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HERTFORDSHIRE'S Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

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THE BITTER END

Mitchells & Butlers Red Rag to the Bull

Acts of desecration to historic pubs always seem to fall between editions of this newsletter, in this case the **Bull** at Wheathampstead, pictured right, by Mitchells & Butler Pub Company.

Signage on the exterior of pubs is covered under planning permission and must be granted by the Council.

Unfortunately mighty M&B, a national pubco, don't know or don't care about this and have

placed unsightly corporate Miller and Carter Steak House Pub Grill hoardings on the Bull, which re-opened in early April.

The *Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society* has objected strongly to these applications to change the signage on The Bull Inn in the centre of Wheathampstead. Their letter to the Council reads as follows:

"The Bull is a Grade II Listed Building standing in a prominent position in the Wheathampstead Conservation Area, at the point where the River Lea passes under the High Street. It has been known as The Bull for several hundred years (probably since 1617 at least), and is well known as such over a wide area of Hertfordshire and beyond. It is a very important feature of the village of Wheathampstead for historical, architectural and cultural reasons, and to change its name and its appearance in the manner proposed strikes at the very heart of this community.

It appears from the application plans on the Council's website that all The Bull signs on the building are being taken down and replaced by signs saying MILLER AND CARTER STEAKHOUSE-PUB-GRILL and other signs displaying the company logo M&C. This is effectively changing the identity of the building



from a well-known historical landmark to just another pub-restaurant belonging to a national chain.

The riverside façade of the building, overlooking the river, the road bridge and the quayside, is a significant landmark in the village and forms part of the historic vista looking southwards along the High Street. The Bull sign has now been removed from this façade, and a new sign saying MILLER AND CARTER STEAKHOUSE-PUB-GRILL in large modern-style font has been erected on another part of the façade. This new sign is completely out of keeping with the historical and architectural character of the rest of the building and is disproportionately large in relation to the façade.

The High Street frontage of the building and the corner of the building returning along East Lane forms part of the vista looking northwards along the High Street. On the opposite side of the High Street, forming part of this historic vista, is the former Corn Mill, also a listed building. The Bull sign on the High Street frontage has been removed, and, according to the application plans, The Bull sign on the East Lane corner of the building is to be removed and replaced by an M&C logo sign. It appears that there is to be an M&C STEAKHOUSE-PUB-GRILL hanging sign on the High Street frontage of the building. These are unacceptable changes to the character and appearance of the building, and

Continued

will have a detrimental effect on the street scene. Turning to the rear of the building, a MILLER AND CARTER STEAKHOUSE-PUB-GRILL sign has been erected on the rebated wall near the rear entrance. Again, this sign is too large in relation to its context and the lettering is in a modern style which is out of character with the rest of the building. In addition, a new lantern, with the M&C logo etched in the glass, has been erected over the rear entrance. In our view, this lantern is disproportionately large in relation to the entrance, and its design is a pastiche which detrimentally affects the character and appearance of the building. This does not appear to have been included in the latest applications, but the incorporation of the M&C logo in the glass suggests that it ought to have formed part of the advertisement control application at least.

For the above reasons, these applications are contrary to the following policies in the St Albans District Local Plan:

Policy 86 which requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses;

Policy 85 which requires any proposal to enhance or preserve the appearance of the Conservation Area;

Policy 78 whereby the Council will take into account the effect of an advertisement proposal on local amenity; and

Policy 90 under which the amount and scale of advertising shall respect the appearance of the building or the area, and advertisements which do not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be refused.

These policies are in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) as amended, that development which affects a listed building or its setting should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 (PPG19)

emphasises that an advertisement's impact on the appearance of the building and on visual amenity in the immediate neighbourhood should be taken into account, and that the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, including scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, which contribute to the distinctive character of the locality, are important considerations.

These applications fail all the above tests, and in our view should be refused and the original signage reinstated."

R. A. SANDERSON, Chairman, WDPS

The latest information is that the signage application by Mitchells & Butlers has been withdrawn. A victory you may think but it may be a hollow one as the application was for one exterior and one interior illuminated sign. It appears that the "Miller & Carter" signage already in place did not need permission and the future of the pictorial sign is still in doubt.

Steve Bury South Herts CAMRA Pub Preservation Officer

● The photo on page 3 taken on 20 May shows the sign still in place, and was previously reported as such in the *Herts Advertiser* on 10 May. The paper quotes Councillor Judy Shardlow, who represents Wheathampstead on St Albans District Council, and who said: "This is a cynical move on behalf of this company who have managed to get a month's free advertising out of it. I just think it shows a complete contempt for the planning process". A district council spokesperson said: "Our enforcement people have written to Mitchells and Butlers informing them that they have until May 11 to comply with our order to remove them. If they fail to do so we will be taking stronger action against them".

Also in the article, a spokesperson for Mitchells and Butlers denied that they had received an enforcement letter and said: "There were some issues with our original planning application for The Bull and this has now been withdrawn.

We've been working closely with the parish council and the local planners and have had meetings on site to resolve their concerns". He added "We're doing everything we need to do to make the agreed changes and work towards an outcome that everyone is happy with".

10th Ware Real Ale Festival -

Another Success

The 10th Ware Real Ale Festival held over the weekend of April 13th + 14th was its usual great success. Over both evenings drinkers sampled 28 ales and ciders from around the country. First beer to run out was Skinners' *Heligan Honey* followed by Mighty Oak *English Oak*, then *Otter Ale*. By close of play the majority of the ales had run out. Friday was its usual hectic night and Saturday was quieter though the noise levels were much higher due to the local band **The Trees** playing a superb and highly enjoyable set upstairs. The most popular beer, as voted by the public was Rocking Victoria's *Blonde + Fruity* by Naylor's brewery of West Yorkshire, with *Umbel Magna* by Nethergate brewery of Suffolk the runner up. Many thanks as always to all those who volunteered their help in any way. The profits this year will go to 'S.A.D Cats' and 'Ware Skate Park Scheme' - both local charities. *Jan Ordon* - on behalf of the Ware Festival Organising Team



Happy festival goes celebrate...



...and festival organiser Jan Ordon terminates another pint - he'll be back for more!

The Trees played on Saturday night, below



Pictures courtesy of www.wareonline.co.uk

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Take it To The Top – Sign CAMRA's Full Pints Petition to PM

Pub customers were robbed of £481 million in 2006. Beer drinkers are being mugged of £1.3m a day! How and why are these crimes against beer drinkers happening?

The answer – short measure.

Recent CAMRA surveys of local authorities' trading standards departments have revealed that 26.6% of all pints are served over 5% short. And the worst example found by officers was 13% short.

CAMRA is calling on the Government to stop this legalised robbery. 76% of pub goers want the Government to stick to its promise, made in 1997, to ensure that drinkers get a full pint. Since Labour made that promise beer drinkers have lost an estimated £4.5 billion.

It is a disgrace that up to a quarter of all pints served in the UK are less than 95% liquid when customers are paying for a full pint.

CAMRA is launching a national petition calling on Government to define a pint of beer as a pint of beer and to require licensees to endeavour to serve a full pint every time. Beer drinkers can sign up by clicking on the web site www.takeittothetop.co.uk.

CAMRA has also produced petition cards that drinkers can sign and return for the PM's attention.

Credit card sized short measure cards are available so drinkers can get an immediate check by how much they are being short changed.

It is not just real ale drinkers that get regularly mugged at their local; lager and Guinness drinkers also suffer from short measure.

Pub managers are often under pressure from their bosses to squeeze extra pints from their casks and kegs. The training manuals of some pub companies advise licensees to serve 95% pints.

The current code of practice issued by the trade body The British Beer and Pub Association recommends that its members serve a 95% pint to customers but advise that if they ask for a top up it should be given and given with good grace. But when was the last time you shopped for a kilo of potatoes or a dozen eggs and had to ask

the shop keeper to give you more because they had originally given you short measure?

A short measure is defined by CAMRA as a pint of beer that is anything less than 100% liquid.



SAY YES TO A FULL PINT

So let's end this short measure disgrace. Click on www.takeittothetop.org.uk and sign up to the petition.

Jonathan Mail, CAMRA Head of Policy and Public Affairs

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.

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Mac's Sad About "Taking It To The Top"

There's not much support for CAMRA's "Take It To The Top" campaign on Full Pints at McMullen's where Peter Furness-Smith (pictured below) already feels beleaguered by what he describes as too much anti-pub legislation. Speaking to the *Hertfordshire*



Mercury in response to CAMRA's campaign he says "It is really sad that, at a time when the pub trade is under constant attack from increasing bureaucracy and legislation, CAMRA is choosing to focus on

something negative. Our research shows that there is little interest in this issue – the vast majority understand that a good pint includes a head. Customers return as regulars if the quality of the pint is consistent and the charge represents value for money. No-one is going to think that for a flat pint, even if they pay supermarket prices".

