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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

April/May 2005

Circulation 5000

No. 210

Spot the Difference?



Short Beer Measures

We ask these Hertfordshire MPs to help end the Great British Beer Rip-Off

~ See Page 2 ~



Mark Prisk
Hertford & Stortford



Melanie Johnson
Welwyn Hatfield



Oliver Heald
Hertfordshire N. East



Peter Lilley
Hitchin & Harpenden

Also In This Issue:

- A New Chapter for McMullens Brewers
- Watford & District's Pub of the Year
- Is Beer Less Fattening than Wine?

THE BITTER END

Full Pints Update

Following the article on short measure in our last edition, Early Day Motion (EDM) 331 has received the support of 275 MPs. The EDM intends to end the 'Great British Beer Rip Off' by forcing the Government to put 100% full measure as part of the Weights & Measures Bill into the Queen's Speech, which will ensure that it is part of the legislation that will be dealt with in the next session of Parliament. A postcard campaign was started by CAMRA asking MP's to support the EDM and this is the result so far:-

MPs covering Hertfordshire who have signed the EDM are (C - Conservative, L - Labour):

Marion Roe - Broxbourne (C)

Tony McWalter - Hemel Hempstead (L)

Richard Page - Hertfordshire South West (C)

James Clappison - Hertsmeire (C)

Kerry Pollard - St Albans (L)

Barbara Follett - Stevenage (L)

The following have not as yet signed the EDM:

Mark Prisk - Hertford & Stortford (C)

Oliver Heald - Hertfordshire North East (C)

Peter Lilley - Hitchin & Harpenden (C)

Melanie Johnson - Welwyn Hatfield (L)

Claire Ward - Watford (L)

To be fair to Claire Ward, she is a Parliamentary Private Secretary to a Minister and decorum states that she should not sign any EDMs. There is nothing of course to prevent her publicly stating her moral support, however.

Of course the others could still sign and sending some more postcards or letters from constituents could help to persuade them to do so.

Peter Lilley, Conservative, Hitchin & Harpenden, who has yet to sign, is using a letter from Patricia Hewitt, Labour's Secretary of State for Trade & Industry to explain his reluctance. It is dated 28th February and says that the government is still considering the results of consultations. You can draw your own conclusions. Some MPs have strong connections with the brewing industry and

have formed a lobby which succeeded in talking out attempts in Parliament in the past to stop short measure. Research shows that nine out of ten pints are served short and publicans sell 200 million more pints than they buy. This is ripping customers off by £400million per year. CAMRA has been campaigning for a full measure for more than ten years, and this could be one of the last chances to change things for a long time.

We hope that this new initiative led by Wolverhampton South East MP Dennis Turner will be successful, and the government is forced to meet its pledge to the electorate, made in the manifesto before the last general election.

So, how much are short measures costing YOU?

Based on a weekly consumption of 10 pints (20 units of alcohol - 21 being the recommended maximum male limit - 14 is the recommended maximum female limit).

For **BITTER**, your loss on short measures is up to: £0.71 per week, £3.07 per month,
= £36.81 per year (£25.76 female)

For **LAGER**, your loss on short measures is up to: £0.95 per week, £4.13 per month
= £49.57 per year (£34.70 female)

Act **NOW** for before *and* after May 5th!!

You may receive a postcard with this newsletter to send to your MP. If so please fill in the details on the card, affix a stamp and post off as soon as possible. If not drop your MP a line to: *Name of your MP*, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA and ask them to support the EDM 331

Suggested text below:

Short beer measures cost consumers over £1 million a day. Please support the campaign for an Honest Pint Law and sign EDM 331.

Subscriptions for Pints of View

£4 for 18 issues. Send to: John Lightfoot, 66 Dryfield Road, Edgware, Middx., HA8 9JT. Cheques payable to: CAMRA South Herts.

THE BITTER END

Beer Price Rises Double Blow for Consumers!

CAMRA and customers alike are disappointed with the Chancellor's decision to increase beer duty in the recent Budget. This is a double blow for beer drinkers following beer price increases last month by several national brewers and pub companies.

A penny may not sound like much, but the Budget day's tax rise, added to recent wholesale beer price rises made by some brewers, will mean increases of as much as 10 pence a pint in less than a month. It must be

remembered that beer and cider are dual tax products, and the increase in excise duty will have VAT added, so you will be paying tax on your tax. At a time when beer consumption is falling and pub-going is in decline, this is a potentially devastating outcome for consumers and licensees alike.

In February 2005 increases of were announced by; Coors brewery of 2.5%, Carlsberg brewery of 4%, and by Enterprise Inns of between 2.9% and 3.8%. These increases will of course all be rounded up by publicans to help cover overheads.



Drinkers Mourn Closure of Boddingtons Brewery

Owners InBev are closing the famous Manchester Brewery after a long battle with the 'Save the Cream' campaign group including CAMRA, the Boddingtons workers and Manchester City Council. Mike Benner, Chief Executive of CAMRA said: "Beer has been brewed at Strangeways since before the French Revolution and global owners InBev have lost their heads if they think the people of Manchester will treat Boddingtons brewed in Lancashire and Wales with the same fondness. Manchester's beer drinkers have made it clear to InBev what they think about the closure, but

their views have been ignored and this viable brewery is to be lost forever in the name of corporate greed".

CAMRA is calling on the management of InBev to ensure that the real cask-conditioned *Boddingtons Bitter*, which will now be brewed at Hydes Brewery in the city, will be promoted throughout the UK and not be sidelined by promotion of the keg version of the beer which will be brewed in Lancashire and Wales. Mr Benner added: "This is the only version of Boddingtons which can still be called the 'Cream of Manchester', and the World's biggest brewer owes it to Manchester to keep brewing it here".

