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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

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A Festival Success!

St. Albans Celebrates Great Beer in Style

~ See Pages 7 - 10 for a full report ~



Also In This Issue:

**St. Albans MP Supports our Campaign
Watford & District's Scotland Breweries Visit**

THE BITTER END

A Clean Glass is all Part of the Perfect Pint

I remember in the 1980s when wiping glasses with a tea towel became an illegal practice. Before this any number of unsavoury things used to happen, and having regularly consumed pints before glass washers were even invented, I have seen my fair share. I remember a pub in New Barnet where the publicans were in their eighties and used to put the dog's bowl in the sink with the ash trays and the glasses. Because glass cleaning was so laborious licensees would not change your drinking vessel between pints, and often resented pub crawls and passing trade. How different things were in the 70s when you couldn't get a seat even in a bad pub after 8 o'clock at night.

Hygiene regulations have forced a change in attitude and I remember an edition of the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide** highlighting the way pub service had degenerated, with the parody of a spotty faced YOP (Youth Opportunity Scheme worker, or "poorly paid unemployed teenager on work experience") wiping out your glass with an AIDS victim's shroud.

Well that's enough history. We all expect to be given a sparkling clean sterile glass, replaced every time we order a drink, so why is it that this is so often not the case?

Cask Marque (a beer-industry sponsored beer-keeping and serving accreditation body) is currently circulating two leaflets to its awarded pubs highlighting the problem of dirty glasses and explaining how to identify and rectify problems. They state:-

"The following are unacceptable to the customer:

- Dirty or unhygienic glasses.
- Flat beer/poor head retention.
- Streaks and spots left on glasses.
- Etching or permanent damage to the glass.

All pretty straightforward and quite familiar to the regular pub-goer."

They continue - "In nearly all cases the problem of dirty glasses originates from the pint pots and most prominently from real ales."

They suggest taking a moist white serviette and wipe the inside of a supposedly clean pint glass. If there is a brown deposit showing then there is a protein build-up on the glass.

If there is a film of bubbles on the inside of any lager glass it is sure sign that the glass is not clean. The bubbles will only stick to an impurity.

The problems they highlight are all solved by better glass-washer maintenance, and they give advice on how to cure a lot of problems easily without the need to call out an engineer.

Flat Beer/Poor Head Retention

Obviously there can be problems in the cellar, but Cask Marque also state that the head can be killed by chemicals on the glass from the glass washer not being set up properly. Now to the horrible bit; flat beer can also be caused by fats from coffee cups washed in the same machine or from customers' lips that have eaten crisps or peanuts.

Spots and Streaks

In Hertfordshire and London the water is very hard, which adds to this problem. The cause is inadequate rinsing or the wrong levels of detergent etc. being used. It is also highlighted that filters often are not cleaned regularly enough.

Detergents used in glass washers will etch the glass over a period of time, and those of us who use our beer festival glasses will testify that our home dishwashers remove the logos quite easily.

Glasses used in pubs do not last very long, which is another reason why lined glasses could be introduced at nil cost over a period of six months.

With modern technology there is no reason why any customer should not receive a hygienic sparkling glass on every occasion. Like poor quality beer it is all about looking after the product properly and making regular checks.

One last word. The height of laziness is the pub where you get a hot glass because they can't be



bothered to move the cold ones forward on the shelf when clearing the glass washing machine.

If you get a dirty glass send it back!!!

Steve Bury

Young's Brewery - Putting the Record Straight

I should start by apologising to Young's Brewers, who I did not intend to offend in any way, and can only say that I was taken in by what may only be politely described as a spoof article printed in the *Mail on Sunday* on 3rd April 2005.

The first complaint I received was from Paul Kirsten on 30th July, but now have the correct definitive information, supplied by Geoff Strawbridge, CAMRA's Young's Brewery Liaison Officer, on 18th August. Geoff states:- The article suggests that decisions had been made in April as part of plans to close Young's Brewery in Wandsworth. There is no truth in that suggestion. The Mail on Sunday article was a concoction of idle speculation. There were no closure plans then and none have been announced to date.

Specifically, a Young's AGM took place on 12 July and at that meeting, John Young made it clear that the comprehensive feasibility studies were still far from completed, and that no decision had yet been reached as to whether Young's should plan to stay put or move elsewhere.

A brewery has existed on the Ram site since 1581, not 1851 as stated. It has not employed a cooper now for decades. Lignum vitae is something else, not the material from which the steam engines were made.

Confidence in replicating the distinctive flavours of Young's beers would surely be a key factor in any decision to relocate. The Guinness Peat Group may have irritated the Young's board over recent years with their apparent preoccupation with maximising short-term shareholder value to the detriment of long-term business prosperity, but the idea of any battle between them and John Young in the context of the feasibility studies is fanciful. Neither they nor any other shareholders asked him any questions at the 12th July AGM.

