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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for every discerning drinker

April/May 2008

Circulation 7500

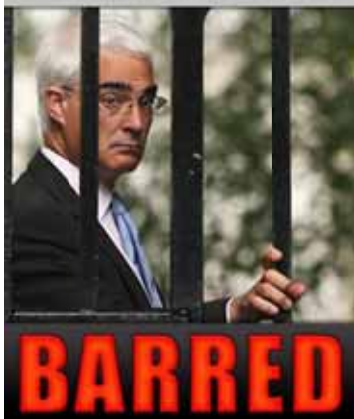
No. 228

Is it Really Just About Tax?

A campaign is reportedly launched to ban the Chancellor from all British Pubs, but the rising cost of beer is only partly due to Government.

See pages 3 - 4

We hereby give notice that Alastair Darling, Chancellor of the Exchequer, is barred from this pub until further notice.



Awards for Herts Pubs

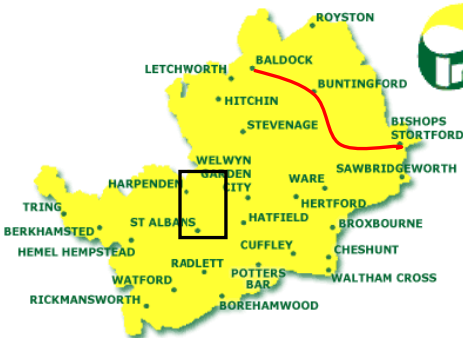
The Woodman at Wildhill is South Herts CAMRA's Pub of the Year, and an outstanding achievement award for the Southern Cross in Watford.

See pages 14 & 17

Make for Mild in May

Celebrating great Milds in Herts during May.

See pages 8, 17 and 21



Bus Routes Open up Herts Pubs

Using the bus network to discover a number of great community pubs in North, South and East Hertfordshire.

See pages 22 to 27

PLUS: Features, news from around the county, branch trips, and a lot more!



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57 Pubs are Closed Permanently Every Month as Hertfordshire Gets the £3 Pint

CAMRA's call for a tax cut on beer in the Budget was totally ignored when Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling added 4 pence tax to every pint on 12th March. This will of course be added to by brewers and pubcos, who are experiencing enormous rises in brewing ingredients and with the increase in fuel costs delivery as well. The real increase could be more than double the Chancellor's increase.

Fergus McMullen (pictured right), Production and Sales director of Hertford brewer McMullen's said:



"A lot of pubs are hanging on by their fingertips, people say they like having a local but soon it won't be there."

"By the time you add VAT, it's more like 6p-8p on a pint, depending on its alcohol content," he said.

"With our raw materials going through the roof and energy bills soaring, tenants are having to put up their pints by 16p-20p. The average is now around £3."

McMullen's raised their prices just before the Budget by 10 pence per pint, but will they absorb the tax increase? From Fergus McMullen's comment, this seems unlikely.

Gary Hayward (right), brewer and proprietor of Red Squirrel brewery, also based in Hertford commented: "The level of increase in prices announced in the budget is a shock – making business all the more difficult. I



guess all small brewers will have to try even harder. For Red Squirrel, I know that I must compete on the quality of my beers and with a loyal band of pubs supporting them I hope that I can operate at, at least, the same business level. Like all brewers the tough increases in the cost of brewing materials over the last year or so have had to be passed on to the pubs but I hope that any rises attributable to the Budget will be

nominal.

I am concerned about the effect on pubs that the Budget will bring but will be staying positive and am confident in my beers - looking for more business though opportunities may be harder to find."

Regional brewer Greene King's response was in the form a poster sent to its pubs:



So what's the real problem? Have I missed something? The incessant price rises, bad leases, restrictive practices by pubco's and brewers with tied estates, excessive taxation, licensing, binge drinking, unfriendly press, materials price increases, the Temperance lobby and petty bureaucracy. All have existed and were destroying pubs before the Budget.

The Chancellor has only speeded up the process. As Greene King say, 27% of the cost of your pint is tax, so what are they and their peers doing with the other 73%?

My view is the problem lies as much, if not more, with the brewers and pub owners who are now trying to pretend it is all the Chancellor's fault. Ceaseless cynical chasing of profits at the cost of customers, publicans and closures is as much if not more the problem.

Pub Closures: Beer sales are on the decline and the argument is that an increase in price will just

THE BITTER END

accelerate this. A reduction in cost of a pint would have had the opposite effect and would increase sales, tax revenue, and protect jobs in both brewing and at the bar (it is a pity the Chancellor cannot understand this). It would also go some way to towards helping to prevent community pub closures following the results of a survey released in March, which reveals that the number of pubs closing permanently has increased to 57 a month. The survey suggests that almost one third (31%) of pubs closed permanently are being demolished, while 36% are converted to shops, cafes and restaurants, and 33% to some other use - mostly residential.

Beyond the Budget: CAMRA are seeking changes to planning law to prevent pub demolitions and change of use from pubs to shops, cafes and restaurants without planning permission.

CAMRA branches across the UK provided figures for their areas, which show the staggering levels of pub closures. The survey is based on closures recorded throughout 2007. The effects of the smoking ban are not yet fully evident and the unprecedented increases in costs of beer production due to hop and malt shortages will be passed on to customers.

The price of a Pint: Many pubs in Hertfordshire are already selling premium beers at £3 a pint and above but my prediction is that we will very soon be seeing ordinary bitters at this price as well.

A survey commissioned by CAMRA in December 2007 shows that 27% of people who prefer to drink at home said price was the main influence on their decision. The survey also revealed that 72% of people agree that it is unfair that responsible drinkers have to pay for an irresponsible minority through high taxes. 68% of adults agree that a pub is a responsible place to drink alcohol.

We need action now before last orders ring for the British pub: Mr Benner, Chief Executive of CAMRA has recently added, "Recent calls from the BMA and others for significant increases in alcohol excise duties are misguided and would be ineffective in combating binge drinking. The higher taxes will kill British pubs, force drinking underground and fuel smuggling and cross-border shopping. We need action now before last orders ring for the British pub".

• Our front cover picture featuring the Chancellor is a poster campaign originating from the **Utopia** bar in Edinburgh, and since adopted by more pubs nationally.

The Facts of the CAMRA Survey:

- The survey shows that 1567 pubs were closed during 2007
- Beer production in the UK declined by 6% during 2007.
- The four penny increase in beer tax will add up to ten pence to the price of a pint in a pub, while supermarkets can usually absorb increases.
- The Government cut cider duty in 2002 followed by freezes over the subsequent four budgets. This action, devised to support the ailing cider sector, has helped revitalise cider sales in the UK
- The UK already has the highest rate of excise duty on beer in the European Union.
- Excise duty on beer has increased by 26.7% in the last ten years compared to 16% for wine, 11% for cider and only 3% for spirits
- Pubs are defined in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 as 'public services'
- CAMRA's survey, carried out by TNS in December 2007, also found:
 - 72% of people agree that it is unfair that responsible drinkers have to pay for an irresponsible minority.
 - 68% of people agree that a pub is a responsible place to drink.
 - A 10% increase in pub prices would lead to 21% of current pub goers drinking more at home.
 - 45% of people now drink at home, and purchase low-cost alcohol, often used as a loss-leader by supermarkets.
 - 27% of people who prefer to drink at home said price was the main influence on their decision to drink at home.
 - Beer is still the preferred drink in pubs. 47% of us prefer beer. This rises to 61% for people who use pubs at least once a week

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.

South Hertfordshire Pub Closures Continue

We have already received one letter about the closure of the **Swan**, Park Street (below) previously owned by Fuller's (see Readers Write section). Other pubs under threat in the

South Hertfordshire area are the **Kings Head** and **White Lion**, London Colney. Both have




planning permission for change of use lodged by developers to convert to housing. In Borehamwood the **Woodcock** (now burnt to the ground by a fire which appears to have been started by an arsonist) and the **Willow Tree** (previously the Suffolk Punch) are also about to become housing developments. Other than the Swan, they were owned by pubcos who are easily tempted, because developers are willing to pay much more than the pubs' value. Most pubs have some land attached - a car park, garden or both - which can be built on. If the pub is listed the building can be converted and built around. The Councils in Hertfordshire are under pressure to increase the housing stock by the Government, and this has led to all sorts of redevelopments being agreed that would not have happened say 20 years ago. I like to think that CAMRA and conservationists have a good relationship with town and country planners and some of the more unwelcome plans have been refused; the **Tin Pot** in Gustard Wood in 2006 for instance. That said only so much can be achieved, the argument often comes down to what type of development, how many houses, flats etc. not whether the development should take place at all.

The trade is suffering and the buyers and sellers will always say that the pub to be closed is not viable any more. The problem for CAMRA and the consumers has several aspects. We all know that pubs are about people and in most cases this means a dedicated licensee, and unfortunately there are a lot of boozers where this is not the case. I read recently in the *Publican* that the trade has finally admitted that the pubcos who now own the majority of the nation's public houses do not run the best establishments, and there are several

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reasons for this. Firstly pub managers need the financial incentives and training. Setting impossible sales and savings targets to gain bonuses is commonplace. Many of the pub leases not only drive up prices but restrict choice - no wonder so many are up for sale. When you take into account the number of hours per week publicans work - and it's every day of the year except Christmas night - the pay and conditions leave a lot to be desired.

Large number of pubs on the market: In the present climate it is not surprising as there are more and more pubs coming on to the market, both tenancies and leases.

The Fact: Greene King has 160 tenancies and 56 leases available - nearly 10% of their pubs. With McMullen the story is even worse, 8 tenancies out of 50 pubs - that's 16%. Hook Norton only has 3 but it is still 7% of their total pubs, while Punch Taverns have a whopping 1,266 leases available out of their 8400 pubs. That's 15%.

The reason most of the licensees are moving on is quite simple, they are not making a decent living.

