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HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Pints of View

The bi-monthly publication for every discerning drinker

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Pub losses across Hertfordshire – a special report



CLOSED: Orchard and Anvil, Hitchin



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CLOSED: Queens Head, Colney Heath



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17th Watford Beer Festival report

Clubs have a place in CAMRA



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THE BITTER END

Minimum Pricing set for Scotland, but is it the answer?

The Scottish government has outlined plans to set a minimum price for a unit of alcohol. The move could see the end of supermarkets selling booze at bargain basement, below-cost prices.

In a letter to the *Scotsman* newspaper CAMRA national chairman Colin Valentine said as a pub and real ale campaigning consumer group the Campaign abhors the current supermarket practice of selling low-quality alcohol as cheaply as possible.

"CAMRA therefore commends the determination of the Scottish government to tackle the scourge of supermarket alcohol loss leader promotions. It is surely no coincidence that, as supermarkets have increased their market share, alcohol-related crime and disorder and hospital admissions have also increased."

Colin called for a minimum unit price of around 45 pence as it will end the sale of alcohol below cost without unduly penalising responsible drinkers and without much impact on the sale of alcohol within pubs. "The current ratio between the price of supermarket loss leader promotions and pub prices is around 5-1. The Scottish government's proposals will reduce this ratio to around 3-1 and in doing so will help encourage a culture of responsible alcohol consumption within well-run pubs," said Colin.

Scottish government health secretary Nicola Sturgeon said it was important that Scotland's "battle with alcohol misuse" was tackled.

The bill is almost certain to be passed, after the Scottish National party won an overall majority in the Scottish parliament in May. However, critics say it contravenes Europe's competition law. A ban on the sale of alcohol below a minimum price could also be introduced in England and Wales. The government is said to be considering regulations stopping shops selling drinks for less than the tax paid on them.

CAMRA recently attended a reception at the Scottish Parliament. The event was hosted was Green party MSP Patrick Harvie, who highlighted the importance of supporting pubs as the solution and not the problem of alcohol misuse. CAMRA made a call for the appointment of a dedicated minister responsible for community pubs in Scotland.

Tim Hampson

Ed Says: Raising the price of alcohol in supermarkets and the "Off Trade" will not save a single pub as it is the price of drink in the pubs that is driving customers away, and reducing the number of times they visit. If as Colin suggests a price of 45 pence per unit was introduced, the lowest price a pint of beer lager or cider could be sold at would be 90 pence for weak drinks under 4%, and up to a possible £1.35 for the stronger pints up to three alcohol units. This would still be nowhere near the £3 plus we are paying for a pint of ordinary bitter in Hertfordshire pubs and would not induce anybody back. The only way to save pubs is to stop the government beer tax escalator, and stop the restrictive practices of the Pubcos and brewers - who are all forcing up prices. Again our minority of antisocial binge drinkers will not be deterred as they will still find it cheaper to buy at the Off Licence and consume it at home before going for a night out. The only thing a price increase will do is make them drink even worse more obnoxious cheaper spirits.

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Business Select Committee Report Ignored by Government

THE government's package of measures announced in the wake of the business select committee's report on pub companies are too weak to save Britain's pubs, says CAMRA. The government announcement of a system of industry self-regulation has flown in the face of a commitment made to implement the recommendations of the MPs' damning report, which called for radical reform of the exploitative hold the national pubcos have over their tenants. The MPs called for the pubcos to provide free of tie and guest beer options. Now the government says the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) will oversee a code of practice for companies operating tied tenancies and leases. CAMRA says the package promises some small steps forward including a new arbitration service, a requirement to follow rental guidelines and to publish national wholesale price lists, but it will do little to stop pub closures.

The government's response has failed to address the key issues of providing lessees with a genuine free of tie and guest beer option, and will not rebalance the relationship between struggling licensees and large pub companies. CAMRA is also concerned that even the limited package that has been announced may not be delivered given pub companies' history of broken promises and abandoned commitments. CAMRA's chief executive Mike Benner said: "The government has been cavalier in rejecting the recommendations of the business select committee and instead putting its faith in the ability of the very companies accused of malpractice to finally put their house in order. "The lack of any formal public consultation on this package of measures is truly remarkable and suggests a failure of government to listen to all interested parties including the consumer. Pubs are vitally important not just to the millions of regular pub goers but also to the health of communities and the overall economy. The failure of the government to secure a more substantial reform package is a massive blow to the prime minister's aspirations to lead a pub-friendly government."



Save the Pub Group* chairman Greg Mulholland MP said: "Ministers and officials have either taken the easy way out or have had the wool pulled over their eyes by the very people so criticised by the select committee.

"The response does nothing to address the fundamental point about the unfair share of turnover pubcos take from pubs, which makes it impossible for many tenants to make a living, even when their takings are at a decent level."

Tim Hampson

**An all-party parliamentary group, whose purpose is to bring together members of the House of Commons and House of Lords who want to add their voice to the efforts to preserve and protect the British pub.*

Community Pubs Month – April 2012

'Celebrating the Great British Pub'

In April, CAMRA is to launch a new national pub campaign in a bid to get more people than ever involved in championing the importance of the community pub.



Community Pubs Month is a new initiative similar to past CAMRA national pub campaigns in recent years such as Local Pubs Week. The main aims of the Month are to increase footfall in pubs, to encourage more publicans to organise and promote events to attract further trade, and spread awareness of community pubs throughout the media.

Extending celebrations to a month of activity – moving on from Local Pubs Week - will allow CAMRA branches greater flexibility to organise their own events, but at the same time have a set period in which to co-ordinate activity.

Kicking off proceedings on Monday April 2nd with Community Pubs Day – the day after CAMRA's Members' Weekend & AGM in Torquay – activity will commence with regional and national press

THE BITTER END

stories circulated by CAMRA to highlight the aims of the campaign and relay the major issues facing pubs.

It is hoped around a half of all CAMRA branches will be organising a wide range of events to promote their local pubs during the Month, and will be working in the lead-up to April to ensure this first year for the campaign is a big success.

As well as CAMRA branches ordering promotional material to maximise the exposure for this new campaign in pubs across Britain, pub licensees can also order packs direct from CAMRA. Available from early 2012, Community Pubs Month packs will include campaigning posters, beer mats, leaflets and pump clip crowners. Pubs interested in acquiring material for Community Pubs Month can find out more by visiting www.camra.org.uk.

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.

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Clubs have a place in CAMRA

Although realising that pubs are under threat and need protecting CAMRA also recognises that there are some exceptional clubs within the county that sell top quality real ale. These clubs deserve our support and recognition and although we do not want to upset struggling publicans we have decided to feature a club in each edition of *Pints of View* that serves good real ale and welcomes CAMRA members.

The Hertford Club (Lombard House, Bull Plain, Hertford)

The Hertford Club was formed by a group of the town's professional gentlemen on 26th September 1878 – the chaps felt the need for somewhere to play whist, billiards etc. They initially met at the **Salisbury Arms** and membership cost 2 guineas a year with an entrance fee of a further guinea. After a spell at premises in Fore Street, the Club took occupation of Lombard House on 1st February 1897 and finally purchasing the freehold in 1913.

Dating from the 15th Century and a Grade II listed building since 1950, Lombard



House was built as an 'English Hall House' and is one of the oldest structures in Hertford. Like in most surviving hall houses, it is thought the intermediate floor was constructed in the 17th Century, at which time also the fireplaces were installed since smoke from the fires could no longer drift to the top of the open hall and seep through the thatching to the open air. The 18th century saw further extensions and the re-fronting of the building, which was then renovated in the 1980s after the 1979 fire.

The Hertford Club is a private members club. It sells real ale, and in consultation with the South Herts CAMRA branch is currently trialling a scheme whereby CAMRA members may be admitted and 'signed in' on production of their CAMRA membership cards. Beers from the local Buntingford Brewery seem to have been adopted as the 'house beer' and always one will be found there – sometimes two, with one or two guests all sharing the three handpumps. Recently launched at the Club, and becoming increasingly well supported, is the Hertford Acoustic Club. This

meets every Sunday from 6pm until 9.30pm and musicians and music lovers are invited to go along to this acoustic open mic night and play a song or three – or just enjoy - in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

(Thanks to the Hertford Club for some of the information in this article, gleaned from its centenary publication 'A Hundred Years 1897-1997')

Brian Page

GMB writes to Davey on Short Measure

The GMB union has written to Business Minister Ed Davey, calling for the Government to act over the “under filling” of pint glasses in the pub trade.

The GMB has accused publicans of failing to provide consumers with a full pint (100% liquid). The union claims this has become so widespread that commercial contracts between pub companies and tenants are based on yield targets that are impossible to achieve without this practice.

It also claims that the agreed industry code of 95% minimum is being encouraged as a maximum liquid in many chains.

However, the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) said: “Our guidance, which is very well known and which was drawn up with trading standards, is that a head on beer shouldn’t be more than five per cent of the volume – but if you (the customer) want your pint glass filled to the top, publicans are happy to oblige.

“However, it’s important to remember that beer comes with a head, and customer tastes on this vary. The traditional British pint glass is very popular, and has been used to serve beer for decades. Publicans already deal with enough red tape, without new regulations on compulsory types of glassware.”

The letter to Davey written by Maria Ludkin GMB national officer for legal and corporate affairs said: “I am writing to you to ask for your Department to take action to ensure a consistent application of Weights and Measures legislation to pubs and other licensed premises.

“The integrity of Weights and Measures legislation and its consistent application is fundamental to the operation of free and fair markets.”

*Michelle Perrett, Publican Morning Advertiser
11 Dec 2011*

Ed Says: Short measure has been practiced since beer sales began, and in fact probably even before that under the barter system. What the British Beer and Pub Association do not recognise is that customers, as well as wanting the choice of a head on their beer or not, also want a full pint, and this is only guaranteed by using over-sized glasses. I make the point again that this could be done at no cost as pub glasses only last on average three or four months before are they are broken or have to be replaced. It is good to see another body supporting the “Full Pint” campaign even if they are on a slightly different agenda.

Industry News in Brief

Greene King jobs pledge

Greene King brewers of Bury St Edmunds Suffolk have announced “record results” and have announced that they intend to create 3,000 jobs.

Over the next three years they will recruit 1,000 per annum across the company’s pubs, hotels, restaurants and the breweries. They also own Belhaven brewery in Scotland. The announcement followed a 9% increase in profit £527.5 million. Surprisingly this led to a drop in their share price down 3.5% to 465.7p. In the last year Greene King have bought 35 pubs and created 800 apprenticeships in the licensed trade.



