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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for every discerning drinker

February/March 2008

Circulation 7500

No. 227

Silver Award for Champion Herts Beer

Hertford's Red Squirrel beer announced as Silver Award winner of CAMRA East Anglia Region.

See page 10



CAMRA Raises the Profile of Local Hertfordshire Pubs

Herts branches arrange visits and events in supporting the traditional local pubs. *See pages 16, 18 and 20*



Plus Inside:

- Is the health lobby picking on beer?
 - North Herts Beer Rambles
 - Brewers' concern on prices
 - Latest Hertfordshire pub news
- ...and a lot more!!**

Just what is Cask- Conditioned Beer?

Red Squirrel Brewer Gary Hayward gives the concise low-down.

See pages 10 and 11



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The Health Lobby Turns its Attention to Beer

By Steve Bury

I have warned our readers in previous editions of this newsletter that once the smoking ban was in place, those who know how we should all be leading our lives even better than we do ourselves, would then move onto an anti-alcohol campaign.

The Rumour

Viewing the press in November and December on the run up to the Christmas festivities it appears I have been proven right. Sensationalist articles about young binge drinkers being allowed to get themselves in a comatose state in the abundance of 24-hour boozers. Upon leaving these undisclosed venues they then amazingly wake up and turn to violence knocking lumps out of either each other or innocent passers-by. Then they become a burden on the emergency services at the cost of billions of pounds to the National Health Service either on the same night or when the inevitable happens and their health fails. The tirade continued with a headline in the Telegraph on New Year's Eve "Hospitals admit 500 binge drinkers each day" claiming that one in twenty hospital admissions is drink related. Liverpool is claimed to be the worst hit with 4.7% of admissions due to alcohol; when I went to school 5% was one in twenty, so where the first statement comes from I do not know. It was also claimed that 13 million Britons are drinking too much.

The Truth

The truth of course is very different; less than 3% of the UK's licensed premises have 24-hour drinking licenses and of these 66% are hotels and 18% supermarkets. Fewer than 1% of pubs, clubs and nightclubs possess a 24-hour license.

It is press coverage like this that has helped cause the overreaction by District Councils and the misinterpretation of the Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs). The press (who let's face it have a terrible name for binge drinking themselves) have again done their utmost to scare and scandalise.

The Lobby

A new organisation called the AHA Alcohol Health Alliance - has been formed, which is made up of twenty-four organisations (including Royal College of Physicians and British Liver Trust) and who are lobbying for restrictions on drinking. Their Chair, Professor Ian Gilmore, President of the Royal College of Physicians, has been spurred on by the recent "Smoking Ban".

The Proposal

The AHA has called for a 10% increase in alcohol taxation which they argue would lead to a cut in alcohol related deaths by 10-30%. It is also calling for restrictions on alcohol advertising before 9pm and in cinemas when films do not have an 18 rating. In Parliament there is an EDM (Early Day Motion) which now has 47 signatures placed before it by Liberal Democrat MP Bob Russell calling for legislation to enforce warnings on alcoholic drinks - giving advice on alcohol intake like those already put on cigarette packets. This is supported by the AHA, Methodist Church and The Salvation Army. The EDM also states that the drinks industry should take more responsibility for harm caused by alcohol, by contributing to the costs of the prevention and treatment of problem drinking.

Let's Face it

An increase in alcohol taxation would not solve any problems and is badly thought out.

Key points:

- Despite excise duty on beer increasing by 26.7% over the past 10 years the total tax raised as a result has increased by only 14%.
- Beer has been disadvantaged compared to other alcoholic drinks.
- Tax policy is driving drinkers away from low alcohol products, such as beer, to high alcohol products such as spirits.
- Beer sold in the off trade has become dramatically cheaper, while beer sold in the on trade has become more expensive.

The Competition Commission has just rejected complaints and supermarkets will still be able to sell at rock bottom (sometimes discounted below cost) prices. In its view alcohol price promotions are good for competition.

As informed readers know binge drinkers start their evening at home with these cheap super strength lagers, alcopops and spirits, so a rise in tax will just mean they drink a bit more at home before leaving to cause problems in the High Street. The idea of blanket tax increases and bans does nothing to



THE BITTER END

identify the problem and will affect the 98%-plus social drinkers, whilst doing nothing to control the irresponsible.

More misinformation

A lot of the information referred to is inaccurate and scare mongering. One of the doctors on the team that advised the Government on safe alcohol consumption limits has admitted that the figures were "plucked out of the air".

It now appears that we should have been more supportive of the smokers' rights campaign; was it not someone called Adolf who caused immense problems in the 30's and 40's when he wasn't stopped in the beginning.

The trade debate

Things are not looking good in the trade as the "Five Reasons Beer Sales have Slumped" article later in this newsletter shows, and we are now in the slackest period for the licensed trade, which is the months after Christmas. Overall, last year the general licensed trade turnover was 10% down and beer sales, which is what CAMRA and I hope our readership is most interested in, have not fared well. The article predicting an upward trend in real ale sales "Real Ale Revival as Market Heads for Growth" in the last newsletter is well researched and optimistic, but the craft brewers are being squeezed by the rise in costs of materials (see article page 6).

Boozenight

On Thursday 13th December BBC2's *Newsnight* programme was re-titled *Boozenight* and debated many of the issues that have been shaping our perception of the nation's relationship with alcohol. Those taking part were Ben Bradshaw,

Minister for Health, Mark Hastings of the British Beer and Pubs Association, Prof Gray-Smith

Laing, Consultant at Medway Hospital, and Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Cheshire. The questions put to the panel were:-

IS BOOZE TOO CHEAP? In the first week of December during a Commons debate there were calls for action against supermarkets selling alcohol below cost price. But it's not only supermarkets. Small shops are rife with discounts and multi-buy promotions as well, and it's not unusual to find bottles of alcohol selling for less

than a bottle of water. So, should this practice be banned? Or should booze be cheap and accessible to all? Should there be a significant increase in how much alcohol is taxed?

SHOULD WE CHANGE THE LAW? Has the government got it right with drinking legislation? Consider three areas: 24-hour licensing, which is now just over two years old. Has this brought us any closer to the drinking culture of our continental cousins, or merely aggravated the already high incidence of binge drinking and anti-social behaviour? Consider also whether the minimum drinking age is still appropriate. In an effort to tackle teenage drinking, should the age be raised from 18 to 21, perhaps? Or should it be lowered? And what of advertising? Should there be a threshold of, say, 9pm before we see alcohol being advertised on TV, or should it go the way of tobacco and be banned entirely?

SHOULD THE NHS PAY? Doctors have warned of an alarming rise in the number of patients they are seeing with alcohol-related diseases. We spend more on treating drug-related illness than for alcohol, but the NHS nevertheless spends a huge amount of money in this area. Is it time to cut

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back or do we need to spend more? Should the NHS be paying to treat people with alcohol-related conditions at all? Should the drinks industry play a part in this treatment? And does a patient in need of a liver transplant because of alcohol abuse deserve to get one?

THE DEBATE I was concerned that what we're going to get was more of the uninformed hype that the press had been touting, but was relieved by opinions of all those who took part.