Ed Says: I assumed that the newspaper article was stating that 1851 was when the present buildings on the site were erected (this may be wrong too). The mention of lignum vitae was a grammatical error. When I was studying Latin - lignum vitae was the wood of life, which I was informed the joints on the beam engines were made of. My memory may not be what it was but on the last occasion that we visited Young's brewery there was a working cooper. Other than the historical points I hope the record is now straight.

Steve Bury

**Any comments, articles or letters for publication are welcome. Please send to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.
Or Email us at: pintsofview@yahoo.co.uk**

Hertfordshire's Pints of View is produced by the South Hertfordshire and Watford & District Branches of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches.



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The Good Beer Guide 2006

The 2006 edition of CAMRA's best-selling guide to Britain's 4,500 top real ale pubs is now on sale. The 33rd edition of the best guide to British pubs costs £13.99 and contains descriptions of the top 4,500 pubs in Britain. It is compiled by 76,000 dedicated volunteers in the Campaign for Real Ale.

The Good Beer Guide 2006 contains a list of every brewery in the country, large and small, with details of all the cask-conditioned and bottle-conditioned beers they brew, with professional tasting notes.

Also included is information about pub facilities for families and the disabled, history, architecture, food, accommodation, local places of interest and, of course, the beer: the best pubs serving the finest real ale in the country.

The guide includes a full list of CAMRA's National Inventory of Pubs – pubs with interiors of outstanding historical interest, helping to save these pubs for posterity. Special features on:

- Crisis? What Crisis? – 'Beer Revolution' in Britain as number of new breweries soars.

The 2006 guide lists more than 80 new breweries, almost twice as many as in the previous year. There are now over 500 micros, 35 family-owned breweries and several bigger regional producers. And there is now greater choice than at any time since the Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971.

- New national brewing giants are a threat to drinkers' choice:

Greene King and Wolverhampton & Dudley have emerged as new national brewers that threaten diversity and choice, according to the new guide. Greene King has recently closed the Ridley's brewery and bought Belhaven in Dunbar, whilst W&D have bought leading

Cumbrian brewer, Jennings of Cockermouth.

- Yorkshire drinkers are top of the hops:

The Good Beer Guide 2006 reports that West Yorkshire is the county with the biggest number, 28, of independent breweries. North Yorkshire is hard on its neighbour's heels with 22. Greater Manchester has 23 whilst Lancashire has 12, giving the North West a combined total of 35

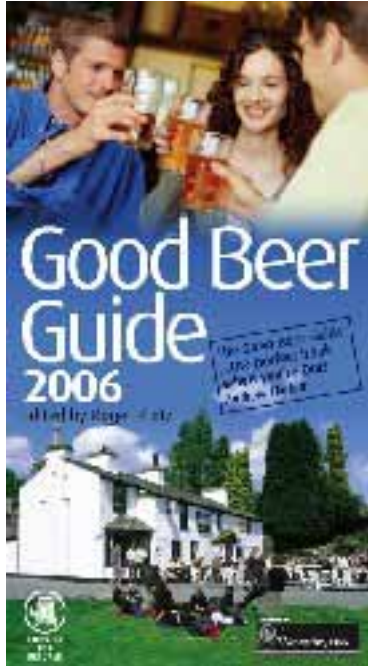
breweries. Even the remote Highlands and Islands boasts 11, but Hertfordshire has only 5 independent brewers.

There is no doubt that pubs in Hertfordshire are profitable and the lack of micro brewers says more about the control of the business and ownership by pub chains than the customers' wishes for choice and variety. The report also highlights the number of breweries in all other counties.

The Good Beer Guide 2006 at 864 pages costs £13.99 or £10.00 for CAMRA members. Available at all good bookshops.

For more information:

CAMRA Press Office: 01727 798444



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Quarter Page B&W	74 x 105	= £ 40.00

Artwork made up at extra cost, preferably in JPEG, Word or PDF format.

The deadline for our Dec/Jan 2006 issue is Sunday 20 November.

Contact: John Bishop, Tel: 01582 768478
Email: realales@yahoo.com

St Albans MP Supports Our Short Measure Campaign

We were pleased that Anne Main, the new Conservative MP for St Albans visited the beer festival in September. Until this time she had not signed Early Day Motion (EDM) 404 calling for a "Full Pint". Following her visit the Campaign received a letter sent to our head office. It states as follows:-

"At the time I wrote replying to all the postcards and e-mails that I received, stating that I would not sign the EDM which you asked me to for various reasons.

Following my meetings with various constituents and representatives I have since changed my mind and when Parliament returns I will be supporting CAMRA's aims and will sign EDM 404".

