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HERTFORDSHIRE'S Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

August/September 2007

Circulation 7000

No. 224

Hertfordshire's Pub of the Year

The Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty in Heronsgate is winner for the second year running. See our Regional winners Page 17



Herts Breweries

Visits to and beer awards presented for Hertfordshire's micro-breweries. See Pages 16-18



Hertfordshire's Endangered Species

Bar Billiards – is there a chance of any resurgence for this dwindling pub game in Hertfordshire's pubs? See page 24



CAMRA's Good Beer Guide

CAMRA's 35th edition of the definitive Good Beer Guide is being launched. More details inside.

PLUS: Features, news from around the county, brewery news and a lot more



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THE BITTER END

CAMRA Fears "domino effect" Following Purchase of Ringwood by Marston's

Beer choice must be preserved

Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) fears that the recent purchase by Marston's of Ringwood Brewery in Hampshire for £19.5 million will encourage a "domino effect" of consolidation in pubs and brewing.

Both Marston's and Ringwood beers are readily available in Hertfordshire so the move may well have an impact on choice locally.

CAMRA Chief Executive, Mike Benner said: "The practice among larger breweries of acquiring smaller competitors is a race where the only loser is the consumer who is often denied a locally brewed beer. As one of the larger breweries buys a brewery and expands their estate their competitors start hunting for their next purchase to keep up. CAMRA's fear is that an increasing number of smaller breweries will be lost if this race continues and consumer choice will suffer as a result."



"In the last three years alone we have seen another Hampshire brewery, Gale's, bought and closed by Fuller's and Greene King bought and closed Hardy's and Hanson's in Nottingham, as well as buying and closing Ridley's brewery in Essex.

North of the border Caledonian Brewery bought Harviestoun of Alva, which had no tied estate but has remained open brewing its distinctive award winning beers.

"Marston's purchased Jennings in Cumbria and invested in the future of the brewery and we hope they will continue this model with Ringwood. But, it begs the question, who is next

in line for acquisition?"

Following the announcement CAMRA seeks assurances that Marston's will continue to make all Ringwood's beers available in its pubs around Hampshire - as well as in the free trade - and not be substituted by Marston's own brands. The consumer group is also seeking assurances that the acquired pubs will keep their Ringwood identity. John Buckley, CAMRA's Wessex Regional Director said, "Ringwood beers are widely available throughout Hampshire and are highly valued. It is essential that they are not replaced by other beers in the Marston's portfolio. Local drinkers in Hampshire are still reeling from the closure of Gale's Brewery and we will fight to protect choice for consumers".



Our Mutual Friend

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Friendly atmosphere, 2 bar pub

North Herts Pub of the Year 2006/2007

Continuously Changing Real Ale Menu

Keith & Yvonne and their staff look forward to seeing you soon

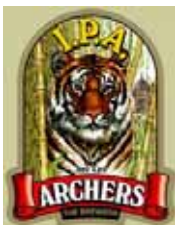
Archers Brewery Saved

Archers brewery has been saved from closure following a deal struck with a local businessman. Archers, which is based in the former Great Western Railway locomotive works in Swindon, is a brewer of award-winning ales for the independent pub sector. Although making beer for nearly three decades, it was placed under administration at the end of May after running into cash flow problems.



It has now been acquired by John Williams – who has had no previous involvement in the brewery or pub trade. The deal secures the future of Archers brands as well as the jobs of the brewing team there. Mr Williams

said: "We've acquired the business because of the high reputation Archers holds within the market. I'm delighted to own an excellent range of beers, although we will be looking at reducing the size of our distribution network until we've



consolidated – and then look to expand into the north of England."



Archers was established in 1979, brews around 10,000 barrels a year employing 20 people, and currently brews 190 different ales. Its award-winning ales – as awarded by CAMRA and SIBA (Society of independent Brewers) are *Golden*, *IPA*, *Dark Mild*, and *Crystal Clear*.

Fifteen Not Out at the Crooked Billet

2007 sees Wally and Julie Kasprak mark their fifteenth year as licensees of the **Good Beer Guide** listed **Crooked Billet**, Colney Heath. The couple had managed two pubs for McMullen's – the **John of Gaunt** in Hertford and the **Royal Oak** at Chingford in Essex - before taking on the free house just off the A414 outside St Albans in 1992.

They arrived to find the pub in a sorry state after many years of steady decline, with no food and

on the point of ceasing to trade. But Wally's passion for real ale, coupled with Julie's catering skills has helped turn the pub round to the point where it now earns its deserved place in the GBG. Tring beers are a regular feature, with *Side Pocket for a Toad* the session bitter, but other local breweries such as Red Squirrel, Potton, Buntingford and Rebellion feature in Wally's cellar alongside guests from further afield including beers from Grand Union, Stonehenge, Pot Belly and York Brewery.



The Crooked Billet

An extension to the kitchen and main bar some years ago allowed the food side to expand under Julie's direction, with a good value lunchtime and evening meal menu featuring meals that are a cut above the average pub grub. And Julie says not to miss the Billet's regular summer barbecues and very popular Sunday roasts....

Want to Advertise in Pints of View?

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Binge Drinking is Nothing New

These days it's alcopops, super-strength lager and shots, but in the 1700s it was gin drunk by the pint.

Gin was introduced to Britain from the Netherlands during the 1690s and became so popular that by 1729, Londoners were drinking eight million gallons of the stuff every year. A lot of it was very cheaply produced and sold, and the saying 'drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence' summed up the state that drinkers got themselves in. Poorly produced gin would affect your eyesight so badly that having fallen into a coma after drinking large quantities of it, you were actually blind drunk the day after and could not work.

In 1739, Judith Defour was charged with collecting her child from the workhouse and murdering it so that she could sell its clothes for a shilling and sixpence to buy gin.

The Government, fired up by the bad press of gin (see article right), steadily increased taxes on the drink, which led to the gin tax riots of 1743. The situation did not improve and artist William Hogarth's famous print, *Gin Lane*, printed in 1751 is considered to be no exaggeration.

The government subsequently again steeply increased gin taxation in the same year and many publicans painted a black band around their pub signs or changed the name for example from White Horse to Black Horse as a protest.

Steve Bury

Hogarth's Beer Street and Gin Lane

William Hogarth (1697-1764) was a major English painter, printmaker, pictorial satirist, and editorial cartoonist who has been credited as a pioneer in western sequential (comic) art. Hogarth was

fascinated by English society and many of his pieces were depictions of people and places that he was familiar with. Hogarth's opinions about the evils of society were often shown through his work. Two works in particular show his ill feelings towards the growing consumption of gin during the 18th Century.

Beer Street (left, top) and *Gin Lane* (left, below) published in 1751 (the latter as previously mentioned) formed part of

a general attempt to re-impose legislation on the sale of spirits at this time. In the two-print set Hogarth compares the two scenes: In the former,

traditional English beer forms part of the life of a well-ordered society, whereas the consumption of gin, as in the latter scene, leads to the total disintegration of society. Hogarth presents gin alcoholism as a social, economic and ethical problem.

Thus, *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* pictorially contrast the "healthfulness of beer with the devastating effects, both social and personal, of that cheaply-distilled anaesthetic, gin".

John Kemp

Source: Fiona Haslam, *Hogarth and the Art of*

Alcohol Abuse, Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 22 (1992), 74-80.



The Smoking Ban Arrives...

No Smoking in pubs became a reality on 1 July and there has been a late flurry of planning activity as pubs have submitted applications to serve smokers with sheltered and heated external areas. It is, of course, too early to judge any trends coming out of the ban and to assess how it is affecting pub business – we may need to wait until the colder months before the ban begins to bite.

In the meantime, here are some of the questions that we all wait for the long-term answers on....

- Are non-smokers flooding back to their locals?
- Are smokers staying away?
- Are pubs suffering a fall in trade? Or a boom?
- Has any drop/change in regular customers totally changed the nature of your pub?
- Is there any one type of pub suffering more than others?
- Will the ban herald a spate of pub closures in the next few years?
- If it does how can we help to keep businesses viable?

- If trade drops off what implications are there on employment?
- Is the lack of smoke making a better or worse drinking environment?
- Are groups of noisy Altiris fresco smokers irritating local residents?
- Will our family brewers need to readjust their pub estates?
- Will England's micro-brewers find it still harder to find outlets?
- How will pub companies address any downfall in sales?

To avoid any further loss of town, village and community pubs we all need to regularly use our local pubs. In particular, expect CAMRA's **Community Pubs Week** next February to create a special push to keep your local where it should be – right at the heart of your community. Let your local publican know how they can provide the best service for you and your friends.

THE SPOTTED BULL



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Lunchtimes 12 noon - 2.30pm**

...so Let's Take a Deep Breath in the (Smoke) Free World...