Well, Peter, rest assured, no-one in CAMRA wants a flat pint either. A head is indeed part of the essence of a good beer – both in how it is presented and how it initially tastes and then carries down the glass. But if the drinker is getting a raw deal (and CAMRA's research says that they are) then surely, on behalf of the consumer, CAMRA must try and do something about it.

To their credit, McMullen's already offer a "Value Promise" to their customers on this issue – with the words "If you think your head is too big, we'll gladly top up your pint" - so you should not have any problems whatsoever in their pubs. If only all companies offered this sort of pledge.

But the campaign, in any case, is not specifically aiming at McMullen's or any other particular brewer or publican, it's about trying to deal with some of the unscrupulous pub companies in the

trade who encourage licensees to sell 185 pints from a barrel containing only 176 pints – the only route being short measure. The Government, submitting to pressure from corporate lobbyists, has decided that a pint of beer will be defined as only 95% of a pint.

So, what is currently an acceptable "pint"? – the age-old drinking debate comes to varying conclusions depending on where you are in the country and, sometimes, how much you've drunk. In Hertfordshire it's perhaps about a quarter of an inch of head on a pint of real ale and all within a standard pint glass. Not many people would complain about that. But, as we all see things differently, it's generally decided by the eye of the beholder. And that is where the difficulty lies.



If we are saying that a pint has to be legislated as liquid only, with the head above it, then should we all be drinking from oversized glasses? With beer poured to a printed pint line and all head above it? Well, there's no denying that this can be done, but how many brewers will accept that interpretation of

the word "pint" in the first place and, in Mac's case, Peter Furness-Smith states that the cost of any complete re-stocking of glasses throughout their estate will be paid for by their customers – no doubt

with beer prices taking another shot upwards.



CAMRA can offer some sympathy and support for Peter Furness-Smith in his frustration about being overburdened with legislation, and Mac's "Value Promise" is certainly praiseworthy. But there is also some disgrace in a Government that has wretched on its 1997 full pint General Election pledge, disgust at the large pub companies who continue to peddle dodges at the expense of the drinker, and laudableness in

CAMRA's championing of consumer rights. If only everybody could have acted reasonably then none of this would have been necessary.

Les Middlewood

What Makes Bar Staff Hate Customers...

It's quite simple really but when it comes to serving people being behind the bar it has its shortcomings. So here is the customer's guide to ordering drinks.

Please remember to order drinks one at a time as we like to run backwards and forwards, it keeps us fit.

When ordering a round make sure you don't know what you want when you arrive at the bar, we like to stand around whilst you nip back to the table or shout across the room to find out. Of course the other people at the bar do not mind waiting either, and if they start moaning it is hardly your problem.

Once you have received two drinks please take them back to your table for a chat before

returning to pay, we'll still be waiting, we're not going anywhere and we appreciate the rest. On a large round this can continue almost indefinitely.

Always order Guinness last, we like you to stand at the bar with all your other drinks whilst we do the double pour and let it settle. We of course are always pleased when we don't do this and have to be reminded to top it up.

Cartoon from www.CartoonStock.com



Never put the money in a bar person's hand - they like to pick it up off the bar, especially if it's all in small change and in a puddle of beer.

Never say "please" or "thank you", it only irritates us.

Always wait until you

have been told how much the round is and it has been rung up before asking for crisps, snacks etc. (when requiring ready-salted crisps please ensure that you are told the full range of flavours available before asking for "plain" - it helps us learn the stock).

When buying a pint for Jim or Tom etc please don't ask them what they want, just tell us their name or point to where they are standing because we like to guess and get a real thrill when we get it right.

If when arriving at the bar and there are others waiting before you, please shout up before them, as we like to be abused by people who think they have been served out of turn on purpose. It is our fault of course as we have the ability, no matter how busy it is, to track the exact time and order that customers arrive at the bar.

In the event that you may have to wait for over two minutes at the bar; please don't hesitate to heckle and exclaim that it has been at least half an hour, it keeps staff on their toes as they have no concept of time. Tapping a coin on the bar can be equally effective.

The last bell of course is just to make sure you are awake and have heard the first one, there is no point in asking for last orders until the towels are up and the staff have started cleaning up.

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... and What Makes Customers Hate Bar Staff

Having given instructions on how to treat bar staff and order drinks it is only fair to air the customers' side of the argument.

The first problem can be finding one (barperson that is). It seems that these days everything other than serving customers comes first. Cleaning the ash trays, checking the toilets, wiping down the tables, replacing beer mats, stocking shelves and many other mundane tasks all come before selling the products, which after all is what puts the money in the till and pays their wages.

When you do spot one who is not doing any of the above, they are idly chatting to customers who have already been served, but let's face it - you weren't in hurry.

A friend of mine would comment, "I must be wearing the cloak of invisibility".

If you want to be welcome, whatever you do don't complain no matter how bad the service or drink quality. Dirty glasses (lipstick is my pet hate) or short measure should be accepted as an occupational hazard, after all it's not every pint, or is it?

I may be getting older but I do find that the appearance of the barperson has a great deal to do with the service they deliver.

There seems to be a certain group of bar staff who have no comprehension of what a complaint is or what to do about it. When presented with a pint that looks like muddy pond water, or is an inch short of the brim they ask blankly 'What is wrong?'. Although modern tills log each drink and tell staff how much the change is to be given they can still manage to get it wrong.

Of course the bar staff are all underpaid and over-worked; do not know why they accepted the job in the first place, or why they carry on doing it. This by the way explains why I gave it up a long time ago.

Steve Bury

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Hangovers - What are They? How are They Cured?

We asked Red Squirrel Brewery's Proprietor, Gary Hayward (shown immediately below), who has a degree in chemistry as well as his brewing talents and experience to draw upon to answer the question that, at some point, has concerned every real ale drinker. So read on.....



So why does crapulent drinking cause such lousy hangovers?

There are many reasons as to why a hangover is sometimes the result of too many beverages the night before. These can be broken down into the following groups: Alcohol and its co-products, Flavouring constituents of the beverage, Inorganic content, Body metabolisms.

We can therefore safely assume that you are going to be better off with real ale as it should contain no artificial flavouring, though the number of truly organic beers are few and not regularly available.

Alcohol (Ethane-1-ol) will dehydrate the body - especially the liver and brain. Alcohol is one of few compounds that are readily absorbed through the stomach wall and into the blood stream. However, in a lot of beverages (particularly wines and some beers) there are traces of fusel alcohols. These are heavier alcohols (e.g.

Propane 2-ol) which naturally occur during the fermentation process and give, in moderation, a desirable taste. But they may take some time to be broken down by the body, leaving toxins, which can cause some discomfort - a headache for example.



A trick I learnt from an American brewer is to ferment beer at a relatively high temperature -

28 degrees Celsius. This stimulates the yeast to produce more esters - aroma compounds - and fusel alcohols. In some very large brewing processes the centre of a fermentation may well get as high as 35 degrees Celsius. This can be so high a temperature that the biological brewing process is radically changed, and if not careful can even kill off the yeast.

Your body is an important factor in your hangover. As you get older your body takes longer to breakdown the complex compounds and to rehydrate your system. The enzymes which occur in your body (and which break down alcohol) do not appear in certain people. Some people from Japan and Mongolia, can get intoxicated on a very small amount of alcohol and remain intoxicated for a long time. This is attributed to alcohol consumption not normally being part of their culture. *Cont/d*



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Why is it that certain beverages sometimes give you an upset stomach in the morning?

There are many reasons - apart from over-indulgence that is. For instance, beverages that contain naturally occurring alkali metal salts such as sodium, potassium, magnesium. In the case of English ale, the water is "Burtonised" with calcium sulphate - up to 150 parts per million. Some drinks have been added to - to give the desired taste and remove undesirable carbonates.

Beer and yeast have a very precise acidity value, a pH of 3.9-4.2. That is normally used as a measure of the quality of the beer. Your stomach will naturally be very acidic (pH1) and some beverages, particularly beer, may act as a chemical buffer and try to make your stomach less acidic. A beverage consumed in volume will sometimes act in the same way as a very mild laxative.

So what is the cure?