Want even more jobs? Lower VAT

The Ministry of Employment in France has released figures revealing that since TVA (to us, VAT) was reduced to 5.5% in the bar/restaurant sector, 20,000 plus new jobs in the industry have been created, with the trend expected to continue. The big question of 2012 is will the Government listen to CAMRA and the trade on this issue?

Fuller’s sales up

Fuller’s of Chiswick has reported a 3.9 per cent rise in sales across its managed pubs and hotels division for the 26 weeks to 1 October



2011. Fuller's chairman Michael Turner said own-brewed beer volumes in the period improved by two per cent with operating profit up by twelve per cent at £4.6m. Operating costs rose seven per cent, which Turner said was due to increases in UK excise duty, raw materials and packaging costs.

M&B back in profit

Mitchells & Butlers who are run from Birmingham but own many pubs in Hertfordshire has returned to profits in its latest trading year. The 1,600-plus pub group say that the business remains under pressure from a weak economy, food inflation and duty tax rises. Net profits for the 12 months to 24 September reached £125m restoring the Pubco to the black following loss of £84m. However, Piedmont, the company's largest shareholder has not ruled out making a fresh takeover offer for the pub company later this year - an earlier offer has already been rejected. Will the ownership of the company make any difference to the customers one asks?



Heineken buys pubs to sell pubs

Heineken has bought the 918 pubs from the Royal Bank of Scotland it has been operating on the bank's behalf since 1999 under its Scottish & Newcastle Pub Company arm. The pubs will now join forces with the 462 pubs it currently owns. Commenting on the £412million purchase, Heineken UK MD Stefan Orlowski said owning the pubs will allow the company to continue the successful transformation of the pub business. The company is now expected to rationalise its estate, which will see blocks of freehold pubs being put up for sale.



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Real Ale helps rural economy through beer

Real ale can help put financial froth back into rural economies. The Grain to Glass report by the National Farmers Union and the British Beer and Pub Association says the government should be doing more to help the industry to flourish by supporting the supply



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chain from farm to pub. NFU president Peter Kendall said: "The home-grown hop industry, after a long period of decline, is also showing signs of a revival, thanks to the real ale revolution".

Purity outstanding results

Warwickshire brewer Purity says its results to September show it has bucked general trading trends to deliver strong results. The brewer of *Pure Ubu*



and *Mad Goose* says sales had grown 26 per cent year over the last year to £2.6 million and it had made a net profit of £200,000. Purity MD Paul Halsey said "a new beer was being planned for 2012 and work would start on a replacement brew house".

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Cheques payable to: CAMRA South Herts.

The Crafty Side – by Ian Boyd

What exactly is “Real Ale”? Despite the huge success of CAMRA, through dedicated and relentless campaigning on behalf of the wider pub-going public culminating in staggering membership growth to become the largest consumer group in Europe, many people still remain uncertain as to what precisely it is. Whether or not you know the official CAMRA definition, many ordinary pub-goers will be well aware that real ale at the bar is often signified by the proud display of one, or an array, of tall wooden or ceramic “handpull” taps. And because of a renewed interest in tradition, helped by tax-breaks for small breweries, a more health- and energy- conscious public eager to taste “local”, the UK has seen the number of real ale producers increase to well over 800.

Detailed definitions aside, the necessary properties of real ale are that it is alive, i.e. not murdered by pasteurisation, and served to the customer from the vessel in which it undergoes slow secondary fermentation, usually outside the brewery. As such, there is no need for additional gas injection at the point of delivery like the heavily advertised “keg” bitters and lagers and “smoothflows” need, to pretend they are full of life. Furthermore, the extended fermentation of real ale imparts further levels of flavour and complexity that mass-produced, low-dimensional dead beers and lagers completely lack.

Other countries too are experiencing a similar explosion in demand for tasty local brews. On the continent, many countries, such as France, Italy, Spain and Norway, to name but a few, have also recently seen a significant growth in microbreweries. There are at least 6 now in Iceland. And in the USA, according to the American Brewers Association, there are now 1740 operational craft breweries with a further 725 registered under planning in the first 6 months of 2011. Some 94% of all US beer producers are now defined as microbreweries or brewpubs due to the low volumes they produce (less than 210 barrels a week).

There is, however, a major difference in the style of beer these foreign producers generally make. With a small number of notable exceptions, it is simply not real ale. These small boutique breweries create what they call craft brews. In common with UK real ales, they are largely

fabricated from choice ingredients – no rice, no corn, no sugar, no colourings, no chemicals and no preservatives. They are prepared in small batches, not million pint batches, compared with the multi-national brands and lovingly matured for weeks or months rather than hours and days. Importantly, they are not pasteurised.

So, what are the differences between real ale and craft beers? Real Ale is clarified at the end of the line by a fining process that uses marine-derived polymers from seaweed or, often to the chagrin of vegetarians, fish swim-bladders. Craft beer is filtered instead, by most often passing it through a series of sieves using 1-10 micron-sized strainers at the brewery. This removes most of the residual yeast and protein particulates but consequently minimises secondary fermentation. As a result, some degree of gas-assisted delivery is required, though rarely anywhere near the levels applied to lifeless laddish lagers in the pub. The taste profile of a craft beer can be subtly altered by the gas-mix and pressure used and serving temperatures around 7-8°C are common. And not being exposed to oxygen during their storage and service, they can be kept on tap for months. Real ales should be served at 11-12°C, mostly by handpump from the cellar, or through taps by gravity from the barrel. Once tapped and opened to the air, they are good for only a matter of days, though can develop even more complex taste profiles before finally going off.

Craft beers are therefore not real ales. But neither are they bland - they can be rich and flavoursome. Some of the best beers I have tasted are craft-produced. And some of the poorest have been real ales. And vice-versa. So, while real ale offers the potential for the widest possible taste experience and a less gassy encounter, both pack more taste than the behemoths’ dead keg variety. The worldwide craft and ale revolution has also led to an explosion in the variety of styles available.

It is not uncommon now to find chocolate, pumpkin, blueberry, banana, vanilla, honey, lemon, coffee, rye, smoked, spiced or even chilli beers in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and even Singapore. The Great American Beer Festival



Beer News and Features

judged 83 different beer styles last year. Few of these can be called traditional British beers, however, and only 9 beer categories are appraised at the summer and winter British Beer Festivals. Just one section alone at the GBBF, Speciality Beers, caters for these diverse varieties.

We have seen the welcome rebirth and development of rare breeds such as brown ales, Imperial stouts and extra-hopped IPA's. Saison, Hefeweisse, Pils and Kölsch styles are now also brewed worldwide as well as the UK, well away from their native homelands. Times are certainly changing and conventional brewing skills are expanding and developing at an unprecedented rate. UK brewers no longer feel limited to brew only delicious milds, pale ales, bitters, porters, barley wines and the like that our recent forefathers enjoyed. We still make the best of these styles in the world.

New techniques, new flavouring ingredients and new strains of hops from around the world are welcomed on to these shores and are becoming more commonplace. And, in addition to real ale, even craft beer is now being produced in the UK, by the likes of Meantime, Thornbridge, Brewdog, and others, to challenge the imports from the USA, Norway, and Denmark. A new style of bar is now appearing across the country and especially in London, where, in establishments like **Craft** (Farringdon EC1N), **Euston Tap** (NW1), **Cask Pub and Kitchen** (Pimlico SW1V), you can enjoy a variety of craft brews alongside well-kept real ales. You might be tempted to try? Be aware, though, craft beer is commonly twice the price of real ale!

Ian Boyd



←
Euston Tap, NW1



→
Craft Beer Co, EC1N



←
Cask Pub and
Kitchen, SW1V

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The Hen and Chickens Raises £10,000 for Charity

At the top end of Baldock's High Street lies South Road in which the **Hen and Chickens** will be found. A popular local serving some of the best cask ale in town, two Greene King beers including *IPA* along with two guest beers are usually available. A successful mini beer festival is held in the garden each September with beers from local microbreweries.



The 'Chicks' as it is known locally has a charity committee and various fund raising activities take place throughout the year. These include a Fun Day each August, a raffle every Sunday and a swear jar which always seems to be nearly full! The pub recently raised £10,000 which was presented to the Keech Cottage Children's Hospice.

During the week, the pub can be a calm oasis where a quiet pint and conversation enjoyed. Come the weekend, the place can change character completely with live music on Friday or Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. The musical entertainment varies from classical through country and pop to heavy rock but local bands playing covers of popular songs predominate.

So, if you fancy a quiet pint in the week or a musical beer at the weekend, try visiting the Hen and Chickens. The natives are friendly and you are assured of a warm welcome. And you can always put your loose change in the sweet jar.

MLR

50th Anniversary at the Cock, Colney Heath

The end of February will see the fiftieth anniversary of Pam Whitting's arrival at the **Cock** in Colney Heath when her parents Stan and Ann North took on the lease of this Benskins of Watford pub back in 1962.

Pam and husband of 36 years Jim (a local boy)

took over the pub in 1984 and have been running it as a free house since 1992. When Pam moved from London in the freezing February weather to a pub with no heating in this quiet Hertfordshire village she thought the end of the world had come. The pub in those days only had one bar and a hatch for off-sales, there were only two pumps, one for mild the other for bitter and the only spirits were gin, whisky or rum.

Benskins had already been taken over in 1957 by Ind Coope and the pub eventually changed its livery to the all-pervasive yellow and black that became all too familiar in the county and beyond. After a CAMRA-initiated Monopolies Commission investigation the brewery was forced to sell off or swap pubs with other breweries and as part of this process Pam and Jim were able to buy the freehold and run the pub as a free house.

The first records of the Cock are from around 1770 but the original building was replaced around 1820 when it belonged to the Hatfield Brewery. The pub now has two bars separated by the front porch still with its servery and there are many photographs of old Colney Heath on the walls. The four hand pumps now serve Greene King *IPA*, Tetley's *Bitter*, Wadworth *6X* and an ever changing guest beer and there is a full complement of spirits and all the paraphernalia a modern bar has to carry.

We congratulate Pam on reaching this milestone and wish her and Jim many more happy years in this fine family run pub, do pay them a visit, you won't be disappointed.

Bob Norrish



Update on the White Horse, Hertford

Following last month's feature on the problems at the **White Horse** in Hertford we can update you on the outcome of the meeting regulars had with Fuller's. The visit from Stephen Lindsley-Frost, Fuller's Business Development Manager, coincided with the re-opening of the pub – it having shut for a week for essential maintenance and redecoration. The pub's new

darker colour scheme has warmed the inside and most people have quickly adjusted to it – Fuller's wanted to create a more cosy atmosphere and this has been achieved. The addition of some old photographs of nearby buildings and streets goes well with the changes which also include the re-introduction of refurbished furniture and some new additions. Stephen conceded that the all-to-regular changes in stewardship at the pub were not helping with the pub's local standing but that efforts are now being made to find the right longer-term leaseholders.

