

# HERTFORDSHIRE'S CAMRA Pulling Together

The bi-monthly publication for every discerning drinker

April / May 2021 - Issue 7



Two brand new pubs for St Albans (above) and Harpenden (below, right) welcome the eagerly awaited full reopening of pubs by mid-May.

*See page 10*



**CAMRA**  
celebrating  
its 50<sup>th</sup>  
birthday



**McMullen's celebrate end of  
lockdown with a seasonal beer, with  
all its pubs fully open by May**

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MATTER.**



**Hertfordshire**  
Campaign for Real Ale



## Motion to commend CAMRA's campaigning in Parliament

**D**aisy Cooper, the Lib Dem MP for St Albans, lodged an Early Day Motion (EDM) in Parliament on 16 March, commending the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) for its 50 years of campaigning.



### What are Early Day Motions?

Early Day Motions are motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons for which no day is fixed. As there is no specific time allocated to EDMs very few are debated. However, many attract a great deal of public interest and media coverage.

### What are EDMs used for?

EDMs are used to put on record the views of individual MPs or to draw attention to specific events or campaigns. Topics covered by EDMs vary widely. By attracting the signatures of other MPs, they can be used to demonstrate the level of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.

### How many EDMs are Submitted a year?

In 2020 calendar year, 1279 EDMs were submitted and in 2021 to 25 March 382 have so far been submitted.

### How many signatures do EDMs attract?

In an average (parliamentary) session only six or seven EDMs reach over two hundred signatures. Around seventy or eighty get over one hundred signatures. The majority will attract only one or two signatures.

There is no rule whereby the number of signatures affects the likelihood of an EDM being debated in Parliament. The EDM submitted by Daisy Cooper MP has attracted sixteen signatures, and which is laid out below:

*"That this House congratulates the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), headquartered in St Albans, on their 50th anniversary; commends the organisation and its members for their tireless campaigning in support of the unique heritage of real ale, cider and perry found in the British Isles; further congratulates them for their successes over the last half century in protecting our brewing traditions and striving for greater quality and variety of cask ales; recognises their role in lobbying producers and government on behalf of consumers; celebrates their longstanding campaign to protect and enhance pubs and clubs;*

*commends their ongoing work to provide information, education and training to all those with an interest in pubs, beer, cider and perry; extends thanks for CAMRA's advocacy on behalf of the pub and brewing sectors, especially during the Covid-19 crisis that continues to endanger our unique pub and brewing heritage; and wishes them every success for the next fifty years".*

## Reply from Oliver Dowden MP

**C**AMRA members have been contacting their MPs asking them to support a series of measures to help pubs. An extension to the business rates holiday and a reduction in VAT have



been asked for. In some cases, we have not received replies but Oliver Dowden MP for Hertsmere and Culture Minister has sent the following letter in reply. *"Thank you very much for your email and for getting in touch with my office.*

*I would like to reassure you that I absolutely understand the difficult position which pubs and so many other hospitality businesses are in at the moment. I know the great lengths many of their owners had gone to make their venues as safe as possible for people to spend time in as well as adapting their businesses to offer their customers takeaway services, I am very grateful for all they have done throughout this crisis.*

*I can also assure you that I do understand your frustration about the huge financial impact these restrictions are having and will continue to have on pubs, and the wider hospitality sector. The toll they are taking on many businesses of course makes it sorely tempting to avoid taking them in the first place or to ease the particular restrictions we find frustrating.*

*Whilst I was pleased that we were able to allow pubs to offer alcoholic takeaway services to customers last month, the rate with which the virus was spreading at the end of December and the start of January meant we needed to take additional measures to bring the virus under control. So as much as I deeply wish we could enable pubs and bars to offer takeaway alcohol to its customers again like you suggest, we do need to keep this restriction in place for the time being in order to limit the contact we all have with those we do not live with.*

*We have made it easier for pubs, bars and other*

hospitality venues to operate collection and delivery services this past year and I am pleased that, even during these new restrictions, alcohol is still allowed to be sold when it is part of a delivery service. I know that this may be difficult for many hospitality venues to offer, but I hope that it is helpful to some.

However, I would like to reassure you that these restrictions are not permanent and will only last as long as they need to be in place. I and my colleagues in Government absolutely understand the huge challenges which hospitality businesses face at the moment and we will of course ease the restrictions on this sector as soon as we are able to. Whilst we still need to remain cautious for now, we are starting to see case numbers ease off slightly and with the protection which the accelerating vaccine programme will offer, I hope that we will be able to start easing the restrictions on the hospitality businesses soon.