The short answer is - there is no cure! You will just have to let your body recover naturally. Vitamin C, raw eggs, a big fry up, a hair of the dog - none of these may really work. You will have to re-hydrate your body over a period of time. Mild painkillers can sometimes alleviate the headache, but a glass of water is probably more important than tablets. Indigestion tablets can help with an upset stomach. Apart from that you will just have to serve your sentence, repeating these familiar words every few minutes: "Never again!"

Finally, did you know that zinc occurs naturally in ground water? In Hertfordshire water it is at about two parts per billion. To improve the vitality of the yeast, and the quality of the beer, some brewers add it to the fermentation. I add it up to a level of two parts per million. That is the equivalent of one zinc tablet from a health food shop per 2,000 litres. It is claimed that zinc is a naturally occurring aphrodisiac. So, in conclusion, if you drink ten pints of Red Squirrel it will improve your libido (I think not!).

Gary Hayward - Proprietor Red Squirrel Brewery, Hertford

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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An Arrow through the Heart of Darts *By Les Middlewood*

Remember a time when every pub had a dartboard - hundreds of players, chalking to get a game, town leagues, Jocky Wilson, The Crafty Cockney and John Lowe. The game had acquired national attention and the fortunes and exploits of our favourite dartsmen were played out on prime time TV. Whilst our national interest has ebbed and flowed since this golden heyday, there are still leagues, good local structures of competition and, perhaps, the highest ever standard of play at its highest level. As a spectator sport, national and international competitions are still eagerly awaited and beamed to Britain's TV viewers - but where can you now play the game?

How often now, when you enter a pub, is there no dartboard to be found or, if there is, the avenue to it barred by seating and tables. It is as if darts can only be played on match night. And the loss of so many public bars has not helped, the dartboard often a casualty of refurbishment.

So who's to blame? Is it that fewer people are now interested in playing, that publicans do not see its value, that seating or food is a better and more profitable use of space, that the working class image of the game does not fit with the ambience that today's drinker is seeking? From where will the great players of the future emerge?

Save Our Darts

All these things have been worrying the luminaries of darts - so much so that multi-times World Champion, Phil "The Power" Taylor has started a campaign to bring the game back to the masses and to encourage people to get out there and enjoy a few games. He says "Unless we get behind the campaign to Save Our Darts and encourage more landlords to install a dartboard, the game really could be consigned to the history books just 30 years from now".

Save Our Darts explain that the game's history, and its close links to Britain's pubs can be traced back to medieval times when a miniature version or archery was taken into local taverns during the winter months. Players threw shortened arrows into the bottom of wine barrels to practice their hand to eye co-ordination. The natural rings and radial cracks made perfect guidelines for scoring. At the turn of the 20th




Century darts grew in popularity as a pastime, then commonly known as Dart and Target - the game being played on a board of numbered coloured circles - no doubles or trebles - with the bulls eye at the centre and the lowest score on the board's edge.

Today's board and its numbering sequence (though there are still some regional variations) dates from 1896, thought to be the invention of Brian Gamlin of Bury, Lancashire - numbered this way to maximise accuracy. At Leeds Magistrates Court, in 1908, darts was confirmed as a game of skill rather than chance and the game subsequently spread quickly around Britain and gathered huge popularity in pubs during the inter-war years and beyond - the "Gamlin" board eventually winning through.

To find out more about the Save Our Darts campaign and sign the petition, look for the website www.saveourdarts.com.

CAMRA understands that darts might not be for everyone but bemoans the loss of so many opportunities to play traditional pub games. What finer - a pint of fantastic real ale, great company and a game of `arrers. One hundred and eighty!

	Old Cross Tavern <i>"The Way Pubs Used to Be"</i> 8 St. Andrew Street, Hertford Tel: 01992 583133
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The Strength of it

Following our Hangovers article, we look at the constituent parts of the beverages that can cause them.

This article originally appeared recently in another local CAMRA newsletter – the **Chiltern Tapper**

The alcoholic strength of drinks in Britain is measured by a system involving a pile of gunpowder. "Proof", the magic strength, is the concentration of alcohol, which will allow the gunpowder, when soaked with it, to burn with a steady flame. A weaker mixture will make it smoulder or put it out, whereas a stronger mix can lead to a nasty conflagration. In the more reasonable French scheme of things strength is measured in percent of alcohol by volume (abv). The percentage figure is expressed as so many degrees (Joseph-Louis) Gay-Lussac: 100 degrees means 100% abv. Our 100 degrees Proof as a matter of interest means 57.1% abv. To further confuse the matter, US proof is, like the US gallon, just a little smaller. Whereas absolute alcohol is 175 degrees British Proof, it is 200 degrees US Proof.



In short, they simply double the Gay-Lussac figure. Applied to the drinks we know, there are four main categories of

strength. Beer is the lowest. Roughly speaking, table wine is twice as strong as beer, fortified wine is twice as strong as table wine, and spirits are twice as strong as fortified wines.

Before distillation was invented in the Middle Ages, table wine was the strongest alcoholic drink made. Yeast, which makes alcohol by feeding on sugar, itself succumbs to the effects of alcohol when the wine reaches a strength of about 15% abv; 15% abv is, therefore, the highest strength that natural wine can achieve, and very few get there. Anything stronger has to be made by the artificial method of distillation. The still is simply a device for removing some of the water, which makes up about 80 per cent of the wine, and more of the beer. Spirits are the concentrated products of the still. Distilled wine is brandy; whisky, gin and vodka are distilled from near relations of beer. They are much stronger



when they drip from the still than in their eventual bottled form. Evaporation of alcohol through wood lowers the strength of brandy and whisky, which mature for years in cask; gin and vodka are brought down to a drinkable strength with distilled water. 70 degree proof (40% abv) is the standard strength for home consumption. Export whisky is 75 degrees proof which reads on American labels as 85 degrees proof, leading the English visitor to over-water his whisky.



Liqueurs can be very strong (**green Chartreuse** is 96 degrees British Proof (or 56% abv) or very weak (Crème de Cassis is 15% abv). The strongest spirit meant for drinking is Polish Plain Spirit at 140 degrees proof or 80% abv. Surgical spirit and methylated spirits are 90% abv, but the one tastes as bad as the other. The intermediate drinks between wine and spirits are the fortified wines, a mixture of the two. Their strength, about 20% abv, happens to be the exact concentration at which the body absorbs alcohol the

fastest. Although they are only half as strong as straight spirits they are in fact more rapidly intoxicating. Thus whisky half-and-half with water is about 20% abv (the strength of port, sherry or vermouth), is quicker in its effect than when it is neat. If the water is carbonated (e.g. soda water) it is quicker still. Whisky and soda on an empty stomach is as quick in its effect as any drink can be.

Simple alcoholic strength is not alone in determining the effects of a drink. Its other components, the sugars, acids and oils which impart flavour, aroma and colour, although they may be present in tiny traces, can make tremendous differences. Cognac may keep one man (or woman) awake all night while it makes another sleep like a log. Armagnac, its close cousin whose chemical difference is contained in a two hundredth part of its volume, may have exactly the reverse effects. Not very much is known about the congeners as these important traces are called, in spirits, and their effect on the body. What seems certain is that the less



Continued/

there is of them the fewer ill effects there will be. Vodka, which has virtually no congeners, having been distilled and redistilled until there is nothing left but alcohol and water, is easily absorbed by the body, and easily got rid of. It leaves practically no hangover. Malt whisky in contrast is full of congeners. They are at the same time the reason why it is so much more delicious than vodka, and so much more lethal.



Alcohol is not a stimulant, but is in fact the reverse. If it appears to stimulate it is because the first

thing it depresses are the inhibitions, fears or sense of responsibility which usually stop us doing anything very spectacular. Not much time later, though, it begins to interfere with our simple physical faculties as well. If we went on drinking - say a whole bottle of whisky at a sitting - it could be fatal. At more than 600 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood (seven and a half times the UK legal driving limit) the body slips into oblivion and coma follows, usually leading to death.

As a postscript, countries where the legal alcohol driving limit is 0 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood are Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

This article originates from a poster and was compiled by Hugh Johnson. Thanks given to the Landlord of The George, Great Missenden, Bucks, for his permission to re publish.

www.pubs.hertsale.org.uk

Help us keep our new database of Hertfordshire pubs up-to-date. Log on to and find your local or pub you intend visiting, check the details and let us know if anything has changed or is missing. Email your corrections and feedback to pubs@hertsale.org.uk

Photographs of pubs also wanted!