Some publicans have gone to great lengths to try and get around the ban. The **Peruvian Arms** in Penzance, Cornwall, which claimed to have a clientele of 95% smokers, applied unsuccessfully to become Peruvian territory. The pub has strong links with Peru as it was built using proceeds from Peruvian silver mines and the licensee visited the Peruvian embassy and met with the Ambassador.

Landlady Dawn Clarke at the **Old Ship Inn**, Lowdham, Nottinghamshire, says she can get around the ban by building a bedroom behind her bar. She says she will then be allowed to invite smokers into it because it is a private area and not covered by the ban.

Another item I have seen advertised is under the heading of "Hot Slot" (not in the contact column or anything to do with Dawn), it reads 'Beat the Smoking ban with coin-operated Patio Heaters. Make money, no need to waste gas with this pay as you go timer'. Having been forced to smoke in the rain snow frost and sleet your jovial host will expect you to pay for the experience as well; somehow I don't think the "Hot Slot" will be universally popular.

The next suggestion is that pubs should stock more confectionery to be used by smokers as a substitute for cigarettes. *Masterfoods*, owners of Mars, say that stocking sweets does not affect sales of crisps and nuts, and suggests that Mars bars, Twix, or sharing bags such as Maltesers, will appeal to smokers. The last thing I want with my pint of real ale is a Mars bar; to be honest the lingering chocolate sweet taste would definitely detract from the beer's flavour for quite a long while afterwards.

The aptly named **Endeavour** in Chelmsford is offering customers the ultimate solution - hypnotherapy by a Harley Street therapist Peter Moule. Of the initial nine guinea pigs who had treatment in May; six have given up completely, two have reduced smoking drastically, and there has been one total failure. How much the treatment costs and whether it will be readily available within the licensed trade remains to be seen.

NICE - the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence - has recommended that

employees should be given time off work to attend "stop smoking" clinics. The FPB (Forum of Private Businesses) disagree and say that smoking workers should pay employers back for the time taken off. NICE disagrees and says that businesses will reap benefits as non-smokers will be more efficient. As for non-smokers being more efficient, the only savings can be that they would no longer need fag breaks.

All the above came from different editions of the Publican and Metro. Any other smoking ban lunacy will be gratefully received.

Steve Bury

...but If You Can't Smoke it - Drink it Instead

Yorkshire brewers, Old Bear Brewery have just released a beer brewed with tobacco leaves. *Puffing Billy* was devised by the brewery to give smokers their nicotine hit without them having to go outside the pub for a puff, and so keep them inside - drinking their beer, of course.

It will be interesting to measure any success this beer has on smokers; will it genuinely alleviate its drinkers' cravings, or will it simply have a psychological effect? Perhaps one of its keenest drinkers could be one of TV's best known barmaids Bet Lynch (actress Julie Goodyear) from *Coronation Street*. She reportedly gave up her 60-a-day smoking habit three weeks before the ban came into effect.

What other enterprising ventures await us in pubs in the future; tobacco substitute patch vending machines, or machines vending chewing tobacco and with spittoons provided? It all doesn't really bear worth thinking about!

John Kemp

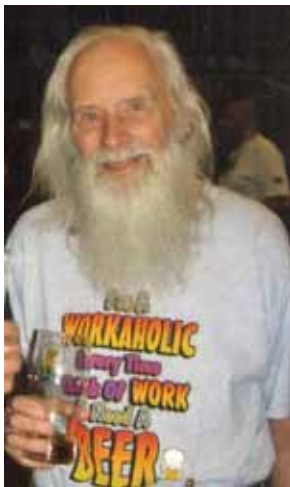


Hertfordshire's Pints of View is produced by the North, South Hertfordshire and Watford & District Branches of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches.

Obituary – Roy Cheeseman

We are sad to report that a friend and neighbour, Roy Cheeseman (pictured below) passed away, aged 77, just before our last issue went to press. Roy was a familiar face within the Hertfordshire CAMRA scene although he actually was resident in the Ball Hill area of Coventry.

On retirement Roy's love of nature and, in particular, large wild cats periodically brought him to Hertfordshire where he actively campaigned for The Cat Survival Trust (www.catsurvivaltrust.org).



Roy pretty much dedicated his retirement weekdays to the Trust working in their Welwyn headquarters and was a Trustee for this charity.

Whilst technically a member of the Coventry and North Warwickshire Branch of CAMRA Roy contributed a great deal to us here in North Hertfordshire.

Surprisingly for a man of his age Roy was very computer literate and our first Branch website was his work.

Roy could always be found working at both our local beer festivals and the Great British Beer Festival. CAMRA Fundraising was a passion for Roy and he often staffed the 'Every 1's a Winner' Tombola.

Right up until the start of this year Roy was very active and cycled or walked to many pubs and CAMRA events. Latterly old age took its toll and after a brief spell in hospital Roy passed on.

We miss him.

*Andy Rawnsley
Branch Chair, CAMRA North Hertfordshire.*

The Red Lion

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September 20th – 22nd
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50 Cask Beers - Foreign Beer Bar
Cider & Perry
Tombola, Products, Hot & Cold Food

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Non Smoking

Entry: £2 with 50% discount before 4pm
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Family Area available Saturday till 7pm

Check www.camranorthherts.org.uk for info
Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

The next **Young Members pub crawl** will take place on **Saturday 15th September 2007**. This will be a minibus ramble, visiting the following pubs:

The Fox, Pirton – 7pm

Red Lion, Great Offley – 8pm

Red Lion, Preston – 9pm

Strathmore Arms, St. Paul's Walden – 10pm

£6 per person, Pick Ups will be: **Our Mutual Friend, Stevenage – 6.15pm, The Cock, Baldock – 6.30pm and Half Moon, Hitchin – 6.45pm**. Drop offs close to home.

To book your place on this trip, or if you require any further information, please email Gemma at

ym@camranorthherts.org.uk



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**



The Good Beer Guide: *35 Years Dedicated to Bringing You the Best Pint*

This September will see the release of the 35th anniversary edition of CAMRA's indispensable travelling companion for every lover of real ale, *The Good Beer Guide 2008*.

The original Good Beer Guide was published by CAMRA in 1974 and was priced at 75p. It featured all the breweries that existed at the time, which totalled a mere 104. By comparison *The Good Beer Guide 2008* will feature more than 600 breweries, and over 4,500 pubs that currently serve good quality real ale.

CAMRA press officer Owen Morris said: "In the first edition the editor said the guide was 'designed to help people who are searching for a decent drop of ale'. The Good Beer Guide has served this purpose every year since, and is now so iconic that it has become known as the beer drinker's bible.

"CAMRA's network of volunteers works tirelessly to make sure only those pubs that serve the highest quality real ale can be considered for entry. When you buy your copy of *The Good Beer Guide 2008*, you can be sure that 35 years' worth of dedication to finding a great pint of the nation's favourite drink is in your hands".

The Good Beer Guide 2008:

- ✓ Edited by Glenfiddich Award-winning drinks writer Roger Protz
- ✓ The number one best-selling guide to pubs selling fine quality real ale
- ✓ Quick reference, county by county guides, clear maps and simple directions
- ✓ More than 4,500 pubs, complete with beer listings, opening hours, pub food information, facilities for families, accommodation, history and location.



The **Good Beer Guide 2008** will be available from CAMRA in September 2007. To order a copy visit: www.camra.org.uk.

Join the Good Beer Guide Privilege Club and receive the latest copy of the Good Beer Guide delivered to your door every year, plus receive an even bigger discount than the CAMRA members' discount.

Cover price of *The Good Beer Guide 2008*: £14.99 (+£1.50 p&p)
CAMRA members' price: £11.00 (+£1.50 p&p)
Good Beer Guide Privilege Club members' price: Only £9.50 (Inc p&p)

For more information, contact CAMRA on 01727 867201.

Cider & Perry Month 2007: Up the Apples and Pears in October

This October is designated Cider and Perry month by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and the consumer organisation is striving to ensure more people will have the opportunity to try these deliciously fruity drinks. CAMRA hopes that as the overall popularity of cider and perry increases we will see increased examples of the traditional styles in pubs across the UK.

Owen Morris, CAMRA Press Officer and member of the Cider and Perry campaigning committee said: "Preconceptions of cider and the people who drink it have been shattered. It is now regarded as a 'drink to be seen with'. CAMRA believes people are ready to be seen drinking the real thing and show that cider and perry are not the only things with great taste.

"Once drinkers enjoy a real cider or perry – where the fruit has simply been pressed and allowed to ferment without any need for additives – then we are certain the cider renaissance will continue. Why not ask in your local if they are planning to stock a real cider and perry in October?"