This is very good news indeed and I would like to think that the discussions with members of the campaign had some bearing

on Anne's change of heart. The photo below shows Anne addressing those present at the St Albans Beer Festival, holding a copy of *Pints of View* edition 210 which named and shamed those Hertfordshire MP's that did not support the short measure campaign.



Some have now lost their seats, but Peter Lilley, MP for Hitchin & Harpenden **still** refuses to sign even though he has received a large amount of correspondence from constituents. For those of you who remember, he is quoted as saying that he did not see short measure as being a problem in his

constituency. He obviously doesn't drink there. The opportunity to do your bit for the short measure campaign is still there; send your MP the White EDM 404 postcard or an e-mail. A full update on all of Hertfordshire's MP's will be in the next edition when we know what they have done on return after the recess.

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Traditional Sunday Roast served 1.00 - 3.00pm

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in the upstairs function rooms.

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Children permitted, upstairs only.
Bar Billiards Room and Traditional Pub Games.

'Simply a Proper Pub!'

CAMRA Celebrates its Best-Ever Festival

The Great British Beer Festival held at London Olympia August 2nd–August 6th saw an increase in attendance of nearly 2,000 people from last year and over 240,000 pints pulled, making this CAMRA's most successful beer festival ever.

The most popular beer on sale at the festival was Crouch Vale *Brewers Gold*, which was also the winner of this year's **Champion Beer of Britain** competition. Despite placing an early reorder for this beer, it still had to be rationed, and at one point it was selling at a rate of 144 pints every twenty minutes - with queues of visitors waiting to try it out.

Festival Facts

- Over 47,000 visitors
- 240,000 pints pulled
- 1,000 new CAMRA members
- 1,400 corporate guests
- Community Pubs Foundation launched
- Wedding reception held for the first time in the Corporate Lounge
- Over 1000 visitors attended tutored tastings

The Community Pubs Foundation was launched at the Festival to help communities whose local pub is under threat of closure.

The Real Ale in a Bottle Scheme celebrated its first birthday with a party for all 100 participating breweries.

In 2006 the Great British Beer Festival will be held at **Earls Court** from 1st to 5th August.

Golden Ale Voted Champion Beer of Britain!

Brewers Gold, brewed by Crouch Vale of Essex, was judged to be the best beer in Britain by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists at the Great British Beer Festival Olympia on 2nd August.

The Essex-brewed beer was chosen as the overall winner from over fifty finalists in eight categories including beers from tiny micros to major brewers.

Roger Protz, one of the finalist judges and

editor of the Good Beer Guide said, "Congratulations to Crouch Vale. It is great to see a golden ale win this award. Golden ale is a rapidly growing style of beer and one that will appeal to younger drinkers and women as well as real ale aficionados. It's a wonderfully refreshing beer - the ideal antidote to lager!"

Oilly Graham, General Manager of Crouch Vale said, "We have been in the final of the this competition for a few years now, but to have gone one step further this year and be voted the best beer in Britain makes me very proud".

List of Winners by Category

Champion Beer of Britain:

Crouch Vale *Brewers Gold* (Essex)

Second: Grainstore *Rutland Panther* (Rutland)

Third: Woodforde's *Wherry* (Norfolk)

Mild Category

Gold: Grainstore *Rutland Panther* (Rutland)

Silver: Brains *Dark* (Cardiff)

Bronze: Elgood's *Black Dog* (Cambridgeshire)

Bitter Category

Gold: Woodforde's *Wherry* (Norfolk)

Silver: Holdens *Black Country Bitter* (West Midlands)

Joint Bronze: RCH *PG Steam* (Somerset) Belvoir *Star* (Leicestershire)

Best Bitter Category

Gold: Harveys *Sussex Bitter* (East Sussex)

Joint Silver: *Mighty Oak* Burntwood Bitter (Essex)

Joint Bronze: Timothy Taylor *Landlord* (Yorkshire)

Olde Swan *Entire* (West Midlands)

Golden Ales Category

Gold: Crouch Vale *Brewers Gold* (Essex)

Silver: Jarrow *Rivet Catcher* (Tyne and Wear)

Bronze: Oakham *JHB* (Cambridgeshire)

Strong Ale Category

Gold: Hanby *Nutcracker* (Shropshire)

Silver: Bullmastiff *Son of a Bitch* (Cardiff)

Bronze: Fuller's *ESB* (London)

Speciality Category

Gold: Cairngorm *Tradewinds* (Inverness-shire)

Silver: Young's *Waggledance* (London)

Joint Bronze: Daleside *Morocco* (North Yorkshire)

Ridleys *Rumpus* (Essex)

Real Ale in a Bottle Category

Gold: Durham *Evensong* (Durham)

Silver: Young's *Special London Ale* (London)

Bronze: Titanic *Stout* (Staffordshire)



The biggest pub in Hertfordshire

The tenth annual St Albans Beer Festival once again broke all records. Roger Filler was there

More beers, more visitors, more bars, more music, more value. It was very much a case of more of everything at this year's St Albans Beer Festival, as once again records crashed at the biggest pub in Hertfordshire. Now in its tenth year, the festival, held in the Alban Arena, and run in conjunction with the South Herts branch of CAMRA and the St Albans Leos, attracted record crowds, raising thousands of pounds for local charities and for the Campaign locally and nationally.

