

FREE

Campaign
CAMRA
for Real AleTHE
HERTFORDSHIRE
NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1986

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 91

BIG BREWERIES PROMOTE REAL ALE

After several months of Benskins bashing and unkind articles about Whitbread lager in these columns, it is with great pleasure that I am now able to write some justifiably complimentary words about not one, not even two, but three of the big six breweries represented in Hertfordshire. Courage, Whitbread and Ind Coope have all called a temporary ceasefire from bombarding us with total lager advertising in the past few months, and have instead been positively promoting their real ales for the first time in years by offering incentives to drinkers.

Admirable as they are, these incentive schemes have also given an interesting insight into the breweries own ideas about their real ales, and especially which sectors of the drinking public they regard as their particular market.

Take Whitbread: their 'Whitbread Traditional Beer Club' scheme requires the intrepid drinker to imbibe twelve pints of one of their traditional beers (not necessarily in one session), for which he or she then qualifies for a free leather credit card wallet, complete with their initials entooled upon it. This of course pre-supposes that the average Whitbread real ale drinker possesses a credit card - not surprising when one considers how much Whitbread charge for their beer - and so their ideal customer must be assumed to be well off enough to be able to afford their prices. Nevertheless this offer is a positive step in the right direction and at regular intervals "Whitbread will be giving you the opportunity to take advantage of some very special offers."

In contrast, Courage seem to have a quite different profile of their beer drinker. For every Tuesday night in November Courage's Best Bitter was reduced to 50 pence per pint, which would suggest that Courage are aiming for the ordinary 'man in the street' to drink real

ale, a surmise which is confirmed by their excellent "Courage Best" adverts on television. Incidentally, the 50 pence offer meant a saving of some 40 pence in their more up-market pubs, such as the **Cock** in St.Albans.

Ind Coope have come up with the "Burton Bunch" in which the drinker qualifies to join by supping a mere nine pints of Burton Ale. After parting with a further £1.99 he can then obtain a very attractive engraved glass "Burton Bunch" tankard, plus his initials for an extra 50 pence. Ind Coope are not exactly being generous, but again it is a good promotional idea, and the Burton Bunch member receives a list of all Burton outlets in the country, and a chance to visit the brewery.

How pleasing it is to be complimentary to the big brewers. Let's hope they can keep up the good work and give real ale the chance to hold its own in the future.

AJ

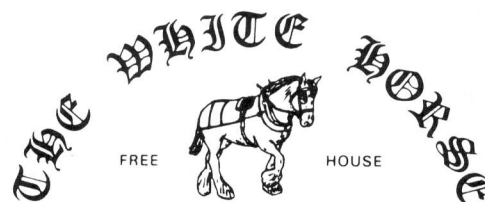
THE BARLEY MOW

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 and bar snacks in the evening.

PLEASE NOTE NO COACHES INCLUDING MINIBUSES

castle street ... old hertford

Now under new ownership

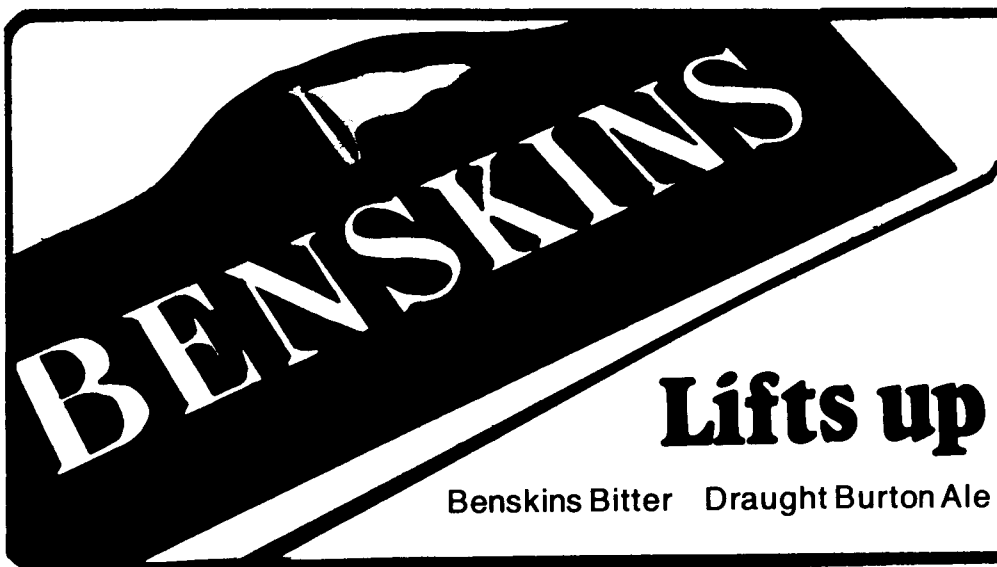
....
*Widest selection of real ales
in Hertford with many guest beers
all served on gravity*