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink which is produced naturally from apples and is neither carbonated nor pasteurised. As cider is made from apples, perry is made from perry pears, which tend to be smaller and harder than dessert pears.

Look on www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth to find cider events put on by local branches in your area. Real cider and perry are stocked at many of the CAMRA beer festival going on throughout the country. Check www.camra.org.uk for more details.

See also Bottled Cider Winners on page 15

A Toast to Cider – Good Health

Cider's trendy image has been further enhanced by the news that it could also be good for your health. Researchers have found that certain types may be just as effective as red wine in giving protection against strokes,

heart disease and cancer. Like red wine, it contains healthy antioxidants which do not get lost in the cider-making process, scientists at Glasgow University found. The cider with the most phenolics was Gwatkins Yarlinton Mill with alcohol strength of 7.5 per cent.

Metro – Thursday 28 June 2007

Ed Says: Don't forget to attend the Cider and Perry bar at the **St Albans Beer Festival** where a large number and variety of healthy antioxidants will be available. **See back page for details.**

Excuse Me I'm Vegetarian

It's that time of year again where customers are encouraged to eat what are called "Lite Bites" on many menus during the summer months. I am not against eating salad in the pub garden for a change, but would not be too pleased to emulate the experience of Sarah Cook, 29, who nearly swallowed a live slug hiding in the lettuce. Where did this take place? Where else but the **Slug and Lettuce**, Farnham, Surrey.

Taken from an article in the Metro newspaper.

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Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival: *Winner by a short head well over the line!*

On Friday March 30th, a small group of St Albans CAMRA members donned their panamas and trilbies, tweed jackets and binoculars, and headed for a world-first - a real ale festival at a racecourse during a race meeting. The Berkshire South East branch succeeded in boldly going where no branch had gone before and successfully mixed firkins with fences in Ascot's brand new £335M grandstand. More than 60 beers were available, mostly from local breweries, including Butts, Crondall, Grand Union, Loddon, Lovibonds, Twickenham, West Berks, White Horse. Additionally there were 5 ciders and a perry, and a sponsored stand from Fuller's, and (wait for it) keg lager Heineken!

The festival was dedicated to the memory of Colin Latham, founder of the branch, and indefatigable campaigner for real ale, who served as Central Southern Regional Chairman between 2000 and 2004, and was involved in the initial stages of the organisation of this unique event before his sad and untimely death at the age of 57.

The location itself was stunning, with the stadium, containing some 5km of balustrades, 24 escalators, 40 bridges connecting the north and south sides, and 10,000 square metres of glass, hugging the natural contours of the racecourse itself. The festival was held in the roofed yet half-walled open-air end, where the unseasonably sharp wind made sure the beers were kept at an almost perfect, if not slightly too cool a temperature. Nothing a minute or so in the hand couldn't easily deal with, or a skip into the heated inside area. Sadly though, the lined glasses were plastic due to local racecourse rules. Also part of the deal to host the event was essential sponsorship, and whilst Fuller's are no strangers to such events (they even brewed a special 4.8% *Ascot Festival Ale* based on their IPA recipe), Heineken certainly are. Their beers, all imported, included Amstel and Moretti and were served by one of 4 young made-up corporate dollies. Sadly for them, despite queues elsewhere, their keg lager stand always seemed deserted.

Entrance for CAMRA members was £5 and halves were £1.25 – cheaper than some recent (Cont'd)

The Nelson



**135 Marford Road
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Herts, AL4 8NH
Tel: 01582 831577**

Open 12.00 Noon – 11.00pm (Mon to Sat), 12 Noon – 10.30pm Sun

**Greene King IPA and McMullen AK plus 4 ever-changing guest beers
Food served daily from 12 Noon to 2.30pm**

~ Patio area including covered seating ~

3-DAY BEER FESTIVAL

**FRI 7th, SAT 8th, AND SUN 9th SEPTEMBER
12 REAL ALES AND FREE FOOD ON SUNDAY 9th**

beer festivals I could care to mention, and that included full access to the race meeting itself, where one could indulge in a little fluttering on the fillies (or colts) if that is where your fancy lay. By coincidence, my friend had a horse running that day, so I had an owner's badge. That didn't help my wallet one little bit, though, so I ended up with less beer-tasting than I had anticipated. (He has since won at handsome odds of 12-1 at Perth, so thankfully I have been able to attend Reading and Tuckers Maltings beer festivals to make up for the loss!)



Some of us will have been to beer festivals at racecourses before. Worcester and Newton Abbot come to mind. But only on non-race days. And of course, some breweries (Everards at Leicester, Belhaven at Musselburgh, Greene King at Newmarket, etc) sponsor races and race days. But real beer during a race meeting is very much a rarity.

The bars are typically franchised out to catering companies with gangs of travelling trucks that operate on a regional basis, trailing from course to course kegs of easy-to-keep long-life bland (sorry brands) that we all love to hate so much. So, well done Berkshire South East! I hear the event was so successful that all concerned are hoping it will be an annual event. Hopefully it might lead to a demand for real ale at more race meetings throughout the country. And why not target other extended sporting events as well?

Ian Boyd

Old Cross Tavern

"The Way Pubs Used to Be"

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Award Winning Freehouse



**4 Regular & 4 Guest Ales
Including a Mild, Stout or Porter**

**An Excellent Selection
of Belgian & Bottled Beers**

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1997 - 2007 Cask Marque Certification



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QUALITY FOOD

**Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale
Morlands Bitter, Guest Beer**

Cambridgeshire Sweeps the Board at the First East Anglia Bottled Cider Competition

Cambridgeshire producers are celebrating winning the top three places in CAMRA's inaugural East Anglia Bottled Cider Competition.

First placed was Pickled Pig *Old Spot* from Stretham near Ely. Described by judges as "A sweet cider with a dry aftertaste, which is friendly on the nose. An excellent session cider", Pickled Pig *Old Spot* is naturally made without chemical additives using three varieties of apple all grown in the Fenlands.

On hearing of his success, Charles Roberts of Pickled Pig Cider said "I am delighted to win such a prestigious award and to see East Anglian ciders firmly back on the map with the help of CAMRA. At Pickled Pig we are passionate about using natural and traditional methods to make quality ciders from locally grown fruit. I am grateful to Ben, Mick and my family for all their help and to Stuart for his excellent fruit".

Second place was awarded to Hereward Brewery of Ely. Michael Czarnobaj of Hereward Brewery has been producing cider since 2002, also using a blend of locally grown eating, cooking and crab apples.

A single variety cider, *Yarlington Mill*, produced by Cassels of Great Shelford near Cambridge came third. Cassels Cider is a well established producer who sells into the city's licensed trade. The prize winning cider, which was fermented in rum casks, was made using one type of apple variety, Yarlington Mill.

Andrea Briers, CAMRA's Regional Cider Co-ordinator for East Anglia said, "This competition has aroused great interest and we were delighted to discover how many different bottled conditioned ciders were produced throughout East Anglia. The standard of entries was very high and the Cambridgeshire producers fought off some very strong competition. I would like to thank Cambridge Beer Festival for hosting these awards".

FULL RESULTS:-

- 1st** *Old Spot*, Pickled Pig Cider
2nd *Medium Dry Cider*, Hereward Brewery
3rd *Yarlington Mill*, Cassels Cider

The East Anglian Cider Competition 2007, a competition for draught ciders and perries produced within East Anglia, will be held at **Norwich Beer Festival** which runs from Monday 22nd October to Saturday 27th October 2007.

Picture left is from the awards presented on 13 July:

From left to right: Michael Czarnobaj (Hereward Brewery), Sinclair Stevenson (Cassels Cider), Andrea Briers (Regional Cider Co-ordinator - East Anglia) and Charles Roberts (Pickled Pig).



THE LORDSHIP ARMS

Herts. Pub of the Year 2002

The Inn In The Sticks

Benington, Nr Stevenage



REAL ALE OASIS FOR THE DISCERNING DRINKER

Fuller's London Pride, Crouch Vale Brewer's Gold

Plus 6 ever changing guest beers from

Independent and Micro Breweries

Also Traditional Cider

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Curry Night every Wednesday £6.00

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South Herts CAMRA Visit to Red Squirrel Brewery

On a rainy Saturday (haven't we had enough of those?) at the end of June, 20 or so members of South Herts CAMRA risked all manner of public transport from Watford, St Albans, Newgate Street, Ware and even Hertford to reach a difficult-to-find unit in a small industrial estate on the west side of Hertford, home of **Red Squirrel Brewery**.