The Chief Constable was happy to say that pubs were highly regulated and were not the problem; Mark Hastings highlighted the 5% decline in alcohol sales, which was part of a 25% decline since the beginning of the 20th century. It was also pointed out that sclerosis of the liver for example was much more prevalent in southern Europe, and Portugal in particular.

It was also agreed that although a 10% rise in alcohol duty would reduce sales it would not reduce alcohol related illness or the burden on the NHS. Health Minister Ben Bradshaw was against any rise in taxation and recognised that there was a cultural problem and that education was needed. All parties agreed that the highly discounted take away booze was a serious problem and that binge drinkers were starting at home and also buying takeaways, as part of their evenings out, and consuming them on the streets. This is probably where part of the DPP problem is coming from. Ben Bradshaw was also against raising the drinking age to 21. He said we should not emulate America and would also find ourselves out of step with the rest of Europe. As for advertising alcohol, it was felt that it should not feature at sporting events such as sponsorship on Football shirts, and a watershed or even a total ban on TV and cinema advertising would be a good idea.

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS Also in December Labour MP John Grogan labelled Terry Leahy, the chief executive of Tesco, "the godfather of binge drinking" during an early day motion debate brought by himself and Eric Illsley MP. The motion was set to highlight "the health consequences of the availability of cheap alcohol". Both MPs are supporters of the pub trade, and wanted the imbalances of the loss leader supermarket sales curbed.

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McMullen's Report – December 2007

Sales of "McMullen's Cask Ale", McMullen's new permanent cask ale continue to be encouraging and generally Mac's detect an upturn in cask beer's share of the market although, along with other pub owners, a downturn in overall alcohol sales. It is still too early to analyse the effect that the non-smoking ban may have had.

McMullen's continue to actively seek new pub acquisitions – we await announcements. Their pub refurbishment programme continues, the latest being at the **Crocodile** in Cheshunt. The **Chieftain** in Welwyn Garden City has been closed and is likely to be demolished – hopefully to be replaced by a smaller pub as part of a housing development. Mac's have effectively pulled out of the Free Trade – unless a pub or club can guarantee to take 20 kils a year, McMullen's will not be dealing. And they will not accept callers aiming to pick up from the brewery. With only 30 current sizeable free trade outlets – a figure which will dwindle to around 20 following this decision – Mac's do not see the Free Trade as a viable way to increase business. So, if you want to taste Mac's beers, come to Hertfordshire! (Or to any of their pubs in North London, Essex – all sell cask-conditioned ale – as do all of the Baroosh outlets). But they are still keen to deal with CAMRA beer festival organisers – so don't hold back there, good people. The new *Winter Ale* (ABV 4.5%) is available to McMullen pubs until February.

An alternative way of sampling Mac's cask beers is through their website where the company has launched 18 and 36 pint beer boxes which can be purchased and delivered to any door in mainland Britain. That's *AK*, *Country Bitter*, *Cask Ale* or *Winter Ale*. Look out for discounts as they try to establish this avenue of sale. Check them out at:

www.mcmullens.co.uk.



The 180th year celebrations have been low key – all tenants and managers were invited to a dinner and dance and a day at the races. There was little made of this anniversary in the pubs or in the press but South Hertfordshire Branch's 35th anniversary – held at the **Farriers Arms** in St Albans – was supported and subsidised by McMullens and attended by Tenanted Operations Manager, Graham Rollings. Nearly all of the previous Mac's BLOs (Brewery Liaison Officers) also attended – the collective noun being a BLOAK (but don't ask to see the photos).

Les Middlewood - McMullen's Brewery Liaison Officer

Spiralling Material Prices Causes Concern in Brewing Industry

Recent press reports have stated that there will be a 40% increase in the price of beer due to poor yields of malt and hops in the 2007 harvest.

The truth is that malt prices have increased between 18 and 40% on last year, and hops have increased by a massive 300%.

What national reports do not tell you is that material prices only constitute between 10 and 15 percent of cost therefore the cost rises in the price of beer should only be 5% maximum. That equates to about 15-20 pence per pint at the bar.

Recent months have been hard in the brewing trade due to the perceived financial crunch. Times ahead will be hard particularly for the small local brewers who do not have tied houses.

There has also been evidence of large companies bullying small brewers into maintaining contract prices despite the massive raw material price increases.

Gary Hayward, the proprietor of the Red Squirrel Brewery in Hertford, believes that price increases are due to crop failure because of the poor summer harvest. Crop failure in English law is an "Act of God". Act of God in English law is "force majeure" – a French term literally translated as "greater force". This clause is included in contracts to remove liability for natural and unavoidable

catastrophes that interrupt the expected course of events and restrict participants from fulfilling obligations.

Gary believes that the future is going to be difficult and a few small breweries may not succeed.

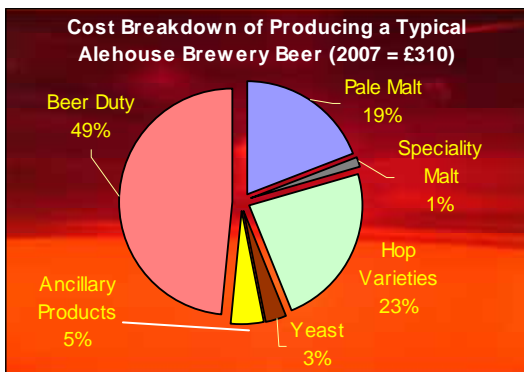
Gary stated that he hopes that by winning the Stouts and Porter category for CAMRA East Anglia 2007, with Red Squirrel *London Porter* (5%), and managing to take silver medal with such a strong speciality beer in the Champion beer of East Anglia, is an achievement that will help with the business over the next few months.

Material Costs Worry Alehouse Brewer

Since I began brewing 22 months ago, duty has increased by 40p per hectolitre or 5.8%. Following a poor harvest last year, the loss of last year's "extra" stock of hops in a warehouse fire in the US 9 months ago, the destruction of vast areas of hop vines in the US (the world's biggest

increased by £4.72 which equals 6.94p per usable pint.

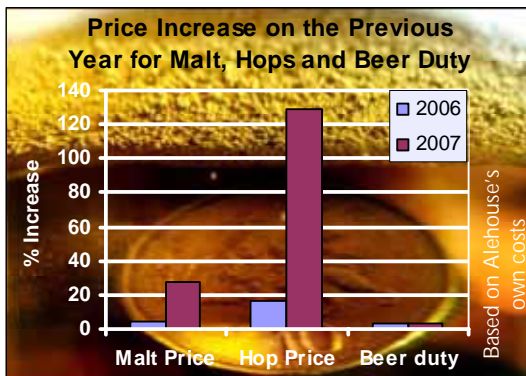
Once that's been sold to the pub and a normal operating gross profit of 60% plus VAT @ 17.5% is added, that's an increase at the pump of 20.39p!!



Prepare yourself for a glut of brewery closures over the next 12 months.

Kevin Yelland - Alehouse Brewery, St Albans

Ed says: Never has there been a time when regional and micro brewers need a tax reduction more. It is the only way to offset Gary and especially Kevin's gloomy predictions. I will just add that CAMRA will be actively canvassing the Chancellor on this issue prior to the next budget. Members should send duty cut cards to their MP.



producer) to grow biofuel crops, then a catastrophic malt & hop harvest this year - things look bleak. Oh, and craft brewing is growing across the globe. Maltsters and hop merchants predict that there will not be enough raw materials to meet this year's demand.

