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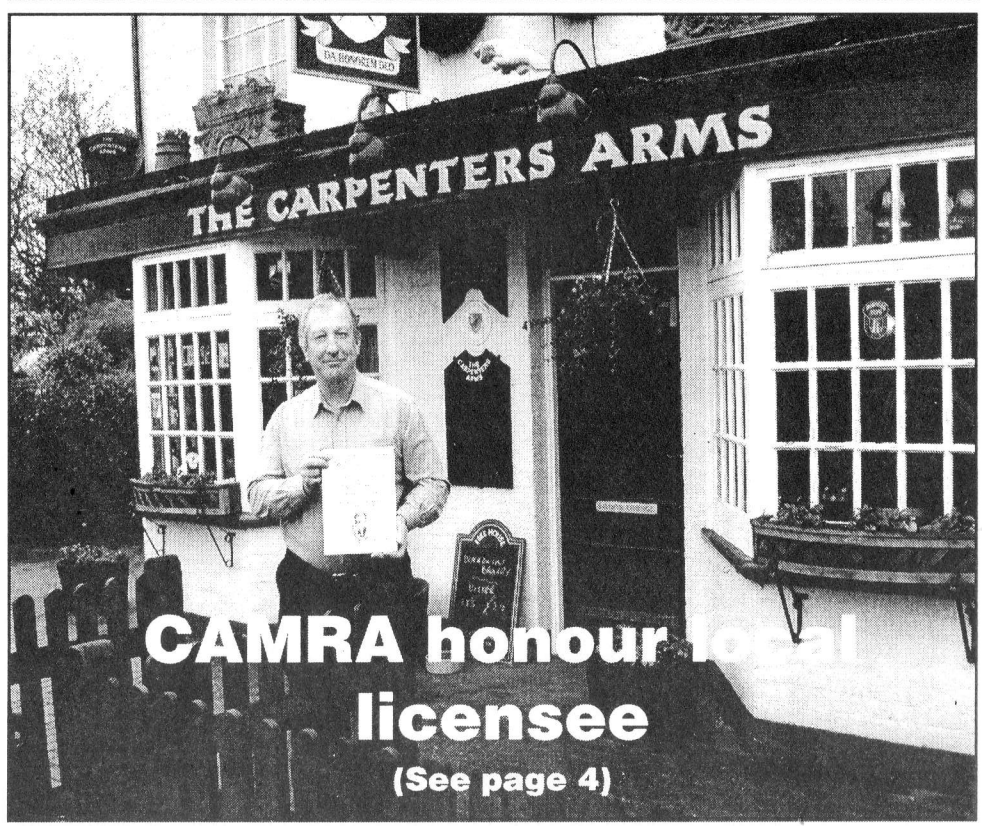
HERTFORDSHIRE'S PINTS OF VIEW

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

Feb/March 2002

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No.191



**CAMRA honour local
licensee**
(See page 4)

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McMullen and Gladstone - an alternative view

Our lead article in "Pints of View" 189 covered the demise of McMullen's Gladstone, the 4.3% real ale that was discontinued by the brewers in October last year. I have received correspondence from Roger Protz, Chair of the Guild of Beer Writers and Editor of the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* who is concerned about the content of my piece. Unfortunately this could not be printed in edition 190 and some quotes from his letter follow.

"We should use CAMRA publications to write articles extolling the beers produced by the regionals, and feature their beers prominently at beer festivals. Unless we act, the regionals will wither on the hop bine and we shall be the poorer with their passing. It doesn't mean we should fail to criticise the regionals when we believe they make errors — CAMRA, after all, is a beer consumers' movement independent of "the beerge" — but criticism must be constructive and not destructive.

As *Pints Of View* claims a readership of 5,000 for each issue, you might expect the editor to devote most of his space to positive news about brewers and beers in the region covered by his newsletter. The attack on the only large commercial brewing company in Hertfordshire not only weakens McMullen but suggests that CAMRA is hostile to independent brewers.

What Steve Bury did not say was that

Gladstone will continue to be brewed as part of the McMullen Special Reserve range of seasonal beers, but like Steve, I regret that Gladstone is no longer to be brewed on a regular basis.

McMullen tell me that Gladstone was introduced as a smoother, less bitter and more floral beer in a bid to attract new drinkers moving from lager who did not relish the traditional bitterness of cask ales. I think it was a marketing error on the brewery's part to give Gladstone the same rating of 4.3% as Country. It confused drinkers and gave rise to an understandable concern for the future of Country. If Gladstone had slotted in at 3.9% or 4% between AK and Country, it might have had a better chance of success. Instead of "Long live Country", the slogan should be "Long live McMullen". Let's stop sniping and throw all our support behind Britain's beleaguered regional breweries."