Gary Hayward, owner, brewer, salesman and drayman welcomed us all with a mystery golden coloured beer. This was Gary's newest recipe try-out, a weissbier. Made strictly according to the book, ingredients included 50% wheat malt with carapils, lager malt and some English malt. American Cascade hops provide only a little bitterness (16 units) but a pleasant low-key lemon bouquet and flavour. Slight acidity could be detected down the side of the tongue after a slightly sweet touch at the start.

Gary explained that in weiss bier the majority of flavour is intended to come from the yeast rather than hops, and this may be the source of some sulphate on the nose and in the aftertaste.

Red Squirrel has a 10 barrel brew length using modern stainless steel vessels. Three Valleys water is conditioned using sulphuric acid to a PH 5.4 then burtonised with calcium sulphate (gypsum) pitched at 70°C. Mashing is in an enclosed Mossbrew tun and there are 3 fermenters where the wort ferments at 28°C. Gary controls the temperature in these using high-tech duvets from Tesco!

Completed brews are conditioned on the floor in cask and held in the cold store until delivery. Conditioning for some of his "bigger" (i.e. higher alcohol) ales can be up to 10 weeks.

Gary uses Maris Otter malt for more conventional ales and because he likes to experiment has 10 or more different hop varieties on the premises.

RSB Red Squirrel Bitter remains the brewery's best seller but Gary prides himself and his brewing skills by producing a wide range of specialist beers including European and American styles. Since 2003 he has used over 15 different types of malt and 10 types of hops.

Continued on next page



Red Squirrel Brewery

Producer of the finest quality hand crafted cask conditioned ales

Red Squirrel Brewery supports local small business, commerce, employment and positive environmental conservation.

For more information contact:-

Red Squirrel Brewery
14B Mimram Road
Hertford, Hertfordshire
SG14 1NN
Tel 01992 501100

gary@redsquirrelbrewery.co.uk



After many questions, Gary provided some snacks and a hospitality beer - more Weiss beer at 5%ABV, before everyone trotted off to the **Old Cross Tavern** for an excellent ale selection, including 2 from Red Squirrel. Further Hertford pubs beckoned thereafter.



South Herts CAMRA with Gary (front centre)

Thanks to Gary himself, and to Les Middlewood for making the arrangements and providing the very useful handout on the brewery and Hertford itself. *Roger How*

County CAMRA Pub of the Year East Anglian Region Winners

We congratulate the winners, who incidentally, are all in the current CAMRA **Good Beer Guide** (with page of entry). Each of the successful pubs above will now go forward to the prestigious national competition.

WINNERS:

Hertfordshire - Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty, Heronsgate (p206). *See advert below for presentation date.*

Suffolk - Rumburgh Buck, Rumburgh (p439)

Essex - Swan, Little Totham (p160)

Cambridgeshire - Waggon & Horses, Milton (p60)

Bedfordshire - Engineers Arms, Henlow (p36)

Norfolk - Royal Oak, Poringland (p360)

Subscriptions for Pints of View

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

THE LAND OF LIBERTY, PEACE AND PLENTY FREEHOUSE

Garden Games Day Sat 25th
Beer Festival
Fri 24th – Mon 27th August

Hertfordshire Pub of the
Year Presentation
Sat 15th September

Kozmik Kwizzes
Muzik Kwiz – 1st Sep
General Kwiz – 29th Sep



- 5+ Real Ales
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R4 Bus Direct from Watford & Rickmansworth

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

Buntingford Brewery Presentation

On March 23rd & 24th Hitchin CAMRA, in association with the Round Table, held their 7th annual beer festival. This year there were 60 beers on offer along with cider, perry & a foreign bar. The theme was 'Best of beers' including many prize winning beers. The beer of the festival was won by local brewery Buntingford's *Royston Red* (4.8%) and they also gained silver with *Western Invader* (4.2%) Members of the public who attended the festival voted for the awards.

The brewery is very happy to have won and say, "It's nice to be recognised locally".



North Herts CAMRA Branch Chairman Andrew Rawnsley (far right) presents an award to Catherine Murphy and Steve Banfield of Buntingford brewery

Although known as the Buntingford brewery, Buntingford opened in Royston in September 2005. For such a new brewery Buntingford have won a lot of other awards. Last year (2006) *St Paddy* (4.3%) won Gold at the CAMRA/Round Table **Hitchin Beer Festival** - making them champions the second year running.

Royston Red, the beer that won this year at Hitchin also won the Gold in the Premium Bitters category at SIBA East 2007 going on to take bronze at the national SIBA awards.

Britannia and *Oatmeal Stout*, two of their other beers also won bronzes regionally in the same competition.

The presentation itself was a great night out; we were very lucky with the weather, and enjoyed a beautiful summer's evening.

Graham Perry - self-titled 'best barbecue chef in Hertfordshire' completely lived up to his reputation, perfectly cooking a selection of different types of burgers and sausages from the

local butchers. The beers at the presentation, both provided and made by Buntingford were *Highwayman* and *Challenger*, and are both worth looking out for, as they were very nice.

The Buntingford brewery stands on the edge of the Therfield Heath, a beautiful location to enjoy good food & nice beer. Whilst we were there we were lucky enough to see barn owls, red kites and hares.

A variety of birdlife inhabits this local area: Corn buntings, skylarks, golden plover, lapwings, swifts, martins (house & sand), sedge warblers, flycatchers, buzzards, sparrowhawk, kestrel, hobby, merlin, grey partridge, jay, woodpeckers and marsh harrier are all a regular sight around the brewery.

The brewery encourages the wildlife and has taken many steps to be environmentally friendly.

The liquid waste used in the brewing operation and sewage goes into a reed-bed pond just behind the building. The farm the brewery is located on holds conservation grade status, has won many awards regionally and nationally and is seen as a beacon of excellence in the conservation area.

Hopefully there will be many more great things from Buntingford in years to come; their beers are well worth looking out for.

Laura Walmsley



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Halls Green, Near Weston
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Simon, Mandy and all the staff offer you a warm welcome to our real country pub.

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Food served 12.00 noon to 7.45 pm.

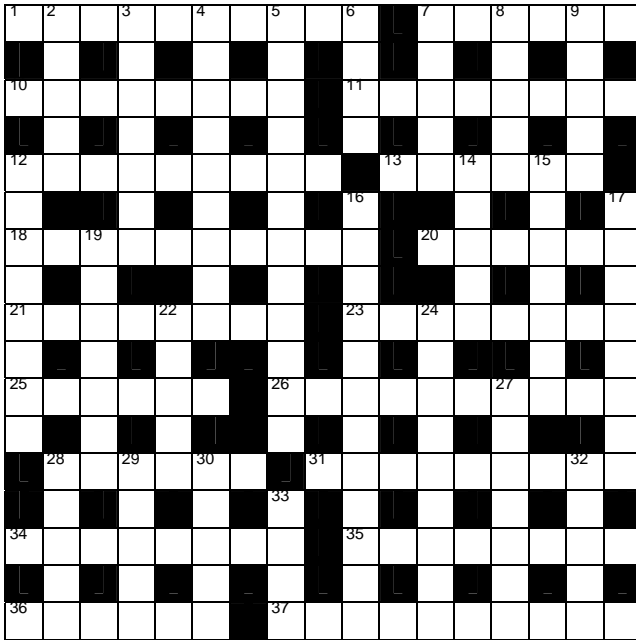
Bookings advised for our conservatory.

Children's play area in our large beer garden,
Plus a real log fire in the winter!

Only a 5-minute drive or 20-minute walk from Great Ashby's Community Centre.

Prize Crossword

Win free Beer at our St Albans Beer Festival



1 pair of tickets **plus £10** worth of beer tokens for any single session of the **12th St. Albans Beer Festival** at St. Albans Arena (26 – 29 Sep) will be won by the first **3** correct entries drawn after the closing date of **15 September 2007**. Photocopies are acceptable.

