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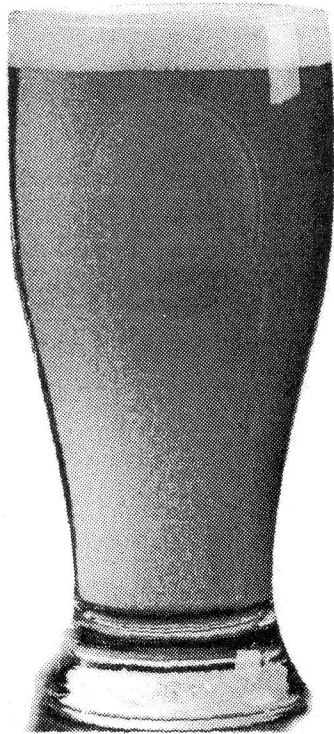
HERTFORDSHIRE'S
PINTS
OF VIEW

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

April/May 2001

Circulation 5,000

No.186



Would you accept this pint?

Find out how short measure affects you on page two

The Red Lion, Preston - a champion pub

There are nearly 1,000 pubs in Hertfordshire: many are good, a number are very good and a handful are truly outstanding. But to find the best you have to travel north past Stevenage towards Hitchin and venture down narrow hedge-lined B roads before you arrive in the small village of Preston. Here, in the centre of the village sits The Red Lion, voted CAMRA's Pub of The Year 2000 by the five branches of the Campaign in Hertfordshire.

At a presentation on 7 March the two licencees of this village-run free house, Tim and Jane Hunter, graciously accepted their award from the local North Herts branch.

"We were absolutely delighted to win," said Tim, leaning against one of his five hand-pumps in the 200-year-old property. "I was aware we had stiff opposition, but we have always striven to make everything the best we possibly could, to provide the best beer, the best food and offer the best atmosphere. It seems to have paid off."

The Hunters have been licensees in Hertfordshire for nearly 25 years but have

only been at The Red Lion for just over two years. The rest was spent at Charlton where they ran the Windmill, a perennial *Good Beer Guide* entry.

"I'd heard on the grapevine that The Red Lion was looking for a new tenant. I knew that I could never afford to live in Preston so I thought what the hell, I'd run the pub there instead," says Tim.

From just two real ales he now regularly offers four or five, all from micros and tries hard to support local breweries. "My regulars enjoy the unusual and I try to satisfy them," says Tim. As for food, the comprehensive menu would satisfy the sternest critic with many of the vegetables coming straight from the pub's own allotment in the beer garden to the rear of the pub.

One of the most astonishing things about the Red Lion is its owners - there are nearly 100 of them and the majority of them work or live in or near the village.

For the pub was purchased from Whitbread by the village in 1982 and it reopened the following year. "The driving force behind the



Tim and Jane Hunter, licensees of the Red Lion, Preston, Hertfordshire's Pub Of The Year



venture has always been to ensure the village has a heart and social focal point," says Brian Waters, a villager and shareholder. "More and more communities are losing these vital ingredients of rural life. Through its endeavours and the support of the village the pub has managed to buck the trends and maintain these advantages for the benefit of all the families in the village. However, the current success of The Red Lion is firmly in the hands of Jane and Tim Hunter. The CAMRA award is their personal achievement and means a

great deal to the shareholders and all the village."

The pub is certainly the centre of village life. An example of this is the local cricket club. "They could have put a bar in their pavilion but prefer to stroll down the lane and use us," says Tim. It's just another illustration of how the pub binds everybody together."

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

Mid Chilterns	King's 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

GOOD BEER GUIDE ENTRY 2001



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The Haunted Pubs of Harpenden

The name Harpenden is supposed to mean valley of nightingales and the town is situated either side of the road which was once the main route between St Albans and Luton. Many of the pubs date back to the sixteenth or seventeenth century or are situated on the sites of even older buildings. It is not surprising therefore that several ghost sightings have been reported.



In 1960 the relief manager in the Cross Keys awoke one night to hear voices coming from the main bar he had locked up

hours earlier, and believed that what he heard was a burglary in progress. He crept downstairs suspecting the worst - that there may be more than one intruder - and opened the door as quietly as he could, looking in through a tiny gap. The bar was in darkness except for the light from the street lamps outside which gave just enough illumination to see three figures crouched over one of the bar tables. As he opened the door wider, three heads turned in his direction, causing him to gasp in disbelief. The faces were ghostly. He could see that they had shaven heads and were wearing dark heavy robes. He realised that he was looking at three medieval monks and for a moment was still with shock, but then slammed the door, ran upstairs and locked himself in the bedroom. Unbeknown to the relief manager this was not the first sighting of the monks. Westminster Abbey had owned a guest house on the site up to the 13th century. The "Cross Keys" insignia of St Peter was taken as the main bar has two brass Crossed Keys set in the floor. Sightings of ghostly monks are not the only apparition at the pub. The Johnsons,

licensees in 1968, had several strange experiences. Firstly after closing time one Sunday afternoon they heard a noise in the bar and found that a large ash tray on the bar had started spinning for no apparent reason. Next Mrs Johnson's Bruce tartan skirt disappeared from the wardrobe. After much searching it was given up for lost but reappeared three months later in exactly the same position on the rail. The next thing to disappear almost before their eyes was a clothes brush left on the bed which appeared three days later lying in the fireplace. Probably the most intriguing occurrence at the pub was in June 1998 when the takings of £530 disappeared from a desk in the living quarters, these as yet have not reappeared.