In the meantime, though, I hope you have found the support we have provided to pubs over the past year helpful. They have been able to benefit from the whole series of financial support we have made available to businesses, such as the Job Retention Scheme, business rates relief and grants, VAT cuts and deferrals and the Government backed loan schemes.

We introduced a new series of grant schemes at the end of last year to support hospitality businesses over the Winter months as the restrictions continue and footfall is affected. We've provided monthly grants of up to £3,000 for premises forced to close and I am pleased that that support remains in place over this new lockdown. We are also providing pubs who would normally derive over 50% of their income from drink sales with a £1,000 grant, and this is on top of the other measures which are in place.

However, I absolutely understand that the financial situation which many pubs face remains incredibly difficult. That is why I hope you were reassured by the additional £5.6 billion package of support we announced at the start of the month, with grants of up to £9,000 being made available to businesses which are closed. I know how valuable this support will be to many hospitality businesses in Hertsmere. On breweries and other businesses in the hospitality supply chain, I do understand the pressures they are under at the moment. We have already given Councils substantial funding to set up discretionary support schemes which would be able to help businesses like these, and we put an additional £594 million towards that last week. I am also reassured that they would be able to benefit from the other schemes we have made available as well, like the

furlough and business support loans.

I can assure you that we will continue to do everything we can to support the hospitality sector as I know just how important it is to millions of people across the country.

Thank you again for your email and for raising this important issue with me.

Yours sincerely, Oliver

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP Member of Parliament for Hertsmere

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

### Trading Standards

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## Greene King to rename four pubs

**G**reene King has decided to change the names of three of its pubs called **The Black Boy** in Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury in Suffolk, and Shinfield in Berkshire, along with the **Black's Head**, in Wirksworth, Derbyshire, saying that it was perceived the names were "linked with racism". The pubs have been given new names, but Greene King says it will take a while for the signage to be changed. The pub in Bury St Edmunds is now called the **West Gate**, the Sudbury pub is now called the **Lady Elizabeth**, the pub in Shinfield is now called the **Shinfield Arms**, the Derbyshire pub is now called the **Quarryman**.

There are 70 pubs called the Black Boy in the UK, and although there is no consensus as to where the name comes from, links to the mining industry and a nickname for King Charles II. My investigations have shown that the Black Boy name for pubs has nothing to do with racism. Last year, the pub chain apologised for its historical links to the slave trade. It was founded in 1799 by Benjamin Greene, who owned highly profitable plantations and Greene King said it would donate to charities representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

In many cases the Black Boy is to do with mining or quarrying work being done nearby. Thus Greene King's change of name of the pub in Derbyshire to the Quarryman relates to the dirty (black) quarrymen who frequented the pub after work.

Charles II had two nicknames. One was *Old Rowley* after his prizewinning racehorse, and the other the *Black Boy*. Black Boy was the nickname given to Charles by his mother, Henrietta Maria of France, due to his dark complexion and hair. As students of pub names will know a large number of pubs especially in the West Country are named the Royal Oak. Charles II hid from pursuing roundheads with Colonel Carlis in an oak tree near Boscobel House following his defeat at the battle of Worcester in 1651. When the monarchy was reinstated many pubs were renamed the Royal Oak to show their loyalty to the new King. If you owned a pub nearby obviously you could not use the same name, and Charles's nickname the Black Boy was used. The secret organisation who met to bring about the return of the monarchy also used the name the Black Boys and would often meet in pubs' back rooms.

There are pubs in Hertfordshire so named; the **Royal Oak**, Bushey and the **Black Boy**, Bricket Wood spring to mind.

Steve Bury

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## Marston's reject third takeover bid

**B**rewer Marston's announced its merger with Carlsberg's UK arm in May last year with the joint venture valued at £780M, and Marston's holding a 40% stake in the merged firm.

The deal involved Marston's six breweries and eleven distribution depots, but not its 1,400 pubs. The six breweries are Marston's, Burton on Trent; Banks's, Wolverhampton; Wychwood Witney, Oxon; Jennings, Cockermouth in Cumbria; Ringwood, Hampshire and the Eagle Brewery in Bedford. The six employ 14,000 people. Carlsberg will put its Northampton brewery, London Fields brewery, and national distribution centre into the joint venture.

Following this in January this year Marston's took over the running of the 156 pubs tied to S A Brain of Cardiff securing 1300 jobs.

Now Marston's has received a third uninvited takeover bid from Platinum Equity Advisors, a US based investment company valuing the pub company at £550million. The Marston's board having rejected £105 per share turned down the offer saying that the company was seriously undervalued by Platinum Equity who have now withdrawn.