Send Entries to: J. E Green, 63 Green Lane, St. Albans, Herts, AL3 6HE

Your Name:

Your Address:

Postcode:

Preamble: The 4 in 11 is the current CAMRA South Hertfordshire 8 27

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 It shows the times for joint period of duty (10)
- 7 One having a pint with late meal (6)
- 10 Stopped crowd getting within one mile (8)
- 11 See preamble (2, 6)
- 12 Very active, but Green has difficulty recalling name (9)
- 13 Sweet little toy (6)
- 18 Local duty to encourage containment of 100 until drunk (7, 3)
- 20 Pub worker to outlaw carrying weapon (6)
- 21 Criminal person: one inside, right? (8)
- 23 What provides traditional fashion to be worn? (3, 5)
- 25 Mixed drink, short, and its contents (6)
- 26 A line toots, moving thus? (4, 2, 4)
- 28 Knocking back unlimited greed in pub? Oz's 28 down (4 – 2)
- 31 Bitter lay fermenting without restraint (2, 7)
- 34 Show how to cut trains, not needing a division (8)
- 35 Came to have dice rolled (8)
- 36 Officer said to be a bit of a nut (6)
- 37 Exchange is no matter for a finance supply advocate (10)

CLUES DOWN

- 2 Manor in disrepair, like ruins in 11 (5)
- 3 Endless games organised for sizeable purse in Scotland (7)
- 4 See preamble (5, 4)
- 5 Final defeat for a feature of this newsletter (3, 6, 3)
- 6 Many a pub landlord (4)
- 7 Celebrity drinks one in part of flight (7)
- 8 See preamble (3, 2)
- 9 Wise selector of next Bond? (5)
- 12 Houdini was one strange case, getting drunk, it's said (8)
- 14 Not fit for purpose – brain aptitude's mostly lacking (5)
- 15 Buddhist priest restricts naughty dance (7)
- 16 Exercise, say, earlier – it'll get you there quicker (7, 5)
- 17 What's beneath a pile of laundry 'e mislaid? (8)
- 19 Go in a true fashion (7)
- 22 Request provision of tidiness (5)
- 24 Become up-to-date, and understand earlier technology (3, 4, 2)
- 27 See preamble (3, 4)
- 28 Being drunk as a result of this? (5)
- 29 It's consumed with or without crusts (5)
- 30 Norm, and what he'd ask for in Cheers? (5)
- 32 Oaks perhaps the race every Epsom specialist heads for (5)
- 33 One article, or a couple (4)

For winner and solution of prize Sudoku in Edition 222, see page 23.



Herts Readers Write



Newsletter Skewed?

In the last edition of Pints of View we reported that Des Scarboro of the **Spotted Dog**, Flamstead had also acquired the lease on the **Skew Bridge**, Harpenden. This turns out not to be the case and we unreservedly apologise to Zoë and Barry Grey at the Skew for any difficulties they have encountered from this misinformation.

Zoë and Barry have been at the Skew Bridge for the best part of ten years, taking it over when it was known as the Queens Head. They served the previous ten years just down the road at the **Rose and Crown**; this must place them among the longest serving licensees in the area. Whilst at the Skew they have overseen the expansion of the saloon bar and it now has a good reputation for good value food and there is a strong sporting theme in the public bar and boasts three football teams, two crib teams and domino, darts and pool teams.

However, Zoë and Barry are looking to retire soon and the lease of this Punch Tavern is up for sale.

Bob Norrish

Sportsman Sought

It appears that we have received our first enquiry from the **Hertsale pub database** as follows:

I stumbled across your web site while looking for info on a pub in Rickmansworth that I used to frequent many years ago. It was called The Sportsman (not the one in Croxley Green) and was sited near the old Tesco store in a square behind the High Street. It has been demolished and replaced by a block of flats. Do you or your readers have any info on the pub, especially in its early days (around the 1920/1930 era?) I think it was a Benskins pub.

Stuart Collie

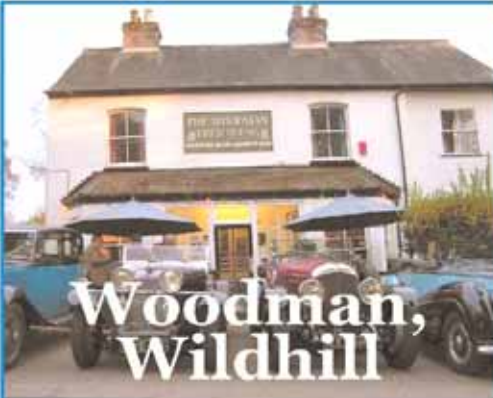
Ed Says: The pub could have been built in the 1920/30 era but I think this unlikely. The Sportsman was a Benskins pub located in Penn Place, a precinct near the old location of Tesco, (just off the A412 east of the station). We think it closed in the early 1970s. There was another pub nearby called the Artists Retreat, and the precinct also has a hairdresser & barber shop.

Full Measure Supporter

I write in response to the article on "Taking it to the Top" in Pints of View issue 223.

Most licensees and staff serve their customers with the proper measure because they value the trade from their customers. One never hears complaints from these pubs or their breweries.

All the fuss comes from those, be they pubcos, breweries or pub operators, who want to maximise the income at the expense of good customer care – and returning trade. Whichever way their argument for short measure goes, it is the customer who loses out. If the pint is served short measure, he or she is overcharged by paying the price of a pint and getting less – maybe up to 10% short. *Continued/*

**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

If legislation comes in requiring a full measure to be sold in an oversize glass then he or she will pay over the odds to cover the cost of the new oversize glasses which could be coming in to the pubs when replacing breakages.

Those who whinge about having to treat the customer fairly should ask themselves how they would react if they bought a bag of apples which was claimed to be ten and found only nine in that bag. No, that isn't different. It's exactly the same – short measure. These people obviously know they are chancers. Why else would their pubs put up a notice behind the bar saying they will willingly top up short measure? They obviously know that they are likely to serve short.

I remember one occasion when a round of six or seven pints of the same beer was purchased. They were all short measure so another pint was ordered and used by the customer to top up the other beers in front of the barmaid who then had the audacity to demand payment for that extra pint. I am pleased to say she didn't get it.

A pint is 20 fluid ounces or 568 millilitres. Where a tight head, such as on Guinness, is an accepted part of the drink then the head on the beer is part of the pint. A 'tight' head on a northern pint which has been served through a sparkler would be part of the stated measure. When the head is just light froth which will soon dissipate dropping the level of the beer to less than the stated measure then this 'froth' is NOT part of the pint. This froth which is often created by pumping in dispense is not part of the legal measure just a method of serving short measure.

To those who still want to argue for selling short measure I merely ask, "Would you like to be at the receiving end of that short sale?"

Hopefully this will lay to rest all the arguments for selling the customer short.

John Crowhurst

Sign of the Times

Greene King have recently introduced a new policy towards pub signs across the country and are replacing their traditional pub signs with a boring, standardised corporate sign. The only variety is some have the name in blue, some green.

Given the importance of pub signs to our pub heritage, what can be done about this?

Firstly, the legal position. If the pub is a listed building and the sign is attached to it then Listed Building Consent must be sought to replace (or remove) it. Pub signs elsewhere come under the Advertisement consent Regulations. Planning consent is always needed if the sign is illuminated. Where the sign is on an existing free standing pole then should the council consider it unsuitable they can insist on an Advertising consent application to be made and then serve a "Discontinuance Notice" if it isn't removed. Much here depends on the though on the policies and practices of individual Councils.

Secondly, you as an individual or through the local CAMRA branch can campaign on this. Greene King are not the only offenders but at present are making the most extensive changes. Greene King are sensitive to bad publicity so make yourself heard.

Kevin Travers

Ed Says: I broached this subject in "Greene King News" page 24 in Edition 223 and I am curious how many Greene King pubs in Hertfordshire have already had the corporate branding treatment. Please report them to the newsletter.

Known so far: - The **Speckled Hen**, Hatfield Road, St Albans (previously the Bunch of Cherries).

- Following our article in Edition 223, the unsightly corporate hoardings placed on the **Bull** in Wheathampstead have now been removed by owners Mitchells and Butlers – see recent picture:



M&B signs were originally erected along with a planning application to St Albans District Council, but this was subsequently withdrawn. The signs drew considerable protest in the local press, including *Pints of View*, and they were recently removed upon order from the district council.

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 our NEW address: pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk

30th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

The Corn Exchange, St. Paul's Square,
Bedford, MK40 1SL.



3rd - 6th October 2007

A chance to enjoy 110+ real ales from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom; along with more than more than 30 traditional ciders & perries from counties you never knew existed!

Admission charges:

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FREE admission to all before 5pm on all days

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£3 after 5pm on Fri

- ▶ Foreign speciality beers
- ▶ Live music on Wed and Sat evenings
- ▶ Tasty hot and cold food
- ▶ Clothing, gifts and books for sale
- ▶ Tombola and Shut the box
- ▶ Exclusive souvenir festival glass
- ▶ Sponsor a cask of ale

Opening Times:

Wed 4pm~11 pm

Thu, Fri & Sat 11.30 am~11 pm

www.northbedscamra.org.uk



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REAL ALE

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or email: festival@northbedscamra.org.uk

This is a totally non-smoking festival



Adnams Brewery National Low Carbon Champion

A company that has already taken steps to reduce their carbon emissions is Suffolk-based brewer Adnams, winner of the Carbon Trust/Daily Telegraph Innovation Awards 2007, a programme created to showcase the best in UK low carbon innovation. Embracing



Making business sense of climate change

energy efficiency across their operations, Adnams have not only built a low carbon distribution centre and developed a new, energy efficient manufacturing process, they have also taken further steps to reduce their carbon footprint by creating a new beer bottle - the lightest on the market.