McMullens - A New Chapter in the Company's History

Our correspondent, Les Middlewood, reports on news from McMullens following his meeting with Peter Furness-Smith and Fergus McMullen at the brewery in late January:

It is plain to see that McMullens are passionate about their cask-conditioned beers, and the company has a proud 178-year history. They see *quality* as being the key to the company's future and their new website (www.mcmullen.co.uk) states their overall philosophy is "...to provide our customers with a clean, well-equipped and warm environment, high quality standards and presentation of food and drink, with friendly, caring and hospitable service". As Peter said, it is the *quality in the glass* that will attract drinkers to Mac's pubs and keep them coming back.

Planning permission has been secured to build the new brewery costing £1million and is programmed to be ready in the late summer. It will be constructed on the east side of Hartham Lane and be capable of brewing over 25,000 barrels of cask-conditioned beer per annum, with water drawn from their own wells. All the same ingredients that are used at present for *Country*, *AK* and occasional beers will stay the same so style and taste will be maintained. Head brewer Chris Evans will move into the next phase of brewing in Hertford – the production of craft beers in small or large batches giving a widened and changing portfolio. Local drinkers and CAMRA

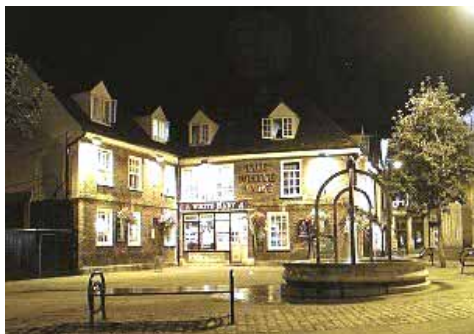
look forward to tasting the new beers which will be available in McMullens pubs and the free trade. In the meantime look out for Chris' new beer just

out - *Catkins Bitter* - described by Fergus as being *light and crisp*. *Mac's No.1* is currently being bottled at Hepworths of Horsham; the superb *Castle Ale* has been suspended but it is hoped it will return when the new brewery is completed.

Cask-conditioned beer is still available in the entire tied estate bar one pub, the **White Hart**, a lively night-time venue in Hertford, where demand had dropped below a level where

quality could be maintained. To help raise the profile of the name McMullen amongst drinkers and the brewing industry, there may be some re-branding of the name *Country Bitter*.

The future for the listed Victorian brewery and its 1980s successor is currently being worked on but



The White Hart – lively but with no real ale

other non-retail property owned by McMullens in the area is already being disposed of. This is not the case in their pub estate, where no closures are currently planned, and McMullens are continuing a refurbishment and improvement programme that visits 20% of its tied houses every year. Mac's are actively seeking new sites and pubs to enlarge their current estate, with the **Baroosh** chain proving to be a success for Macs, and further new developments are expected later in the year. Some pubs have been returned to tenancies and on completion - 52 Macs pubs will be tenanted and 80 will be managed.

We discussed the well-aired issue of cask-breathers - where CAMRA and McMullen have a

long-held difference of opinion. CAMRA official policy is that these should not be used as they impede the taste and nature of the beer. McMullen's view them as a way of helping to ensure quality at the point of dispense but where turnover and beer quality is excellent, Peter and Fergus are the first to agree that cask-breathers are not required (and, contrary to local belief, there is not a three-line-whip on all managers to use them!). The problem they have is with poor quality dispensed beer *per se*. Of course, cask-conditioned beer is a living thing and requires expert cellarmanship and training is provided for all their landlords. Cask-breathers, in McMullen's eyes, can help to maintain beer quality for a longer period and give an opportunity for a landlord to take on an additional beer, even though turnover might be slow, thus offering some additional choice to the customer. McMullens are steadfast in their belief that quality is the key to the future success of cask-conditioned beer. They cite falling national sales statistics as evidence that, if we are not careful, the future might not be secured. Peter condemns cellar malpractices such as back filtering and

advertising is considered minimal. Fergus prefers to spend the limited publicity budget on traditional in-pub material such as beer mats, bar towels and posters together with advertisements as and when required. Fergus and Peter hope that word of mouth from satisfied customers will become a major source of increased trade. Brewery tours have been suspended since 2003 but with the opening of the new brewery later this year it is hoped that these may be re-established – still using the cottage for hospitality. It was an enjoyable and informative visit - my thanks to Peter and Fergus for their hospitality. CAMRA wishes McMullens every success in its new brewery venture and eagerly looks forward to sampling the new beers (perhaps some will be ready for the **St. Albans Beer Festival** in the autumn!). We hope that we can work closely together to promote our common cause – quality cask-conditioned beer available in as many outlets as possible.


Les Middlewood



McMullens Hartham Lane brewery

encourages CAMRA to put the subject of beer quality high on its list of campaigning priorities. If we cannot agree on the use of cask breathers, we can certainly agree on the quest for beer quality.