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North Herts Campaigning Mini Bus Ramble

April once again found us out and about campaigning in another and a quite pleasant part of the branch rural area. This month we were visiting the small village of Hinxworth and the larger village of Ashwell, both in the northern part of the branch. However, we had one other village to visit first and this was Norton, and the **Three Horseshoes**. Although Norton is now on the edge of Letchworth, it is not always that way. Many years ago it was a true village in its own right. The pub was owned and run by Pryor's Brewery of Baldock as late as 1779. It's a large pub and as is usual with pubs nowadays serves food. As for beers, *Buntingford Britannia* was on offer along with *Adnams Broadside* and both were in excellent condition. Two other beers, *Bass* and *Potton Shannon IPA* were also available. We then boarded the mini bus and set off for the small village of Hinxworth.

We arrived at the only pub in the village, which also happened to be called the **Three Horseshoes** (below). There has been a pub on



this site from around 1705 although a building has stood there from 1528. The pub is quite small, although it was

even smaller not that long ago. It's a Greene King pub and serves *IPA*, *Abbot* and *Old Speckled Hen*. I tried the IPA and the Abbot, not being a lover of Speckled Hen. The Abbot was in very good form that evening, but all too soon we had to make our way to Ashwell and the last three pubs of the evening.

There are now only three pubs in Ashwell as I have just stated, but in recent times there were four, the fourth one being the Engine, which closed in the late eighties or early nineties having been a pub from around 1836. Later the pub belonged to Fordham the Ashwell Brewery, then Flowers, and then Whitbread, who shut it down. There is also a railway station, (1850), which is about two miles out of the village in the middle of nowhere and shares its name with the village of Morden in Cambridgeshire. We made our way to the first pub, which was the **Three**

Tuns (below). It's quite a large pub with a large public bar and a slightly smaller lounge/restaurant which serves food.

The history of the pub is unclear, but another pub the Bay Tree may have stood side by side with the Three Tuns until they were amalgamated



around 1799. *Greene King IPA*, *Abbot*, *LBW* and *Hardys & Hansons*, (now Greene King), and *Olde Trip* were on offer. All were in good condition and I especially liked the Oldie Trip.

From here we walked to the **Rose & Crown**, which appears to have been a pub since 1746, with a malting attached at that time. The pub is probably 16th Century, of timber frame with a central chimney. Many years ago, the North Herts Branch frequented this pub for the branch Christmas Dinner, latterly in January after the Christmas rush. Food is served in a separate dining room along with bar snacks. Greene King owns it now, so on offer were *IPA*, *Abbot* and *LBW*. I tried the first two and both were in good condition.

Finally we made our way to the **Bushel & Strike** in Mill Street (below), a large pub that up to a couple of years ago used to hold an annual beer festival.



Many years ago, there were other pubs in and around Mill Street. In 1609 there was pub called Angel, in 1633 a Wheatsheaf (wine tavern), and a Wheatsheaf in 1854, a Fordham brewery pub. The pub now belongs to brewer Wells & Young's and the beers on offer

were *Bombardier*, *Young's Special* and *Adnams Broadside*. I tried the Bombardier and the Broadside, and both were very tasty.

We then boarded the bus and made our way home until next time. This will be our June trip to Datchworth and Woolmer Green, because in May the mini bus is visiting all the nominated Herts Pubs of the Year.

Brian Mason © 2007

South Herts Pubs of the Year Award Roundup

Gold for the White Lion at St. Albans

A deserved win for landlord David Worcester - and equally his team, for becoming first-time winners. David was presented with the South Herts Pub of the Year award in a packed ceremony held at the **White Lion** on 17 May in the evening, by South Herts CAMRA Chairman Phil Defriez. The hot samosas served later on were very much appreciated too!



Pictured above, Phil Defriez (left) and David.

The White Lion



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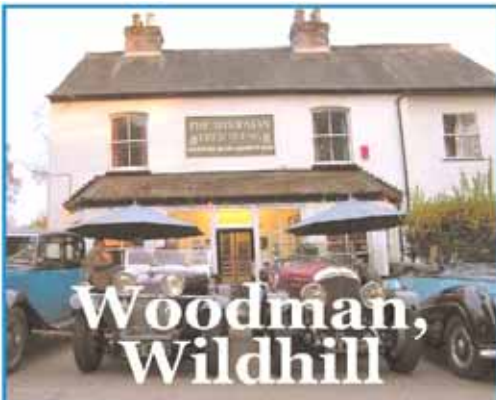
Tel: 01727 850540

www.TheWhiteLionPH.co.uk

Silver for the Woodman

Toast to the King of the Hill! Well, to landlord Graham Craig of the **Woodman at Wildhill**. A frequent, and the previous, winner in our competition, the Woodman lost its crown only by the closest of margins this time. The award ceremony held on 10 May was well attended, with stories of top notch ale and hot pizza slices flowing in abundance throughout the night.

Pictured below: Branch Chairman Phil Defriez flanked either side by King Graham and Graham's son Tom. *Photo - Judd Lander*



Woodman, Wildhill

Guest Beers Lunchtime Food

45 Wildhill Lane
(Between A1000 and B158)

01707 642618

Six Times Winner South Herts
CAMRA Pub of the Year



Bronze for the White Horse

Congratulations to Nigel Crofts and the staff of the **White Horse**, Hertford who have claimed the bronze, third place award in South Herts Branch's Pub of the Year competition. Landlord for seven years, Nigel has steered the pub through its change from a Free House to a Fuller's Free House, ensuring that in addition to the range of Fuller's beers, an interesting selection of beers from Britain's smaller breweries is always also available. There are no TVs or gaming machines to distract customers from their conversation and good ale. And the White Horse, a timbered former beer house, manages to fit a quart into a pint pot with two bars downstairs and additional rooms upstairs, where there is even space to house a bar billiards table. With twice-yearly beer festivals and a well-supported street party in aid of the National Deaf Children's Society (this year on Sunday 19 August, by the way), there's always something going on, usually with the Horse's regular customers at the heart of it. With excellent lunchtime food plus the famous Monday night Gastronomic Tour, Nigel presides over a pub that is a perennial entry in the **Good Beer Guide** and a magnet for any visitor landing in Hertford.



Our picture above shows South Herts Chairman, Phil Defriez (*I promise he won't appear in this issue again!* - Ed), presenting Nigel with the well-earned award.

Born to Be Mild

Fifty CAMRA members and friends were Born to Be Mild in May when they ambled through the street of Hertford celebrating dark mild. With milds from Hardys and Hansons,

THE WHITE HORSE
33, CASTLE STREET, HERTFORD
01992 501950

One of Hertford's oldest pubs, offering a fine selection of up to 10 cask conditioned ales from around the country

Good pub food served 12.00 - 2.00pm daily.

Traditional Sunday Roast served 1.00 - 3.00pm

NO SMOKING AREA
in the upstairs function rooms.

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

'Simply a Proper Pub!'

Dark Star, Red Squirrel, Greene King and Moorhouse, we would like to thank our hosts at the **Black Horse, White Horse, Old Barge and Old Cross Tavern** for a brilliant evening. It seems this has become a popular annual town event – and a rare chance to taste beers from this fading but classic English style. Look out for next year's date – see you next May.



Join the Ware Summer Saunter

Join Ware and Hertford CAMRA members for a second summer's saunter on **Tue 17 July** as they explore some of Ware's more enterprising real ale pubs, for some scintillating beers that are being amassed especially for the occasion. Starting at the **Crooked Billet** in Musley Hill at 8pm, then on to the **High Oak** in High Oak Road (8.45pm), followed by **Waggers** in Kibes Lane (9.40pm) and the **Vine** in the High Street (10.20pm). For everyone who enjoys a great pint – at a relaxed summer's evening pace.

The 2007 St Albans Beer Festival

Once again, one of the highlights of the British drinking calendar is coming to St Albans with a wonderful celebration of British cask-conditioned beers!

Over 300 different British real ales will be on tap as well as cask and bottled beers from the world over. Ciders and perries will also be available alongside hot food and snacks.

But it's not just about ale. Top live entertainment will keep the place rocking, especially this year special guests **Nine Below Zero** one of Britain's top rhythm and blues bands, who are playing on Saturday night. You will be able to enjoy pub games, the tombola, the team quiz, and breweriana auctions in a lively friendly atmosphere. Catch up and socialise with friends, unwind after work or just soak up the festival atmosphere.

Tickets & Times:

Wed 26 Sept 5.00pm - 10.30pm

Thu 27 - Sat 29 Sept 11.00am - 10.30pm

Tickets: £2.00 - £4.00 (no re-admission)

CAMRA members free at all times

See our Beer Festival Website:

www.stalbansbeerfestival.com



Join CAMRA Today...