Ed Says: I have seen the new distribution depot on a recent visit to Southwold with its roof covered in turf a resplendent green. The only pity is that like larger brewers they deliver to an enormous trading area by motorised dray which must be putting a lot of the CO₂ saved back into the atmosphere.

The Pub with Four Names

Drinkers in Hertford may be looking forward to the opening of Wetherspoon's new Lloyd's No.1 venue in December but they're also enjoying the mirth the company are creating over its name. Originally to be called the Last Witch, and then the Jane Wenham, both commemorating the last woman in England to be tried for witchcraft - in 1712 at Hertford Assizes - and later given a royal pardon, the company then ditched this idea for a new name - the Five Bishops, commemorating the first church synod which took place in Hertford in AD 673. May comes along and this too is dropped in favour of the Knights Templar, this following a push from modern day Templars who see Hertford as having a special status in everything Holy Grail - though proof of this appears to be thin on the ground. Apparently taking only 24 hours to consider and decide on this new name, Wetherspoon's appear to have been sold on the Templars' assertion that they are "... close to the people of Hertford and always have been" (news to many residents of the town) and have, perhaps, seen a chance to jump on a current bandwagon, rather than stick with a name that has more proven local worthiness. But what the heck, let's just relax and enjoy the fun. It's only August - so there's plenty of time for loads more name changes yet. The Knights Templar is due to open in mid-December.

Les Middlewood

Ed Says: Wetherspoon's already have a pub called The **Knights Templar** in Chancery Lane, Central London. I understand the building was previously a bank.

LOWER RED LION



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St Albans, AL3 4RX
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in the shadow of St Albans Abbey.
Genuine free house with
real ales and accommodation
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**8 Real Ales and 1 Real Cider
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AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

**Friday 24 Aug - Monday 27 Aug
40 Real Ales, 4 Real Ciders, 1 Real
Perry. Marquee and Barbecue**

Comfortable B&B,
Quiz night Wednesdays
No music or machines

Sunday Roast lunch
Regular beer festivals

Solution to Sudoku in Edition 222

Winner: Dorothy Flude, Potters Bar. Wins a 2007 Good Beer Guide.

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

Bar Billiards – Hertfordshire's Endangered Species

Following on from last edition's article on the threat to darts and the campaign launched to make it more available in our pubs, consider another of our once-loved pub games – bar billiards. In its heyday this game could be found in so many of our best local pubs, tucked away in a small room or in a recess of the bar but now only a handful of Hertfordshire pubs sport a table.

The game shone brightest locally in the 1950s and 1960s when there were local and county leagues and tournaments, but was gradually swept aside in the ensuing forty years by the onslaught of American pool.

So what is bar billiards, where did it come and what is the current state of play?

Bar Billiards is a table game played with cues and by potting balls into 9 holes that carry differing points tariffs. All shots are taken from one end of the table, from a small D shaped area and it is called bar billiards because a wooden bar drops after a time limit (usually up to 17 minutes in England – though 15 minutes in the Channel Islands) preventing any more balls becoming available for use. There are seven white balls and one red which counts for double points. In the leagues there are three skittles or mushrooms placed on the table – two white, one black – the capsizing of which will forfeit a break (white) or an entire score (black). Elsewhere tables with four skittles might be found. The game's current strongest bastion of support can be found in the Channel Islands and in English counties along the Channel, from Kent round as far as Hampshire, then up through Berkshire to Oxfordshire and Northants. Here leagues still exist and it is from Oxfordshire where the current and triple world champion, Kevin Tunstall, hails. The annual British Isles and World Championships are held in Jersey. For those of you who play the game, the world's



highest score, in a competitive match, is 29,000 - scored in just over 17 minutes - try getting anywhere near that! As with so many of our pub games, its history cannot be drilled down to one clear moment of birth but in the early

1930s an Englishman called David Gill came across a game called Russian Billiards being played in Belgium (thought to be called this to make it sound more exotic). He convinced the English manufacturer Jekyll to make a version of the game and soon pubs were queuing to buy them, and other makers were helping to meet the demand. The game swiftly gained popularity – the first league appearing in Oxfordshire in 1936. Today, the game is administered by the All England Bar Billiards Association, and it is worth investigating their website; www.aebba.btinternet.co.uk to find out more. If you are a publican reading this and you've been toying with the idea of installing a table, just sift through the web – there are quite a few companies hiring or selling tables. *Continued/*



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

WELL SUPERVISED

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

AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY BEER FESTIVAL – 24th to 27th AUGUST

'Simply a Proper Pub!'

Alas, there are no leagues remaining in Hertfordshire but the game can still be found in a very small number of Hertfordshire pubs – maybe as few as five - the **Goat** in St Albans, **White Horse** in Hertford and **Blind Fiddler** in Anstey coming to mind. Are there enough players in these pubs and others to put together a fixture list and stop the last throes of the game's silent Hertfordshire demise?

Les Middlewood

Jukebox Jewellery

Where real ale was quaffed at 45rpm, when every time you went into a pub the same record seemed to be playing and where, in the end, you were the one putting it on. In Hertford, you couldn't experience the Bell and Crown, in the 1970s and early 1980s, without having the delicate tones of Slim Whitman and "Rose Marie" accompanies your Mac's AK.

Landlord Alf Pearson's

jukebox was stacked with a welter of late 1950s and early 1960s classics – all original, judging by the scratchy quality. Yet this mattered not a jot. For me "Rose Marie" became the



A 1967 Seeburg Phono-Jet

pub's signatory song. Over town, at the **Black Horse**, it was "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Airplane that soared through the pub's smoky atmosphere. Seemingly played half-hourly and with never a complaint (or maybe a notice), many an Abbot and Eddie was sunk to this classic. In Railway Street, the Warren House had an amazing stand-up juke box, rich with early rock and roll – still intact at the pub's demise in 1980.

Subjective? Probably so. Nostalgia? Well ok, I admit it. A run of songs that needed could, after all, lead to a spate of 78rpm drinking and a swift

departure from the building.

As piped music replaced jukeboxes, the songs often reflected a landlord's personal taste – with little input from customers – by the mid-eighties it was Blues Brothers at the **Lord Haig**, Supertramp at the **Old Barge**, crooners in the **Duncombe Arms**. Today's music is most likely to be heard in some of our town centre pubs and bars where real ale is often an absentee – music played loud to drown your conversation as you down your drink. This is nothing new but there seem to be fewer pubs with good contemporary music – the **Black Horse** an exception, still sporting a juke-box bursting with recent hits as well as classics from the last 40 years (amongst them, by the way, you'll still find White Rabbit – keeping the tradition alive) and let's face it, the best real ale pubs often have no music at all – places for quiet contemplation or conversation, banter and debate.

There may be fewer jukeboxes in our real ale pubs these days – and they may be running CDs – but on the night, when the music's all right, the beer flows just as well as ever. And in true Freemanesque, stay bright!

Les Middlewood

THE BLACK HORSE

29-31 West Street, Hertford
01992 583630

Good Beer Guide 2007 - We're In It!
Cask Marque Accredited
Serving Greene King Ales,
Guest Beers and Fine Wines
Home Made Meals and Soups,
Sandwiches & Toasted Baguettes
Daily "Specials" and Desserts

Lunches 12-1:45 Monday & Wednesday - Saturday
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Tony & Linda are CAMRA members

Watford & District's Visit to Potbelly Brewery

On Friday 6th July I was one of sixteen members of Watford & District branch who made a (fraught) journey up the M1 to Northamptonshire to visit Potbelly Brewery in Kettering. Potbelly's Beijing Black had been named Beer of the Festival at last year's Watford Beer Festival and we were on our customary trip to present the certificate.

Potbelly is a modern 10-barrel (360 gallon-a-time) brewery whose stainless steel vessels are comfortably housed in a smaller space than you might imagine. Toni set the brewery up with his business partner Glenn Morris in 2005. They already owned a leather goods factory next door, which is still operating, but were looking to diversify and, as Toni explained, both liked their beer and decided to move into micro-brewing. Toni took one of the well regarded Brewlab courses in Sunderland and, with no other experience under his belt, began brewing for Potbelly. Since then the brewery has won many awards at CAMRA beer festivals across the country, and also from the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), who named *Beijing Black* their Supreme Champion beer at the National Brewing Awards in 2006. Not bad for a brewer with one year's experience of commercial brewing.