The big global brewers have already hoovered up vast quantities of ingredients, including most of the high alpha-acid hops preferred by craft brewers. What's left therefore is extremely highly priced.

So now as we pass into the new season's crops: Malt has increased by £135 per tonne or 23%, hops have increased by up to £10.20 per kg or 262%. The cost of production per firkin has

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North Minibus Rambles – Datchworth and Watton at Stone

The first pub on November's minibus trip was the **Chequers** at Bragbury End (below), on the southern edge of Stevenage, but according to the information I hold (circa 1962), it is in the parish of Datchworth. Which means that later the

Boundaries Commission moved it into Stevenage?

However, I digress, interesting though it is.

There was a

house on this site in 1766 and a pub from at least 1806, kept by a Robert Maynard. The only beer available was Wells & Young's *Bombardier*, which was good.

We then moved to the second pub of the evening, which is the **Three Horseshoes** at Hooks Cross (below), which is or was in Datchworth as well. I



remember when this pub was only 'inches' away from the edge of the carriageway and looking very dilapidated. The pub was demolished in the 1980s and replaced by the

new one in its present position. There was a house on the site in 1766 converted to a pub from 1806 owned first by William Handley and then by W. & J. Lucas of Hitchin before its present owner McMullen. On offer were McMullen *Country* and *Cask Ale*. I tried the Cask Ale and it was very good. Watton at Stone, which before the by-pass was a nightmare to go through in both morning and evening rush hours, has another claim to fame. The railway station, closed by Doctor Beeching, was reopened again sometime in the 1980's. However, it was closed again later for a while; can any reader inform us when and why?

Our first visit was the **Waggon & Horses**, which stands at the northern end at the junction with the

road to Walkern – right. Formerly known as the Red Lion in 1732, before being conveyed to John Irons of Watton, who

four years earlier had been before the justices for keeping a disorderly alehouse. The sign of the Waggon & Horses was not mentioned until 1760 when at that time a farm of some thirty-five acres was attached. The beers on offer were Greene King *IPA*, Marston's *Pedigree* and Brains *SA*, the last of which was very nice indeed.

Further south and on the other side of the road stands the **George & Dragon** (below). There appears to have been a licence for this pub going back to 1619 and was owned by one Edmund Ind, a brewer from

Romford and the same building is still on site.

The beers on offer were Greene King *IPA*, *Abbot* and Ridley's *Old Bob* and again the latter was very good and warming on an autumn evening.

The last pub of the evening and further south still was the **Bull**. The earliest mention of this pub was in 1704 when Philip Boteler lord of the manor of Watton Woodhall mortgaged it. The pub rumbled on until one night in early February 1990 (if my memory serves me well – an apt saying; do you know the song?), and following a North Herts branch meeting, which saved the branch from closure, the pub burnt down, in fact it was 'gutted', and was eventually rebuilt. The beer selection on our trip was *Otter Ale*, Greene King *IPA* and Shepherd Neame *Spitfire* and all the beers were good.

Eventually, it was time to leave and the bands of happy travellers climbed back on the mini bus and were taken home until next time.



Brian Mason

White Park - Bedfordshire's new Brewer

White Park Brewery is a new micro brewery opened in October 2007 and is based in Cranfield, a few miles south-west of Bedford.

White Park is named after a rare breed of cattle, a small herd of which is maintained locally by the brewery owner, Alan Kelly, and gets to eat the spent malt. The first beer, *First Flight Bedfordshire Ale* (3.7%), has appeared as a guest in a few local pubs as well as the CAMRA Milton Keynes Beer Festival

(The Concrete Pint) in late October – sadly just too late for our CAMRA Bedford festival although we helped publicise the new enterprise at our event. Alan has promised a couple more beers in the near future, including a porter.

For further information on White Park, visit:
www.whiteparkbrewery.co.uk



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Champion Beer of East Anglia

CAMRA East Anglia region, comprising of; Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, have announced their Champion Beer for 2007:

Overall Champion: Adnams *Bitter*

Silver Award: Red Squirrel *London Porter*

Bronze Award: Greene King *XX Mild*

Commended Finalist: Elgood *Black Dog Mild*

Champion Gold Ale: Oakham *JHB*

Champion Strong Ale: Milton *Cyclops*

Congratulations to Gary

Haywood

(pictured on left collecting his award) and his Hertford-based Red Squirrel brewery who have scooped



silver medal in the Champion Beer of East Anglia competition for their London Porter. The beer had already been elected Champion in the Dark Beer category of the same competition – excellent to see a Hertfordshire brewery being recognised at this level of competition.

What is Cask-Conditioned Beer?

Why does beer or lager have to be conditioned to get the best results?

When making beer the action of the yeast on the fermentable sugars in the brew produces alcohol, and esters (aromatic organic compounds), and a lot of carbon dioxide gas.

Yeast ferments the complex sugars in beer in a very strict order starting with the simples and finishing with the most complex.

Towards the end of the brewing process the yeast will release waste product into the beer. Those by-products have some distinctive tastes and smells for example butterscotch, apple, sulphury smell, phenolic (medicinal smell).

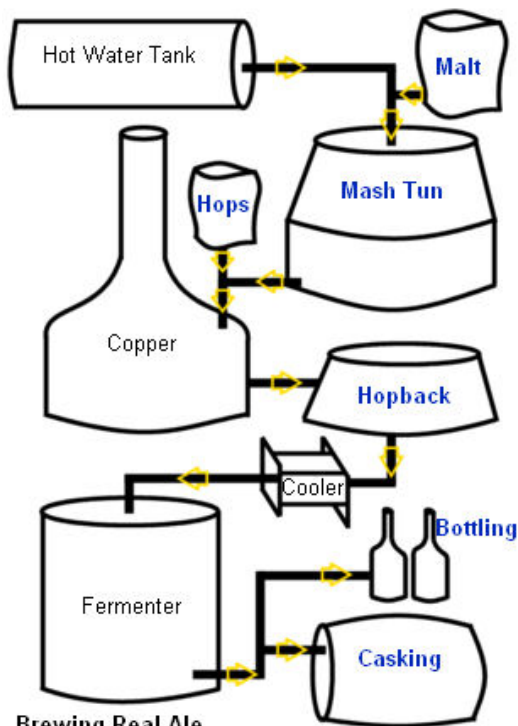
The yeast over a period of time will reassimilate the complex molecules and “crack” them into simple compounds.

A beverage that has not been conditioned properly is called a “green” beer. That description probably comes from the fact that English ales, particularly strong ones have a “green apple” smell and taste.

Sometimes that taste can be confused, as being the beer is more bitter than usual. But if you smell the empty glass you will get a green apple smell in the first few seconds. The green apple taste can be desirable in beer, but in excess it is called “astringent”, sharp or dry bitter.

I personally find that taste dominant in strong beers, for example Fuller’s *ESB*.

The fact is that all beers need conditioning; weak beers need 2-3 weeks strong beers 8-12 weeks.



Brewing Real Ale

Source: Wikipedia

What is cask conditioning?