In the meantime InnSpirit – a holding company employed by Fuller's – are managing the Horse and making a good job of it. Landlord Wayne

Moore has experience of running bars around the UK and has settled in well, creating a welcoming environment with business well up in the run-up to Christmas, Sunday lunches back and a full range of Fuller's beers at the bar. Still complemented by the likes of Butcombe and Adnams *Bitter*, the meeting asked Stephen to explore whether the choice on the third more rotated alternative might be loosened – recent beers have included Brains *Reverend James* and Guernsey *Liberation* – but more freedom for the landlord to choose this beer will make the pub a little more competitive, in terms of real ales, with the town's free houses who now lead the way in this respect. Time will tell on this, though Fuller's will probably defend the current position – hoping that their range of seasonal beers will do the trick.

Try the very drinkable stout – **Black Cab** – definitely worth a pint or two. But the *Golden Pride* at ABV 8.5% should probably be savoured with caution. It is good to see the pub buzzing again. Stephen has no problem with a reinstatement of the pub's beer festival later in the year. Fuller's have plans to improve the small yard at the rear and want to encourage greater use of the upstairs rooms – some visitors are unaware that either exist. They also need to re-position some of the wall-mountings.



There have been a few minor hiccups with the availability of certain beers and spirits but it is the sustained stability in the running of the pub that remains the goal, so we await developments. In the meantime, good luck to Wayne and his staff.

Les Middlewood

The Albert, Hitchin Re-opens

The news last year that Frank, The **Albert's** long-serving landlord, was retiring came with all the usual foreboding that accompanies the departure of a landlord. More so in this case, as with Frank being the freeholder this meant the pub was on the market. The Albert is a pub with a long history of serving cask ale and supporting CAMRA aims, so should it be lost it'd be a real blow for the area. The worry increased when the news hit the grapevine that a local businessman had bought the property. We know where that is usually heading: demolition or irreversible conversion.

The happy news came not long after that the pub was to be refurbished and a landlord found. Thus, in June, a clean and somewhat clinical Albert opened its doors. At first things seemed well, cask ale was on regularly and mostly sourced from our local Buntingford Brewery. The new landlord had plans to get a kitchen installed and provide light food options and had been hosting live music gigs. Then one day in November the doors shut and didn't open again. Re-enter concern for the Albert's future!

I'm glad to report that once again The Albert is trading – having re-opened with a new-landlord a little while before Christmas. I live only a minute's walk from the pub and can attest to the quality of the cask ale that has been on recently. The new landlord is Paul Dennis, a local who grew up in nearby Ickleford. Paul worked behind the bar at nearby Molly Malone's for 3 years and this is his first try at being "the landlord". Good luck! The great news, from our perspective, is that he is a cask ale drinker himself. Paul's switched on when it comes to knowing whether or not a pint is as it should be. He even brews his own, so



has a more intimate knowledge of beer than most! (Pub micro in the future perhaps?)



Paul (pictured here pulling a pint) plans to try to keep 3 ales on and will add another hand-pump or two if volumes allow. There isn't going to be any specific house-ale, but he currently intends keep at least one hand-pump serving something from Buntingford Brewery. Currently he's talking to multiple suppliers (the joy of being a freehouse) and looking at ranges of ales from across the country. As far as non-beery items go, live music seems to be top of the list with a few acts already planned. Some light food options will probably come in the future – but there's a lot of other work to do first, such as installing a usable kitchen!

The Albert is conveniently located on Walsworth Road between Hitchin station and the town centre. If you're in town pop in and say hello to Paul.

Words & Photos: Yvan Seth

Old Cross Tavern

"The Way Pubs Used to Be"

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Black Lion, St Albans, could be turned into homes

The **Black Lion** pub and hotel, 194-198 Fishpool Street St Albans had proposals to change the use of the Grade II listed building to create three new homes granted at a council planning meeting on 21st November. The single storey rear extension will be demolished and six parking spaces will be provided.



Landlady Gail Payne said "There are no immediate plans to close the pub, at the moment it's business as usual. This is just an option we have been exploring for some time. With today's economic climate we have to look at all options. People have suggested the pub has been sold, but it hasn't. One step at a time." Councillor Martin Leach (Labour), the only member of the planning committee to vote against the plans, said: "This is another consequence of this council not having an up-to-date local plan. If we did have the policies in place the officers would have recommended refusal".

Pubs News in Old Hatfield

Ancient Hatfield Pub In Whisky Top 100

The **Eight Bells** in Hatfield Old Town has been recognised by the Famous Grouse whisky in a national competition. The pub was first mentioned in 1756, but the current building is believed to have been built well over a century before that. Hatfield was an important staging post on the Great North Road



linking the Post Offices of London and Edinburgh and placed at a crossroads between St. Albans and Hertford. By 1904 Hatfield boasted so many pubs and beer-houses that, magistrates insisted that some were closed. Having survived, the Eight Bells has been selected for the Famous Grouse's 2011 Top 100 Famous Pubs list. The competition was looking for pubs across Britain that are celebrated

for their history and character with their own unique reasons for being famous.

It is said that Charles Dickens who travelled throughout Hertfordshire used many local buildings in his stories. Bleak House is in Catherine Street St Albans and the Eight Bells Hatfield is the pub where Bill Sykes hides after killing Nancy in *Oliver Twist*.

With the customers from the likes of Charles Dickens, Samuel Pepys, Dick Turpin and a host of top film stars, the Eight Bells qualifies.

Ed Says: I always like the references made to Dick Turpin. To my knowledge he was most active in Essex, mainly doing house-breaking and as a footpad (latter day mugger). Considering how bad the roads were I am surprised to find him this far west, though many pubs locally claim that he was a regular. I have also had correspondence which indicates that the history stops at the front door with the pub having more of a sports bar feel to it inside.

Horse and Groom Praised on Beer in the Evening

The **Horse and Groom** has been a well-kept secret for decades frequented mainly by diehard locals. That's because its location down a quiet side street in Old Hatfield near Hatfield House, makes it almost invisible to out-of-towners.

The pub was taken over in July 2011 by Ben Gill who had previously managed the Fairway in Welwyn Garden City. The oak-beamed single



bar Horse and Groom has been a pub since the 17th century although the building is much older. There are five hand pumps (soon to be six) currently selling Greene King *Abbot Ale*, Fuller's *London Pride*, Sharp's *Doom Bar*, Caledonian *Flying Scotsman* and Black Sheep *Bitter*. The correspondent on Beer in the Evening also recommends the food.

Ed says: I am always unsure what to do with glowing references for pubs I have not visited. Can I remind readers that the comments made are not those of editor, CAMRA locally or nationally? I add that I am informed that the Horse and Groom has a much more traditional feel to it.

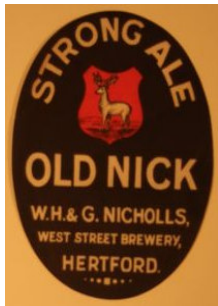
Hertfordshire Brewery Feature

Nicholls of Hertford - Brewers for Over 100 Years.

We all know of McMullen's and the company's rich heritage of brewing in Hertford, but how many have heard of the only other working brewery to survive in the town after World War II, and which continued to brew until the mid-1960s? This was the brewery of W.H & G Nicholls in West Street.

The family brewing story started with Samuel Ongar Nicholls who, in 1846, was landlord of the tiny Oddfellows Arms, which fronted on to West Street and who by 1853 had occupied the brewery buildings to the rear. His son William Henry took over the reins in 1863 and on his death, just fourteen years later, his wife Ellen continued the business until her retirement in 1896. Ellen with her sons took the bold decision to rebuild the brewery and in 1885 a new tower brewery emerged designed and largely newly-equipped by George Adlam of Bristol, noted as one of the foremost brewery engineers of that time and whose company had recently moved into the field of brewery design and architecture. With some equipment retained from the old brewery – at the Nicholls's insistence - and water taken direct from a bore made to the underlying artesian well, the new brewery began operating, its chimney stack featuring the initials of family members – both at the top and the bottom. Nicholls proudly moved into the twentieth century.

Sons William Henry and George continued the line and the company, in 1906, became known as W.H & G Nicholls. With just five tied houses, the company also plied its beer to local clubs and particularly found a niche in supplying the large houses nearby - places such as Panshanger and Bayfordbury. The draught and bottled beers included the well-liked XK Family Pale Ale and the strong Old Nick, though the company's Light Dinner Ale, Mild, Brown Ale and IPA all, at times, sold well.



E.J. Connell, writing in Industrial Archaeology Volume 4 (1967) estimated that the brewery would have a maximum output of 10 barrels per day, based on two brewing days each week. As the taste grew for bottled beers, Nicholls invested in a purpose-built bottling plant designed by Wickhams of Ware – pioneers of bottling machinery installed all over Europe. They even bottled for other brewers such as Watney Combe Reid of London.

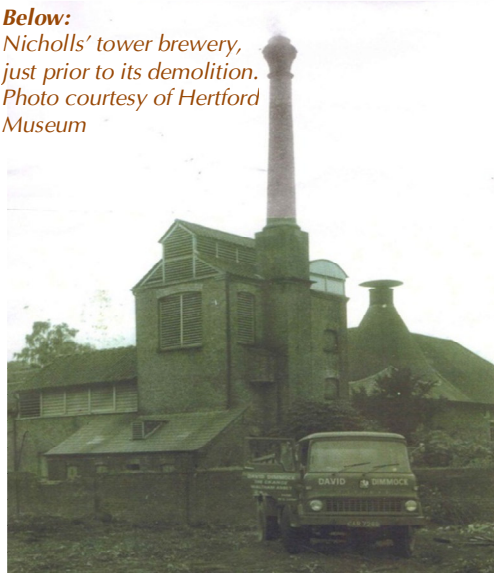
The Road to Decline

When plans to build a controversial by-pass (Gascoyne Way) were announced and some years later years confirmed, this must have hung heavy over the company. It ultimately involved the compulsory purchase and demolition of the Nicholls brewhouse, thus heralding the end to over 100 years of family brewing on the site, surely a contributory factor as to why brewing had declined and reduced to barely once per month. The last brew was in November 1965. The buildings were demolished in 1967. Today, only the brewery house (erroneously called the Old Maltings) still stands, now incorporating the former Oddfellows Arms, on its east flank, which after its closure as a pub, operated as a Jug & Bottle, then off-licence for seventy or more years.

