12th December

Christmas social at the Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesdon, 8pm.

Contact Peter Yorke ☎ Rickmansworth 770488

WHAT'S ON AT YOUR PUB

- 3 Nov **Ware:** Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Geoff Higginbottom.
- 8 Nov **Stanstead Abbotts:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: Spring Chickens.
- 10 Nov **Ware:** Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Adrian May.
- 15 Nov **Stanstead Abbotts:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Bob Walser.
- 17 Nov **Ware:** Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Paul Metsers.
- 22 Nov **Stanstead Abbotts:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guests: Calennig.
- 24 Nov **Ware:** Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Singers Night.
- 29 Nov **Stanstead Abbotts:** Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Singaround.

Please send details of forthcoming events by October 24th for the Christmas Edition to Peter Lerner, 7 Sheppards Close, St. Albans, Herts.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

I should like to vent my astonishment and dissatisfaction at the quality of the Castlemaine Foux article that appeared in the July edition of your Newsletter.

I find it most disappointing that CAMRA, with whom we work so closely and who claim to understand the mechanics of the brewing industry so precisely, seem totally blind to the fact that Lager exists in the market or even has the right to exist. I would point out that there are considerably more draught lager drinkers around today than real ale consumers.

I have taken considerable time out to explain to you and your organisation the rationale behind launching Castlemaine and indeed its unique characteristics that stand it apart from other lagers on the market. Before complaining about the prices I would ask you to remember that the ingredients are shipped all the way from Australia and therefore justify a small premium over our other running lagers.

The cynical remarks in reference to Welsh Beers again displays your organisations somewhat blinkered attitude towards Lagers. What would you say if we imported all our foreign lagers from their countries of origin and charged the true cost of a pint to the customer. The situation would be somewhat untenable.

Whilst wholeheartedly supporting your quest for the perfection of real ale throughout Hertfordshire and indeed the nation, I would ask you and your colleagues to take a more commercial viewpoint towards the brewing industry as a whole and not let your emotions carry you away.

Yours sincerely,

For: IND COOPE BENSKINS LTD.

J.D. Hughes.

Marketing manager.

Dear Sir,

We have just read the Summer 85 edition of CAMRA Hertfordshire Newsletter and were disappointed to read the comments on the **White Horse**, Weston to which we have just taken over the tenancy. We thought the remarks were not justified and a little out of date, because on enquiry we found that the pub became 'one bar' some four years ago, and the handpump has been in operation for two. Whether the unnamed writer came at the beginning of our tenancy or at the end of the departing landlords, his or any other persons comments or complaints would be better directed at the landlord or his staff, so that problems can be dealt with immediately. We feel that if he had made a few discreet enquiries he would have realised that a change over was imminent and would have made allowances for this.

But the proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating and we can only invite all readers to come up to Weston and sample it for themselves.

Hope to see you soon

Ian and Bernie Crawford.

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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 **Nadine Fynn, 78 Old North Road, Royston, Hertfordshire.**

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