After fermentation the green beer has to be chilled so that 90% of the suspended yeast falls to the bottom, the residual suspended yeast will protect the beer from bacterial infection and oxidation. However conditioning is a very slow process. Most of the yeast can be “cropped” from the bottom of the fermentation tank when it is no longer required. The residual yeast suspended in the ale is then placed in a cask with a measured amount of sugar. The cask is sealed with bungs. The residual yeast will use the sugar to make a small amount of carbon dioxide; in a sealed cask the gas dissolves in the beer. The yeast also uses the energy from the residual sugar to condition the “green” beer by

Beer News and Features

breaking down excessive or undesirable taste compounds.

The manufacture of carbon dioxide and the breaking down of esters, which happens with the action of yeast in the cask, is called "cask conditioning". If the yeast is not given enough time to ferment the residual sugars into carbon dioxide or break down the undesirable tastes or aromas it is called "unconditioned" or green.

In the case of keg beer or lager the yeast is filtered out of the beer after a few days. Whatever tastes and aromas are in the beer at the time of filtration will remain in the beer because the yeast is not in contact with the beer no further conditioning will take place.

The yeast in cask-conditioned ales protects the beer from oxidation, so if it is removed the beer has to be protected by putting in a keg with a blanket of carbon dioxide. Hence keg beers have to be dispensed using carbon dioxide gas.

The biggest fault with all beers and lagers is that they are not given enough time for the yeast to condition the beer. That is true for all beers all lagers cask, keg, bottled. The main reason is: - Time is money. A lot of landlords keep cask-conditioned beers in the cellar for up to eight weeks before serving so the yeast has enough time to condition the beer. It is not always possible in some pubs to store beer due to space.

I personally think if you buy a beer from a brewery, it should be ready to drink, almost straight away.

So what should you look for in properly conditioned cask beer?

The beer should not be flat. Swirling the beer in a glass should produce bubbles around the top. There should be no dominant taste or smell of butterscotch, unripe apples, sulphur, yeast, sugary sweet, or phenolic taste (medicinal). The beer should not be astringent (bitterness like eating an unripe apple) the beer should be smooth balanced and rounded. The beer quality should be consistent in taste, always, and not up and down with each cask.

My own personal experience is 60-70% of cask-conditioned beers are not fully conditioned; some of them are very famous beers that have won major awards. A lot of keg lagers are barely conditioned before being processed. The taste has been hidden by being served very cold and very gassy.

FACT: Anything below 5 degree centigrade cannot be tasted properly due to the numbing of the taste buds in the mouth. **FACT:** Gassy beer creates mouth feel not taste.

With recent reports of beer drinking being only 30% of the level it was 50 years ago perhaps that is the quality that should be addressed cask conditioned beer should be exactly that - **CONDITIONED.**

Gary Hayward RSB

About Gary Hayward:

Age 42. Degree in Chemistry. Diploma in Management Studies. Twenty years experience in manufacturing including defence, electronics, telecommunication and space project management. Lives in Hertford and is proprietor of Red Squirrel Brewery: www.redsquirrelbrewery.co.uk.



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Five Reasons Beer Sales Have Slumped

By Alexis Akwagyiram, BBC News, 20 Nov 2007

Beer sales in pubs are at their lowest level since the 1930s, say brewers. But how has this happened?

The humble pint used to be the backbone of the local pub; it was what they were all about.

But seven million fewer pints per day are now being sold in Britain than in 1979 - the beer market's peak. It's a drop of 22%.

But why is it happening?

HEALTH

Beer has an image problem and there is a common misconception that it is less healthy than other alcoholic drinks, says Adam Withrington, drinks editor of the *Publican* magazine.

It's what he refers to as the "beer-belly notion". People assume that drinking pints will lead to weight gain, making the drink less appealing at a time when people are increasingly health conscious.



Is this the end of the humble pint?

But beer is about 96% water and made up of natural ingredients, so when comparing it to other alcoholic drinks, it's wrong to label it as unhealthy.

It's a view, which is echoed by Dr Martin Bobak, an epidemiologist at University College London. He conducted a study of 2,300 drinkers in the Czech Republic, where beer is the tippie of choice, and found they put on almost no more weight around the abdomen than non-drinkers.

In the West, the better educated someone is, the less obese they are. This is largely related to diet.

Beer appears to be less fattening than wine, according to the British Beer and Pub Association.

A glass of beer with a typical 4.6% alcoholic volume has fewer calories not only than a similar measure of wine, but also milk or fruit juice.

Spirits, meanwhile, contain more than six times the calories of beer and when mixed with a soft drink, the calorie-count soars even higher.

FOOD

The reputation of pub grub has been transformed in recent years. The rise of the gastro pub has resulted in an increasing number of drinking establishments considering themselves as much a restaurant as a place to get a pint.

While our stomachs are the winners, the traditional pint is not as most people drink wine with their meal and this has impacted on the slump in beer sales.



Pub food has moved on

"It's a bit of a chicken and egg thing as to what came first but as beer sales have declined publicans have had to look elsewhere to make up for the drop in revenue," says Mr Withrington.

"In the 1990s they started to realise food was where the money was".

WOMEN

There was a time when the pub was not considered the "proper" place for a woman to be seen. But times have changed, women are now earning more than ever before and publicans want them to spend that cash in their establishment.

As a result many pubs have been made more "female-friendly". Gone is the flock wallpaper in favour of more stylish decor, even fresh



Pubs are more 'female-friendly'

flowers on the bar in some cases. Although more women are now using pubs, it's not beer that they're drinking. Industry figures show 36% of women in pubs drink wine but only 14% drink lager. How many drink traditional beer?

This is mainly down to cultural reasons, says the British Dietetic Association. There is no difference

Beer News and Features

between men and women when it comes to taste detection, but there is when it comes to what they prefer to drink.

"There are clear cultural and psychological patterns when it comes to what we order down the pub" says a spokeswoman.

In short beer has an image problem and is seen as a drink for men. Attempts are being made to repackage it for women, like the introduction of smaller glass sizes.

The increase in female trade has also had an impact on what men drink, says Mr Withrington. If a couple go to the pub for a night and the woman wants wine they are quite likely to get a bottle to share.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Generational shifts in the way people work and socialise mean they are less likely to drink beer.

The decline of manual labour in the UK is the "key point" in the decline of beer sales over the last 40 years, according to Mr Withrington.

"When we had a major industrial culture manual workers came out of factories and mines to drink eight pints, to replenish fluids and socialise. As industry died, that culture died, which meant publicans lost customers who drank large amounts every night," he says.

The "Drink Driving Laws" have also had a great impact on lunchtime consumption.

"In the 60s and 70s people were driving to the pub, drinking and driving home, but people aren't doing that anymore," he says. "That's had a big impact, particularly in country pubs which you need a car to reach.

"In the past going to the pub for a beer was a nice way to catch up with your mates. Now drink is cheaper in supermarkets and people have a wide choice of TV and home entertainment systems, so staying in is more fun than it used to be."

Meanwhile, the rise in club culture in recent decades appears to have made the use of recreational drugs - such as ecstasy and cocaine - more widespread among young people.

This trend has seen some young people eschew the pub altogether, while those who go often drink non-alcoholic drinks.