The main responsibility for brewing has now fallen to Ben Bullcock while Toni arranges Potbelly's move to a larger site. Ben gave us a detailed explanation of Potbelly's brewing process while we helped ourselves to fish & chips washed down with pints of Potbelly's excellent beers. Potbelly's equipment is capable of producing the equivalent of 40 firkin (9-gallon) casks of ale in a single brew; I asked how the beer was sold, since most pubs are now owned by companies that tie their landlords and restrict micro-breweries' access to the market. The brewery has access to some local free-houses, including **Sawyer's** in Kettering, but many casks are sold through the SIBA direct

delivery scheme, which allows breweries that are members of SIBA to sell their beers directly to pubs owned by participating companies; most notably Enterprise Inns. Potbelly supply pubs over a very wide area, even ones in the South East, and avoid having to deliver over this area personally by arranging beer swaps with other breweries, with each brewery then acting as the other's distributor.



Toni Hooper and Ben Bullcock accept Beijing Black's Beer of the Festival award from branch chair Andrew Vaughan.

Toni is happy to supply other breweries' beers to pubs as he believes that pubs that sell a changing range of small breweries' beers increase levels of interest in cask beer and are good for his business. He's also aware that the swap system means that as he sells one brewery's beer his beer is being sold elsewhere.

We thanked the brewery staff for their hospitality and went on our way, with the intention of visiting pubs within and

around Kettering. Examination of the **Good Beer Guide** revealed that, disappointingly, most of the local pubs listed were closed that Friday afternoon. One Good Beer Guide-listed pub in Kettering was open, however; The **Alexandra Arms**, home of Nobby's Brewery. Paul 'Nobby' Mulliner brews in the cellar of the pub, but has recently taken over the running of the **Ward Arms** in Guilsborough, and the plan is to install a larger brewery there. Until then the Alexandra Arms serves as the brewery tap, but also carries a range of guest beers from other micro-breweries. It's an unusual pub that looks rather modern in design, as if it has been rebuilt or converted from a house. The lounge area inside is certainly as cosy as someone's living room, but there can't be too many people who have pump clips decorating their ceiling.

The lack of open pubs in the Kettering area meant that we had to stop off in Northampton on the way back, where we visited the **Romany**, a roadhouse-style pub with two large bars and a very good selection of real ales. The pub struck me as being very similar to **Our Mutual Friend** in Stevenage in that it seemed an unlikely venue for such a range of beers. Such pubs provide evidence that real ale has the potential to be a success anywhere, so long as there's commitment on the part of the publican.

Andrew Vaughan

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 entry at all times

See back page for further details.

See also our Beer Festival Website:

www.stalbinsbeerfestival.com

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Albury: The **Catherine Wheel**, which was completely destroyed by fire, has been rebuilt and is due to reopen in August.

Aston End: The **Crown's** freehold is for sale (c £460, 000).

Bridens Camp: We have been informed that the new licensees welcomed to the **Crown & Sceptre** in the last edition have actually been at the pub one year.

Chandler's Cross: A planning application has been made asking for permission to extend the **Clarendon Arms** and its associated stable building. Planned alterations include an extension to the north-facing rear and an extension to the entrance side facing Redhall Lane. Major landscaping is also planned around the pub, which is currently closed.

East Barnet: The **Cat and Lantern** closed in June, and its future is unknown.

Elstree: The **Waggon & Horses**, Medburn, closed for seven weeks through April and May, has reopened.

Cromer Hyde: The **Crooked Chimney** (between Wheathampstead and Welwyn Garden City) has a new manager; Mike from the **White Horse** in Shenley. Beers on sale are *Adnams Bitter* and *Wells Bombardier*. It appears that drinkers are still discouraged from standing at the bar.

Harpenden: The **Amble Inn**, formerly the **Dolphin**, opened on Friday 29th June. The place has had a refreshing makeover and the new landlord, Pete, who has bought the lease on the pub, also runs the **Hare & Hounds** in St Albans. He wants a complete change from the Dolphin days (formerly no real ale and a bouncy castle in the beer garden, etc.) hence the change of name. The décor is all new, some of which probably wouldn't appeal to pub traditionalists - there are candles on the tables and the inevitable couch that seems to be in vogue these days. Our correspondent thinks it looks and feels much better from the days of old, and given its re-opening date there is no lingering smell of cigarette smoke. Two beers are on offer; *Timothy Taylor's Landlord* and *Black Sheep bitter*. The plan is to add another if sales are good. We have a report that the **George** is selling real ale again.

Hertford: After a period of having no hot food, homemade pies are now available at the **Old Cross Tavern** to sit alongside the filled rolls. The

Bridge House at Hertford North Station has adopted an over-21s only policy - strange for an out-of-town-centre pub. Sainsbury's have held a public exhibition of proposals to develop a supermarket on land recently purchased from McMullens in Hartham Lane - the land including the landmark listed Victorian building and the former Unicorn pub, which has been boarded up since 1985. A planning application is likely to follow later this year.

Hitchin: The **Well** is closed, again. The **Barleycorn** is NOT being sold... allegedly (!).

Hoddesdon: The **Bull** is selling Fuller's *London Pride*. The **Bell** reportedly is closed.

Kings Langley: The **Young Pretender** has also had a major facelift and reopened in June.

Letty Green: The **Cowper Arms** is closed for refurbishment.

Maple Cross: The **Cross** has its lease up for sale.

Piccotts End: The **Marchmont Arms** reopened on 12 May after a major refurbishment. It is now billing itself as a country dining establishment. You can read all about it on www.themarchmontarms.co.uk Greene King *Old Speckled Hen*, Taylor's *Landlord* and the Austrian *Edelweiss Weissbier* available.

Radlett: **Brookes Bar** only sells real ale at the weekend (that's not every weekend by the way).

Shenley: Mike left the **White Horse** to take over the **Crooked Chimney** at Cromer Hyde in May; we wish him all the best in his new venture. We also welcome Gareth who took over first week of June and previously ran the **Red Lion** at Digswell.

St Albans: It is reported that the **Rats Castle** (nearest pub to CAMERA HQ) which is owned by ScotCo and has seen better days, will be having a refurb. and real ale installed - watch this space. The **Beehive** has been bought from S&N by the existing licensee so is now free of tie. It has had a refurbishment, which has brightened it up considerably. *Courage Best*, *Directors* and *Adnams* were on offer. We hope that the beer range will now become more varied and extensive. We are informed that the sale of the **White Hart Hotel** fell through last month so the previous manager is acting as holding manager for a couple of months. It is reported that the **Blacksmiths Arms** is selling real ale again - further information required.

Stanborough: We have been contacted by a large number of people about the change of the **Bull** into a restaurant called the **East**. The **Plough** at Elstree

DOWN YOUR WAY

was also converted by the Thai/Chinese eatery chain several years ago. The good news is that they do still have a separate drinking area, and sell real ale. The East in Stanborough does sell real ale, *Greene King IPA*, but the pump is not labelled and not in a prominent position on the bar, so make sure you ask for the real stuff on your visit. The Bull was famous for winning a court case against Younger's for a TV advertisement, which stated that people would not want to use the pub because it did not serve *Younger's Tartan Bitter*. My view is it should have been the other way round.

Stanstead Abbots: Maltsters French and Jupp have completed a £1M renovation of their Victorian kiln and carried out other necessary maintenance work to ensure the longevity of their historic building.

Stevenage: The **Old Red Lion** at Shephall Green, has been re-branded by Greene King as a member of the "Giant" pub/restaurant chain but the service remains unchanged.

Watford: The **Hare** in Leavesden has been demolished. The pub had lain empty for some time and had been the subject of several planning applications. The owners, MacNeil Limited, demolished the detached building despite the fact that it was on Watford Council's local list. Mention was made of this in the council development committee's agenda, and MacNeil Limited had their knuckles rapped, but consent was given for the building of an old peoples' home anyway. On a separate occasion the council development committee refused consent for demolition of the **Robert Peel** because of its historical importance to Watford (it was the first purpose-built police station in the town) and the fact that it is in a conservation area. It is not known whether the owners, Bannister Properties, will appeal. It seems unlikely, however, that the building will reopen as a pub.

Watton-at-Stone: The **Waggon and Horses** remains closed.

Wheathampstead: The curse of POV struck the **Bull** (subject of a dispute over signage and removal of the pictorial pub sign) when it flooded during extreme weather over the May bank holiday. Our intrepid local contact reports that there was no real ale on sale when he

Continued over

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visited. The *London Pride* was keg, served at about 3 degrees centigrade, and was fobbing nicely. Upon asking why no real ale was available he was informed that Mitchells & Butlers do not have a national policy and it is at the local publican/area manager's discretion. As it appears the pictorial pub sign is now to be replaced and at least some of the offensive signage has been removed (see page 21). The next campaign should be to get the beer reinstated. Also in the village the **Swan** has been taken over by Steve Pascal who also runs the **Nelson** in Marford Road. Steve will install a manager and chef in the Swan and intends to promote the food trade. The Nelson, by the way, is owned by Bob Andrews of the **Cross Keys** in Gustard Wood. Hopefully this explanation removes any confusion previously caused.