Little physical evidence survives of the brewery site but pop into Hertford Museum and you can see a

Below:

Nicholls' tower brewery, just prior to its demolition. Photo courtesy of Hertford Museum



Hertfordshire Brewery Feature

few artefacts and bottle labels from the brewery. Two of Nicholls's five tied pubs were lost along the way – the Farmer's Boy on Bengeo Street closing in 1919 and the Old Victory in Ware sold in 1886 – leaving three, all in Hertford, by the time of the brewery closure. All were sold as free houses. The Warren House in Bengeo closed late in 2009 and is soon to be adapted for housing. Fuller's bought the **White Horse** in Castle Street in 1999 (look for the small wall-mounted montage of the Nicholls history) and the **Two Brewers** remains as a street-corner free house in Port Vale. One of the last in the family line of brewers, Charlie Nicholls, lived on for many years in the cottage next to the White Horse, sometimes venturing next door for a pint.

In 1972 Gordon Moodey, a local antiquarian and resident, summarised what we have lost – "One of the prettiest sights in the county used to be Nicholls West Street Brewery in the spring, when the brewing tower and the slender chimney rose from a foam of blossom mirrored in the Lea....".



Above: Nicholls' brewery arch and house with the Oddfellows Arms adjacent. The tower brewery chimney is just visible to the left. Photo courtesy Hertford Museum.

Les Middlewood

CAMRA South Herts Pub of the Year 2009



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Good Beer Guide 2008 - 2012

Letchworth 2011 Beer of the Festival Presentation

Summer Wine Brewery – Diablo IPA

Regular readers may remember that Summer Wine Brewery's Diablo IPA (6%) was voted the Beer of the Festival at Letchworth in September last year. North Herts branch policy is to visit en masse, drink free beer at the brewery and then decamp to nearby recommended boozers to get stuck into plenty more. Sounds good eh? Well this time it didn't go quite to plan. Summer

Wine are going through a never-ending growth in demand for their beers and couldn't find time to accommodate us. However, a trip to the Yorkshire Motherland gave two of us an opportunity to sneak up while they weren't looking and thrust the certificate into the Head Brewer's hands. This was the brewery's first ever BoF win so it was well received.

While there we had the 50p tour. Current production is on a six barrel plant which will be replaced with something much bigger sometime this year when suitable premises to put it in can be found. Most of the beer is bottled, some is cask and gasp some gets put into kegs... You can buy the bottled product online, direct from the brewery at <http://shop.summerwinebrewery.co.uk/> if you're interested. Summer Wine beers are not your typical brown Yorkshire Bitter; most have very complex malt recipes and more hops than you can shake a stick at. The bottles we took away with us were certainly an interesting bunch.

Afterwards we traditionally decamped to the nearby Nook in Holmfirth (round the back of Sid's Café in 'Last of the Summer Wine') which also has a brewery in the back yard, and we got an impromptu tour of that too when we were caught pressing our faces to the windows for a better look. Two breweries in a day, can't be bad!

Don't forget – the Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival (see back page advert) will be returning to the Hitchin Town Hall on March 9th & 10th, expect the usual excellent range of cask ales. Diablo IPA will be making a return appearance – so long as all goes according to plan with the beer order. Who's going to win Beer of the Festival this year? Find out in the next Pints of View!

Graham Perry



Above: Head Brewer James Farran (left) is delighted to receive the certificate from a grinning Graham Perry (Photo: Helen Perry)



Diablo is Summer Wine Brewery's flagship IPA, loaded with US hop varieties, dominated by the 'Citra' variety. Huge tropical flavours & aromas fruit punctuate, mango, lychee, and papaya fruits abound, with notes of resinous pine leading to a lasting bitterness.

White Hart Tap

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Traditional Fresh Cod & Chips Every
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Quiz Night Every Wednesday

Large Beer Garden

www.whiteharttap.co.uk

17th Watford Beer Festival – Another Successful Year

The 17th Watford Beer Festival took place from Thursday 17th to Saturday 19th November at the **West Herts Sports Club** in Watford. Around 1,500 customers visited the festival over three days and drank from a choice of 84 different beers and 11 ciders and perries.

Attendance was up 10% overall, which was better than expected in trying economic times. In fact a whopping 20% increase on Friday night led to long queues outside and disappointment for some. We apologise to those who had to wait outside on Friday evening, or who couldn't get in at all, and we'll definitely be looking at ways to deal with this next time.

It may be that our success has been partially down to our small size, with many customers remarking that they prefer smaller venues to larger beer festivals. Of course we're happy that our customers enjoy the cosy atmosphere, but it causes a bit of a problem when people arrive in large numbers. Perhaps because of that we receive just as many calls for a larger venue as we get pleas to 'keep it the same'.

We've dealt with increasing attendances over the last few years by having a heated marquee to supplement the main function room and bar. This year's marquee was the biggest yet, and we decided to use some of the extra space to house an extended bar for cider, perry and additional beers. We also held a pub quiz in the marquee on Saturday night for the first time, which went down very well. The questions were all themed around the festival's beers and the prizes were real ale tokens to be used in participating local pubs.

In addition to being small but perfectly formed I'd like to think that another reason for our success is that we always have a good selection of beers, ciders and perries sourced from small producers, microbrewers and regional breweries. These are bought from well-established wholesalers like Flying Firkin as well as breweries like Isle of Avalon, Rebellion and Tring who also act as dealers and can supply products that aren't on the larger dealers' lists. Breweries like Redemption, Tring and Windsor & Eton also sell beer to the public through their shops, so they're ideally

placed to supply small amounts at short notice, which is something we've found very useful when running a bit low on Saturday. The West Herts Sports Club stewards also get into the swing of things by laying on the catering for the occasion, and by stocking a selection of beers in the bar that have packed quite an alcoholic punch in recent years.

One theme we seem to have almost accidentally picked up over the last couple of years is the stocking of a good range of beers from small London breweries. This year's list included beers from Brodie's, East London, Redemption, Sambrook's – and the aforementioned Windsor & Eton, whose membership of the London Brewers' Alliance may be stretching things a bit, but no more so than Watford & District branch attending CAMRA London meetings.







Watford & District

Breweriana Auction

West Herts Sports Club
8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP

Thursday 15th March 2012

Viewing from 7pm




Contact baustin@supanet.com for catalogue and further details

Hertfordshire CAMRA Events

Watford & District CAMRA has something of an identity crisis, with the branch area located inside the M25 and closely linked to London by rail and Underground, but being entirely within Hertfordshire's county boundaries. Despite the proximity of London, our branch has close links with the other Hertfordshire branches and for the last few years the Watford Beer Festival has been the venue for the **Herts Beer of the Year** presentation. This year's winning beers were identified in blind tastings at the St Albans Beer Festival in September, and we had them all at the Watford Beer Festival. The awards were presented on Friday night, and we're very happy that representatives from each brewery were able to attend and accept the certificates. The winner was Red Squirrel London Porter, with worthy runners up Sawbridgeworth Malt Shovel Porter and Tring Death or Glory. Congratulations to all of them. To top the Hertfordshire theme off we also had a firkin of McMullen Country Bitter, which was the most recent winner of the East Anglia section of the **Champion Beer of Britain** competition.

Throughout the festival we ask our customers to vote for their favourite three beers, ciders or perries. We use this information to identify the Beer of the Festival, as voted for entirely by the public. The top ten beers this year were as follows:

Watford Beer Festival top 10 Beers:

1. Redemption Trinity
2. Titanic Cappuccino Stout
3. Oakham Citra
4. Verulam Hops in Union
5. Arbor Green Bullet
6. Brodie's Shoreditch Sunshine
7. Dark Star Green Hopped IPA
8. Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby
9. Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes Old Ale
10. Tring Death or Glory

So in the top ten we had two Hertfordshire beers from Verulam and Tring, and two London beers from Redemption and Brodie's. Of the London breweries, one was the winner and one was last year's winner. It looks like there is a pattern developing. Congratulations to all at Redemption Brewery for their win and to all the other breweries in the top ten, and thanks to everyone who visited the festival and especially to those who gave up their time to work throughout the week. Here's hoping there will be many more successful festivals in the future.

Andrew Vaughan

Festival picture opposite



Above: Herts Beer of the Year Presentation: From the left, Ben Marston (Tring Brewery), Tony Smith (Watford & District CAMRA), Greg Blesson and Jason Duncan-Anderson (Red Squirrel Brewery) and Gary Barnett (Sawbridgeworth Brewery)

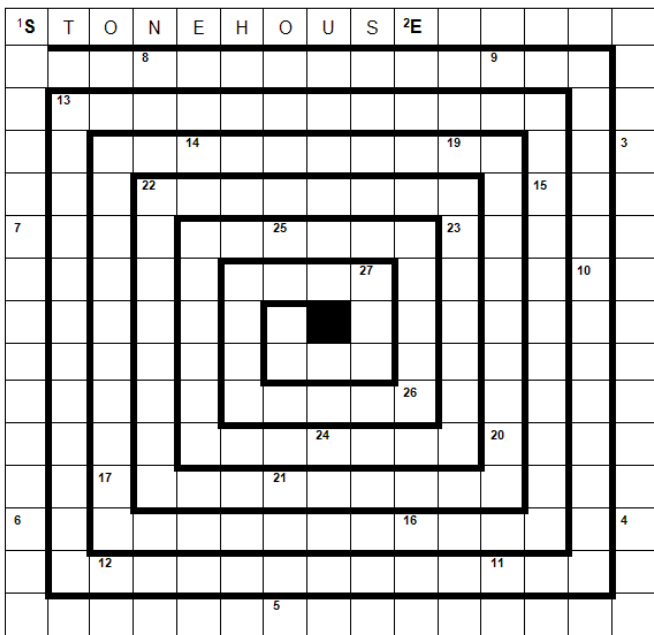


Above: Customers enjoy the beer in the function room at the 17th Watford Beer Festival



Above: The marquee was larger this year, with room for an extended bar

Catherine Wheel Brewery Name Anagram Competition



Completed entries by 14 March 2012 to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.
 1st winner drawn wins a CAMRA 2012 Good Beer Guide. Photocopies are acceptable.

Your Name:.....

 Your Address:.....

 Your Postcode:.....

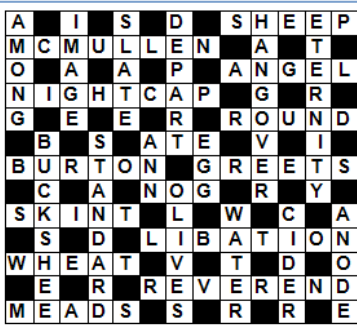
Instructions: Starting from the top-left corner, fill in the answers from the clues given below. The last letter of the previous answer is also the beginning letter of the following one. The first answer is shown as an example, so the next answer starts with an 'E'. Complete all the answers to fill in the 'Catherine wheel'. All clues are breweries are listed in the Good Beer Guide.