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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Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

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Tel. no(s):

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for..... Signed..... Date.....

Applications will be processed within 21 days

North Herts Pubs of the Year Ramble

If popular perceptions are anything to go by, I doubt if many would associate CAMRA members with walking, except perhaps on city centre pub crawls. However this isn't always the case, and in the North Herts branch we have enjoyed a number of excellent country walks, taking in some of our local pubs and the scenic Hertfordshire countryside.

Our latest walk was from the **Red Lion** in Preston Village to the **Lytton Arms** in Old Knebworth. We met in the Red Lion (below) around



12.30pm one Saturday and sampled some of landlord Tim's beers, including *Kingston Topaz* and *Red Squirrel Old Ale*. For those who don't know the Red Lion, it was Britain's first community-owned pub and has been both North Herts and Hertfordshire **Pub of the Year**. Tim informed us that the Red Lion had just been awarded the *Morning Advertiser East Anglia* pub of the year. The pub was very busy because the local basset hound hunt was having its lunchtime break. The bassets chase hares (followed by humans on foot) and given the respective speed of the basset and hare is something of an unequal contest. I asked if they ever caught anything and the reply was 'never'. 'How long have you been going?' I enquired. '1954' was the answer. That's my kind of hunt.

A total of seven had assembled for the walk, including five from North Herts and two from the North London branch. We left the Red Lion and travelled cross country to the **Maidens Head** in Whitwell where we put supermarket carrier bags over our feet to protect Landlord Mike's carpet. Six of the group had brought bags from either Tesco or Sainsbury, whilst Brian, who has just

Cont/d

The Red Lion

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The First Community Owned Public House in
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Ever Changing Real Ales
Recent Beers:

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Everyday Good Home Made Food
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Herts. Pub of the Year 2000, 2005
North Herts. Pub of the Year 2005
Cask Ale Pub of the Year Bronze Award

Maidens Head

High Street, Whitwell



Good Quality Cask Conditioned
McMullen's Beers

East Anglian Pub Of The Year 1997
Herts Pub Of The Year 2003

Continual Cellarmanship Award

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North Herts Pubs of the Year Ramble *Continued...*

retired after 40 years in the public sector, produced bags from Waitrose. We proceeded to enjoy pints of *AK* and *Sweet Chariot*. The Maidens Head is consistently one of McMullen's best pubs and Whitwell is a nice relaxing village. Landlord Mike was his usual affable self and entertained us with tales from his childhood in Liverpool. He then became distinctly worried that these stories might appear in this article and provided us with large bowls of complimentary Bombay Mix. Don't worry Mike, your secrets are safe with us.

We then headed towards the **Strathmore Arms** in St Pauls Walden via the 'Rare Breeds Farm' in Whitwell. Before we arrived at the Strathmore we took a look at the Queen Mother Memorial in the churchyard at St Paul's Walden (where the Queen Mother was born). The Strathmore Arms is an authentic country pub that specialises in new beers. As if to prove this point, Hertfordshire's leading beer ticker, Harry was sat at the bar. Harry claimed to be in his 35th year of beer ticking with a score approaching 35,000 beers. Harry hopes landlord Danny will name a beer after this colossal achievement when the Strathmore opens its brewery later in 2007. At the time of our visit the Strathmore still had to overcome highway engineering problems before approval could be granted.



We left the Strathmore and walked to our final stop, the **Lytton Arms** (left) in Old Knebworth, via Graffidge Wood and

Knebworth Park. The Lytton is a popular country pub with a nice view across Knebworth Park. Lucy the landlady enquired about our walk and was immediately invited on the next, but didn't feel able to walk 10 miles at this stage. We enjoyed beers from Brains and Archers before ordering our meal. Three of us went for the lamb curry on the 'specials' menu, which proved to be the hottest (and best) pub curry I've ever eaten. Definitely not for widows and orphans though. We then walked back to Knebworth railway

station. It had been a great day out, as these walks always are.

The only change I'm likely to make for future trips is to limit the number of pubs to three, as four was really too many given the distance we walked. If you would like to join us, please send me an email and I'll include you on the list. The walks are normally on a Saturday, from a railway station, between 7 and 10 miles, and finishes with a pub meal. You don't have to be a CAMRA member but if you're not, we will endeavour to sign you up during the course of the day. Future walks are likely to include starts from Watton-at-Stone and Henley-on-Thames. *Ian Burns - ian.burns@btconnect.com*

In Memory of Roy Cheeseman, who sadly passed away in April. He'll be missed by all of us in CAMRA that had the pleasure of his company.

A full obituary will appear in the next newsletter.

The Strathmore Arms

St Paul's Walden, Nr Hitchin SG4 8BT
01438 871654
strathmorearms@tiscali.co.uk



North Herts pub of the year 2004
Herts pub of the year 2004
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BEER FESTIVALS IN 2007

Easter Fest - April 5th-9th ✓
Beer & Steam Fest - Jun 7th-10th
Last Of The Summer Fest - Sept 13th-16th



Wells Own Young's?

I was very interested to read in edition 221 the article from the publican concerning Wells & Young's.

I believe that this throws a very interesting light on how the "partnership" is regarded internally. Nigel McNally, the MD of the new company is quoted as saying it "would still be committed to the Young's brands it acquired last year while more than £2M would be spent on marketing its own *Bombardier* brand this year".



My underlings! So, Wells & Young's own products are the Wells range and the Young's beers are acquired brands. Who says Young's didn't sell out?

Andrew Cunningham

Ed Says: There have been some odd goings on in the Young's pubs I have visited. Firstly there is a big push to sell *Wells Bombardier* in them. Secondly Wells have a fixation with swan neck and sparkler dispense, I do not know whether Wells brew their beers for this method of service,

but Young's most certainly did not when brewed

at Wandsworth. As far as the new Young's beers are concerned I have yet to find anybody raving about them, most agree that the new beer is perfectly acceptable but it is not the Young's they used to love. This goes across the complete range, including the *Winter Warmer*. I fear that we may lose two beers and find just *Bombardier* and *Young's Bitter* surviving after all *Young's Special* and *Wells Eagle IPA* are identical strength to their counterparts, and it may not be very long before you cannot taste the difference either.



Poor Hygiene:

I feel that the local CAMRA newsletter is a good place to put my question.

Am I just becoming more observant in my mature years or are standards of elementary hygiene in some pubs becoming rather slack? I refer to my observed increase of poor handling of customers' drinks by bar staff. I have noticed an increase of staff putting their fingers all round the lip of a pint glass of beer or even 'craning' it across the bar to the customer. Even some customers have started to do this when passing drinks on to their companions. I find this abuse of basic hygiene absolutely amazing and quite inexcusable. The problem is not even confined to, possibly new, staff. I have even seen this sloppy attitude from a licensee's daughter, also from a landlord hoping to see his pub in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

I sincerely hope that this deplorable practice will be stamped on by licensees and managers. I'm sure that the bad publicity that such behaviour attracts will not be appreciated by those wishing to have quality as their yardstick.

John Crowhurst.

Ed Says: I wrote a lengthy piece on glass cleanliness in edition 213. Cask Marque - the beer-industry sponsored beer-keeping and serving accreditation body - also take the issue very seriously and have issued leaflets and advice on the subject.

It is a pity to have your glass cleaned and sterilised (allegedly) by a glass washing machine, changed every time you order and then have it handled in the way you mention.

Cont/d

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Do drink prices cause Binge drinking?

Following the article in POV 221 about supermarkets' promotions of cheap alcohol, I wrote to St Albans MP Anne Main as an individual CAMRA member, urging her to sign Early Day Motion 495.

This morning I have received Mrs Main's reply. She understands CAMRA's concerns about binge drinking, and supports the 'Challenge 21' initiative, but will not be signing the EDM: "...The EDM you highlight suggests that it is the price differential between alcohol sold in pubs and that sold in the off-trade that causes the problem of binge drinking. To date, no hard evidence has been produced to prove that discount drinks promotions in supermarkets lead directly to binge drinking. There are many factors that cause binge drinking and alcohol abuse, not simply the price...

Tim Holman

Ed Says: Anne Main, MP for St Albans, did sign the "Fair Pints" EDM (Early Day Motion) on short measure after her visit to the **St Albans Beer Festival** in 2005.