....
Large open log fire

....
Home cooked food at all times
Sunday lunch a speciality

A BETTER BREW

There was, on the evening of January 8th, a half hour programme on Radio 4, about the history of beer making over the past 500 years. Peter James, of 77 Woburn Close, Stevenage, recorded this programme, and would be happy to provide tape recordings of this on receipt of a C60 cassette and suitable SAE for its return.



Lifts up Herts.

Benskins Bitter Draught Burton Ale

HERTFORD UPDATE

White Horse

A belated welcome to Ian and Janet Harvey at the **White Horse**, Castle Street, Hertford. Under Ian the range of real ales has blossomed to a regular eight and on some occasions ten. Since arriving in November Ian has tried over 30 different beers including Ringwoods, Sam Smiths, Hook Norton, Youngs, Marstons, Everards, Wiltshire, Hoskins and Oldfield, Archers, Gales, Wadworths and the popular Mauldons, a rare visitor to Hertfordshire from Suffolk. Lanes and James White ciders and Gales Country Wines are usually available and Ian and Janet's cuisine is gaining a sound reputation. All home made, meals are available at all times although Sunday Lunches need to be booked. Two splendid fireplaces have been revealed and are currently being used. Structural alterations are in the offing (pending planning permission) but Ian and Janet are aware of the unique character of the pub and any changes are to be sympathetic. Good luck to two new enthusiastic people to the trade. And a farewell to Mick Peck, for 13 years landlord at the **White Horse**. A sort of semi-retirement this as Mick is still a regular customer and can still be seen helping behind the bar when required.

Millstream

The **Millstream**, Port Vale, has recently been refurbished by McMullens. Now a one bar pub, Mac's have tried to create a cottage atmosphere not unsuccessfully and the pub is larger due to a 'knock-through' into the neighbouring cottage. It is pleasing to see hand-pumps for both Country and AK.

Lord Haig

Mac's are currently finishing off their latest refurbishment at the **Lord Haig**, South Street. Again knocked into one bar (what is this fascination Macs?) the pub was closed for most of January. The new more comfortable decor and furnishings should bring in the trade but watch out, decorators are still completing the final touches to this town centre pub. Handpumped Country and AK continue.

Sportsman

Over the road, at the **Sportsman**, a recent additional real ale is Sam Smith's bitter – not surprising really, as the owners come from Yorkshire! Still the only outlet for Rayments in the area too.

Old Barge

A nice story from the **Old Barge**, on the Lea Navigation. When the pub was enlarged some years ago an artist was commissioned by Benskins to paint a new pub sign. Unfortunately he didn't do his homework and painted two river barges, probably not seen in Hertford since early this century if at all. Benskins have now replaced the sign with a more fitting one featuring narrow boats and canal scenes.

Duncombe, Stags and Woolpack

A brand new cloth now adorns the bar billiards table at the **Duncombe Arms**, Railway Street – excellent Greene King ales here. A new bar, **Stags**, has opened in Parliament Square. Proudly boasting to be a free house, the bar, alas, sells no real ale and caters mainly for the young drinking market. The **Woolpack**, Mill Bridge, will be McMullen's next venture into refurbishment. A family room is planned and Mac's aim to make greater use of its position at the head of the Lea Navigation. Access to the river is currently blocked by a locked gate. Please add handpumped AK to the Country Macs. The Greyhound, Bengo and the Dolphin, Railway Street (both Macs) are the only pubs left in Hertford with no real ale.

