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HERTFORDSHIRE'S



Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

December/January 2006/7

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Spotlight on Pub Signs

www.hertsale.org.uk

www.hertsale.org.uk



See article pages 8 - 9

Also In This Issue:

- The importance of pub interiors
- 12th Watford Beer Festival report

THE BITTER END

Is Where You Drink as Important as What You Drink?

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)'s first priority is of course to ensure that a variety of good quality real ale is available in as many outlets as possible. We would be failing in our duty as a consumer organisation if we did not support naturally conditioned cider and perry, but it would be a sad state of affairs if we had to drink these excellent beverages, in sad and lacklustre surroundings.

With this in mind CAMRA has for many years been campaigning to protect historic pubs and their interiors, and because of this we have a Pub Campaigns Committee who have recently issued the advice, as reported below.

Since 1991 CAMRA has publicised its National Inventory of pubs with outstanding historic interiors. This list is sadly a small one, with less than 250 of Britain's 60,000 pubs now meeting the inventory criteria. Fortunately there are also a large number of other pubs which although no means intact, hold enough architectural and historic features left to make them well worth a visit, and are still in need of protection. These are also being collated and listed.

There is a third category of cherished interiors which are of more recent design, including refurbishments, which have been carried out especially well and so have architectural, if not historical merit.

Pub interiors have always been subject to change and change is not always a bad thing. Many renovations and alterations have been undertaken sensitively, and have displayed an understanding of good design. Many others have, unfortunately, resulted in loss of character; been imposed with short-term gimmickry or have introduced the bogus or tawdry. With the onus so much on dry sales (food) many pubs are still suffering the knock-through barn effect, to provide more covers (place settings) at the expense of historic features and the comfort of the traditional drinking clientele.

The pressure for change: The inside of your pub is starting to look a bit tired and tatty, trade is down, competition is hot – a gut

reaction may be to trash the place and install a quick replacement décor in the short term.

This may be successful but experience tells us that instant make-overs inevitably don't have much of a shelf life, and you're soon back to the tired and tatty - and this time it is unloved as well. The cycle of change and expense soon starts again.

Brewers and pub chains alike have been great exponents of "theming" whereby identikit internal schemes are foisted on a complete estate no matter what historic features or good design features exist, on the 'it works in one it will work in all' theory.

If all the traditional brewers were to close, and let's face it, a very large number of those that remained have done in the last five years, all would not be lost. The reason for this is that you could set up new breweries, get the old recipes or invent new ones, and brew again in a short period a wide variety of different and interesting beers of quality. With the micro-brewers winning so many CAMRA awards you think it has happened already. If you allow the pubs to be destroyed they are gone for good.

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1997 - 2007 Cask Marque Certification



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CAMRA to launch Community Pubs Week

17th – 24 February 2007

Following the article on pub losses in the last edition CAMRA nationally has decided to give a new beginning for CAMRA's popular **National Pubs Week**.

It's a frightening reality that at least 26 pubs are closing in Britain each month, and early indications of new research being carried out by CAMRA suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher. Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days as important community amenities. The local pub, after all, is often the heart of the community.

CAMRA has successfully run National Pubs Week for four years in an attempt to convince more people to visit more pubs more of the time. CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking. Despite low supermarket prices, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

In light of the increased threats to community pubs CAMRA is changing the focus of its week of action to help raise the profile and importance of pubs in the community and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to use community pubs more.

The new Community Pub Week will complement a range of CAMRA-led initiatives

including the Community Pubs Foundation, launched in 2005 to support campaigns to save local public houses by offering assistance to community groups, as well as a whole range of local campaigns by CAMRA to save and promote community pubs.



Community Pubs Week will celebrate and promote all community pubs - not just village locals, but urban gems too.

The newsletter will contain a much more detail of planned events in the next edition.

Participating pubs will also display information and news of activities during Community Pubs Week in your local area.

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Licensee Challenges

'Regulars' to Show Loyalty to the Chieftain

Drinkers at the McMullen's owned **Chieftain** in Welwyn Garden City appeared in the local paper decrying a decision to close and rebuild the pub. However, licensee Carolyn Lowe said most of the faces in the photo only drink in her pub once or twice a week, and do not qualify as regulars in her book. Now she has a copy of the picture behind the bar and says if the punters in it show up four times before the end of the month – she will buy them two free beers each.



The Chieftain

She has the backing of McMullen's Managing Director Peter Furness-Smith.

He said: "We don't want to do anything that will upset the local community. These are the people we are trying to appeal to and attract". He added; "This challenge is just a bit of fun".

McMullen's plans to build a smaller pub on the site along with some flats but several locals have signed a petition to keep the 98-year-old building. However, licensee Carolyn said: "It's the people that make the pub, this is just bricks and mortar".