Cont'd over

What with the appalling summer last year, the smoking ban, brewery price rises and 4p on a pint

in the budget (that's 5p including VAT) it is hardly surprising that licensees are suffering. And when someone like Wetherspoon's is selling beer at only 20p a pint more than a brewery tenant can buy it for, it's farewell to the community local.

CAMRA recently held its Community Pubs Week to support and remind customers how important and good fun your community locals can be. The message is the one I publish again and again:

USE THEM OR LOSE THEM.

Steve Bury, Editor.

Laurel Pub Company to Close Another 60 High Street Pubs

After the closure of 24 pubs in February the company will only have five pubs from the group of 95 it put on the market still trading. Laurel claim there was insufficient interest in the pubs, which were put on the market through Colliers CRE.



Spokesman said: "This is a logical but regrettable decision because they were costing more to run than they are making."

A large number of closed sites will be Yates bars, which made

up 42 of the 95 pubs on the market, as well as some Litten Trees and Hog's Heads.

Observers will think the dramatic closure of another swathe of Laurel's high street business means a controlled

administration is more likely. **Ed Says:** Laurels own many pubs in Hertfordshire so how are these pubs to be disposed of? They claim lack of interest - well I bet there was if they were advertised as leases. How about selling them as freehold free houses, and seeing whether they are really viable or not when their lease stranglehold is taken off?

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

Failed Deal Gives Mitchell's and Butlers a £391 Million Loss

Most of our readers would be surprised at how many pubs in Hertfordshire Mitchell's and Butlers, the Birmingham-based pubco, control. But even the mighty make mistakes, and a failed hedge fund property deal have left the company with an overall £391million pre-tax debt. The Finance Director, Karim Naffah, resigned and the Chief Executive, Tim Clarke, also offered to go, but was asked to stay by the board. M&B are inviting takeover offers. For those of you who may be considering making a bid, Mitchell's pub estate is valued at £5bn - well ahead of its stock market value of £1.6bn countered by debts of £2.9bn. If interested you had better hurry; Punch as well as private equity giants CVC and Blackstone, and Cinven have already made offers. The question is will it be a merger or a takeover? M&B have sent out confidentiality agreements to the bidders to try and start the formal auction process. If Punch were to succeed they would then control 10,500 pubs, a deal which must raise serious concerns about competition and cannot be in the customers' interest.

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1997 - 2008 Cask Marque Certification



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Brewery and Pub Industry News

Microbreweries - Good News for a Change

Scottish & Newcastle, the last British - owned big-brand brewery in the UK has been sold to Carlsberg and Heineken for £7.8bn. After a decade of falling sales, breweries closing down and selling out, there is a light at the bottom of the cask.

Around 70 microbreweries opened last year to supply the increasing demand for real ales, and



these small companies are helping to lift the declining beer industry in this country. Robert Wicks (left) opened his brewery four years ago and is now supplying supermarkets, pubs and local shops with his ales. Around half of all new micro-breweries are

based in rural locations, and Robert's brewery is on a tenanted farm in Kent. His rent helps the farmer cover his costs and effluent from the brewery is used on the field as a fertilizer.

Scottish Courage Closes Reading Brewery *By Steve Bury*

I am old enough to remember the save Reading brewery campaign in the 1970's titled by CAMRA: "Stop the Killer Cock". How things have changed; Courage did close Reading and opened their new mega-keggery, Worton Grange, within sight of the M4 just outside the town. Scottish & Newcastle stopped brewing in Newcastle and transferred production of *Courage Best* and *Directors* from John Smiths in Tadcaster, Yorkshire to Wells & Youngs in Bedford. Now as announced in edition 227 they have been taken over by Heineken who bought them out for £7.8 billion. The announcement of the closure of Worton Grange on 12th February follows the closure of their bottling plant last year and Courage say that the plant has been brewing at 20pc below capacity. Over 350 jobs will be lost, which is part of a rationalisation programme, and will save Heineken a predicted £13m per annum. At present Fosters and Kronenbourg are brewed at Worton Grange, which will close by 2010.

• Stella Artois has been dumped by Young's tied estate, who failed to negotiate a better deal for it with its brewers InBev. The nation's top-selling premium lager has had a recent decline in its sales.

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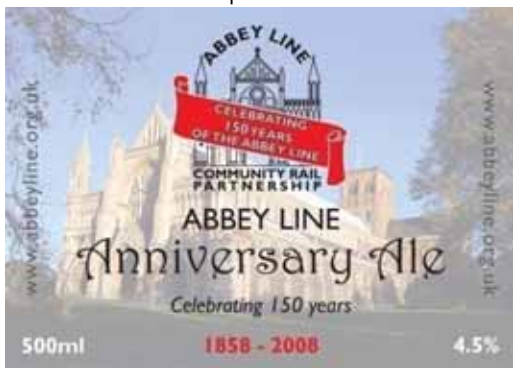
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Lift your Glasses to the Abbey Line!

This April will see the launch of a brand new ale to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Abbey Line.

The Abbey Line, which calls at all stations between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey has been running since 1858, and will be hosting a number of celebratory events over the coming months. The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, which looks after a number of aspects of the line, including events, will be officially launching the new *Anniversary Ale* in early April at the **Southern Cross** pub in Watford.



After the official launch event the ale will be available in casks at selected pubs and in bottles at selected outlets until stocks last.

For more information and to find out about the other anniversary events, visit the Abbey Line website at www.abbeyline.org.uk.

Greene King XX Mild is a Winner

Since the 1800s the Greene King Brewing Company have been making mild ale, and now they have received recognition for their continued work.

Greene King's *XX Mild* has been awarded **Champion Mild of East Anglia** at the recent CAMRA Colchester Winter Ale Festival, held at Colchester Arts Centre. The award was presented to head brewer, John Bexton, at the festival by Dave Sherman of CAMRA (Campaign



for Real Ale), who is the Champion Beer of East Anglia organiser.

The mild was voted East Anglia's best by 12 CAMRA members who also awarded it a bronze in the overall 'Champion Beer' regional competition.

"Greene King's XX Mild was a clear winner in a strong field, it was a unanimous decision by the judges based on the quality of the beer", said David Sherman.

Greene King brews a range of cask ales and its XX Mild (3% ABV) is described as being a fine dark, mild ale with a burnt, roast flavour.

Ed Says: Considering the large number of Greene King pubs in Hertfordshire it is a pity we don't see more of this excellent Dark Mild. I am old enough to remember when GK used to brew two milds - XX dark and KK light. The KK is now sadly extinct but the quality of the dark XX has meant that small runs are still brewed. Last year it was suggested that XX would be discontinued in favour of Hardy & Hanson's mild now also brewed at Bury St Edmunds a review was due, but at present no news is good news.



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Sad Time for Cyder

In 1763 the Seven Years War fought by Britain and Prussia against the forces of France, Austria, Spain and Russia had left an immense national debt for the new King George III who came to the throne in 1760 to deal with. Cider - spelt Cyder at the time was the most popular alcoholic drink



amongst the largely rural community of the time and Lord Bute (1713-1792), the King's favourite and mentor (left) introduced the Cider Act in 1757, which levied a rate of four shillings a Hogshead (fifty four gallons) on all

production. The outcry was spontaneous and across the nation as it not only posed a threat to fruit farmers and their workforce, it was hated as an infringement of civil liberties as excise officers were required to investigate the affairs of every apple grower in the country.

Demonstrations took place organised by cyder merchants, farmers, coopers and labourers. At Ledbury in Gloucestershire a man beating a drum covered in black led the procession. Beating out the dead march he was followed by two mutes in black hats and cloaks, behind them an empty cider barrel was carried by six farmers. Others dressed in cider hair-cloths and carried apple tree branches and axes as if to fell the orchards, which would not now be needed. Speeches were made and the church bells rung muffled to express sympathetic sorrow for the ruin which awaited the country.

Following the demonstrations the Prime Minister resigned, and the King was also held to blame and labelled a despot. It took three years for the Act to be repealed in April 1766, when much celebration took place. In Gloucester on 21st April when the Royal assent for the repeal was announced, free cider was available from Hogsheads, bonfires blazed in every Street and a giant firework display took place on Castle Hill, which illuminated the town. A piece of memorabilia of the Campaign is still on show in Hereford museum where a cider mug with the inscription 'No Liberty-No Excise' is on display.

The Strathmore Arms

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A Train of Thought

The telephone call from the chairman did not bring good news. Circumstances meant that Herts Essex branch trip to Belgium had been postponed until June. As I settled in the corner of the bar with my pint, I started to muse on what I would be missing. Sure, a trip to delightful Belgium bars, but also my first visit to the new St Pancras International Station. And as I sipped my pint, my thoughts turned to railways and beer for it was beer that played such a part in the building of the original Midland Railway station.

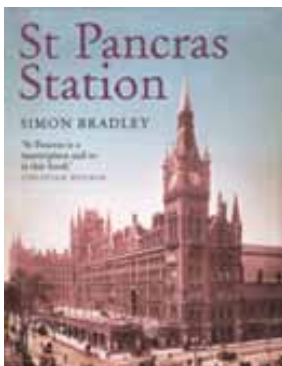
In the mid-eighteenth Century Burton-on-Trent was famous for producing well-balanced clear brews which were transported to London by the new railways. Gradually the dark and cloudier stouts and porters were abandoned leading to the introduction of clear glasses to replace pewter pots. A six-acre warehouse was built for Bass, enough for 100,000 barrels of 36 gallons each - a staggering 28,800,000 pints which, whilst a sight to bring a smile to a real ale fan, is far more than one can possibly drink.

Yet Barlow, the builder of the original St Pancras station, obviously did not consider this enough and wondered where the railway could store more. The answer was simple- use the space created by the excavations required for the station foundations. And so the station was built using 800 cast-iron supporting columns spaced 14 feet apart, a figure which happens to be a multiple of the standard local cask of the era. In Barlow's words, the length of a beer barrel became the unit of measure upon which the station floor is based.

I'm sure I'll remember all this as I walk down the platform should our trip ever materialise. But for now, I'll settle for another pint.