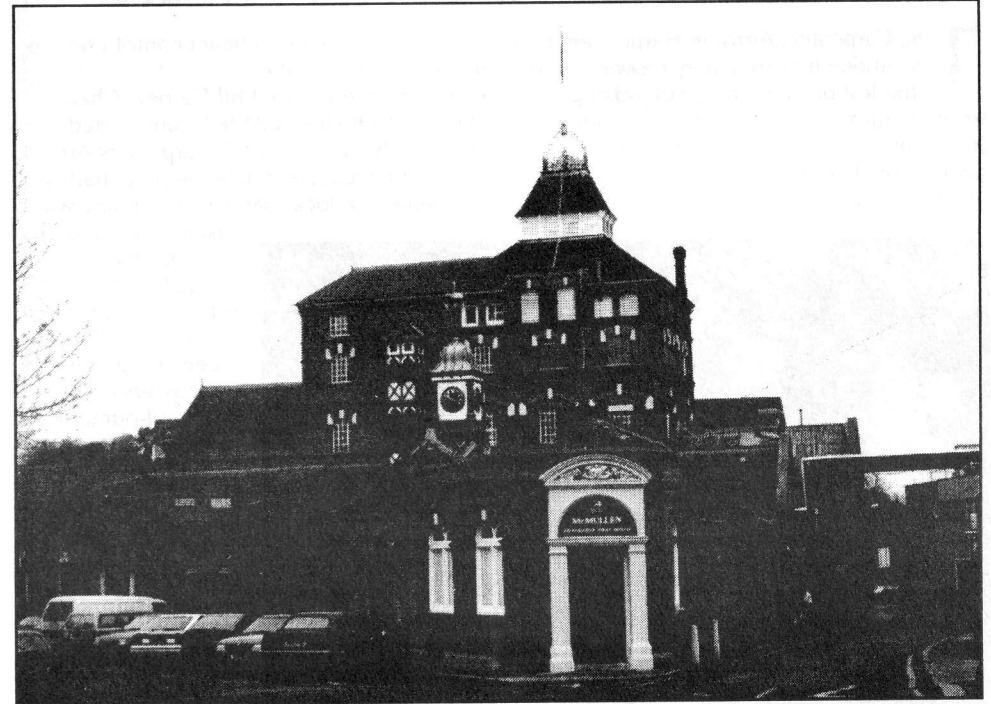
The Editor comments:-

I thank Roger for his letter but feel he is too ready to support McMullen. He also seems to be in agreement with a lot of the comments I made in the original article namely that it was not a good idea to launch a new beer at the same gravity as the long established and respected Country Bitter. It should also be noted that Mac's have discontinued Gladstone to replace it with a Nitro Keg called "Mac's Smooth" which even Roger

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McMullen's stately Hartham Brewery, Hertford

must admit is a retrograde step and makes no business sense (more on this later).

It's not cool to drink Smooth

It was rumoured that naturally conditioned beers from either Wadworth or Gale might replace Gladstone - this has proved not to be the case. Against all the market trends and traditional ideals McMullen's have now come up with a replacement - an uninspiring Nitro Keg at 3.7% called Mac's Smooth. McMullen made one of the largest investments in the company's history when they built a new Brewhouse and introduced Hartsman Lager in the 1980's. All the market trends and other independent brewers were discontinuing brewing their own branded Lagers at this time and lager drinkers shunned Hartsman. Mac's had to buy in Fosters to regain some credibility and get lager drinkers back into their pubs. My prediction is that Mac's Smooth is Hartsman

II and is destined for a short life. CAMRA has no formal liaison with Mac's but we have received the publicity leaflet for the launch of Smooth. It starts out by saying that their research has convinced them that their Black Font and smooth beer is a winner. I sometimes wonder who they ask and how large is the market sample? McMullen have chosen ten of their more popular pubs for the launch of the new beer with its "Cool to be Smooth" black "T" shirts for staff (poor sods) and a poster and drip mat campaign. The beer will be served through garish large black illuminated fonts so you will have no trouble avoiding it. Like Roger Protz I support McMullen's who now produce two excellent real ales, AK, Country Bitter and their seasonal Special Reserves. I can only be worried when they discontinue a Real Ale and replace it with a keg beer.