Ed says: I suppose we should be grateful that the proposal is not to close the pub altogether. I also hope that the pub name is retained. Over the years Mac's have rebuilt or actually constructed new pubs near to pubs they have closed. The **Builders Arms** at Little Heath, **Potters Bar**, and the **Mops & Brooms** at Well End being two examples. The new pubs have character and that particular McMullen design and feel about them. - the Mops still has a thriving public bar. The challenge to Mac's is to emulate this and give the locals somewhere they are proud to use.

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Admiral Toasts Greene King Deal

Pub firm Admiral Taverns has beefed up its presence in southern England after buying 155 pubs in a £56m deal.

The Hertfordshire group (based in Rickmansworth) has snapped up 140 tenanted and 15 managed pubs from rival Greene King.



Greene King said the sale was part of its "continuous drive" to improve the quality of its estate.

Suffolk-based Greene King, most famous for its *Abbot Ale* and *Old Speckled Hen* beers, also agreed an "attractive" deal to supply beers to Admiral's pubs.

The deal means Admiral, founded in 2003, is now the UK's third largest operator of tenanted and leased pubs, with almost 2,000 sites.

"This transaction enhances the quality of our estate. These are typical high quality Greene King pubs located in some of the most attractive locations in the south of England," chief executive Gary Landesberg said.

BBC News, 20 November 2006

Pensioners May Lose Own Homes for Opposing Pub Hours

Four pensioners are facing financial devastation after daring to object to their local pub opening until the early hours.

Brewer Greene King is seeking £29,000 in legal costs, which could force them to sell their homes. The landmark case threatens to stamp out any opposition to late-night drinking.

One of the pensioners, Simon Harding, said: "They're just bully boys who want to make an example of someone. I suspect the whole brewery trade is looking at this case".

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Mr Harding led 40 residents opposing an application to open the **Dog and Partridge**, in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, until 1am.

He and Martin Whitworth, 82, exercised their right under the 2003 Licensing Act to object to the council's licensing committee. After a short hearing, the council sided with Greene King, a major employer whose brewery is in the town.

The pensioners, fearing their lives would be blighted by noise and people being sick, took their fight to the magistrates' court.

This right of appeal is a key feature of the Act and, under Government-approved guidelines, residents would normally expect to be spared costs.

Mr Harding, 64, backed by his partner Valerie Legg, 63, and Mr Whitworth, supported by his wife Sheila, 80, presented their case in person. They even had pictures of drinkers being sick in the street after the 24-hour drinking laws came into force on November 24, 2005.

But after a two-day hearing in April, the court found in favour of Greene King - who were represented by a top licensing lawyer. The brewery and pub chain, which made pre-tax -

profits of £121million last year, asked for costs but was turned down. Magistrates said the appeal was not frivolous and the residents had every right to lodge it.

But the four have now received letters saying Greene King is mounting a challenge in the High Court to the costs decision. The brewery said it was 'unfair' to have to pay to defeat the objections twice - once at the council meeting, then in court.

It said not challenging the decision would pose a threat to thousands of community pubs across the country.

Mr Harding, a retired civil servant and devoted charity fundraiser, said: "We simply fell through the floor. There is no way we can afford to pay and we would have to sell our home". Mr Whitworth, a retired architect on a fixed pension, said: "It has turned our world completely upside down". The case, to be heard next year, threatens to leave the Act's safeguards in tatters.

Barrister Sarah Clover, of No. 5 Chambers, who is representing the two elderly couples, said: "Some of the costs bandied around the magistrates' courts can be quite astronomical. It's simply not feasible to ask residents to take on the risk.

"But if they don't pursue their rights, then a big part of the empowerment the Licensing Act was supposed to give them is rendered null and void".

Mr Whitworth said the four were sure they did the right thing, despite the financial threat. He said: "There are a lot of elderly people here, many of them a lot worse off than us, and we felt it was our responsibility to take a stand.

"There is such a lot of noise and broken glass. There is a primary school opposite and children have to sidestep glass every morning". Greene King said: "We listened to the concerns of the residents and made considerable concessions. The Licensing Authority did consider a number of other demands by residents but dismissed them.

"Having already had their say, four people decided to appeal against the council's decision. We believe wholeheartedly in people's right to be heard, but to continue to appeal, with no obligation to pay, is unfair".

From - Thisislondon.co.uk, 19 November 2006

Cheer up Inuits! Global

Warming is Not All Bad News

A brewery in Greenland is producing beer using water melted from the ice cap of the vast Arctic island.

The brewers claim that the water is at least 2,000 years old and free of minerals and pollutants. The first 66,000 litres of the new dark and pale ales are on their way to the Danish market.

The beer from Greenland - a semi-autonomous Danish territory - costs 37 kroner (£3.40; five euros) per half-litre bottle.

It is the first ever Inuit microbrewery - located in Narsaq, a hamlet 625km (390 miles) south of the Arctic Circle.



Greenland beers – Pale Ale and Brown Ale (both beers at 5.5% ABV)

The beer is shipped to Stralsund, on Germany's north coast, to be bottled.