Ivan Bullerwell.

Thanks are due to Simon Bradley's book *St Pancras Station* published by Profile Books for the factual information contained above.



Just as the Time Bell Rings

So the Government is once again under pressure to tinker with our pub opening hours – so soon after the introduction of so-called “24-Hour Drinking”. This is already the subject of comment in the press and Pints of View but just how have our opening hours developed to where they now are?

Over the last 500 years alcohol and public houses have been the target of all sorts of legislation, moral condemnation, restriction borne out of strife, social change and economic viability. Here we attempt a whistle-stop tour through the regulations that have helped shape our pub opening hours.

Until the 19th Century public houses could generally open all hours except during Sunday morning church service. Whilst the earlier Royal Proclamation against Vice and Immorality of 1787 had set magistrates across the country addressing the problems presented by drink by attempting to impose some opening time restrictions, it was an 1828 Act which introduced new rules for the control of licences. With gin drinking a serious social menace – notably in the larger towns and cities – and suspicions about the quality of beer as the big brewers began to build their tied estates, the Beer House Act of 1830 was passed, enabling any householder to sell beer on or off of the premises for an annual Excise payment of two guineas.

Inns and taverns could continue as they were but the new beerhouses were required to close between 10pm and 4am during the week. But if the beerhouses, who were not allowed to sell spirits, were supposed to entice drinkers away from the demon gin, they only engineered a notable increase in beer consumption. Added to the continuing scourge of gin, a calamitous alcohol-fuelled effect was being suffered by society.

An 1840 Act oddly brought more liberal opening hours linked to the size of a community's population – closing time becoming 11pm in towns and 10pm in rural areas – and the Government of the day (influenced by religious groups) see-sawed with England's drink problem. The 1848 Alehouses and Beer Houses Act brought about increased restriction closely followed by the 1854 Sunday Beer Act which aimed to close pubs on Sunday afternoons - this 'sacrilege' being accompanied by civil unrest as the population

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fought against this curtailment of fun on their one day off. It took another 18 years before the Government was able to fully win the day. In the meantime (and in a growing mood of temperance) the Public House Closing Act of 1864 brought the overnight closing imposed on beerhouses to other forms of public houses – inns, taverns and gin palaces alike who now had to close between 1am and 4am. Other more minor pieces legislation meddled with Sunday and overnight closing but it was the First World War that was to have the most arresting influence on England's opening hours – setting the scene for the next sixty years.

In 1914, with the war in its tragic infancy, concerns grew about the inappropriateness of excessive drinking. Under The Defence of the Realm Act earlier closing was introduced in some areas at the request of the military authorities. Weeks later the Intoxicating Liquor Act allowed the further restricting of opening hours, and by 1915 pubs were only open for 5½ hours every weekday – typically from 12 to 2.30pm and 6.30 to 9.30pm.

Despite some pressure to return to pre-war opening hours, the post-war Licensing Act of 1921

retained many of the wartime restrictions, but extended weekday opening in areas such as Hertfordshire to eight hours with at least a two-hour closure in the afternoon (except on market days). The opening hours had to occur between 11am and 10pm. Only 5 hours were permitted on a Sunday, all after 12 noon. After 1934 weekday evening closing could be extended by magistrates to 10.30pm but initially for only for part of the year – to offset the seasonal late working of agricultural workers.

The Second World War was not encumbered by any further legislation – it was even suspended to help wartime morale.

The Licensing Act of 1961 introduced the 10 minute drinking-up period for the end of opening sessions. In the ensuing 25 years increasing pressure was applied for the liberalising of England's anachronistic licensing laws though the powers of the land continue to thwart change.

It took until 1988 (under a new Licensing Act) for unbroken day time drinking to become a possibility. Opening hours became 11am to 11pm, 6 days a week, with Sunday lunchtime drinking extended by one hour until 3pm. Seven years on and Sunday afternoon closing was also abolished although the 10.30pm evening closing remained. But for many pubs it was no longer viable to open all day, particularly during the week, so marked had been the social and economic change since WW1.

The current picture was completed in 2005 when, ostensibly, it became possible for a pub to open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Only a tiny number of publicans have sought this option – the new flexibility on opening hours being accompanied by a more stringent onus on them to show social responsibility. The police and licensing authorities have increased powers to deal with drunkenness and pubs that fall short of this requirement.

There is now a mixed bag of opening time in Hertfordshire – most pubs still not selling alcohol during the week until 11am or later. Many remain closed during the afternoons and some do not open at all during weekday lunchtimes. In the evenings some have taken advantage of an extra hour, closing at midnight but many town centre pubs now open later, particularly at the weekends. Few remain open after 2am. There are no Hertfordshire pubs operating 24-hour opening.

Recent Government words have hailed the 2005-spawned freedom to drink when we want as a guarded success story – there is little additional drunkenness apportioned to it. However the police have voiced genuine concern over binge-drinking and drink related crimes committed between 2am and dawn as pubs empty at a later time. The effects of cheap pub offers and supermarket booze are deep into focus. Rest assured that we have not seen the last of Licensing Law change.

Les Middlewood

Hitchin Beer Festival 2008

Once again, the **Hitchin Beer Festival**, a joint venture between North Herts CAMRA and the Hitchin Round Table was an enormous success. Over 1,600 came through the doors over the two-day period, an increase of over 200 on last year. Between them all, they managed to drink their way through 60 different beers from all over the country.

On offer were milds, bitters and plenty of stouts and porters. The first three milds to sell out were *Fernandes* *Malt Shovel Mild* at 3.8%, *Riverhead Sparth Mild* at 3.6%, and



Elgoods Black Dog Mild at 3.6%. In the bitter section, we had old favourites such as *Crouch Vale Brewers Gold* at 4.0%, *Red Squirrel Bitter* at 3.9% and *Great Oakley Wot's Occurring* at 3.9% etc. There were plenty of stouts and porters with old favourites; *Bateman Salem Porter* at 4.7% and *Wentworth Oatmeal Stout* at 4.8%, *Nightjar Porter* at 4.5% and *Hopshackle Historic Porter* at 4.8%, plus beers from Bedfordshire brewer *White Park* (which opened in Oct 2007). Porters are becoming popular again and the *Stannington Stout* from Crown Brewery in Hillsborough Hotel, Sheffield, was voted the Beer of the Festival, and North Herts Branch will be organising a trip in the near future to present them with an award.

In addition to the beers there were ciders and perry, with the East Anglian Gold Medal Winner, *Pickled Pig* not only selling out first, but being voted cider of the festival, and of course we will visit and present them with an award.

The Foreign Beer Bar sold out completely on Friday evening, so we only had a new stock of bottled beers available on Saturday.

Food was once again supplied by Mick (the Ham) Saunders, ably assisted by his daughter Debbie and a 'work experience' boy Paul Marlow. There were rolls, pies, sausage rolls and a vegetable chilli on offer each day. In addition to the main food, cheeses and olives were also available along with country wines and meads.

The festival was such a success that it sold out of beer, cider, etc, etc at 8.45 pm on Saturday. With a bit of luck and if the Town Hall, doesn't close, we should all be able to once again spend a pleasant weekend 'supping' real ale, cider and perry from all over the country around this time next year.

Finally, on behalf of both Chairman and the Committees I would like to say a big thank you to all those who volunteered to help and make the festival possible. And let's not forget the visitors who drank all the beer, ciders, and perry. See you next year?

Brian Mason © 2008

Letchworth 2007 Beer Festival Workers Party

Recently a group of us gathered at **Our Mutual Friend**, Stevenage, towards the end of January for the traditional "bit of a do" to celebrate our successful festival in autumn 2007. We were given tickets for two pints each, plus really nice food.



"Smile for the CAMRA." The "Usual Suspects" including Graham, Andy R, Keith, Richard, Colin, Lindsay, Tony, Andy B and several others.

Eventually, even good parties have to end.... So we all down one last pint before wending our way home...only to return next year!

Colin Yates

Our Mutual Friend

Broadwater Crescent, Stevenage, 01438-312282



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

Another Borehamwood Pub Destroyed by Fire

On Sunday 20th January the fire brigade was called out just after midnight to the **Harvester**, previously known as Jefferson's - and when it was a real pub, the Kings Arms. The roof has been completely burnt out and an investigation into the cause is already underway. Thirty members of staff are now temporarily out of work until repair work is completed. The Harvester did not serve real ale.

Wetherspoons Accused of Foul Play by Rivals

Although just over the border in Beds, Dunstable's new Wetherspoons pub has only been open for just over a week and has already been accused with "foul play" by competitors. The **Gary Cooper**, in the Grove Theatre complex, opened on Monday last week, but rival publicans claim it is aggressively trying to put them out of business.

Their ire has been caused by the "Price Comparison Board" put up in the new bar, which claims that the Wetherspoons is now the cheapest of Dunstable's pubs.

But both bars singled out for this treatment - The **Nag's Head** and **Bar Chameleon** in High Street North - say the prices quoted for them are inaccurate.

Nag's Head boss Trevor Coyne said: "I couldn't believe it when someone told me, so I went down there and it's definitely true. A lot of people have rung me and popped in to see if I'd seen it. A big company like that's trying to put us out of business". Trevor added that he originally hoped that the new bar would be a breath of fresh air for Dunstable's flagging nightlife, but now thinks it could end up costing landlords dearly.

Ed Says: Are price comparison boards fair play? They are in being used in many Wetherspoons in Hertfordshire, Watford being a prime example. Of course the information must be correct but as far as customers are concerned anything which embarrasses the other pubcos and brewers about their pricing policy can't be all bad.

ADZ Town Centre Pub Threat

Alcohol Disorder Zones (or ADZs) are in the final stages of discussion by the Home Office. The latest version of the proposals proposing that pubs in designated areas will have to pay towards the cost of policing the area was relayed to Parliament on 8th January. Amendments to the scheme suggest that a discount of up to 90% could be available if the pubs were part of the "Best Bar One", or another recognised scheme. Supermarkets, convenience stores and off licenses are outside the scheme, and the charges incurred could be up to £100 per week.