LES MIDDLEWOOD

WHITBREAD PRICE SURVEY

Following last year's Benskins Pub Survey, Herts South Branch decided to follow up with a similar trawl of Whitbread pubs in the Branch area. There are 46 of these, all but 7 offering at least one real ale. Not surprisingly, most of Whitbread's pubs are centred around Harpenden and St Albans (proximity to Luton) but over the years Whitbread, through take-overs, have inherited pubs throughout the area. Their beers, of course, are shipped in from Marlow (Wethereds), Cheltenham (Flowers) and Faversham (Fremlins), the latter being available in only 4 South Herts outlets. Whitbread pubs are allowed to take one foreign beer (the brewery state which beer this is to be each quarter or thereabouts). Six pubs had taken up this option, Brakspears being the current option, though 90p was the cheapest pint. Cheapest pints were:*

Wethereds: 82p at the **King William IV**, Shenley
85p at the **Queens Head**, Colney Heath

Flowers
Original: 88p at the **Three Horseshoes**, Smallford
Fremlins: 88p at the **White Horse**, Park Street

Samuel
Whitbread
Bitter: 96p at the **Queens Head**, Colney Heath
Most expensive pints were:*

Wethereds: £1 at the **White Horse**, Harpenden

Flowers
Original: £1.10 at the **White Horse**, Harpenden
Fremlins: 96p at the **Green Dragon**, Potters Bar

Samuel
Whitbread
Bitter: £1.02 at the **Bridge House** (Potters Bar), **Bell Hotel**, **Fleur de Lys** and **Bell Hotel** (all St. Albans).

* Prices may have changed since this October-November survey.

As in the Benskins survey the difference between cheapest and most expensive is quite alarming, but Whitbread beat Benskins in compliance with the law which states that prices should be easily visible for customers to read. Only four pubs fell short of this requirement.

Quality of beer, as far as real ale is concerned, founders generally on the attitude of the landlord towards it and Whitbread pubs are no exception.

It is probably unfair to judge the quality of beer on one visit, suffice to say that 85% of the beers tasted fell into the categories 'Excellent', 'Good' or 'Average' and only 15% into 'Below Par' or 'undrinkable'.

CAMRA is at present conducting a price survey of Free Houses nationwide, it will be interesting to see how local free houses compare to their tied rivals.

LES MIDDLEWOOD

PUB OF THE MONTH

North Herts

The Cock, Stocking Pelham

The Cock is a delightful old village pub in the centre of Stocking Pelham with a thatched roof and weatherboarding outside, and a low beamed ceiling inside. Long standing landlord Jim Westbrook, a keen supporter of the Multiple Sclerosis charity, serves excellent pints of Burton Ale (his own tippale) and Ind Coope Bitter.

It will be well worth your while making a trip to the eastern border of Hertfordshire to visit **The Cock** and drink the beers.