We discussed the pros and cons of advertising and publicity. In the past it has been possible to wear a Mac's tee shirt, don a Mac's baseball cap or sport a McMullens lapel badge. These items are no longer available and whilst not entirely ruling out their return, their value in



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Herts Readers Write



Following our last edition I have received two letters from readers. The first was highlighting an article in "Harpenden Living" Winter 2004 edition and is titled "The independent magazine for Harpenden and AL5". On the inside cover is High Street News, which has a section called "New Pubs for Old". It stated that "autumn and winter 2004 have marked a transformation in Harpenden's pub scene with the refurbishment schemes completed or in prospect all over the town". Our correspondent says "To be blunt, Harpenden's pub-pubs are disappearing at a rate of knots - being converted to often pricey gastro-pubs or similar. This should give under-used real pubs like the **Red Cow** in Westfield Road a chance to blossom (if a Cow can!). He (name and address provided) continues; lamenting the loss of the "village bar" at the **Silver Cup**, with its cosy open fire and simple furniture being absorbed into the boring expanse of the classy bar. It is also noted that the **Three Horseshoes**, having been taken over by Spice Inns has been refurbished and now also specialises in food which will just add to the many other eateries in the vicinity.

Ed's comment: I think a key point in this piece is that it is recognised that some pubs are under-used. If it means that part of a pub has to be given over to food service to survive, as long as there is a dedicated bar area and a good variety of drinks to be had (including real ale), the transition should be reasonably painless. The problem arises when drinkers are made unwelcome, or classic interiors are destroyed, and I can think of many examples. In 2004 we saw local pubs close and become either pizza parlours, Indian or Chinese restaurants, or move to residential use. Perhaps their customers would have preferred the other option. **"Use them or lose them!"**
The Cat & Fiddle

I have received correspondence from David Herridge, a genealogist who comments on a piece in "Pints of View 203" Feb/March 2004; "On page 14, a reference to the **Cat & Fiddle**, Radlett referred to the pub as a listed 16th Century building. I can assure you that the b

building may be listed but it is certainly not 16th Century. It is in fact late 18th Century, dated circa 1795. "The Book of Radlett and Aldenham" by Donald Wratten describes the building of a pair of semi-detached cottages on the waste land beside Watling Street by my great-great-great-grandfather Richard Hooper, at about 1816. A beer house licence was subsequently attached in 1845.

Incidentally, my research has indicated that the pub's name has nothing to do with the nursery rhyme. The present name was probably changed from "Le Chat Fidele" (The Faithful Cat - Ed.) to the Cat & Fiddle early in the 19th Century to avoid any reference to a French connection, which would have been highly unpopular during the Napoleonic wars. It is likely that Richard Hooper was of French Huguenot descent.

Nautical Walsworth

I have received an e-mail from Phil Rowe who comments that he was surprised that I had not commented on the names of the three pubs in Walsworth, once a small village but now subsumed by Hitchin. The pubs in question are the **Anchor, Sailor Boy** and **Ship**. He continues "I have asked many people about the reason for all three pubs in a small area having been given nautical names. Twice I have been given the explanation that it was because of unrealised plans in the 18th and 19th Centuries to extend the River Ivel navigation, by means of a canal from Langford, to Hitchin. This seems an unlikely reason to give three pubs seafaring names. Do any readers have a more plausible explanation?"

Ed says: Firstly the Ship, owned by McMullen, was renamed the **Millstream** quite recently; there may be a story here as Mac's have several pubs with that name. My information comes from the 2000 Hertfordshire Guide to Real Ale and I know that several pubs in Hitchin have had name changes since then - an update would be well received. A good source of information on pubs past and present is the magistrates' records held at the Archive Library in County Hall. The problem in future will be who will maintain the information when the responsibility for licensing moves to the local councils.

Steve Bury

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Morlands Bitter, Guest Beer

An Evening Trip to Flamstead

It has been my intention to sample the two pubs in Flamstead and also seek out the little **Rose & Crown** in Trowley Bottom which I had been told was a little gem! I duly

caught the Centrebus 343 from St. Peter's Street at 7pm. After leaving St Albans, we headed north-west along the A5183 (Watling Street) to Redbourn passing the delightful **Chequers**, a Good Beer Guide entry for 2004, sadly closed after a chimney fire

destroyed its thatched roof, which collapsed into the first floor. The owners, Spirit Group, assure us that this Grade 1 listed building will be restored to its former glory but this will take a long time!

We continued into Redbourn and passed the **Saracen's Head**, another pub with its doors and windows firmly boarded up. This delightful basic boozier had a loyal and friendly customer base. The problem is that the greedy owners thought that they could get more money selling it for residential development.

I continued for another couple of miles in what had become my 45-seat taxi and was dropped outside the **Three Blackbirds** in Flamstead.

The Three Blackbirds is a 14th C pub serving a very wide customer base. Ales on offer were *Courage Best*, *Old Speckled Hen* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*. I felt that the background music was a bit loud.

A little back along the road is the **Spotted Dog** currently owned by Brown Bear Inns. This pub seems to have had an erratic career, often being closed. I understand it has been open for about a month now. The new team in this modernised pub are very friendly and I enjoyed an excellent pint of *Timothy Taylor Landlord* at the keen price of £2.00. Also on offer were *Brains SA* and *Greene King Abbot*. Food is also available here. Taking the road down the side of the Three Blackbirds, I continued down the hill past the school and the aluminium phone box until the road turned

to the right and the street lights finished. Ignoring the unlit lane to the left and continuing for another 300 yards through Trowley Bottom I came to a crossroads at the Rose & Crown pub.



The Three Blackbirds in Flamstead

are *Greene King IPA* (£1.50/pint), plus keg *Benskins Mild*, *John Smith Smooth* and *Castlemaine XXXX*, although the Mild hasn't been available for about 10 years. The pub opens from 8.00-8.30 until 10.30. Visitors need to observe the protocol of the regulars having their special bar stools. *(continued/)*

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The Rose and Crown has been privately owned for 15 years by licensee 85-year old Judy and her son. It is a well kept secret (*not any more! - Ed*) as there are probably less than a dozen regular customers.