What does this mean to customers? As with the DPOs (Designated Public Place Orders) pubs will just find themselves inside the designated areas and will include establishments causing no problems at all. As I have said in the newsletter before; town locals are as much under threat, if not more, than country pubs. The smoking ban and the DPOs have taken their toll and it is the big beer barns that can cope best because of their large turnover. The ADZs if introduced in the near future may be the last straw for the already pressurised licensees. Use them or lose them! Support your local.

Steve Bury

Outstanding Achievement Award for the Southern Cross

The **Southern Cross** in Langley Road, Watford has been a consistent entry in the Good Beer Guide for several years now, and the credit for this must go to publicans John Ross and Joan Bayliss, who turned a pub that no-one expected to excel, into a classic contemporary real ale outlet. This was recognised on the evening of Friday 29th February, when Watford & District branch presented them with an Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Promotion of Real Ale.

The Orchard Pub Company acquired the Southern Cross in the early years of this decade and immediately set about modernising the interior by introducing modern fixtures and fittings, and creating an island bar in the centre of a single drinking area. Such modernisation often isn't good news for the real ale drinker, as cask beer can be neglected in an attempt to push heavily marketed lagers and spirit mixers, but John and Joan, who have run the pub since it reopened, have promoted ale from the very beginning and have for some time now had three changing guest ales to go alongside their regular offering of *Caledonian Deuchars IPA*, *Adnams Broadside* and *Charles Wells Bombardier*. The pub's promotion of real ale goes beyond merely serving one of the best ranges of beer in Watford; John and Joan are keen supporters of the **Watford Beer Festival**, and Watford & District CAMRA branch have collaborated with John to host two Real Ale Experiences at the pub over the last year.

John and Joan's approach has led to the Southern Cross gaining an excellent reputation among the pub-goers of Watford, and not just among real ale fans. The pub's relaxed and convivial atmosphere makes it a favourite for drinkers and diners of all ages and tastes.

It's often said that a pub that gets its ale right is a good pub in all other areas, because excellent ale shows commitment to quality on the part of the publicans. This is certainly the case with the Southern Cross, and the branch would like to thank John, Joan and all their staff for their dedication and congratulate them on their award.

History repeated itself once again for Martin Few and Gill Gibson at the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty in Long Lane Heronsgate as, on Friday 22nd

February, they collected Watford & District's Branch Pub of the Year award for the third year running. The Pub of the Year award recognises those pubs that not only serve the very best real ale, but that offer the best service and welcome, and support CAMRA's campaigning aims.



Above: John Ross (centre) and Joan Bayliss of the Southern Cross accept their Outstanding Achievement award from Watford & District branch chairman Andrew Vaughan

Land of Liberty's Local Success Continues

The **Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty** was recently a runner-up in CAMRA's **National Pub of the Year** competition, so winning the local award once again means Martin and Gill have another chance to go for the top spot. The branch would like to congratulate Martin, Gill and their staff, and wish them the best of luck with the all-Hertfordshire stage of the competition.



Above: Gill and Martin (far right) presented with Watford & District's 2007 Pub of the Year award

Local News and CAMRA Events

Ware Wobble a Success

On Wednesday February 20th in Ware, South Herts CAMRA members plus friends celebrated community pubs week with **The Ware Wobble** - a pub tour of some of Ware's finest community pubs. First port of call was the **Rose and Crown**, a McMullen's house where Richard and Liam served up a special menu for the week plus superb Mac's in the form of *AK*, *Cask* and *IPA*; then down to **The Worpell** to see George and Pat (pictured left), Hertfordshire's longest serving landlords where *Greene King IPA* and *Abbot* were in top notch condition as one would expect plus, Hook Norton's *Old Hooky* was served as well.



Then up to the very packed **High Oak** were Helen and Sandra served up *GK IPA*, Jennings

Cumberland, plus *Titanic Stout* which was outstanding and virtually sold out that night! Last, but by no means least Stuart and Sue at the wonderful **Crooked Billet** where we had Buntingford *Highwaymans IPA*, Nethergate *Priory Mild/Umble*, *Magna* and Oldershaws *Newton's Drop* all served in tip top condition at this GBG regular pub. A great night had by all, thanks for everyone for supporting the Wobble and special thanks to the landlords for looking after us so well! Look forward to seeing you all on the Hertford May is Mild crawl on 20 May (see page 17).

Below: Happy punters at the Crooked Billet



**THE LAND OF LIBERTY, PEACE
AND PLENTY FREEHOUSE**
**CAMRA National Pub of the Year
Finalist 2007!**



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Bank
Holiday
BBQ 's**

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2/3 mile M25 J17; 1 mile Chorleywood Stn

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**St George's Special
Wed 23rd April**
Themed beers & Traditional
English Food
Lunch & Evening

**Spring Beer
Festival
22 – 26 May**

**Call or visit website for more
details**

Great Northern Syndicate Scoops Lotto Win

A 20-strong syndicate, who drink in The Great Northern Inn in London Road, St Albans, swapped pints for glasses of champagne



after scooping £228,000 on the Lotto - netting them £11,400 each.

Pub landlord John Slight said: "I was at home with my partner Debbie when our barman called to say we had won some money.

"I didn't believe him as we are always playing tricks on one another. I couldn't believe it when I realised he was telling the truth. I was just standing in shock while Debbie was running around the room."

After 13 years of binning losing tickets the syndicate could not believe it when they heard they had won.

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA Visit Great Oakley brewery

A merry band of HEB members set out on the morning of the 19th January to visit Great Oakley brewery, near Corby in Northants, their *Wot's Occurring* ABV 3.9% having been voted best beer at the **Hebfeest Beer Festival** last October. The brewery, housed in converted stables first brewed in 2005, and before the visit we had an enjoyable lunch at their brewery tap, the **Malt Shovel** in Northampton. We thank Great Oakley for their hospitality and the informative tour of the brewery. An even merrier band returned home well satisfied by their day out.

Right: Brendan Southcott (centre), Herts & Essex

Borders Chairman, presents Beer of the Festival award to Mike (left) and Phil of the brewery.



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

A fantastic array of fine ales as usual

Lunchtime Snacks

Curry Night every Wednesday £6.00

Two Course Sunday Roast £12.00

Telephone 01438 869665

White Hart Tap

4 Keyfield Terrace, St Albans

Tel: 01727 860974



Deuchars IPA, London Pride
& three guest beers

Food served lunchtime everyday and evenings

Tuesday - Friday

Live music

First Saturday night of month

Large beer garden

All welcome

Woodman is CAMRA South Herts Pub of the Year

The panel of judges, deciding out of all nominated pubs, have announced that the **Woodman** at Wildhill is South Herts CAMRA's 2007 **Pub of the Year**. The result followed one of the closest competitions on record. Full results are as follows:

- 1st **Woodman**, Wildhill.
- 2nd **White Lion**, St Albans (last year's winner).
- 3rd **Crooked Billet**, Ware.

Full write ups and reports will be published following presentations of the awards. Congratulations to all the winning pubs.



Woodman, Wildhill

Guest Beers Lunchtime Food

45 Wildhill Lane
(Between A1000 and B153)
01707 642618

**Seven Times Winner South Herts
CAMRA Pub of the Year**

Watford and District Darts Tournament

The Watford & District CAMRA Annual Darts Tournament takes place at the **West Herts Sports & Social Club** on Thursday 5th June. Branch members will be competing in knock-out rounds to find out who will be engraving their name on the trophy this year. If you're a CAMRA member, and a decent darts player who fancies a shot at the title, or if you just fancy a fun evening and a few beers, then why not come along? See the Branch Diary section for details.

Mild Thing - You make my heart sing

May is coming round again and it's time to support CAMRA's **Make May a Mild Month** campaign and search out some of England's finest milds. Hertford's annual mild walk is upon us with four participating pubs and up to six mouth-watering milds. Come and join Hertford and Ware members on the evening of Tuesday 20 May for their jovial evening quest.

Everyone welcome. Itinerary below:

- 8.00pm **Old Barge**, The Folly
- 8.45 **Old Cross Tavern**, St. Andrew Street
- 9.30 **White Horse**, Castle Street
- 10.15 **Black Horse**, West Street



The White Lion



SOUTH HERTS CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP

Open 5.30pm-11pm (Mon), 12pm-11pm Tue-Sun

**Black Sheep Bitter & Young's Special,
plus 4 ever-changing guest beers**

**Exceptional home-cooked food
lunchtimes and evenings
Tues-Sat 12-2pm, 6.30-8.30pm
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www.TheWhiteLionPH.co.uk



The last last word on Speckled Hen:

Your response to Ray Holmes' letter edition 227 is not quite correct. Morlands first brewed *Old Speckled Hen* in 1979 as a tribute to the MG car factory's golden jubilee that year - the MG plant, also located in Abingdon, was closed the following year by British Leyland! Old Speckled Hen was the nickname given to one of MG's prototype models made in 1927, which was given a paint finish with a difference!

I was given one of the original half pint bottles, which bore a hexagonal label printed in green on a whitish paper by my then girlfriend who lived not far from the brewery.

Nigel Thomson, East Grinstead

Ed Says: I'm certainly not right about everything. As well as the above Ray Holmes, Business Development Manager, Greene King has E-mailed us as we mistakenly called him Roy in edition 227. Sorry Ray. I think this must be the "last last" word on the Speckled Hen and we appreciate having you as a regular reader of our periodical.

Ideal Rise selective with the truth:

The **Swan** in Park Street has been fenced in (8 feet high) off, by a company called "Ideal Rise". The fence is very bright and corporate with Ideal Rise all over it, with the phone number 0208 843 1977.

I called in (the car park doors are still open and no-one seemed to be around). All the barrels are still at the back and there is a pile of banners lying in the car park with Ideal Rise all over them, just like a housing development.

I rang the number and a chap called Mark answered, he would not give his surname and claimed not to know of the plans for the pub. I presume they will let it rot for a while and then put in for planning permission citing no-one wants to use the pub.

