

**FREE**

HERTFORDSHIRE'S

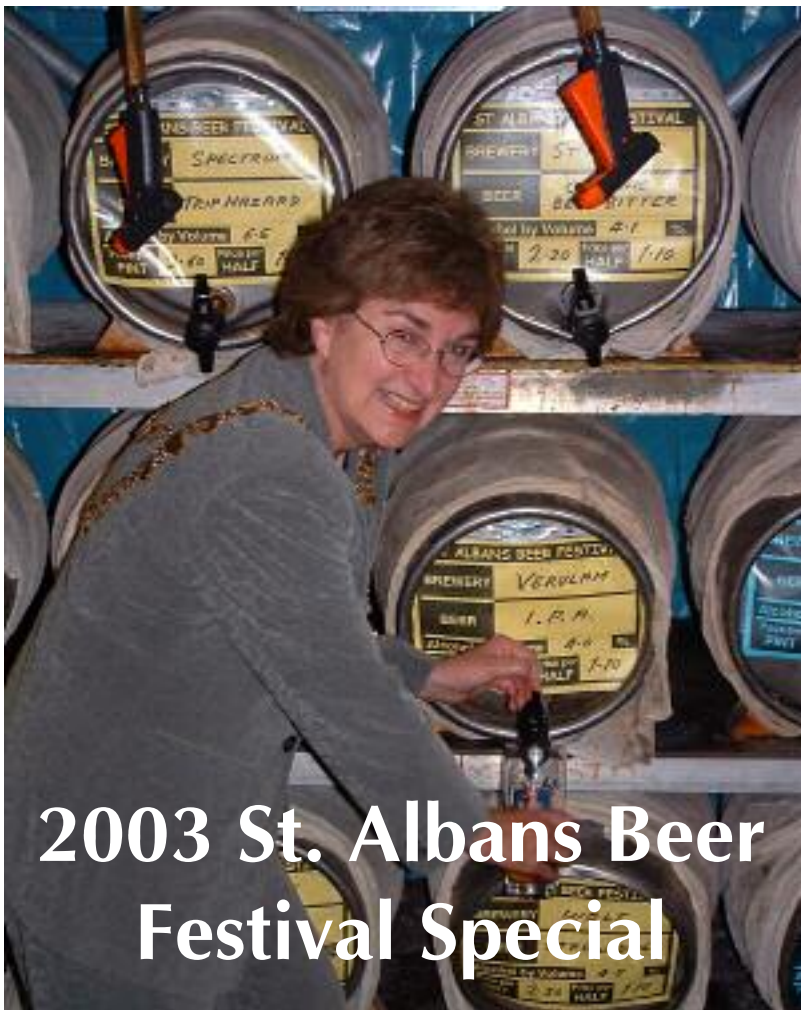
# Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

October/November 2003

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**2003 St. Albans Beer  
Festival Special**

# THE BITTER END

## Family Real Ale drinking under threat of Extinction

**C**AMRA is in favour of sensible drinking and pubs catering for all age groups. It is important that as well as your friendly back street locals there is a variety of pubs and bars that provide food and entertainment. CAMRA campaigns for choice and does not oppose the more up-market eateries if they provide a reasonable choice of drinks, including real ale, and an area dedicated to those who do not wish to partake of the culinary delights on offer.

We all know that there has been a major change to the larger pubs on the outskirts of towns and residential areas. Most have been converted to branded chain pub restaurants such as Harvester, Out & Out, Vintage Inns and the infamous Grill Bar and Jim Thompson's.

If you wish to take out your family, with very few exceptions the only place you will be welcome during inclement weather with young children is one of the above. So what do they provide? Alarmingly we are

receiving continual reports of real ales being discontinued completely by pub restaurant chains. Those that do serve real ale often do so almost under sufferance and do not offer a reasonable range or good choice of beers. It is as if the drink, which is often much more expensive than in other outlets, is secondary. So how do you enjoy a pint yourself and introduce your children to sensible drinking and the unique pub atmosphere in



The Grill Bar prior to demolition

large areas of the county? You can't. It is not acceptable to say that the lack of demand or turnover is the problem; well kept real ale would sell, however it appears that the owners' view is that there is much less bother and more profit in a bottle of Chardonnay.

