

# FREE

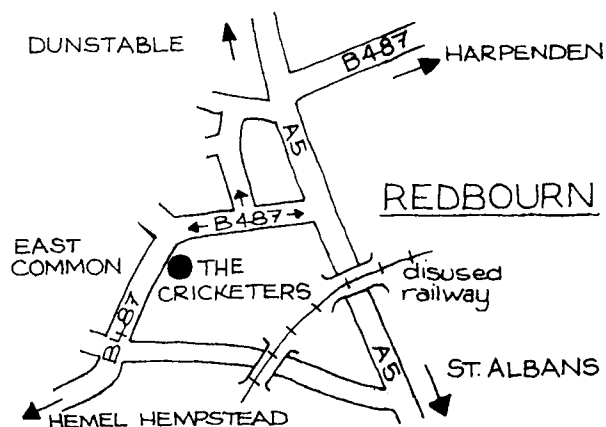


# THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1976 NUMBER 5

## 1976 A.G.M. in Redbourn

The 1976 Hertfordshire South branch Annual General Meeting will be held at The Cricketers, East Common, Redbourn on 14 December. The meeting will incorporate the December branch meeting. Needless to say, it is important that as many members turn up as possible - so make a date in your diaries! Apart from the chance to vote or even stand for the committee, members will hear about the successes and failures of the past year and will vote for the new branch constitution which has been drawn up by branch secretary, Dave Burns. There will be a special raffle for the occasion - the prize, of course will be a pin of beer. Proceedings will start at 8.00pm. The map below will help you find your way:



## Change of Heart?

Is this a final admission, from one of the most stubborn of brewers, that there might be a demand for real ale after all? Whitbread in the past have swept aside any such ideas as 'a passing fad' and continued with their rationalization programme. The company control about 18 breweries and most of the South Herts area is supplied from their factory in Luton which is unable to produce any real draught beer.

However, it now seems to be the policy that any tenant wishing to sell real ale and can prove that he can keep it and sell it in top condition, can get handpumps through the brewery, the beer being supplied from Whitbread's Marlow brewery.

This could well prove to be very good news for Hertfordshire drinkers, if many landlords decide to introduce real beer - after all there is undeniable demand in the County (the number of pubs with real draught beer has swollen by over a hundred in the last year).

It appears that distribution may be a problem at the moment - supplies in The Goat, St. Albans are spasmodic and two pubs in Harpenden are still waiting for their first supplies of the Marlow beer.

Work on the Fleur de Lys, St. Albans has stopped while planning permission goes through. It will not re-open until the new year and it is still not known whether Whitbread intend to introduce real beer.

## THF and real ale

Trust House Forte are now to put Real Ale into most of their pubs/restaurants. To our knowledge there are six of their establishments in Hertfordshire, three of which have been selling real beer for some time. These three are of course The Battleaxes at Elstree selling Ruddles County and Greene King Abbot Ale and IPA. The Red Lion in Radlett serving Abbot and Bass, and The Rose and Crown, Tring which has Abbot and Bass Worthington.

The White Horse in Hertingfordbury,  
(continued back page)

# The First Herts. Exhibition

BY STEVE BURY

The Hertfordshire Beer Exhibition, in which I had a small part, took place in the Market Hall, St. Albans in December 1972. For me and all those present, I am sure it was a day never to be forgotten.

A 200 plus crowd downed 2000 pints in an afternoon and early evening session, which was second to none. With all the beers at 2p per half and the entrance fee at 50p, tickets were sold out well in advance. Some exceptions were made - I remember 4 weary hitch hikers from Manchester who just couldn't be turned away.