The Rose and Crown – looks better in the dark!

Sadly, it was soon time to leave and I remembered that after returning to St. Albans, the bus continued as a 307 to Wheathampstead. This would give me time for a quick pint of *Greene King Abbot* (£2.60) on gravity at the **Green Man** in Sandridge. The pub is a regular Good Beer Guide entry and deservedly so. Twenty minutes later the bus collected me again and dropped me back at my local, the **Jolly Sailor** in St. Albans, where there was time for a final pint; this time *Charles Wells Eagle*. *John Crowhurst*

South Herts Pub of the Year

We are always a bit quirky in South Hertfordshire branch and the Pub of the Year competition is no exception. The winner for 2004 has now been decided (selected from the pubs surveyed in 2004 for the 2005 CAMRA Good Beer Guide) and the Winner was the **Carpenters Arms, Harpenden**, who previously won the award in 2002. The **Old Cross Tavern**, Hertford came second. Last year's winner the **Woodman, Wildhill** came third and the **Lower Red Lion**, St Albans, fourth. All four pubs have won the award previously and presentations will take place at the Carpenters on 10th May 2005 and the Old Cross on 3rd May 2005. Accompanying articles will be in the next Newsletter, and our congratulations go to the winners.

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SOUTH HERTS PUB OF THE YEAR
1999 & 2000



Waterend Barn

Our intrepid St Albans reporter visited the Waterend Barn, Lloyds Number 1 owned by Wetherspoons the day after it opened in February.

It is situated next to the Alban Arena (home of the St Albans Beer festival) and he comments below.

"Bouncers on the door - even on a Monday night. Inside they have done a nice job on it - the ceiling is full of beams, (*the beams came from a barn in Water End, hence the name - Ed*) it is very large with unusually for Wetherspoons, plenty of staff. There is a separate area for dining, an odd little bit called the Blenheim Room and a picture of Francis Bacon. The whole pub is no smoking although apparently there is some sort of outside smoking area in the courtyard which I didn't venture into.

The main problem with the place is that it is almost pitch dark so that even finding the toilets is a major endeavour without a torch.



Inside the Waterend Barn

Beers I could see through the darkness were *Greene King Abbot Ale*, *Marstons Pedigree*, *De Koninck* and *Fullers London Pride* - quality was OK. All the beers are over £2 a pint and the food is a bit more up-market and more costly than normal Wetherspoons.

There are a couple of odd screens with flashing pictures sometimes reminding you that you are in a Lloyds Number 1, which provided some much needed additional lighting. Music was not overloud but after ten minutes of the same drum machine it started to get a bit tedious.

The pub is unusually open until 12 midnight from Sunday to Wednesday and until 2am Thursday to Saturday, when after 10pm you have to pay £5 to go in to listen to the DJ.

On the whole slightly better than the run of the mill youth circuit pubs - it will be interesting to see what impact it has on the fortunes of the **Vintry**, **Barneys** and the **Casa**."

Phil Defriez

St Albans Licensing Forum

With extended hours and other changes to licensing being introduced, South Herts CAMRA branch has taken up an opportunity to attend the St Albans Licensing Forums, and our delegate has written the following report below:

Policing: The policing criteria in the city centre is that officers attending incidents record the presence of alcohol in those involved and question them to ascertain where alcohol was consumed. There is extra policing in the area on Friday/Saturday and Saturday/Sunday nights.

Licensing: Only 4 personal licence and 2 premises license applications had so far been received. A licensee reported that his company was making a block application on behalf of all their outlets. (This will involve about six pubs within the city.)

Two extra members of staff had been recruited to deal with the additional Council's licensing work. It was also reported that the income from licensing would cover more of the cost than had been expected, and the Government was also providing extra funding.

A surgery had been held on 18 February to assist licensees with their paperwork. Another surgery was planned for 18 March.

Public entertainment: The Council will be taking on responsibility for this in November and will be policing it. It is planned to have an out-of-hours phone line in this connection.

Residents Issues: A number of concerns were expressed by residents' groups about noise, vandalism, and drunks and dossers sleeping in the multi-storey car park. Also of concern was the possible incidence of outside drinking when no

smoking bans were brought in. It had been noted that the **Lloyds No. 1**, heralded as a non-smoking venue, in fact had an outside heated seating area for smokers.

Pubwatch: The group mirrored the concerns of local residents about anti-social behaviour and licensees were working hard to ensure that they did not contribute to the problems. The Council and police were praised for their help. On the subject of drugs the meeting was informed that a drugs atomizer was available and that four publicans had volunteered their premises for checking.

Our thanks to John Crowhurst for this report

CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2005

Robinson's *Old Tom*, brewed in Stockport has been named as CAMRA's Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2005. The barley wine ABV 8.5% is described in the 2005 edition of the Good Beer Guide as 'A full-bodied, dark beer, with malt, fruit and chocolate in the aroma. A delightfully complex range of flavours including dark chocolate, full maltiness, port and fruits leads to a long, bitter-sweet aftertaste'.

On hearing the news Oliver Robinson, Commercial Director at Robinson's Brewery, said "I'm absolutely thrilled. We won the award back in 2000 and it's wonderful to achieve that once again. Old Tom is our flagship beer, we've been brewing it since 1899 and it's still very popular."

The silver prize went to Somerset-based Bath Brewery for their superb *Festivity*, and the Bronze award went to Woodforde's Brewery from Norfolk for their fantastic *Headcracker*.

Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2005

SUPREME CHAMPION

1st - OLD TOM, Robinson's Brewery (Stockport)

2ND - FESTIVITY, Bath Brewery (Somerset)

3rd - HEADCRACKER, Woodforde's Brewery (Norfolk)

CATEGORY WINNERS

Old Ales & Strong Mild Category

Gold - Bath Festivity (Somerset)

Silver - Gales Festival Mild (Hampshire)

Bronze - Theakstons Old Peculier (North Yorkshire)

Stouts & Porters

Gold - Batemans Salem Porter (Lincolnshire)

Silver - Big Lamp Summerhill Stout (Newcastle)

Bronze - Spectrum Old Stootwobbler (Norfolk)

Barley Wines

Gold - Robinsons Old Tom (Stockport)

Silver - Woodforde's Headcracker (Norfolk)

Bronze - Moor Old Freddy Walker (Somerset)

National Pub of the Year

The Campaign for Real Ale, has announced that the **Fat Cat** in Norwich, Norfolk, has won CAMRA's prestigious 'National Pub of the Year' title - the only pub to have been voted best pub in Britain twice since the competition began in 1988!

The criteria used to decide the winner are quality of the beer, atmosphere, décor, customer service and welcome and value for money.

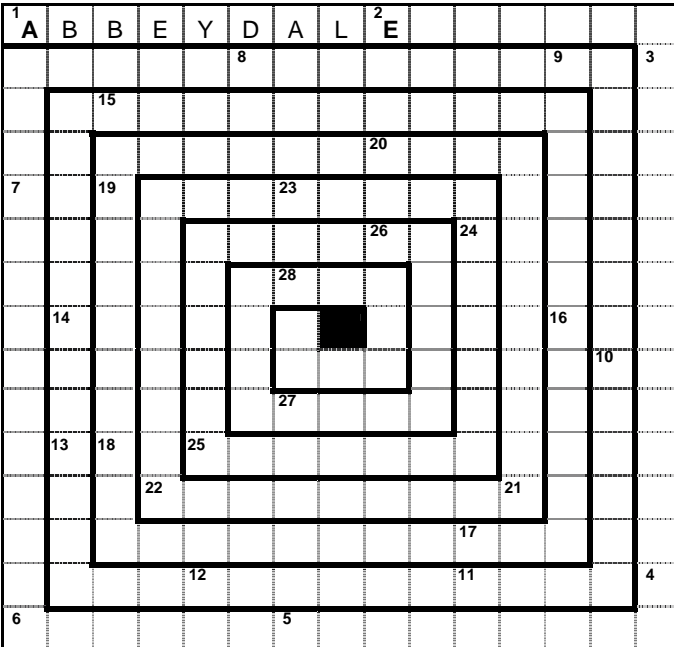
The Fat Cat is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2005 as an "Ale drinkers' paradise. The tap room can be seen behind the bar, up to 25 guest beers are served including one mild and a dark ale, sourced from breweries around the country. The pub stocks up to 30 Belgian bottled beers, plus six on tap, and was CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 1998".



The Fat Cat, Norwich

Bob Stukins, CAMRA's Pubs Director and one of the final judges said, "The Fat Cat is a great example of what can be done when thought and effort combined with the knowledgeable skill of staff all come together in the surroundings of a well-planned pub. But as with most pubs the customers have to be made to feel part of the whole equation. The overall experience made me wish I lived much nearer to Norwich than I do!" Just in case you don't own a CAMRA Good Beer Guide and are in need of a drink in the Norwich area the Fat Cat's address is 49 West End Street, Norwich NR2 4NA.

Catherine Wheel Cryptic Brewery Names Competition



Completed entries to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA

1st Prize: 2004 St. Albans Festival Polo Shirt , 2nd Prize: CAMRA 2005 Good Beer Guide

Winners for 208 Pubcos Wordsearch

2005 Good Beer Guide:

Peter Woodhams, Wheathampstead

CAMRA Pub Inventory Calendars:

Andrew Gray, Shenley, Mrs S.Brennan, Watford, Mrs A Gear, Hemel Hempstead, Richard Lawton , St Albans, Claire & Mark, St Albans.

Starting from the top-left corner, fill in the answers from the clues given below. The last letter of the previous answer is also the beginning letter of the following one. The first answer is shown, so the next answer starts with an 'E'. Complete all the answers to fill in the 'Catherine wheel'.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yorkshire brewer in Bedale Bay (9) | 15. Select store crime in Taunton (16)* |
| 2. Dave errs in Leicestershire (8) | 16. Eco light in Somerset (8) |
| 3. She made her pen in Kent (13)* | 17. His Arun vote in Clackmananshire (11) |
| 4. Reg belches in Falkirk (10) | 18. Swan men in Somerset (7) |
| 5. Neds hob in Wiltshire (7) | 19. Wash lord in Leicestershire (8) |
| 6. World's death in Manchester (11) | 20. Twist nothing in Gloucestershire (12) |
| 7. Heed Brian on Isle of Lewis (9) | 21. Troop huts in Merseyside (9) |
| 8. Had Agnes in Pembrokeshire (8)* | 22. Worthing yet in Devon (11) |
| 9. Kerb Triad in Scunthorpe (9)* | 23. No guys in Wandsworth (6) |
| 10. Harem also in Suffolk (9)* | 24. Will wise mate in London (12)* |
| 11. Pay mole in Newark (7) | 25. Let Kim rest in Somerset (10)* |
| 12. Shave me in Warwickshire (7) | 26. Spit today in Jersey (9)* |
| 13. Sham in Great Portland Street (4) | 27. Stored in Weymouth (6) |
| 14. Old hens in West Midlands (7) | 28. What site in Blackburn? (8) |

Note: * = Two word answer

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Watford and District Feature

The Sportsman, Croxley Green: Watford & District Pub of the Year 2004

Congratulations to Mary Emerson and Jackie Hughes, landladies of the **Sportsman** in Croxley Green, which has been voted Watford & District branch's Pub of the Year for 2004.