CLUES:

- 1) ETON HOUSES in Oswestry
- 2) A MASH ROLE in Suffolk
- 3) MOOSE HOURS in Burnley
- 4) US SAIL THEM in Tadcaster
- 5) NOT DARK HOT in Cumbria
- 6) LEGA TOT in Derbyshire
- 7) OWE TOADS in West Yorks
- 8) BIKER DART in Lincolnshire
- 9) REV READS in Leicestershire
- 10) RAM SAD LANE in Bradford
- 11) TIP ROME DEN in Tottenham
- 12) COLD TOWN ROTS in Gloucestershire
- 13) NOT DOWN in Lincolnshire
- 14) RON OK BUT in Derbyshire
- 15) SHAME AND KILL in South Yorks
- 16) DO POT BLUE in Worksop
- 17) MORSE UP POLE in Gwynedd
- 18) SOLD EGO in Wisbech
- 19) ONE STANDS in Wrexham
- 20) VEND EEL in Thetford

- 21) INCH WAR ROBE in Norwich
- 22) SON IS BORN in Manchester
- 23) GETS OGRES in Worcs
- 24) WAS RED DOLT in Oldham
- 25) BAN HOMER in Manchester
- 26) MAST ROOM RON in Yorkshire
- 27) EX FORD in Essex

Winner of Pints of View 250 Crossword:
 Mr D. Lewis Hitchin Herts
SOLUTION BELOW:





Farmers Boy overlooked

I refer to page 11 of your December/January 2012 issue where you claim to list some 'pubs that regularly serve beers brewed locally within the county'.

Unfortunately you seem to have missed out such a pub in St. Albans, The **Farmer's Boy** which actually has the only micro-brewery in St. Albans, serving *Clipper IPA* and *Farmers Joy* ale. It is intriguing that these two brews are actually sold to at least two of the pubs you include in your brewed locally list for St. Albans, The **Mermaid** & the **White Hart Hotel** and yet you omit to include The Farmer's Boy, the pub that actually brews these beers. For your information The Verulam Brewery, which forms part of the Farmer's Boy, has won Beer of the Festival, with the *Citra Hit* ale, at the **2011 Luton Beer and Cider Festival** which was organised by South Bedfordshire CAMRA.

Please could you correct this omission for your next issue? Thank you.

Huw Jones

Gate overlooked as well

I settled down to read the December *Pints of View*, but found myself stuck on one item. For no matter how many times I read the list of pubs serving beer from Hertfordshire independent brewers, I could not find my own - The **Gate**, Sawbridgeworth!

The beers our customers enjoy (covering the full spectrum, from refreshing golden ale to rich porter at 6% abv) could hardly be more local, since they are brewed on the premises in our own micro-brewery.

But surely you guys know that! We have a certificate to show that one of our brews was awarded the Silver prize in the 2011 Herts CAMRA blind beer-tasting competition.

Indeed in the same edition of *Pints of View*, in an article about **Sawbridgeworth Beer Festival**, your correspondent refers to The Gate as a brewpub, and to the award.

Just a pity she didn't name the beer right.

Coal Shovel Porter? No as befits a brew of this calibre- *Malt Shovel Porter!*

Ed Says You are both of course 100% correct and I can only apologise to the Farmers Boy and the Gate. I can confirm that the Verulam Brewery attached to the Farmers Boy also produces a CAMRA award winning beer *Citra Hit*

There were several other errors/omissions in the list which will be revised and published in the next

edition.

Worried about Mac's

I am most partial to McMullen's beers, the AK is a classic of its kind and is not the sort of ale you can get from a micro brewer. One of the best pints I have had anywhere during 2011 was a *Country Bitter* at the **John Bunyan**, Coleman Green, truly delicious!

I note however, that of McMullen's 140 pubs only two (as far as I can find) are in the **Good Beer Guide**. I assume this is because of the cask breather issue, and wondered how this matter now stands. Do some branches automatically exclude all McMullen's pubs?

In general I find that the most common problem with real ale nowadays is pubs selling it too fresh, before it has had a chance to properly mature and with too much dissolved CO₂ in it (swirl the glass and you get not a lovely nose of malt and hops but pure CO₂). I suspect that some pubs keep in the hard spile to "preserve freshness", as you can get CO₂ infused pints right to the end of the barrel. In this respect I do not notice McMullen's being worse than other pubs. Is it actually possible to detect by tasting whether a cask breather is in use? It does seem a shame that Hertfordshire's only traditional family brewer cannot be supported more by CAMRA; is there any hope of the situation changing?

John Savage

Ed Says: John is under several misconceptions and asks three questions which I will attempt to answer. Firstly he does not realise that since Mac's closed their beautiful Victorian Brewery and moved to their much smaller Whole Hop brewing plant, so they are technically a micro brewer. If there is any doubt they get "small brewers relief", an exemption from the taxman for brewing less than 60,000 hectolitres per annum. I have checked the **2012 Good beer Guide** and in Hertfordshire and Essex, I can only find one Mac's pub listed the **White Horse** in Bourne End. McMullen's these days sell little of their cask beer to the free trade, so their beers are rarely found outside their own pubs. All pubs that use cask breathers (no matter who brews the beer) should be excluded from the Good Beer Guide as their use is against CAMRA policy, something that McMullen's are fully aware of. This policy can only be changed at CAMRA's national AGM - the next one being held in Torquay 31st March to 1st April 2012 - though we are not yet



aware whether there is any attempt, this year, to change it. McMullen's contend that cask breathers are a positive aid in assisting with the quality of their cask beers at the bar, and so their managed estate and much of their tenanted estate uphold their use.

Now we get down to the technical stuff. John says he finds beer too gassy, or to use his words, has too much CO₂ in it. A cask breather retains the beer's naturally produced CO₂ in the empty space above the beer in a cask, and basically stops air getting into the cask. This slows secondary fermentation, which of course is the process that allows the beer to mature. If you wish to keep air away from your naturally conditioned beer a one way valve called a "Race Spile" can be used, and these are accepted by CAMRA – if fact they are used at the **St Albans Beer Festival**, for example. Mac's as beer brewers and retailers should be fully aware of this relatively cheap and useful item.

John, a note on cellarmanship. If you keep the hard spile in the cask you will not be able to pull any beer through the handpump as it will cause a vacuum. Also the cask breather is fitted into the hole that the spile goes in. For those not using race spiles I would recommend putting the hard spile back in to the cask between sessions as it will keep the natural CO₂ in the cask and help sustain the condition of the beer.

Cask breathers are being used by many publicans and many brewers, and I am willing to agree that on occasions it will be very hard to detect their use. The reason that CAMRA is against their use is that the breather or aspirator as it is sometimes called allows carbon dioxide into the beer. As I hope you know fluids absorb gases so as the cask empties the beer will get more gassy, just what you claim to dislike. It was the use of extraneous CO₂ through top pressure on naturally conditioned beer that was one of the reasons CAMRA was formed over 40 years ago, and we have not moved from that stance - something which I applaud.

Lastly John asks why we do not support McMullen's which shows that he does not read Pints of View very often. Almost every edition of Pints of View has at least one Mac's article in it and we have done features on their pub acquisitions and refurbishments, like the **Nag's Head** at Bishops Stortford (which was on the front cover edition 245) for example, and highlight their

seasonal beers. Mac's Country Bitter even won a CAMRA award in 2010 which I know they were very pleased about. We also have an active Brewery Liaison Officer, Les Middlewood, who by the way writes most of the Mac's articles for this journal, and is in contact with representatives of the company on a regular basis. Although McMullen's and CAMRA differ on the use of cask breathers, we find much else to support each other on – from our love of cask-conditioned ale to industry issues (opposition to Government excise policies, support for the pub, the fight against binge drinking and cheap supermarket beer) and to more local support for pubs and their place in the community.

I will just finish by saying that I am most impressed that John travels 20 miles from Tring to drink McMullen's in the John Bunyan, Coleman Green - the Country Bitter must be truly delicious indeed. Let's hope that those who follow his recommendation find it so as well.

Edition 250 article revisited

Whilst it is gratifying to be listed among the Campaign luminaries who have edited the newsletter (albeit spelt incorrectly) I am perplexed by my supposed claim to fame. I have never claimed any family connections to Greene King (or any other brewery) and assume you must be confusing me with another.

Keep up the good work with the Newsletter which Jonathan and I still read regularly. *Nadine Fynn*

A friend who lives in Hertfordshire emailed me to say that my name was in a CAMRA newspaper, so I googled my name + CAMRA Herts and found the latest Pints of View, which said that I was a former Editor of the Hertfordshire Newsletter (which I don't think I ever was, although I used to write a lot of articles), and that I live in West London (which I don't and never have - I live in High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire).

It was really good to see the names of so many campaigners and pubs that I remember well from my Hertfordshire days. My best memory is my "Newsletter Run" when I lived in Watton-at-Stone, which took me to the Goose at Moor Green, Chequers at Wood End, Plough at Great Munden (now all sadly closed), before finishing the evening at the **Rest and Welcome** in Haultwick, which I



hope is still with us. Best beer by far was the delicious Rayments BBA.

Another word or two about the other former Editors. Didn't Nick Page run the Plough at Datchworth for a while? I believe Cathy Totman emigrated to New Zealand after a few years as Assistant Editor of the Good Beer Guide, and of course the effervescent Martyn Cornell has written loads of books about brewing and beer.

Peter Lerner

Ed Says: I believe that what I was suffering from when I wrote the article was the vagaries of the passage of time. Unfortunately what is highlighted in these two letters were not the only errors. It was probably Cathy Totman who should have been credited with the uncle on the Greene King Board, and as she has emigrated to New Zealand we may never know. I have been informed by Les Middlewood that the silhouette logo was definitely Rich Page who has never edited the newsletter but drew the Brian Bickle cartoons which featured in the magazine between September 1977 and February 1979. The Brian Bickle cartoons have a style and humour all of their own and are well worth looking up on our newsletter web site. Richard also did all the advertising artwork and the glasses logos for the Hatfield Beer Festivals during this period. Hertfordshire Newsletter No. 3 April 1978 was printed in sepia to match the newly launched "Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire Guide" and December 1980 was printed on both green and white paper - the green is now a collectors item. There was a gap in publication between September 1987 (edition 105) and Christmas 1988 (edition 106) as we did not have an editor.

I think that's all the newsletter history I can handle until edition 300, which if we stay bi-monthly could be over eight years away.

Crap Beer ? No problem !

Carlton United Brewers (CUB) has recently snapped up a new technology for its Victoria Pale Lager. This is the company responsible for Fosters (brewed in Europe by Heineken and in Canada by Molson) which became so unpopular over the past few decades in Australia that it was withdrawn from sale there. The innovation was recently developed for SAB Miller in the USA, who claims that it has led to a 6% increase in sales of Miller Lite.