With a capacity of 400,000 litres a year, the brewery has ambitions beyond the Danish market. "We've got enquiries from the US and from Germany and we will probably be launching it on the German market in, let's say, six months," Steen Outzen, the brewery owner, told the BBC's World Today programme.

It is claimed that the Greenland beer, officially launched in Copenhagen on 31 July, has a softer, cleaner taste than other beers, because of the ice cap water.

The gigantic island of Greenland measures 2.2 million square km (844,000 square miles) - 85% of it covered with ice that is up to 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) thick.

From BBC News, Tuesday 1 August 2006



Family Ends an Era of Brakspear Pub Ownership

The Brakspear family, which owns some of Britain's most historic pubs, has sold its business to another family firm, ending 227 years under single ownership.

The deal allows 30 members of the Brakspear family, ranging in age from 18 to over 80, to share a windfall of £33m.

While Brakspear is a relatively small pub company, its 104 venues are well known, especially to television viewers. Its pubs, frequently timbered buildings on the fringe of village greens, have become stars thanks to *Midsomer Murders*, *The Vicar of Dibley* and most famously *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, which featured the Tudor-era **Bull & Butcher** in Turville (near High Wycombe, Bucks).



The Hollybush in Redbourn, above, is also owned by Brakspears.

The buyer is JT Davies which owns 50 pubs and a wine wholesaler, and has for many years held a 29.9pc stake. The deal values Brakspear at £106M.

Hugo Pring, a descendant of Brakspear's founder, co-ordinated the family selling its 31pc stake.

He called it the "end of an era" but said with a disparate family, with "many differing agendas and in light of what we consider to be an extremely generous bid from JT Davies, it is understandable that eventually we would decide to sell out." Not everyone has toasted the deal, however. **CAMRA**, which campaigns for real ale, said it would not vote its investment club's shares, valued at £238,000, in favour of the deal.

"We're very disappointed," said CAMRA's Iain Loe, who said he was worried that Brakspear's reputation for selling good beer would be damaged.

Brakspear stopped brewing its eponymous ale in 2002, but all its pubs still take the beer, which is now made by the Wychwood Brewery.

CAMRA has also complained the 915p-a-share offer is a discount of 14pc to Brakspear's share price before the deal was announced, though it stands to make a hefty profit from its shares.

The independent directors insisted the deal was fully priced. "We looked at this very carefully," said non-executive chairman Michael Foster. "As a multiple of operating profits it is already pretty high." The deal values Brakspear at nearly 20 times operating profits.

Michael Davies, the chairman of JT Davies promised the company would be in good hands, pointing out that he was re-branding his 50 pubs as Brakspears.

"We're in the business for the next 100 years," he said.

Daily Telegraph, 21 November 2006

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The Kings' Influence on Pub Signs

By Steve Bury

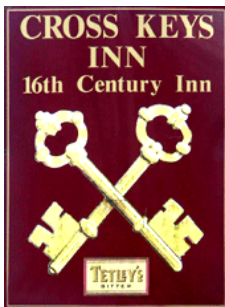
In 1393 Richard II was very concerned about the quality of the beer being served in his realm and in particular London (sometimes I think things have not changed much). He decreed that all premises selling ale should have a clear sign hung outside so that they could be easily identified by the *Ale Tasters*. In London the sign to be used was that of the King, which in this case was the White Hart.

Ale tasters were elected locally and paid an honorarium for undertaking the task of ensuring that all ale sold was drinkable, and that short measure was not being administered. They could issue punitive fines and if necessary



close premises for persistent offences. William Shakespeare's father held the post in Stratford-upon-Avon - and it would be good to see the job re-introduced. Of course pubs in Hertfordshire called the White Hart may not have held the name since the time of Richard II, as the White Hart is prominent on the Hertfordshire Coat of Arms. A good example is the **White Hart** in Welwyn which used to house the Assizes (predecessor of a crown court), and had the Hertfordshire Coat of Arms hanging outside. The name White Hart is the fifth most popular pub name in Britain.

Later in history Henry VIII changed more pub names than any other monarch when he closed the monasteries following the reformation. Because the church was a large landowner and the monks undertook most of the brewing they owned nearly all the pubs - which of course all had religious names. The Cross Keys (the sign of St Peter) being a good example - and which also indicated that it was



a resting place for pilgrims.

When the pubs changed hands the old Catholic religious symbols had to go and the new owners



were very much in support of this. Henry had recently added a bull to his Coat of Arms, having defied the Pope's edict, because there was a bull's

head on the Pope's seal. This explains why there are so many pubs named the Bull, Bull's Head or Black Bull.

In 1603 James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. He was so pleased to have control of Scotland's old enemy England that he proclaimed that his flag should fly outside any important building. His flag was a red lion, rampant on a yellow background. For those of you who are not conversant with heraldry, this means the lion is standing on its hind legs.