Steve Bury

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## Return of the Watneys Party Seven

The Watneys Party Seven beer can first appeared in off-licences in 1968 and was soon ridiculed for being 'bland' and fizzy and needed to be punctured to get the beer out. Production ceased in the 1980s when six packs of cans were introduced. An attempt to relaunch the large can in 2016 was not successful.

Pubs were very different in the late 60's and 70's and legislation that allowed licensed supermarkets had not been introduced, so to buy a Party Seven you had to use an off-licence often attached to larger estate pubs or standalone shops in the high street with restricted hours. Pubs with a licence to sell drinks for consumption off the premises normally charged inflated prices and deposits on bottles, plus restricted opening hours (no afternoon opening and 10.30 pm closing in the whole of Hertfordshire), getting your party booze together had to be organised in advance. The Party Seven was among the least welcome sights at a Seventies party, especially with the rise of real ale awareness, people beginning to ask for a better quality product. The Watneys Red Revolution was being challenged and jokes like "What is the difference between drinking Watneys and making love in a punt? Answer absolutely nothing they are both f.....g near to water" were doing the rounds. Party Seven was a particularly bad brew - 3% ABV with a fizzy, sweet and metallic taste that was said to come from the can.

The large red and gold cans would often get shaken up on route from the off license to the party or by some joker when they arrived, and even if you used the correct opener, they were notorious for spraying beer all over the kitchen when punctured. Of course, there was a special tap that cost the equivalent of £40 at today's prices, but often a screwdriver or even a hammer and nail were used, and the beer spray did not subside until the second hole was made.

The new mini-keg, which contains 5 litres, or 8.8 pints, incorporates a tap to avoid mess (no hammer and nail now required). While the makers promise the beer has been improved to reflect today's taste for traditional ales. The beer is stronger, with an ABV of 4.2 per cent rather than the original 3 per cent.



However, the sobering news is that the revamped Party Seven costs around £25, £2.84 per pint compared with £1 for the whole seven pints in 1974, although the all-new Party Seven price does come with some beer mats and a keyring bundled in.

The new Party Seven has been launched by Nick Whitehurst, who with two friends helped revive the Watneys brand five years ago, producing beers with names such as *Sarcasm* and *Irony* – to reflect Watneys' previous image problem.

Party Seven has reappeared partly because of the pandemic and lockdowns causing the brewery to concentrate on canned beer. Mr Whitehurst said; "It's out of necessity after the rest of our business shut down overnight last March".

Watneys, a London-based brewer since 1837, launched Party Seven on 21 October 1968, one of the first bulk containers for purchasing beer cheaply.

Though much ridiculed since, their plan was a smart one - to set themselves apart from the competition by evoking the idea of a 'party drink' - seven pints worth in one can. In actual fact the can contained 6 pints and 16 fluid ounces (20 fluid ounces in a pint).

It also complemented Watneys' smaller can, *Party Four* (containing 3 pints and 18 fluid ounces, or 3.9 pints), which they had been selling since 1964.

The new Party Sevens are produced on Merseyside.

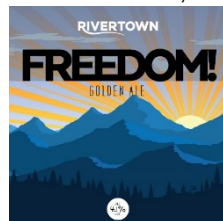


## Mac's - Ready on The Starting Line

There's a strong sense of optimism and rejuvenated endeavour at the brewery in Hertford - McMullen's

began full brewing again in early March and aim to be ready for their pubs re-opening with a familiar range of cask ales – AK, Country and IPA – plus a Rivertown seasonal ale,

*Freedom!* - a 4.1% golden ale marking the end to the string of lockdowns and restrictions that have so frustrated brewers, pubs and beer drinkers in the last year. All Mac's tied pubs with gardens and significant outside areas aim to be open on 12 April with most others following, as soon as they are permitted, on or soon after 17 May.





## Gladstone Bitter – A Story of Great Hope By Les Middlewood

Sometimes things are considered good, sometimes the time seems right and sometimes the reasons for doing something are compelling. But sometimes, despite all the right inclinations and initial signs, things just don't work out and last orders must be called. Consider



*Gladstone Bitter*, launched by McMullen with confidence, panache and fanfare in 1995. A beer that is still mentioned with fondness by some in local discerning drinking circles.