We've had a steady flow of inventions for packaged beer over the decades, cans, twist-tops, bottle coolers, widgets and the like. What could this wondrous new technique be? Wait for it.....internally embossed special "vortex" beer bottles - spirally grooved to induce a different "pour" to the straight neck. "Science makes it good", the web-site states, it "lets the great pilsner taste flow right out". And there was me thinking it was gravity.

Apparently, according to the December 23rd Newsletter of the *Glass Manufacturing Services*, the CUB marketing team were so excited by the prototypes, they accepted the design immediately, believing that the packaging will "provide consumers with an impression of premium quality, at little expense for the beer maker".

That says it all - yet another example of what happens when bean-counters take over a craft industry. *Ian Boyd*

Ed Says: Somehow I don't think I need to comment on this one.

M&B guest beer range cut

I had noticed that the range of guest beers in my local had drastically reduced and upon asking the landlord he informed me he was given a 'Winter range' of real ales from around 10 ales from round the country with only one guest permitted.

M&B had told him that if he took three fixed real ales they would allow a greater range of guest beers to be provided. This clearly has not happened and the customers would like a far larger range of guests all year round and that these should include Hertfordshire breweries.

The landlord said that if he had his own pub he would serve five real ales, one fixed and the other four guests. *Rob Strachan*

Ed Says: During the summer months I had noticed a vastly improved range of guest beers in my local M&B outlet the **Colney Fox**, London Colney (though none came from Hertfordshire there were several from Scotland). I must admit I do not know what the situation is at present. Can any of our readers comment on the current M&B beer range?

Any comments, articles or letters for publication are welcome. Please send to: **Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.** Or send an Email to us at: pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk

Hertfordshire's Pub Losses and Gains in 2011

In edition 245 Feb/Mar 2011 *Pints of View* published a comprehensive list of pub losses and gains for 2010. It's that time again and this article is the Hertfordshire 2011 tally.

We are obviously losing pubs at an alarming rate but 2011 has shown more gains than last year. The debate about why this is happening can be a broad one. Should some of these pubs have closed anyway? Pubs have been left to fail, being squeezed not only by exorbitant prices; partly tax and partly the cost of beer provided through the tied house system, but also exorbitant rents, council tax and overheads.

The government has failed to act against the restrictive practices under the tie. Self-regulation has failed and a select committee wrote a damning report following contributions from the campaign and the trade. The government has ignored this and failed again to introduce proper legislation to protect landlords which will have a positive knock on effect for customers as well.

The pub companies like Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns are of course in a terrible financial situation due to their enormous toxic debts. Large numbers of pubco pubs have been sold, and are on sale to be bought freehold in order to raise money to pay off debts. The sales appear to have had some effect on our gains this year. Prospective buyers had to consider a hidden cost in VAT as they are buying a business, and some pubs have changed hands at knock-down prices. CAMRA is also backing the "Protection of Local Services" and a change to planning regulations to stop the ease with which change of use is granted or in many cases no application is needed at all. A lot still needs to be done to planning legislation to stop the speculative closure of viable pubs for redevelopment.

Pub Losses:

Bedmond: In August a planning application was granted for change of use of the **White Hart** which has been boarded up and closed for several years, to a single dwelling.

Berkhamsted: The former real ale off licence **Barrel & Bottle** has been converted into a shop.

Boxmoor: The **Swan** was converted to an antiques shop during the summer.

Buntingford: The **Railway Inn** has been closed. It last traded as a combined Chinese restaurant & pub. An application has been made to demolish

the building and put up eight houses. This has been opposed by both the council and local residents who claim the pub is still viable and serves a large area. In the meantime it remains boarded up.

Bushey: The **Otter** in Otterspool Road, closed since 2009, was demolished in April 2011 and a new housing development called Otter Place is almost completed.

Cheshunt: The **Garden Gastropub**, Turners Hill, became **Lavas Barbeque Restaurant** in July.

Colney Heath: There has been a lot of confusion about the proposed plans for the **Queens Head** which is closed at present. Plans for change of use of the Grade II listed pub to residential and the building of two houses on the site have been refused by St Albans planning committee as the land is considered to be within the Green Belt. They did however agree to the change of use of the pub and have asked the owner to present a new application on that basis. The pub then re-opened for a short while but is now closed again. A new application to convert the pub and build one house on the car park has been lodged.

Elstree: Is now down to its last pub. The **Artichoke/La Masseria** restaurant is closed and boarded up. No planning application has been made yet. The **Hollybush** has signs on the doors front and rear saying closed until further notice. The **Plough** now the East, Chinese/Thai restaurant discontinued real ale some time ago. Which leaves the **Fishery**, Mac's the only pub for miles.

Goose Green near Hoddesdon: It is sad to see the once thriving **Huntsman** closed with for sale signs looming at the entrance.

Hertford: In April 2011 after 26 years of closure and increasing dereliction, the **Unicorn** has finally succumbed to the bulldozer, as a new Sainsbury supermarket rises on former McMullen's brewery land in Hartham Lane. Also now demolished is the 1980s brewery.

The **Warren House** Bengoe has also been lost as planning permission for a residential development has been agreed.

Hoddesdon: The **Old Highway Tavern** in Rye Park closed on Sunday 8th August 2010. It was built in the early stages of housing development in the Rye Park area, probably late 1870s or 1880. Two planning applications in January and August 2010 to develop the site have been refused by

Broxbourne Council because it represented "over development of this prominent corner site". The pub remains closed. The **Boars Head** is also closed and bears a "For Sale" notice.

Hitchin: In May a planning application was lodged to demolish the **Orchard & Anvil** (now closed for around 3 years) and build apartments in its place.

Letchworth: The **Globe** closed again, having only recently re-opened under the name of "Baby Brown's" by the owners of **Mother Brown's** in Hitchin. Originally named the **Black Squirrel** this pub has had multiple incarnations including a brief period as a Mexican restaurant. The Thai Garden restaurant has now been occupying the premises for some time. The food is reportedly good but there no real ale anymore!

London Colney: Work has started on the conversion of the **White Lion** into a house. The plans were amended and the barn we were informed was protected and due to stay has been knocked down, so instead of two semi-detached houses, two detached houses have been built on the garden.

Long Marston: it has come to light that the **Boot** has been closed for about two and a half years.

Maple Cross: The **Cross** was closed in 2010 and was demolished in September 2011 and housing built on the site. The façade remains as part of a new housing development as the pub had been on Three Rivers District Council's local list, presumably the developers didn't feel they could knock the whole thing down. With the usual pathos Clearview Homes have named the new estate Crosslands in remembrance of the pub.

Mill Green: It has been reported in the Herts Advertiser that the Gascoyne Cecil estate are the new owners of the **Green Man** which has been left boarded-up since March 2010, when the pubco that was running it went bankrupt. The estate also owns the **Bush Hall Hotel** nearby, closed for over a year for a major refurbishment and extension and not due to re-open in the near future. The estate also owns the **Woodman**, Wildhill and the **Candlestick** West End, Essendon. Hopefully they will consider reopening the Green Man on the same terms as these two successful pubs; it could be a real asset to the area as a genuine free house.

Much Hadham: With no buyers of the freehold of the **Jolly Waggoners** in sight, and the pub closed for two years after a failure to find tenants, owners McMullen's have decided to apply for a planning



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change to allow for residential use.

North Mymms Water End: The **Maypole** which closed in 2008 was granted permission to be converted to residential in February 2011. Although the older parts of the building including the inglenook fireplace are protected, the conversion has gone ahead and these historic features will now only be enjoyed by the new owners.

Park Street: The **Old Red Lion**, closed in 2009, was converted without planning permission into Traffic Van Hire's offices and car park. Objections to the council's enforcement officer followed about the conversion and use of greenbelt land this is still unresolved. No progress was made through 2010 and finally a retrospective application was granted in December 2011.

Piccotts End: The only pub in the village, the **Boars Head**, closed at the beginning of September. It has been bought by the uncle of a village resident who plans to convert it to residential use (whether a planning application has been submitted is not clear).

Reed: The freehold of the Grade II listed pub, the **Cabinet** (currently closed) is up for sale, requiring offers in excess of £495,000.

Rickmansworth: The **Urban Vine** Rickmansworth High Street, previously known as the **Mill House Tavern** and **Hogshead**, was closed in 2009 and became a Costa Coffee shop in late 2011.

Shenley: The **Queen Adelaide** (no real ale) closed 14th February 2011 and now has a Firecrest developers sign on the outside. An approach has been made to the Parish Council about demolition and the building of five houses on the site, which would be serious overdevelopment. The pub has been boarded up and is now in a terrible state which will work in the developers' favour when pleading it is unviable and should not be re-opened. The pub would not lend itself to residential conversion as it is right on the pavement and has the famous Shenley Lock Up situated at the entrance to the car park. The dilapidated pub sign fell down several weeks before closure and was so faded that you could not recognise what was on it anyway. A large tree stump has been placed across the entrance to the car park to stop dumping and the whole site is an eyesore. The council are trying to raise money to improve the village pond which is situated next to the pub. What is needed is a cordon sanitaire between the pond lockup and any development. It is most unlikely that the Adelaide will ever open again.

South Oxhey: The **Jet**, which was closed many years ago after complaints about antisocial behaviour, was discovered to have been demolished in September 2011.

St. Albans: **Harry Smiths** is to become a **Brasserie Blanc** encompassing not only the **Harry Smiths** site but also the adjacent two buildings (previously a hardware shop and hairdressers). Real ale being on sale is very unlikely.

Stevenage: McMullen sold the freehold of the **Prince of Wales**, Albert Street in April 2011. This community pub closed in the third week of January 2011; its future is now uncertain. To date there have been no planning applications for a change of use and the premises remain vacant.

Chells Family Pub & Restaurant, closed in April 2011 and became a Tesco Express, which opened in January 2012.

The **White Hart** became an Indian restaurant the Spice Route in July. The plasterwork image of the

White Hart is all that has been retained

Of the four bars opened ten years ago in the Plaza, Town Square next to the bus station, only two remain. **Edwards** and **Yates's** have both shut leaving the Wetherspoons **Standard Bearer** and the **Old Post Office** (formerly the Hogshead).

In the High Street Old Town the **Yorkshire Grey** is now an ASK restaurant. **Bottles** (formerly **The Bar**) in Middle Row is shut.

The **Woodman** in Norton Green has closed and is now being used as a private residence.

St. Ippollitts: The **Greyhound Inn** is now trading as The Dragon Inn, serving Chinese food but, alas, no real ale.