Anne Main, 'Pints of View' newsletter in hand, making her announcement in 2005

This was I believe due at least partly to several active members having the opportunity to make our case to her personally. My advice is for other members who live in her constituency to continue to raise the issue with her. I would have

thought the connection between cheap booze and binge drinking was obvious. It may not be the cause but it is certainly the means by which many binge drinkers get started before they even venture out of an evening. I don't know what evidence the doubters need, it seems obvious to me that low cost alco pops, super lagers and low quality full strength spirits that bingers thrive on should not be so readily available at discount prices.

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

Shooting Star's Zero Tolerance

The **Shooting Star**, Rossington Avenue in Borehamwood was closed for six weeks in April and May for a £200,000 refit by its new owners - AVJ Leisure. As well as an outside smoking facility and CCTV the pub will have the first ultra violet (UV) light system in the county installed as part of a zero tolerance on drugs policy. The three UV lights are placed at the entrance doors to the toilets and the pub and will illuminate illegal substances on people's faces. CCTV footage of drug taking will be forwarded to the Police. Mr Jay Diesel of AVJ said " We are keen for the Shooting Star to be a family pub and so we have adopted a zero tolerance policy towards drugs". The moves have been applauded by the licensing authority and the Police. Perhaps part of the new image could be the re-introduction of real ale - none was available when the pub was surveyed prior to the refit.

The Bull



Watton at Stone

Gary & Yvonne welcome you to the Bull
A Superb C15th Pub
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5 Real Ales including 2 changing Guest Beers
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Greene King Pub Signs

Not surprisingly Greene King got a few mentions in our last edition; not least for their faceless corporate pub signs. It now transpires that "Only a small number of pictorial signs will be replaced by GK branded signs. Pub Partners (tenants) will continue to have pictorial signs". As this is a comment from one of the country's largest pub owners my question is how many managed houses do they have, and what they think constitutes a small number.



Mild Mild Mild

Greene King now brew both *XX Dark Mild* and *Hardy & Hansons* mild. As part of CAMRA's Make May Mild promotions Greene King were good enough to distribute our literature and encourage publicans to promote the beers in their pubs. Let's hope this support, gets results, as we are informed that all of Greene Kings beer portfolio gets reviewed every year.

Greene King U-Turn at Lewes Arms

It is unlikely that our criticism of Greene King and its attitude towards the regulars of the **Lewes Arms** (below), in Lewes, Sussex in the last newsletter finally persuaded the mega brewer to relent, but The Lewes Arms much-loved *Harvey's Best Bitter* has been reinstated



following the vociferous campaign by locals. Adam Collett, marketing director for Greene King's managed pubs, acknowledged his company had "underestimated the strength of feeling which led to many locals boycotting what was once a great British pub. As a result, it has lost some of its character and greatness". Although he defended Greene King's right to remove the beer from the pub "and, where we

choose, not to sell rival beers", he admitted the group "did not fully appreciate its special position in Lewes as the former 'Brewery Tap', or take into account its history and traditions".

Greene King originally took Harveys' products out of the Sussex pub last December as part of a drive to promote its own cask ale brands. The aftermath has been described as a public relations nightmare for the Suffolk brewer, with national newspaper headlines and airtime on radio and TV.

Some observers have suggested that the row prompted the recent departure of Greene King Pub Company managing director Mark Angela and the restructuring of the managed division, which was recently split into 510 community-focused 'Local Pubs' and 280 food-led 'Destination Pubs'. Adam Collett has denied this and said "We look forward to reconciling those involved in all sides of the debate".

Down Where The Drunkards Roll

Picture this. The year is 1814 and you're standing outside Meux's Horse Shoe brewery, at the junction of London's Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. There's a deafening roar, suddenly followed by a huge tsunami of beer heading your way. Do you run for your life? Do you drink? Is this heaven?

This was the dilemma facing passers-by when the brewery's immense vat of porter burst. So huge a vat was it that it stood 22 feet high and held over one million pints. In the mighty flow, rickety houses were swept aside and eight people drowned.

But plenty of others drank heartily and free that day - direct from the street - in Britain's worst brewing disaster. (*Until Watney's Red Barrel - Ed*)

Les Middlewood

SIBA Have the Bottle for Threshers

At a launch recently held at McMullen's new brewery in Hertford, and well-attended by CAMRA representatives, the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) unveiled a unique and individual distribution agreement with Threshers Off-Licences. Threshers are now rolling out to its 1,800 stores in the land, up to four bottled beers (many of which are bottled-conditioned) which will

be delivered directly by small breweries from within a 30-40 miles radius of each shop – so the chances are that no two Threshers' outlets will have the same range. SIBA, in turn, are providing a leaflet unique to each store, offering tasting notes on the beers and stressing the environmental and economic sustainability benefits of local produce in local stores.

Les Middlewood

All Change at the Spotted Dog

The 12 May was a night to remember in Flamstead. That was the night Des Scarboro (pictured above right) took over the **Spotted Dog** and launched his new enterprise in a blaze of publicity. The whole village and his dog turned up to hear how he has set up a training scheme for young aspiring chefs (à la Jamie Oliver), and of course there was some good food and beer to be had, as well as fireworks and a rock and roll band.

Des (only 27 himself) has won a young entrepreneurs award supported by HSBC bank and the Bank of Scotland, and in conjunction with West Herts College Vocational Training Relief, he will be running training courses at the



Skew Bridge in Harpenden, which he has also just acquired on a 25 year lease from Punch Taverns (free of tie). Trainees will then be able to test their talents at the **Three Horseshoes** (Spice Inns) the **Silver Cup** (Wells and Young's) and the **White Horse** (Novelli) - all in Harpenden as well as at the Spotted Dog. All have a reputation for good food.

Des is no stranger to the catering industry as his parents are major stake holders in the London & Edinburgh Inns chain, and he has travelled the world as a chef on cruise liners. At the Spotted Dog he has four hand pumps serving *Tring Brock* as a staple plus three guest ales, he also plans to install another two shortly.

Bob Norrish

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East Anglian CAMRA Pubs Of The Year

Little more needs to be said other than congratulations to all the winners listed below, who will move on to the next regional stage of the competition. All pubs naturally belong to the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide**, but these pubs are recommended as the "best of the best".

Listed below are CAMRA East Anglia region local branch pub contenders for the East Anglia Pub of the Year.

Herts/Essex Borders - The Gate, Sawbridgeworth

Dengie - The Swan, Little Totham

Colchester & N.E. Essex - The Albion, Rowhedge

S. E. Essex - Golden Lion, Rochford

N. W. Essex - White Horse, Ridgewell

Chelmsford/Mid Essex - The White Hart Inn, Margaretting, Tye

S. W. Essex - White Hart, Grays

Tendring - The New Bell, Harwich

Huntingdonshire - Chequers, Little Gransden

Cambridge & District - Wagon and Horses, Milton

Peterborough - Drapers Arms, Peterborough

Ely & District - West End House, Ely

Norwich & Norfolk - Royal Oak, Poringland

West Norfolk - Kings Head, Great Bircham

N. Hertfordshire - Our Mutual Friend, Stevenage

S. Hertfordshire - White Lion, St. Albans

Watford & District - Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty, Heronsgate (Herts winner – see page 27)

East Bedfordshire - Engineers Arms, Henlow

North Bedfordshire - Cricketers Arms, Bedford

South Bedfordshire - The Globe, Dunstable

West Suffolk - Fox and Hounds, Thurston

Ipswich & East Suffolk - Dove, Ipswich

North East Suffolk - Rumburgh Buck, Rumburgh

Drinking in the (Smoke) Free World

By the next issue we will be one month into the banning of smoking in pubs. How has it been for those of you sitting inside? How has it been for those of you now puffing outside?

Of course, for the smoker, the pinch is likely to be felt a little later in the year, when the colder weather sets in but what are your initial thoughts? And, publicans, what have been the initial effects on your business? Pints of View would like to hear from you, and to set the scene Brian Mason has been canvassing a few North Herts licensees.

Scotland has it, Wales made it in April and finally, England will get it on 1 July this year; the ban on smoking in public places and especially pubs. Why were we the last in this United Kingdom? With this in mind it got me thinking, and for the past couple of weeks I have been asking landlords and landladies for their opinions on the ban. As my father used to say, 'no names, no pack drill' and what does that mean? Well I'll tell you what they said, but not who they are.

My first approach was a pub that has had a no smoking policy for quite some time. I asked the landlady how it was since smoking was banned. The reply was that although she smoked it was much better to work in a non smoking atmosphere and then go outside when she wanted a cigarette. She also said that at first the takings were down, but they had risen again. One interesting point she made was to the effect that older people were now frequenting the pub because there was no smoke and when they went home they did not need to change clothing because they reeked of smoke.