Changing social habits have hit beer sales

Cont/d over

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FASHION

The increasing amount of choice available to drinkers has played a large part in falling beer sales in pubs, with a heightened sense of adventure and the pursuit of the next fashionable drink informing many people's habits.

For example, the amount of wine drunk in pubs since 1979 has increased six-fold, as the quality and range available has improved.

Phil Tate, research manager at licensed trade research consultancy CGA Strategy, says the main spirits categories - such as vodka, gin and rum - are all "enjoying growth" because "spirit categories appeal to the younger audience".

According to trends identified by CGA, vodka is increasingly popular primarily at the expense of alcopops, but also beer.



Certain drinks are seen as 'fashionable'

Meanwhile, cider has taken sales from standard lager, in both male and female drinkers in the last year.

"Packaged cider volume has increased 31% in the last 12 months," says Mr Tate.

"The research also points to trends which suggest people are moving away from mainstream cider brands, such as Magners, towards more niche brands," he adds.

But the increase in choice has also led to a wider variety of beers, which has seen the UK's real ale scene flourish in recent years.

"The major trend is premiumisation," says Mr Tate. "Although overall volumes are down, new categories such as the world lager categories and premium 4% lager brands are enjoying volume growth."

Some of the most successful new beers in recent years are those from Poland.

Tesco sales of Tyskie, Lech and Zywiec grew by 250% in six months this year. It's not good news for the humble pint.

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.



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Pints of View Beer Name Prize Sudoku

S			E			N	O	
			B				S	T
	E			M				
			I	O	M		T	
T								I
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	R	I			T			E

Winner of Beer Name Prize Sudoku in Edition 225:
Les Jenkins of Hemel Hempstead wins a **CAMRA 2008 Good Beer Guide**.

Winner of Pints of View Xmas Prize Crossword in Edition 226: Donald Gregory of Stevenage wins a **CAMRA 2008 Good Beer Guide**.

SOLUTION BELOW:

P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S		H	A	M	P	E	R
O		X	B		O		F		C		L		E	
S	P	I	L	E		W	O	R	T	H	L	E	S	S
T		S		N		A		O		R		N		O
C	A	T	H	E	D	R	A	L		I	N	T	E	R
O			Z		D			I		S		I		T
D	I	C	K	E	N	S		C	U	T	O	F	F	
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P	I	E	C	E	S			U	N	C	L	O	T	H

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](mailto:pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk)

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that every row, column and each of the nine 3x3 squares contain all the letters of Abbeydale brewery beer: **BRIMSTONE**

Completed entries by 1 April 2008 to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.
1st winner drawn wins a **CAMRA 2008 Good Beer Guide**.

Your Name:

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The Dave Burns Memorial Award

The Dave Burns Memorial Award (DBMA) has been awarded by the South Herts CAMRA Branch since 1997. Dave Burns died suddenly in 1995 aged 45.

He had been the driving force in South Hertfordshire CAMRA throughout the 1970s and 1980s and had been secretary and Chair of the Branch. He also edited two Hertfordshire Beer Guides and the Hertfordshire Newsletter (forerunner to *Pints of View*). He was very active with other branches and regularly attended the AGM. He was also committed to the **Great British Beer Festival** where he was a bar manager for many years, and he was a key member of the team that organised the Hertfordshire Beer Festivals held in Hatfield in 1978/79/80.

The South Herts Branch set up the award to honour individuals who have made a significant contribution to the cause for real ale in the county. The DBMA is not an annual event and is only given when the branch feels it is warranted.

There have been seven recipients so far: Graham and Roz Craig of the **Woodman** at Wildhill. Richard Steward of CAMRA – McMullen's Brewery Liaison Officer upon his retirement. Eric Sim - long standing active member of the branch previously Chair, Financial Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Dennis Ruttledge – McMullen's Public Relations Officer, Brewery Guide and friend of the Campaign. John Tibble – former landlord of the **Carpenters Arms** in Harpenden for his support of Mild particularly and good beer in general. Paul Ruane for services to the local branch. The latest recipient is Steve Bury, South Herts Branch activist (as reported in the last edition 226).

Change of Management at the Three Magnets, Letchworth

I wrote in a recent *Pints of View* congratulating Mark Curtis (pictured top right) on his success in managing the only Wetherspoon's pub in Herts to make it to the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide**. Sadly for North Herts CAMRA members, he's been so successful that he's now moved on to become tenant of the **Cross Keys** in Bedford. Hopefully his arrival in that role will be appreciated by our members in that county! It's not all bad news,

though. Mark's Cellar Organiser, Chris (a CAMRA member) will continue to organise the cellar at the **Three Magnets** in Letchworth Garden City, especially the real ales. Also Mark's replacement, new Manager Nick Sicka, commented to me on his arrival in January that he thought the bar could do with more than six handpumps. This is a good sign; it bodes well for the future of Real Ale at the pub!



We extend a warm welcome to Nick, who is no stranger to the Three Magnets (left) as he covered for Mark while he (Mark) was away on holiday in Turkey – ironically, just as the **Good Beer Guide 2008** was being published, with Mark's new success included! I was only able to deliver the letter of congratulations to Mark on his return.

I trust Nick will continue the progress Mark achieved in his good few years as Manager, during which he turned the pub around in terms of clientele, meals uptake and beer quality.

Colin Yates

Ware Wobbles Again

Support your local in Ware! In support of **Community Pubs Week**, join Ware and Hertford CAMRA members on Wednesday 20 February for this year's Ware Wobble - an evening walk to four excellent local community pubs in the town. Starting at the **Rose and Crown** (McMullen) in Watton Road at 8pm, we move down the hill to the **Worppell** (Greene King) for 8.45pm, then on

up to the **High Oak** (Punch) in High Oak Road (9.30pm), completing the evening at the **Crooked Billet** (Admiral) in Musley Hill for 10.15pm. There will be some terrific beers in store! All are welcome.



Herts & Essex Borders News

My name is Ivan Bullerwell, and as recently appointed publicity secretary for CAMRA Herts & Essex Borders branch, I find myself looking after an area that runs from Bishop's Stortford in the east of the county and roughly follows the A10 to Waltham Cross in the south, as well as an equally stretched north to south area in Essex. I will get round everywhere eventually - in the meantime, I would be grateful if any readers could advise me of happenings and I will gladly check out and follow up accordingly. You can contact me by e-mail: publicity@heb-camra.org.uk The Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth (RACS) who meet at the **Good Beer Guide**-listed **Gate** in Sawbridgeworth are holding a Belgian Beer evening on 3rd February. Full details of events are on their website: www.racs.org.uk.



Illustration of several wooden beer barrels stacked together.

Future dates for the calendar-2nd Hebfest Beer Festival on 26th & 27th October 2008 at Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall and - **stop press**- watch out for news of the **Ongar Beer Festival's** rise from the grave. Although in neighbouring Essex, the Ongar Beer Festival was one of the region's outstanding events until 2000 and plans are afoot to resurrect it for early 2009. For details of both, contact: publicity@heb-camra.org.uk.

Pubco Merger with Big Local Implications

There was speculation late last year of a £5BN merger between pub group Punch Taverns and rivals Mitchells & Butler (who own All Bar One and Harvester restaurants). Although Punch subsequently denied the speculation, if this merger happens it will result in a pubco with 11,000 pubs, and which would own the majority of all pubs in St Albans area.