The Silver Cup, built in the 17th century, is situated near the common and is said to be haunted by the lady in grey. In December 1985 Roy

Mills the landlord told the local Review "I don't believe in ghosts and I was stone cold sober when I left my upstairs office to go to the bedroom. There in the corridor was a lady with her hair pulled back wearing grey. She smiled at me and then walked straight through the closed door". The cottage behind the pub is also said to be haunted by a 19-year-old soldier killed in the First World War.

The Plume of Feathers, Tewin, which is a grade II listed building claims to be the most haunted pub in Hertfordshire if not the country, with no less than five ghosts, including a lady in grey no doubt an entirely different apparition to the one in the Silver Cup.



Swift Haves

The Bell Closes! what is it about Widford ?

Having printed the good news that the Green Man, High Street, Widford appears to have a secure future in the last edition we are now informed (5th March) by Graham Darby of CAMRA Herts Essex Borders branch that the Bell in Hunsdon Road closed on 28th January and it is rumoured that an application for conversion to private housing may be made. When the Green Man originally closed in 1998 it was suggested that McMullen's, the then owners, were in some way to blame. Their claim that Widford does not have the trade to sustain two pubs now seems to have a ring of truth in it. The licensees of the Bell are still living on the premises and I hope that the locals will rally round in the same way as they did to save the Green Man.

I think a fair comment in this case is that if

all the 850 people who signed the petition to save the Green Man visited it, or the Bell regularly, neither pub would have been in trouble.

White Horse name saved

The White Horse, London Road, Shenley officially re-opened on 5th March. It appears that the million pounds invested by Bass has been well spent and the much-needed alterations, improvements and refurbishment have been completed to a high standard. The bias is towards food but a good pints of Bass and Tetley Bitter are also available. In this case the campaign to save the pub name took place at exactly the right time. The press publicity (thank you *Borehamwood Times*) and the large number of letters from individuals and local organisations made the difference. We wish Alan and his team success at the White Horse.

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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.

☒ **BRAMFIELD:** The **Grandison Arms** has a new landlord.

☒ **BOVINGDON:** This village's oldest pub, **The Wheatsheaf**, has been gutted for conversion into a motel!

☒ **BOXMOOR:** The **Fishery Inn** has reopened after a major refit. No news on what beers it is selling.

☒ **BRICKET WOOD:** It appears that the **Moor Mill** (mentioned in issue 185) has been closed and converted into an **Out & Out** bar at a cost of £65,000. It was due to re open on 14 March. Some detail of the end result would be useful.

☒ **BUSHEY:** The **Stag**, 134 Merryhill Road, has been sold for redevelopment. The landlord, Mick Pratt, has become the tenant of the **Kings Head**, a Charles Wells house. The **Horse and Chains** has now become a Pizza restaurant.

☒ **BUSHEY HEATH:** The **White Hart**, 27 High Street, has been taken over by a local restaurant.

☒ **CHESHUNT:** The takeover of the Stanford Pub Company means new owners at the **Rose & Crown**, Turners Hill.

☒ **DIGSWELL:** The **Cowper Arms**, Station Road, was closed for much of February for major refurbishment.

☒ **GOFFS OAK:** The **Prince of Wales** has reopened. More information please.

☒ **HERTFORD:** The **Hooden Horse**, previously the **Reindeer** has been sold as a free-house and become the **Rockin' Horse** with rocking horses on the pub sign. **Shamus O'Donnells**, like its counterpart in Potters Bar, has become **Shamus O'Butchers**. Why? (Needless to say neither sells real ale).

☒ **HIGH WYCH:** Congratulations to the **Rising Sun** (aka Sid's) which has won Herts Essex Borders Pub of the Year.

☒ **POTTERS BAR:** **Shamus O'Donnells** has become **Shamus O'Butcher's** - Does anyone know why? - does anyone care? Remember when it was the **Artful Dodger** serving real ale and being entered in the *Good Beer Guide*? How sadly things have changed.

☒ **REDBOURN:** the **Saracens Head** has reopened.

☒ **SAWBRIDGEWORTH:** **Allens Green** An application has been made to East Herts District Council to restore part of the **Queens Head** as a pub and convert the rest of the building into two self-contained dwellings. The pub has been closed for quite some time and a previous application to convert the whole building to housing was withdrawn.