Another landlord said that, 'we are all grown up and it should be up to the individual landlords to allow or ban smoking'. An interesting point, but how many pubs would ban smoking; not many in my opinion.

Another landlady was wondering what type of 'shelter' to buy so that her customers who smoked would not get wet. That sounds great, but where were the shelters when non-smoking customers having bought their pint had to go outside to drink it because of the smoke? Why should we worry about the smokers, they don't worry about non-smokers. People seem to be thinking of a small minority of smokers rather than the vast majority of non-smokers who will benefit and, (according to CAMRA), make their way back to the pubs in 'their millions'. One fair point that this particular landlady made was that fact that many of her regular customers smoked and were in the pub nearly every evening. They were not the type of 'drinkers' who

would stay at home, many were single and went out to socialise.

Even with shelters, will smokers use them or stand outside door of the pub and make non-smokers run the gauntlet of their smoke to get inside. People who have to smoke outside their offices in the main stand near the door and the smoke is 'sucked' back into the building. Will that be contrary to the ban? In Canada, (I understand), and Calgary in particular, smokers must be at least 2.00 metres, (that's 6ft - 6¾ in - in real money), away from any door leading to a public place like a bar. Now that's what I call a ban!

Finally, it has got to be a good thing in the long run, just like 'full pints' we may all suffer with an increase in prices over the 'full pint', but at least we will get it; won't we? With smoking, people may actually stop and who knows, one day the shelters may become just like short measures, a thing of the past, (we hope).

Brian Mason

Stop Press!

The Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty in Heronsgate has just been voted the overall best Pub of the Year for Hertfordshire. The pub will now compete as Hertfordshire's entry for the Pub of the Year East Anglia region.

Ashtrays Could be Your Nest

Egg

Check the pockets of antique collectors as they leave your pub after one described pub ashtrays as a collectible of the future.

By July smoking bans will be active in Scotland, Wales Northern Ireland and England and branded pub ashtrays will become a thing of the past.

Antiques writer Christopher Proudlove told the Western Mail: "Like all things, if they stop being used they will pass into antiquity with the passage of time.

"They should be 100-years-old to be antiques, but, as they say, antiques get younger every day.

"It's only a matter of time -



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before we see dealers and collectors specialising in smoking materials in general. "Pub ashtrays are still accessible and therefore still affordable.

"We should be investing in them. I don't think it's time to sell your collection and book a world cruise, but they will rise in value over time".

Proudlove recommends cut-glass or pottery ashtrays with the logo of a beer or cigarette brand.

He also suggests cigarette machines will become collectible.

Jungle Juice Swings to Victory

At the CAMRA champion cider & perry awards 2007, held at the Reading Beer Festival, judges sampled more than 140 ciders and perries over two days at the before arriving at the final winners.

The National Champions 2007 are:

Cider: West Croft *Janet's Jungle Juice*, Somerset

Perry: *Hartlands*, Gloucestershire



FULL RESULTS:

CIDER

GOLD – *West Croft Janet's Jungle Juice* (Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset)

SILVER – *Cornish Orchards Dry* (Liskeard, Cornwall)

BRONZE – *Green Valley Cyder Vintage Farmhouse* (Clyst St.George, Exeter, Devon)

PERRY

GOLD – *Hartlands* (Tirley, Gloucestershire)

SILVER – *Newton Court* (Newton, Leominster, Herefordshire)

BRONZE – *Gwatkin Malvern Hills* (Abbey Dore, Herefordshire)

HIGHLY COMMENDED – *Minchews* (Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire),

The judges described the National Gold Champion Cider, *West Croft Janet's Jungle Juice*, as having "an inviting fresh nose of roses and ripe fruit, a well balanced smooth flavour hinting at pineapple, apples and bananas with a light lingering after taste.

The National Gold Champion Perry, *Hartland's Perry*, was described as having a "tangy tropical fruit and earthy nose which was full of flavour hinting at melon, vanilla and floral overtones with a smooth honey finish.

Go to www.camra.org.uk for further details of the Cider and Perry campaign including the definition of real cider and perry. Also, see details of beer festivals where real cider and perry are available.

Stop Press!

The cider press?? Seriously, the East Anglian Bottled Cider Competition was judged at the recent 34th Cambridge Beer Festival. Cambridgeshire producers swept the board.

1st – *Pickled Pig*, Old Spot

2nd – *Hereward*, Dry

3rd – *Cassels*, Yarlington Mill

In late October Norwich Beer Festival will be hosting the draught cider competition. For further details and entry forms please contact Andrea Briers 01553 766904 (h)/07732 754888 (m) or your Branch Cider Representative. *Andrew Rawnsley*

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Watford & District's History of the Southern Cross

I thought that for this issue I'd take a look at a bit of the history of Watford's premier real ale outlet, the *Southern Cross*.

The Southern Cross's history as a pub is rather short, although the building itself seems to date from the time of Watford's industrial development, appearing on Ordnance Survey maps as far back as 1898. The current building was originally divided into two detached houses at numbers 41 and 43 Langley Road according to my study of Kelly's Directories. A Mr. Cyril Thornley occupied number 43 in 1947, but by 1949 he had converted the house into the Gainsborough Club. By 1960 number 43 is listed as the Gainsborough Hotel and Club and is under the ownership of Mr and Mrs P. S. Garbutt. A major change seems to have occurred in about 1965, when the Gainsborough Hotel (the club had been dropped from the name) occupies 41-43 Langley Road, which is the current state of affairs.

The hotel's name was changed to the Southern Cross on the 1st March 1967, after its acquisition by the Australian-born Mr. S.G. Eller. The bars of what was previously a residential hotel were opened to the public in what Mr. Eller said was the first phase in a plan to build a large residential hotel on the site. The plans for a major residential hotel never seem to have come to fruition. Instead, at some stage in the 70s or 80s, it was re-branded as a pub.

Wartime Activities

One of the more intriguing aspects of the pub's history is an anecdotal report that the U.S. Military had a bunker beneath the building during the Second World War. There is certainly some physical evidence for this as there are thick poured-concrete walls and what seem to be sealed up passageways in the cellar. I have found no direct evidence for military activities so far, but there is some interesting information from Kelly's Directories. In 1935 a Mrs. Howard lived at 43 Langley Road. Oddly, between 1936

and 1938 number 43 does not appear in the directories; the numbers on Langley Road go from 41 straight to 45. In 1939 a Herbert C. Gregory occupies the house. He apparently lives there up to 1944. Unfortunately the 1945 and 1946 editions of Kelly's are missing from the library, but Cyril Thornley of the Gainsborough Club is occupying the site in 1947. It's interesting that Mr. Gregory occupies the house during the war years and departs soon after. It could easily be a red herring but it's possible that the Herbert Gregory name was a cover for wartime military activities.

The Pub Sign

When Orchard Inns took over the pub their initial idea was to have a picture of the Southern Cross constellation on the pub sign. It was manager John Ross's idea to use a picture of the ocean liner S.S. Southern Cross. The S.S. Southern Cross was the first ship to be built with its engines aft, at the insistence of the shipping line Shaw Savill who wanted more space for passengers



and general cargo. Queen Elizabeth II launched the liner on the 17th August 1954 and for about twenty years the Southern Cross carried passengers to and from Australia and New Zealand. Eventually the increasing popularity of air travel meant that her time travelling this route was cut short, and she was sold to Ulysses Cruise Line where she was renamed S.S. Calypso and used for Mediterranean cruises during the 70s. After that, the ship changed hands several times before Imperial Majesty Cruise Lines bought her, renamed her S.S. Ocean Breeze, and used her on the Fort Lauderdale to Nassau cruise route. In 2003 she was suddenly traded in for the S.S. Regal Empress and has since, sadly, been broken up in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Andrew Vaughan

Sources:

Information from Kelly's Directories and from the article 'Enter the Southern Cross' (Watford Observer, Friday 3rd February 1967) was gathered in Watford Central Library.

Information on S.S. Southern Cross is from the website www.ssmaritime.com.

Aldbury: The **Valiant Trooper** is serving *Everards Beacon* and Robinson's *Old Stockport*. The **Greyhound** is selling *Badger* ales.

Apsley: The **Spotted Bull** has been renamed the **Bull** and no longer serves real ale. The **Oddfellows Arms** serves Fullers *London Pride*.

Bedmond: The freehold of the **White Hart** is being advertised for sale in the *Morning Advertiser*.