In a special edition of the company's newspaper "McMullen News" issued to launch the new beer, David

McMullen, then Mac's Chairman, was quoted as saying "The move to traditional British bitters is increasing daily. Customers are looking for more choice and better quality and research shows they expect the best to come from the smaller regional brewers like ourselves. We don't intend to disappoint them. Gladstone is positioned to sit alongside other regional flagships like Wadworth 6X and Adnams *Extra* and well-rated nationals like Bass and Flowers *Original*. We are confident that Gladstone has a quality that will take some beating". Mac's confidence had been buoyed by the recent national award of British Brewer of the Year conferred on Head Brewer Tony Skipper, a particular citation being the range of McMullen Special Reserve beers that had proved to be successful and popular with Mac's drinkers and in the free trade. With the new beer in mind Tony had spent two years carefully researching with customers what would be the "perfect pint", a period that included trial beers which were produced and sampled by Mac's drinkers.

The press release of the launch of the new flagship beer said "At the base of the brew are Suffolk Halcyon barley, malted by the same Stanstead Abbotts maltster (French and Jupp) which has been supplying McMullen for over 100 years, crystal malt and water from the brewery's own wells. The resulting sweet wort is then combined with carefully measured quantities of the famous Fuggles hops, whole and straight from the sack. With McMullen's own special ale yeast, the brew is gently fermented

for seven days in the brewery's historic copper-lined vats to produce a beer that is extremely smooth with a well-rounded bitterness".

Michael Jackson, the revered beer writer, effused "Gladstone is a clean, refreshing premium bitter with a body that is light but firm. At first there is a touch of sweetness. Then a light fruitiness and a hoppy dryness begin to develop. The hop character is nutty and flowery. The finish is long and appetising". John Cryne, CAMRA's national chairman, added "McMullen's has always, with its long-established *Original AK*, *Country Best* and *Stronghart* brands, and latterly with the *Special Reserve* seasonal ales, shown its dedication to quality and choice for the British drinker. We know Gladstone will be no exception to the McMullen rule and CAMRA heartily welcomes its launch".

The name Gladstone was chosen to represent tradition, strength and quality. It had been used before by Mac's, for a Hertford pub that once stood in Castle Street, lost in the 1960's to a dual carriageway.

The beer was launched at 4.3% ABV, which did raise some eyebrows in Hertfordshire as this appeared to put it into direct competition with the company's other premium cask beer, *Country Bitter* – a beer that had been in the forefront of Mac's production and publicity since its inception in 1964 – and also brewed at 4.3%. Would Country be phased out? Mac's strongly advised that this was not the case.

Gladstone began very well – backed with beer mats and window stickers – even adverts emblazoned on local



buses. Two months after the launch Mac's were pleased with the beer's sales, feedback and performance, saying that it had become an "established member of the McMullen family of fine beers".

Michael Jackson even added "Gladstone will attract many more pub-goers to the McMullen range". In the subsequent months and years the beer did gain a loyal and considerable following, and although maybe not ever reaching the heights of success that Mac's had hoped for – particularly in the free trade – it was considered by all as a worthy addition to the

beers on the bar in Mac's pubs.

In 1997

Gladstone

became one of

CAMRA's Beers

of the Year, the

award flowing

from the Best

Bitter category of

its **Champion**

**Beer of Britain**

competition. But

many beer

drinkers were

still puzzled by

the juxtaposition

with Country Bitter, thinking that Mac's should have

gone for a characterful 5% beer as their flagship ale,

maybe one of their seasonal Special Reserve beers,

made a permanent addition.

By 1999 it had become apparent that Gladstone was

unlikely to ever achieve the sustained flagship status

that Mac's had hoped for and by late 2000 rumours

were circulating that McMullen's were having a

serious rethink about the future of Gladstone. Sales

had waned somewhat and many of Britain's beer

drinkers were being beguiled by a wave of nitro-keg

"smooth" beers led by the likes of *Caffreys*. Mac's

were pondering whether they should travel further in

this direction. And, after all, in the tied estate, sales

of the familiar Country Best (and indeed AK) were

holding up very well indeed.

Sales of Gladstone in the free trade had also fallen

away after a successful start, even though there had

been reciprocal arrangements of supply with the

likes of Nethergate in Suffolk and deals with some of

the national brewers, pub chains and distributors.

After six years and on a sad day in 2001 Gladstone

was withdrawn. Much had been invested but a

strong and reasoned business decision had needed

to be taken. There was to be no permanent cask

replacement. Gladstone had gathered a committed

band of supporters but not enough to make the beer's

future viable. Initially Mac's said that the beer might

occasionally reappear as one of their Special Reserve

beers though if it ever happened it must have been

rarely.