Ware: McMullen's closed the **Wine Lodge** in the High Street in June 2010. The pub is unique for its turret on the corner of the building. A one-bar, basic, town pub with no garden, Mac's say the pub has not been viable for some time (it certainly has been run-down for some time) and have submitted a change of use application to become a take-away. Mac's have been asked if this means they will be selling it and we await a response. The pub is in a good position and, if sold, could have done really well as a real ale freehouse – Ware town centre years for one.

Watford: The **Amber Rooms** in Queen's Road, Watford closed for refurbishment some months ago, but there has been a To Let sign outside recently and it isn't clear when or whether it will reopen.

Pubs open but future uncertain:

Ashwell: At the end of August the **Rose & Crown** was advertised on the Greene King website as being available for rent or lease. It is still trading as we go to press.

Hoddesdon: The **Rose & Crown** in Amwell Street, has a 'For Sale / To Let' sign, though it still appears to be open and trading.

St Albans: The **Black Lion** is still trading although a planning application to convert to housing has been agreed. Although the owners succeeded in a change of use application, the landlady has vowed to carry on running the pub. There were many objections from local residents and St Albans is short of hotel accommodation especially in the picturesque and historic St Michaels area. The building has many historical features and is the site of a Roman brewery, a collection of artefacts unearthed when the car park was re-laid are on display in the bar, what will happen to these now

one asks. Councillor Martin Leach (Labour), the only member of the planning committee to vote against the plans, said: "This is another consequence of this council not having an up-to-date local plan. If we did have the policies in place the officers would have recommended refusal."

Stevenage: The **March Hare**, Burwell Road and the **Twin Foxes Beer Engine**, Rockingham Way have both been put on the market by Enterprise Inns. Like many pubs in Stevenage new town these are on long-term leases from the council with a peppercorn rent. The Enterprise Inns area manager is quoted as saying "We decided that these two pubs no longer have a future with Enterprise Inns" Despite this they still continue to trade as pubs. The problem is what is their future?

Watford: There is some hope on the horizon for the **Red Lion** on Vicarage Road, which has been closed since 2008. Watford FC owner Laurence Bassini has plans to re-open it as a sports bar. It was hoped that the pub would open by Christmas, but this didn't happen, so the future is still a little uncertain.

Pubs Saved

Aston: We welcomed Andrea and David Hart to their first pub the **Rose & Crown** which they will took over in July. The pub was closed for refurbishment re-opening in August. The Orchid Thai restaurant will be no more and a home-cooked English menu will be replaced it. Real ale McMullen's AK will be on all the time with hopefully two other beers from the Mac's stable.

Barley: Adrian Parkes who bought the **Fox and Hounds**, closed since 2008 following a fire, re-opened the pub on 16th April. It is now a genuine free house, with seven micro-brewed real ales, including Falstaff ales from Derby which is new to the county. Unusually for the area these are served by gravity from the cask.

Berkhamsted: The **Kings Arms** Hotel re-opened following a refurb and under new management on 2nd December 2010. Oakman Inns have spent £1.2M refurbishing the hotel, restaurant and bar, and according to their website local real ales are on offer. Oakman is the brainchild of Peter Borg-Neal who already runs the **Akeman** in Tring and the **Red Lion**, Water End; both up-market food led establishments and more premises are being sought.

Bishop's Stortford: The **Boar's Head** re-opened on more "adult" lines. *Black Sheep* and *London Pride*

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Good Beer Guide 2012 - We're In It!

were on offer when visited. In the town centre Mac's new **Baroosh**, opened before Christmas 2011 – formed out of a former furniture store.

Brent Pelham: The **Black Horse** closed in late March, but re-opened on the 9th August, with real ale supplied from Buntingford Brewery.

Harpenden: Hatching Green: The **White Horse** has now been purchased by Peach - a Pub Company who have a free of tie lease from Enterprise. The **Three Horseshoes**, Bamville re-opened on the 6th May, under the stewardship of Colin Baxter and Andrew Stewart of the **Good Beer Guide**-listed **Cricketers** in Redbourn.

Hertford: Worries that the **Black Horse** once owned by Greene King would be lost forever proved unfounded, with new enterprising owners operating the pub as a free house with a good range of real ales.

Hertford Heath: The **Townshend Arms** re-opened with Adnams beer and other guests from micro-brewers. The Townshend is still very much a pub and committed to serving real ale - another two hand pumps were installed in May.

Hitchin: Anglian Country Inns (who also own the **Fox**, Willian) took over the lease on its fourth venue, the 600-capacity **Remix** nightclub. They invested heavily in refurbishing the site, re-opening it as the **Hermitage Rd Bar & Brasserie** in October 2011. The good news is that it now serves *London Pride*, Adnams *Bitter* and Brew Dog's *Trashy Blonde* plus a regular guest real ale. The **Croft Wine Bar** (formerly **Bombora**) is also serving real ale, in the form of Fuller's London Pride.

Hunton Bridge: The **Dog & Partridge** re-opened under the ownership of Clive Dodman, who also owns the **King's Lodge** around the corner.

London Colney: The **Pear & Partridge** re-opened following a major refit/refurb, part of the job was an external redeck and the pub has been re-signed in its original name the **White Horse**. The new owners are two 'local lads' Simon Niemiec and Mevin Madoorapen who have returned the pub to its original style like it was when they started drinking there. Needless to say cask conditioned beer was reintroduced after several years' absence.

Rickmansworth/Mill End: The **Whip & Collar** reopened 10th November 2011 as part of the Butcher & Barrel Pub Company, who also own the **Coach & Horses**.

Ridge: We welcomed Vaska Battley and Sylwia Johnson to The **Old Guinea** which they bought

from Moorgate Taverns, and the pub is now a genuine free house. They have replaced the wall ensuring that the restaurant/pizzeria is completely separate from the bar area. Real ale on sale at present is St Austell *Tribute*.

Stevenage: The Rising Sun, Juliens Road has re-opened, a pub that we thought was closed for good after the freehold was placed on the market in 2009 with vacant possession. The area in which the pub lies has been designated as a Conservation Area and this has probably had a bearing on the fact that the premises have not seen a change of use.

Walkern: The freehold of the **Robin Hood** which had been shut for some time has been bought. The pub has now re-opened, unfortunately we do not have any further details.

Watford: Champions Bar on St Albans Road which was closed in 2010 after complaints about noise reopened as the **Sycamore**, after a refurbishment. The target market seems to be the same as for Champions, with chalk boards outside advertising bands and DJs. Reportedly real ale is still available in the form of Greene King *IPA* and *Abbot Ale*.

Welwyn Garden City: The **Chieftain** in Cole Green Lane, Welwyn Garden City literally rose from the ashes - and re-opened at the end of Feb 2011. The pub suffered a fire in 2007 and was burnt to the

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ground, and a new timber-clad smaller pub was erected at the cost of £1.4M by McMullen's. A small housing development will be on the rest of the site which is yet to emerge.

As everyone knows all is not well in licensed trade. The problem is our MPs are fiddling whilst Rome burns. Anyway, with 26 bars in the House of Commons and real draught beer at £2.40 per pint why should they worry?

Landlord Swipes Wipers

Paul Hook the landlord of the **Charters** pub in Peterborough has had enough of people parking in his car park without permission. In an attempt to stop the practice he has started removing the windscreen wipers of offending cars. Police received complaints from two motorists but informed them that Paul is completely within the law as the car park is private land. Mr Hook says there is no damage to the cars he leaves a note and keeps the wipers behind the bar for the owners to retrieve.



Beachy Head Ale is Insensitive

Beachy Head brewery started trading in 2006 and has a 2.5 barrel plant at the rear of the Seven Sisters Sheep Centre in East Dean. Relations of people who have killed themselves at the 530ft cliffs at Eastbourne have accused the brewer of insensitivity when they brewed a 7.2% Festive Ale called "Beachy Head Christmas Jumper". The label was described as "disgusting" by Keith Lane whose wife had died on the cliffs in 2004.

The brewers have said that any offence was unintentional. Says Roger Green from the brewery: "The name is derived from the woolly jumpers that Santa wears. It started life as a pump clip in one of pubs with Santa in a jumper. When we bottled it we



gave it a label with a standard background that we use, and now someone has taken it the wrong way".

Ed says: Some people do jump to the wrong conclusions at times.

What is the price of Thirst?

From a sign spotted above the bar at the **Royal Oak**, Ruseper, West Sussex:

"I have tried very hard to source free water but without any luck at all, the only free water I can find is in the well, I have had this tested and would not recommend anyone to drink it! The result of this is that anyone ordering a round of drinks that consists mainly of water will be charged 50 pence a pint, I am happy to supply free water on any round over £10. My last water bill was £450, so if anyone can tell me where this free water comes from I would be most grateful for the information".



Ed says: Free water? I think not!

Sell Alcohol without a licence

Retailers that sell liqueur-filled chocolates will no longer need an alcohol licence. The move comes as part of a Government promise to scrap more than half of all the regulations that affect shopkeepers.

Taken from the Daily Telegraph.

Trapped in the pub

Steven Stobie a regular in the of the **Oakwood Lounge**, Sauchie, Clackmannanshire was trying to retrieve a friend's shoe when he fell into a 7ft deep heating vent and was trapped for over an hour.

The 20-year-old had to be cut out by the fire brigade and was treated for shock and dust inhalation. Mr Stobie's comment was "I'm lucky to be here".



DOWN YOUR WAY

Disclaimer: This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur. Items are supplied to meet newsletter deadlines, and which in some cases may be out of date upon publication. **Comments or additional information should be sent to our contact details on page 21**

Bishops Stortford: The Bishops Stortford Brewery opening has been delayed due to some planning and listed building issues regarding the brew house, which now seemed to be resolved, and in the week before Christmas a test brew which was made at Oaks Faringdon brewery was on sale. It was "a taste of things to come".

The Bishops Stortford Brewery should be operational early 2012, though they are at the mercy of fabricators who are extremely busy at the moment building lots of breweries! McMullen's latest **Baroosh** (their sixth) opened in Market Street in November- fashioned from a former furniture outlet. Following the tried and trusted formula of the other Baroosh pubs it has a contemporary atmosphere and offers a wide menu and Mac's cask-conditioned ale. There is a strict over-21 years of age policy and children even with adults are not allowed.

Buntingford: The future of the **Railway Inn** looks grim. In August 2011 the site was sold to a property developer by Punch Taverns for a reported £450k – there was local interest in buying the site for continued use as a pub but the price tag was too high. In mid-December the developer lodged an application with East Herts council to demolish the building and build houses in its place. According to local newspapers the Buntingford council, chamber of commerce, and local residents are objecting to the application which has been refused.

Colney Heath: A new change of use application for the Queens Head to turn into a three bed dwelling and to build one house on the car park. Outline planning has already been agreed to convert the pub to a house and permission was refused to build two houses on the car park and other green belt land. Will these revised plans be successful? We hope not.