Borehamwood: Planning permission has been requested to demolish the **Woodcock**, Croxdale Road, closed since April last year, and build flats on the site. The **Enigma** on the corner of Theobald Street opposite Borehamwood station has gone back to its original name the **Crown**. They are selling three real ales Greene King *IPA* Courage *Best* and *Old Speckled Hen*.

Bridens Camp: New landlords have taken over the **Crown & Sceptre**.

Cheshunt: The **Pond** is now called **Bar AB**. No real ale. The **Rose & Crown** has been re-named **Turners**, No real ale. The **Roman Urn** and **Victoria** both no longer serve real ale. The **Temple Bar** has closed. The **Maltsters** beer range is McMullen's *Country* and *AK*.

Elstree: Possibly the county's longest serving licensees Catherine and Bob Byron left the **Artichoke** in mid May and we wish them a long and happy retirement after 21 years at the pub. The **Waggon & Horses**, Medburn, closed first week of April - the future is not clear but it should remain as a pub.

Flamstead: The **Three Blackbirds** is now serving real ale again.

Harpenden: The **George** has reopened following redecoration works and now sells real ales Fuller's *London Pride* and Marston's *Pedigree*.

Hertford: The opening of Wetherspoon's forthcoming Lloyd's No.1 pub, the **Five Bishops**, has been delayed still further with a new projected opening date of December 2007 - but at least work is now well and truly under way. New landlords have recently appeared at three McMullen pubs - the **Ram Inn**, the **Greyhound** (McMullen's first pub, purchased way back in 1836) and the **Bridge House** - where both bars are once again open and food has been reinstated as a major feature. Hertford still awaits Sainsbury's planning submission for the

developing of the former McMullen's brewery site in Hartham Lane. It is apparent that the sale lot included the former **Unicorn** pub site - the increasingly forlorn looking pub building has been boarded up for well over 20 years. The **Old Cross Tavern** is currently closing on Monday lunchtimes - opening at 4pm. Take a trip to the **Black Horse** over the Father's Day weekend (Friday 15 - Sunday 17 June) and you will be rewarded with a beer festival of over a dozen real ales.

Kings Langley: The **Old Palace** sells Greene King *IPA* and *Abbot*.

Letchmore Heath: The **Three Horseshoes** will have new lessees starting the beginning of May. We understand that the lease has been taken by Gary Dunks who is well known in the trade locally.

Nash Mills: The **Eagle** has been refurbished. The **Three Tuns** is selling Fullers *London Pride*. The **Old Red Lion** is selling Greene King *IPA* and Wells *Bombardier*. The **George** is selling Greene King *IPA*.

Leverstock Green: The **Litten Tree** no longer sells real ale. The **Leather Bottle** has improved its beer range and sells Adnams *Bitter*, *Broadside*, Greene King *IPA* and *Old Speckled Hen*. The **Plough** sells Fullers *London Pride*, Wadworth *6X* and Wells *Bombardier*, the pub is now also completely non smoking.

Newgate Street: We welcome Chris Izzard who has taken over at the **Coach and Horses**. Beers on sale are Greene King *IPA*, *Adnams Bitter* and Black Sheep *Bitter*, Chris says they are all session beers because it is a destination pub (I must admit I haven't a clue what that means).

Piccotts End: The **Marchmont Arms** is closed for renovation.

Potters Bar: McMullen's are undertaking significant building work at the **Builder's Arms**.

Radlett: The **Cat & Fiddle** is undergoing improvements to the patio and garden area for the summer. They have also started an Italian food night on Wednesdays. **Brookes**, reported in the last edition as selling Fullers, is actually selling two real beers from Greene King, *IPA* and *Abbot Ale*.

Sarratt: A lease is being offered for sale on the **Boot** in the *Morning Advertiser*.

Shenley: The **Black Lion** closed April 7th and due to re-open 9th May to be converted to the "Basmati" Indian restaurant. We hope that the real ale public bar will still stay following the conversion of this

historic two-bar pub.

St Albans: A belated welcome to Kate & Michael Axford to the **Goat**, who took over in late March. The **Fleur De Lys** is now open serving real ale. The **Peacock**, Hatfield Road, has now been renamed **O'Neill's** with a garish green and gold sign. It appears that it is not part of the national chain that already owns a pub in St Albans in the old library in Victoria Street.

Ware: Try the **Vine**, where beers from Britain's micro-brewers are now often being featured and kept in excellent condition. The **Old Bull's Head** has been granted additional opening hours – up to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays with live bands on the latter. Real ales from Sharp's of Cornwall are currently available. Usually four beers are on.

Watford: The **Mad George** on Queen's Road has reopened as the **Amber Rooms**. The previous managers of **Taylor's** are now apparently running the pub. **Taylor's** was purchased for High Street redevelopment last year. Live music is planned; possibly for a basement venue.

BRANCH DIARY

NORTH HERTS *Branch Contact – see below*

Mon 4 Jun: Committee Meeting - **Strathmore Arms** 8pm sharp.

Wed 6 June: Branch Social, Royston Crawl - **Green Man** 8:00pm, **Chequers** 8:30pm

Old Bull 9:00pm, **Jockey** 9:30pm, **White Bear** 10:00pm

Sat. 9 June: 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

Fri 15 June: Hitchin Beer of Festival Presentation at **Buntingford Brewery** from 7:30pm. All workers invited. There will be a BBQ cooked by the best BBQ chef in Hertfordshire.

Wed 20 June: Branch Social Letchworth Crawl - **Arena Tavern** 8:00pm, **Broadway Hotel** 8:45pm, **Hogshead** 9:30pm, **Three Magnets** 10:15pm

Wed 4 Jul: Branch Social **Lordship Arms** Curry Night. Book your own table for eating; otherwise just come along for the beer.

Sat 14 July: Branch Minibus Ramble - Southwest of Buntingford

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

Wed 18 Jul: Branch Meeting - **Lilley Arms**, Lilley Voting for T&J Award.

Wed 1 Aug: Branch Crawl – Hitchin, **Coopers Arms**, **Kings Arms**, **Half Moon**. Times tba

Sat 11 Aug: Branch Minibus Ramble - Weston and Willian.

SOUTH HERTS *Branch Contact on foot of page 30*

Tue 12 Jun: Branch Meeting – **Cross Keys**, Harpenden 8pm

Fri 15 Jun: Beer Festival Staff 2006 Party, **White Lion**, Sopwell Lane, St Albans 8pm (BEER FESTIVAL STAFF ONLY)

Sat 30 Jun: Red Squirrel Brewery Trip - 12 max.: Book place with branch contact. Trip 1.00pm. Meet St Albans City station 11.30am or outside brewery at 12.45pm.

Thu 5 Jul: Beer Festival Meeting - **White Lion** 8pm

Tue 10 Jul: Branch Meeting - **Cricketers**, Redbourn

Thu 12 Jul: Herts Liaison - **Wenlock Arms**, London N1 7.00pm

Tue 17 Jul: Ware Summer Saunter – see page 17.

Sat 28 Jul: Abbey Flier Rail Ale Tour. Joint South Herts/Watford & District social. Start at **Southern Cross**, Watford 11.00 am.

WATFORD & DISTRICT *Branch contact on page 29*

Sat 9 Jun: Morning Social at **Rose & Crown**, Woodcock Hill, Rickmansworth (Farmer's Market); from 9 am.

Wed 20 Jun: Watford Town Centre social: **Druids 2**, 8.30 pm; **Estcourt Tavern**, 9 pm; **Wellington Arms**, 9.45 pm; **Estcourt Arms**, 10.15 pm.

Mon 25 Jun: Branch Meeting, **Estcourt Arms** ('Lynch's'), 8.15 pm. All members welcome.

Sat 30 Jun: Sarratt Stumble: **Plough**, Belsize, 12.30 pm; **Cart & Horses**, Commonwood, 1.15 pm; **Boot**, Sarratt, 2.00 pm. (Catch 352 bus from Watford Town Centre, 12.00 noon).

Thu 12 Jul: Branch Darts Tournament, **West Herts Sports Club**, 8.00 pm (prompt) start. All members welcome to take part.

Tue 3 Jul: Out of area social at **Black Boy**, Old Watford Road, Bricket Wood, 8.30 pm.

Sat 28 Jul: Abbey Flier Rail Ale Tour. Start at **Southern Cross**, Watford 11.00 am.

Mon 30 Jul: Branch Meeting, **Estcourt Arms** ('Lynch's'), 8.15 pm. All members welcome.

Fri 10 Aug: GBBF Social at Earls Court; meet by Membership Stand at 6.00 pm and hourly thereafter.



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