3 Committee members and 3 members from the floor (one being myself) had been elected at a branch meeting several months earlier as organisers. There was difficulty in finding a suitable venue without licensing problems, but we had a generous offer of an occasional license from the gov'nor of The Crown and Sceptre, that amazing little Free House much used by Reg and Bob at the time. The eloquent Rob Griffin composed an excellent letter which we sent to every brewery in the South Counties. The response was lukewarm to start with, but when the first few breweries offered us some free beer, word seemed to get round and beer literally poured in. As we were spread out between Barnet, Watford and St. Albans, it gave us a chance to hold Committee meetings at some of the most interesting of the few real ale pubs left in the County at the time.

## DRINKERS DREAM

We didn't have much difficulty collecting the beers - many a keen branch member was willing to go forth to outlying areas to collect and at the same time sample the local brew. Some other barrels were collected by Steve Warnes and a few other members in a hired van, using a list of loading points like a drinker's dream. Al Saunders got lost in Rayment's, having organised his own private brewery trip, with one of the employees.

Anyway, the beer all arrived safely by Friday, all donated free, except for two firkins. We thought we had written to every brewery, (incl. Watney's who politely declined) but as the beer was being racked we had a surprise visit from one of the directors of Charringtons, who had heard from someone at Youngs about the event. He had requisitioned a kil of IPA and driven from the Mile End brewery (now closed) to make sure that Charringtons were there.

By Friday evening 26 barrels, representing the brews of some 14 breweries were all tapped and spilled. The taps, brass and wood had been begged and borrowed from

many a friend and relative; even pub display items were in use for the first time in years - beer mats, posters, pub guides, etc, giving the hall the decorative splash of colour the occasion needed to brighten it up.

## RED BREAD

Bright and early Saturday we were all out seeing how well the beer had settled and checking all the taps ran properly. After half-an-hour I started cutting the French bread for the buffet, which was going alright until I noticed some of the slices turning red. After immediate medical attention Reg and I slipped out for a couple of pints of Youngs- to steady my nerves. St. Albans was then a very dry town, with only the Farrier's Arms (Mac's) and the Lower Red Lion (Youngs in a Free House) to its credit. We cut through from Fishpool St. for some Mac's, arriving back in time for the Grand Opening.

Soon the Hall was filled with drinkers and deep discussion on the merits and qualities of the ales. Fullers, Adnams, Brakspears and Hook Norton were gaining the most interest as they were not then available anywhere in the County.

The ESB ran out first but late arrivals made up for it with Abbot Ale. The local Morris Dancers gave us a great display with crowd participation from John Simpson, better known for his Cheerless Charlie cartoons than his folk dancing.

The deadline of 9.30 for clearing the Hall could not have worked out better. The Beers were running out one by one and all the guests were wending their weary way out, home through the dark streets of St. Albans. Even after the afternoon's exceptional showing a few managed a last night cap in the two locals.

## Success and Publicity

The hall suddenly silent, looked devastated - the souvenir hunters had taken the lot, down to the notices on the barrels saying '2p per half-pint!'

For the campaign, it was a great success; we as the Herts. Branch had organised and run the first, but by no means the last beer exhibition. It had been a great event on a local scale and we did very well for publicity from all the local weekly papers, plus some of the dailies. We had managed to get the whole branch actively involved where a certain apathy had crept in and gained many a new member and much public interest.

So here's to the next Hert's Beer Exhibition and let it be soon!

# Harpenden & Choice

Earlier this year Harpenden could have been described as a real beer desert, although proclaiming 23 pubs for a population of around 23,000.

Hopefully, by the time this Newsletter is produced, it will be able to boast no less than seven real draught beers.

It all started with the introduction of Watney's Fined Bitter in the spring, to the Old Bell which was followed by the Inn on the Green Restaurant which now serves Greene King Abbot straight from the barrel (as well as on top pressure - choice indeed!).

Then came the Queens Head; this was listed as one of the pubs to be receiving a handpump for the new Ind Coope Burton Ale. Here again the bitter is both on top pressure and handpump. (As the pump for the Burton was a long time coming, the chairman and Dave Eames procured and fitted a pair of handpumps).