The killer is that they normally work hand in hand with the pubco and split the profits. This is obviously going to happen a lot now as property values are high and some pubs are struggling.

Local councils will like it also as even if they just do the car park into housing, they can squeeze in a few more crappy small homes, collect more tax and keep up with the demand for extra dwellings.

Apparently, Terry and William O'Sullivan (also apparently not related) run the firm and Terry is

out of the country and William is busy at a pub site in Watford. Having just found them on the web, it seems the plan is quite clear and it would explain why "Mark" Fitzgerald was at best evasive, if not telling untruths, when I spoke to him, especially as he is listed on their website as the Corporate Planning Director!

<http://www.idealrise.com/page2.htm>

Name & Registered Office:

IDEALRISE LIMITED 24 GRAYS INN ROAD LONDON, WC1X 8HP

<http://www.idealrise.com/index.htm>

idealrise@btconnect.com

Tel: 0208 452 3355 Fax: 0208 452 8434

Martin (name and address supplied)

Oh! Dr Beeching

With regard to Watton railway station in Brian Masons article. I think we should be fair to the much maligned, Dr Beeching. Watton and Stapleford were both closed as a wartime economy measure on 10th Sept 1939. Stapleford, as we know never reopened and services to Watton resumed with electrification, in May 1982. I know this has little to do with ale, but the two interests do have a habit of mixing with one another.

Jerry Robertson, Hertford

Have Greene King beers changed?

I am sure GK beers have and can recollect when the generation drinking beer in the 1940s to 60s saying in the 1970s and 80s 'The beer does not have the taste as it used to', and the younger generation concluding 'No problem with the beer, your taste buds are not what they were'.



My experience of GK is varied, however and I have had some absolutely outstanding *IPA* and *Abbot*.

Two years ago at a 50th birthday bash held in a large barn out in the sticks of North East Hertfordshire, there were three firkins of *IPA* racked up on gravity, and all ran out in 2 1/2 hours. It was a serious under-order and I said to the bar staff, six of the *IPA* would have sold out during the evening no problem.



Having done the maths, I reckon around a 100 were drinking the IPA, so the average is a little over 2 pints each - no wonder they ran out!!! Also consumed were two full size hog roasts. Similarly, I have had some exceptional Abbot - also on gravity. Some of the large brewers have had to contend with poor quality beer served in pubs. I think this is why GK began their 'best cask ale awards' to raise the standard. Incidentally, the **Nelson** in Wheathampstead is now into the top 20 selected by GK for their award out of several thousand applications.

Rob Strachan

Ed Says: What people forget is that in the 1970s IPA (and I believe Abbot Ale) were brewed at Biggleswade and Bury St Edmunds. As I hope the informed of us know, each brewery has its own fingerprint, and the debate was long as to which was the best. Sometimes just to cause confusion, beer from the other breweries would come into each other's estate. This of course ended when Biggleswade shut. Again, over the years things have changed; Greene King no longer malt their own barley, for example, and brewers have changed as well as the recipe being amended. I remember very well the head brewer informing me once, with much pleasure that he had changed Abbot Ale so that it would reduce the chances of a hangover. *Never worked for me.*

No late drinking in North London

Following my comment in Readers Write edition 227 (*24-hour drinking very rare indeed*) Richard Larkin of CAMRA North London Branch has been in touch.

He sent me an article from the Times written by Mick Hume titled "24-hour boozing - the sober truth", which hitherto endorses what I said.

"Driving through the streets of North and East London last Saturday night, we were everywhere confronted by the same depressing scene; the pubs were all closed, dark and apparently deserted. If there is indeed a problem with our late-night drinking laws, it is that many of us, on the rare occasions we go out, still cannot enjoy a pint after midnight at the weekend. That's what I call antisocial.

Government figures show that 60% of licensed premises still close by 11pm on a Saturday, a further 24% shut by midnight and only 6% open past 1am.

The truth is 24-hour drinking does *not* exist. - 470 pubs, bars and clubs have 24-hour licenses, about one per 100,000 adults. Some of course do not use their extended hours. So if you find one it is going to be a bit of a squeeze.

The new laws were always measures of regulation not liberalisation. But things look different in the fantasy world inhabited by the critics, the hardcore prigs and political troublemakers wearing reverse "beer goggles" that makes everything look ugly around drink. Ignoring any review findings of a drop in alcohol consumption and violent crime, they seized upon the one weapon to hand - a reported increase in offences between 3 and 6 am, a sleepy time that accounts for just 4% of night-time trouble.

It may shock the critics that even in the 1970s where it often seemed very hard to find any pubs open people still got drunk and into trouble, yet somehow society survived."

Ed Says I hope Mick will accept my editing and I am in total agreement with his views.

Ware 2008 Real Ale Festival

~ At ~

**Ware Arts Centre, Kibes Lane, Ware
(Entrance around the back)**

Fri - Sat, 11 - 12 April 2008

26 Real Ales & 3 Ciders

**Opening Times: 7.00-11.00 both nights
Entry price £3 both nights
(advance tickets required for Friday)**

Live music Saturday night: The Trees

**Tickets on sale now at:
Genesis Jewellers, 16 High St., Ware, Herts.**

All proceeds to local charities

**For further information contact:
01920-424095 or email:
josemporium@hotmail.co.uk**

Pints of View Beer Name Prize Sudoku

	R				L	
N						A
G	Y		F		N	
F	D		N	R		
	G			D		F
				F	L	D
		N			O	Y
O						F
	L					R

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 Loddon brewery beer: **DRAGONFLY**

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

Your Name:

Your Address:

Postcode:

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

2008 St Albans Beer Festival: 24-27 September

Dr Feelgood are back by popular demand!

Formed on Canvey Island in Essex in the 1970s **Dr Feelgood** remains one of the most popular and exciting live rhythm and blues acts in the world.

The raw and uncompromising sound and style of their music resulted in the album *Stupidity* which immediately went to the number one position in the UK charts.

Dr Feelgood have also enjoyed global success with a string of hit singles including: *Roxette*, *Back in the Night*, *Milk and Alcohol*, *Down at the Doctors*, *She Does it Right*, *Going Back Home* and *See You Later Alligator* – which gave the group their first gold record.

2008 sees the band continue to tour extensively throughout the world visiting exciting new places and thrilling crowds with the vitality of their live show.

www.stalbansbeerfestival.com

www.drfeelgood.org

Dr Feelgood will be playing at the 2008 St Albans Beer Festival, Alban Arena on Saturday 27 September 2008, so make a note in your diary!



DR FEELGOOD



Making a Mild Month of May

May comes round again and with it another chance for CAMRA to champion Mild, a brew that is hard to find in Hertfordshire's pubs. It is reckoned that as few as 10 now stock it on a regular all-year-round basis. But May is when Mild blossoms with CAMRA branches all over the land holding events in support of this rare and endangered breed. In Hertfordshire most of the branches will be putting on chances to try mild, marking another Make May A Mild Month – look out for events near you.

Putting It Mildly...

Mild was developed in the 18th and 19th Centuries as a less aggressively bitter style of beer than porter and stout. Early Milds were much stronger than most modern interpretations which tend to fall into the 3% to 3.7% category, though there are still some notable stronger versions.



Mild's usual darkness is normally attributed to the use of well-roasted malts, roasted barley or caramel. Paler versions have existed – many of us will remember Mac's AK being marketed as a light Mild until its original gravity was raised. Whilst some regional and local brewers still produce a mild – until the 1960s all brewers had a Mild in their portfolio - in Hertfordshire you are more likely to find examples from our important band of micro-brewers, including Red Squirrel Brewery *Dark Ruby Mild*, Tring *Mansion Mild* and Buntingford *Pargeter Mild*. Locally CAMRA's support for mild goes way back to 1977 when Make May A Mild Month events took place at the **Bell and Crown** in Hertford, the **Rose and Crown**, Essenden, **Plough**, Great Munden, **Victoria**, Watford and **Red Lion**, Radlett. That year North Herts Branch ran a Mild Beer Festival at Therfield Village Hall.



Peter and Katie give you a warm welcome to -

The Mermaid Public House

6 Cask Ales

Draught Cider and
Perry

Selection of Wine
and Belgian Beers

Home Cooked Food
Served Daily 12-3pm
& 5-7pm



All Sports Shown

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Karaoke Every Sunday 6-10pm

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Tuesday from 8pm - All
Players Welcome

*Jam Sessions Every Monday
Night*

Live Music Every Weekend

Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RL, Tel 01727 837758

Open 12-11pm Mon-Thurs, 12-12am Fri & Sat, 12-10.30pm Sun

Car Park and Beer Garden

Route 700 Opens up North Herts Branch Area

ARRIVA Buses run route 700 from Stevenage to Stansted Airport via Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Buntingford, Puckeridge, Standon, Little Hadham and Bishops Stortford. It gives us the chance to visit the eastern half of our branch area without having the need to drive there. With up to 6 buses running during 'opening time' it gives you plenty of scope to hop on and off buses at your will. The fares are very cheap. The best deal is an Explorer ticket with a day's unlimited travel for up to 4 people for only £7. You can get more details of bus times and prices from **INTERLINK** travel line on 0870 608 2608.



On leaving Baldock the route 700 takes the main A507 to Cotteder. Your first port of call is the **Bull** (01763 281243) with the bus stopping outside the front door! This open plan

Greene King pub has a beer garden and sells *IPA* and *Abbot*. It tends to be a food-orientated pub but it does have a separate drinking area.

Rejoin the bus outside the pub to continue your journey to Buntingford, and when it crosses the A10 it is a short ride into the town centre. Here the bus will deposit you outside the **Crown** (☎ 01763 271308). What is it with buses and pubs? The Crown is an ideal place to start your visit to Buntingford, and if you can only spare time to visit



a couple of pubs make this and **Brambles** (left) your first choice. The Crown is a friendly pub, run by Colin and Cherry, and has featured in the last 17 editions of CAMRA's **Good**

Beer Guide. It has two bars, a rear covered patio, plus a beer garden for those hot summer days! Look out for the bird in the cage. This is a fine free house and sells up to three changing real ales. If you are feeling hungry why not try one of their Mad Cow Pies! They sometime have themed food nights.