Steve Bury, Editor

The White Swan and the other pubs of Widford

Points of View received an e-mail recently from Patrick Hannafin who, whilst tracing his ancestors, found that Arthur Ollett was the licensee of the White Swan in Widford in 1881. He was trying to find additional information as to where the pub was and whether the building is still standing. As readers may know there is only one pub in Widford still open, the Green Man; The Bell closed in January this year. The first point of call when researching closed pubs is the Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies Library in County Hall, Hertford, which I can recommend for helpful staff and a wealth of local reference books and documents. *Kelly's Directory* lists all the business and residential premises in Hertfordshire and although the library

doesn't have a copy of every year's editions you can trace pubs quite easily. To my surprise there used to be five pubs in Widford, the Bell, the Green Man, Royal Oak, Victoria and White Swan.

So what happened to all the pubs?

As far as we could find the White Swan was situated opposite the Bell on the corner of Bell Lane and Hunsdon Road. Sadly the Bell is closed and boarded up, the Inn has been on the site since 1560 and it is almost certain that a Channel Island property developer will convert the pub and build seven new dwellings on the site. The White Swan built in 1712 was trading as a pub in 1852 and converted into a house at some time in the 1950's. The research also shows the White Swan open in 1937, but the pub had ceased to trade by 1962 when Branch Johnson was published. For those of you who do not know, Branch Johnson was a local farmer who wrote an inventory of all the pubs in the Hertford and Ware area. His book contains some very useful information. Although there were two pubs listed in the 1880's there were also two other beer retailers whose premises were not named in the guide. The White Swan like many of the businesses in Widford changed hands regularly and in 1882 was run by a Charles Kimmer. Four licensees later in 1898 Thomas Manfield was also running a butcher's shop from the premises. In 1906 another Thomas, Thomas Hatton, owned the pub and fishmonger's business on the site. On further investigation using the Ware division Register of Alehouse licences I found that the licence for the Swan was surrendered 2 May 1958 when the licensee



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Left: The Bell, Widford (2001).

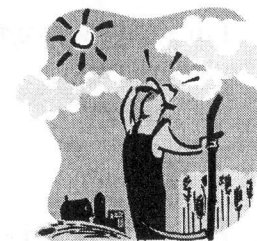
Opposite left: White Swan, Widford (2001)

Below right: Royal Oak, Widford (2001)

Robert Samson who had only been at the pub just over a year moved to the Jolly Brewers, Bishop's Stortford. As is the way with this research answering one question only raises another. When did the pub's name change from the White Swan to the Swan? Records tell us that it happened between 1937 & 1945 but it's not clear why. The Royal Oak on the corner of Ware Road, Hunsdon Road and the High Street closed in 1922 and had the Post Office beside it in a single storey extension which one must assume carried on long after the pub's closure. Many pubs closed after the First World War and not all of them due to a lack of trade. A determined effort was made by the local authorities to improve licensed premises - many were so archaic that they closed rather than make the necessary improvements, many others which would today be considered little gems were given grants, demolished and rebuilt. The Victoria, opposite the cricket ground in



Ware Road, closed in 1960 and still stands as a private dwelling. The Green Man, Widford's last remaining pub, has planning permission pending to convert part of the premises into private dwellings and to add an extension to the rear of the pub. At the present time this has not been granted; the case continues.



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Roger Protz

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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

☐ **AMWELL:** The **Elephant & Castle** is now selling Greene King XX Mild on a permanent basis.

☐ **BRICKET WOOD:** The **Gate** pub is still closed. A lot of rumours are circulating surrounding the previous licensee. Might the local undertaker be the next landlord?

☐ **CHAPMORE END:** We welcome Danny and Alex, the new licensees at the **Woodman** and are pleased that all the Greene King beers are still being served by gravity.

☐ **COLNEY STREET:** The **Black Horse** is still closed and we are having difficulty finding out who the new owner is or the future plans for the pub.

☐ **PATCHETTS GREEN:** We would like to welcome Rene, the new licensee at the **Three Compasses**. The pub is due for a refurb in the spring and will be running a pub quiz on Wednesdays a Karaoke on Thursdays and live music Saturdays. It is also hoped that the range of real ales will be extended.

☐ **HARPENDEN:** We have received a report that the **George** has discontinued selling real ale. Colin and Mary Cassidy are leaving The Silver Cup.

☐ **HERTFORD:** It seems likely that Wetherspoon's long-awaited venture into Hertford will be called **The Last Witch**, presumably after Jane Wenham, the last witch brought to Herford Assizes in those days of yore. The **Three Tuns** in St Andrew Street is currently closed and the local press is running a competition to re-name the pub. The **Two Brewers** in Port Vale has a new licensee.

☐ **PRESTON:** We wish the **Red Lion** "CAMRA Hertfordshire Pub of the Year" the best of luck as it has reached the finals of the *Morning Advertiser* "Pub and Industry Award 2002". The result will be announced on 7 February.