The story of Gladstone Bitter has probably been

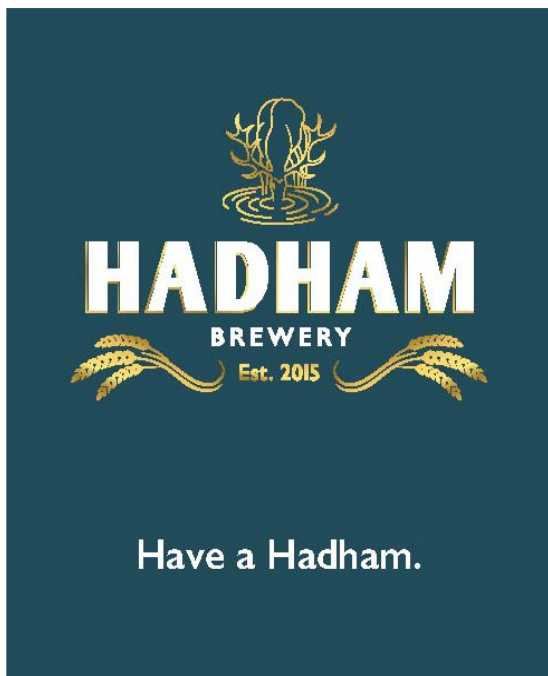
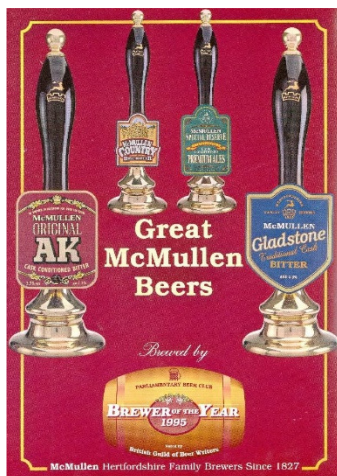
mirrored at many a regional or family brewer - the

cycle of inception, production, success and demise.

There had been a major investment in time, research,

finance, skill and promotion, a process that is

perhaps riskier for regional and family brewers than



it is for the national brands. It was time for Gladstone to pack its bag. Not everything can be a winner but brewers such as Mac's understand that they must not only strive to respond to discerning beer drinkers but also to beer drinking trends – whilst also keeping with the beers that are familiar and popular with existing drinkers. It's a never-ending challenge and a delicate balance to achieve.

Postscript and food for thought. Mac's attention turned swiftly to Country Bitter which was given a promotional boost and life continued with their famous AK, Country and seasonal cask ales until 2007 when Cask Ale became the next permanent addition to the cask range (though now also less seen) and, a little later, their Original IPA. These beers now form the permanent range of "Authentic Heritage" Mac's ales, along with some excellent seasonal beers sometimes badged as Rivertown.

In January 2021 McMullen's Chairman, Charles Brims, in his annual strategic statement to shareholders, reported that cask ale continued to be "in strong decline". It is true that the pandemic has also created its own burden for brewers and pubs, though Mac's finances are on a sound footing. But as a campaigning organisation, if CAMRA wants to see real cask ale resurge, we will all need to redouble our efforts to educate, persuade and encourage drinkers to come over to cask. And we need to support our local brewers and pubs by getting out for a pint or two. Are we up for the challenge?



## New Pubs for

### St Albans and Harpenden

Young's, the Patrick Dardis-led pub company, will increase its portfolio with the opening of two new sites in April. Acquired by Young's last year, the **Alban's Well** in St Peter's Street, St Albans is a 6,000 square foot site that is undergoing building work to create a 168-cover pub and dining room alongside a 62-cover outdoor terrace. Food menus will focus on underutilised and ethically sourced ingredients, with plant-based and gluten-free dishes at the forefront. There will also be a self-service "Wine Wall", offering wine by the glass. The group will also open its fifth pub in Greenwich, following its purchase of the Grade II listed **Enderby**. In Harpenden it has been confirmed that Oakman Inns are to open a new pub in the premises, previously occupied by fashion shop called M&Co, located next to the **George** in the High Street. Oakman also runs the **Beech House** in St Albans, the **Penny Farthing Hotel** in Berkhamsted, and the **Red Lion** at Water End in Hemel Hempstead. The name, however of the new Harpenden pub is yet unknown. Just round the corner up Station Road a new wine bar with basement cocktail bar called **Vinsanto** is set to open in the premises previously occupied by a wine bar called M.

## Other County Pub News

In Berkhamsted Dacorum Council rejected a bid by Punch on 11<sup>th</sup> March to turn the **Crystal Palace** into private housing. In Hertford a planning application has been submitted to fully convert the **Two Brewers** into residential accommodation. The Brewers is a street corner free house, in Port Vale, and an ex-Nicholls tied house, but has rarely sold real ale in recent years.