Again this changed a lot of pub names. However, there is also a debate around the influence of an earlier reason for pubs being named the Red Lion, which is the influence of John of Gaunt. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (1340 - 1399) was in his time more powerful than the King (his nephew Richard II) and had great wealth and lands in France through marriage and conquest. His Coat of Arms was also



the Red Lion, but this time walking normally on all fours - as it is depicted on many pub signs.

John of Gaunt (left) was associated with Hertford and was hated and feared, and is credited for causing the Peasants' Revolt (1381). When those in the uprising looted his London house they took his jewellery, reputed to be worth a small fortune, melted it into



a ball in a bonfire and then threw it into the river Thames. Although a lot of people think otherwise, the Red Lion is the second most popular pub name in the UK.

So what is the most popular name? It surprised me as well but it is the Crown. The Crown of course can be the Rose & Crown the Crown &

Anchor, and there are the One, Two and Three Crowns.

Apparently if you wished to get around James I of England's proclamation you could call your pub the Crown, then a Rose was added to show that you were loyal to England. The

English Rose and the Rose of Old England being the same thing.

Of course prior to this the Wars of the Roses had decreed which colour your rose would be - depending in which part of the country your pub was. The one two and three Crowns occur in towns which have large numbers of pubs to simply tell them apart. The Crown & Anchor, as I stated in my nautical pubs article in a previous edition relates to the Crown and Fettered Anchor on the buttons of Royal Naval Officers. I was also informed that this was a gambling game common in the 1800's.

The last line of Kings that changed pub names drastically were the Hanoverians, who had five monarchs between 1714 and 1837. There are

of course pubs named after the Georges;

including the pub in Queens Road Watford, named the **Mad George** after George III. The Hanoverian to have pubs named after him is of

course William IV; who introduced the Guinea licence, causing an explosion of new pubs to be set up, most of which took his name. If you had a William IV next door the next best thing

was to name your pub the White Horse, which was the Hanoverians' family emblem. Queen Adelaide was William IV's wife and we have a pub named after her in Shenley. Apparently she did visit the village. The Duke of York, Prince Fredrick Augustus, mentioned in edition 214, was also a Hanoverian. White Horse is the eighth most popular pub name.

I will finish with a cautionary tale about pub signs. Around 1810 when Stephen Raggett was the innkeeper of the Cock in Redbourn he failed in his duty to provide refreshment for two soldiers marching through the town, and refused to billet them. The commanding officer called for a ladder and a saw and proceeded to cut down the pub sign. He pinned a notice on the wall saying "This license is terminated". The Inn ceased to trade and never reopened.



Steve Bury

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Bringing in the Beers

On 7 November nearly forty thirsty drinkers trampled the streets of Hertford seeking out tasty harvest and autumnal beers especially provided for us on the night by the **Black Horse, White Horse, Old Barge** and **Old Cross Tavern** - a sort of seasonal mini-beer festival on the move.



With 45 minutes rationed for each pub, including walking time (total 15 minutes maximum), and starting at 8pm, the punters were



Starting at the Black Horse, left (Greene King - West Street), with a pint of Ruddles *Orchard*, our party moved on for Fuller's *Red Fox* and Castle Rock *Harvest Pale* at the White

already crossing the threshold at the Old Cross Tavern by 10.15pm.

Many thanks to the four participating pubs for finding the beers and for giving us such a warm welcome on the night.

As part of the continuing run of themed evening events organised by South Hertfordshire branch in Hertford and Ware this year, these gatherings have proved popular with local members and drinkers alike - friendly evenings with great beer and great company.

Horse (Fullers Free House - Castle Street). Bath's *Barnstormer* greeted us at the Old Barge, above right (Punch Tavern - canal side, The Folly), before the evening concluded at the Old Cross Tavern (Free House - St. Andrew Street), with Brewster's *Stilton Porter* and Mauldon's autumn beers.

Join us for the next in our series, "The Ware Winter Wobble", currently being planned for next February. In the meantime a Merry Christmas to those of you who have attended these events - we hope we'll be seeing you shortly - in 2007.

Les Middlewood

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Herts Readers Write



Got no bottle

I am concerned at the lack of bottled beer found in Greene King pubs in the Watford area. I have asked what Greene King beers are available, only to be told that they are not allowed to stock them. This seems odd to me as they are able to stock a plethora of tasteless foreign drinks. What ever happened to the really good Greene King ales such as *St Edmunds*, and *Crown & Audit*? I am aware that *Strong Suffolk* is available in some outlets but not in the Watford pubs.

Any ideas?