As well as serving excellent and varied ales, with Tring's *Sidepocket for a Toad* and *Bass* as regular beers amongst changing guests, the Sportsman stands out in the area for its distinctive style and ambience. The single, L-



Jackie and Mary accept the Pub of the Year certificate from Branch Secretary Andrew Vaughan (left)

shaped bar-room is decorated with a huge collection of unusual sporting equipment, with an excellent painting of the eponymous 'Sportsman' at one end - an eccentric chap whose image can also be seen on the pub's sign.

This is no sports bar, though. The Sportsman, in fact, has a great reputation for live music. Bands are regularly featured on Saturday nights, with once-a-month blues and folk jam sessions on Sundays. Flyers for jazz, blues and folk festivals can be found sitting on top of the pub piano, along with local magazines (including Pints of View).

Mary and Jackie hold occasional beer festivals, which can take place in the bar or out in the Shed, converted stables behind the pub which act as a meeting place for various local

societies and as a venue for acoustic music, jazz and even children's parties. The varied use of the Shed emphasises the pub's community focus in an area that, despite being sandwiched between Watford and Rickmansworth, still retains a strong village feel.

For those of you who haven't yet visited this characterful pub, the Sportsman is located at 2 Scot's Hill, at the junction of Rickmansworth Road (A412) and The Green (tel: 01923 443360). Look out for the unusually parked mountain bike out front.

You can visit the Sportsman's website at www.croxleygreen.com/Sportsman where you'll find details of upcoming gigs amongst other information.

All Change at the Land of Liberty

Watford & District branch would like to wish luck to Martin Few and Gill Nicoll, who took over at the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** in Heronsgate during February. Both Martin and Gill are active local CAMRA members; in fact Martin was the branch Chair up until a few years ago and has been co-organiser of the **Watford Beer Festival** since its inception. The Land of Liberty has featured in the Good Beer Guide for the last few years and we're anticipating no change on that front, given Martin's proven cellarmaniship skills.



Busy bar staff at Martin & Gill's welcome party at the Land of Liberty

Even though they only moved in about a month prior to this article, Gill and Martin have already had an impressive number of guest beers to go

(Continued) alongside the regular *Young's Bitter* and *Fuller's London Pride*. Such beers as *Adnams Oyster Stout*, *Batemans Dark Mild* and *Woodforde's Wherry* have all been spotted recently, with new beers packing the cellar all the time.

In addition to the obvious attraction of real ales, the pub often organises social events and occasional music. Local band Juke Joint rocked the house at the new licensees' welcome party, with more bands lined up for the future. Gill and Martin organised many events for National Pubs' Week at the end of February, including rambles, raffles, a beer tasting and the first in an annual series of Pub Games Competitions, with such unfamiliar (these days) sports as table skittles, shut the box and shove ha'penny. The eager ale enthusiast can find the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty on Long Lane, Heronsgate (tel: 01923 282226). The website at www.landoflibertypub.com has more information on upcoming beers, events and other details.

Andrew Vaughan

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A Swift Half...

Man Urinates His Way Out of Avalanche

The Register, which I believe is an American journal, ran the following story in January.

We are delighted to report that a Slovak man trapped in his car by an avalanche urinated his way to freedom after working his way through 60 half-litre bottles of beer.

Richard Kral was off on holiday when the snow swallowed his Audi in the Tantra mountains. Initially he tried to dig his way out through the car window, but soon realised the snow would fill the vehicle long before he could break free.

Mercifully, he had stocked up on essential supplies of alcohol and quickly formulated a cunning plan: "I was scooping the snow from above me and packing it down below the window, and then peed on it to melt it. It was hard how my liver and kidneys hurt. But I'm glad the beer I took on holiday turned out to be so useful and managed to get me out of there".

Rescuers eventually found Kral staggering drunk on a mountain path four days after his ordeal had begun.

Steve Bury

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Roger Protz, Editor of CAMRA Good Beer Guide

You're Due a Deuchars

Beer Debate: Is Beer Less Fattening Than Wine?

Drinkers are hoping to appeal to women by offering beer in third-of-a-pint glasses. But first they must tackle the belief that beer is more fattening than wine. Is it true?

Stroll through the doors of a traditional British hostelry and the scene that presents itself would no doubt jar with the slogan for a new campaign by pub operators: **Beautiful Beer**. The sight of burly, whisky men propping up the bar with a pint in one hand and a gravity-affirming paunch may conjure up many descriptions, but "beautiful" is probably not one of them.

Yet, with its campaign, the British Beer and Pub Association believes it can turn back the clock on British drinking trends, which, of late, have seen ales and lagers lose out to the more fashionable wine.

To do so, it needs to win over women drinkers - only 14% of whom drink beer in pubs, compared to 36% who drink wine.

Believing that female drinkers are put off by pints and halves the BBPA wants to see beer served in more elegant, long-stemmed, third-of-a-pint glasses.

But it also wants to set the record straight on beer's calorific qualities. Startling as it may seem, beer is less, not more, fattening than wine.