If you choose to visit all the pubs in Buntingford

then a suggested route might be to walk from the Crown back along High Street until you come to Brambles (117 High Street, 01763 271327) Here you will find up to eight real ales, usually from Fullers, Buntingford Brewery and Tring Brewery and sometimes others further afield. This pub features in the current **Good Beer Guide**.



Returning along High Street you take a left turn into Church Street and go down to the **Fox and Duck** (23 Church Street, ☎ 01763 271308). This is a comfortable two-bar side street pub. This pub has

Sky TV and a beer garden outside. It sells *Greene King IPA*. Look out for the off-sales hatch by the front door, a rarity in Hertfordshire. Return to the High Street, turning left, and continue to the **Black Bull** (16 High Street, ☎ 01763 271230) this is a McMullen pub so expect to see *AK* and their new beer *Cask Ale* on sale. This town centre local



has a comfortable bar area and a beer garden, the pubs sells food but not on Tuesdays. On leaving the **Black Bull** turn left and proceed to the **Jolly Sailors** (2 Station Road, ☎ 01763 271353). This is a free house with a traditional bar at the front with restaurant and games area



to the side and rear. Children are welcome in the conservatory. The beer on sale is Shepherd Neame *Spitfire*, and occasionally another one. Food is served Tues to Sat Lunchtimes. Your next port of call (sailors etc) is along Station Road at the **Railway Inn** (on corner of London Road, ☎ 01763 271374). Buntingford lost its railway, like many other places in the early 60's, to



that wonderful man Dr Beeching. This is essentially a Chinese restaurant but still does real ale. It sells *Greene King IPA*. You can now either return back to the Crown for the next bus or take a

Local Features

diversion to Aspenden. At the turn of the 19th Century Buntingford had fifteen pubs, what a pub crawl that would have been!

The walk to the **Fox** at Aspenden is just under a mile each way. Come out of the Railway Inn walk along Aspenden road, going under the A10 Buntingford bypass, till you come to the Fox (☎ 01763 271886) which is just beyond the turning to Westmill on your left hand side.



This unspoilt traditional village local is housed in buildings dating back to the 16th Century. It has two bars and a beer garden to the rear. Traditional food is served here. The beer is well worth drinking and consists of *Greene King IPA* and *Abbot Ale*, plus one from GK's guest range.

Having left Buntingford via London Road the bus rejoins the A10. Continue till you get to the turning for Westmill. You had better ask the driver to stop here. Walk along the road for about a quarter of a



mile where you will come to the lovely village of Westmill. Here you will not only find the **Sword Inn Hand** (above) but also the Westmill Tea Rooms. Whilst the tea rooms are not licensed they make an excellent excuse to get 'her' indoors to make the short walk here. The food and cups of tea come highly recommended, and it is a favourite watering hole for cyclists! The Sword Inn Hand (☎ 01763 271356) is a country pub of real character. Now very much a restaurant pub it still retains a traditional bar area. There is a beer garden to sit in. The beers on sale are *Greene King IPA*, and sometimes something more interesting. Summer opening hours are often longer...(It's probably easier to walk to Westmill than go back to Buntingford and wait ages for the next bus just for one stop. Turn right at the cricket pitch and follow the road for about half a mile. Be warned there is no pavement, or streetlights, this is the country, after all.

Walk back to the A10 where the bus (if you can get it to stop) takes you along the valley of the River Rib to Puckeridge. On leaving the A10 the bus will turn into the B1368 Braughing Road

(Station Road), oh why could not Dr Beeching have left things alone?! The bus takes a right turn into Buntingford Road where you will stop outside the **White Hart** (right). There are two pubs in Braughing the **Axe and Compasses** (Flowers IPA and one or two guests) and **Brown Bear** (GK IPA, Abbot) but as they are more than a mile away fitness and timing are all important! The White Hart (Buntingford Road) (☎ 01920 821309) is a comfortable, welcoming McMullen pub. It has a multi roomed area with a bar in the middle. Beers on offer are *AK* and *Country*. It has a reputation for good food. On



leaving the pub turns left and continue into the High Street. Here you will come across the **Crown and Falcon** (33 High Street, ☎ 01920 821561). This is an attractive welcoming



pub with a large bar and restaurant. Its picturesque white fronted outside reveals superb interior timber-work. On the last inspection of this free house it sold McMullen *AK*, *Adnams Bitter* and two guests, often one from Buntingford Brewery. Go back to the White Hart and catch the bus to Standon or walk along another Station Road (*Oh*, Dr B..!) until we reach the A120 and stop outside the Heron.

The pubs in Standon and the rest of the route are part of the Herts Essex Borders branch of CAMRA but as I have visited them on several occasions, feel they deserve a mention here. They once made paper for Bibles in Standon! The **Heron** (Kents Lane/A120, ☎ 01920 821236) which incorporates the China Garden Restaurant still has the feel of a friendly



comfortable local. *Greene King IPA* is the choice. On leaving the Heron turn right into the High Street. The first pub you come to is the **Bell** (4 High Street, ☎ 01920 821639). This true village pub has a frontage dating from the 16th Century and has a large garden with petanque and a children's area. It sells *Greene King IPA* and sometimes *Abbot*, and

Local Features

does meals at lunch time. On leaving the pub turn right and continue to the **Star**, just below (High Street, ☎ 01920 821528). This is an attractive village pub, having a beer garden, selling food lunch times and evenings. It sells

Greene King IPA and *Tanners Jack*. You must walk back to the Heron for the bus to continue your journey.

The bus continues along the A120 and will take you into Bishop's Stortford. Here you will find up to 24 pubs. The **Half Moon** and the **Jolly Brewers** are in the Good Beer Guide. The Half Moon sells anything up to eight real ales and cider too, and is well known for live music. No food is served, but you are welcome to order in takeaways and use the pub cutlery.

Below, The Half Moon



The last 700 bus leaves the Causeway stop at around 2230, and gets back to Stevenage Bus Station just after midnight.

On the way to Bishop's Stortford from Standon the bus passes the roads to Wellpond Green and Little Hadham. There do not appear to be any bus stops on this part of the route so like Braughing it -

Below, The Jolly Brewers

will be a long walk to get to the **Kick and Dicky** (above, top) formerly the Nags Head (Wellpond Green, ☎ 01920 821424). This is a pleasant pub cum restaurant that has reverted to its original name so as not to be confused with the other pub near by. It sells *Adnams Bitter* and *Broadside*. There is a beer garden with a pond in it! Continue your journey and you will reach Little



Hadham. Here you will find the **Nags Head**, below the Ford, (☎ 01279 751555). This is a typical village pub housed in an oldish building; it sells *Greene King*

beers and has a beer garden and tables outside the front. I have tried the food and it is reasonably priced and tasty!

Please check opening times when visiting pubs during the afternoon.

All details of the above pubs including photographs can be found at:

www.pubs.hertsale.org.uk



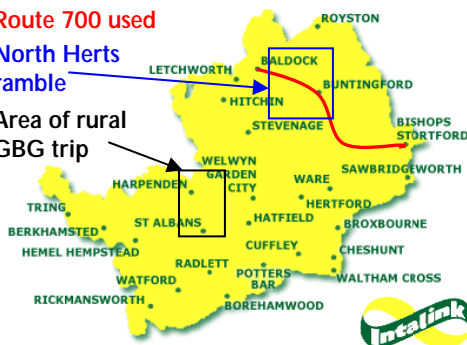
Richard Merritt MBE

Map for articles above and two below

Route 700 used

North Herts ramble

Area of rural GBG trip



For further bus information see: www.intalink.org.uk

Using the Bus for a Rural GBG Survey Trip

South Hertfordshire branch dedicate February to **Good Beer Guide** surveying and as we weren't able to go on them all, Martin and I decided to do some of the rural ones on a  ticket from St. Albans one evening. We met up at St Albans station at 18.00 to find the 320 to Batford (East of Harpenden) already waiting, and



Local Features

were soon off to our first pub, **the Green Man** (previous page, bottom right) in Sandridge. This Punch pub has been under Mike Eames' management for the past 20 years. The *Greene King Abbot* here is a reference point for that beer. Also on offer were the other regular beers, *Greene King IPA* and *Caledonian Deuchars IPA*. The guest ales available on our visit were from a local brewery, *Tring Colleys Dog* (5%) and *Legless Lal* (4.5). These were, as expected, in tip-top condition and very flavoured.

The next leg of our journey was to Gustard Wood on the last 304 of the night at 19.10. Nine minutes



later we were dropped in the middle of nowhere at the Ballslough Hill cross roads and

were soon inside the welcoming **Cross Keys** (above). Unfortunately, we didn't see Bob Andrews, the owner, but we were able to sample a pint of *Greene King H&H Rocking Rudolph*, an excellent brew weighing in at 4.5%. A welcome change in the pub is the clean atmosphere. It used to be a smokers pub. Hopefully, the smoking regulations won't tip the balance against rural pubs such as this.

Time was pressing and the next part of our crawl involved a walk of nearly three miles. With the last 304 now gone, it was a case of walking back along the twisting road to Wheathampstead. Fortunately most

motorists were courteous, dipping their headlights and giving us



a wide berth as they passed. We carried on walking up Church Road and down Amwell Lane to the Greene King GBG, **Elephant & Castle** in Amwell (above). This is another fairly isolated pub but always seems to have a good trade.

Malcolm was behind the bar with a cheerful greeting and two more pints of excellent *Abbot*. We compared diaries and found that we would probably be at the **Luton Beer Festival** on the same day the following week. Had we thought quickly

enough, we could have ordered a couple of the pub's enormous baguettes to soak up the beer.