☐ **SHENLEY:** The **William IV** changed landlords in early January. Tim Shaw who has been at the pub since August 1999 has emigrated to Australia.

☐ **ST ALBANS:** **Barney's Bar**, previously the O'Neill's in London Road has opened. No real ale is being served. The **King Harry** is closed and being converted into a Vintage Inn. Renovations haven't been helped by a vehicle ploughing into the pub off the roundabout.

☐ **WARE:** The **Saracens Head**. McMullen's large riverside pub has been refurbished and has met with general approval from Ware's active CAMRA members.

☐ **WATFORD:** Following a revamp, the Firkin pub by Watford Junction station is now called the **Flag**, selling London Pride and Bass. The **Southern Cross**, Langley Road, is selling Courage Best alongside a guest beer. Fullers have sold the **Broadwalk** in The Parade. It is now the **Pane and Table** and the handpumps have been removed. Also in The Parade, the **Hogwash** is now the **Bar Me**. Again no handpumps. Further down The Parade **Yates** have put their handpumps back and are dispensing Tetley Bitter. The **Lloyds No 1** in The Parade has been selling Landlord at £1.29 a pint, undercutting even their sister Wetherspoon's outlet a few hundred metres away.

☐ **WELWYN:** The **Red Lion**, Digswell Hill, will finally re-open during March, after being closed for several months. It will be another Vintage Inn.

Get well soon John

One person missing from Watford CAMRA's recent central London pub crawl was branch stalwart John Hurrell. John, who has planned a number of the branch's previous crawls around the City, is currently seriously ill in hospital, and along with all his friends, we would like to wish him a speedy recovery.

Wordsearch 191 Brewery Names

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

Brewery Names: ASHVINE, BRAGDY YNYS MON, BARNESLEY, BATH, CHALK HILL, CHILTERN, DEVON, DURHAM, EVESHAM, FENLAND, FYFE, GREEN TYE, GUERNSEY, HAMPSHIRE, INVERALMOND, JERSEY, KELTEK, LIVERPOOL, MILTON, NORTHUMBERLAND, OAK HILL, POOLE, REDRUTH, ST AUSTELL, SELBY, TRING, ULEY, VENTNOR, WYCHWOOD, YORK.

Completed entries should be sent to Paul Ruane, 15 Turpins Close, Hertford, Herts, SG14 2EH. The first correct entry opened on 4th April will receive a Hertfordshire Guide To Real Ale.

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BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

■ Thurs 7 February. Social. **Essex Arms** 8.30pm; **Horns** 9.30pm. **Moon Under Water** 10pm.

■ Tues 12 February. **Royal Oak** (Watford Heath) 8.30pm; **Villiers Arms** 9.30pm; **Railway Arms** 10pm.

■ Fri 22 February. Abbots Crawl. **Swan** 8pm; **Compasses** 8.30pm; **Royal Oak** 9pm; **Boys Home** 10pm.

■ Fri 1 March. "Pub Of The Year Award". **Swan**, Bushey, 8.30pm.

■ Tues 12 March. **Estcourt Tavern** 8.30pm; **Wellington** 9pm; **Estcourt Arms** 9.30pm.

■ Wed 20 March. Joint Social with West Middx CAMRA. **Man In The Moon**, Stanmore 8pm; **Malthouse** 9.30pm.

■ Thurs 28 March. Branch AGM. **Estcourt Arms** 8.30pm.

Contact: **Martin Few 01923 252412**

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS

■ Mon 18 February. Branch Meeting, **Sid's**,

(Rising Sun) High Wych. 8pm.

■ Mon 18 March. Branch Meeting. **The Cock**, Hatfield Broad Oak. 8pm.

■ Mon 8 April. **The Vaults and The Moon On The Cross**, Waltham Cross. 8pm.

Contact: **Derek Wisdom 01279 414200**

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

■ Tues 12 February. Branch Meeting. **Cat & Fiddle**, Radlett. 8pm.

■ Sat 9 February. Branch trip to Derby.

■ Tues 19 February. GBG Survey. Radlett & Southern area.

■ Tues 5 March. GBG Survey. Potters Bar and environs.

■ Tues 12 March. GBG Selection meeting and Pub Of The Year selection. CAMRA HQ, 8pm.

■ Tues 19 March. Branch Meeting, **White Horse**, Hertford. 8pm

■ Tues 23 April. Branch Meeting. Either **Cross Keys/Elephant & Castle**. TBC. 8pm.

Contact **John Bishop (H) 01582 768479**

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