As per usual the festival opened on the Wednesday night with a quiet session. The

official opening took place the following lunchtime when the Mayor of St Albans, Malcolm Macmillan, and its new MP, Anne Main, officially wished it every success. During the Thursday lunchtime session local licensees, brewers and CAMRA stalwarts voted on the Beer of The Festival and Crouch Vale's *Brewer's Gold*, the current Champion Beer of Britain, was their choice, with Tring's *Side Pocket For A Toad*, as runner-up.

Sponsors of this year's main bar were London brewers Fullers who having recognised the importance and reputation of the St Albans festival exhibited their full range of beers,



1



4



2



5



3

... dressing the main bar in their distinctive red and white livery. Up on stage the bar was sponsored by Hertford's mighty micro Red Squirrel brewery for the second year running, who again used the festival to show off their huge range of beers, including a special one-off beer that had been brewed as a tribute to Ted Ovenden, the long-time South Herts CAMRA member who died suddenly this summer. The two bars did brisk business throughout Thursday afternoon and into the evening when the

festival welcomed back the Verulam School Big Band. These young musicians wowed the crowd with their virtuosity and ensemble playing and got a huge round of applause from an appreciative audience.

Meanwhile the foreign beer bar in the lower foyer was beginning to hot up and the Leos tombola was reporting brisk business. Friday is always the big day at St Albans and this year was no exception. The auditorium remained busy throughout the afternoon and by early evening queues started to stretch back almost



1. Visitors mingle in the foyer area where they could join CAMRA and visit the other trade stands on display.
2. "Soul System", Friday night's entertainment performs in the upper balcony
3. Over 2,400 festival glasses, sponsored by brewers Charles Wells (pint) and Adnams (half pint), were sold at this year's festival
4. This year's main bar was sponsored by Fullers
5. The Foreign Beer Bar in the Lower Foyer was as popular as ever
6. Nine pm Friday night on the main bar
7. Auctioneer Steve Bury attempts to knock down another item of brewiana in his nightly auction.

to the High Street.

The nightly auction, run by Steve Bury, is always entertaining but this year Steve, helped by Bill Austin from CAMRA's Watford branch, outdid himself and raised a huge amount of money for local charities.

Guests came from as far away as Bristol and Edinburgh with a smattering of visitors from overseas. Peter Hallan, from just outside Rotterdam was visiting some friends in Luton when he heard about the festival. "I had heard about your real ales but had

never experienced them. I am truly converted, especially to the light blonde beers."

Another foreign guest was Jan Flemming, from Pretoria in South Africa. He visited with his brother and was amazed at the range of styles available at the festival. "I have never seen anything like this before. I am enjoying your real ales as well as the Budvar Dark beer that you have in your downstairs bar."

We were honoured to announce at the festival that *Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde Mild* was voted CAMRA's Champion Beer of East Anglia.



Albans City Band played a wide selection which was very well received, and it was the same story on Saturday night when "Straight Life" appeared for the third time at the festival. A good time was had by all, especially when licensee Steve Bury announced to the Saturday night crowd at 10.30pm that the bars would stay open an extra half hour and all beer would be £1 a pint.

- We thank Good Beer Guide 2006 editor Roger Protz for being on hand on Friday to book sign his guide, and his latest book, *300 Beers To Try Before You Die!*

A record number of guests took part in the quiz on Saturday afternoon. Run by John Bailey, it stretched the brain power of our guests, with all questions relating to the names of beers and brewers at the festival and in the process raised £250 for charity.

Most agreed that the range of beers was the best ever, which was a testament to the skill of Andy Clark, at his first festival as Beer Supremo. All were agreed that he had done a fantastic job on the beer order.

Friday night's music was from "Soul System", a South London soul band. Opinion was mixed on the volume they generated but most of our guests seemed to enjoy them.

Over the Saturday lunchtime session the St



8. St Albans Mayor Malcolm Macmillan opens the festival.

9. Some happy drinkers toast the festival's success.

10. The stage bar, sponsored by Red Squirrel on the Thursday night. Roger Filler



Watford & District's Scotland Ale and Brewery Trip

Watford & District branch received a lesson in the realities of modern brewing on a recent trip to Scotland. We were there to present *Heather Ales* with their Beer of the Festival certificate for *Ebulum* (6.5% ABV) the rich, strong, elderberry-infused brew that bagged the top spot in the 10th Watford Beer Festival.