JFF

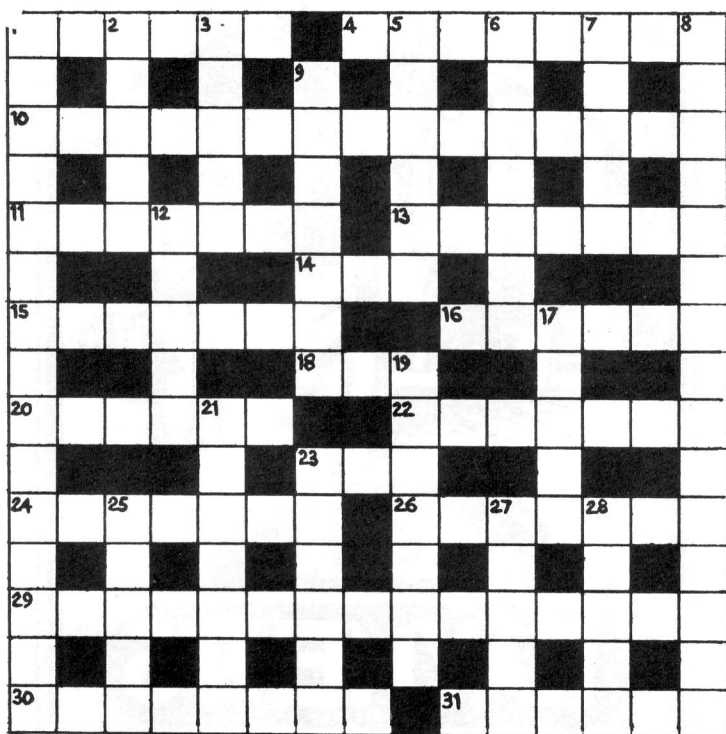
South Herts

Congratulations to John and Betty Buckley who have won the Herts South December Pub of the Month award. Tenants for 11 years at the **East India College Arms**, Hertford Heath, John and Betty have amassed a loyal following of regulars and passers by. The pub is named after the nearby college (now known as Haileybury) and is a wonderful conglomeration of public saloon bars, games rooms (one inside one out), meeting room, hotel accommodation and garden. Food is always available and how many British pubs is it possible to get a fresh milkshake in? Ind Coope and Benskin's beers are on handpump and winter has seen the addition of Adnam's Extra. I thought John's wry sense of humour was at work when he pronounced that his favourite beer was Double Diamond but he means it. C'est la vie we can't convert everyone! We would like to thank John and Betty for their generosity and hospitality on the presentaion evening in December and wish them well for 1986 and beyond.

LES MIDDLEWOOD

6. Reg sits awkwardly in toilet – maybe originally not enough of this? (3-4)
7. Spar enacted herein? (5)
8. These Danes drink uncontrollably, showing generosity (15)
9. Boy eats lean ingredient of a ploughman's? (7)
12. Wood, a thick piece, standing up (5)
17. Proper acting part in musical work (5)
19. On which one is anything but peaceful? (7)
21. We all like a full one, certainly after unfinished dinner? (7)
23. Strange dream I have high regard for (6)
25. Best bitter, indeed without head, flowed back (5)
27. Hurried back, for example, to choice of beers on offer (5)
28. Power source observed on horses they say (5)

COMPETITION



The sender of the first correct entry opened on March 1st will receive a CAMRA PVC Apron. Please mark the envelope February Competition.

Across

1. London brewer with more in (6)
4. The Ram's covering the cards in another Hertford pub (8)
10. Keg-lovers' centre? Maybe, but for White Horse and Plough (10,5)
11. Police? 'E's replaced one in Sawbridgeworth (3,4)
13. Reluctantly put up with faults to machinery component (7)
14. What summer will do for a small child (3)
15. Announcement of sighting of pub in Woolmer Green (5-2)
16. Small creature capable of doing the splits (6)
18. The Vine (Waltham Cross) contains description of the Crown (Boreham Wood) (3)
20. And return in the morning to begin supping his brew (6)
22. Try a dry MP found in alien surroundings (7)
23. Display right indicator when going onto main road (3)
24. Brewer with a tiger in the tank (or barrel, preferably)? (7)
26. Spy topless pub in Hertford? I'd make it a monument (7)
29. BR see union – vital to negotiate such work? (6-9)
30. Like Watney's faces when their beer ended disastrously (8)
31. Some of the Saracens used for enumeration (6)

Down

1. Chap in the next seat is a communist (6-9)
2. Angry when four or six are dropped in the cover (5)
3. Eastern country being overthrown is causing fear (5)
5. Company finds itself in tons of difficulty with overheads (6)

Good beer is a tradition with us.

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

Our AK Mild is as popular today as it was when it was first brewed in 1829. Another best seller is Country Bitter. Both are traditionally brewed. Cask conditioned. Full flavoured.

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.

McMULLEN

Brewers in Hertfordshire since 1827



PUB NEWS

Whitbreads have withdrawn real ale from **Jeans** in Hitchin, their fun pub. Congratulations go out to two North Herts licencees, Ron and Joyce Kirby of the **Two Diamonds** in Stevenage and Mike and Barbara Jones of the **Maidens Head** Whitwell, who both finished in the top four of the McMullens Cellar Competition. The overall winner, out of interest, came from the Enfield area. Time has been called for the last time at the **Royal Oak** in Albury. Despite representations to the brewery and a strong objection to East Herts Council, planning permission has been granted to Greene King to turn this rural pub into a residential premise. A pity that Greene King could not be persuaded to have sold the premises with a licence so that a more enterprising owner could have maintained a rural amenity.

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

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

Thursday 6th March

Social at the Windmill, Charlton 8p.m.

Thursday 20th March

Social at the Green Man, Little Wymondley 8p.m.

Thursday 27th March

Pub of the Month Social at the Cock, Stocking Pelham 8p.m.

Thursday 3rd April

Darts match with Hertfordshire South branch, venue to be arranged

Thursday 10th April

Branch meeting at the Motte and Bailey, Pirton 8p.m.

Contact Peter Clarke ☎ Stevenage 65957

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Monday 3rd March

Committee Meeting at the Barley Mow, Tyttenhanger.

Tuesday 18th March

Branch meeting at the Cricketers, Redbourn.

Tuesday 25th March

Pub of the Month at the Woodman, Wildhill.

Contact Adrian Jolliffe ☎ St.Albans 69675

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 5th March

Joint Social with Mid-Chilterns Branch at the Unicorn Abbots Langley 8p.m. All welcome

Friday 14th March

Pub Crawl in Bushey Village starting at the Horse and Chains 8p.m. King Stag 8.45p.m., White Hart, Red Lion, finish at the Swan.

Wednesday 19th March

Annual General Meeting at the Wheatsheaf, Watford, Bring Membership cards. 8p.m.

Wednesday 2nd April

Social evening at the Kings Head, Hunton Bridge 8p.m.

Contact Tony King ☎ Garston 672587

MIDCHILTERNS BRANCH

Tuesday 4th March

Social at the Swan, Ley Hill (Bucks) 8.30p.m.

Wednesday 5th March

Joint Social with Watford & District branch at the Unicorn, Abbots Langley, 8p.m.

Tuesday 11th March

Annual General Meeting at the Royal Oak, Chipperfield. All members welcome. 8.30p.m.

Tuesday 18th March

Social at the Rose & Crown, Trowley Bottom, Flamstead. 8.30p.m.

Tuesday 25th March

Social at the White Lion, St Leonards, Buckland Common 8.30p.m.

Tuesday 1st April

Social? nednessiM elttiL nworC ehT 8.30p.m.

Contact Peter Yorke ☎ Rickmansworth 770488

2 Mar Ware: Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Barry Goodman and Greg Lindsay.

7 Mar Stanstead Abbots: Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Charley Yarwood.

9 Mar Ware: Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Les Barker and Mrs Ackroyd.

14 Mar Stanstead Abbots: Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: Plenty Left.

16 Mar Ware: Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Guest: Fiddlebridge.

21 Mar Stanstead Abbots: Crown. 8pm. Hoddesdon Folk Club. Guest: John Bowden and Vic Shepherd.

23 Mar Ware: Old Bull's Head. 8pm. Ware Folk Club. Singaround.

Please send details of forthcoming events by March 1st for the April edition to the Editor. Remember that it is FREE to advertise in the What's on column.



THE ROYAL OAK, BUSHEY

Free House

★6 Real Ales □ Food ★

★ Guest Beers ★

Restaurant and carvery now open

Reservations preferable ☎ 01-9502865

SPARROWS HERNE ★ ON THE A411

THE CHALLENGERS

"The Challengers" are a small group of people particularly interested in the 'full mesh' method of making beer in the home. They hold regular monthly meetings and organise a topic relating to homebrewing for each month. Anyone interested in joining should contact Rod Howard on St.Albans 73279 after 6p.m.

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.

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

Advertising: £8 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 1st. FOR MAY EDITION: APRIL 1st.

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