### Sambrooks news

Today, 4<sup>th</sup> March, is a sombre milestone as it marks the first anniversary of the last comedy night at The Ram Brewery. As most of you know, I have kept the brewing going since March 2020 in order to supply beer to the residents of Ram Quarter in polypins so at least our brewing heritage is unbroken.

In November I transferred my employment from Knight Frank (Greenland) to Sambrook's Brewery who now occupy the buildings along Ram Street. In December we carefully dismantled the nano-brewery and transported it from the stables to Ram Street where it was mostly manhandled up a ladder in the partially constructed brewing area and was rebuilt and plumbed in. The transfer took less than a week so there was no break in our unbroken brewing record!

The first few weeks brewing on Ram Street had its challenges which were partly down to the ongoing construction operations but mostly down to the bitterly cold weather conditions. Anyway, all that is behind us, the nano-brewery is performing magnificently and construction in the brewing area (1 Bellwether Lane) is complete. We thoroughly tested the "new" brewery on Tuesday and the first official brew will be this Friday (5<sup>th</sup> March). At which point, the nano-brewery can take a well-earned rest and hand the responsibility of continuous brewing onto its bigger (younger) brother.

As to comedy, the priorities for Sambrook's were to get the brewery running, then to open up their shop on Ram Street and finish off the Heritage/Visitor Centre which will lie above the shop. The pub will be the last thing to be completed which makes perfect sense with the current Lockdown. Sambrook's have allocated a room that will be dedicated to comedy but used as a function room between comedy sessions and this will be upstairs attached to the pub. For those of you who know the site well, the comedy club will be based around the chimney stack which is a little larger than the stables Sample Room that you have all been shoehorned into for so long.

We still do not have an opening date but I can assure you that all at Sambrook's are very much looking forward to getting the comedy off the ground again as soon as it is safe to do so, in the meantime, I hope to see you in the shop on Ram Street from time to time when it opens later this month!

John Hatch, Heritage Experience Manager,  
Sambrook's Brewery, 1 Bellwether Lane,  
Wandsworth, London, SW18 1UD, Tel: 020 8874  
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tues-thurs 12-10 fri-sat 12-11 sun-mon 12-8

## CAMRA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – 1971 to 2021

Many readers will know that this is CAMRA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year as the Campaign officially started on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1971. Well, you might say this announcement is a bit late but no one could have predicted the events that led to the lockdown and in place of a lot of happy faces raising glasses in their favoured local we had to make do with online events. This will not stop us celebrating later this year, when hopefully all the pubs will have reopened and we are back to some sort of normality.

The Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale was started by four friends who were on a drinking holiday in Ireland, following a debate on the lack of quality of a lot of the beer that was being sold in pubs in England. They knew that some beers were exceedingly better than others but

did not know why. This was followed by some investigation which gave startling results, a large number of the country's small independent brewers had been and were still being taken over and closed by mega conglomerates, who having got control of the tied pubs the smaller breweries owned, proceeded to close the breweries and replace their distinctive local brews with mass produced keg brands brewed in enormous plants and trucked all round the country.

As keg beer is a pasteurised and lifeless product, Co<sub>2</sub> was used to get the beer to the point of dispense at the bar. This of course made the beer fizzy as gases under pressure are absorbed by fluids. This however did not seem to bother the big brewers a great deal as the beer was delivered in sealed kegs and being kept away from the air, oxygen in particular, would last up to three months when opened. Naturally conditioned cask beer will only last a week after being broached so turnover and cleanliness were essential to serving good real ale, whereas keg could be served anywhere by anybody with no cellar skills necessary.

I'm sure a lot of readers are aware of the above and there were two other issues that were also contributing to the concerns of the beer drinking public. A lot of non-traditional ingredients were

being used in beer brewing, such as any starch that was fermentable and cheaper than malted barley. Potatoes, rice and corn, were used to reduce production costs and as the strengths of beers did not have to be advertised the pint in your glass was getting weaker and weaker to reduce paying excise duty.

Fortunately, some of the small independents had survived; Young's and Fullers in London,

McMullen's in Hertfordshire, Adnams in Suffolk and Hook Norton in Oxfordshire as examples.

The Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale became the Campaign for Real Ale and the definition of cask conditioned real ale was drawn up which remains unchanged to this day. It also appears in the Oxford English Dictionary. Campaigning in Hertfordshire started one

year later in 1972 and the plaque celebrating the first meeting of the then Hertfordshire branch 20<sup>th</sup> November 1972 is on the outside of the **Farriers Arms** St Albans. We are the first branch that continues to this day. Another which started in the same year in the North West was short lived. As the membership of the campaign expanded there are now five branches in Hertfordshire: Herts Essex Borders, North Herts, South Herts, Mid Chilterns and Watford & District.