Crisps and peanuts

According to the BBPA, a glass of beer with a typical 4.6% alcoholic volume, has fewer calories not only than a similar measure of wine, but also milk or fruit juice. Spirits, meanwhile, contain more than six times the calories of beer, and when mixed with a soft drink, the calorie-count soars even higher. *But who ever heard of a wine belly or a vodka gut?*

Research into drinking habits has found that beer's fattening reputation has more to do with the lifestyle of those who drink it, and the greasy bar snacks that often accompany a night down the local.



Is it the beer or the lifestyle that's fattening?

"There's no such thing as the beer belly," says George Philliskirk, of the Beer Academy. "But it is an appetite stimulant and it's the fish and chips or curry that round off a night with a few pints that puts the weight on."

A study of 2,300 drinkers in the Czech Republic, where beer is the tipples of choice, found they put on almost no more weight around the abdomen than non-drinkers.

Martin Bobak, an epidemiologist at University College London, who carried out the research, suggests it is a lifestyle argument.

In the West, the better educated someone is, the less obese they are likely to be. Lower educated people tend to drink more beer while the higher educated tend to drink more wine, said Mr Bobak.

Bigger glasses

Sceptics will argue that although beer has fewer calories than wine, it comes in pints while wine is served in smaller measures.

However, Mr Phillistick says the gap is narrowing - the typical wine serving has crept up from 125ml to 175ml. Many bars now serve a large 250ml glass as a matter of course, which is equivalent to a third of a bottle.

The BBPA says the trend toward slightly stronger beers in recent years means drinkers can sip from a full-flavour Continental brew in much the same way as they do from a glass of Chardonnay; even enjoy it at mealtimes.

In fact, concerns about alcohol being fattening could be completely off-target anyway. Martin Bobak says there isn't even concrete evidence that the human body can turn alcohol into fat.

CALORIES PER 100ml



- Beer (4.6% alc): 41 calories
 - Wine (12% alc): 77 calories
 - Spirits: 250 calories
 - Milk: 64 calories
 - Orange juice: 42 calories
 - Apple juice: 47 calories
- Source: BBPA

Beer is Fattening, say Beer-Lovers

The astounding revelations in the article opposite that beer is not in fact fattening may have raised a few eyebrows among readers. It appears that a few small details which didn't fit the view of beer as the elixir of the Gods may have been omitted.

Hmm - nice bit of spin by the British Beer & Pubs Association BBPA but they are glossing over the fact that the calories quoted are for 100ml of each fluid, and who drinks only 100ml of beer? (1 pint = 568ml) Translated into real-world quantities (1 pint of beer vs. 125ml of wine) then the tables are nicely turned: 230 Cals for the beer vs. 96 Cals for the wine.

The article speaks of "alcohol" being fattening (or not). As anyone who has ever been near a low-carb diet can tell you. It isn't the alcohol in these drinks that can put the pounds on you - it's all the leftover carbohydrates from the grape, the grain, or whatever else you care to distil the alcohol from. I know from both science and personal experience that I can drink whisky and lose weight just fine, but that beer (and to a lesser extent wine) will put that weight right back on.

Of course, this is the same BBC which recently reported that A-bomb architect Hans Bethe died at the age of 98, having been born in 1902 (they have since corrected his birth date to 1906). If they can't even get their basic maths right the first time, you can bet that we can't trust them on anything REALLY important, such as beer. And in the meantime, make mine a double Laphroaig (no ice!).

And one more thing about beer. The hops it's brewed with add oestrogen derivatives to the beer, which makes your body pile on the pounds and grow breasts. Does this therefore mean that beer is in fact an organic breast augmentation treatment, as well as for curing cancer? Is there no end to its miracle properties?

Ed says that if you believe the critics of the BBC article, then beer is very dangerous stuff. I have been drinking it on a reasonably steady basis for over 35 years and can assure you that I have not gained breasts or a too extreme a beer gut. If you are overweight diet is a problem but what everyone here has missed is a bit of exercise would solve a lot of drinkers' health and weight problems.

Steve Bury

DOWN YOUR WAY

Aldenham: The **Roundbush** was due to go completely non-smoking from 31st March.

Borehamwood: We don't often find much to praise in the town but it has come to our notice that the **Hart & Spool**, Wetherspoons has been serving a large variety of guest beers, many from micro-brewers. Our reporter was very pleased with the quality. Well worth a visit. The refurbishment of the **Oaklands** is completed and they now wish to be known only as the **Borehamwood Toby Carvery**. Although a lot of local advertising has taken place you would not notice that anything has changed. The advertising handout gives the impression that it has been converted into a traditional bar with three real ales on handpump. Not so. There is only one real ale; *Young's Bitter* - the *Bombardier* and *Old Speckled Hen* are on top pressure and the *Tetley* is smooth flow. The introduction of one

handpump beer is an improvement on the last visit.

Enfield & Barnet news: The **Enfield Arms** EN1 is closed and could become part of a new road system. **Bar Me** EN2 is boarded up and could become a restaurant.

The **Catcher in the Rye** N3 has re-opened as a **Faucet Inn** following refurbishment and sells *Young's Bitter*, *Wells Bombardier* and *Courage Directors*. The **Black Horse** EN5 is now a **Bell & Buckley** tavern following refurbishment and sells *Greene King IPA*. The **Bailey** EN4 is now selling real ale *Bass*.

Heronsgate: Long standing Watford branch activists Gill Nicol & Martin Few took over at **The Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty**, Long Lane, on 1st February. They have an impressive list of forthcoming events and the guarantee of some excellent ale. We wish them well with their new venture. (See article page 13.)

DOWN YOUR WAY

Hertford: The **Sportsman** has re-opened after refurbishment, selling *Charles Wells Bombardier* and others. The **Sele Arms** closed at the end of March for a redecoration. The **Harts Horns** has a new landlord. The **Blackbirds** and **White Hart** no longer serve real ale. The latter is the only Mac's pub in Hertford not selling real ale.

Markyate: It's a couple of years since the **Swan** has sold real ale but now all reference to the pub name has gone and it's a French-style restaurant called "**La Vie En Rose**".

Potters Bar: The **Strafford Arms** in Mutton Lane, Potters Bar reopened 14th February after refurbishment as a '**John Barras**' house - still otherwise The **Strafford**, and now has three handpumps (previously nil). Beers on sale on opening were *Greene King IPA*, *Charles Wells Bombardier* and *Marstons Pedigree*. There is a large non-smoking area, and the sports screens etc. remain. We welcome the new landlord and the re-introduction of real ale.

Shenley: The tenancy of the **William IV** has been taken by Sev Stepsky of the **Waggon & Horses**, Medburn, Elstree. Following refurbishment the pub is destined to become a sports bar, and for the first time in several years it now serves real ale - *Wadworths 6X* and *Greene King IPA*. The **Black Horse** lease has been sold and the new landlords should have arrived in the last week of March. As we go to press we are still awaiting further details.

St. Albans: The **Mermaid** (Old English Inns - subject to renaming) no longer offers any food. Live music has also stopped. The **Cricketers** (Avebury Inns) is still closed and it is expected to be turned into an Indian restaurant. **62** (Punch) (formerly **Pineapple** and **Merry Minstrel** offers *Fuller's London Pride* and *62 (Potton IPA)*. Opening hours are 17.00-23.00 (Mon-Fri); 12.00-23.00 (Sat); 12.00-22.30 (Sun) Food is also available. The IPA is in good nick. It should be, as the landlord drinks it. At the **Jolly Sailor** a petition is being raised in opposition to the proposed development which will put three houses on the car park. We have been informed that the brewery, their managers and staff are not allowed to object to the development (condition of sale of pub to

Wells). In fact, Mark & Christine who now run the pub are leaving and we wish them all the best for the future. If the car park is lost could the pub's future viability be severely challenged? **Waterend Barn**, Lloyds No1, is now open (see page 10). The **Robin Hood** is selling *Wadworths 6X*, *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* and *Fullers London Pride*. Congratulations to the **Portland Arms** landlord Ken, who has won Fullers Best Newcomer and Master Cellarman awards. The **Glass House** is now real ale again selling *Fullers London Pride* and *Greene King IPA*. We have been informed that Alan Dean, landlord of the **Lower Red Lion** got plastered - not due to too much real ale, but to the ceiling falling down. Lastly, the **Harrow** and **Rats Castle** tenancies are both up for sale.

Watford: In the High Street but definitely not on the pub circuit, the **One Crown** - a genuine local's local is selling an excellent pint of *Tring Brewery Jack O Legs*.

Welwyn: The **White Hart** is being refurbished.

Welwyn Garden City: It is reported that the **Cork & Cask** is selling *Banks & Taylor's Shefford* ales.

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BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Friday 8 April: Birthday social at the **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford, 8.30pm. Please note that the West Herts is a members' club. Visitors must be signed in by a member. Contact the branch for details.

Wednesday 13 April: Oxhey Social at The **Royal Oak**, Watford Heath, 8.15pm; **Villiers Arms**, Oxhey, 9pm; **Victoria**, Oxhey, 9.45pm.

Saturday 23 April: St. George's Day social at the **Clarendon Arms**, Chandler's Cross, from 1pm.

Monday 25 April: Committee Meeting, **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Friday 6 May: Mild social at the **Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty** in Heronsgate, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 10 May: **Unicorn**, Abbot's Langley, 8.15pm; **King's Head**, Hunton Bridge, 9pm; **Southern Cross**, Watford 10pm.

Thursday 19 May: Annual Breweriana Auction, **West Herts Sports Club** function room. Viewing from 7pm.

Monday 23 May: Committee Meeting, **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Sunday 29 May: Quiz Night at the **Southern Cross**, Watford. 8.30pm for a 9pm start.

Saturday 4 June: **Plough**, Belsize, 1pm; **Cart & Horses**, Commonwood, 2.30pm; **Boot**, Sarratt, 3.30pm.

Wednesday 8 June: Watford social, **Estcourt Tavern**, 8.30pm; **Wellington Arms**, 9.15pm; **Estcourt Arms**, 10pm.

Branch Contact: Andrew Vaughan. Telephone: 01923 230104.

Email: branch@watfordcamra.org.uk

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tuesday 19 April: Branch meeting, **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans, 8pm.

Tuesday 3 May: Pub of the Year Runner-Up presentation – **Old Cross Tavern**, Hertford. Minibus leaves St. Albans Thameslink station at 7pm.

Tuesday 10 May: Pub of the Year presentation at the **Carpenters Arms**, Harpenden, 8pm.

Tuesday 17 May: Branch Meeting, **Red Lion Hotel**, Radlett, 8pm.

Thursday 19 May: St. Albans 2005 Beer Festival Committee meeting, **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans, 8pm.

Tuesday 24 May: Mild Night social trip, **Black Horse**, Hertford. Minibus leaves St. Albans Thameslink station at 7pm.

To reserve a minibus seat please contact Chris Bozier on: 01582 515692 (Home) or 07849 644544 (Mobile). **Please book early to guarantee a place. Any cancellations also need to be notified.**

Branch Contact: John Bishop. Telephone: 01582-768478

Email: realales@yahoo.com

Website: www.hertsale.org.uk

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

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