At 21.25 we were on our way again and heading

for the **Nelson** on the other side of Wheathampstead in Marford Road. The Nelson is owned by Bob Andrews of the Cross Keys and run by Steve Pascall who has turned the pub



into an excellent operation from nothing in the last couple of years. We sat by the open fire with pints of McMullens AK. Time to leave was 22.10 and we walked back to the **Swan** (below) and the bus stop. As the bus hadn't yet arrived, there was time




for a swift half each of *Greene King Morland Old Speckled Hen* which doesn't have the body and flavour of the bottled version.

The bus arrived on time and 15 minutes

later we were back in St. Albans with just time to nip into the **Mermaid** (below) for last orders. Pete Cruickshank and Katie Avery are working hard to promote the pub as a mecca for real ale. Martin had a pint of *Hadrian Gladiator* while I settled for a half, and a half of Gary's *Mild* from **Red Squirrel** brewery in Hertford.

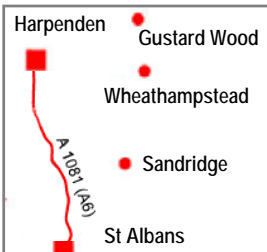
For those who say the only way to get to village and rural pubs is to drive, I say, "Give this itinerary a try". We

managed 5 out of town pubs in a 5-hour evening trip by bus and on foot. The cost of the  ticket



is only £1.70 on top of a train ticket to St. Albans. It can be done on any Monday-Saturday at the timings given. The times quoted are current to September 2007. It is strongly advised that checks are made on the Intalink website or from Traveline on **0871 200 2233**. For those preferring to do the trip on daylight, start off on the 11.50 320 from St. Peter's Street to Sandridge for a 55 minute break before

Local Features



Inset of map page 24

catching the 304 at 12.50 on to Gustard Wood. This gives another break of an hour before returning at 14.18 to Wheathampstead and the rest of the crawl as detailed above.

John Crowhurst

North Herts Mini Bus Rambles

February found us once again on the road to visit more out of the way places.

Our first port of call, which is not strictly off the beaten track, but a long way out of Baldock, was the **George IV** (right) on the old A1, on the way to Letchworth.

As the pub stands in the Parish of Weston everyone refers to it as being in Baldock. In 1806 a cottage became a beer house which was demolished and rebuilt about 1850. Ruddles *County* was very nice and the *Greene King IPA* and *Speckled Hen* were reasonable.



Moving on we next went to the **Moon & Stars** at Rushden (below), often mistaken for the other town in Northamptonshire by foreign lorry drivers travelling west on the A507, until a Hertfordshire sign was erected. I have always liked this little pub,



which in my working days was a very good place for real ale and a 'ploughman's lunch'. In 1806, the pub was called the 'Seven Stars' and in 1817 called the 'Half Moon & Stars'. Other than that, little is known of the pub. On offer were Greene King IPA and London Pride, both in good condition.

We then made our way across country to the **Fox & Duck**, right,



at Therfield. The pub, circa 1750, was mortgaged to a Thomas Crocket of Royston and rebuilt in the nineteenth Century. It has recently had an attractive interior refurbishment and Ruddles Best Bitter and Greene King IPA, were on offer both in very good condition. The other pub in Therfield, called the Bell was closed at the end of the last century.

We were all looking forward to the next pub, the **Cabinet** at Reed, right. I have fond memories of sitting at the 'inglenook' fireplace in the winter, munching away at yet another ploughman's lunch. Its fortunes have changed over the last few years and it is more of a restaurant that serves beer. However, when we arrived, the pub was once again closed for refurbishment (to be updated in Down Your Way).



Not to be downhearted, we made our way to the **Countryman** at Chipping, below. This pub quite literally stands beside the A10, and only opens on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is worth visiting as it is a very old building, with original wooden beams and other features. I need to research its history as I know of nothing

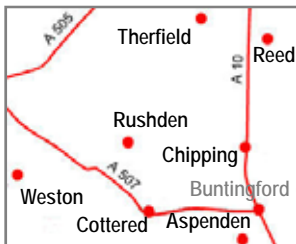


recorded. The beers available were Marston Sweet Chariot and Wells & Young's Bombardier. Both were in excellent condition.

Because the Cabinet at Reed was closed, we decided to try the **Fox** at Aspenden, below, just south of Buntingford as our last pub of the evening. This pub is really off the beaten track, but is well worth a visit. In 1771 and for the next century, the pub was divided into two dwellings, of which one was an alehouse. Simpson's of Baldock owned it and now it is a Greene King pub. Greene King IPA and Hook Norton Old Hooky were on sale and both were in very good condition.



With that last pub, the evening ended and we all



wended our way home to bed, (some quicker than others), until the next time.

Brian Mason

Left: Inset of map on page 24

In the wake of the Review's exposure of the District Council's illegal efforts to ban drinking outside pubs, the authority is beginning to sort out the confusion.

It has announced it will be taking over responsibility from the County Council for licensing tables and chairs on pavements, and is drawing up a draft policy.

But despite it being highlighted how city centre pubs had been wrongly told to stop customers drinking outside; it has neither apologised to landlords nor communicated with them to clarify the position.

In an effort to bolster its reputation, however, the licensing department is reminding the public it was awarded the title of Local Authority of the Year in the Responsible Drinks Retailing Awards - in November.

Labour leader Roma Mills responded: "How odd that only a few months ago, officers from the district council busied themselves telling local publicans to stop their customers standing or sitting outside whilst having a drink, because a very small number of local residents found this activity intimidating.

"No doubt all will be well when we have chairs and tables licensed to be placed on the pavement - will consumers' feet have to be licensed in a similar way if they choose to stand with a drink in hand?"

Ed Says: It appears we cannot escape this bureaucratic nightmare, how about some common sense, and some honest admission of error?

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 20.

Allens Green: Congratulations to the **Queens Head** winning the Herts & Essex Borders Branch pub of the year. The Queens is a community village pub re-opened following closure by a big brewer.

Barley: the **Fox and Hounds** has suffered £500k worth of fire damage. This is the pub which used to have a small brewery and has a gantry sign over the road which is still intact. The pictures don't look good - the bars have been seriously affected but one suspects, with the right intent, this one can be mended.

Bishop's Stortford: The **Red White & Blue**, just to

Is St Albans Booze Ban a Scam?

In Edition 226 Dec/Jan 2008 we highlighted the unsatisfactory situation that St Albans City centre pubs had been put in following the Council putting the area under a DPPO (Designated Public Place Order). The St Albans and Harpenden Review published a front page article on Wednesday 28th February which appears to show that the Council have now relented and customers are allowed to drink outside pubs again as long as they are well behaved. In Edition 226 we published a long piece from Brian Parker who explained exactly what the order meant and exposed the small number of complaints that had been made. District Council chief executive Daniel Goodwin is quoted in the article as admitting that the Council has no right to stop outside drinking in the area. He continued by also admitting that the original letter could have been misinterpreted as banning the consumption of alcohol outside the premises. Brian Parker's comment was "This is a scam the council should acknowledge that it set out to stop people drinking in public, contrary to the 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act and should write a formal apology to the five pubs affected".

Julie Barnes, landlady of the **White Swan** in Upper Dagnall Street said "This has affected our trade especially because of the smoking ban". The other pubs placed under the ban are the **Boot**, the **Snug** at the **Fleur De Lys**, at the Clock Tower in French Row, **Harry Smith's** in Verulam Road, and the **Great Northern** in London Road.

The article was accompanied by Brian Parker and Julie Barnes enjoying a drink outside the **White Swan**, Brian a discerning drinker was using a **CAMRA St Albans Beer Festival glass**.

The council says it will clarify the situation in a leaflet to be sent to all city centre pubs.

the north of the town, and now boarded up for some time, is destined for redevelopment into flats.

Bricket Wood: The lease on the **Fox & Hounds** is up for sale.

Cromer Hyde: The **Crooked Chimney** is open again and sporting a superb sign with a hand painting of the Crooked Chimney pub, our correspondent says it looks ten to a hundred times better than the previous sign of some daft looking chimney sweep with their Inn Keeping with Tradition phrase - now gone. There is another Crooked Chimney wooden painted name sign on the front of the pub and it looks like M&B are listening to local voices and now has three brand new wooden hand pumps serving Everard's *Tiger*, Fuller's *London Pride*, and Greene King *Abbot Ale*. As all the keg bitters have gone - it is now a proper pub that also serves food. (Note that up until the late 1960s the pub was named the "Chequers" *Ed*).

Croxley Green: Watford & District branch would like to welcome Jason and Tracy Soden, and Tracy's son Daniel, who have taken over the reins at the **Sportsman**.

Elstree/Medburn: The **Waggon & Horses** had a visit from the Police "Itemiser" - a portable drug testing machine early last November. The landlady Marion Buckley, previously at the **Woodcock**, Borehamwood and the **Swan**, Park Street (both now sadly closed and up for redevelopment) welcomed the check. Thirty people were tested and two had positive results and were searched - no illegal substances were found.

Harpenden: It's good to hear that real ale isn't on the decline, and is on the up and up in the **Carpenters Arms** anyway, a fifth hand pump went in recently so look forward to an even bigger variety of guest ales.

Hertford: The **Six Templars** finally opened its doors for the first time in early March. Six years in the coming, Wetherspoon's latest Hertfordshire outlet is located outside the walls of Hertford Castle on The Wash. Set on two floors and occupying part of the former Unionist Club, the controversial new-build part of the building features a turret end and a full two-storey-height glazed frontage. Currently not being badged as a Lloyd's No.1 the pub has almost a Seventies retro feel to it and features pictures, statues and a mural above the bar depicting Hertford and local events. The former Unionist Club bar area has a reading-room feel to it. Upstairs there are WC's and a

corridor seating area. As well as the regular beers - Greene King *Abbot IPA*, and Marston's *Pedigree* - two guest beers are usually available. So far there has been a good representation from local Hertfordshire breweries - from the likes of Red Squirrel and Tring. There is no sign of any refurbishment work starting at the **Sportsman**, which remains closed - it's papered out windows now becoming a bit of an eyesore. Over the road there is another change of landlord at the **Ram**. And a word for the **Hertford Club** in the historic Lombards House in Bull Plain, where a February Beer Festival went down well with club members and their real-ale-seeking guests. Two or three regularly-changing beers featured at the bar with a further two served direct from the cask.