Steve Kiely

Ed Says: Although the beers you mention are pasteurised and carbonated, they are or were certainly beers of character, which I have enjoyed myself from time to time. For the un-initiated; bottle conditioned beers rely on the natural yeast which settles at the bottom of the bottle to keep the beer's condition, and should be poured carefully so as not to introduce the yeast to the drink. When I have raised the issue I have been informed that the problem is; a lack of turnover/demand, and the reduced shelf life following bottle dating on the labels (which started taking place many years ago). Greene King do not seem to have any trouble stocking and promoting "Beer to dine For" which is 5% abv and comes in 75cl bottles. The beer is recommended to be served chilled and, I am informed, has been aimed at the female market. My view is that it is a Cobra/Kingfisher substitute. Young's supply an extensive range of 500ml bottled beers in their pubs; bottle conditioned and otherwise with no problems, so I do wonder what Greene King's problem is.

A sign of the times?

It seems to have become my lot to bring you regular news of the misfortunes of St Albans pubs. This month the news is even worse than usual...

It is perhaps just as well that my proposed series of traditional inn signs for Points of View never got off the ground. Whereas the ditching of hand-painted signs in favour of labels was largely a matter of scattered and less prestigious pubs, the malaise has now hit a landmark central historic pub, much favoured

and admired by CAMRA members and local historians alike. I refer to the **Farmers Boy**, London Road, now the "TFB".



Then and now. Signs of change at the Farmers boy.



pub altogether, as it no longer has any real presence in the street. In my opinion it is a bad change and something which will be regretted by regulars and visitors alike.

I failed to get any answer to my email enquiry asking if the change was permanent. I think it is. The "Victoriana" book also singles out the former Farmers Boy, with two pages of illustrations and historic details - a really good advertisement for this pub. It's a pity if they've thrown all their best tradition into the garbage bin, or will some lucky CAMRA member find the lovely old sign going cheap at some car boot sale?

Apart from this, the **Peacock**, **Duke of Marlborough** and **Fleur de Lys** are not in business, with their future far from certain. *Tony Billings*

Ed says: Although I too am not happy with the new look Farmers Boy sign, I understand they do intend to auction their old sign for charity. If you placed a successful bid it could one day be returned - who knows? What makes you think that the closure of the Fleur, Peacock or Duke of Marlborough are in any way long term or permanent? All further information on the above will be gratefully received. *See page 18 for our contact details.*

It would appear that the old sign ("Quite the best inn sign in St Albans today", says the new "Victoriana" book of St Albans pubs - available at Paton Books) is no longer with it. I imagine something less airy-fairy artistic and trendier was thought desirable? In the event with sign lacking it is easy to miss the

Pints of View Real Ale Prize Sudoku

	N	E		T	U	R	B	
O	B				A	U	E	
		T			R			
	U	R				A	L	
			A			N		
	L	A	N				R	O
O	B	L	A		T	U		

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 words **BURTON ALE**.

Completed entries by 1 February 2007 to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.

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

Your Name:

Your Address:

Postcode:

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.

The Mermaid



98 Hatfield Road
St Albans

Regular and guest ales

Lunch served 12 noon until
2pm

Sky Premiership Football

Solution to **Pub-a-Gram** in the St. Albans 2006 Beer Festival Programme. £25 winners were Rachel McKay of St. Albans and Terry Lavell of London E17. Our thanks to all who entered.

MISS A PARTNER = PAINTERS ARMS
 BEER CART = CRAB TREE
 COLD AS SUPERMAN = RULE AND COMPASS
 ETON PLACE = ANTELOPE
 CHANGE IDLE LAD = EAGLE AND CHILD
 WHO IS THERE = WHITE HORSE
 FOUR GALAS = SUGAR LOAF
 PLACE FOR WINES = PRINCE OF WALES
 I HANG DESK = KINGS HEAD
 SEES THE PLACE = STEEPLE CHASE
 SPORT MASTER = POTTERS ARMS
 LACKED TOP OF CROWN = COCK AND FLOWERPOT
 HOP DANGLER = GOLDEN HARP
 NEW GIN TOLL = WELLINGTON
 SPY BOOT = POST BOY
 AYR ACCEPTS ALL = CRYSTAL PALACE
 W-WORST BEER = TWO BREWERS
 HE LOCKS BAR = BLACK HORSE
 NEED EQUAL IDEA = QUEEN ADELAIDE
 EGG ROE = GEORGE

Watford and District Feature

The Twelfth Watford Beer Festival Report

The 12th Watford Beer Festival took place from November 9th to 11th. Just under one thousand people visited the festival during the three days it was open, which was roughly the same overall attendance as last year. The festival was held in its customary venue; the **West Herts Sports Club** function room on Park Avenue. Friday night was a crush once again, but the other sessions were more relaxed. The Saturday afternoon session didn't coincide with a Watford FC home match for the first time in several years, and this caused attendance to be lower during the afternoon. However, the Thursday afternoon session was more popular than ever and made up for the lower Saturday numbers. Attendance may have been greater if we could have fitted more people in; visitors were being admitted on a 'one out, one in' basis for some time on Friday evening. This means we may have to think about options to expand the festival next year.



