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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

October/November 2006

Circulation 5000

No. 219

A Festival Salute

Dr Feelgood Tops Our Best Festival Yet
- See Centre Pages -



Also In This Issue:

- Shock Figures on Pub Closures
- Out and About Near Rickmansworth

THE BITTER END

Pub Closures - New Shock Figures

CAMRA branches nationwide have recently taken part in a survey of the pubs in their areas and the results make for depressing reading.

The survey covered over 10,000 pubs, 16% of the national total of 60,000 and therefore a representative sample. Branches found that 139 pubs had closed permanently during 2005. Assuming the same rates for the other 50,000 pubs this would mean 816 pubs closed nationally i.e. 68 per month or 16 per week. This is a much worse figure than for the last detailed survey, which showed 6 pubs closing per week.

The figures get even gloomier if you include pubs which closed during 2005 but which might (but might not) reopen, which totalled 1626.

What's especially notable from the results is the extent to which pub closures have become an urban problem. Over three times as many pubs shut permanently in towns and cities as in rural areas. With figures showing 33 rural and 106 urban closures it reflects the fact that many village pubs are now well protected by planning policies. Increasingly, local councils will refuse planning consent to change the use of rural pubs, especially the last one in a village. For pubs in urban areas, few such protections exist - something CAMRA is trying to get changed.

In Hertfordshire we have had two instances where demolition has been used to, or attempt to, circumvent the planning system. The first is of course the **Mile House**, London Road, St Albans, gutted and renamed the **Grill Bar**, opening as a

steak house without real ale. It was then closed and demolished without permission in 2003. Needless to say this offended the council planners and local residents who ran an exceptional campaign and succeeded in getting all planning applications to convert to residential use refused. The other case is the **Black Horse**, Colney Street which mysteriously



The Farmers Boy, Langley - now empty

caught fire after it had been security boarded up with metal shutters. If my memory is correct this was in 2002. The pub is now a heap of rubble and the site was sold at auction in September 2005. If anyone knows who the new owners are or what their plans are please inform the newsletter. Sometimes I think it is done on purpose. A new application for

change of use of the **Tin Pot** in Gustard Wood has been lodged between editions of *Pints of View* with a closing date for objections set early September. When we reported in Edition 217 (June/July) that the pub had been put on the market for a staggering



The Tin Pot - up for sale at £1.5M

£1.5 million no application for change had been made; it had previously been advertised for sale at £900,000 in 2004. The Tin Pot is still open but only as a guest house. I am reasonably happy that my objection to the change of use was one of many. As with all closed pubs, the **Grandison Arms** at Bramfield being another good example, be vigilant and get your objections in. In Langley we believe the

Farmers Boy is still owned by Greene King, and still licensed premises, but has now been shut for several years, and is looking very decrepit and unloved. Sadly missed. Don't let this happen to **your** local. Almost five years after it was sold to Mr & Mrs M McCarthy the **Plough**, Great Munden has been demolished to make way for a single house. The Plough was built in 1880 for C.P.Christie and Co,

brewers from Baldock, and eventually it came into the hands of Watford-based Benskins brewers who tried to sell the premises as a "non-going concern" in the early 1960s. In 1965 Gerald Carrington, a professional organ builder, took over The Plough and, in 1967, to diversify and enhance the business, installed a Compton Organ which was obtained from the Gaumont Cinema in Finchley. Regular concerts on the Compton kept people coming to the Plough for many years; you would often see a coach party visiting. The organ was sold in 2003 and without an attraction to draw people it was only a matter of time before the pub was no more. R.I.P.

I know I have said it before in this newsletter but the message is the same; many excellent classic pubs are closing, not because of unscrupulous developers, but because they are not viable. *Use them or lose them.* *Steve Bury*

CAMRA Slams Greene King for Killing off Kimberley Brewery

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has condemned the announcement by Greene King that Hardys & Hansons brewery in Nottinghamshire will be closed by the end of the year.

Despite thousands of Hardys & Hansons drinkers signing a petition to keep the 174-year-old brewery in Kimberley, Greene King have announced that brewing will cease by Christmas and be moved to Bury St Edmunds. The Kimberley site will be retained, but as little more than a distribution centre for Greene King in the midlands and the north.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive said, "We regard this as an unnecessary loss. Despite a history of brewery closures, Greene King has shown with its acquisition of Belhaven that it can integrate other breweries into a growing empire. We urge them to follow this approach with the Kimberley Brewery.

Britain's brewing heritage is being slowly eroded by a seemingly endless string of closures through consolidation, and drinkers across the UK need to join us in opposing this destruction. Greene King is a major brewer and promoter of real ale, but it has to listen to real ale drinkers, reverse its decision, invest in Hardys & Hansons brewery and promote its beers for the future".



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QUALITY FOOD

Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale
Morlands Bitter, Guest Beer

Mac's Former Brewery Site

Sold to Sainsbury's

Mcmullen's Victorian brewery and allied outbuildings, plus the 1980s brewery – a four acre site - has been purchased by Sainsbury's for an undisclosed sum. They aim to open a supermarket on the site. The deal will enable McMullen to pay off some of the bank loans taken out in 2003 to provide liquidity for shareholders and will offer a new opportunity to expand its pub estate.

The Victorian brewery (pictured below), an important landmark in Hertford, is listed so any alterations here will face stringent planning examination. Sainsbury has put no timescale, as yet, on the construction or opening of their new store.

Mac's Managing Director Peter Furness-Smith said "This deal was part of a long term plan to take McMullen's forward after we built the new



brewery".

Future McMullen operations will become restricted to the south side of Hartham Lane, where their new £1M brewery was opened earlier this year. In the weeks leading up to the purchase, Mac's were auctioning off surplus brewing equipment and plant, with interest coming from as far away as China.

The opening of the latest **Baroosh**, in Chelmsford, is imminent. More locally, major pub refurbishments are planned for the **Chieftain** in Welwyn Garden City and the **Blue Anchor** in St.Albans.

McMullen's latest seasonal beer offering (one

we've seen before and available until late October) is *IPA* which at 4.8% ABV is described as a full bodied beer using specially kilned amber malt to give it its deep rich flavours. November's 4.5% *Stag Bitter* (not to be confused, in any way, with its grim Watney namesake from years ago) will be followed by *Festive Stout* (6%) available in December and over the New Year period.

Les Middlewood CAMRA McMullen BLO

South Herts Branch Visit Fuller's

The evening of Thursday 20th July had humidity levels in West London at their highest when South Herts Branch members visited Fullers Brewery (picture below). For me it was the first visit this century though I did manage four visits in the last one and found the brewery much changed. We started in the **Mawson Arms** or **Fox & Hounds** - depending on which door you enter by, the nearest pub to the brewery having two names since a fire caused the two original buildings to be amalgamated.



We were met by Graham Satterley who is the Fuller's rep dealing with the **St Albans Beer Festival**, and were then taken round by John Holloway who used to be a drayman and had indeed delivered beer in the St Albans area at one time. Most of the old brewing squares and other equipment have now gone and all the beer is brewed in conical fermenters; it was explained that these were easier to clean, but did not save any time as the beer takes as long to brew.

What the conicals have done is allow larger quantities of beer to be brewed within the same buildings. Some of the old plant remains to show visitors the original process, but no longer will you see the two foot frothy heads of yeast on top of the brewing squares, and Fuller's new yeast strain is



bottom-fermenting. We received generous hospitality at the start and finish of the trip, and a buffet in the Mawson to follow. At the brewery *Gales HSB* - now brewed at Chiswick - was available, a sad sign of changing times where Fuller's have taken over and since closed the Horndean Brewery.

I thank both our hosts for an excellent trip and Fullers for their support of the St Albans Beer Festival. On the way home we visited the **Dove**, a classic Fuller's pub overlooking the Thames finishing what was an excellent evening out.

Steve Bury

- Brewery tours (only bookable in advance) are available. Call Fuller's on 020 8996 2063 or see internet site www.fullers.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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Cider Making in Inner London

Surprised? Yes, in recent years activity has been occurring in SE1 and SE23.

Allotments in SE23 in Honor Oak Park, has had a recent plot holder turn an overgrown plot into a site for permaculture events, and was lucky to be given a number of years ago, a small cider press and scrapper (apple shredder).

Between myself and the plot holder, we ran a small cider-making event in 2004, and in 2005 we ran a larger event open to CAMRA members in the area.

Over the course of the day more than 70 people came and give a hand, and about 20 gallons of juice was pressed.

We started at midday and finished at 8pm in the dark, followed by sitting round a campfire with music and food, accompanied by a barrel of *Castle* cider.

Cider making now actually occurs in SE16, originating from when a group of local residents from SE1 (London Bridge area) got together via an internet discussion group. The location of the pressing is in the excellent Surrey Docks Farm, situated right on the banks of the River Thames overlooking Canary Wharf.

The group after their hard efforts that Sunday each took away a 5 gallon barrel to ferment in their SE1 residences. Perhaps next year there will be a wassailing somewhere in SE1, although I'm not too sure what the Met police will think, if a shotgun is fired in inner London!

Ian White

- **Wassailing** - This is an ancient ritual, its aim to increase fertility of the apple trees. Wassail songs are sung and toast is put into the oldest or most fertile tree, cider is then poured over its roots and a shotgun is fired into the air, making a lot of noise in order to ward off any evil spirits.



Wassailing as performed by Exmoor Border Morris Men

This is a folklore idea that robins will feed on the bread and come back in the year to eat the grubs.



When Real Ale Went for a Burton

It's 30 years since the launch of Ind Coope "Burton Ale", an event which cannot be underestimated in the annals of the real ale revival in Hertfordshire.



Here's why.

Britain had been in a depressing and smothering post-war clinch with cold and tasteless keg beers – the likes of Watneys *Red Barrel*, Ind Coope *Double Diamond*, Whitbread *Tankard*. Lager was rapidly elbowing its way into the brewing scene. In this climate, real ale was fast disappearing. By 1972, Hertfordshire, a county of over 1000 pubs, had less than 90 real ale outlets.

Into this world of fizz came forth CAMRA, a growing band of real ale enthusiasts hell bent on preserving real ale, and a thorn in the side to many of the brewers. To them CAMRA was a paradox – vociferously against a lot of brewery policy but yet very much in favour of their real ale products. Rarely had the breweries encountered such organised opposition or, in real ale, such support.

In 1972 CAMRA's earliest surviving branch (now

South Hertfordshire but then an all-Hertfordshire branch) was formed. The local pub and brewery situation was largely in tune with that of the national scene. There was no real ale at all in Watney pubs. In other pubs – often rural or old-style town locals – a hardy band of remnant landlords and drinkers, persevering with real ale, often to the annoyance or amazement of the brewers, had kept real ale afloat. McMullens preferred to see their real ale sold under top pressure. Greene King had a policy on the number of pubs that would be allowed to stock real ale. Whitbread reluctantly shipped their real ales from outside the area. At Ind Coope real ale production was heading towards a terminal decline. Free Houses had yet to see the new wave of opportunity open to them.

In Hertfordshire, despite some notable wins, real ale pub numbers dropped to around 65.

But the seed of real ale interest was beginning to flower. CAMRA's sometimes crude but always effective tactics and its increasing activities were attracting the press, securing more members and, most importantly, winning over the drinking public. By the mid-seventies, CAMRA local membership had swollen – now with four branches in

The Farmers Boy

Still

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 - Serving good quality home-cooked food
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Gerry and Heidi invite you to take a look at the new Farmers Boy....

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01727 800029

Hertfordshire – each pressing landlords and brewery representatives for real ale. Demand had tempted some of the more enterprising

publicans to stand behind the real ale banner (in South Hertfordshire some of them dispensing beer from former Watneys handpumps refurbished by branch members). In the four years to 1976 real ale pub numbers climbed gradually to 120 – still only a fraction of the number of county pubs.

The situation was progressing well, if slowly. But a push was required and it came from an unlikely source. Perhaps initially dreamt up as a marketing opportunity, Ind Coope, in 1976, announced

that they were to brew a new real ale at Burton-on-Trent. "Burton Ale" would be a light-brown, hoppy bitter at an original gravity of 1047 and it would soon appear in 600 of its pubs in the South-East – 87 of them in Hertfordshire. Quite an investment both in brewing, handpumps and training and perhaps a gamble for Ind Coope, yet for CAMRA this represented a huge boost for the availability of real ale in the county. Such was the demand and success that other Ind Coope pubs soon queued for the beer and on the back of *Burton Ale*, Ind Coope drinkers began pressing for Ind Coope Bitter on handpump. KK light Mild sales even increased in some pubs. Real ale pub numbers in Hertfordshire soon reached 250 and publicans from other breweries began to press for real ale for their pubs.

In time the other brewery nationals each understood that there was a market for real ale and the smaller local brewers such as Greene King and McMullens each loosened their beer policies on real ale, and handpumps appeared in their pubs. Local free houses began searching further afield for their beers – *Youngs*, *Ruddles*, *Adnams*, *Fullers* and *Samuel Smiths* being early visitors to the Hertfordshire real ale scene.

It's 30 years since the launch of Burton Ale and real ale now flourishes in our area – there's a vibrant local brewing scene with regular new

brews and a sustained and keen interest in real ale. Wonderful beers are now in some wonderful pubs.



But what has happened to Burton Ale?

Well, it's still available, though now a rare find in Hertfordshire pubs, these days. It is brewed by Carlsberg UK using the former Tetley brewery in Leeds. The beer is described in the **2006 Good Beer Guide** as "A beer with hops, fruit and malt present throughout, and a lingering complex aftertaste but lacking some hoppiness compared to its Burton-brewed original". Seek it out if you can.

So hats off to Burton Ale. Happy 30th birthday to an unsung hero of the real ale revival in Hertfordshire.

Les Middlewood

The Mermaid



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St Albans

Regular and guest ales

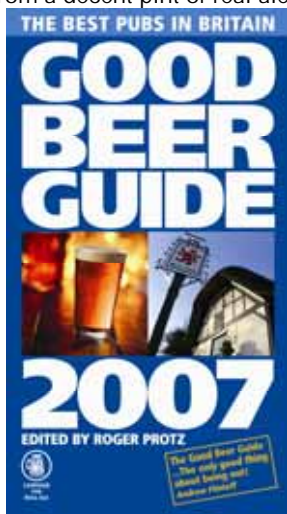
Lunch served 12 noon until
2pm

Sky Premiership Football



CAMRA'S Good Beer Guide 2007

The 34th edition of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) **Good Beer Guide** edited by award-winning beer writer Roger Protz was officially released on Wednesday September 13th. The **Good Beer Guide 2007** is the number one guide to pubs selling fine quality real ale. From sophisticated city bars to cosy country inns, tiny off-beat locals to grand architectural gems, with the *Good Beer Guide 2007* you are never far from a decent pint of real ale.



The Real Ale Revolution Goes On!
84 new breweries and hundreds of new pubs listed in the *Good Beer Guide 2007*.

CONSUMER demand for real ale has led to the birth of 84 new breweries in the UK in the last 12 months that are listed in the *Good Beer Guide 2007* – published on September 13th by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Hundreds of new pubs are also included in the updated guide.

Social ownership can help save threatened breweries

A call for new forms of social ownership for small breweries – including management buy-outs and co-operatives – is made by the editor of the *Good Beer Guide 2007*.

Editor Roger Protz says the cull by regional brewers must be stopped in order to ensure a good choice of beers for drinkers, and puts forward an argument for threatened breweries to be run and owned by their management and

workers or turned into community co-ops.

A quick reference guide to new breweries and pubs in the Good Beer Guide 2007:

	New Breweries	New Pubs
Total UK	84	594
<i>Of which:</i>		
Total England	73	507
Total Scotland	4	55
Total Wales	6	24
Total Other	1	8
This CAMRA Region + London		
Total E. Anglia	11	43
<i>Of which:</i>		
Bedfordshire		12
Cambridgeshire	1	16
Essex	2	3
Hertfordshire	1	1
Norfolk	6	9
Suffolk	1	2
Total London	1	13

Unspoilt Pubs in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2007

THE country's most unspoilt pubs are featured and lists guide the reader to a rich variety of pubs ranging from humble rural gems to magnificent Victorian drinking palaces.

The traditional pub has been ravaged by change over the past few decades and CAMRA has put huge efforts into identifying the last-remaining examples. The new *Good Beer Guide* identifies 188 pubs which are still much as they were half a century ago. In addition the guide lists a further 63 examples where there are particular features or rooms in otherwise altered buildings which CAMRA considers to be of truly national importance.

The *Good Beer Guide 2007* is available from CAMRA priced £14.99 (£11.00 for CAMRA members). Order by calling 01727 867201 or order online at www.camra.org.uk.

Crackdown on Borehamwood

Pubs Continues

The **Directors Arms** in Ripon Way, Borehamwood, was closed following a visit from Environmental Health Officers after a complaint about excessive noise levels. When they visited the pub on Wednesday 26th July they asked to speak to the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) but found that the registered person had left the pub and not been replaced. The pub was then closed under the new licensing regulations of 2003. A spokesperson for the Council who now control licenses said "Those responsible for licensed premises should be warned that we will take the necessary action to ensure licensing requirements are met".

The pub re-opened the following Monday.

Don't Forget your Knickers Girls

Well that's the message in the July edition of Suffolk Police's magazine "Safe". It contains a reminder for female readers "intent on getting ratted", alongside a picture of a scantily clad woman on the floor with the caption "if you've got it don't flaunt it".



It reads: "If you fall over or pass out, remember your skirt or dress may ride up. You could show more than you intended - for all our sakes, please make sure you're wearing nice pants and that you've recently had a wax. Better still, eat before you go out, think about how much you're drinking pace yourself and drink plenty of water between bevies or better still don't get in this sorry state - it's not nice". The police defended the article by saying that following assaults on ladies under the influence of alcohol, they hoped it would encourage young women to pick up the magazine and take notice. *To me the whole thing sounds like madness, to make yourself more presentable will not help in the case of sexual assaults. The next advice will be chastity belts for drunken nights out. Ed*

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The Friendly Festival

This year's St Albans Beer Festival broke all previous records. Roger Filler was there

It's become known as the "Friendly Festival" and the 11th St Albans Beer Festival at the Alban Arena at the end of September lived up to its reputation, welcoming friends old and new back to the city, with a bumper selection of beers. Over 350-plus British real ales and ciders as well as over 100 different foreign beers could be sampled over the festival's four-day run.

Organised by South Herts CAMRA, in conjunction with other local CAMRA branches and the St Albans Leos, this year's festival attracted record crowds (over 8,000 visitors) and in the process raised thousands of pounds for local charities and CAMRA locally and nationally.

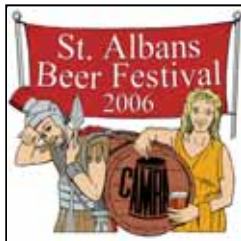
The festival was officially opened on the Wednesday evening by Alison Stear, St Albans City Mayor, after short speeches from local MP Anne Main, Fergus McMullen from McMullen

brewers, and John Keeling, Head Brewer from Fuller's brewery. Also on the podium was Ollie Graham, from Crouch Vale Brewery, winner of our Beer of The Festival for 2005, and current national champion.

This year's festival, which was mainly sponsored by Fuller's and Young's breweries, gave visitors a wide range of taste sensations. St Albans has always been the place to find the unusual and esoteric in the world of brewing and this year's event was no exception. with beers from over 30

new breweries. The familiar was not forgotten though and all Hertfordshire's local breweries were represented as well as local and national champion beers.

Downstairs in the foreign bar, beers from across the globe were available. For the second year running Czech brewer Budvar sponsored the bar, and sales of their *Budvar Dark* on draught proved popular.





1

In the main foyer area guests could buy brewery-related merchandise and get their glasses engraved. The Leo's tombola stall, always busy, did good business again this year, and the CAMRA products stand signed up a large number of new members. **Good Beer Guide** editor, Roger Protz, also came along to sign copies of the latest 2007 edition, and at the Friday night session, local author Allan Whitaker was available to sign copies of his latest book, *Brewers in Hertfordshire*.

Beer of the Year

A panel of judges at the Thursday lunchtime session, made up of licencees, brewers and CAMRA stalwarts, spent most of the session deciding which beers were outstanding enough to be crowned St Albans Beer of the Festival.



3



2

The winner was Potbelly's *Beijing Black*, very closely followed by Grand Union's, *Honey Porter* and in third place was current National Champion Crouch Vale *Brewer's Gold*.

Saturday lunchtime McMullen's kindly drove their vintage steam wagon over from Hertford and displayed it in the Market Place to promote the festival.

A record number of guests took the quiz on Saturday afternoon which 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.

Entertainment

Music has always featured prominently at St Albans and this year's "friendly festival" featured the legendary rhythm and blues band **Dr Feelgood**, who wowed the packed Saturday night audience with a set that featured their hits *Milk & Alcohol* and *Down at the Doctors*.

In contrast, on Thursday night, a number of our guests came to see the local Verulam School Big Band, back for a third year, which got a great reception from another packed crowd. St Albans City Band was the last of musical treats for this year and they played a laid-back selection to reflect the mood of the early Saturday lunchtime session.

Records smashed

Over 1,000 extra customers came through the doors of the Arena this Saturday compared to last year, and while we had prepared for an increase,



4

this was beyond our wildest expectations and it put huge pressure on all aspects of the operation, run entirely by volunteers from the Campaign. Despite a huge increase in the cider and perry order there was not a drop left by late afternoon on Saturday and with beers on both bars and also in our foreign bar, also running low. Latecomers also had the opportunity to enjoy the music and still have a beer choice, even though -

BEERS OF THE FESTIVAL

1. Potbelly Beijing Black 4.4
2. Grand Union Honey Porter 4.9
3. Crouch Vale Brewer's Gold 4.0



6



5

1. CAMRA volunteers behind the main bar were kept busy throughout the festival.
2. Fergus McMullen addresses the crowd at the opening ceremony flanked by local MP Anne Maine and Festival Organiser Phil Defriez.
3. The BBC World Service interview festival licensee Steve Bury.
4. A relaxed Thursday night crowd comfortably fills the auditorium.
5. Some of our visitors found innovative ways of combining eating and drinking.
6. The main bar, sponsored by Fuller's.



it was quite limited towards the end of the evening.

St. Albans is now the biggest CAMRA beer festival in the South East, excluding the annual London **Great British Beer Festival** at Earl's Court, and attracts visitors from right across the UK and beyond. Groups from Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and Poland visited the festival during its four-day run and also the BBC World Service filmed a piece for broadcast during the Saturday lunchtime session.

On behalf of the organising committee, we would like to thank everybody who came along to our "friendly festival".

We will be back at the end of September next year and hope to bring you an ever better event for 2007.

Cheers!!

RF

Above left: Banners in St Peter's Street welcomed visitors to the city.

Above right: Guests enjoy the variety of ales available.

Below: Dr Feelgood rocked the festival on Saturday night





Herts Readers Write



French Row Revisited

As a lapsed historian, I was interested to read your question about the name French Row in Edition 218.

Briefly, early in the 13th century the King of France sent his son, the Dauphin, to England to depose King John. For a while the Dauphin's troops were quartered near the High Street, and when they departed the impressed locals nicknamed the area French Row. There is a slight confusion about the actual date: old guide books by St Albans City Council quote 1216, but Chris Saunders's excellent www.salbani.co.uk website states 1217. In "The Story of St Albans" Dr Elsie Toms goes further and stipulates December 1217. She adds, "The first mention (of French Row) is found in 1259; it is given without any explanation, showing that it was already established as the familiar name of the street".



Then, as you mention, in 1356 King John of France (left) was captured at Poitiers and later lodged for a short time in a private house in French Row. Later this house became an inn, named the Fleur-de-Lys after that royal visit.

Tim Holman

Camra Food Guide Editor Praised.

May I, through your columns, express to dear Sue Nowak how much not only CAMRA members but all RIGHT THINKING people in St Albans miss her? The newspaper of which she should have become editor has gone downhill fast since her departure. Sue, mentioning the excellent food at the **Portland Arms**, will be sorry to hear that the impending Railfreight Depot at Park Street may wipe out their suppliers, Hedges Farm, altogether. Better news is that the **Verulam Arms** (1853), Sue's local which she knew well, has been well restored and is also offering fine locally produced food and five choices of real ale in excellent condition.

Tony Billings.

Chaplins Chow a liberty?

I was reading about the **Land of Liberty Peace**

and **Plenty** in the magazine and wondered if it is still remembered that at some time the pub was frequented by Charlie Chaplin.



In the early 1970s, Chaplin was in this country and decided to make a nostalgic visit to the Land of Liberty and lunch was ordered.

A large silver salver was put in front of him. When the cover was taken off, on the dish was a boiled old boot. There was laughter all round when Chaplin picked up his knife and fork as though to try and eat it. Pics were taken and then Chaplin was allowed to get on with his proper meal.

I wonder if a memento of this still exists?

Harvey Haynes

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

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Evening meals Monday to Thursday 5:30-7:30

Friday & Saturday 5:30-10:00

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www.blackhorseherts.co.uk

Tony & Linda are CAMRA members

Pints of View Pub Sudoku

	A	R				M		
W				A	O	L		
	E		M					B
		A		R				E
			E		W			
O				Y		B		
A					E		B	
		Y	R	O				A
		B				Y	M	

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that every row, column and each of the nine 3x3 squares contain all the letters of the word **BARLEYMOW**.

Completed entries by 1December 2006 to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.

1st winner drawn wins a CAMRA 2007 Good Beer Guide.

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Winners of the Pints of View CAMRA Sudoku in Edition 217: 2006 Good Beer Guide D. Field, Wheathampstead, 2005 Beer Festival T-Shirts – M Jones, Whitwell and A. Bainbridge, Spring, Hertford. **SOLUTION BELOW:**

H	S	P	E	L	I	D	A	R
A	I	E	H	R	D	L	P	S
R	L	D	A	S	P	I	H	E
D	R	I	S	A	H	P	E	L
S	E	L	P	D	R	A	I	H
P	H	A	I	E	L	R	S	D
I	A	R	L	H	S	E	D	P
L	P	S	D	I	E	H	R	A
E	D	H	R	P	A	S	L	I

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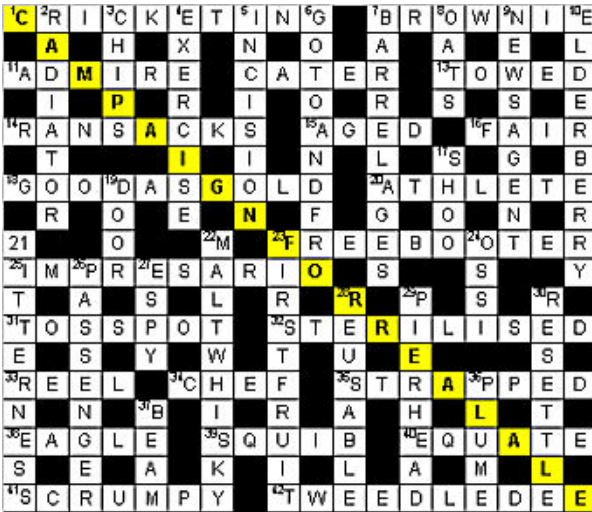
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Winners of the Pints of View CAMRA Beer St. Albans Beer Festival Prize Crossword in Edition 218: **Pair of tickets plus £10 worth of beer tokens** to A Southgate of Hitchin and P Anderson of Welwyn, Herts. These were the only two correct entries.

There was an error; the clue shown against 9 Down was actually the clue to 10 Down. The proper clue for 9 Down was missing from the list of clues. Only one word would fit in the squares for 9 Down as shown in the grid, but any entry, including blank spaces was accepted. We apologise for the error and any inconvenience caused. **SOLUTION BELOW**



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Get on Board the 'Rail Ale Trail'

Beer lovers are being invited to “let the train take the strain” and board the Abbey Line to experience the taste of real ale in 16 pubs along the Abbey Line which runs between St Albans and Watford.

The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, which receives funding from Hertfordshire County Council, has joined forces with the South Herts branch of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) to launch the 'Rail Ale Trail', which promotes sensible enjoyment of real ale alongside safe and reliable train journeys.

The trail, detailed in an attractive leaflet, lists 16 pubs along the line, between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey stations. Participants can collect stamps from each pub and obtain a specially designed Rail Ale T-shirt.

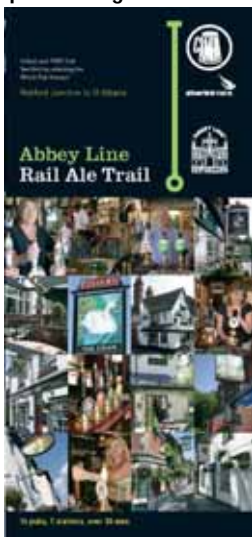
County Councillor Stuart Pile, Executive Member Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs said: “There are a number of pubs along the Abbey

great campaign and we are always in favour of anything that encourages people not to drink and drive. We want people to enjoy themselves without risking their own lives and the lives of others by drinking and driving. Our message is simple, if you drink – don't drive”.

Chair of the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, County Councillor Aislinn Lee said: “The Community Rail Partnership works hard to promote tourism through train travel and the Rail Ale Trail is another example of encouraging people to use the line and to visit the towns and villages along the route”.

The Rail Ale Trail was launched on September 21.

Trains leave Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey in both directions every 45 minutes, Monday to Saturday. Early evenings and Sunday services run hourly. The train journey takes 16 minutes from end to end.



line which we know are very popular with local people. Through this initiative we are hoping to encourage people to travel by train when they visit any of the pubs along the route of the line. We also hope it will raise awareness of this local line.”

The Road Safety Team at Hertfordshire County Council is also supporting this project. Theresa Casbard, Head of Road Safety said: “This is a



For further information contact Maria Cutler - Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership Tel 0777 099 3162. Or visit www.abbeyline.org.uk

Subscriptions for Pints of View

£5 for 18 issues. Send to: John Lightfoot, 66 Dryfield Road, Edgware, Middx., HA8 9JT. Cheques payable to: CAMRA South Herts.

Out & About: West Hyde, Maple Cross & Hornhill

There are a few parts of the Watford & District branch area that, to be honest, the Watford-based branch members don't make it to often enough. One of these areas is the narrow piece of Hertfordshire that's just south of Rickmansworth, sandwiched between Harefield in Greater London and Buckinghamshire. The branch took the opportunity to visit this area on a sunny Sunday afternoon in August.

We took the number 6 bus from Watford to Maple Cross and walked down the Denham Way (A412), branching off into Old Uxbridge Road until we found ourselves in West Hyde village.



It seems that West Hyde was once on the main route to Uxbridge but was shunted off the main drag when the North Orbital Road (A412) was constructed. It is now marooned between the road and the series of lakes formed by the River Colne/Grand Union Canal that separate it from Harefield.

The **Oaks** public house (pictured above) is on a sharp bend at the corner of Old Uxbridge Road and Coppermill Lane, with a quite picturesque view across the fields towards the Denham Way. In many ways it is a typical modern community pub, serving up drinks, food and TV sport in an open-plan layout that may once have looked very different. The cask ales usually available are Fuller's *London Pride* and *Flower's Original*, with *Flower's IPA* substituted for the latter on this occasion. *Flower's*, which is now being contract brewed by Badger Brewery, used to be ubiquitous but is now rarely seen. The only other

branch pub I can remember that regularly serves it is the **Villiers Arms** in Oxhey.

After visiting the Oaks we walked back up Old Uxbridge Road, onto the Denham Way and back to Maple Cross, where we stopped off at the **Cross** public house. The Cross (pictured below) looks like quite an old pub and has probably existed for longer than the Maple Cross estate that it now serves. Alan Whitaker's book 'Brewers in Hertfordshire: A Historical Gazetteer' has the Cross down as a Salter's of Rickmansworth public house as early as 1770, although it's always possible that the pub has been rebuilt at some time. It still retains a two-bar layout, although the dividing door has been removed. The Cross was a cask ale-free



zone for a few years but the new landlord now has *Courage Directors* on the bar, which we drank while sitting in one of the window bays in the sizeable lounge.

We now had a bit of a hike uphill ahead of us. From the Denham Way the road through Maple Cross snakes uphill towards Chalfont St. Peter. The walk up Hornhill Road brought us to Shire Lane and the **Dumb Bell** (pictured over) public house opposite Rickmansworth Lane. The Dumb Bell is probably one of our most remote pubs and is unusual in that it is in Hertfordshire, whereas the opposite side of Shire Lane is in Bucks. The Dumb Bell is an attractive country pub, and recent refurbishment has created a large restaurant area at the back, leading out to the extensive garden. The cosy bar area at the front has been retained. *Courage Best* and *Directors* were available on the day. Alan Whitaker's book suggests that a small brewery was located on the nearby Hornhill Farm in 1838 and that the brewer

Cont'd over -



owned a beer house called the Bell. I wonder if this could be the Dumb Bell?



The Old Shire Lane walk forms a circuit in the area, taking in West Hyde, Maple Cross, Hornhill and Heronsgate, so we joined the route and enjoyed a pleasant walk up Old Shire Lane and across the fields to the Swillet, from where it was just a short walk to Herts Pub of the Year the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, of which much has been written in these pages already, so I trust you need no more encouragement to visit.

Andrew Vaughan

CAMRA Enfield & Barnet Branch

Ramble

Saturday 2nd September 2006

The weather forecast for the day had been decidedly unpromising for several days. In spite of this a stalwart group met at Enfield Chase station. A contingency plan was in hand – if it started to rain heavily before we reached Bayford Station we would just continue on to Hertford (where we planned to finish our walk) and then do a crawl of the town. Fortunately it didn't.

The first pub visited was the **Baker Arms** - a McMullen house. We sampled the seasonal beer *Harvest Moon* which was in good form as was the *AK*. 2 more members joined us here having caught a later train. We then moved on with the rain still at bay; we were heading roughly south although our goal was north - but it all made for a good walk! Taking a footpath and then a bridleway we arrived at our next hostelry the **Beehive** at Epping Green (not to be confused with the larger village in Essex). This is a very picturesque pub that is very food-orientated with a speciality of fish. It served

(Cont/d)



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Baker Arms at Bayford

Fuller's London Pride, Greene King IPA and Adnams Bitter. The landlady initially had a "fobbing" problem with this latter and she was most concerned that she served a good pint as she had registered that we were CAMRA members - needless to say it was!

Our next pub across the boundary line of the village cricket pitch of Little Berkhamsted was the **Five Horseshoes**, which is part of the Chef and Brewer chain. Real ales available included *GK IPA, Wells Bombardier* and *Courage Best*. They were all drinkable but not, in our collective opinion of excellent quality.



Five Horseshoes at Little Berkhamsted

On again and eventually we passed under an old railway line that used to run between Hertford and Welwyn. At the junction at Hertingfordbury, we split into 2 groups to visit 2 different pubs; our group visited the **White Hart Hotel**, had *Courage Best* and *Directors*.

The others tried the **Prince of Wales**, which sadly had the *Brakspears* bitter pump clip turned around and the GK IPA was, to our palate, somewhat "tired".

Retracing our steps we visited another 2006 GBG pub, the **White Horse**, operated as a "semi-free house by Fullers. Then passing St. Andrews Church into the street bearing its name to the 3rd GBG entry for the town **Old Cross Tavern**. This was very crowded, but in spite of this the service

was quick. An excellent one to finish on as the following beers were available: - *Fuller's London Pride, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde* and *IPA*, and *Dark Star Hophead* and *Spiced Wheat*.



The Old Cross Tavern

A short walk took us to Hertford North Station – we certainly wet our whistle but remained dry on the outside. Here's to the next real ale ramble.

Ron Andrews

DOWN YOUR WAY

Note: This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur. Comments or additional information should be sent to our contact details on page 11.

Bricket Wood: The **Moor Mill** is closed for refurbishment; any further information will be gratefully received. The **Gate**, Charles Wells; also closed for refurbishment was due to re-open 20th September.

Bushey Heath: The **Devonshire Arms** was closed after a review of its licence prompted by complaints of noise from local residents. The owners, Save Investments Ltd, are taking the case to court. In the meantime the pub will stay open.

Epping Green: The **Beehive** has new management.

Great Munden: The **Plough** has been demolished. (See Pub Closures article page 3).

Gustard Wood: The **Tin Pot** has a new change of use application (see Pub Closures article page 3).

Harpenden: The **Red Cow** has been voted Best Public House in the Harpenden in Bloom competition.

Hertingfordbury: *Courage Best* (very acceptable condition) is available at the **White Horse Hotel** (Aquarius Hotels). The new licensee of the **Prince of Wales** (London & Edinburgh) is Louise Evans. She has been there for two weeks dispensing good beer

Cont'd over -

and food. The range is *GK IPA*, *Abbot* (n/a when visited) and a guest (*Brakspear's Bitter*).

Langley: The **Farmers Boy** remains shut (see Pub Closures article page 3).

Radlett: Carl White, award winning chef from the **Plough** at Sleepshyde has moved to the **Cat & Fiddle**, Cobden Hill, Radlett. Brad, manager of the GBG listed **Red Lion Hotel** fell and has broken his pelvis in three places and had to undergo surgery. We wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Ridge: By the time we go to press the **Old Guinea** will have changed hands.

Shenley: Apologies to the **William IV** after edition 218, which has an excellent well maintained traditional pub sign. The **White Horse**, now controlled by Mitchells and Butlers, has been at the centre of speculation following a planning application in July.

St Albans: The **Bunch of Cherries** re-opened Friday 15th September, following refurbishment. The pub has been renamed the **Speckled Hen** as part of Greene King's re-launch of the reduced gravity *Old Speckled Hen*. The beer was originally brewed by Morland of Abingdon and

named after the classic MG sports car. Paul Smith, the new landlord at the **King Harry**, is from Namibia. The pub still serves 5 changing real ales. The **Farmers Boy** does not sell food after 7.30pm. The patio area has been cleaned up and opened out with some new furniture. The restaurant at the **Black Lion**, Fishpool Street, (privately owned – free house) is closed for refurbishment. It is planned to reopen by December with a more up-market theme. It is reported that Gail the owner is intending to have a fresh look at what the pub offers, both in beers and entertainment. Across the road, the **Blue Anchor** (McMullen) has another new manager, Steve, since the first week of September. The pub closed on 23 September 2006 for a complete refurbishment. The small bar facing onto Fishpool Street will be retained but the larger 'lounge' will become an up-market restaurant. It is reported that the bar counter in the lounge will be retained but only for food service. On the other side of town in St Julian's the **King Offa** has been under the stewardship of Roger Rudolf (no cracks about my Christmas spelling please) for the last six months. Roger has made some changes to the clientele and intends doing food once the kitchen is sorted.

Cont/d -

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Flowers IPA is the only cask ale at present but Roger hopes to put on a second beer soon. It has been a struggle to change the pub's fortunes and he is starting to turn it round. The **Old Kings Arms** in George Street, now masquerading as a Thai restaurant, has been sold off at auction. Whether it will return to being a pub remains to be seen.

Trowley Bottom: We have received sad news that the **Rose & Crown** have increased their beer prices from £1.50 to £1.70 per pint – outrageous!

Watford: The Watford Observer reported that the **Robert Peel** may be under threat as developers have apparently bought it, along with adjacent buildings that include **Taylor's Bar**. The developers' plans for the sites are unknown at the moment. Watford Football Club has bought the freehold of the **Red Lion** on Vicarage Road. It's business as usual so far but the club's long-term plans for the site are unknown at the moment.

Wheathampstead: The **Nelson** held its first beer festival in mid-September, with eight real ales available straight from the cask. Beers included *Hook Norton Hooky Bitter*, *Tring Jack O'Legs*, *Tring Austell Tribute* and *Batemans XXXB*. *Weston's Old Rosie* cider was also on hand and licensee Steve Pascall is planning another festival same time next year due to this year's phenomenal success. The **Wicked Lady** in Nomansland Common is closed for refurbishment.

BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Thu 12 Oct: Watford Beer Festival publicity pub-crawl: **Black Boy**, Windmill Street, Bushey Heath, 8.30pm; **Lazy Fox**, Sparrows Herne, Bushey, 9.30pm; **Swan**, Park Road, Bushey, 10.15pm.

Fri 20 Oct: Cider Social at **Land of Liberty**, Long Lane, Heronsgate, 8.30pm.

Wed 25 Oct: Watford Beer Festival publicity crawl: Starting at **Bodega**, The Parade, Watford, 8.30pm.

Mon 30 Oct: Committee meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Thu 9 Nov – Sat 11 Nov: 12th Watford Beer Festival, West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue,

Watford, WD18 7HP. See back page.

Thu 23 Nov: Quiz Night at the **Southern Cross**, Langley Road, Watford. Begins at 9pm.

Mon 27 Nov: Committee Meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Tue 12 Dec: Social - **Watford Town & Country Club**, Rosslyn Road, Watford, 8.30pm.

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan. Phone: 01923 230104. Mobile: 07854 988152.

Email: branch@watfordcamra.org.uk

Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tue 17 Oct: Branch meeting, **Red Lion Hotel**, Radlett 8pm.

Tue 7 Nov: Hertford, Bringing in the Beers – see p12

Tue 14 Nov: Branch meeting, **White Horse**, Hertford 8pm.

Thu 30 Nov: **New Members Night**, **White Lion**, St Albans, from 7.30pm.

Fri 8 Dec: Branch trip to **Brussels**. Meet at Waterloo International at 7am.

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Email: realales@yahoo.com

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