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

The 25th Luton Beer Festival: 14 – 16 February 2008

The twenty-fifth **Luton Beer Festival**, run by South Bedfordshire CAMRA, will be at the High Town Sports and Arts Centre, in Concorde Street, Luton. The venue is only 10 minutes walk from Luton railway station (take the footbridge towards High Town). On offer are up to 80 real ales, plus cider, perry, continental bottled beers, and a specially brewed ale to mark the event's silver jubilee. On Thursday 14th there is an opportunity to meet some brewers of the ales, and the **South Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2008** will also be announced. Opening times are: (14th) 5pm – 11pm, (15th) 12pm – 11pm, and (16th) 11am – 12pm. For further details phone 01582 513159. Or see: www.sbedscamra.org.uk/festivals.lbf08.asp



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Six Times Winner South Herts
CAMRA Pub of the Year

CAMRA Community Pubs Week

Saturday 16th to Saturday 23rd February 2008

It's a frightening reality that at least 56 pubs are closing in Britain each month and early indications of new research being carried out by CAMRA suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher. Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days, as important community amenities. The local pub, after all, is the heart of the community.

CAMRA has successfully run National Pubs Week for four years in an attempt to convince more people to visit more pubs more of the time.



CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking. Despite low supermarket prices, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

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

to use community pubs more. Community Pubs Week celebrates and promotes all community pubs - not just village locals, but urban gems too.

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Herts Readers Write



Greene King signs of change at Speckled Hen

In further response to your comments re the 'corporate' signage at the Speckled Hen, St Albans, I thought you would like to know that it has now been changed and I attach a copy for your records

Roy Holmes

Business Development Manager, Greene King

Ed Says: This is good news the new pictorial sign (featured); I am sure will meet with approval from the traditionalists and preservation lobby. Following the piece in 226, I am not right about everything and stated that Old Speckled Hen was brewed to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Morland's in Abingdon. The brewery first traded in 1711 so it must have been the 250th anniversary (still didn't stop it being closed).



24-hour opening very rare indeed

On 11th January 2008 at 11.55am it was reported on "You and Yours" BBC R4 that only three pubs in the whole country have applied for 24-hour licences. They are all in Blandford Forum, Dorset. Two are free houses, not named, and the third is **The Railway** (the railway line closed c 1966!). The licensee of the Railway said that they do not open 24 hours but applied for the licence in order that they could run the business as they wished. They closed at 04.30 this morning, when the last customer left, and reopened at 10.30 to show the South Africa match.

John (name and address supplied)

Ed Says: Blandford Forum, a quiet market town in Dorset and the home of Hall & Woodhouse Brewery recently acquired by Marstons. Hardly the Metropolis, so come on Press, name names. I want to go to one of these 24-hour boozers you are always on about.

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@hotmail.co.uk

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See www.landoflibertypub.com
For more information & beer lists

Easter Beer
Festival

Thurs 20th Mar 5pm to
Mon 24th Mar

Quiz Sat 22nd March

Land of Liberty Continues its Winning Ways

There's been some exciting news for Martin, Gill and all the staff at the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, which has just been named as one of the finalists in CAMRA's



National Pub of the Year competition. I never seem to stop writing articles about the Land of Liberty's awards and achievements, and this is the most significant yet. The pub is now just one of four from around Britain to have made it through the early stages of competition; and now stands a chance of being named National Pub of the Year on the 15th February; the eve of CAMRA's **Community Pubs Week** (see page 18). The four finalists are as follows:

MERSEYSIDE:

Turks Head, 49-51 Morley Street, St Helens, Merseyside

HERTFORDSHIRE:

Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty, Long Lane, Heronsgate, Hertfordshire

GLOUCESTERSHIRE:

Old Spot, Hill Road, Dursley, Gloucestershire

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY, SCOTLAND:

Blue Peter Hotel, Kirkcolm, Dumfries & Galloway

According to a press announcement on Friday 11 January, CAMRA's Director of Pubs, Julian Hough, said: "There are around 60,000 pubs in the UK and to be named the very best is an incredible honour. Each of these pubs works tremendously hard to ensure the standard of their beer is matched only by their warm welcome. It will be exciting to see who emerges as the overall winner on February 15th".

I'm sure all the local branches will join Watford & District in wishing the Land of Liberty the best of luck in the final stage of the competition. Watford & District branch plan on visiting the pub (along with all our other Good Beer Guide 2007 entries) as part of **Community Pubs Week**. Who knows? We may end up paying a visit to the best pub in the country. Details of our activities can be found in the Branch Diary section of the newsletter.

Andrew Vaughan, Watford & District CAMRA

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Friday 5:30-8:00
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Tony & Linda are CAMRA members

Not a Shaggy Dog Story

A dog was admitted to a veterinary clinic in Austria in January, barely able to stand on his own four paws and reeking "like a beer hall".

Dingo, a three-year-old Labrador weighing 40 kilogrammes (88 pounds), was a pitiful sight when his owner, a hunter, brought him in to the surgery in the Salzkammergut region, the Oberoesterreichische Nachrichten quoted vet Karl Hofbauer as saying.

"The dog had dreadful wind and diarrhoea, and was vomiting a lot," Hofbauer said.

"When I got him up on the table, it smelt like a distillery."

Tests indicated that the dog had a blood alcohol content of 1.6 milligrams per 100 millilitres. But that was not the result of Dingo having one drink too many, the owner insisted. The hungry pooch had stolen and secretly devoured half a kilogramme of fresh yeast dough from the kitchen. Alcohol had formed inside his stomach as a result of the fermentation process, leaving poor old Dingo stone drunk.

"Nasty-minded people said that we hunters are often drunk. With me, it's my dog," joked the owner.

Yahoo News, 7 January 2008



Pubs Blamed as 'Phantom Piddler' Strikes in Bury

Residents in a historic market town have been warned to be on the lookout for a "phantom piddler" after someone urinated through an elderly couple's letterbox.

Leonard Perren was taking his wife to church when he noticed an unidentified liquid had been squirted through the door of his home in Hatter Street, in Bury St Edmunds.

Despite it being a one-off incident, the 73-year-old - who has now sealed up his letterbox - believes it is indicative of a rise in anti-social behaviour caused by drinkers outside nearby pubs and bars in the town.

"We had gone downstairs one Sunday morning

when I noticed a stream of liquid on the mat," said Mr Perren, whose wife, Yvonne, has lived in the couple's house since she was five years old.

"Whatever it was had obviously come through the letterbox with some force and in a projectile manner, so I assumed it must have been urine.

"You have got to see the funny side of it but it is not a nice thing for someone to do.

"This time of year is not so bad but in the summer, when the weather is warmer, people tend to gather outside the bars and it can be impossible for visitors to the house to get to sleep because of where the bedrooms are.

"The smoking ban has made the problem worse although we accept there is nothing that can be done about that, but I would really like to see drinkers banned from congregating outside bars."

St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor David Nettleton, who is a member of the Real Independent Party, said it was an "unfortunate incident", which he hoped would be a one-off. But he said the town's nightlife was all too often the first to be blamed for the behaviour of a handful of individuals who drink in the town.