Markyate: the lease on the **Sun** is up for sale through agents 'RTA'.

Roydon Hamlet: Although a couple of miles across the border, the **Green Man**, run by Hertfordshire CAMRA members, re-opened in November. Previously there were no real ales but Jane & Danny introduced Shepherd Neame *Spitfire*. Sales have been so encouraging that an additional pump, serving *Bass* has been installed.

Shenley: After valiant efforts the **William IV** has been unable to continue selling *Greene King IPA*, the excellent *Abbot Ale* will continue to be served.

St Albans: The **Glass House**, previously the **Acorn**, owned by Punch has its lease, which has 17 years to run up for sale for £65,000. 98% of the turnover is wet! New management, apparently a brother and sister team started at the **Portland Arms** in February. Sadly, we say goodbye to Andy and Emma Marsh at the **King William IV**. The friendly and funny banter from behind the bar will be sadly missed by their appreciative regulars. We welcome Nathan Laflin as their replacement in this challenging Mitchells & Butlers pub. M&B are currently challenging Wertherspoons in their Ember Inns pubs by offering a steak package on Tuesdays and a curry on Thursdays. Unlike Wetherspoons, the beer choice is ANY real ale under 4.1% rather than a specific real ale, whether you like the choice or not. Tony & Noleen left the **Rats Castle** on 31 January for a pub in London. We now welcome Gordon and Selina Lungley in their place and hope that they will stay a little longer. Regular beers are Caledonian *Deuchars IPA* and Fuller's *Gales HSB* + a guest. The **King Harry**, owned by one of the many arms of Mitchells &

DOWN YOUR WAY

Butlers is now up for sale as a freehold with agents Collier's who have not published a price as yet. Could this be something to do with the pub being under threat from developers and road planners? Plans to redevelop the playing fields behind the pub were refused last March but an appeal was lodged, which was heard 16th January. We await the result.

Stanstead Abbots: The **Red Lion** has been extensively refurbished with a separate restaurant. The landlord is keen on (and drinks) real ale and has rearranged the three-sided bar with the lager pumps to the rear, so that on entering you have the more welcoming sight of *Spitfire* and *Greene King IPA* pumps. Look out for the Hog Roast on Bank Holiday, 5th May, and the beer festival over the late Spring Bank Holiday.

Stocking Pelham: Terrible news. The **Cock** has been all-but demolished by a serious blaze. The weather-boarded and thatched low-ceilinged pub was one of only seventeen Hertfordshire pubs that featured in CAMRA's *East Anglian Inventory of Pub Interiors with Special Interest* – cited for its heavy beams and timbers and the "outbuilding" which featured an amazing rough-cast semi-circular roof. Maybe the noted outhouse has survived. We wait to see if the pub will be re-built.

Tyttenhanger: The GBG-listed **Plough** has been bought by Fullers. They probably used some of the money they got from the sale of the **Swan** Park Street.

Ware: New landlords have been appointed to the **Rifle Volunteer**.

Waltham Cross: The **Happy Pig** has been refurbished and renamed as **Bar AB**. It's a neon-lit, sparsely furnished venue with a resident DJ on Saturday night and young clientele. There is a bouncer on the door but predictably no real ale, or indeed bitter of any kind.. The **Vault** and the **Temple Bar** are still closed.

Well End (nr Borehamwood): The **Mops & Brooms** will re open shortly following a six week refurbishment that will make the place more foody. Mac's are going to be "opening it up" but there will be a drinkers "end". When they did the **John Gilpin** in Ware a few years ago a "drinkers end" was created there too, and it has very much kept a locals feel to it, with locals still using it well and darts teams etc. still operating from there.

Welwyn Garden City: The closed former **Chieftain** pub has now burnt down following a serious fire.

Early demolition – the pub was due to make way for housing and a smaller pub

Widford: The **Green Man** will remain closed until at least late April.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS

Mon 14 Apr: Branch Meeting - the **Cock**, Ongar 8.30 pm.

Fri 18 Apr: Branch Social - the **Queens Head**, Allens Green.

Sat 3 May: Visit to **Prince of Wales** Beer Festival - Green Tye. Meet about 8.00 pm.

Mon 12 May: Branch Meeting - **Victoria Tavern**, Loughton. 8.30 pm.

Sat: 17 May: (RACS) BBQ at **Queens Head**, Allens Green. Midday start.

Sat 7 June: East Anglian Regional Meeting, **Half Moon**, Bishops Stortford. 12.00 – 4.00 pm.

For mini-bus to branch meetings, contact Gavin, 0782 544 6586 or mini-bus@heb-camra.org.uk.

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

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Thu 10 Apr: Herts Liaison meeting - **Wenlock Arms**, London N1 7.30pm.

Fri 11 Apr: Branch trip to the **Ware Beer Festival**. Meet at St Albans City Station at 7pm. *See page 19*

Tue 15 Apr: Branch Meeting - **Six Bells**, St Michaels Street, St Albans 8pm.

Tue 22 Apr: Pub of the Year presentation: **Woodman**, Wildhill 8pm.

Fri 18 – Sun 20 Apr: CAMRA National AGM, Cardiff.

Thu 1 May: Pub of the Year Runner-up presentation - **White Lion**, St Albans 8pm.

Tue 6 May: Pub of the Year Runner-up presentation - **Crooked Billet**, Ware 8pm.

Tue 13 May: Branch Meeting - **Red Lion**, Radlett 8 pm.

Tue 20 May: Mild Night, Hertford – *see page 17*

South Herts Branch Contact: John Bishop, Tel 01582 768478

Email: realales@yahoo.com

Internet: www.hertsale.org.uk

BRANCH DIARY

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Thu 10 Apr: Rickmansworth social - **Feathers**, Church Street, 830pm; **Pennsylvanian**, High Street, 915pm.

Mon 21 Apr: Branch AGM - **Estcourt Arms**, St Johns Road, Watford 8pm.

Tue 29 Apr: Open Mic Night: - **Pump House Colne Rivers Rooms**, Local Board Road 830pm.

Fri 9 May: Mild social - **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Heronsgate 8pm.

Thu 15 May: Mild social - **Southern Cross**, Langley Road, Watford 8pm.

Mon 19 May: Branch meeting - **Estcourt Arms**, St Johns Road, Watford 8pm.

Wed 28 May Watford High Street social - **Moon Under Water**, 830pm; **One Crown**, 10pm.

Thu 5 Jun: Annual Darts Tournament - **West Herts Sports & Social Club**, Park Avenue, Watford. 730pm for an 8pm prompt start.

Watford & District Contact: Andrew Vaughan.

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

Email: watfordcamra@googlemail.com

Internet: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Mon 7 Apr: Hitchin Beer Festival Wash Up Meeting - **Sunrunner**, Hitchin, 8pm.

Thu 10 Apr: Hertfordshire Liaison Meeting - **Wenlock Arms**, London, 7pm.

Sat 12 Apr: Minibus Ramble, Gosmore and Preston

Fri 18 Apr: **Branch Pub of the Year** Presentation - Venue to be announced (at AGM).

Wed 23 Apr: Benington Crawl - Start at **Bell**, 8pm.

Wed 7 May: Committee Meeting - **Our Mutual Friend**, Stevenage 8pm. All members welcome

Sat 10 May: Minibus Ramble - **Herts Pub of the Year** surveys.

Wed 21 May: Branch Meeting - **Red Lion**, Offley, 8pm.

Wed 4 Jun: Committee Meeting - **Robin Hood & Little John**, Rabley Heath 8pm. All members welcome.

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

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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

.....

..... Postcode

Email address

Tel No (s)

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in?

Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership (UK & EU) £20 £22

Joint Membership (Partner at the same address) £25 £27

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

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

Originator's Identification Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

.....

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

.....

.....

Bank or Building Society Account Number

.....

.....

Branch Sort Code

.....

.....

Reference Number

.....

.....

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards ensured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- The Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amount to be paid or the payment date changes CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. There is also a copy of your letter to us.

Detach and retain this section

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts.



The Boot Inn

(Opposite St Albans' famous Clock Tower)
"Stunning Old Pub with Friendly Staff and Superb Beer"

7 Ever-Changing Real Ales
Including Deuchars IPA, Young's Special and Bitter

Excellent Selection of Continental Lagers
including Leffe, Staropramen, Lowenbrau and Hoegaarden

Live Acoustic Music Every Tuesday Evening
Building Aged from 1400s with Low Ceilings and Exposed Beams
Open Log Fire During The Winter Months
Freshly Prepared Food served Tuesday to Sunday lunch

**OFFICIAL SARACENS
RUGBY AND GUINNESS
PREMIERSHIP PUB**
Regular Coaches to
Home Games

Outside Catering and Event
Management Services
All Provided in Conjunction
with The Verulam Arms

**Call Rebecca or Sean on (01727) 857533
for Bookings, Events or Location Hire**

The Boot Inn, 4 Market Place, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5DG

THE VERULAM ARMS

Now under same ownership as:

The Boot Inn

*"A Beautiful Relaxing Pub with a Secluded Sunny Terrace Area
5 minutes from St Albans City Centre"*



4 Real Ales including Young's Bitter and Special
(2 ever-changing guests)
Excellent Selection of Continental Lagers
Extensive Selection of Wine and Fine Malt Whisky
Superb Food served Tuesday to Sunday lunch
and evening (Tue-Sat)
Fish fresh from Markets daily

Saracens Rugby Tickets and
Coach to Home Games
In association with The Boot

Call Sean on (01727) 833323 for Events, Bookings or Private Hire
The Verulam Arms, 41 Lower Dagnall Street
St Albans, Herts, AL3 4QE