Next came the Engineer, a free house selling Ruddles County and Blue, the ordinary.

## Just Waiting

To follow in the not too distant future are the Rose and Crown and the Cross Keys - which will both be selling Whitbread/Wethereds/Draught bitter - the pumps and stillage are ready and waiting for the beer to arrive.

However, Harpenden continues to keep its image as one of the more salubrious parts of the County as the prices of the following brews reflect:

1. Watneys Fined Bitter (1044) 31p/pint
2. Greene King Abbot (1048) 29p/pint
3. Ind Coope Burton Ale (1048) 30p/pint
4. " " Bitter (1036) 26p/pint
5. Ruddles County (1050) 32p/pint
6. " Blue (1038) 30p/pint

It is thought the Wethereds (1035) will be about 28 or 29p per pint.

NB. The figures in brackets refer to the original gravity - that is the specific gravity of the beer before it is fermented. This is roughly proportional to the beer's strength.

## Pumps to Essex

The handpumps advertised for sale in the Newsletter last month are to be sold to a pub in Brentwood, Essex, which is in an area deperately short of real ale.

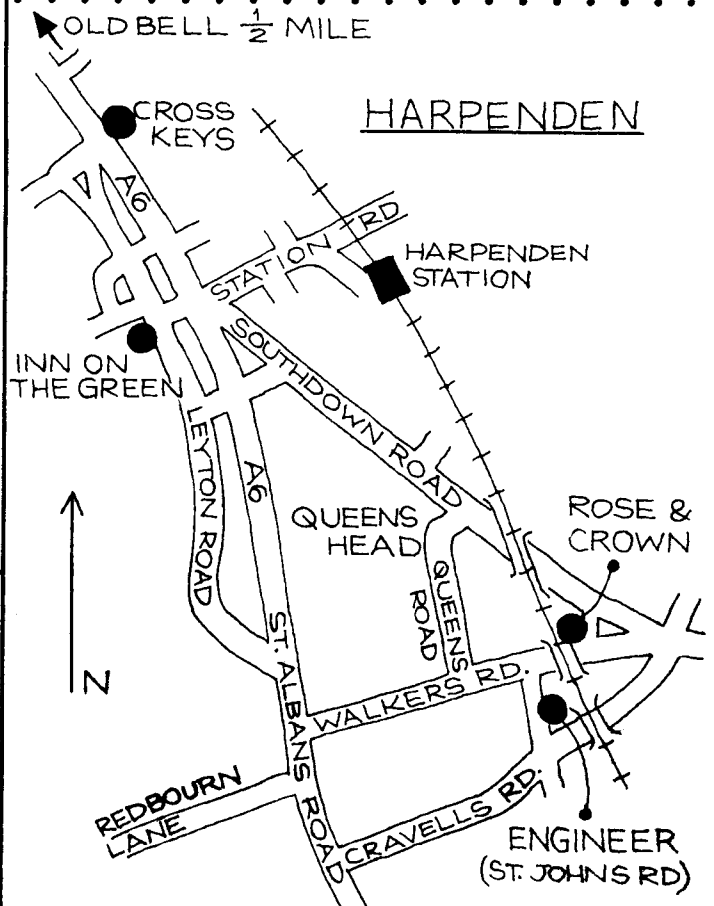
The 1976 Revised Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire is back on sale after selling out, from Neil Campbell, 105 Batchwood Drive, St. Albans, Herts.

# Darts : win and lose

The first of our two league matches this month was held at the Strafford Arms, Potters Bar versus Enfield and Barnet branch. It was another win for Herts South by the familiar margin of 4 - 3. It's always good to win but the 6 points for this win could so easily have been more. It was decided to play the game in reverse, playing all the doubles first. This proved to be to our advantage as we moved into a 4 - 0 lead. The 'fours' and 'eights' were our downfall, so 4 - 3 it became.