BRANCH DIARY

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Fri 17 Aug: Reopening of **Catherine Wheel**, Albury TBC.

Fri 24 Aug: Branch Meal - **Rising Sun**, Halls Green. Book your own table.

Wed 29 Aug: Branch Crawl, Ickleford

Sat 8 Sept: Branch Minibus Ramble - Walkern

Wed 12 Sept: Branch Crawl from 8pm. **Royston Sports Club – Jockey - Coach & Horses -Old Post Office.**

Fri 14 Sep: Branch Trip - **St Ives Beer Festival**

Sat 15 Sept: Young Members Minibus Ramble - South of Hitchin. **See page 10.**

Tue 18 Sept: **Letchworth Beer Festival** Set up Day - volunteers wanted, contact branch contact.

Thu -Sat 20 -22 Sept: **Letchworth Beer Festival.** **See page 9.**

Wed 26 Sept: Branch Meeting - **Crown Buntingford**, 8pm.

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

Website: www.camranorthherts.org.uk

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Tue 14 Aug: Branch Meeting - **White Horse**, Hertford

Fri 7 Sept: **Beer Festival Publicity Crawl** London. Meet at **Market Porter** 6.00pm

Tue 11 Sept: Branch Meeting - **Green Man**, Sandridge 8pm

Sat 15 Sept: **Beer Festival Publicity Crawl** – Harpenden. Meet at **Cross Keys**, 6.00pm

Sat 22 Sept: **Beer Festival Publicity Crawl** - St Albans. Meet at **Farmers Boy**, 6.00pm

Wed 26 - Sat 29 Sept: **St Albans Beer Festival**, plus **Nine Below Zero** (Sat), Alban Arena. **See back page.**

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

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Fri 10 Aug: **Great British Beer Festival:** Meet at membership stand at 6pm and every hour thereafter.

Wed 15 Aug: Croxley Green Social - **Coach & Horses**, 8.30pm; **Artichoke**, 9.15pm; **Sportsman**, 10pm.

Thu 23 Aug: Branch Meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Sat 25 Aug: Games Night at the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Heronsgate. Contact branch for details.

Wed 29 Aug: Social at **Hoopers**, Ivanhoe Road, Camberwell, from 6.30pm.

Thu 6 Sept: Abbot's Langley Social: **Boys Home**, 8.30pm; **Compasses**, 9.30pm.

Sat 15 Sept: Herts Pub of the Year Award: **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, from 7pm.

Tue 18 Sept: **Southern Cross** Real Ale Evening, Langley Road, Watford. Contact John Ross on 01923 256033.

Thu 20 Sept: Branch Meeting at the **Estcourt Arms**, St. John's Road, Watford, 8.15pm. All members welcome.

Wed 26 Sept: **St. Albans Beer Festival:** Meet at CAMRA books stand at 7pm and every hour thereafter.

Watford & District Contact: Andrew Vaughan.
Phone: 01923 230104. **Mobile:** 07854 988152.
Email: watfordcamra@googlemail.com
Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

Great Ashby, a New Town Story

Have you ever been to Great Ashby? Do you know where it is?

Some of the residents paint a picture of a small village or hamlet in rural Hertfordshire with a village green and a duck pond outside the pub.

In reality, however, it's a new housing development of roughly 2800 homes and growing, attached at both ends to Stevenage town.

The punchline being of course; no village green, no ducks and **NO PUB!**

So what happened there? Why no pub?

The village of Graveley, in the same parish, has 200 homes and 3 pubs (technically). All the other neighbourhoods in Stevenage have pubs.

Well there was a plot of land and money set aside by the developers for the building of a pub, but apparently no brewery would take the lease.

Now the planning requirement has expired and the land will now be used for more houses.

Great Ashby does however have a community centre, which, as of the 3rd May 2007, is being run by the residents of Great Ashby.

In the next year or so, when the number of homes reaches a further trigger value, more money will be released from the builders to the council. The plan is for an extension to the community centre, which the centre management association would like to use as a bar/club for the area.

This will bring valuable funding for the centre and a much needed social venue for the residents.

This hasn't been without its own issues. North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), the centre is within the NHDC boundary along with two thirds of Great Ashby, has added restrictions to the 42-year lease regarding its use, specifically as a licensed premises.

But the management association are resolute and hope, one day, to be selling real ale in Great Ashby.

Great Ashby aside, with the 23,900 new homes per year until 2010 being built in East of England as part of the East of England Regional Assembly's plan, much of this will end up in Hertfordshire. We may expect to see more of these new expansions added to existing towns and villages, and they will quite probably end up in a similar situation.

We can only hope that this will become an example of what not to do.



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).

.....
Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

.....
P'tner Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

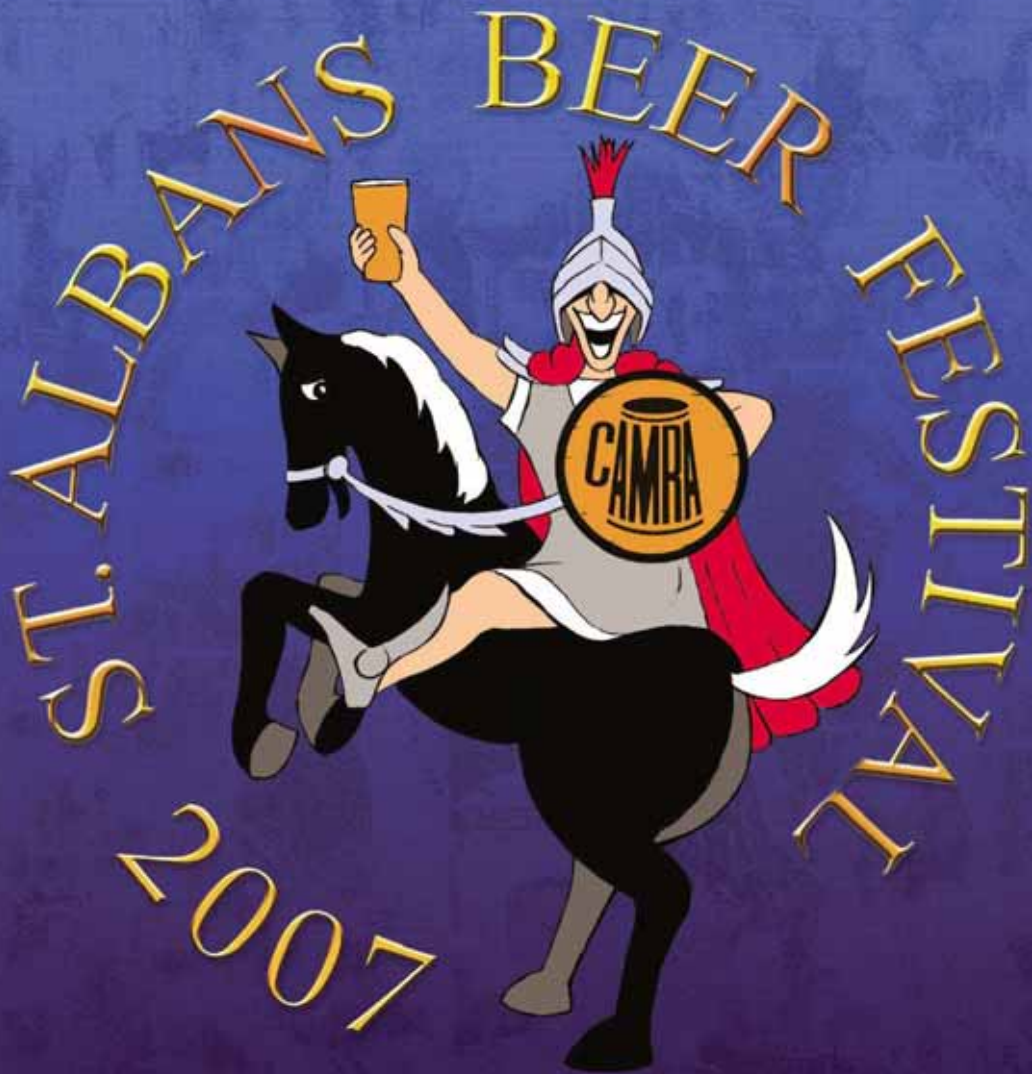
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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

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

Applications will be processed within 21 days



26th- 29th September

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Admission prices: Wed £2.50. Thu-Sat before 4.00 pm £2.00. after 4.00 pm £2.50 (Fri. £3.00, Sat £4.00)

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