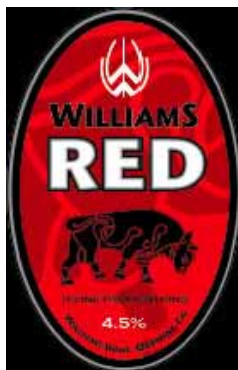
Brothers Bruce and Scott Williams run Heather Ales and recently moved their operation into the ex-home of the defunct



Forth Brewery in Alloa. Lesson one about modern small breweries is that they're usually in the back of beyond; Heather Ales is located in an unprepossessing haulage yard at the bottom of an Alloa industrial estate, which is just the kind of place you'd find a brewery. It was drizzling when we turned up, which didn't enhance the general post-industrial gloom, but it's always interesting to find where small brewers ply their trade, and it gives you something to think about when you see Heather Ales' beers in their selection boxes in Oddbins.

Scott welcomed us into the brewery itself, which is contained within what looks like a Victorian factory that's been stripped of its original machinery. Brewing equipment varies in size depending on the output of the brewery, and Heather Ales' kit takes up a fair amount of space, but there seemed to be quite a bit of room for expansion in the building. The brothers do a fair bit of contract brewing, a nice little earner for small (and larger) breweries, and have a bottling line for their own and others' beers. A lot of their beer is brewed for the bottle and sold through the likes of the aforementioned Oddbins; but it was, of course, cask-conditioned Ebulum that won our festival. Sadly none of that rich, potent brew was available on the day, but

Scott gave us tasters of a few beers that he and his brother are now producing under the banner of *Williams Brothers Brewery*. With an eye on marketing for modern tastes the Williams brothers are giving their new brand less of a Scottish History angle than the Heather beers. In a new departure for any brewer, the 'Williams Brothers' brand beers are brewed using 'divine proportions', also known as the 'Golden Section', a ratio that is



repeated throughout nature and, as it turns out, in the proportion of different ingredients in Scott and Bruce's beer. We tasted their three leading beers: *Gold*, which is a light-coloured but full-bodied session beer; *Red*, which is a malty beer in the 'heavy' or best bitter style and *Black*, which is much in the style of an English dark mild. We also got to try a new brew, as yet unnamed, which is a beer based on their Gold recipe, but with added tayberries (a hybrid of raspberries and blackberries unique to the area). *The Beer With No Name* came straight from the conditioning tank with its yeast sediment intact; so it looked like *Hoegaarden*, only pink. The fruit was strong on the nose but not quite so much in flavour and lent the beer a pleasing dryness. Scott suggested that we attempt to name it, and humoured our efforts, but it may well go out with its working title of *Pink Laddie*.

We also got to try one of the Heather Ales lines, which use locally sourced (often hand-picked) ingredients such as bog myrtle, spruce, pine and heather as flavourings in an attempt to recreate early styles of ale brewed before the Scots could easily lay their hands on hops. We tried *Alba*, which is the Gaelic word for Scotland. It's a

pickled spruce and pine beer, strongly flavoured but surprisingly palatable and rather potent.

We presented Scott with the winning certificate for *Ebulum* and let him get on with the business of brewing while we cabbed it up the road to Sauchie and the **Mansfield Arms**, a Good Beer Guide listed brewpub that's home to *Devon Ales*. A large lunch and a couple of pints of *Original 70/-* later and we were all ready for a nap back at our base, the **Bridge Inn** in Tillicoultry.

When we'd arrived the previous day we found that the pub's single Real Ale was *Fuller's London Pride!* Great, we never get to drink that! The landlord, however, had been good enough to stock up on *Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted* and we went to the source of this fine beer the following day.

South Herts branch wrote about Harviestoun Brewery in Alva in the last edition of Pints of View, so I won't go into too much detail other than to say that Ken Brooker has built himself a modern brewery in one of the many business estates that can be found all over Britain. This brings me to lesson two in modern small breweries: although Ken's purpose-built brewery is large and roomy, many modern micro-breweries are in characterless, out-of-town industrial units that could just as easily house textile importers or pharmaceutical distributors. Mind you, for a business estate, the one in Alva has a great view of the Ochil Hills and I certainly wouldn't mind working there. Alva is one of

several villages, including Tillicoultry and Dollar, which lie in the shadow of the Ochil Hills on the A91 between Stirling and St. Andrews. Streams run down between the hills and into the villages, which used to have thriving mills. The ruins of old mills can still be seen in the villages but now the main attraction is hill walking up those glens.