"The majority of people who drink in Bury at night are just out to enjoy themselves, and it is about educating those that do cause a problem to quiet down and amend their behaviour," he said.

"There is some bad behaviour and that is usually related to excess alcohol, but I do not think the problem is as bad as some people think it is.

"I hope the phantom piddler is soon caught before he commits further offences or damages himself."

Wet T-shirt Competitions too Dangerous?

Bosses at the North West pub co Yesteryear were stunned to be told to cancel a wet t-shirt competition because officials ruled that it was too dangerous. Managing director Tony Callaghan said: "One key condition of a wet T-shirt contest is that people get wet. We've been advised that people who get wet could sue if they get pneumonia. Others could hurt themselves on slippery surfaces - and some of the better-endowed participants may cause blokes to drop their drinks!" Backbench Tory MP David Davies branded the ban crazy. "This is a real boob," he said. "How dare they outlaw this? They just want to stop anyone having any fun."

DOWN YOUR WAY

This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur.

Comments or additional information should be sent to our contact details on page 19

Anstey: The **Chequers** has been renamed to the **Blind Fiddler** - after 17th Century fiddler Blind George. George defied warnings from locals not to enter the "Devils Hole", to prove that it was false that all who entered would perish. He never came out again and the cave entrance was filled with rubble. The pub is also supposed to be haunted by a Second World War American airman

Ardeley: The **Jolly Wagoners** at is now called the **Rabbits Foot**. I suppose the question is why!

Barley: The landlord at the **Chequers** will be retiring soon.

Barnet: The **Dandelion**, previously called the Avenue, Dandy Lion, Felix and Firkin, and originally the Red Lion has changed name again to a Mitchells and Butlers' **Toby Carvery**. No real ale available.

Bayford: If you are up with the larks try the breakfast served at the **Baker Arms** between 8-10am. The pub opens at 12 Noon for Macs' *Country and AK*.

Borehamwood: It is pleasing to report that the **Crown** now returned to its original name by Juniper Taverns is selling both *Courage Best* and *Old Speckled Hen* at very competitive prices - both under £2 per pint on a recent visit. The food is good value too. The pub appears to be dedicated to real ale and they had a pre-Christmas beer festival with a good range of beers it is pleasing to have another watering hole in the beer desert.

Brickenden: The **Farmers Boy** has a new excellent menu of traditional pub fayre and an often rotated guest ale sitting alongside both Greene King *IPA* and Mac's *AK*.

Burnham Green: In the rural village, to the northeast of Welwyn stands a pub where there once were two. The **White Horse** was for many years an Ind Coope then Benskins house and subsequently a free house, eventually bought by McMullen last year who are currently operating it as a thriving gastro pub. Just round the corner, near the village green, is an ex-pub previously owned by McMullen called the **Duck**. This was sold to become a free house but closed - now nine years ago - and has been used as a private residence since. However there is now a sign on the outside saying the leasehold as a free house is for sale. Presumably the licence is still in place. Are there

any interested parties out there? It is not very often a rural pub reopens after a long period of closure. The contact number on the board is 07799 866 188. The agent was very cagey about the asking price, just saying there was some renovation work to be done and it is negotiable.

Bushey: An application to build flats on the site of the **King's Head** has been rejected. The pub remains closed.

Darley Hall: The **Fox** has had a new landlord since before Christmas.

Hertford: Plans for the **Sportsman** include a modern town-centre atmosphere similar to other bars in the town. The toilets and kitchen will be moved upstairs allowing for increased bar space downstairs. No news on any future for real ale. Further along Fore Street, planning approval has been given for a new 16-bedroom hotel, bar and restaurant to be formed from a Grade 2 listed building and shop-front. The ground floor, once an estate agent, has stood empty for some years. Construction work at the **Six Templars** is nearing completion - at the time of going to press a 4 February opening was still being promoted. Further congratulations to the **White Horse** who have been awarded "Star Performer of the Month" by owners Fuller's for the outstanding quality of Nigel's beers.

Hertingfordbury: At the **Prince of Wales**, the real ale trade is being built up with Hancocks *HB* and Greene King *IPA* as regular beers and a frequently-changing guest ale. There's a quiz on Thursdays and free pool on Mondays.

High Wych: The end of an era. The **Rising Sun**, long known informally as Sid's, has installed a lager pump.

Markyate: Leases are up for sale at the **Sun** (Moorgate Taverns) and **Red Lion** (Enterprise Inns).

Meesden: The **Fox** has been converted to a private dwelling called **Fox Cottage**.

Northaw: The **Sun** has its lease up for sale at £75,000.

Park Street: The **Swan** is closed and has been boarded up.

Sandridge: The **Rose and Crown** following a refit is under New Management and now offering 'Traditional Home Cooked Food'.

Sawbridgeworth: The **Queens Head** has decided to fully embrace real ale sales. There are now two

changing guest ales and recent visitors have reported excellent pints on offer.

Shenley: The **White Horse** now has a spectacular Three D sign. Since the article in edition 226 highlighting the demise of the **Black Lion**, the **Queen Adelaide** has also discontinued real ale saying there is not enough demand. Strangely, if this is the case, the **William IV** has increased its range to include Greene King *IPA* and so is now even more worth a visit.

St. Albans: Our local correspondent says in answer to your query in PoV 226, the sign on the **Jolly Sailor** became bent when the brewery lorry was parked on the pavement for a delivery. On backing off the pavement, the lorry caught the sign, which is a rigid one, and bent it. That'll teach him to park illegally. The sign has been replaced with a new one. (I think the person who originally asked the question knew the answer **Ed**). Thai Square at the **Tudor Tavern** is open. You guessed it - absolutely no beer of any description - real ale, lager or bottled. Purely a cocktail wine bar! At least no-one will go hungry in St Albans with so many eateries. The lease for the **Glass House** is up for sale.

Watford: The **Highwayman** on Tolpits Lane has been demolished. Planning permission for flats has not been granted to our knowledge. The **Beaver** on the corner of Courtlands Drive and Gammons Lane is up for sale. The **One Bell** on Watford High Street is on the market, as is the **Bedford Arms** on Langley Road.

Welwyn Garden City: It was reported on 29th November that the **Chieftain** has been closed and boarded up, with concrete blocks and metal fencing surrounding the whole site. This is in advance of a new housing development. With no plans currently agreed we wait to see if the original plan to build a smaller pub makes it into the final scheme.

Widford: All is not well at the **Green Man**, closed for three months by magistrates, following a drugs raid by police. The pub is likely to remain shut until the end of February, during which time the licence will be reviewed.

Willian: Retirement of John and Jane Harvey, of the **Three Horseshoes** seems to have advanced beyond the status of rumour following an ad in the local paper that their last music event will take place at the end of January.

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE:

Wed 13 Feb: Good Beer Guide 2009 Selection Meeting - **Highlander**, Hitchin 8pm.

Fri 29 Feb: Young Members Letchworth Crawl - 8.00pm - **Broadway Hotel**
8.45pm - **Arena Tavern**
9.30pm - **Hogshead**

10.15pm - **Three Magnets**

This crawl is being run by the Young Members (YM) coordinator and aimed at the CAMRA members who are 35 and under; however, all members are welcome. Please contact YM coordinator at ym@camranorthherts.org.uk or our branch Socials Contact below if you'd like to attend.