☒ **ST ALBANS:** The **Cock** has new licensees from New Zealand, We are informed that there has not been a chef appointed so no food for six weeks. The **Blacksmiths Arms** opposite has been reaping the benefits. The **Blue Anchor**, Fishpool Street, a McMullens pub, has new management. The **Fighting Cocks** will be closed for six to eight weeks from 15th March for refurbishment. The **White Hart Tap** has twinned with the **No Limit** bar in Belgrade. This has apparently been a great success and has got them a lot of local publicity. Could they become the first of many? The **Spotted Bull**, Verulam Road, has the City's youngest licensee, 21-year-old Jessica Stewart, who took over the pub when Tom Dohney, the previous manager, disappeared in November and is now on the missing persons list. Jessica hopes eventually to get the full licence for the pub.

☒ **STEVENAGE:** The new Plaza complex by the bus station has four new pubs. Real Ale at **Wetherspoons** and the **Hogshead**; **Yates Wine Lodge** and **McCluskeys** are fizz only. The **March Hare** is real again selling

DOWN YOUR WAY...

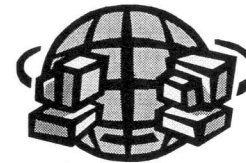
London Pride. Poplars Farm **Harvester**, formally the **Cooper's Apprentice** has been renamed the **Cooper's Inn** and is real again selling Bass and London Pride.

☒ **WARE:** Planning permission for a major refurbishment of **The Brewery Tap**, Ware is being considered by East Herts DC. A 12-hour darts marathon at the **Jolly Bargeman** raised £1,400 for charity.

☒ **WATFORD:** The **Ice-o-Bar** in the High Street has been closed since November and will become the first southern member of Wetherspoons, Lloyds No1 chain (ten Ice-O-Bars have been bought from Wolverhampton & Dudley) and is due to open in May. **Café Maximo** also in the High Street is no longer selling real ale. The **New Victoria** previously the **Tantivy** is due to close.

☒ **WIDFORD:** The Bell is closed. See page9.

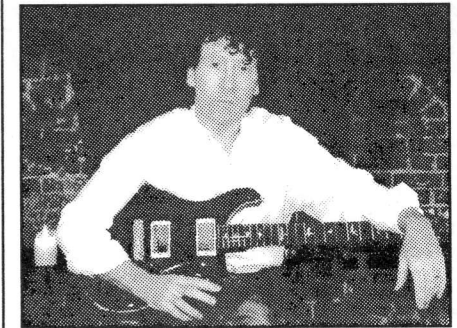
☒ **WINKWELL:** Congratulations to the **Maidens Head**, which has won CAMRA North Herts Branch Pub of the Year.



South Herts CAMRA

www.hertsale.org.uk

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BRANCH DIARY cont.

HERTS LIAISON MEETING
Tues 15 May.
Prince of Wales, Green Tye. 8pm.

SOUTH HERTS

- Tues 10 April. Joint Pub Of The Year presentation. Woodman, Wildhill. 8pm.
 - Tues 17 April. Branch Meeting, White Lion, St Albans. 8pm.
 - Tues 24 April. Joint Pub Of The Year presentation. Old Cross, Hertford. 8pm.
 - Tues 22 May. Branch Meeting. Crooked Billet, Ware. (To be confirmed).
- Contact: John Bishop (H) 01582 768478 (W) 020 7477 7700**

HERTS ESSEX BORDERS

- Mon 9 April. Branch Meeting, Prince of Wales, Green Tye. 8.30pm.
 - Mon 21 May. Branch Meeting, Black Horse, White Roding. 8.30pm.
- Contact Carl West 01279 863772 (H) or e-mail camra@carlwest.ntlworld.com**

MID CHILTERNES

- Mon 2 April. Berko Social. Crown 8pm, Goat 9pm, Lamb 10pm.
- Sat 29 April. Branch AGM (prov). Royal

Oak, Chipperfield. 7pm.
Contact: Chris Pontin (H) 01442 834899

NORTH HERTS

Contact: Sid Marvell 01438 311270 (H)

ENFIELD & BARNET

- Tues 3 April. Branch Social. The George, Enfield. 9pm.
Wed 11 April. Social. Sebright Arms, Barnet, 9pm; White Lion, Barnet, 10pm.
Wed 18 April. Social. The Wonder, Gordon Hill, Enfield. 9pm.
Mon 23 April. St George's Day Social. Railway Bell, New Barnet. 9pm.
Thurs 3 May. Social. King's Head, Winchmore Hill. 9pm.
Wed 9 May. Social. Robin Hood, Enfield. 9pm.
Tues 15 May. Social. Black Bull. Whetstone. 9pm.
Sat 19 May. Brewery Visit, Greene King. Contact Tony Roberts 0208 482 9673
Tues 22 May. Social. Stag, Enfield. 9pm.
Contact: Mark Shepherd (H) 020 8441 (W) 0174 020 7712 2081

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Contact: Tony Smith 01923 221155

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