We had to wait until the following day to visit our next port of call. We made the two and a half hour journey by bus up to the ski resort of Aviemore to visit *Cairngorm Brewery*. This brewery is also located in an out of town business



The Ochil Hills from Alva



Mansfield Arms, Sauchie

park, but lacks the space for expansion that Harviestoun and Heather benefit from. The small space available in the unit is used to its best advantage and it doesn't seem to have held Cairngorm back, as they've just bagged the top two places in the Champion Beer of Scotland competition with *Black Gold* and

Trade Winds, respectively. We found ourselves at Cairngorm after a recount revealed that Trade Winds was runner up in our Beer of the Festival competition. Merlin Sandbach showed us around

the plant and gave us liquid refreshment in the form of the two winning beers, the former being a classic, smoky stout and the latter being a strong, full-bodied golden ale. The brewery company was formed to market the products of the Tomintoul Brewery and the Aviemore Brewery and the Cairngorm site is, in fact, the latter of these two. It's been there for a few years and so the kit looks less

squeaky clean than Ken Brooker's new equipment, but Cairngorm have invested in some new fermenters and are rearranging their set-up to cope with demand for their fine beers.

Another lesson that came up at both Harviestoun and Cairngorm was both companies' willingness to make keg versions of their beers for markets that can't or won't sell cask. Cairngorm Brewery seems to be a little apprehensive about CAMRA's potential reaction to this. It's true that some hardliners will brook no compromise on the cask front, but my own (moderate) opinion is that if such products lead to the breweries' survival then there's no problem, provided they continue to brew cask beers, and I can't see Cairngorm

giving cask up so soon after winning the top two Scottish CAMRA awards. Merlin was good enough to

give us all a lift back into town to the *Cairngorm Hotel* opposite the railway station. This is one of several local pubs (and two Good Beer Guide entries) that serve Cairngorm's beers, in this case *Stag*. The town itself is surprisingly busy, especially after a long journey through bleak and largely unpopulated glens. Tourism seems to be the main business and there were plenty of outdoor and ski shops to go along with the crafts and gifts. It seems that Aviemore pretty much acts as a hub for anyone wishing to explore the Cairngorms.

Our final day north of the border took us to

Bridge of Allan Brewery, which is located in a large brick-built shed around the back of a hotel in the middle of Bridge of Allan. Not all microbreweries are in the middle of nowhere but there are still compromises to be made in

finding the space to set them up. Head brewer Dougie Ross used to own the hotel as well as the brewery, but sold the former. Now he can't get his beer into the bar, or any other in the town, and exports most of his beer to England, where we apparently have more of a taste for his typically Scottish malty beers than do the Scots themselves. There seem to be two main reasons for this crazy situation: The dominance of keg beer like *Tennant's Lager* in Scotland and the (familiar) grip of the big pub companies and their approved beer lists on licensed premises in the area. He hasn't let

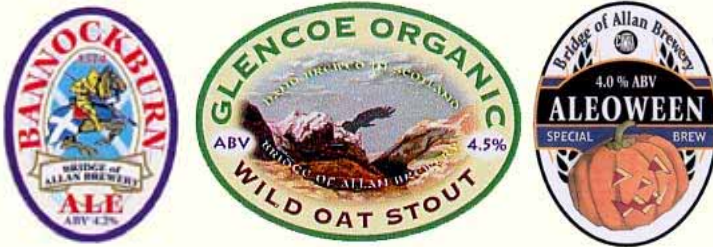
this get to him, though, and the brewery has, like *Cairngorm*, become an award-winner, scooping the awards

for Champion and Runner-up Scottish bottle-conditioned beers at the Troon Beer Festival with *Brig O' Allan* and *Blonde*.

Of all of the breweries we visited, Bridge of Allan is the one most geared to accommodating visitors. Despite being the smallest we'd seen, it has a

comfy bar area with tables set out just like a pub, brewing knick-knacks and ephemera from Scottish history adorning the walls. Dougie doesn't have an on-licence for the place, so all beer pulled was free and any bottles bought couldn't be consumed on the premises. Having said that, plans for the brewery include doubling the size of the building and moving the brewing equipment so that the bar

area can be expanded. He's hoping to get an on-licence too, so the place really will become a brewpub. Dougie got on with his business, so we accepted the hospitality of his assistant Paul, who plied us with *Bannockburn Ale*, an incredibly



A selection of ales from Bridge of Allan Brewery



Watford & District branch in Bridge of Allan Brewery

malty heavy (Dougie really isn't a hop fan and is the diametric opposite of Ken Brooker in this sense), the astringent *Scotch Mist* wheat beer and the familiar and warming *Glencoe Stout*.

Like Heather Ales and Cairngorm, a lot of Bridge of Allan's business comes in the form of bottled beer for the supermarkets and off licences, and in contract brewing. Dougie set up the City of Stirling Brewery site near the Forth River so that he could handle the demand for bottling and now City of Stirling is a brand in its own right, with bottles of the beer available to buy in the visitor centre.



As we sat in the convivial surroundings American tourists gradually filtered in. Maybe they were in the area to visit the historic city of Stirling and couldn't resist popping into the nearby brewery. There's a thriving microbrewery and brewpub scene on the other side of the Atlantic, so they might have known more about the stuff than we did.