Defeat finally caught up with us at the Railway Bell in New Barnet against North London branch. Again we played the doubles first but after winning the first game we slumped to 3 - 1 behind. It was too much to close the gap and although we won 2 of the remaining 3 games (including a stunning 'bull finish' by Chris Gonet) victory went to North London. It all added up to a disappointing performance and our first defeat.

While at the printers we have a match against East London Branch in London. After this we have a match against the Railway Bell Darts Team on the 30th of this month in New Barnet and a match (if enough people turn up) at the social with South Beds. branch on 9 December.



# Trust House Ale

(continued from front page)

which is west of Hertford, is already selling McMullens Country and AK Mild on handpumps, although there was a small problem with the 70 ft. run for the pipes which were getting entangled with the heating system.

The Roebuck in Stevenage is soon to have handpumps installed and will sell Abbot and Rayments bitter.

Finally, the sixth pub, The George and Dragon in Codicote will not, unfortunately, be getting any real ale as the cellar is apparently the size of 'a broom cupboard' and the bar is only an anteroom to the restaurant.

Such places have in the past, been referred to as 'steak bar waiting rooms' by one particular branch member, but lets hope this venture runs well and THF extend it to include their newly acquired hotels from Lyons. Fancy, real ale at the Cumberland!

Fears continue to grow that the Bridge-water Arms in Little Gaddesdon, recently sold, may not have its licence renewed.



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of beer

and pubs throughout the country. Why not join and help us improve the lot of the drinking person?

For your £2.00 subscription you will receive a copy of the monthly 'What's Brewing', CAMRA's newspaper on what is going on in the world of beer.

### SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

I wish to become a member of CAMRA.

I agree to abide by the ideals of the Campaign and I enclose £2.00 as my annual membership subscription.

(Any additional amount received will be welcomed as a donation).

Name.....

Address.....

.....Tel.No:.....

Signature.....

Please send to: The Membership Secretary, The Campaign for Real Ale, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3BW.

.....  
This Newsletter is produced monthly by the Herts. South branch of CAMRA. All contributions should be sent to the editor: Les Middlewood, 81a Linden Way, London N14.

# DIARY of EVENTS

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Nov. 30 Darts Match v Railway Bell at The Railway Bell, New Barnet. (Ind Coope) starting 8.00pm

Dec. 9 Social and perhaps darts match with South Bedfordshire branch at The Live and Let Live, Pegsdon (Greene King) 8.00pm

Dec. 14 A.G.M. and December Meeting At The Cricketers, Redbourn (Ind Coope). See front page for further details. 8.00pm.

## Hertfordshire North Branch

Dec. 8 Branch Meeting. The George, Hitchin. 8.00pm. (real ale being supplied for the event).

## Herts/Essex Borders Branch

Dec. 6 Informal Meeting at The Tanners Arms, Bishops Stortford (McMullens) 8.00pm

Dec. 13 Branch Meeting. The Railway Hotel, Bishops Stortford. 8.00pm.

## Enfield and Barnet Branch

Dec. 8 Branch Meeting. The George, The Town, Enfield. (Charringtons) 8.00pm.

## Changes

Changes this month are as follows:  
Borehamwood The Mops and Brooms is now selling McMullens on handpumps.  
East Barnet The Wine Host sells Sam Smiths bitter, Theakstons bitter and Old Peculiar. Fullers ESB + L.Pride.  
Flaunden The Bricklayers Arms has replaced Mild with Burton Ale.  
Hoddesdon The Golden Lion now sells Burton Ale. (High Street).  
Hertingfordbury (West of Hertford) The White Horse has Mac's Country + AK.  
Kings Langley The Rose and Crown now sells Ind Coope bitter + Burton Ale.  
Letchworth The Garden City Hotel now also has Theakstons Old Peculiar.  
Therfield The Fox and Duck has replaced Adnams Mild with Theakston bitt.  
Walton at Stone (south of Stevenage) The Waggon and Horses now sells Ind Coope Burton Ale.