Over 60 beers were available during the event. Drinkers didn't seem to be picking on their favourite beers and instead spread their attention across the full range. This meant that most of the beers were still available for visitors to try on the last day. Beer of the Festival was



Beijing Black, a strong mild from Kettering's Potbelly Brewery, which also grabbed the top spot at the **St. Albans Beer Festival** in September. *Beijing Black* is winning lots of awards at the moment; it was named Supreme Champion beer at the Society of Independent Brewers' (SIBA) National Brewing Awards this year. Congratulations are due to all at Potbelly Brewery. The top ten Beers of the Festival are listed below:

1. Potbelly *Beijing Black*
2. Crouch Vale *Brewers Gold*
3. Williams Brothers *Róisín*
4. Bartrams *Comrade Bill Bartrams Egalitarian Anti-Imperialist Soviet Stout*
5. Mighty Oak *Tell T'Ale*
6. Garton *Chocolate Frog*
7. Dark Star *Hophead*
8. Wood *Bonfire Brew*
9. Mighty Oak *Saxon Strong*
10. = Stewarts *Edinburgh No. 3*; Surrey Hills *Shere Drop*; Triple fff *Moondance*

The branch would like to extend its thanks to all those who visited us over the three days, and especially to those who gave up their time to work during the festival and during the planning stages. We hope everybody had a great time and can make it to our next festival. *Andrew Vaughan*

Cambridgeshire Producer Wins 2006

East Anglian Cider Competition

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) are delighted to announce the results of the First **East Anglian Cider Competition** held at Norwich Beer Festival.

The winners are:-

Perry Burnard's Perry (Banham)
Cider Hereward Brewery, Medium Dry (Ely)

Producers throughout CAMRA's East Anglian region were invited to enter and the judging took place on the first day of the 29th Norwich Beer Festival, held last month.

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink which is produced naturally from apples and is neither carbonated nor pasteurised. As cider is made from apples, so perry is made from pears.

Fifteen ciders and perries were judged by panels that included cider experts, enthusiasts and local celebrities. After the initial rounds, six ciders went forward to the final judging and after much tasting and discussion Burnard's Perry and Hereward Brewery's Medium Dry cider emerged victorious.

Ryan Burnard has been making cider and perry for over 15 years. Previously based at Banham Cider Shed, he now runs the Cider Shed in Lawson Road, Norwich. The winning perry was made using robin pears which are grown locally.

Judges were impressed with the winning perry, describing it as "well balanced dry perry with fruity notes and a lingering aftertaste leaving you yearning for more".

On hearing the news of his award, Ryan said "This award is totally unexpected. I would like to thank all the volunteers who help me keep the tradition going, fighting the tide of formality."

Hereward Brewery's Medium Dry was a clear winner, described by judges as "A pleasantly dry, well balanced cider with a superb aroma

and a complex but somehow gentle finish".

Michael Czarnobaj of Hereward Brewery was delighted to hear that his medium dry cider had won and said "Although I do most of the work myself, I couldn't do it without the assistance of my mother and my father who provides the equipment. I would like to thank the people who supplied the apples, also thanks to CAMRA and the judges for this prestigious award".

Using apples from friends and family, Michael has been making cider since 2002 and his cider has proved extremely popular, with production levels increasing year on year.



Andrea Briers, CAMRA's Regional Cider Co-ordinator for East Anglia said, "The purpose of the competition is to promote East Anglian cider and perry and introduce it to a wider audience. We also hoped to make contact with cider makers that we were previously unaware of. We have achieved both our aims. The competition itself has aroused great interest and we have discovered some new contacts.

They might only produce cider for their own consumption and not commercially but they are the guardians of a traditional skill.

I would like to thank our hosts, Norwich Beer Festival, for their help in making this competition run smoothly".

FULL RESULTS:-

Perry

1st Hereward Brewery, Medium Dry (Ely, Cambridgeshire)

2nd Banham Barrel, Early Night Dry (Banham, Norfolk)

3rd Peter Blake, Hog and Vine (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk)

Cider

Winner Burnard's Perry (Banham, Norfolk)

DOWN YOUR WAY

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 18

Aldenham: The **Aldenham Golf Club** bar is still open to the public and selling Ruddles *Best Bitter*.

Bramfield: Some excellent news that we have received but has not been confirmed is that local residents have clubbed together and bought the **Grandison Arms**, which has been closed since 4th April 2002. We am told they intend to re-open it as a pub and there is no doubt that it was viable before it was closed, even though the owner had run down the trade and opened irregular hours (some say on purpose). The owner's attempts at getting change of use for redevelopment failed and other than the pub being used for a short while as a film set it has lain idle. Rumours were that the interior had been damaged. We used to get reports from local residents who had opened up a bar with Greene King's help in the village hall. Any further information would be gratefully received. We would like there to be a CAMRA presence and of course supporting article in the newsletter on the pub's re-opening.

Broxbourne: The **Kingfisher** is now closed for good, it would seem and to be demolished for housing. The pub has been run down for some years now but would have great potential in the right hands.

Bushey: The **Horse & Chains** is now a fresh fish restaurant called **Snappers**. On last inspection, however, the establishment looked closed.

Bushey Heath: On last inspection the **Devonshire Arms** was closed and boarded up.

Chiswell Green: The **Three Hammers** will be shut between 20th and 30th November for a refurbishment (see also under St. Albans entry).

Gustard Wood: The application for change of use for the **Tin Pot** was refused by St Albans City Council on the 24th October. Thanks to all those who wrote in opposing the move. Unfortunately for the owner, as grade II licenced premises it not going to get the asking price of £1.5 million.

Hertford: Looks like work has finally started on the **Wetherspoons** - with bulldozers in clearing the garden, knocking down the walls, etc.. The

last we heard it was to be a **Lloyds No1** called the **Five Bishops** opening in spring 2007 - but all this could change - now 6 years and running. The refurbishment of the **Blackbirds** is complete. *Courage Best* and Fuller's *London Pride* are sometimes on offer. A new bar the **Office** is planned in the place of the old doctors' surgery, Castle Street, which is nearby to the GBG-listed **White Horse**. Fuller's *London Pride* can be found at the new **Hertford House Hotel**, which has been created out of the former Hertfordshire Mercury offices at No.1 Fore Street. With 22 bedrooms, an 80 seat restaurant and bar, this £4m contemporary conversion provides Hertford with its first new large hotel in generations. Food of a British theme is available all through the day. A guest beer may be added in the future. At the **Old Barge**, new managers Simon and Sally have held their first beer festival, with 25 beers and cider/perries from far and wide. They hope to try another festival around Easter-time next year. The pub, well-known for its Thursday jazz sessions and Sunday quizzes, now offers 7 real ales, and there is always a real cider or perry available. We are pleased to announce that the **White Hart** is real ale friendly again selling Mac's *Country* and *AK*. There seems to have been a change of theme (it is a quieter place these days). In Ware Road, the **Saracens Bar and Eatery** (formerly the Saracens Head) offers a quiet and relaxed alternative to the bustle of the town centre. Six months after the conversion, the clean and contemporary look is proving popular with many. Greene King *Abbot* and *IPA* are offered. There'll be another change of manager at the **Bridge House** - the outgoing manager has moved on to the **Old Bulls Head** in Ware. The **Ram** is hosting a well-attended fortnightly open-mic session on Thursdays with *AK* to help with the swing. At the **Old Cross Tavern** a range of bottled Belgian beers is now complementing Bev's ever-changing selection of real ales. In West Street, Tony and Linda have launched a regular world-cuisine night at the **Black Horse**. Held on the 4th Wednesday of each month (6.30-8.00pm) - see the pub's informative website for details. At the **White Horse**, *Red Fox* has been the latest addition to the Fullers range. As usual, Nigel searches out two



DOWN YOUR WAY

interesting guest ales (normally from micro-brewers) to sit alongside the Fuller's beers and Adams *Bitter*. The **Duncombe Arms** has had a change in landlord. A belated mention in these pages for the **White Lion** in Bengeoe. A major refurbishment earlier this year has brought a more open-plan, bright and modern feel to the building – both bars having been knocked into one. Three real ales are usually available (currently Shepherd Name *Spitfire*, Adams *Broadside* and Greene King *IPA*) and a new restaurant area has been set out at the rear.

Hunton Bridge: The **King's Head** is now known as the **Waterside Inn**, not the Riverside as reported in a previous edition. We have no report on whether cask beer is still available.

Radlett: Brookes bar (no real ale) got into problems with Hertsmere Council in October when it was found that the pub manager did not hold a licence. The bar had to close for a

few days while the problem was rectified. This of course is not the first time the premises has had licence trouble. In December 2003 when the place was known as **Ryans** they had the dubious honour of being the first place to have its licensee fined for showing a live premiership game using a foreign satellite decoder. The prosecution was made by the Football Association and the fine was £2,000.

Rickmansworth: The **Millhouse Tavern** is to re-open as the **Urban Vine**, which looks like it's going to have a 'gastropub' theme. It is believed that Greene King is still in charge, so cask beer should be available.

Ridge: We welcome Michelle and Stefan to the **Old Guinea**. At present the beer range is Greene King *IPA* and *Worthington Bitter*, but it is hoped to extend the range.

St. Albans: A cask ale festival has been happening at the **Three Hammers** at Chiswell Green, with

Continues on next page

THE LAND OF LIBERTY, PEACE AND PLENTY FREEHOUSE

CAMRA Hertfordshire Pub of the Year!

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Kozmik's Music Quiz

Sat 23rd Dec

Gourmet Food Night (game)

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DOWN YOUR WAY

beers from brewers Jennings, Titanic, Caledonian, Okells and Oakham on tap to name but a few. At the time of going to press the pub has just reopened following a brief refurbishment.. The **Boot** now has 7 real ale hand pumps on the bar with *Black Sheep Bitter* as a regular..

Stanstead Abbots: A £200k refurbishment has just been completed at the **Red Lion**.

Thundridge: The **Sow and Pigs** has been refurbished.

Ware: The Good Beer Guide-listed **Crooked Billet** is one of the pubs recently transferred from Greene King to Admiral Taverns, but in terms of its beers, it is business as usual. See article headed 'Admiral Toasts Greene King Deal', on page 5. Barracuda have bought the **Waterfront**, which has been closed to allow refurbishment. We wait to see what they do with it. Another Ware pub with an uncertain future is the **Sun and Harrow** – recently up for auction with a concern that it might fall to a housing developer - a similar fate as befell the nearby **Rising Sun** eighteen months ago. Here's a special mention for **Ware Football Club** of the Ryman League who play at Wodson Park. Their club bar now features a real ale guest on match days and during other opening hours. Batemans, Hardy and Hansons, Hall and Woodhouse and Greene King beers have all featured. Local real ale enthusiasts have been disappointed with the reduced real ale selection of late at the **Old Bull's Head**. It is hoped that the pub's parent company, "It's My Local" (who are part of Scottish and Newcastle) and the new landlord will reverse this policy to restore the pub's reputation for having the best choice of real ale in Ware. We watch this space. In the **High Oak** the annual Bonfire Night beer festival continued to be a well-supported event

Welwyn Garden City: The **Chieftain** is to be demolished by McMullen's to make way for a new housing development and, hey presto, a new pub – albeit a smaller one. McMullen's real ales will feature. See also; *Licensee Challenges 'Regulars' to Show Loyalty* article on page 4.

Wheathampstead: The **Wicked Lady** has reopened following a refurbishment.

CAMRA 2008 GOOD BEER GUIDE

If **you** are a CAMRA member and would like to nominate and survey a pub for the next Good Beer Guide please drop a line to realales@yahoo.com along with your name, address with CAMRA membership number, and a brief description of why you think the pub should be included. *See page 19*

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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BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

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

Mon 8 Jan: Committee meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. Johns Road, Watford, 8.15pm.

Fri 12 Jan: Post-Christmas 'Pre-Xmas' Pub Crawl in London, starting at the **Mulberry Bush**, 89 Upper Ground, 5.30pm. Contact branch for details, or visit the branch website.

Wed 17 Jan: Abbots Langley social at the **Swan**, College Road, 8.30pm and the **Compasses**, Tibbs Hill Road, 9.45pm.

Mon 29 Jan: Committee meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm.

Branch Contact – see top right of this page.

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tue 12 Dec: Branch meeting, **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans, 8.00pm.

Thu 18 Jan: Herts liaison meeting, **Wenlock Arms**, London, N1, 7.30pm.

Tue 30 Jan: Branch Annual General Meeting, **CAMRA HQ** St. Albans, 8.00pm

Good Beer Guide 2008 survey – see below:

ATTENTION CAMRA MEMBERS!

Good Beer Guide (GBG) 2008 nominations for South Hertfordshire are due by **31 Dec 2006**.

The first four GBG survey trips on the dates below are via minibus, departing from outside **St Albans City Station** main entrance at **7pm**:

Tue 23 Jan – Hertford/Ware area (NE zone)

Tue 06 Feb – Harpenden area (NW zone)

Tue 13 Feb – Radlett/ etc. area (SW/Central)

Tue 20 Feb – Wildhill area (SE zone)

Tue 27 Feb – St. Albans survey crawl - meet at 7pm, venue to be announced.

Tue 06 Mar - Good Beer Guide 2008 selection meeting – **CAMRA HQ**, St Albans, 8pm

GBG nomination forms and mini-bus seat reservations are available from our Branch Contact below, to whom completed nomination forms must be returned by 31 Dec.

Branch Contact: John Bishop 01582 768478,

Email: realales@yahoo.com

Internet: www.hertsale.org.uk

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan.
Phone: 01923 230104. **Mobile:** 07854 988152.
Email: branch@watfordcamra.org.uk
Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

Stamp's Axe Marks End of an Era

More than 300 years of history has come to an end with the replacement of the official crown stamp on pint and half-pint glasses by the European CE mark.

The stamp was introduced by the Act for Ascertaining the Measures for Retailing Ale and Beer in 1699 but in 2001 the last two major British glass makers closed. The last glass stamping office in the country – in Bury, Lancashire – now only approves glasses from small makers. The French, Belgian and Czech companies which now make most of our pints and halves have self-verification schemes approved by the UK's National Weights & Measures Laboratory.

Old glasses still bearing the crown stamp will continue to be legal tender until the very last one is broken.

Our Mutual Friend 2007 Beer Festival

Broadwater Crescent, Stevenage, 01438-312282

18th January 2007 - 20th January 2007



North Herts Pub of the Year 2006
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Lost Boys - Friday Night
Jazz - Saturday Night

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