Eventually we had to stir ourselves and ended up leaving it a bit late and running for the train to Glasgow, which would see us on our way back home after what was an intensive but enjoyable long weekend. To anyone wishing to follow in our footsteps: make a week of it.

Andrew Vaughan

11th Watford Beer Festival

The 11th Watford Beer Festival is taking place at the West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue, Watford, WD17 8HP from Thursday 17th November to Saturday 19th November. Once again the festival will be open from 5 – 11 on Thursday and 11 – 11 on Friday and Saturday. Entrance will cost £2 but will be free to CAMRA members and members of the West Herts Sports Club. Once again we'll have over 50 real ales, together with cider and perry. Food will be provided until 8pm on all nights.

Watford & District branch will be holding prior publicity socials for the festival and for the new Good Beer Guide at the Land of Liberty in Heronsgate, Southern Cross in Watford and Sportsman in Croxley Green. See the diary pages for details or contact the branch.

- See back page advert

Watford & District Cider Social



October is CAMRA's Cider & Perry Month and Watford & District branch will be holding a cider & perry social at the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty on Friday 28th October. Real ciders have subtle and varied flavours that have little in common with the nationally recognised brands, and are rare outside their West Country heartlands. Perry, cider made using pears, is even rarer. So if you fancy exploring new taste sensations, or reacquainting yourself with old friends, come along the Land of Liberty from 8pm.

Pub Names Wordsearch

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

Mark the twenty-nine pub names in the grid from the list below.

ALBION, ANCHOR, ANGEL, BLACK LION, COCK, COMET, DOLPHIN, EAGLE, FALCON, FISHERMAN, GOAT, GREEN MAN, HARBOUR LIGHT, HERON, JOLLY BARGEMAN, LIFEBOAT, LILLEY ARMS, MERMAID, NELSON, OLD BARGE, OLD BELL, PEAHEN, RAM INN, RAVEN, ROYAL OAK, SAILOR BOY, SWAN, VICTORY.

Completed entries should be sent to Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.
The first correct entry opened on the 1st December 2005 will receive a copy of the CAMRA 2006 Good Beer Guide.

The solution and winners to our Prize Crossword in Edition 212 will be shown in our next newsletter

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Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale
Morlands Bitter, Guest Beer

Adnams to Refit Southwold Brewery

Adnams have appointed German-based brewhouse manufacturers Huppmann to replace their existing brewery production equipment. The investment in the Southwold brewery is estimated at £3.8m and is expected to take 2 years to complete.

Huppmann, a family-owned company, will be working in conjunction with local contractors Duncans of Southwold, fitting the equipment and making the necessary alterations to the brewery building.



According to Managing Director Jonathan Adnams, "It is a major investment, that reinforces our commitment to Southwold, and the result will be Adnams having the most modern, energy-efficient brewery in Europe". Head Brewer Mike Powell-Evans is confident that the state-of-the-art brewery will not compromise quality, "the two systems will be run in parallel for a short time to ensure exact taste matching. We have every confidence that we can reproduce our current range of beers".

Queens Award:

Adnams of Southwold have been awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development. The company, which has been trading since 1890, won the award for their innovative approach to improving the environmental impacts associated with brewing operations, as well as a commitment to promote responsible drinking through a series of innovative campaigns. The presentation was made on Thursday 1 September by The Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lord Tollemache.

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Greene King Cross Border to Acquire Belhaven

After their successful assault on Ridley's only a couple of months ago, Greene King are at it again and have agreed to pay £187M for Belhaven, Scotland's largest independent brewer.

GK have bought out nine other brewers since 1996 and closed Rayment's, Ruddles, Morland and Ridley's breweries, but have given assurances that Belhaven will keep its name, brands and its East Lothian brewery. Belhaven's products include *80/-*, *Best* and *St Andrews Ale*.

To fund the Bury St Edmunds-based brewer's 625p per share deal, Greene King will be raising £47M through a share placing plan.

Greene King have now have 2,370 pubs and have become the country's largest pub owning brewer, overtaking their Midlands rival Banks's or Wolverhampton and Dudley.

For those of you who enjoy Greene King ales as I do, we have just received their forthcoming seasonal beer list:-



1/9/05 - 30/11/05 Ruddles *Orchard* (new) and Ridley's *Old Bob*

1/12/05 - 28/02/06 Greene King *Fireside* (new) and Ridley's *Rumpus*

1/3/06 - 31/5/06 Greene King *Triumph* and Ridley's *Prospect*

1/6/06 - 31/8/06 *Ale Fresco* and *Tolly Original*

Spirit Alive but Only Just

Reported in edition 212 that Spirit Inns had been bought by Punch Taverns for £3billion, it appears that Punch did not have that kind of capital to hand and the deal did not take place. Spirit have now sold 178 of their estate to the Tattershall Castle Group, which is part of Alchemy, for £177 million. Speculation is that Spirit's days are numbered and that a joint bid of £2.5 billion for what remains of their estate from Punch and Mitchells & Butlers may be accepted.