CAMRA now has 170,000 members, we campaign not only to keep cask ale, real cider and perry in pubs but to save pubs from closure, taxation reduction and full measure. CAMRA's Head Quarters is in Hertfordshire in Hatfield Road St Albans, having started in an office next to a cycle shop in Victoria Street and then moving to a converted house in Alma Road before taking over at the present location in Hatfield Road, Fleetville.

When pubs re-open properly there will be celebratory events, which we will advertise in this newsletter. There will also no doubt be a celebration in November 2022 when the local branch reaches its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I'm sure we do not need an excuse but let's raise a glass to the contribution that CAMRA made to saving real ale, naturally conditioned cider and perry.

Steve Bury





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**Happy Hour Mon - Fri 17.00 - 19.30**

**One beer finishes, another beer from a different brewery replaces it. Two hand pumps, a supply of different beers, with a smile.**

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## Two Pints for a Quid? I Don't Mind if I Do

Here's a piece wistful Lockdown reading (and nostalgia for some). Way back in the early years of CAMRA, Branches of the Campaign would carry out regular price surveys to keep a tab on those pubs that were offering beer at the best value for money.



Of course, like now, going to the pub was not just about the price of a pint, it was about the whole rounded pub experience

– friendship, company, fun and community. But in those days pubs did not have the fierce price competition from supermarkets that they endure today, many pubs still having their own off-licences. And taxation on beer was increasingly a major factor that contributed to the price of a pint. Beer prices were beginning to rise regularly with the big profit-orientated brewing companies seemingly working in tandem with the Chancellor to stunt the pocket of many a drinker. As well as the regular brewery price rises to cover “costs and inflation”, brewers would always add to whatever the Chancellor pronounced in his Budget to “maintain profit margins”. It has been an endless upward spiral since.

Forty years ago, in 1981, South Hertfordshire Branch carried

out a survey of the 25 pubs in Ware. At the time just 13 of them served cask-conditioned beer by handpump, most others still applying taste-destroying CO<sub>2</sub> top pressure to their cask beers. Some of

these 13 pubs are now gone - the Station Hotel, John Gilpin, Cannon Tavern. Others are familiar to this day. The **Old Bull's Head**, **Rifle Volunteer**, **Spread Eagle**, **Royal Oak**, Windsor Castle (now the **High Oak**), **Old Punch House**, **Old Rose and Crown** and the New Rose and Crown (later renamed the **Worppell** and now the **Maltings**) all still offer a hand-pulled pint. There were almost no outlets for beers from outside of the tied house system, the town then dominated by McMullen's, Ind Coope, (the company – part of Allied Breweries - also brewing beers badged as Benskin's) and Greene King and hence their own-brewed beers. Ware was crying out for a free house to widen the choice for town beer

drinkers.

First prize overall went to the **Cannon Tavern** where a pint of Mac's *AK Mild* would set you back a mere 48p. The cheapest McMullen *Country Bitter* was to be found nearby at the Rifle Volunteer, then a Mac's tied house (now Greene King) – at 52p a pint. McMullen's beers were generally cheaper in Ware than their larger competitors, a position mirrored across all of East Hertfordshire.

Ben's Brasserie, occupying the former Star pub (now an Indian Restaurant), was best buy for Benskin's Bitter at 52p a pint. The only outlet for Benskin's *Light Mild*, a short-lived beer, was the Old Bull's Head at 50p. The OBH was also the cheapest for Ind Coope *Burton Ale* at 60p. The **Brewery Tap** won the accolade for all Greene King beers with *Abbot Ale* at 58p per pint, *IPA* at 50p and *KK Light Mild* at 48p. The survey's summary said “Cheap beer doesn't necessarily mean the best beer but in these hard times it is certainly a consideration when going out for a pint” – words that will chime with many a drinker today.



So, a couple of £1 notes and some copper would have set you up for 4 pints of bitter or mild and if you had a few more pence you could have lived like a lord with a pint of Burton Ale or Abbot Ale.

Now, there's an old gag that goes “Eeee, when I was a lad you could go to Southend and back on the train, drink five pints of beer, eat a plate of whelks - all for a farthing - and still have change”. Going to Ware for an evening's drink in 1981 got pretty close. At those prices I reckon it must be your round. Mine's a pint!

Les Middlewood

# THE LORDSHIP ARMS

Repeat Herts Pub of the Year Winner

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Benington, Nr Stevenage



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# DOWN YOUR WAY

County pub news for this edition is on page 10.

## CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

### South Hertfordshire CAMRA

South Herts meetings are held on the Zoom link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84282007058?pwd=UUU4eHp0WmVZYVdSRDZwT2Rlc2p3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 842 8200 7058

Passcode: 686620

**Tue 20 Apr:** Branch Meeting 7:30pm

**Tue 11 May:** Committee Meeting 7.30pm

### North Hertfordshire CAMRA

Recurring North Herts meetings and socials are held on the Zoom link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89447816810?pwd=RUUUmZ6NlZROGJtYU1Z31lZlFvUT09>

Meeting ID: 894 4781 6810

Passcode: 670915

Events for April and May with Zoom link above:

**Wed 7 Apr:** Virtual Social with Gin Tasting – Neil Hepplewhite of Luxlo Spirits (luxlospirits.com) and previously of Mansfield Brewery to talk about his career in ale and gin. 8pm

**Fri 16 Apr:** Virtual Committee Meeting 8pm

**Wed 28 Apr:** Virtual Social 8pm

**Wed 12 May:** Virtual Social 8pm

**Fri 21 May:** Virtual Committee Meeting 8pm

### Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

See branch website for any updates

### Watford & District CAMRA

See branch website for any updates

## CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

### South Hertfordshire CAMRA

**Chairman** – Iain Loe

Email: [iain492002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:iain492002@yahoo.co.uk)

**Branch Contact:** Iain Loe, Email: [realales@yahoo.com](mailto:realales@yahoo.com)

**Socials Secretary:** Ian Boyd, Tel: 07402 323525

Email: [ian.boyd@me.com](mailto:ian.boyd@me.com)

Internet: [www.hertsale.org.uk](http://www.hertsale.org.uk)

### North Hertfordshire CAMRA

**Chairman** – Paul Coard

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**Branch Contact** - Jeremy Kitson

Email: [secretary@northherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@northherts.camra.org.uk)

**Socials Secretary** – Brian Mason

Email: [socialsecretary@northherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:socialsecretary@northherts.camra.org.uk)

Internet: [www.northherts.camra.org.uk](http://www.northherts.camra.org.uk)

## CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

### Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

**Chairman** – Brendan Sothcott, Tel: 01279 507493

**Minibus Bookings** – Call Graham on: 07753266983, Email: [mini-bus@heb-camra.org.uk](mailto:mini-bus@heb-camra.org.uk)

**Pubs Officer** - Vacant, any urgent enquiries to Chairman Brendan Sothcott.

**Socials Contact Email:** [social@heb-camra.org.uk](mailto:social@heb-camra.org.uk)

Email: [Secretary@heb-camra.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@heb-camra.org.uk)

Internet: [www.heb-camra.org.uk](http://www.heb-camra.org.uk)

### Watford & District CAMRA

**Branch Contact:** Andrew Vaughan.

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Phone: 01923 230104. Mobile: 07854 988152.

Internet: [www.watford.camra.org.uk](http://www.watford.camra.org.uk)

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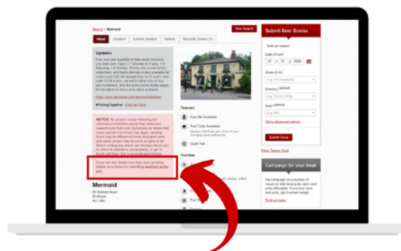
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# Attention ALL CAMRA members!

Want to get more from your membership?  
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Understand more about local branch campaigns?  
Want to know more about your local beer & cider  
festival and how to get involved?

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updating your CAMRA member record:**

- 1 Sign in using your membership  
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- 2 Select 'Edit your membership information'  
to update your contact preferences**
- 3 Sit back and enjoy getting the information  
that matters to you!**





# 10 great reasons to join CAMRA

**1 CAMPAIGN**  
for great beer, cider and perry

**2** Become a  
**BEER EXPERT**

**3** Enjoy CAMRA  
**BEER FESTIVALS**  
in front of or behind the bar

**4 GET INVOLVED**  
and make new friends

**5** Save  
**YOUR LOCAL**

**6** Find the  
**BEST PUBS  
IN BRITAIN**

**7** Get great  
**VALUE FOR  
MONEY**

**8 DISCOVER**  
pub heritage and the  
great outdoors

**9** Enjoy great  
**HEALTH BENEFITS**  
(really!)

**10** **HAVE YOUR SAY**

## What's yours?

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[www.camra.org.uk/10reasons](http://www.camra.org.uk/10reasons)



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale