

HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

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Herts Pubs of the Year

Four pubs have been voted the best pubs by the Hertfordshire branches of CAMRA. The winners, pictured clockwise from top left are: The **White Lion**, St Albans (South Herts CAMRA), **Our Mutual Friend**, Stevenage (North Herts CAMRA), the **Gate**, Sawbridgeworth (Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA), and the **Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty** (Watford & District CAMRA). All four will now be entered for the overall best Herts pub. See page 18



Also In This Issue:

- Community Pub Week events held throughout Herts
- CAMRA in Herts Making a Mild Month of May
- Latest news from Hertfordshire's breweries

www.pubs.hertsale.org.uk

The Hertfordshire branches of the Campaign for Real Ale, CAMRA, are proud to launch their new online guide to the County's pubs.

The guide has been in the making for well over a year and has involved members from the five Hertfordshire branches as well as those in Barnet (which used to be part of the county). They have been around the towns and down the lanes collecting information on all the county's hostelrys.

See page 20 for more details



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THE BITTER END

Millions Will Return to the Pub After Smoking Ban

CAMRA research suggests 7 million people are likely to visit pubs more often after the ban

A new survey by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has revealed the public's attitudes to the forthcoming smoking ban in England and Wales later in July 2007.

The sample survey's key findings indicated that:

- 6.2 million people (17% of all adults in England and Wales) who visit pubs regularly are likely to visit pubs more often. Of that group 97% were non-smokers.
- 840,000 people who currently never go to a pub said they will after the smoking ban. Added to the figure for people who currently visit regularly that is a total of 7,040,000 people who will visit pubs more often.
- 93% of real ale drinkers said they would be more likely to visit pubs more often or that their visiting habits would not be changed by the ban. See table opposite.
- 68% of regular smokers say it will not change their pub visiting habits at all.
- 69% of all adults said it would not affect their visits to pubs at all, only 3% said they would not visit pubs at all as a result of the ban.
- Smokers are typically lager drinkers (43% of lager drinkers said they smoke). See table.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "This survey shows that non-smokers will be attracted to pubs after the ban comes into force, and many of them would like to find a real ale waiting for them when they get there.

"The smoking ban will be a difficult transition for licensees, but it is encouraging that only 3% of people surveyed by CAMRA said they would not visit pubs at all as a result of the ban. The key will be to ensure that other factors such as quality of real ale, food, atmosphere and quality of real ale, food, atmosphere and welcome are all superb. If this is the case then the traditional Community Pub will have a bright and healthy future".

The survey was carried out by CAMRA to mark Community Pubs Week which began on Saturday February 17th and ran until Saturday February 24th. Community Pubs Week supersedes National Pubs Week, which ran successfully for four years until 2006. However

due to evidence that community pubs are under particularly severe threat CAMRA has refocused its efforts to protect them specifically.

The ban on smoking in pubs will come into force in Wales on April 2nd and in England on July 1st.

The Pub Omnibus Survey was conducted by TNS on behalf of CAMRA from a sample of more than 1500 adults in England and Wales.

The table below shows the effect on pub-goers' visits following the ban, as per the survey results:

Drinkers primarily of:	% more likely to visit pubs, or whose pub visits will not be affected.	% who smoke
Real Ales	93%	25%
Keg bitters	90%	35%
Wine	89%	20%
Soft drinks	88%	24%
Spirits	86%	37%
Lager	84%	43%
Alcopops	81%	42%

Ed Says: I find this TNS survey a little troubling. Firstly only 1,500 customers or prospective customers were surveyed. Secondly all pubs are different; some are dependent on their smoking customers, whereas in others it will not have the same impact, if any at all. What we in CAMRA should be worrying about is the future of these perfectly good community locals, rather than trying to talk up the ban. As I have said before; the nanny state and the self-righteous following the smoking ban will try to reduce the amounts of alcohol we drink (for our own good of course) and will no doubt be proposing some form of drinks token. I gave up smoking in 1982, by the way.

Two men are having a pint after work and one says to the other "I don't smoke and can't wait for the smoking ban to come into effect." The other says "Yes I agree, it is bad in here. You may only pop in for a couple of pints, but you can smell it on your clothes for hours."

"Yes" replies his partner "I can cover the smell of the beer with a breath freshener so as the wife can't tell I've had a drink, but the clothes thing is a dead give away every time, roll on the ban".

CAMRA Slams Beer Duty Rise as "False Economy"

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has slammed the Chancellor's decision to yet again increase excise duty on beer by 1p a pint in the Budget as a mistake that will hit Britain's pubs hard. The 84,000 member strong consumer organisation had called on the Government to freeze excise duty, as the decision to increase tax is likely to result in higher prices, less customers in pubs, and a drop in revenue for the treasury. CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "This is a false economy for the Government as we may now see an exodus from pubs after beer prices rise.

This is bad news for the millions of people who enjoy British pubs but will now face a higher cost to visit them. Therefore trips to the pub will become less frequent and the revenue the Government makes from VAT will suffer.

"At a time when 56 pubs a month are closing, the smoking ban is imminent and supermarkets are selling beer at ridiculously low prices, British pubs needed a lifeline from their government and that has been denied them".

On the announcement that duty on cider would rise by 1p per litre, Mike Benner added: "Cider has recently been selling very well in the on-trade, but the news of an excise duty increase could hamper its resurgence".

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Community Pubs Week Events



South Herts - The Ware Winter Wobble

A group of Hertford South Herts branch members celebrated Community Pubs week by setting out on the *Ware Winter Wobble* – a visit to four excellent community locals. Starting at the **Crooked Billet** in Musley Hill, there wasn't a Greene King beer in sight now that the pub has been sold to Admiral Inns. *Hook Norton Bitter*, *Theakston's Mild* and *Cornish Knocker* were at the bar but Stuart and Sue, now 13 years at the CB, are currently treating their locals to three beers from a choice of up to 30 guest ales. Stuart's attention to detail and the quality of his ales has been rewarded with many years in the **Good Beer Guide**. Round the corner at the **High Oak**, a Punch Tavern in High Oak Road, Helen and co are providing a regularly changed guest ale picked by the customers! *Goffs Joster* was the choice on the night, complementing the bedrock *Charles Wells Bombardier* and *GK IPA*. These two superb local pubs are nestling in the streets of north Ware.

Half a mile away and next stop is the **Worppell** in Watton Road, a Greene King tied house where George and Pat have presided over drinking for 23 years – surely a remarkable stint, (*and by the way, who are the longest standing tenants in Hertfordshire?*). *IPA* was available for our team, and George's *Abbot*, as all his regulars will attest, is exceptional - and it would be hard to find better anywhere in the land. Finally, the few yards up to the **Rose and Crown**, a lively McMullen's tied pub that features in the 2007 **Good Beer Guide**, and where *AK* and *Country* were supplemented by Mac's seasonal beer, *Sweet Chariot*, which was offered free by Richard, Liam and McMullen's to the leg-weary party – a lovely gesture. These two more, brilliant local pubs, reside in the west of Ware.

All four pubs sit in the heart of their neighbourhood and carry on the age-old spirit of the community local. There's always something going on, from darts to crib, football to rugby, deep conversation to quiet reflection, leg-pulling and banter – all to the taste of some terrific real ale. The pubs give much back to the communities in which they sit – and are a much-



Pictured. Ware and Hertford CAMRA members out on the Ware Winter Wobble on 20 February.

loved part of the local scene. Many thanks to all of them for making us feel so welcome. This year, in England, over 26 pubs are closing every month. A similar number of people came out to *wobble* through Ware and support their local pubs. Get out there and support yours. If you don't use it, you could lose it.

Jan Ordon

North Herts - Community Pubs Week Fundraising

During Community Pubs Week the GBG-listed **Crown and Falcon**, Puckeridge held a charity evening to raise funds for Standon and Puckeridge Health Centre. The main focus was the annual emptying of the charity change bottle. Three of the doctors from the Health Centre were on hand to help count the cash. A raffle and Guess the Bottle Total had also been running for some while and the three events raised £400. Licensees Ian and Rachel Norman added a further £1,100 from the ongoing Lottery bonus ball charity fund to present a cheque for £1,500 to a delighted Dr. Reynolds from the practice management team. The money will go towards buying an ECG machine.

Licensees Ian and Rachel Norman present Dr Reynolds with the cheque.





Watford & District – A Real Ale Experience



As part of Community Pubs Week Watford & District branch took part in a 'Real Ale Experience' at the **Southern Cross** on Langley Road, one of Watford's premier real ale outlets and a regular entrant in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide**. Publican John Ross had approached the branch several months earlier suggesting a real ale event combining beer tasting with talks on real ales after several of his customers had expressed an interest in finding out more about the beer they love. After weeks of preparation the event took place on the evening of Tuesday 20th February and, after an enthusiastic introduction by John, commenced with a talk on the history of beer from ancient times to the present day. Further talks followed on how beer is brewed, beer and food matching and the history and purpose of CAMRA; all interspersed with tutored tastings presided over by Treasurer Bill Austin.

stretching the capacity of the space available, and feedback was excellent, with CAMRA signing up three new members as a result. There are now plans to hold a similar event at the pub later in the year. The branch would like to thank John, Joan and all members of staff at the Southern Cross for inviting us to talk and for making the event such a success.

Andrew Vaughan



Bill Austin talking about the history of CAMRA at the Southern Cross Real Ale Experience

Over twenty ticket-buying customers turned up,



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Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd). All forms to be addressed to: Membership Secretary, Camra, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk. Rates for single membership are £22 and for joint £27 (single £13 for Under 26/Over 60 – partner at same address add £3).

.....

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Do you think of yourself as a 'young' person?
Do you enjoy real ale or cider?
Have you thought of joining CAMRA?

If the answer is 'no', then why not?!

Do you think it's boring and made up of old men with beards and beer-bellies who wear bobble hats, anoraks, woolly jumpers, shorts and socks with sandals? If this is your view, challenge your preconceptions and take a look at these pictures below from the first CAMRA North Herts Young Members event!



As I walked to the **Half Moon**, on time for a change, a few doubts started going through my mind. Will anyone come? Will anyone who drinks ale come? Is a pub crawl officially a pub crawl if there are only 2 people? Armed with my homemade CAMRA hat (well, t-shirts are so passé aren't they?) I went inside. After an extremely long 5 minutes, my patience was rewarded, some people turned up! Now with the



beer flowing, it didn't seem another 5 minutes before we were moving on, but not before grabbing a couple of lads to join us on the way out!

From this point on there was no stopping us. A few more members joined us at the **King's Arms** (above), and conversation moved from the pub interiors, to being in Germany for the World Cup, to musicals vs. sci-fi, to the merits of scoring your beer (very important kids!). Eventually, after tearing ourselves away from the bar, about 15 of us turn up to the **Sunrunner** (right)...only to be informed that there's a private function on upstairs. Not ones to be put off by a bit of a busy pub, we made for the back where we stayed for some time...



Ending the crawl (well, when it was closing time at the third pub) we decided to head back to the **Half Moon** again for the proverbial 'one for the road'. I think everyone was quite jolly at this point and slowly but surely, we all started going our separate ways home. I'd like to thank all who turned up and made the evening a really good laugh. Just shows there are younger people who enjoy a night out trying real ales and ciders. If you'd like to join us on future events, pop me an email to gemma.collins@hotmail.co.uk.

- *Gemma Collins (left, bottom picture) is North Herts CAMRA's Young Members Coordinator.*

Hertfordshire's Pints of View is produced by the North, 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.

As advertised in the last newsletter, the first YM event was a pub crawl around Hitchin.

North Herts Mini Bus Rambles

Quite a lot of the North Herts Branch area is very rural and not easy to get to. For years loyal branch members would trek miles on dark, frosty and usually miserable winter evenings promoting CAMRA and its ideals. Then quite a few years ago it was decided to hire a mini bus and go out on the road, (as it were), en masse. This is usually the second Saturday of the month. The mini is subsidised by the branch as it is seen as campaigning and members pay £5 per head and if there are spaces, guests can pay £7 per head. Details of these events and pick up points are shown on the Branch Diary pages at the end of this newsletter.

February found us in deepest rural Hertfordshire, not far from Luton Airport to begin with. Our first port of call was the **White Horse** at Kimpton



(left) where we sampled some good *McMullen's AK* and *Sweet Chariot*, and a chat with the bar staff. The landlord was

away at his daughter's wedding. From here we moved up the street to the **Boot** and met the new landlords Barry and Roberta Smith who had taken over the pub last December. They were already making changes and had altered the bar. *Greene King IPA* was on offer along with *Fullers London Pride*. Barry said that since taking over the pub the sale of beer had increased dramatically. After a while we bid them farewell and wished them all the best for the future.

We next moved on to the **Bright Star** at Peters Green (right), which is even nearer to Luton Airport than the two previous pubs.



Another Mac's pub and once again we tried the AK and Sweet Chariot, the latter kindly bought by the landlord. After chatting with him about this, that and the other it was time to depart to Whitwell and visit the last two pubs of the evening.

Our penultimate pub was the **Bull** where we had a very nice pint of *Greene King IPA*. There has been a pub on this site since 1675 when it was

known as the Bull Inn. There is also a print from 1833 showing a gallows sign spanning the road. The next and last pub of the evening was the **Maidens Head** in Whitwell (right), which has been in the **Good Beer Guide** for many, many years and is run by Mike Jones. It is a McMullen's house and the beer here is kept in excellent condition by Mike who has won many cellermanship awards over the years, and was **North Herts Pub of the Year** in 1986, 1996 and 2003. First we tried the *Winter Ale*, which was very warming on a mild February evening and then Mike treated us to a glass of *Country*, both of which scored highly. After some jovial banter with Mike, (which is inevitable, if you know him), it was time to leave and wend our way home.

The beauty of the ramble is that provided you can get to one of the pick-up points the return journey home drops you off very close to where you live. In my case a few hundred yards at the most, others even closer; why not join us next time?

Brian Mason © 2007

Maidens Head

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Making a Mild Month of May

May comes around again, the month when CAMRA traditionally sets about promoting Mild – one of Britain's classic brewing styles but a beer which has become hard to find in the bars of Hertfordshire. Most of Britain's largest breweries have long since given up on Mild but many of our family breweries continue to brew it though, sadly, not in our county. If Mild has become an endangered species, then CAMRA's annual campaigning has at least helped to keep some of these beers alive. And Britain's micro-brewers are carrying the banner forward – many producing some brilliant Milds. CAMRA's current champion is *Mighty Oak's Oscar Wilde* from Maldon in Essex. We need to keep all of our national brewing styles alive.

What is mild?

Mild was once the most popular style of beer and until 1960 still held 40% of the draught beer market, but it had a cloth cap, working class image, making it difficult to promote and was overtaken by the lighter coloured Bitter in the 1950s. Mild was developed in the 18th and 19th Centuries as a less bitter style of beer than porter and stout, and its introduction had much to do with the social conditions of the age. Its darkness generally comes from the use of darker malts and/or roasted barley which are used to compensate for the loss of hop character.

Early Milds were much stronger than modern examples but, during the First World War, malt rationing and pressure from the Temperance movement led to brewers reducing the strength, and following the Second World War, as prosperity returned to Britain, Mild's popularity as a cheap ale began to fade. By the 1970s and with the aggressive marketing of keg bitters and lager, Mild's share of the market had fallen to around 13%.

Today's Milds tend to fall in the 3% to 3.5% ABV category, though there still are stronger versions, such as *Gale's Festival Mild* and *Sarah Hughes' Dark Ruby*. Whilst most Milds are dark, there are paler versions, such as *Bank's Original* and *Timothy Taylor's Golden Best*. Sales are traditionally strongest in the West Midlands, where *Highgate Mild* and *Batham's*

Mild are particularly good examples, but one of the finest Milds is surely *Thwaite's Dark Mild* from Blackburn.

Mild in Hertfordshire

These days only Hertfordshire's micro-brewers are keeping Mild alive and all, dark and at ABV 3.7%, are brewed slightly higher than the national average:-



In the 1970s both remaining Hertfordshire brewers, McMullen's and Rayment's still brewed an AK light Mild. *Rayment's AK* disappeared in 1978 and *McMullen's AK*, which then had an ABV of 3.3%, has been modified over the years, now having an ABV of 3.7% and today described by the company as a Bitter – though many of its light mild characteristics remain.

Greene King's *XX Mild* (ABV 3.0%) is perhaps the most widely available locally, though often found only as a seasonal beer in some tenanted pubs – usually where the landlord is a real ale enthusiast.

Campaigning

Every year CAMRA makes a special attempt to promote Mild and bring this excellent beer to the attention of Britain's drinkers.

In 1978, when Greene King threatened to axe XX, South Herts Branch launched a campaign to save it. Posters, beer mats and other material helped to save the day. Though XX amounts to only a fraction of Greene King's beer production, it is still available and the company deserve credit for not just wielding their axe. Why not ask your nearest Greene King pub to give it a try?



Continued/

What's happening *this* May?

Please see our **Wild About Mild** article on page 22. Each of Hertfordshire's local branches will be running Mild events crawls - a chance to get out there and try some fantastic rarely seen beers, brought to you especially by the landlords involved. North Herts Branch is running a coach to the Black Country. Check our Branch Diary – pages 30-31 of this edition of Pints of View – hopefully there's an event near to you.

Les Middlewood

Crouch Vale Brewery Trip

In September 2006 *Crouch Vale Amarillo* was voted Beer of the Festival by drinkers at North Herts CAMRA's **Letchworth Beer and Cider Festival**. All the Festival volunteer workers were invited to visit the brewery and presentation as a thank you for their hard work during the festival. The day dawned bright and cold, everybody turned up on time, and there was no traffic so we ended up arriving at the **Prince of Wales**, Stow Maries half an hour before opening time, despite going as slowly as the bus driver dared! A brief negotiation with the man filling coal scuttles in the yard gained us entry, and a long queue formed at the bar while one harassed barmaid served 39 people single-handed.

At the brewery we were greeted by Ollly Graham who gave us a brief history of Crouch Vale and their beers, and samples of malt and hops to taste and smell. He then showed off the vast range of certificates and awards Crouch Vale has won over the years.



*Branch
Chairman and
Festival
Organiser Andy
Rawnsley (left)
presents Ollly
with another
BOF* certificate
to add to his
huge collection*

The brewery turned out to be a bit of an anticlimax; inside a brand new industrial unit were a steam boiler, a mash tun, a copper and four fermentation tanks. Clean and shiny stainless steel was everywhere, so fortunately about five minutes and five questions later we went back into the visitor centre to sample -

**BOF = Beer of festival*

Amarillo and *Winter Ale*, the very first brew through the new plant. And very nice it was too.

Back in the pub lunch was served, along with more top-quality beer, and we officially presented the BOF certificate in front of the whole party.

Our next stop was Chelmsford where everybody was let loose with a map of the GBG pubs in the town and told to get on with it. Most of us visited the **Queen's Head**, coincidentally owned by Crouch Vale, and pretty much acknowledged as the best pub in town. There are normally 6-8 beers on, including milds and stouts, and real cider too. Just the sort of thing CAMRA members look out for.

En route home we stopped at the **Queen's Head**, Allens Green near Sawbridgeworth, and the current **Herts/Essex Border Pub of the year (2006)** and were made very welcome by landlord Cliff Caswell and his staff. This Queen's Head also sells milds, stouts, two ciders and a perry, so all tastes are catered for. Back home in Hitchin several members of the party retired to the **Half Moon** until late into the night according to most reports. All in all a great day out, and a nice reward for all the hard work put in by the festival workers.

Graham Perry

THE LORDSHIP ARMS

Herts. Pub of the Year 2002
The Inn In The Sticks
Benington, Nr Stevenage



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Herts Breweries Feature

All the latest news from Hertfordshire's own breweries

New McMullen Cask Ale

Great news from Hertford, where McMullen's have launched a new third beer to sit alongside *AK* and *Country* at the bar. Almost a year in the planning, the new 3.8% ABV beer is based on the most successful of the company's recent seasonal ales – *Maypole* – a beer that impressed all drinkers who came across it. **Cask Ale** was launched over the Easter weekend, first going to over forty managed houses and then rolling out to McMullen's tenanted pubs. Mac's beer notes say "Our latest ale is inspired by over 180 years of brewing at the Whole Hop Brewery. Styrian Goldings added to English

Country and AK in 20 and 10 litre beer boxes – with delivery to anywhere on mainland Britain within three days of ordering. To do this, check out McMullen's brand new website. Replacing the previous and somewhat restricted website, which acted mainly as a recruitment tool, the new site offers information on all the company's beers and pubs.

Mac's latest Hertfordshire acquisition is the **White Horse** at Burnham Green, many years ago a CAMRA **Good Beer Guide** entry. In Marlow, plans are afoot for a new Baroosh with the purchase of the town's Lloyd's bank building – though Mac's will have to wait until 2011 before conversion work can start. And the **Old Beams** at Shenley Lodge, Milton Keynes will re-open in the summer, after a two-year closure, following an arson attack. For more local Mac's pub news see "Down Your Way" later in these pages.

Les Middlewood, Brewery Liaison Officer

Fuggle hops achieve a refreshing well-balanced beer. Mixed with the the subtle biscuity flavours of these hops, this cask ale is a light and refreshing ale that all generations of drinkers will enjoy". CAMRA feels that this is a very welcome addition to the McMullen portfolio of cask beers – ask your landlord to give it a try! If the beer is as well thought of as *Maypole* then it is sure to be a big hit for the company.

Not to be forgotten, McMullen's are introducing new, more contemporary, pump clips for *Country Bitter* and *AK* – seen here for the first time. These will begin to appear in their pubs from around May. No changes to the beers or how they are brewed. Expect a little gap in the seasonal beers as Cask Ale is given its chance to shine in Mac's houses but plans are already under way for a special cask beer later in the year, brewed to celebrate McMullen's 180th anniversary. And it will now be possible to buy cask ale,



CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1997 - 2007 Cask Marque Certification



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QUALITY FOOD

Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale
Morlands Bitter, Guest Beer

Buntingford Brewery's New Beers

Buntingford Brewery has launched two new beers; *Highwayman IPA* 3.6% and *Western Invader* 4.2% - a light brown beer hopped with Bullion and Progress to give 'a refreshing bitterness with a slight citrus edge'. The brewery did well at the SIBA Eastern Region Beer Competition, winning bronzes for *Britannia* (Best Bitters) and *Oatmeal Stout* (Stouts and Porters), and gold for *Royston Red* (Premium Bitters). Royston Red went on to win bronze at the SIBA National Competition.

New Brews from Red Squirrel

Look out for two new beers coming from Hertford's Red Squirrel brewery. The first, now available, is a variation on *Organic Blonde* - Organic Blonde with Ginger Roots. The second beer, a German weiss beer, will be available in the early summer. Brewed at an ABV of 5%, no poor English copy this. Brewer, Gary Hayward, will be meticulously brewing this beer

in the way that the Germans do, and sourcing local ingredients from Germany. Now for sale alongside the company logo sweatshirts and polos, Red Squirrel can offer you skinny-fit tee shirts and thongs. Contact the brewery. See advert at bottom of page.



The 12th St. Albans Beer Festival is on at St. Albans Arena - 26th to 29th Sept 2007



Top R&B band
Nine Below Zero
headline on Sat
29th evening.

...So make a note in your diary!



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Borehamwood Licensee's defended

Your insulting remarks about the majority of licensees and staff being uninterested in the quality and condition of beer, is somewhat superficial and condescending (*Borehamwood is a Beer Desert* article in edition 221).

Borehamwood I know from my years as a resident of Radlett, and it has always had a mainly 'lager-type' clientele.

When I bought the tenancy of the **Dog and Partridge** at Hunton Bridge some years ago, it sold four lagers and *Tetley Smooth* (yeuk!), but had 3 unused ale pumps. After a few weeks I added real ale, but 7 gallons of the firkin went down the cellar drain. I tried again twice more over the next 3 years with the same result - beer down the drain and me out of pocket.

The majority of managers, and naturally all tenants, leaseholders and freeholders will sell whatever their customers want, but no demand = no sales = waste, and waste = loss of money - and if the customers in bars in Borehamwood prefer lager to ale, that is what you must sell.

J D Pears MBII (Member of the British Institute of Innkeepers)

Ed Says: If you receive the *Borehamwood & Elstree Times*, the edition on Friday February 16th carried an in-depth article, where the licensees interviewed gave exactly the explanation that you have - for the lack of real ale in the town. What cannot be explained is why seven years ago there were seven real ale outlets and now there are only two.

What customers want, whether it be in Borehamwood, Hunton Bridge, or Hartlepool is quality and choice. I do not believe that there is no demand for real ale in Borehamwood; the **Hart & Spool** and **Mops & Brooms** both prove this. The problem does lie with the licensees. When the **Woodcock**, Croxdale Road had a good licensee it served two consistently good real ales and was a pleasurable place to drink. It is now closed - by the Council in April 2006 under an ASBO (Anti Social Behaviour Order), and may never re-open.

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

Oaks loss lamented

Further to your table of closed pubs in Feb/Mar issue another lost local is a McMullen pub closed in the late 1990's "The Three Oaks" on Nomansland Common, Wheathampstead - a basic but delightful two-bar pub (both small - one with dominoes players in the evening, the other for meals at lunchtime). Fronting onto a quiet lane with a bench outside facing the setting sun on a summers evening, and with a large lawn, trees, benches and car park. Many happy hours spent and a big disappointment when McMullen sold up - again! The pub was torn down and has been replaced by a large and very "suburban" looking (i.e. out of place in what is a country setting) four or five, bedroom villa! All very sad. I presume that Mc Mullen argue that selling up helps then balance their books - as does selling the family silver or burning the furniture to keep warm in the winter - a bit short sighted.

J.B.Davies Harpenden

Ed Says: I remember the Three Oaks well and the period in the seventies when we campaigned to get them to re-introduce real ale. The **Elephant & Castle**

The Strathmore Arms

St Paul's Walden, Nr Hitchin SG4 8BT

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strathmorearms@tiscali.co.uk



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Herts pub of the year 2004

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Easter Fest - April 5th-9th

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Last Of The Summer Fest - Sept 13th-16th

up the road was an Ind Coope house at the time, selling *Burton Ale* and Ind Coope bitter. The Oaks had an exceptional darts team for a while and won many trophies, including as I remember, a visit to America. Mac's argument



was that trade had diminished, although the Elephant & Castle (above) has always thrived - draw your own conclusions. There is an analogy here to what has happened recently with the **Tin Pot** in Gustard Wood. When the Three Oaks closed I was surprised that the redevelopment was allowed, but whether the new house is out of place or not to me remains debateable.

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.

Fond memories of the Flower Pot:

I was interested to read your article "it couldn't happen to My Hertford Local" in the Feb/Mar Edition of *Pints of View*. Towards the end of 1968 I took over as Area Manager (I think we may have been mere District Managers in those days!) for Benskins the areas of St Albans and Hertford and Ware, and I have many happy memories of driving over to Hertford to visit my tenants there. I think, initially, I looked after some fourteen pubs in Hertford and five in Ware, along with many others in East Herts.

One of my pubs in those early days not mentioned in your article was the "Flower Pot" - in the square in the centre of Hertford. This was a splendid pub, I can't remember whether it had one or two bars but it was basically a "public bar". It had across the front, facing the square, magnificent coloured leaded windows behind which ran an enormous brass gas pipe, a relic from the days of gas lighting, but which could have been used in an emergency. It was run by a

delightful Irish couple, Jim Burns (or Byrne) and his wife, and I well remember trying to find a suitable replacement pub for them when the Flower Pot had to be closed for redevelopment. I think this would have been 1969.

Sam Hall Harpenden

Ed says: Well 'potted' Sam, the pub was somehow lost between article and print. The Flower Pot in question remained an Ind Coope/Benskins pub until 1972, when it closed for the last time. To jog your memory still further, here's a photograph of the pub from the 1960's, courtesy of Peter Ruffles. Today, the building remains but is now largely occupied by a baker's shop



Tudor Tavern in St Albans Revisited

In newsletter 221 Mr Bury said "The building got its name after two adjoining pubs, The George and the Swan, were knocked together to form one unit" doesn't explain why it got the name Tudor Tavern. Secondly, given that it happened in 1932 the statement can't be true. The George was trading in 1932 and I believe that it closed in that year, however, the Swan had not been on the site for many a decade. Thirdly and perhaps most importantly is that I don't believe that the George ever occupied the site now occupied by the Tudor



Tavern (left), but was in the adjacent buildings, and was certainly the case in 1932 - as can be seen in contemporary photographs. I certainly wouldn't suggest calling it the George as this would in my mind be misleading. For similar reasons using the name Kings Head or Swan only causes historical confusion after such a gap of usage. And anyway, there is still a **Swan** in the town, and some people will recall the last King's

Continued

Head in Market Place, which closed as recently as 1971. Personally, I would have no problem with a new name in this case anyway, as other than familiarity it doesn't have that much going for it. One of the historical facts from your article was that the Tudor Tavern assumed that name in 1932. However, in my own collection, I came across the 1937 transactions of the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society. This contained an article on the survey of what was to become the Tudor Tavern but was then clearly Fred Mayles Antiques shop and Penn Studios. At the moment I don't know when the Tudor Tavern opened (unless you do) but it clearly wasn't before 1937 and therefore don't see how the buildings could have taken the name Tudor Tavern in 1932. I have tried to find the exact date but believe it was as late as 1963 that it opened as a restaurant. The name is a bit naff anyway and generally I can't get that worked up about name changes as historically this happened quite frequently and, the other way around, names for new houses were taken from recently closed inns and the likes e.g. **Mermaid, Kings Head, Swan, Beehive, Verulam Arms** etc. What is more important to me, in this order, is that a) the pub actually stays open in -

any guise - if that is the best that can be done, and b) that it sells decent beer. Sadly of course changing a pub name to something stupid nearly always goes hand in hand with the pub going the same way. By the way, during its licensed trading period the Swan/King's Head never had a tavern license.

Graham Jolliffe

Ed Says: Thanks Graham. There seems to be some doubt about the exact history of the Tudor Tavern. I own up, I cribbed the historic information from Chris Saunders who has a piece on the Tudor Tavern, which is on the web. As far as I know the reason the pub got the name - Tudor Tavern - was that it had been shut and not used as a pub for a long period of time. The Council bought and restored it, wishing the public to have the opportunity to see and enjoy the interior, they reopened it as a pub. Initially managed it then got sold to a brewer. In the Egon Roney guide for 1965 it is listed as selling Charrington's beer.

Greene King Not Flavour Of the Month in East Sussex:

Following the article "Greene King Beers Are Overpriced - Official" in edition 221, the **Friends of the Lewes Arms** have been in touch to highlight another act by the Bury St Edmunds brewer which is not in the consumer's interest. Hertfordshire has many Greene King pubs, and I think it deserves a hearing -

"We are a group of former regulars of the Lewes Arms pub in Lewes, East Sussex. Our favourite beers are brewed in Lewes, by Harvey's, notably their Best Bitter, this won the **Champion Best Bitter** in 2005 and 2006 at the **CAMRA Great British Beer festival**. The **Lewes Arms** has been owned for eight years by Greene King, who stopped selling *Harvey's Best Bitter* in the pub, two weeks before Christmas. This enraged the pub regulars, who are very fond of Harvey's and of the local brewing tradition - the Lewes Arms had been selling Lewes beer since it opened 220 years ago. Imagine having the best beer in Britain brewed a few hundred yards away and not being



Continued

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able to drink it in your favourite pub!
Since the Harveys was stopped we have been boycotting the pub and running regular "vigils" outside to inform passing trade of our discontent with Greene King. This has been going on for two months and will continue indefinitely. We reckon attendance is down by at least 90%, so Greene King have certainly been hit where it hurts them most - the till.

The decision to stop selling Harveys was taken despite a 1,200-signature petition and intervention by our local MP, Norman Baker, and the Town Mayor, Merlin Milner.

We think the current situation is absurd: Greene King effectively challenged us to boycott our own pub, and we have done so. The former regulars have dispersed to other pubs and clubs, but something wonderful has been lost, including many charitable activities. The pub was also a safe haven for many vulnerable individuals. For Greene King's part, they have lost a great deal of money in takings - not much for a company that owns 2,500 pubs, but they must have noticed - and suffered great and continuing damage to their reputation not just in Lewes, but amongst the beer-drinking public in general.

We'd welcome your support if you feel able to give it. You can follow our campaign on the internet at www.lewesarms.org.uk and you can contact us via the website too.

We just want Harveys back in the Lewes Arms, which we think is not a lot to ask".

The Friends of the Lewes Arms

Ed says: This touches me as Greene King policy seems to be; do it our way or not at all. I am pleased to see some genuine grass roots campaigning going on and ask our readers to support the drinkers of the Lewes Arms. Greene King control an enormous tied estate, which includes numerous pubs in Hertfordshire. They are removing choice and imposing their corporate identity onto their customers. If you don't act know it will be you next, if it hasn't happened to you already.

Tony Billings Challenges

I would like to respond to the lively debate I seem to have stimulated, particularly regarding The **Farmer's Boy** (aka "tfb").

I am aware, as a local historian, that "quite the best inn sign in St Albans today" is not very old. 'Lovely Old' is a term of affection, which I held for the rustic inn sign now swept away by so-called 'progress'. Likewise I acknowledge it as a good, historic pub with great beer, which I have often visited. The present incumbents, however, will not know me; sadly age and the lack of direct public transport make for a long walk.

I make no apology for plugging my own book *Victoriana* which has rather more than five of its 82 pages devoted to the 111 pubs of Victorian St Albans, and gave special, illustrated coverage of The Farmer's Boy and The **Verulam Arms** pubs. As I am my own author, publisher, clerk and general dogsbody I stand to make a hefty loss if I don't sell copies, so please note this - Phil Defriez and Tim Holman. I am however pleased that CAMRA has one copy.

Whatever reservations Phil has about the new "label" at 134 London Road I wonder how he views the fact that two of CAMRA HQs nearest pubs are The **Rat's Castle** (below), now with no sign at all,



and the recent **Bunch of Cherries** (now The **Speckled Hen** and displaying the Greene King corporate logo).

I have never used either of these pubs because one has a badly tarnished social image and the other sells the ubiquitous Greene King product, which some readers might agree is even more off-putting.

Unlike Mr Defriez, who is "far more interested in what happens inside the pub", I am intent on saving the best traditions of what goes on both inside AND OUTSIDE. I am a member of *The Inn Sign Society*, which exists to raise awareness of the history and importance of traditional "at the sign offs". I have asked CAMRA, with all its might and clout, to support this small group of enthusiasts in protecting our pub traditions before it is too late. All deemed precious pub interiors should surely be complemented by worthy exteriors, and this should include the inn signs which, thanks to pubcos and new thinking, are rapidly disappearing. Where does

Continued

CAMRAs National Inventory of heritage pubs stand on this issue?

I wait for CAMRA to campaign on this issue of inn signs versus labels and corporate images. If there is any reader who agrees with me that the danger to our pub heritage comes also from "without" please follow me in becoming a member of The Inn Sign Society (Secretary Alan Rose, 9 Denmead Drive, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton. WV11 2QS). A year's membership (£15) will bring you four colourful and informative journals.

Phil Defriez might like to try the *Timothy Taylor Landlord*, usually available at the **Queen's Head**, Sandridge, where he can also enjoy a thoroughly good inn sign...

Tony Billings

Ed says: I think we have had enough correspondence on the Farmers Boy and I would like to re assure Tony Billings, The Inn Signs Society and our readership that CAMRA and Hertfordshire branches take pubs signs seriously, and realise that they are worth preservation. I know that CAMRA Cambridge branch is already challenging Greene King over their use of "Corporate" pub signs, we wish them all success. As far as Tony's book is concerned I do take his point, it takes a long time to research a historical gazetteer, and there is great danger of making a loss even if you do succeed in getting it published, so I think to be fair we can excuse him for plugging it. After all we did publish a piece on Alan Whitakers *Brewers in Hertfordshire* in edition 217 for exactly this reason.

Reg Remembered

I was saddened to hear about Reg Thomas' death in the last edition of POV. I read John Green's tribute with sadness and joy at the memories I had of him.

I recall one instance when my brother and I were on our way for a long weekend 'doing' the 'Kinver Cocktail' and then onto Manchester. On the morning of the trip we passed through Watford heading for the M1. We noticed Reg (right) doing his morning shop. Stopping to briefly say hello he asked what we -



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were off to. 'Kinver and Manchester' we said. Without a blink he was in the back of the car and we had a great weekend. I often think what happened to the shopping and what his mother ate that weekend!

Tony Burns

Ed Says: All of us who knew Reg have anecdotal stories like the one you recall here. He was a "one off" and the tales will be re-told with great humour in drinking company for many years to come.

Hertfordshire Pubs of the Year

Continued from front cover...

North Herts

Our Mutual Friend, Stevenage is CAMRA North Hertfordshire Pub of the Year. This 'New Town' pub was recently voted top pub for the second year running by branch Members. Keith and Yvonne Neville now proudly stand alongside the current licensees of **Lordship Arms**, Benington, the **Red Lion**, Preston, and the **Maiden's Head**, Whitwell, who all have won this coveted title on more than one occasion.

Andy Rawnsley

Hertfordshire Pubs of the Year continued...

Watford & District

Congratulations to the **Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty** at Heronsgate for winning the CAMRA Watford & District branch's Pub of the Year award for 2007.

CAMRA's Pub of the Year awards are judged on a number of criteria which the Campaign regards as those that make a good real ale pub: friendly efficient staff; customers who help generate a pleasant drinking environment; promotion of real ale; support of CAMRA policies such as the use of oversized glasses; and, of course, an excellent pint.

It shouldn't have come as a great surprise that active CAMRA members Martin Few and Gill Gibson have done well in this competition. Most of the above objectives are what they support when they're on the other side of the bar, and are ones that they have tried to instil into their own pub. The pub might not have come top in all categories, but the overall package made them worthy winners.

This is the second year in a row that the Land of Liberty has won the award, and last year it went

on to win the **Hertfordshire Pub of the Year** title, and also to do extremely well in the East Anglian Regional competition. It was gratifying to see voters from outside the area recognising the quality of the pub in competitions in which Watford branch voters could not participate.

The Land of Liberty has an advantage in that it is one of a declining number of free houses, and hence can avoid being subject to many of the restrictions that a brewery or pub company is liable to impose. The scope for innovation can be even more limited for those in charge of a company-managed pub, so special congratulations to John Ross, Joan Bayliss and the staff at the **Southern Cross** who again this year were close runners up.

Bill Austin & Andrew Vaughan

South Hertfordshire

In just a few years licensee David Worcester has turned the **White Lion** into a shining example of a community pub, and it is the worthy winner of **South Herts Pub of the Year**. This pub welcomes all; with excellent real ales and good food, occasional live music to suit all tastes, barbeques in the summer, a sun trap of a garden, boules and Aunt Sally for the more energetic.

Iain Loe

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2/3 mile M25 Junction 17, Follow sign to Heronsgate; 1 mile Chorleywood station

New Herts Pub Database (Continued from front page)

We have produced many paper-based guides to the county in the past but it is always disappointing to find they are out of date before we get them back from the printers, things change so fast in the pub trade these days. The new web-based guide is fully updateable so we can add information as soon as we find out about it.

The guide is fully searchable, you can find all the pubs in a town or village, and you don't even have to worry about the spelling, as all locations are on a drop-down list, or you can look at the maps and click on a location. If you know the name of the pub you are looking for, that can be entered directly, part of the name is usually enough but entering 'Lion' will list all the Red Lions, White Lions and Dandelions.

Search by postcode; e.g. AL3 will list all the pubs with that postcode.

Search by beer; e.g. 'London Pride' will list all the pubs serving that ale.

You can also search by facility or combination of facilities e.g. pubs that welcome families, have a garden, near a railway station and are dog friendly. Or have accommodation, evening meals and a television.

To aid finding the pub, simply click on the postcode and this provides a link to www.Multimap.com with your selected pub highlighted. You can vary the map scale to get your bearings or use the directions facility to guide you there.

Being a CAMRA guide, the emphasis of course is on pubs selling real ale, however, non-real ale pubs (fizz houses in the local parlance) are listed so people can find them and do some campaigning.

Anybody is welcome to send in updates or suggestions; these should be addressed to pubs@hertsale.org.uk. All publicans have been notified of their entry and asked to submit updates as things change.

For the active CAMRA members, lists can be produced of pubs by branch areas, by ownership either brewery or pub chain or free houses.

Mailing lists and labels can be produced for circulars.

For the premier pubs eligible for the **Good Beer Guide** the information can be converted into the format required by the GBG editor. *Bob Norrish*

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North Herts:	Graham Perry Tel: 07956 564606 graham.perry@t-mobile.co.uk
South Herts:	John Bishop Tel: 01582 768478 realales@yahoo.com
Watford and District:	Andrew Vaughan Tel: 01923 230104 branch@watfordcamra.org.uk
All branches above can be seen on the guide	



*Above: Database Editor Tony Dawes (far left) and chief co-ordinator Bob Norrish (far right) at the pub database launch, held at the **Black Horse**, Hertford on 27 March.*

Below: A screenshot of the pub database.



Pints of View Beer Name Prize Sudoku

								E
			R	O		A		
T	W				A	F		R
		F	T		R	W		
R			L		F			O
		L	W			E		
L		T	O				A	G
			A	T	E			
W								

Solution to our Pints of View Real ale Sudoku in edition 220 will appear in next edition. Winner of a **2007 Good Beer Guide**: Maria Blatch, Borehamwood, Herts. **Thanks to all who entered.**

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 Triple FFF beer: **AFTERGLOW**.

Completed entries by 1 June 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:.....

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in the shadow of St Albans Abbey.
Genuine free house with
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8 Real Ales and 1 Real Cider
7 Ever-changing guests
Belgian and Czech on draught
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Wild About Mild?

May is CAMRA's Mild promotion month, and asks licensees around the country to stock Mild. As mentioned in our Mild article, pages 10 – 11, local Herts CAMRA branches will hold events to celebrate Mild too, which are as detailed below.

Mild in North Herts

In the North Herts branch area, the branch makes sure that Mild will be available at its normal month events, with visits to three **Good Beer Guide** pubs selling the dark stuff – check through our Branch Diary. And look out for a branch excursion to the West Midlands in May – seeking out Dark Mild in its heartland.

Born to be Mild

Like last year, Hertford and Ware members will be going Mild on Tuesday 22 May, when four game Hertford landlords will be surprising us with Milds from around Britain.

Starting at the **Black Horse** in West Street at 8pm, our party moves on to the **White Horse** in Castle Street for 8.45pm. To the **Old**



Barge on The Folly at 9.30pm and finishing at the **Old Cross Tavern** in St. Andrew Street at 10.15pm. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

Going Mild in Watford

In Watford, the branch's town Mild celebrations take place at a social evening on Wednesday 9 May. Mild seekers can try *Greene King XX Mild*, which will feature at the **Nascot Arms** in Stamford Road and then, around the corner, *Theakston's Mild* at the **Southern Cross** in Langley Road.

Mild too, in Chorleywood and Herongate

Moving out to Chorleywood. Watford branch's Mild celebrations continue on Tuesday 22 May where the evening starts at the **Black Horse** in Dog Kennel Lane, Chorleywood, one of the branch's most recent stockists of mild. Then it's on to the **Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty** in Long Lane, Herongate where Mild will be ready and waiting.

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BBQ Saturday & Sunday

Large Garden

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Saturday 12 - 12

Sunday 12 - 11

Sunday Quiz 8:30

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4 Regulars & 4 Guests
Incl. a Mild, Stout or Porter
Selection of Belgian Beers

Good Home Cooked Food

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Sun Roast 12:00-4:00 optional 3 courses
incl. Vegetarian option

Beer Festivals

End of May Bank Hol. & Early Oct.

Log Fire – Patio Garden

Festival Farewell?

Was that the last **Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival**? We hope not, this was our best ever. With the future of the Town Hall in question we may be without a suitable venue for our ever more popular annual event. March 23rd & 24th saw the seventh annual Festival run jointly with Hitchin and District Round Table. Thirsty punters drank through 5,200 pints of our 'Best of Beers' Real Ale selection. Not content with that they drank 450 pints of draught and bottled foreign beer plus 400 pints of cider and perry! With the past two years having sold out we were determined to provide a range right until the end. We did it! At closing time on Saturday the 24th you still had a choice of 21 top quality real ales. A live demonstration of our new Hertfordshire on-line pub guide (see page 20) was well received by all.

Voting for Beer and Cider of Festival was fast and furious. Our local friends at



Buntingford Brewery have to be congratulated: They walked off with Gold and Silver awards with *Royston Red* and *Western Invader* respectively. Top cider went to *Heck's Kingston Black* with second place going to *Wilkins' Medium Perry*.

We'd like to be back with the **2008 Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival** on the 14th and 15th March next year. Here's hoping that North Herts District Council let the Town Hall survive and we can provide an ever better choice of beer, cider and perry for you to try. Time will tell. In the meantime let's to see you for a drink our two at the **2007 Letchworth Beer & Cider Festival**. Usual venue, Plinston Hall, Letchworth from the 20th to 22nd September. *Andy Rawnsley*

Beer of the Festival Presentation
Buntingford Brewery, Therfield Heath,
Royston
Friday 15th June, 7:30 pm

Meet The Adnams Brewer

A large crowd recently gathered at the **Crown and Falcon** Puckeridge, pictured below, (<http://www.crown-falcon.demon.co.uk>) to 'Meet the Adnams Brewer'. This is an informal evening a bit like a brewery visit without the traipsing around old buildings and banging your head on pipes. The brewer David Waller gave a brief history of Adnams (did you know they started in Newbury, Berkshire?), described the brewing process and gave us some Maris Otter malt and Fuggles hops to taste and smell, followed by some samples of Bitter and Explorer again to taste, smell, and describe Jilly Goulden style.



Just to see if we had been paying attention there was a short quiz with beer as prizes, and there was much hilarity when he tried to fob off Steve Banfield from Buntingford Brewery (obviously there to find out how to do it properly☺) with some cans of Adnams Bitter.

The highlight for the CAMRA members was a glass-ended cask of bitter which David shone a floodlight through. In the cask the beer had a very dark ruby-red colour, the sediment was visible in the bottom, and a steady stream of CO2 bubbles could be seen rising; proof that this was *real* real ale, with live yeast still fermenting residual sugars in the cask. It took only a slight movement of the cask to disturb the sediment, and parts of hops from the dry hopping were soon seen circling round in the currents.

David then vented the cask, which created a very impressive fountain of sediment inside the cask which soon spread out through the beer. Brewers put finings in the casks to trap the sediment and help it sink to the bottom and clear the beer for consumption. Just as an experiment Adnams once managed to get a cask to clear 14 times after shaking it up before they got bored.

Graham Perry

Pub Feature – The Black Boy, Bushey Heath

The **Black Boy** could be Bushey Heath's best kept secret: A pub where you wouldn't expect a pub; and one which, if they're lucky, residents might stumble across one day as they walk around the area.

The pub is located on Windmill Street in a residential neighbourhood well off Bushey High Road; and is not associated with any similar establishments such as shops and the like. The reason for this can be discovered from the history of the area.

Prior to its enclosure in 1808 Bushey Heath was common heath land, feared by travellers for the cover it afforded to highwaymen. One of the only buildings on the heath was the windmill that gave its name to Windmill Lane and

many such beer houses were established after the Duke of Wellington's government introduced the Beer Act in 1830 abolishing duty on beer and allowing anyone to sell it after the purchase of a two-guinea licence. The purpose of the Act was to combat the surge in gin drinking, but a knock-on effect was an explosion of beer houses across the country. Was Clutterbuck's purchase of the land on Bushey Heath a year after the Act an attempt to jump on the bandwagon? It seems unlikely since there probably wouldn't have been much custom in the area at the time. The windmill would have had a workforce, of course, and in the middle years of the nineteenth century a small community was starting to develop along Bushey High Road. As the century wore on the Black Boy, which shared its site with a



A photograph of the Black Boy in 1930; and the same scene today: Notice that the pub sign has changed position. 1930 photograph courtesy of the Bushey Museum.

Windmill Street, which stood at the highest point on the hill and had done so since at least 1720.

In the early nineteenth century the nearest building would have been the Windmill Inn (now the Harvester) on Bushey High Road, but just before 1830 Basil Burchell of Bushey Farm bought the plot next to the windmill. He subsequently sold it to Peter Clutterbuck (presumably of Clutterbuck's Brewery on nearby Stanmore Hill) in 1831. It seems likely that Clutterbuck's intention was to build a pub, but the earliest reference to a building on the site comes from 1835. Even so, no licensee is named until Thomas Rawbone in 1841 although the premises may have been serving beer before then.

Originally the Black Boy was a beer house; that is, it only had a licence to sell beer. A great

small community store at the time, may have been an essential amenity for what may have been a rather isolated community.

By the end of the century the community store had gone and the windmill had ceased operation, finally being demolished in about 1905. Eventually all trace of the windmill was covered up by the development of newer buildings. The original pub building was demolished and replaced by the current building shortly before the First World War, and shortly afterwards in 1923 Clutterbuck's Brewery was sold to the Cannon Brewery of Clerkenwell. Seven years after this the Cannon Brewery itself merged with Taylor Walker to form the Taylor Walker group, but the Cannon Brewery continued to operate until 1955 and a photograph of the Black Boy taken in the year of the merger shows a large Cannon Brewery sign on the side of

Continued/

the building. In 1939 the pub was finally granted a wine licence but it wasn't until 1961 that spirits could be sold at the pub, making it rather a late conversion to a full licence.

Demolition of the windmill and development of the area eventually surrounded the Black Boy and isolated it from the main road. This doesn't seem to have caused any harm in the long run, though. The pub retains its traditional atmosphere and is a previous winner of Watford branch's Pub of the Year award, continuing to attract custom to this day. Several real ales are on offer, including a changing guest ale; and amongst the pictures and photographs on the wall is one showing the windmill, in a rather dilapidated state, shortly before its demolition.

Hopefully this article will encourage those who may be new to the area, or who simply weren't aware of the pub's existence, to seek out this tucked away treasure.

The historical information in the article came from the following sources:

TR Groves, EG Longman, BND Wood: *From the Wheatsheaf to the Windmill. The Story of Bushey and Oxhey Pubs*. Bushey Museum Trust 1984.

G Jolliffe & A Jones: *Hertfordshire Inns & Public Houses: A Historical Gazetteer*. Hertfordshire Publications 1995.

P Haydon: *Beer and Britannia: An Inebriated History of Britain*. Sutton Publishing 2003

A Whitaker: *Brewers in Hertfordshire: A Historical Gazetteer*. Hertfordshire Publications 2006.

Andrew Vaughan (Watford & District CAMRA)

Whittlesea Straw Bear Festival

On the first Saturday following Plough Monday, which is the first Monday following Twelfth Night the Straw Bear Festival takes place in Whittlesea, or Whittlesey, (as the case maybe), near Peterborough in Cambridgeshire. In days gone by the tradition used to take place on the Tuesday following Plough Monday when a Plough Boy was dressed up as a straw bear. He and his friends would entertain the locals in Whittlesea. However, the age old tradition was stopped by a local police inspector in 1919 because he saw it as a way of

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'cadging' and it brought on 'bad behaviour' resulting in prison sentences. The tradition was revived in 1980 and this year was the twenty eighth since then. North Herts branch of CAMRA started going to the festival in 2002 and have been going ever since.

Since the revival, the event takes place over the weekend, culminating in the burning of the Straw Bear, (minus its occupant), on the Sunday. Nowadays, thousands of people turn up to see the procession of the Straw Bear and as many as fourteen various Morris Men and Women troupes, nine Molly Men and Women troupes, several Clog Dancing troupes, six or so Sword Dancing troupes and a couple of Appalachian dancing groups, all accompanied by their own musicians; something for everyone with a colourful and musical display.

The initial procession starts at the Ivy Leaf Club at 10.30 am and winds its way to the Market Square. En route various dance groups stop and take turns to dance in the streets. Two other processions start at 12 noon and 1.30 pm respectively and this time they dance at various local pubs around the town,

Continued

eight in all. At 3.00 pm some of them return to the Market Square for the finale, whilst others carry on dancing and sinking the odd pint or two.

The branch members that attended arrived early this year, so a half pint was the order of the day. It's a long day, so half pints are ample. Two of the pubs are in the current **Good Beer Guide** this year the **Boat and the Bricklayers**. This year we saw many dancers performing at the various pubs and we managed to visit each of the eight. It's worth a visit and next year the date should be Saturday 12 January 2008, (if I have worked that out correctly). However, don't take my word for it, log onto the web page at www.strawbear.org.uk or email them on info@strawbear.org.uk, nearer the time.



The Straw Bear procession

By late afternoon most of the dancers and the 'tourists' are ensconced in the local pubs and the club, but not the intrepid band from Hertfordshire. They have, by a series of pubs, made their way back to the station to catch the train to Ely to visit the three pubs in the current **Good Beer Guide**. This year it was the **Town House**, **West End House** and the **Prince Albert**, all serving good quality ale. Alas all too soon it was time to catch the train home and wait for next year.

Why not think about joining us and going next year; details should appear in Pints of View in the December edition.

Brian Mason ©

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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CAMRA Launches its Beer Club

CAMRA is delighted to announce the launch of the CAMRA Beer Club – a new scheme that will deliver a case of 20-top quality bottled real ales direct to your door for just £39.99 a month plus postage and packing.

This new initiative is a major step forward in our promotion of real ale in a bottle and in offering greater benefits to CAMRA members.

As a member of the CAMRA Beer Club you will discover and enjoy a whole range of specialist beers that are currently not widely available in supermarkets or pubs. Every British beer is bottle-conditioned and some collections will feature authentic 'World Explorer' beers. It's a great way to expand on your knowledge of beer!

Every three months the CAMRA Beer Club will put together a collection of five different beers (four bottles of each). You will also receive tasting notes written by our resident guest experts.

All those chosen will be high-quality examples of their type, will have distinctive character, and will come from brewers who are committed to diversity and quality.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "CAMRA would always prefer that people enjoy a cask ale at the pub. However we also accept there are many occasions when people do drink at home. In these instances we would prefer that people drink real ale in a bottle rather than canned beer products.

CAMRA's policy is also to promote real ale in a bottle (British bottle-conditioned products). We believe that this is the next best thing to cask ale that you enjoy at the pub. The club aims to make available beers that might have not previously or easily been available to CAMRA Beer Club members in bottle form.

By increasing people's knowledge, and by widening their awareness of different beer styles, we hope that they may also have the confidence to try different styles of cask ales at the pub."

Many of the beers selected will be previous CAMRA award-winners or champion beers. Each case is hand-picked by a panel of experts from both CAMRA and our partners the Beer Club of Britain. We ensure beers are of the

highest quality, by having brewing experts on hand to advise.

Every beer is selected for its consistency, quality and diversity. In future cases there will be opportunities for Beer Club members to make their own personal recommendations to the Club.

As a member of the CAMRA Beer Club you will receive details of the latest selection. If you decide to accept it, you need do nothing more – delivery to your door is automatic. Of course, you're not obliged to take any of the CAMRA Beer Club's cases. You can 'miss' as many cases as you like, or if you decide the CAMRA Beer Club is not for you, you can cancel at any time, just tell us.

You can order with complete confidence because every bottle is covered by our full, money-back guarantee. However this offer is limited, so be quick to secure yours. Your introductory case will be ready to ship, week commencing 2nd April.

Non-CAMRA members can join the CAMRA Beer Club for £44.95 (plus p&p)

For more information on how the beer club works, to place an order, or view our current case, visit

www.camrabeerclub.co.uk.



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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 19.

Baldock: The **Boot** has a new licensee. The **George & Dragon** remains shut and removal work was observed in early March. The **Goldcrest Inn** also remains closed, awaiting an uncertain future.

Bramfield: It appears that the optimistic report about the **Grandison Arms** was completely unfounded. The latest report is that the pub, closed since April 2002, has a new owner, and the garage next door is closed and boarded up too. The indication is that if another piece of land and some lock ups are acquired a large redevelopment could be on the cards. Again I ask for further information.

Burnham Green: McMullen's have bought the popular **White Horse**. The pub is famously named after the phantom headless stallion, slain during the English Civil War, that is said to haunt the road leading to Woolmer Green.

Bushey: The **Lazy Fox** (Ex Queen's Arms) has closed and is being advertised as a pub or development opportunity.

Bushey Heath: The **King's Head** on Little Bushey Lane has closed and has an uncertain future. The **Devonshire Arms** has had its licence returned after a court hearing in January. Stricter conditions have been applied to the licence, including a requirement for frequent meetings with residents. The pub is still closed at the moment.

Chandler's Cross: The **Clarendon Arms**, former **Good Beer Guide** entry, has been sold by the Massive Pub Company to David Cowham and Shaun Gamble, who seem to have plans to expand the food side of the business, but who apparently intend to maintain it as a pub. It is closed for alterations at the moment.

Chapelfoot: The **Royal Oak** reopens after a major refit in March. Now owned by Mitchells & Butler, real ale might be available.

Chorleywood: The **Black Horse** on Dog Kennel Lane is serving *Hyde's Mild*; not the **Rose & Crown** as was reported in the last edition.

Cuffley: The Harvester is to be demolished for a new Tesco Extra and a block of apartments.

Dane End: The **Boot** has a new licensee.

Elstree: We welcome Caroline and Dave to the

Wagon & Horses, Medburn who took over in November 2006. The beer range is Fullers, *London Pride* and *Adnams*. The *Brakspears Bitter* is being discontinued in favour of a changing guest beer. The pub also provides an extensive food menu.

Halls Green: The **Rising Sun** has a new licensee who is doing a lot of community-related events.

Hatfield: The **Red Lion** (Mac's) is having its function room demolished and will lose part of the car park in a redevelopment. Flats will be built on the site of the **Cranbourne** rooms, which McMullen says were under utilised. There's hoardings all around the enormous car park at the **Red Lion** where McMullen's have sold land for the development of flats. Though the pub will remain, the outmoded function rooms will be demolished, the pub then being able to concentrate on its local trade

Hare Street: The **Beehive** building work is ongoing to open the pub out into one bar area.

Harpenden: Change of licensee at the **Dolphin**. We understand that the pub is being covered on a temporary basis at present.

Heronsgate: We congratulate Gill Nichol and Martin Few of the **Land of Liberty Peace & Plenty** on winning the Watford & District, **Pub of the Year** award for the second consecutive year. *See page 19.*

Hertford: If you're only looking for a beer at the **Hertford House Hotel**, you'll have to wait until around 10pm. The hotel very much gives preference to its diners before this. Great to see Hertford-based Red Squirrel Brewery's *RSB* as a stock beer at the **Old Cross Tavern** – though their beers have often featured here, this is a first permanent berth for Red Squirrel in their home town. There's a new landlord at the **Bridge House** which hopefully signals an end to the recent period of uncertainty. The beer festival season in Hertford gets under way when the **Old Barge** holds its second beer festival over the St. George's day weekend Friday 20 to Monday 23 April, with Simon and Sally offering an all-English theme. At the **White Horse**, Nigel's May Day Bank Holiday weekend beer festival happens between Friday 4 and Monday 7 May. And over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, Friday 25- Monday 28 May, at the **Old Cross Tavern**, Bev and Mary will be holding their first beer festival of the year. Into June, Tony and Linda hold their second Fathers Day beer

Continued

festival at the **Black Horse** – from Friday 15 to Sunday 17.

Hertford Heath: Another Hertfordshire pub changes tack. The **Jolly Pindar**, formerly the East India College Arms, is reverting to a still older name, the **College Arms** – a name linked to the nearby Haileybury College. Leased by Punch to Spice Inns, the pub is set for a £500k uplift to create an 80 cover pub/restaurant with a further 60 or so seats outside for al fresco dining – all specialising in modern British cuisine. There may be more chance of real ale remaining here than at the **Hillside**, in Hertford where poor sales of Fuller's London Pride amongst diners eventually led to its demise. Spice Inn's third Hertfordshire pub is the **Three Horseshoes** at Harpenden.

Hitchin: The **Anchor** has new tenants. The **Bricklayers Arms** has a new landlord Reports say beer quality has improved. The **Orchard & Anvil** has a new tenant, with food to be available, but sadly still no real ale.

Ickleford: The **Green Man** changed hands in early March. The **Plume of Feathers** is planning a beer festival over the late May Bank Holiday weekend.

Letchmore Heath: Paul has left the GBG-listed **Three Horseshoes** to run a pub for Wadsworth's in the New Forest. We welcome Lee, who will be managing the pub until new tenants are found, which will not be until end of March at the earliest.

Letchworth: The **Black Squirrel** is currently closed.

Little Wymondley: The **Plume of Feathers** has new management.

Mill Hill: NW9 The **New Chandos** no longer sells real ale.

Potters Bar: The **Green Man** no longer sells real ale. I remember this place when it was a pub. The **Oakmere** was closed 18th February and is due to re-open 4th April after conversion to a Beefeater restaurant, which apparently will not be selling real ale. Confirmation awaited. The **Duke O York**, Ganwick Corner, is selling *Charles Wells Bombardier* and *Old Speckled Hen*, there are always two real ales on offer but the selection varies. The **Builders Arms** in Little Heath (Mac's) is also due for a refurb., details

and dates awaited. The **Green Dragon** at Trotters Bottom, arguably nearer Barnet than Potters Bar, is selling three real ales; *Greene King IPA* and two guests - *Speckled Hen* and *Olde Trip*. All brewed at Bury St Edmunds. They have a new chef, Nick Turpin, who has moved from a gastro pub (**Kings Head** in Winchmore Hill). All food on the menu is home made from locally-sourced ingredients, so it's well worth a visit.

Park Street: The **Old Red Lion** has had its interior refit completed. The traditional exterior hides a contemporary interior as well as the original fittings. The real ale has gone.

Radlett: Brookes Bar is now selling real ale. It has two handpumps; one reported to be selling *Fullers London Pride*, further details to follow.

Redbourn: The **Bell and Shears**, has had a refurb. It is reported that the redundant handpumps have been removed - to be confirmed. A planning application has been made for the **Saracens Head**, (as at Oct 06). The new owner, Lorraine Fletcher of Hemel Hempstead, wants change of use to a "beauty salon", and promises to preserve the old fabric of the building. The application is quite interesting reading - they make out a good case for conversion that would be difficult to argue against, especially as it has been empty for at least four years.

Royston: The **Old Post Office** has been refurbished and turned into a **Barracuda** pub. Since opening in early March three real ales are now on available, all of which are from *Buntingford Brewery*.

St Albans: The **Pré Hotel** is no longer a Whitbread 'Out and Out'. It now belongs to Mitchels & Butlers and there are some developments being planned. My guess is that it will be an Ember Inn (they are also reviving the Beefeater restaurant theme Ed). We welcome Emma Marsh to the **William IV**, who took over at the beginning of March. The **Baton**, **Beehive** and the **Crown** all have Punch leases for sale. Congratulations go to landlord David Worcester of the **White Lion** for being voted South Herts **Pub of the Year**. See page 19.

Stevenage: Our Mutual Friend is the 2007 North Hertfordshire Branch **Pub of the Year**. A five year birthday party and mini beer festival is to take place on the weekend of 21st/22nd April with 6 or so special beers. See page 19.

Therfield: The **Fox & Duck** has a new licensee.

Continued

DOWN YOUR WAY

Ware: The **Navigator** is the chosen name for the former Waterfront pub. Canal side, on the River Lee Navigation, the £700k refurbishment aims to create a contemporary feel. Now operating under Barracuda's Smith and Jones colours, there is still one rather cavernous and open-plan space but the pub is nevertheless bright and comfortable and, on opening night, was offering handpumped *Potton Black Swan*, *Fuller's London Pride* and *Courage Director's* to its new customers.

Welwyn Garden City: A start to work at the **Chieftain** has been delayed. Proposals for flats and a smaller pub are subject to further planning discussions.

Wheathampstead: The Swan, reopened first week of February and being run by jointly with the Nelson. Real ale is on sale and the pub has gone more foody. The **Bull** has a planning application in to remove some studding wall around the bar area, improve the toilets and general decoration, but obviously they want to impose the Mitchells & Butlers ethos/template/theme (or what ever they call it these days) on the place.

BRANCH DIARY

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tue 2 Apr: Committee Meeting – **Brambles**, Buntingford 8.00pm sharp.

Wed 11 Apr: April Branch Social - **Half Moon**, Hitchin 8.00pm

Sat 14 Apr: Branch Mini-bus Ramble: **Three Horseshoes** - Norton 7.00pm, **Three Horseshoes**, - Hinxworth 7.45pm, **Rose and Crown** – Ashwell 8.30pm, **ThreeTuns** – Ashwell 9.15pm, **Bushel and Strike** - Ashwell 10.00pm. **£5 per person**. Pick-ups: Stevenage 6.15pm, Baldock 6.30pm, Hitchin 6.45pm. Drop offs close to home.

Wed 25 Apr: Branch Social Stevenage Crawl - **Granby** 8.00pm, **Coreys Mill** 9.00pm, **Squirrel** 10.00pm

Mon 7 May: May Committee Meeting - **Our Mutual Friend**, Stevenage 8.00pm sharp.

Wed 9 May: Branch Meeting - **Red Lion**, Great Offley 8.00pm. Nominations for Community Pub of the Year.

Sat 12 May: Branch Mini-bus Ramble. Herts POTY checking. All day trip. Details tbc when branch POTYs are announced.

Wed 23 May: Branch Social Hitchin Crawl - **Well** 8.00pm, **Orange Tree** 8.30pm, **Three Moorhens** 9.00pm, **Bricklayers Arms** 9.30pm., **Half Moon** 10.00pm.

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Mon 4 Jun: Committee Meeting - **Strathmore Arms** 8.00pm sharp.

Wed 6 Jun: Branch Social Royston Crawl - **Green Man** 8.00pm, **Chequers** 8.30pm, **Old Bull** 9.00pm **Jockey** 9.30pm, **White Bear** 10.00pm.

Sat 9 Jun: Branch Mini-bus Ramble: **Plough** - Datchworth 7.00pm, **Tilbury** - Datchworth 7.45pm, **Fox** - Woolmer Green 8.30pm, **Red Lion** - Woolmer Green 9.15pm, **Chequers** - Woolmer Green 10.00pm. **£5 per person.** Pick-ups: Stevenage 6.15pm, Baldock 6.30pm, Hitchin 6.45pm. Drop offs close to home. Please book by 27th May.

Fri 15 - Jun: trip to present Hitchin Beer of Festival (BOF) certificate. Details to be confirmed after Hitchin Beer Festival.

Wed 20 Jun: Branch Social Letchworth Crawl: **Arena Tavern** 8.00pm, **Broadway Hotel** 8.45pm, **Hogshead** 9.30pm, **Three Magnets** 10.15pm

Contacts: **Chairman** - Andy Rawnsley, Tel 01438 816938, email chairman@camranorthherts.org.uk,
Socials contact - Graham Perry, Tel 07956 564606, email secretary@camranorthherts.org.uk

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Thu 12 Apr: Herts Liaison meeting – **Wenlock Arms**, London N1 7.00pm

Fri 13 Apr: Ware Beer Festival trip - Coach from (at 7.00pm) and back to **St Albans City station**. £8.00

Tue 17 Apr: Branch Meeting - **Lower Red Lion**, St Albans 8.00pm.

Fri 20 – Sun 22 Apr: - **CAMRA MEMBERS WEEKEND**, Wolverhampton.

Tue 1 May: Pub of the Year 3rd Place Award presentation - **White Horse**, Castle Street, Hertford. 8.00pm

Thu 3 May: Beer Festival Committee Meeting - **White Lion**, Sopwell Lane 8.00pm.

Thu 10 May: Pub of the Year Runner up presentation - **Woodman**, Wildhill. Minibus from St Albans City station 7.00pm. £8.00 (book through Branch Contact above top).

Tue 15 May: Branch Meeting - **Red Lion**, Radlett 8.00pm.

Thu 17 May: South Herts Pub of the Year Winner presentation - **White Lion**, Sopwell Lane, St Albans 8.00pm.

Sat 30 Jun: **Red Squirrel** brewery trip, 12.00pm. Contact Branch Contact, above top, for details.

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

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Tue 17 Apr: Bushey social - **Royal Oak**, Sparrows Herne, 8.30pm; **King Stag**, Bournehall Road, 9.30pm; **Swan**, Park Road, 10.00pm.

Tue 24 Apr: Watford social - **Moon Under Water**, High Street, 8.30pm; **One Bell**, High Street, 9.15pm; **One Crown**, High Street, 10.00pm.

Mon 30 Apr: Branch Meeting - **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Wed 9 May: Watford Social - **Nascot Arms**, Stamford Road, 8.30pm; **Southern Cross**, Langley Road, 9.30pm.

Mon 21 May: Branch Meeting - **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Tue 22 May: Branch Social - **Black Horse**, Dog Kennel Lane, Chorleywood, 8.30pm; **Land of Liberty**..., Long Lane, Heronsgate, 9.45pm.

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan.

Phone: 01923 230104. **Mobile:** 07854 988152.

Email: branch@watfordcamra.org.uk

Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

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