Both articles by Steve Bury

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ADDRESS.....

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POST CODE.....

SIGNATURE.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER/S.....

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I/we enclose a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd for membership for one year (tick applicable box).

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DOWN YOUR WAY

This Pub news section information comes from a large number of sources and from time to time errors may occur. Any comments or additional information will be gratefully received. See our contact details on page 3.

Barnet: The **Crown & Anchor**, High Street has been let.

Borehamwood: The **Suffolk Punch** in Howard Drive which has changed its name to the **Willow Tree** and has been refused an extension to its opening hours.

Buntingford: The **Chequers** is now called **Brambles** and welcomes customers of all ages, especially families.

Chandler's Cross: Daniel and Amy have left the **Clarendon Arms**. The pub is now being managed by Dylan Ruurd.

Colney Street: The **Black Horse** site was up for auction on 12th September following the mysterious fire which destroyed the pub after it had been covered with high security metal screens in 2003. The owner who reportedly lives in Thailand should be in for a large return on the investment.

Elstree: The **Waggon and Horses**, Medburn has replaced *Courage Best* with *Fullers London Pride*. Other beers are *Adnams Bitter* and *Wadworths 6X*.

Harpenden: The **Inn on the Green** is now serving a rotating guest.

Letchmore Heath: The **Three Horseshoes** has a mini beer festival of ten rotating guest beers running throughout October.

South Mimms: The **Black Horse** is open all day summer and winter, with food served lunch and evenings. As well as *Greene King IPA* and *Abbot* regular guest beers are available.

St Albans: The **Baton** in Marshalswick is closed for extensive building work.

Stevenage: The **Two Diamonds** which has been closed for refurbishment will re-open as a Mac's tenancy. Named the "2 Dry" this gives prospective guests an idea of the type of changes made. Good news is that they will still be serving a full range of McMullens cask beers.

BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Thu 6 Oct: Watford Social at the **Essex Arms**, 8.30pm; **Beaver**, 9.30pm; **Southern Cross**, 10.30pm.

Wed 12 Oct: London Social at the **Lamb**, Lamb's Conduit Street, 6pm; **Swan**, Cosmo Place, 7pm; **Night & Day**, Russell Square, 7.45pm; **Square Tavern**, Tolmer's Square, 8.30pm; **Head of Steam** (Doric Arch), Euston Station Colonnade, 9.30pm.

Mon 24 Oct: Committee Meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Fri 28 Oct: National Cider & Perry Month social at the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Heronsgate at 8.30pm. Find out more about real cider and perry at the 11th Watford Beer Festival, see pages 14/20.

Watford Beer Festival and Good Beer Guide 2006 publicity socials (2 socials):

Wed 2 Nov: **Southern Cross**, Watford, at 8.30pm.

Thu 10 Nov: **Sportsman**, Croxley Green (Branch Pub of the Year) at 8.30pm.

Thu 17 to Sat 19 Nov: 11th Watford Beer Festival, **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford.

Mon 28 Nov: Committee Meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Wed 7 Dec: Club Social at the **Watford Town & Country Club**, Rosslyn Road, Watford, 8.30pm. This is a members' club and visitors may need to be signed in. Contact branch for details.

Thu 15 Dec: Talk presented by the Watford Museum on the Pubs of Watford High Street. Everyone welcome. Contact branch for details.

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan. Phone: 01923 230104. Email: branch@watfordcamra.org.uk
Website: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tue 18 Oct: Branch meeting, **Red Lion Hotel**, Radlett, 8pm. All members welcome.

Tue 15 Nov: Branch meeting, **White Horse**, Hertford, 8pm. All members welcome.

Branch Contact: John Bishop 01582 768478,
Email – realales@yahoo.com, Internet:
www.hertsale.org.uk

Subscriptions for Pints of View

£5 for 18 issues. Send to: John Lightfoot, 66 Dryfield Road, Edgware, Middx., HA8 9JT.
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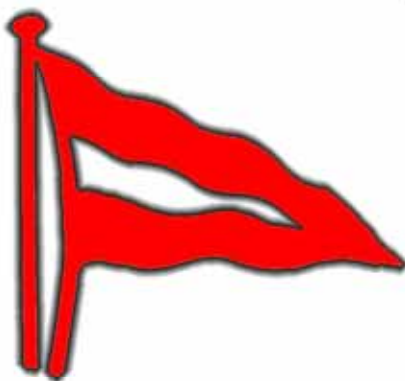
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Further information at www.watfordcamra.org.uk