Goose Green: An increasingly forlorn-looking Huntsman remains closed and up for sale. Once a thriving **Good Beer Guide** pub offering excellent food and with a large garden and paddock, are there any potential buyers out there?

Gustard Wood: The **Cross Keys** has had plans for its extension agreed.

Hertford: The **Black Horse** is notching up an increasing number of beers from around the

country. There are four handpumps with an additional beer available direct from the cellar. For an update on the latest position on the **White Horse** see page 9.

Harpenden: The **Skew Bridge** has changed hands. An application to demolish the **Rose and Crown** and build 14 flats has been refused. Specific reasons against demolition were: 1) No evidence of providing alternative use of the building for substantial community benefit, and 2) Building loss a detrimental effect on the area.

Hatfield: A new **Harvester** was been opened on 30th November in the Gallaria complex, though it is unlikely that it sells real ale.

Hitchin: After being refurbished and re-opened earlier in 2011, The **Albert** shut its doors again early in November. Luckily it has now been re-opened by new landlord, Paul – what's more, Paul is a cask ale drinker and has been keeping three ales on in good condition since opening (more detail page 10). Greene King has listed **Molly Malones** as being available for lease – **Molly's** is a great local pub known for its regular live music, and normally has Greene King **IPA** and one other changing beer from the brewery.

Letchworth: Wetherspoon pub The **Three Magnets** is offering a discount to CAMRA members on Wednesday & Sunday – remember to take your membership card if you want to claim the discount.

Royston: It has been reported that there are new tenants in The **Boar's Head** and that the pub has had a "much needed facelift". The **Chequers** now has a changing Buntingford Brewery guest available on a permanent basis. By the time of print a Buntingford Brewery "brand refresh" will have been revealed to the world. The details of this have not been revealed to us, but expect to see a new logo, pump clips, and bottle labels, and – we're informed – "a Cyril".

St Albans: We congratulate Dave Beale at the **Garibaldi** who has received the Fullers Master Cellarman Award. New managers arrived in both Wetherspoons **Cross Keys** and **Water End Barn** in late November.

Tytenhanger: A planning application has been made to demolish the **Barley Mow** pub which was closed and converted to housing and a builders

DOWN YOUR WAY

yard many years ago. Barley Mow farm will also be knocked down and there are plans to build sixty eight (yes 68) houses on the site.

Ware: McMullen's are moving forward with their plans for a new pub and family golf centre at the existing **Chadwell Springs Golf Club** site between Ware and Hertford. The proposals will see a complete overhaul of the 9-hole golf course, a new driving range and tuition area and a pitch and putt course. The new pub (open to all) and golf shop will replace the existing clubhouse, no timescales at present but we'll keep you abreast of progress.

Watford: The freehold of the **Bedford Arms** in Langley Road is being advertised for sale OIRO £325000 exc VAT by Everard Cole. The **Sycamore** on St. Albans Road has re-opened after its refurbishment.

Welwyn Garden City: A somewhat belated welcome to Keith Robinson who took over as landlord of the **Attimore Hall** last August. Along with regular Brakespears *Bitter*, two changing guests are on offer from the Ember Inns seasonal beer range - *Moor Revival* (3.8%) and *Venus Black* (5%) being on at a recent visit there.

Woolmer Green: We reported in PoV 249 that a new tenant was expected at The **Fox**, in New Road, Woolmer Green. Jan Beevor is that new tenant, having previously run a bar in Ibiza for eight years. Jan has a wide experience of the pub industry, but has admitted that taking on a village pub all on her own is going to take some getting used to! Jan hasn't changed the real ale with McMullen's *AK* and *Country* always available alongside the McMullen seasonal beers. The re-introduction of home-made food has been welcomed by all.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

HERTS & ESSEX BORDERS CAMRA

Mon 13 Feb: 2012 Branch Meeting and AGM - **Queen's Head**, Allens Green 8.30pm.

Mon 12 Mar: Branch Meeting and POTY -The **Moletrap**, Stapleford Tawney 8.30pm

Mon 16 Apr: Branch Meeting - **Orange Tree**, West Road, Sawbridgeworth (formerly The Three Horseshoes) 8.30pm.

For further details please contact Branch Chairman or see the website as in CAMRA Branch Contacts.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE CAMRA

Fri 10 Feb: Pub Ramble in Stevenage Old Town, **Chequers, Marquis of Lorne, Prince of Wales, Standing Order**. Meet in Chequers 20:00.

Sat 18 Feb: Minibus Trip South of Hitchin visiting **Windmill, Plough, Red Lion** (Breachwood Green) and **Strathmore Arms**. Minibus pickup info at end of this section.

Mon 20 Feb: Branch meeting at the **Highlander** in Hitchin at which we will decide which North Herts Pubs should go in the Good Beer Guide. 8pm.

Wed 29 Feb: Pub Ramble in Hitchin to publicise the beer festival, **Orange Tree, Three Moorhens, The Coopers Arms** and the **Half Moon**. Meet in the Orange Tree 8pm.,

Wed 7 Mar: Building **Hitchin Beer Festival** - volunteers required.

Wed 7 Mar: Pub Ramble in Hitchin to publicise the beer festival. **Nightingale, Albert, Molly Malones, Bar 85, Victoria** and **Sunrunner**. Meet in Nightingale at 8pm

Fri 9 and Sat 10 Mar: Hitchin Beer Festival - volunteers required.

Sun 11 Mar: Dismantle Hitchin Beer Festival - volunteers required.

To volunteer to help at Hitchin Beer Festival please contact Paul Beardsley.

Sat 17 Mar: Minibus Trip to Graveley, Lt Wymondley & Gt Wymondley - Visiting **Highwayman, George & Dragon, Waggon & Horses, Plume of Feathers, Buck's Head** and the **Green Man**. See Minibus pickup info below

Mon 19 Mar: Branch Meeting at the **Sun Runner**, Hitchin which we will agree which pub is the North Herts Pub of the Year. 8pm

Fri 30 Mar: Branch Annual General Meeting and Social at the **Orange Tree**, Baldock. 8pm:

MINIBUS PICKUPS: from 6pm onwards in Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock. £6 members, £10 non-members. Please contact Paul Beardsley to book 07970 440703 or socialsecretary@camranorthherts.org.uk

Please check our website to confirm event details.

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE CAMRA

Tue 6 Mar: Branch Meeting - **Hertford Club**, Hertford 8pm.

WATFORD & DISTRICT CAMRA

Thu 2 Feb: Quiz - **Southern Cross**, Langley Road, Watford, WD17 4PP, 8.30pm.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

Thu 16 Feb: Croxley Green Social - **Coach & Horses**, The Green, WD3 3HX, 8.30pm; **Croxley Guild of Sports**, The Green, WD3 3HT, 9pm; **Artichoke**, The Green, WD3 3HN, 9.45pm; **Sportsman**, 2 Scots Hill, WD3 3AD, 10.15pm.

Mon 27 Feb: Branch Meeting - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

Thu 1 Mar: Watford Heath Social - **Royal Oak**, 24 Watford Heath, WD19 4EU, 8.30pm; **Load of Hay**, 207 Pinner Road, WD19 4ET, 9.15pm; **Villiers Arms**, 108 Villiers Road, Oxhey, WD19 4AJ, 10pm.

Wed 7 Mar: London Drinker Beer Festival - Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London, WC1H 9AU. Meet at Products Stand every hour on the hour from 6pm.

Thu 15 Mar: Annual Breweriana Auction - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP. 7pm viewing for 8pm start.

Mon 26 Mar: Branch AGM - **Estcourt Arms**, 2 St John's Road, Watford, WD17 1PT, 8pm.

CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

For queries relating to your area please contact your relevant local branch below. If you are unsure which CAMRA branch applies to your area, please contact CAMRA direct on 01727 867201, or email your query to us at pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk where your query will be re-directed to the relevant branch.

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

Chairman – Brendan Sothcott, Tel: 01279 507493

Pubs Officer - Ivan Bullerwell, Tel: 01279 304117

Mini-Bus Bookings – Call Graham on: 07753266983 or Email: mini-bus@heb-camra.org.uk

Socials Contact Email: social@heb-camra.org.uk

Email: Secretary@heb-camra.org.uk

Internet: www.heb-camra.org.uk

North Hertfordshire CAMRA

Chairman – Tony Driscoll, **Email:**

chairman@camranorthherts.org.uk,

Socials Secretary – Paul Beardsley, **Email:**

socialsecretary@camranorthherts.org.uk, Tel: 07970 440 703.

Internet: www.camranorthherts.org.uk

CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

South Hertfordshire CAMRA

Branch Contact: John Bishop, Tel: 01582 768478,

Email: realales@yahoo.com

Socials Contact: Barry Davis. Tel: evenings and weekends only - 07719 407544.

Email: b.davis70@btinternet.com

Internet: www.hertsale.org.uk

Watford & District CAMRA

Branch Contact: Andrew Vaughan.

Phone: 01923 230104. Mobile: 07854 988152.

Email: watfordcamra@googlemail.com

Long Serving St Albans Landlord Dies

It is sad to report that Brian McKeon 79 died in early November following a battle with cancer. He had run the **Baton** in Marshalswick from 1972 until 1990 and was also previously the licensee of the **Six Bells** St Michaels, St Albans Hockey Club and St Albans Conservative Club until 2010. As well as being a publican he also took part in the TV show Countdown and reached the quarter finals in 2003. He spent over 40 years in the licensed trade and will be remembered by many.



Wenlock Arms Saved?

Threatened with being torn down to make way for a block of flats by the new owners of the **Wenlock Arms** in Hoxton, Hackney Council has stepped in again to protect the building.

The Council originally rejected a planning application last October, stating the pub has historical value and architectural character, and adds positively to the local distinctiveness of the area. Yet the property owners, evidently determined to go ahead, served a notice for demolition anyway. So the Council have extended the Regent's Canal conservation area, in effect awarding the Wenlock listed status, affording councillors the power to block any proposals for demolition.

To our knowledge, however, the owners still plan to shut the pub on 10 April, and it is feared the building will be boarded up until it falls down.



From londonist.com, 6/1/12

A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax

Save Britain's Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 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/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Title _____ Surname _____

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Applications will be processed within 21 days

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12/10

Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers

Enjoying Real Ale & Pubs

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



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 - If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
 - If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
 - You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.



ROUNDTABLE



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REAL ALE**



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**70+ Cask Beers
Cider - Perry
Foreign Beer - Food**

Fri 9th (Noon-11pm) & Sat 10th March (11am-11pm)

Hitchin Town Hall, Brand Street, Hitchin, SG5 1HX

Entry on the door : £2.50 Round Table, CAMRA, EBCU & OAPs FREE

Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission



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