Sat 8 Mar: Minibus Ramble - The Pelhams

Wed 12 Mar: Committee Meeting - **Nightingale**, Hitchin 8pm. All members welcome

Fri 14/Sat 15 Mar: **Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival**
See inside back cover for details.

Wed 26 Mar: Branch AGM - **Three Horseshoes**, Willian 8pm.

Mon 7 Apr: Hitchin Beer Festival Wash Up Meeting - **Half Moon**, Hitchin 8pm

Wed 9 Apr: Committee Meeting - **Crown**, Buntingford 8pm. All members welcome

Sat 12 Apr: Minibus Ramble - Gosmore and Preston.

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:

Wed 6 Feb: Good Beer Guide (GBG) Survey trip. Meet at St Albans Station 7pm (£8.00 per head).

Tues 12 Feb: GBG Survey trip. Meet at St Albans Station 7pm (£8.00 per head).

Wed 20 Feb: GBG Survey trip. Meet at St Albans Station 7pm (£8.00 per head). Includes **CAMRA Community Pubs Week** crawl of Ware - **Rose and Crown** (8pm), **Worpell** (8.45pm), **High Oak** (9.30pm), **Crooked Billet** (10.15pm).

Tue 26 Feb: GBG Survey trip. Meet at St Albans Station 7pm (£8.00 per head).

Book all trips above through our Branch Contact

Fri 29 Feb: GBG Survey trip - St Albans. Meet at **Mermaid**, St Albans 6.30pm.

BRANCH DIARY

Tue 4 Mar: 2009 GBG Selection Meeting - **CAMRA HQ**, Hatfield Road, St Albans.

South Herts Branch Contact: John Bishop, Tel 01582 768478

Email: realales@yahoo.com

Internet: www.hertsale.org.uk

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Tue 5 Feb: Social - starting at **Ox**, South Oxhey, 8.30pm and moving on to the **Partridge**, Carpenders Park and the **Nascot Arms**, Watford.

Thu 14 Feb: Quiz night - **Southern Cross**, Watford. Quiz starts at 9pm.

Sat 16 Feb: Community Pubs Week visit to Good Beer Guide entries - **Sportsman**, Croxley Green; **Rose & Crown**, Rickmansworth and **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Herongate; starting at the **Sportsman**, 12.30pm.

Mon 18 Feb: Community Pubs Week visit to GBG entries - **Compasses**, Abbots Langley, **Southern Cross**, Watford; starting at the **Compasses** from 8pm.

Wed 20 Feb: Community Pubs Week visit to **Black Boy**, Bushey Heath and the **West Herts Sports Club**, Watford; starting at the **Black Boy** from 8pm.

Fri 22 Feb: **Pub of the Year** presentation - venue TBA. Contact branch for details.

Mon 25 Feb: Branch Meeting - **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8pm

Fri 29 Feb: Leap Year Pub Presentation - venue TBA. Contact branch for details.

Wed 12 Mar: Social at **London Drinker Beer Festival** - Meet at the products stall hourly from 6pm.

Mon 24 Mar: Branch Meeting - **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, 8pm.

Sat 29 Mar: Branch Day Trip to Brighton. Catch 0911 Southern service from Watford Junction. Contact branch for details

Watford & District Contact: Andrew Vaughan.

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

Email: watfordcamra@googlemail.com

Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS

Fri 11 Feb: Branch AGM. Final selection of pubs for **Good Beer Guide** and voting for Branch **Pub of the Year** at the **Rising Sun**, High Wych. 8.30pm Mini-bus running*

Fri 15 Feb: Branch Social - **Queens Head**, Allens Green. 8.30pm.

Sat 23 Feb: Trip to Buntingford Brewery - 2.30pm. Mini-bus running from Harlow, Sawbridgeworth & Bishop's Stortford areas. Must be booked in advance with Social Secretary. E-mail to social@heb-camra.org.uk.

Mon 10 Mar: Branch meeting - **Half Moon**, Bishops Stortford 8.30pm. Mini-bus running*

Fri 14 Mar: Branch Social - **Queens Head**, Allens Green 8.30pm

Mon 14 Apr: Branch Meeting - **The Cock**, Ongar 8.30pm. Mini-bus running*

*For Mini Bus contact Gavin on 01279 304823 or 07825446586

Herts/Essex Borders Mini Bus Contact: Gavin Chester, Tel 01279 304823 or 07825446586

Email: Secretary@heb-camra.org.uk

Internet: www.heb-camra.org.uk

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

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STOP PRESS - Scottish and Newcastle Takeover!

CAMRA Claims Consumer Choice and Competition Will be Hit

The announcement on 25th January that Scottish and Newcastle (S&N) is to be acquired and divided between Carlsberg and Heineken has been condemned by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). S&N's UK activities are set to be acquired by Heineken and CAMRA will be seeking urgent reassurances over the future of S&N's real ale interests.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive, said, "The relentless obsession with pushing global lager brands is a failing strategy in the UK beer market and this is fuelling consolidation and hitting profits hard. The inevitable result of consolidation is brewery closures, brand losses and less choice for Britain's consumers".

Mr. Benner added, "The deal raises many questions for real ale drinkers in the UK. What impact will this have on traditional real ales such as *John Smiths* and smaller regional brands such as *Magnet*? We will be seeking reassurances from the new owners that they will invest in their real ale brands and breweries to meet the demands of today's beer drinkers who are increasingly demanding real ale".

It is expected that the takeover will be considered by the European Commission and CAMRA is calling for an in-depth review of competition and consumer choice in the EU beer market.

Mike Benner continued: "The lager-led approach of the global brewers has been flawed for years and consumers demand choice, quality and provenance. Fortunately the increasing number of small and independent real ale breweries in the UK is rising up to fill the void in the market where demand for local and regional beer continues to grow".

Bob Stukins, CAMRA's Director of Breweries Campaigning said, "This is a sad day for British brewing. S&N was the last remaining major brewer in British hands and the deal is unlikely to show any benefits for consumers".

S&N's main real ale brand is John Smith's cask. However it also brews Theakston's Best Bitter on behalf of T&R Theakston, and owns 30% of Scottish brewery Caledonian's brands. CAMRA will be seeking assurances from the new owners that these enterprises will be preserved.

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Over the last thirty six years the Campaign for Real Ale has been campaigning on all different kinds of beer and pub issues. We have helped to save breweries and pubs, helped to introduce more flexible licensing hours.

Research shows a staggering 56 pubs close every month and CAMRA needs your help to campaign and save the pubs that are under threat from closure before it is too late.

CAMRA now boasts over 90,000 members and we are striving to reach 100,000 to help us with our current campaigns which include getting legislation that makes sure the consumer gets a Full Pint, reducing beer duty, promoting and supporting local breweries and pubs.

By becoming a CAMRA member you can help to make a difference. **Join CAMRA today -**

See next page, or call CAMRA on 01727 - 867201, or visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.



Your Details

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

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..... Postcode

Email address

Tel No (s)

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in?

	Direct Debit	Non DD
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Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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

Mem Form 0108

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

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2008



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