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HERTFORDSHIRE'S PINTS OF VIEW

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

October/November 2000

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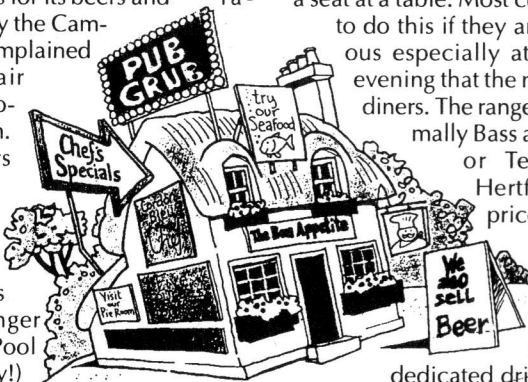
New Herts Beer Guide launched
at St Albans Beer Festival

Visit our web site at www.hertsale.org.uk



Do you want your local converted to a Vintage Inn?

After Allied Breweries sold off their complete tied estate of 3,500 pubs to Punch Taverns last year a large number of the pubs were taken over by Bass. Punch has a supply deal with Bass for its beers and lagers and this was why the Campaign for Real Ale complained to the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies Commission. The variety of beers available has been severely reduced and guest beers are no longer available in many pubs. Allied's Firkin chain no longer brews, Mr Q's, the Pool Pub, is dead (hooray!) and most of the Big Steak pubs have been taken over by Bass Leisure.



can never be this profitable. You can, of course, drink in a Vintage Inn but are discouraged from doing so, as you cannot stand or sit at the bar and are expected to take a seat at a table. Most customers are not happy to do this if they are alone and it is obvious especially at lunchtime and early evening that the numbered tables are for diners. The range of beers is limited, normally Bass and either London Pride or Tetley Bitter sold in Hertfordshire at premium prices.

I have received some very strange comments when I suggested that the policy may be wrong and that dedicated drinking areas should remain after conversion. One of the oddest is that the locals will find somewhere else to drink. In many cases they don't want to and in some they cannot, as their pub is the only one in a large geographical area. Of course the policy makers are indifferent to this and completely inflexible. It cannot be denied that a large number of the pubs that Bass bought had been neglected and are desperately in need of refurbishment. It is sad that the price for this is the destruction of a good local where you can meet people, have a conversation and share some good humour, without ordering a meal.

What is a Pub?

Although CAMRA had reservations about some of these themed pubs they all catered for one important group - drinkers. Bass are on the verge of converting 550 of the larger pubs they acquired into Vintage Inns, which are designed and run to be food first, drinker second. The accountants' view is simple: the mark-up on food is around 150%, beer and lager unless sold in large quantities

Hertfordshire's Pints Of View is produced by the Hertfordshire South, Watford & District, Herts Essex Borders and Mid Chilterns Branches of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches. Any articles or letters for publication should be typewritten and sent to Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts WD7 9EA.

Subscriptions: £4 for 12 issues. Send to John Lightfoot, 66 Dryfield Road, Edgware, Middx, HA8 9JT cheques made payable to CAMRA South Herts Branch.

Advertising & Editorial: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts WD7 9EA. Advertising: Jim Newman on 01727 835674 Advertising £12 per 2.5 cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Typesetting by Roger Filler from South Herts Branch via Pagemaker. Printed by Cavalry Creative Services. Ring Charlie on 01707 274584.

Bass Conversions update

We are pleased to announce that the Three Hammers, Chiswell Green, is not going to be converted into a Vintage Inn. The downside is that although Bass intend to keep the grade II listed building as an Ember Inn, catering for both eaters and drinkers, the interior is to be altered and a conservatory built to extend the bar area. I have no doubt that the customers who ran an excellent campaign to save the pub will be pleased with the outcome.

The White Horse in Shenley is in the process of converting into a Vintage Inn. Bass seem to have missed the fact that it is a grade II listed 16th Century Coaching Inn and had planned to knock down walls and rebuild part of the building. They had also planned to extend the car park over a large part of the garden.

The good news is whilst Bass wait to present revised plans many drinks in the pub are at reduced prices, Bass and Tetley Bitter at £1 per pint. It was reported that the pub would be open until at least the end of August in the last "Pints Of View". This could now be extended to Christmas and beyond.

The Old Red Lion on the A41 at Aldenham is

now ready to re-open badged as a Toby Carvery and Inn, as predicted in the last issue there is no name. On my travels I noticed another Toby outside Northampton with the same pink mock Tudor exterior also nameless, how long will this faceless corporate branding continue?

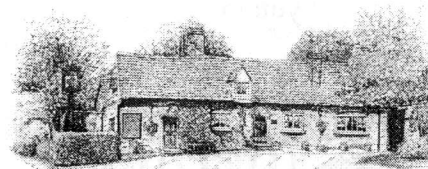
No room at the Inn?

Another interesting point is that there is so much work planned in the new Bass estate that they are running short of builders. Many of the pub conversions have plans to move the toilets upstairs to increase the bar/ restaurant area which means a reduction or complete loss of accommodation for the publican. Many are becoming "lock-ins" with elaborate alarm systems and the licensee living off the premises.

This can only be a bad thing and force even more good people, especially those with young families, to leave the trade. Although it has been suggested that an increase in earnings will be made, this will not cover the cost of private accommodation, especially in the South East of England.

Steve Bury

GOOD BEER GUIDE ENTRY 2000



The ELEPHANT & CASTLE

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QUALITY FOOD

Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale, Ruddles
& rotating Guest Beer

Old Cross Tavern



Real Ale Free House

"The way pubs used to be"

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Food available lunchtimes
Monday-Saturday

SOUTH HERTS CAMRA
PUB OF THE YEAR 1999



Red Lion, Preston Hertfordshire's Pub of the Year

For many years Hertfordshire's four CAMRA branches have run Pub of the Year competitions for their respective areas. This year the four top pubs in the county have been assessed to give one overall winner. The nominations were:-

Mid Chilterns	Kings Arms, Tring
Herts-Essex Borders	Prince of Wales, Green Tye
North Herts	The Red Lion, Preston
South Herts	The Old Cross Tavern, Hertford
Watford	The Black Boy, Bushey

Each pub was visited by representatives from all branches. South Herts team did what turned out to be an almost impossible one-night trip of over 120 miles, visiting them all.

Needless to say the pubs were excellent, but very different and to score them against each other was very difficult.

We started early at six, and received a warm welcome at the Black Boy, a locals' local.

We did not inform our hosts of the reason for our visit though I think that some may have tumbled what we were doing before we left. Having sampled a variety of different beers in each pub we had plenty of opportunity to discuss their merits whilst travelling. At the Kings Arms parking was difficult (no fault of the pub) and a selection of Tring Brewery's new beers were available. Some very appetising food was being served but we did not partake. The interior is painted in some very imaginative "Changing Rooms" type colours, nothing wrong with a bit of adventure. On to Preston and the

Red Lion, Hertfordshire's only community-owned pub or so I'm informed. We missed North Herts branch who were apparently also making a late visit that evening which appeared to be having Women's Institute night. Like all good pubs it reflects the local inhabitants but caters

for all. Next stop was Green Tye - what a journey. We went through several places twice, including a ford, nearly running over a stray heron before reaching the Prince of Wales by the oddest of routes. No reflection on the pub which was running a darts night, but the Green Tye Brewery beer was below its normal standard and two pints were returned. However, the Mac's AK was in very good condition so the problem was not due to cellarmanship. Last, but not least, we got to the Old Cross Tavern right on the bell, but of course we were not surveying our own Pub of the Year anyway.

Congratulations to Tim & Jane Hunter of the Red Lion, Preston who are worthy winners of CAMRA Hertfordshire Pub Of The Year 2000 and will now go forward for entry in the East Anglia Pub Of the Year competition. The arrangements for the Hertfordshire presentation have still to be made. *Steve Bury*

Lin & Dick welcome
you to



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Homemade food a Speciality
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and two guests*

THE ENGINEER

Beer Today - Gone Tomorrow.... at The Engineer

Mark & Carol are pleased to report a major increase in real ale sales since our refurbishment in July.

A changing portfolio of between four and five beers are always available including: WADWORTH 6X, EVERARDS TIGER, ADNAMS, SHEPHERD NEAME SPITFIRE & MARSTON'S PEDIGREE

We are hoping to introduce some more obscure brews in October.... and LONDON PRIDE under £2 a pint for a limited period.

Christmas booking are now being taken

15 St Johns Road, Harpenden, Herts
01582 469303

NEIL AND EM ARE PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO ST ALBANS NEWEST ADDITION TO THE "GOOD BEER GUIDE"





St Albans Mayor, Roma Mills, serves an early guest with a pint of "Norwegian Blue" at the Pet shop bar at this year's St Albans Beer Festival. Also behind the bar is City Town Crier, Martin Hallett, and Festival Organiser, Phil Defriez

Record-breaking festival

This year's St Albans Beer Festival broke all previous records. Now in its fifth year, the festival sold more beer than ever, some 220 different real ales and over 18,000 pints in its four-day run and attracted thousands of visitors to the Alban Arena, St Albans between Wednesday 27th and Saturday 30th September.

Now firmly established as one of the premier beer festivals in the CAMRA calendar (it is the largest festival in the South East outside the GBBF at London's Olympia) St Albans goes from strength to strength. This year saw visitors arriving in the city from as far afield as Edinburgh and Bristol.

At its formal opening ceremony St Albans City Mayor, Roma Mills, praised CAMRA and its commitment to preserving traditional ale and the British pub. "I've been to every one of your festivals as a visitor. It's nice to be back today as your guest of honour," she quipped.

Run in conjunction with the St Albans Leos, this year's event featured a "Pet Shop" bar and beers such as "Castrated Cat", "One Sick Lizard" and "Norwegian Blue" were snapped

up by "tickers" and casual drinkers alike. If you missed the festival and want to know more about what happened then visit South Herts CAMRA's website at www.hertsale.org.uk where you can find all the beers listed, as well as an innovative virtual beer festival where you can walk round the Arena and get a taste of what makes this annual event so popular.

The champion beers of the festival as voted by visiting publicans, brewers and CAMRA personnel were as follows:

1. NEWBY WYKE		
White Squall	4.8%	
2. OAKHAM		
J.H.B	3.8%	
3. HAMPSHIRE		
Pride of Romsey	5.0%	
4. HARVIESTOUN		
Brookers Bitter & Twisted	3.8%	

White Hart Tap

4 Keyfield Terrace, St Albans
01727 860974

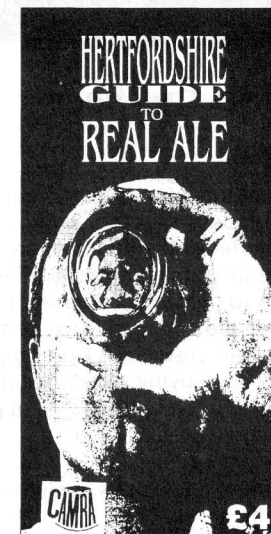
Food served Saturday
& Sunday

Live music Thursday & Saturday

Surf the Internet

All welcome

Greene King IPA
Adnams Broadside & Guest



It's out

For a long time its future has looked severely in doubt, but the brand new "Hertfordshire Guide To Real Ale" is finally out and was launched in style at this year's St Albans Beer Festival (see front cover). The guide has been totally updated by the five CAMRA branches that cover the county, and this edition includes all the pubs in the Barnet area that fall into the Hertfordshire postal district.

For Guide Editor, Roger Filler of South Herts, it's his third guide. "This has been the most difficult to complete with all the upheavals in pub ownership and beer range changes over the past 12 months. I suppose it's more of a snapshot of where we are in Herts at this time and there are bound to be errors. If any pub feels we should publish any change we can incorporate them into "Pints of View". Over 500 copies were snapped up at the recent North and South Herts Beer Festivals and copies are available at leading bookshops, CAMRA Headquarters, or by post from Jim Newman, 96A London Road, St Albans AL1 1NX, at £4 & 50p p&p.



THE FARMERS BOY

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food and drink

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Roger Protz

Summon the beer doctor

It seems that foreign pubs just cannot hold their British beer, says the *Daily Telegraph* recently. Interbrew, the (Belgian) brewer, has been forced to launch a website telling pubs abroad how to deal with beers such as Boddingtons, the cream of Manchester! So keen are they to ensure it is kept properly that they are employing a beer doctor to fly in and check. "To be honest, a lot of places abroad are more used to lager," a spokesman says primly. We can think of a few pubs in Herts that could do with a visit.

Tippelfair

For all you collectors of breweriana, the next national collectors' "Tippelfair" will be on Sunday 19 November at the Woughton Centre, (Sports Hall), Rainbow Drive, Chaffon Way (H7) Leadenhall, Milton Keynes. Items on sale will include Beer Mats, Pump Clips, Glasses, Brewery Trays, Enamel Signs, Pub Mirrors, and lots, lots, more. For more information contact Peter Ballantyne on 01908 260 429 or e-mail him on pete@tipples.net. Good hunting!

White Hart refurbishment

Apologies to the White Hart, South Mimms, whose write-up on their major refurbishment, completed back in March, should have been published two editions ago. The results are very pleasing. The traditional public bar remains unchanged, with improvements to the floor and decorations. The lounge has been extended by removing a partitioned office area, which gives more seating and a lighter, more open

atmosphere through the whole bar. The biggest improvement are the toilets which have been enlarged, refurbished and are now inside the pub! The Hart now has a secluded garden at the back of the pub with a panoramic view of farmland and unfortunately a small section of the M25. This is an altogether asympathetic improvement of the pub which is well worth a visit.

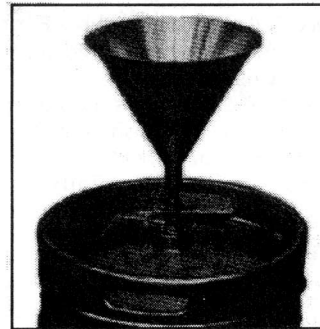
There's nothing like a Sunday lunchtime tippie

Malcolm Storey's friends decided that nothing was going to stop him having his regular Sunday lunchtime session even though he had broken his back, pelvis, arm and nose in a motorcycle accident. Five of them boldly entered the hospital and wheeled the 43-year-old scaffolder's bed past security guards at Southampton General Hospital and into a van before driving him to his local, the Stile Inn two miles away, where he enjoyed a pint or two. His disappearance sparked a police hunt after staff realised he was missing. Mr Storey was returned to hospital four hours later.

Memorial to a loyal friend

Many Hertfordshire beer drinkers may know Peter Cousins of Watford (known affectionately as Pete the Dog). With his faithful companion "Sonny" he was a regular at many local beer festivals, branch meetings and the Golden Retriever was an honorary member of CAMRA. Sadly Pete lost Sonny on 20 July after a period of failing health. The kind-hearted canine will be missed by many. Pete was at St Albans Beer Festival recently and informed "Pints of View", that although he could never replace Sonny he now has a new companion - a collie.

Just what every Publican needs



How many times have you heard people say the reason that they drink Keg, Smooth Flow or Lager is because it cannot be tampered with? Your average pub-goer knows that a cask has a hole with a peg in the top which makes it nice and easy to get a funnel the right size and return the ullage (waste beer from any source). Of course a Keg all shiny and bright has a screw threaded adapter which has a locking twist grip fitment with carbon dioxide pressure on it to send the beer to the bar - what could be safer.

It does not take any new publican long to realise that Kegs can be easily opened and when fluid is returned (it doesn't have to be beer by the way, water is equally as good) you just increase the CO2 pressure for a short while to replace the lost fizzyness.

Now ZYGO have made the job easier and are advertising the patent Keg Returner which conveniently fits into the top of the barrel and can have a filter paper fitted to remove unwanted items such as fag ends, peanuts etc.

The advertisement in the trade press states that: The new patented pressure keg returner that's safe and easy to use:

- Can you afford to be without one?
- Increase your profits
- Reduce expensive waste
- It will pay for itself within weeks
- Full money back guarantee if not satisfied

For those lager drinkers amongst you who are now feeling a little queasy you will be pleased to know that returning anything to the cask is illegal. There are of course two problems, the first is catching mine host at it, the second is that equipment like the Keg Returner is openly on sale.

ZYGO are exploiting a legal loophole, it may be against the law to return beer to the cask but not to sell the tools to do it. Automatic petrol siphon systems fall into the same category.

Whilst brewers insist that 76 - yes 76 pints can be served from a 72 pint firkin, beer will continue to be returned to the cask and short measure remain a common practice.

BEER BITS

In English pubs ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them to mind their own pints and quarts and settle down. It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's".

THE WHITE HORSE

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... DOWN YOUR WAY... DOWN YOUR WAY...

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☒ **BARNET:** The licensee of the **King William IV**, Hadley Highstone, has announced his retirement and sold the freehouse. The **Duke of Lancaster** is closed and being prepared for demolition. The **Old Mitre** now has a function room, converted from former stables. Scottish Courage has sold The **Trent Tavern**, Cockfosters to a property company. Future looks in doubt. ☒ **BUSHEY:** The **Swan** has added a fourth hand pump, selling Ansell's Mild at £1.80. ☒ **CHISWELL GREEN:** The **Three Hammers** is to become a Bass Ember Inn (see article on page 2).

☒ **COLEMAN GREEN:** The John Bunyan, a Mac's house is to have a new landlord, details please.

☒ **CROMER HYDE:** The **Crooked Chimney** should re-open in October. It is interesting to note that the pub although having the famous crooked chimney was previously named the Chequers at least up to the late sixties. Can anyone inform "Pints of View" exactly when the name changed?

☒ **HAILEY:** The **Galley Hall** now has an additional handpump. The range of beers available is Burton Ale, Adnams Bitter, Greene King IPA and Tetley Bitter.

☒ **HARPENDEN:** The **Cafe Parisa** is still advertising its non-existent Micro-brewery on the windows. This is against the Advertising Standards ruling. The **Cross Keys**, High Street, was closed by Mrs Wong, the owner, on 25 September, and it is intended to transfer the lease to Bill Ferncombe, the father of the licensee of the **Peacock**, Hatfield Road, St Albans. We hope that the variety and quality of the beers which have put the pub in the "Good Beer Guide" on many occasions will continue, and wish Bill every success. The **Oak Tree**, Leyton Green, has a new landlord who started on 12 October. He used to run the **Swan**, Markyate.

☒ **HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:** A new **Hogshead** has opened in the old Electricity Showroom in Marlowes. Local reports suggest it is more

of a cafe bar than a pub. However, the prices are reasonable and there is a good selection of Begian bottled beer.

☒ **HERTFORD:** Nigel Croft is the new licensee at the **White Horse**.

☒ **LONDON COLNEY:** The **Colney Fox** no longer sells London Pride. Bass and Tetley Bitter are still available.

☒ **REDBOURN:** The **Chequers** should re-open in October after refurbishment. The **Bull** is under new management.

☒ **ST ALBANS:** It is hoped that Barry Fitzgerald will take over the **Cricketers** in mid October. He has promised to re-introduce real ale.

☒ **STANSTEAD ABBOTTS:** The **Jolly Fisherman** re-opened 22 September.

☒ **WATFORD:** The **Old Westminster**, High Street, (Greene King), is closed for refurbishment.

Our information comes from a wide variety of sources and it is inevitable that some errors will occur. Please inform us of any mistakes and the appropriate correction, apology or retraction will be published. Ed

6th WATFORD BEER FESTIVAL

West Herts Sports Club,
Park Avenue, Watford

Friday 3rd -
Sunday 5th November

5-11pm Friday
11am - 11pm Saturday
noon - 3pm Sunday.

Over 30 beers, ciders and perry as well as five beers at the club bar.

Free entry to CAMRA members
£1 to non-members

BRANCH REPORT...

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Whether the Watford and District Branch go out to drink or to watch their team, who knows, but here's a report from Martin Few.

Huddersfield v Watford

The Glorious 12th of August saw the start of a new season of beer drinking whilst on our footballing travels. What finer pub to kick off with than former National Pub Of The Year, the Sair Inn, Linthwaite, near Huddersfield. This classic pub, home of Linfit Ales, is at the top of a very steep hill and offers splendid views across the Colne Valley. Seven ales were on offer. We followed this with a quick visit to the GBG-listed Slubbers Arms, which offered excellent Timothy Taylor's ales, so good in fact it had to be visited after the game as well.

Wimbledon v Watford

Next stop, Wimbledon, and a ride on the recently opened Croydon tram system. This aided those of us doing the Fullers passport scheme. The Royal Standard, Builders Arms, Fisherman's Arms, Goats Head were preceded by The George. More pubs were visited after the game aided by the tram.

Cheltenham v Watford

The highlight of our Cheltenham trip was the excellent Kemble Brewery Inn. A back street boozier near the town centre owned by Archers of Swindon, with guests including Donningtons SBA at a reasonable £1.65.

Portsmouth v Watford

A trip round Gale's Brewery preceded the game at Portsmouth. This Victorian tower brewery is little changed since 1869. Beers on offer in the sampling room were GB and HSB. Both were supplied before, during and after the tour which costs £25 to CAMRA branches (up to 15 people). The pit-stop on the way home was at the Sun at Bentworth. A village free house selling Ringwood Bitter and Four Harts Moondance among others.

BREWERIANA AUCTION

Watford and District CAMRA will be holding their annual auction of breweriana at the West Herts Sports Club on Wednesday 6 December, starting at 8pm. Viewing from 7pm

Beer Names Wordsearch Competition

O	S	A	R	O	D	W	E	E	T	W	O	O	D	N
R	K	R	O	Y	U	P	S	B	R	A	C	W	L	E
C	C	Y	N	K	M	L	D	U	E	R	M	B	T	W
H	I	D	T	O	P	A	S	M	K	C	I	R	P	B
A	P	I	N	V	E	R	A	L	M	O	N	D	Q	Y
R	I	T	E	R	Y	B	U	R	N	P	A	L	U	W
D	H	U	V	L	D	A	S	E	D	Y	H	U	B	Y
J	S	D	S	U	T	T	O	N	A	N	A	G	S	K
U	G	O	A	C	M	E	G	R	E	E	N	T	Y	E
D	A	R	W	I	N	M	T	O	W	V	B	O	I	L
G	L	S	Y	I	B	A	N	B	U	R	Y	N	V	T
E	F	A	V	R	A	N	C	N	D	M	K	L	P	E
S	U	H	B	F	E	N	L	A	N	D	T	N	E	K
Q	S	W	E	X	M	O	O	R	H	O	U	S	E	S
A	H	O	S	K	I	N	S	C	P	A	R	I	S	H

Find the 30 beer names:

ASHVINE, BANBURY, BATEMAN, CRANBOURNE, DARWIN, EXMOOR, FENLAND, FLAGSHIP, GREENTYE, HANBURY, HOSKINS, HYDES, INVERALMOND, JUDGES, KELTEK, KENT, LUGTON, MOORHOUSES, NEWBY WYKE, ORCHARD, PARISH, PICKS, QUAY, RYBURN, SUTTON, TUDOR, VENTNOR, WARCOP, WETWOOD, YORK

Completed entries should be sent to: Paul Ruane, 15 Turpins Close, Hertford, SG14 2EH.

The first correct entry opened on 4 December will receive a 1999 St Albans Beer Festival T Shirt.

BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

- Thurs 5 October. Abbots Langley Social. **Swan**, 8.30pm. **Compasses**, 9.30pm.
- Sat 14 October. Social at the **Land of Liberty** Beer Festival, Heronsgate.
- Thurs 19 October. Watford Social. **Red Lion**, 8.30pm. **One Crown**, 9.15pm. **Moon Under Water**, 10pm.
- Fri 3 - Sun 5 November. Watford Beer Festival. (See page 10 for advert).
- Fri 17 November. GBG Social. **Black Boy**, Bushey Heath. 8.30pm.
- Sat 18 November. Beer Festival Social at the **British Legion Club**, Bushey Mill Lane. From 7pm.
- Wed 22 November. Social at the **Sportsman**, 8.30pm.
- Sun 26 November. Committee Meeting, **West Herts Sports Club**. 8pm.

Contact Tony Smith 01923 221155.

ENFIELD & BARNET

- Tues 17 October. GBG Promo. **Old Wheatsheaf**, Windmill Hill, Enfield. 9pm.
- Tues 24 October, GBG Promo. **Hadley Hotel**, Hadley Road, Barnet. 9pm.

Contact Derek Smith 020 8805 1436

SOUTH HERTS

- Tues 17 October. Branch Meeting, **Red Lion**, Radlett, 8pm.
- Tues 14 November. Branch Meeting, **Philanthropist & Firkin**, Victoria Street, St Albans. 8pm.
- Tues 12 December. Branch Meeting. **White Horse**, Castle Street, Hertford. 8pm.

Contact John Bishop 01582 768478 (H)
020 7477 7700 (W)

MID CHILTERNES

- Tues 17 October. Amersham Old Town crawl. **Eagle** 8pm. **Elephant & Castle** 9pm.

Contact Chris Pontin 01442 834899 (H)

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS

- Mon 23 October. Branch Meeting. **Vault/Moon On The Cross**, Waltham Cross. 8pm.
- Wed 25 October. Social. The **Viper**, Inglestone.
- Wed 1 November. Social with N.W. Essex CAMRA. The **Gate**, Sawbridgeworth. 8pm
- Mon 20 November. Branch Meeting. The **Cock**, Hatfield Broad Oak.

Contact Carl West 01279 863772

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Christmas, christenings,
or just a party for the hell of
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www.TheLowerRedLion.co.uk