The conversion, often at great expense, into themed eateries does not guarantee success and we have seen recently converted pubs closed, demolished and converted to housing at regular intervals. Gone is the Leather Bottle Edgware Road, converted to Jim Thompson's Thai

# THE BITTER END

Restaurant and now flats. The **Grill Bar** on London Road St Albans has had demolition started without proper Council permission, with a plan to build 44 flats on the site. The developers Weston Homes who started work in the second week of September have been condemned by Mike Higham, local resident and CAMRA member. Mike said the consequences for the area will be far reaching; there are 17 protected trees on the site and the parking needed and increased levels of traffic at this busy junction are very worrying. A plan incorporating a pub as part of the new development has been suggested which would seem a sensible if not so lucrative a compromise. In October 2002 Fairview Homes demolished the Plough, Turkey Street Enfield the day before it was to be assessed by English Heritage - the fine was a miserable £5,000.

The Campaign is concerned that the recently converted **King William IV** (now another Jim Thompson's) on the St Albans Ring Road may be the next victim. At present it does sell Courage Best on handpump but trade is not meeting expectations. The sites are worth a fortune to unscrupulous developers and unless the councils are willing to act to protect what are viable pubs, the loss to the local communities will be immense and permanent.

Jennie & Nathan  
welcome you to one of St Albans'  
friendliest pubs



## The Mermaid

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*Always three regular real ales  
and two guests*

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## Old Cross Tavern



**Real Ale Free House**

*"The way pubs used to be"*

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*Food available lunchtimes  
Monday-Saturday*

SOUTH HERTS PUB OF THE YEAR  
1999 & 2000

## OSSETT FOR SORE EYES

*Andrew Vaughan from CAMRA's Watford & District branch takes a trip to Ossett Brewery in Wakefield in West Yorkshire*

Six a.m. isn't the earliest I've had to get up to go on a brewery trip but it's still not easy, especially when you've had absolutely no sleep. I'd been organising Watford and District branch's trip to West Yorkshire for a few months. We were heading up Wakefield way on July 26<sup>th</sup> to present Ossett Brewery with our 2002 Beer Festival Runners-up

prize for Silver King. It was the first time I'd had to organise such an outing and it was a pretty popular one, with fifteen or so people signing up. Luckily tiredness evaporated soon after my wife (and

branch Chair) Rachel and I arrived at King's Cross station for the ten past eight train.

The train was due into Wakefield with plenty of time to spare before the bus arrived to take us to the brewery. The train was late but that only meant we spent less time hanging around. To anyone thinking of heading down to Ossett Brewery, which is actually in Healey, the 121 Bus stops outside Wakefield station

and will take you right to the brewery.

It was pretty quiet in Healey when we arrived. It's a semi-industrial, semi-rural area near to railway sidings and the canal. There are a few factories and warehouses and a single pub, the Brewer's Pride, which is in the GGB under Healey. After a few seconds trying to find the brewery we located

it behind the pub. Brewer Paul Spencer, who immediately offered up pints of Ossett's recent brews Pale Gold and Silver Link, greeted our party. Some of us wondered whether the

latter beer had been named in honour of a certain train company who operate services through Watford. Apparently not.

Paul gave us a tour of the brewery during which I thought I spotted the Holy Grail sitting on top of the mash tun. It turned out to be Ossett Excelsior's award for winning the Champion Beer at the SIBA National Beer Competition in Southport. This is just as good.



*Ex-Chair Martin Few presents brewer Paul Spencer with Watford branch's prize for Silver*

Ossett have begun exporting their Old Gurners beer to Japan in bottled form. Treasurer Bill Austin bought a couple of the specially labelled bottles and quietly slipped them into his bag. I think I know his game. Anyone reading this who collects unusual or rare bottled beers should head to our Breweriana auction in Watford in December to see if they turn up. Of course you could go to Japan and buy them there. The award was presented by ex-chair Martin Few, after which we headed

into the Brewer's Pride pub while Paul got ready to entertain members of Barnsley branch. The

Brewer's Pride pub, despite its proximity to the brewery, has no formal connection with Ossett. They always have plenty of their beers on, though. I supped a pint of Falstaff with my Cumberland-Sausage-filled Yorkshire Pud. You can't beat good pub grub. The food and beer in this alehouse can't be recommended enough. I could have stayed there all afternoon and some members of our party nearly did. Barnsley branch had the same idea as us and hit the pub before and after their tour. Paul turned up later on after his busy early

afternoon. Nice place for a drink after work, the jammy beggar. After the Brewer's Pride the party split up with people going back into Wakefield at different times. Rachel and I enjoyed the sun in Healey (it was a lovely day) before heading back to visit the Wakefield Labour Club. Also known as the Red Shed, it's CAMRA Club of the Year, justifiably renowned and very red. Denis Calnan, our Membership Secretary, struck up a conversation with a genial Irishman who turned



out to be from the same part of Cork. Singing ensued. This happens a lot to the Irish, apparently. Members of the

branch managed to visit most, if not all, of the GBG listed pubs in Wakefield. Our calls included the Fernandes Brewery Tap, where heads started to nod, and Harry's Bar. I polished off a pint of Ossett's Silver King while waiting for everyone to find the place. Sadly I missed out on some marvellously malty Clark's beer at Henry Boon's.

We made the five to six train back to King's Cross, finally getting back into Watford at about ten past ten. It was a tiring day for me but a lot of fun.

*Andrew Vaughan*

## **CAMRA LAUNCHES** **NEW GOOD BEER** **GUIDE**

Launched Tuesday 23rd September 2003 and on sale at the St Albans Beer Festival on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Roger Protz, the editor and an Albanian, visited the festival and signed copies for customers.

The 31<sup>st</sup> guide has almost 900 new entries from across Britain. The best-selling guide highlights the top 4,500 real ale pubs in Britain and offers a unique directory to every brewery in the country, large or small, with details of all the cask-conditioned and bottle-conditioned beers they brew, together with tasting notes. Each pub entry, surveyed on a regular basis throughout the year by CAMRA members, gives a detailed summary of why the pub has been included in the Good Beer Guide and highlights information on the pub's facilities for families and the disabled, history, architecture, food, accommodation, local places of interest and, of course, the beer!

Roger Protz, Editor of the Good Beer Guide said, "CAMRA members have spent an enormous amount of time carefully selecting the final 4,500 pub entries and, unlike some other pub guides, there is no charge for entry into the Good Beer Guide. These elite pubs are selected by the real pub goer!"



### **THE GARIBALDI**

61 Albert Street, St Albans  
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(Newly refurbished and under new management)

Now offering a selection of six different cask ales

Open all day, every day

Thai food served  
Thurs, Fri, Sat evenings 6.30-10pm

### GOOD BEER GUIDE ENTRY 2004



### The **ELEPHANT & CASTLE**

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### QUALITY FOOD

Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale  
& two rotating Guest Beers

## Burnham Green's Headless Horses

**T**he White Horse was used as an emblem on the ancient Danish battle flag and the White Horse at Burnham Green may have been named in memory of the battle between the Danes and local Saxons which took place nearby in 1002. The Danes were soundly beaten and the fighting led to carnage during which many men and horses died. The area is now said to be haunted by phantom headless white horses. The sunken lane, which leads to Old Welwyn village, is a particular haunt of the phantom beasts and it is said by riders that horses are often uncomfortable there. The White Horse pub had an extensive fire (not marauding Danes or Saxons this time) and was closed for a long period awaiting repair. The pub finally reopened in February and our reporter says that the restoration has been a success although the thatch has gone, presumably for insurance reasons. The Duck, Burnham Green remains closed. It was reported that attempts were being made to get permission to convert it to private dwellings, against the wishes of local residents. Any information on this would be gratefully received.

## The Blind Fiddler at Ansty

**I**n the 17<sup>th</sup> century the fiddlers of Ansty were famed far and wide and blind George who used to frequent the Chequers was considered the best player, but he became famous for the strangest of reasons. One night in the pub the talk turned to the Devil's Hole - an awesome local cave said to have formed an underground passage into Ansty Castle. The locals spoke of mysterious happenings and agreed that anyone who entered the cave would not come out alive. Blind George ridiculed the story as a fairy tale and said he would explore the cave there and then. He marched from the pub merrily playing his fiddle. The surprised customers rushed after him across the fields but could for some reason not keep up. He could be heard playing in the distance as he entered the hole but suddenly the music stopped, followed by an awful screech and deathly silence. They rushed to the entrance to find George's loyal dog whose every hair had been singed off. George did not reappear and when all hope was lost the villagers filled the cave entrance with rubble. It has stayed sealed to this day. The Chequers claims to be haunted though it is not clear whether this is by blind George, or by an American airman from the Second World War.

## The Pubs of St. Albans and the Civil War

St. Albans was staunchly Parliamentary throughout the English Civil War and was used by the Earl of Essex to garrison the army. The Abbey Church became the parliamentary Headquarters and later in the conflict was used by Lord Fairfax and the New Model Army. There is no doubt that Oliver Cromwell visited the City on several occasions. The best recorded was in 1643 when as a Captain leading a troop of horse he discovered Thomas Coningsby, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, trying to recruit for the King in the Market Square. Cromwell dismounted his troopers outside the Old Crossed Keys, then situated at the top of Holywell Hill and proceeded to make arrests. Coningsby in an attempt to escape entered the Red Lion Inn (later known as the Red Lion Hotel) which was on the corner of French Row by the Clocktower, next door to the Fleur De Lys (the Red Lion closed in the late 70's). The ruse didn't work and he was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he later died. The Fighting Cocks claims that Oliver Cromwell stayed there. It is a fact that Cromwell drank ale and stayed in pubs and inns, and although the claim is supported by several books it is unlikely, as at the time the pub was still a small roundhouse originally used for storing boats and fishing

equipment by the monks, with a stable added at the rear. Cromwell was a lifelong friend of Alban Cox, the Colonel in charge of horses in the New Model Army, and who lived in Beaumonts, a large house situated near the Cherry Tree pub in Hatfield Road and who would have willingly provided him with much more suitable free accommodation.

*Information thanks to the Sealed Knot (the English Civil War re-enactment Society) Ed.*

## Nice work if you could get it

A recent trip to Stratford on Avon revealed that the "Bard" Will Shakespeare came from well off upper middle class stock. His father John being a glove maker and wool trader also held the civic post of Ale Taster from 1552, the job description "to ensure that no tippler (Tavern Keeper) do from henceforth sell stale ale by any measure as appointed by the belly (bailiff) under the pain of a 20 shilling fine". The fine was punitive for the average skilled worker earning 2 shillings a week. Another part of the job was to check ale measures and other items including loaves of bread were the full weight. Considering the condition of some of the beer served today it might be prudent to re-introduce the post, the fine would be £3000 taking inflation into account.



# Special Brewing Brain Teaser Wordsearch

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

Completed entries should be sent to:  
**Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.**

The first correct entry opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003 will receive a copy of the "Good Beer Guide 2004 Edition".

**There are thirty-five words in the grid. Below are the first letters of each word and the number of letters in the word. For example:- Beer Types A (3) = ALE**

## Now find:-

**Four Beer Types A(3), B(4), M(4), P(6), S(5).**

**Eight Cask Sizes B(6-3), B(6), F(6), H(8), K(3), K(9), P(3), T(3).**

**Three Jobs B(6), C(6), D(7).**

**Four Brewing Ingredients B(6), H(4), L(6), Y(5).**

**Seven Types of Hop B(8-5), C(10), F(5-4), F(6), G(7), M(5-5), N(9).**

**Nine Items to do with Casks B(4), C(5), G(4), H(4), S(5), S(5), S(5), S(8), T(3).**

## WORDSEARCH COMPETITION WINNERS

197 Thermionic Pete, St Albans

198 D.Judd, Bengoe

199 N.Mepham, Luton

**Winners of and the solution to our prize crossword in issue 200 will feature in our next Newsletter.**

The competition in edition 199 had three pubs listed that were not in the grid ANGEL, FEATHERS and GREYHOUND. The GLOBE was in the grid but not listed and the JOLLY BARGEMEN should have read JOLLY BARGEMAN. So special congratulations go to the June/July winner.

## Cask Marque Update

For those of you who do not know, Cask Marque is a private organisation that promotes quality Real Ale by doing point of service checks (at the Bar) and makes recommendations on improvements to the brewers/pub owners. You may see silver and blue plaques depicting a handpump on the outside and diplomas displayed on the inside of pubs in the scheme. This is not free of charge and Cask Marque sponsor the CAMRA Good Beer Guide from the proceeds. CAMRA is in agreement with the general aim of the organisation, which is to improve the quality of Real Ale in pubs, though it does have reservations about some of the standards they set, e.g. beer temperature and dispense issues such as cask breather.

Recent surveys carried out by Cask Marque in the 2,400 pubs they have accredited have shown that 80% recorded an increase in trade. 86% said that customers knew about the scheme (*I must say this does surprise me - Ed*). They have now produced a training video called "Satisfaction Guaranteed" to introduce new pub staff to real ale, something which must be applauded, as a lot of bad beer served to customers is due to lack of knowledge by barpersons about what they are selling.

### **LOWER RED LION**



36 Fishpool Street,  
St. Albans AL3 4RX  
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*17<sup>th</sup> Century Coaching Inn  
in the shadow of St. Albans Abbey  
Genuine free house with  
real ales and accommodation*

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**Nine real ales**  
**7 ever-changing guests**  
**Belgian and Czech on draught**  
**Belgian bottled beers**  
**Malt Whiskies**

Comfortable B&B  
Quiz night Wednesdays

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### **THE FARMER'S BOY**

London Road, St Albans  
Tel: 01727 766702

**Open all day for homemade  
food and drink**

**Home of Verulam Brewery**

**"One of Britain's Best 500 Pubs"**

*Roger Protz*

# DOWN YOUR WAY

**Cuffley:** The **Harvester** no longer sells real ale.

**Harpenden:** The **Malta** is now selling real ales Greene King IPA and Adnams Bitter. The original reason given when real ales were ceased was that the passing lorries shook the barrels in the cellar. Presumably the traffic has found a different route or weight restrictions have been imposed, either way we applaud the return of cask beer.

**Letchmore Heath:** Best wishes to Vicky and Richard who are leaving the Good Beer Guide listed **Three Horseshoes** after five years to take over at the **Royal Oak** in Carcalston, Nottinghamshire. Their new pub is owned by Wolverhampton and Dudley Brewery and they intend to move on the 16<sup>th</sup> October.

**Medburn:** (between Elstree and Radlett on the A5183) We welcome Zev Stepsky to the **Wagon and Horses** who took over the lease in mid-September.

**Northaw:** The **Two Brewers** is advertising events in October and November including Conker Championships on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct and a meet the Brewer evening with Adnams beer demonstrations, tastings and prizes 13<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Sandridge:** The **Queens Head** now serves Young's Bitter, Fullers London Pride, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Morland Old Speckled Hen.

**Shenley:** Twenty years after real ale was re-introduced to the **William IV**,

this has now ceased.

**St Albans:** The **Blacksmiths Arms**, once a mecca for real ale under Hogshead, now no longer serves any real ale at all. The **Mile House** latterly: - **Grill Bar** closed in early September and may well be demolished by the time we go to press. The sad demise of this perfectly viable pub has been chronicled in previous editions. The **Cricketers** has now re-opened following redecoration works.

**Watford:** The 15<sup>th</sup> September saw the start of the demolition of the **New Victoria (Tantivy)**. The **Pub on the Corner**, Queens Road, an ex-GBG Inn Brief, has been renamed Mad George. Beer availability has been variable.

## BRANCH DIARY

### SOUTH HERTS

**Tues 21 October:** Branch Meeting. The Red Lion, Radlett.

**Tues 18 November:** Branch Meeting. The Lower Red Lion, St. Albans.

**Tues 16 December:** Branch Meeting. The White Horse, Hertford

### WATFORD & DISTRICT

**Sat 25th October:** Mystery Social by Train. Meet at Watford Junction 12 noon, or call Rachel on 07785 508135 if late.

**Fri 31st Oct. - Sat 1st Nov: Watford Beer Festival**, West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue, Watford. Open 12 -11 on Fri, 11 -11 on Sat.

Continued/

## BRANCH DIARY

**Mon 3rd Nov:** Committee Meeting, **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8pm.

**Tue 11th Nov:** Social: **Partridge**, St George's Drive, Carpenders Park, 8.30pm; **Wetherspoon's**, Bridlington Road, South Oxhey, 9.15pm

**Sun 23rd Nov:** Pub Quiz Night. Meet at **Nascot Arms**, 8pm to select teams; then on to **Southern Cross**, 8.45pm sharp, for their quiz.

**Thu 27th Nov:** Ricky Social. **Feathers**, 8.30pm; **Pennsylvanian**, 9.30pm

**Mon 1st Dec:** Committee Meeting, **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8pm. Contact branch to confirm venue and time.

*Branch Contact: Andrew Vaughan.  
Telephone: 01923 230104*

Watford & District CAMRA



31<sup>st</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2003  
West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue, Watford, Herts

Over 45 real ales, ciders and perries from around the UK.

Open 12 noon to 11pm Friday; 11am to 11pm Saturday

Hot and cold food available both sessions to 8pm  
Free entry to CAMRA/West Herts cardholders, £1 to all others

## THE WHITE HORSE

Castle Street, Hertford

A Fuller's  
"Freestyle" House

A minimum of seven cask  
ales always available  
including  
at least four guest beers

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4 Keyfield Terrace, St Albans  
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Deuchans IPA, London Pride  
& two guest beers

Food served lunchtime  
everyday

Live music  
Saturday night &  
occasional Sundays

Large beer garden

All welcome

[www.whiteharttap.co.uk](http://www.whiteharttap.co.uk)



## Record Festival sells out of beer (well almost)

**B**oudicca may have terrorised St Albans almost two thousand years ago but her image as the face of this year's St Albans Beer Festival did not seem to deter present day beer lovers who flocked to The Alban Arena between Wednesday 24th and

Saturday 27th September, to sample over 300 real ales, foreign beers, ciders and perries. This was the eighth St Albans Beer Festival

*Right: Phil Delrieux, Festival Organiser, with Dennis Rutledge from McMullen raise a toast to the festival's success helped by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of St Albans aboard Mac's dray.*

*Below: One of the distinctive banners hanging in St Peter's Street the week of the festival.*



and each year the event goes from strength to strength. This year's attendance figure of over 8,000 broke all previous records. Ciders and perries ran out mid-Saturday night and by the end of the evening there were only a few bottled beers left and guests were able to snap up any of the real ale left at a bargain price. Monies raised at the festival enable CAMRA both locally

and nationally to continue campaigning for real ale and pubs and the St Albans Leos, who co-host the festival, a large donation which they will use to benefit various local charities.

This year's festival started with a SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers) tasting of brews from across East Anglia. Their winning beer was Oakham JHB, a firm St



*Left: Leo ladies manning the glasses stall. Below: Friday night in the main auditorium.*

*Opposite: "Boudicca", alias Caroline Kelly, gets into the spirit of the festival. Opposite right: MacMullen's steam wagon was a draw in the city centre for Saturday shoppers.*

*Bottom right: Elizabeth Moore, CAMRA's 70,000th member.*

*Bottom right: The main bar in full swing on Friday evening.*



Albans favourite and a previous CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain.

Twenty four hours later the Mayor of St Albans, Jenny Stroud, officially opened the festival by pulling a pint of Verulam IPA, brewed at the Farmers Boy, London Road, St Albans.

McMullen and Safeway were this year's main sponsors. Safeway mounted a

tasting opportunity of several Belgian beers in the lower foyer and Mac's brought along their horse drawn dray to the official opening on the Thursday lunchtime and took the Mayor and her deputy on a whistlestop "trot" around the city centre. As usual the beers ranged from the familiar to the downright bizarre, with bitters, milds, porters and stouts sitting alongside



such oddities as horseradish beer. Music was supplied by local bands "Straightlife" on Friday night and "Grooveshack" on Saturday. McMullen were back in the city on Saturday lunchtime but this time with their steam driven brewery lorry to rustle up interest in the festival while inside the Arena, a group of jugglers kept the lunchtime drinkers entertained. Guests came from across the country and

one couple on holiday in London from Pennsylvania saw a poster for the event and came up for the day to see what all the fuss was about. "We were not disappointed at all", said Pete Laurenson, who with his wife were on the last day of their British holiday. "We have beer festivals in Philadelphia but nothing like this. The beers here are all so tasty. We will be definitely be telling all our friends what a great event this is."



*Top left: The Mayor and Deputy Mayor meet McMullen's walking pint.*

*Top right: Phil Dornicz presents Glastonbury Brewery with their Beer of the Festival 2002 award for their "Mystery Tor"*

*Left: The CAMRA products stand was busy throughout the festival*