

FREE

HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Autumn Edition
Sept – Nov 2021



Pints of View

Celebration issue 300

We're back
with festivals



Awards for the Land of
Liberty, Peace and
Plenty, Heronsgate



Well, this is a bit of a rallying call. As our pubs have re-opened, we have witnessed a sort of stumbling back to normality – and in the case of some pubs, there are a few more paces to go. But in July the Government removed the last distancing and mask-wearing measures, leading to a reasonably clear road ahead for Herts' pubs. What seems apparent is that, generally, vibrant town centre and entrepreneurial community and village pubs are recovering and doing reasonably well – those with a clear and enticing offer and where that offer meets with the hopes of sufficient drinkers and customers. On the other hand, some smaller pubs and maybe those that are restricted in size and location – are struggling to attract enough customers to continue profitably. And many customers, for their own good reasons, are hesitant to return – some have become used to drinking bottled, canned and cask-conditioned take-away beer at home during the long periods of pub closure.

What can we do to help our pubs?

Call in for a pint, obviously. But maybe also see if we can entice friends and neighbours in for specific events – be it a celebration, or maybe a pub quiz or something of that ilk. Something that will put some money over the bar – we all want our pubs to survive and to continue be part of our community and national spirit. Perhaps ask a landlord to arrange some beer-related evenings – for those that have a freedom from tie, maybe a golden beer night for a summer's evening - with 2 or 3 real golden ales – or a traditional bitter night with a small range of beers on offer. Put the word out – encourage people to attend. For those that are brewery or pub company-tied, maybe a beer and cheese evening, songs from some local musicians or a history walk around the neighbourhood.

Whatever your ideas are, most publicans are prepared to lend an ear, particularly if it might help or boost trade. And if you have a success story to tell please let us know – other pubs around the county might also benefit. Contact us at:

pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk

Support Your Herts Local

The more observant of you may have noticed that this article featured in the CAMRA Herts *Pulling Together* online newsletter No 9 but the message is a big and important one. So for those of you who missed this appeal online I felt it useful to present it again in print.

Steve Bury, Editor

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Ordering via phone apps in pubs is here to stay

Many pubs have relied on apps to help with table service during the pandemic and won't be going anywhere even after restrictions are lifted, according to industry professionals.

Publicans and customers couldn't wait to get back to the bar but the new system of settling up when you leave has suited some customers and staff.

Greene King and Mitchells & Butlers already had the technology in place ahead of the pandemic but say Covid has "accelerated the customer adoption of apps". "Lots of people have found apps difficult – some people don't have smartphones so it must be a nightmare for them. But for a lot of people, digital ordering is quite good, and easier. It's here to stay." Stonegate, now Britain's largest pub company, suggested the landscape of pubs has changed which I think all of us have noticed. By using apps or ordering from staff and paying at the end of the evening, we are moving into a more European way of drinking. Some establishments normally the more up-market ones like this, as firstly customers do not keep track of what they are spending or drinking, and secondly staff receive tips. This went one step further in some pubs who added a service charge, with some unsuspecting customers not realising this charge until later.

Steve Bury

Two Bob Brewery

Hertfordshire's newest addition

A new Herts brewery -- Two Bob Brewing Company -- a few miles outside Old Welwyn, is up and running and has three beers available in cask and bottle-conditioned format. Running a small brewery was the dream of Rob Clarke, a home brewer for more than 20 years, and his chum Bob Underwood – the Two Bobs. They teamed up with John Thurlow, another keen home brewer, who had some small buildings available on a patch of land next to his home.

When they heard that Northern Monk Brewery was selling its pilot brewery, where new beers were developed, the trio rushed to Leeds to buy the one-barrel kit. They got a licence to brew in February, spent several months making trial brews and are now fully operational.

The beers are available on draught at the **Plough** in Datchworth and bottled versions can be bought

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using: Facebook.com/The-Two-Bob-Brewing-Co. The team use only the finest English ingredients: Maris Otter malting barley from Norfolk and Archer, Jester and East Kent Goldings hops. They are in talks with a neighbouring farmer who may supply them with his barley: Hertfordshire grain enjoys a fine reputation and would add local lustre to the beers. Three beers are produced at present: *Gold* (4.3%), *Porter* (4.2%) and *EPA*, standing for English Pale Ale (4.6%). An India Pale Ale is planned. *Gold*, a fine summer refresher, is made with pale, wheat and caramel malts – the caramel adds a delicious hint of butterscotch.



Pictured left from left to right are Rob Clarke, John Thurlow and Bob Underwood.

The Bobs and John are keen to find new outlets for the draught versions of the beers. You can contact them at: twobobbrewco@gmail.com

Roger Protz

BrewDog leaves a sour taste

It was all going to be so refreshingly different – a brewery turning its back on “industrial lagers and stuffy ales” and offering bright, new beers for young people dubbed punks. That was the promise made by James Watt and Martin Dickie when they launched BrewDog in 2007. They funded their growth with repeated crowdfunding exercises called

Equity for Punks, raised millions and eventually opened bars throughout this country as well as in Las Vegas, Tokyo, Shanghai and Brisbane. They bought a brewery in Berlin and two more are planned in the United States and Australia.

BrewDog is valued at £2Bn

but this success has been seriously damaged by revelations about how employees are treated at the giant brewery at Ellon near Aberdeen, where 220,000 hectolitres of beer are produced annually. In June, 250 former members of staff, calling themselves Punks with Purpose, published an open letter in which they accused Watt and Dickie of creating a “rotten culture that damaged their mental health”. They said a policy of “growth at all costs” compromised health and safety, and there was a “toxic attitude” to junior members of staff.

They also criticised the founders of pursuing “vanity” public relations stunts, such as dropping stuffed animals from a helicopter over the Houses of Parliament and Watt and Dickie greeting visitors to the brewery dressed as penguins.

CAMRA knows about such stunts. In 2011, BrewDog applied to rent a stand at the **Great British Beer Festival** at Earl’s Court in London. Hiring Earl’s Court is extremely expensive and the Campaign has a long-established agreement with companies renting stands to pay in advance of the festival.

In 2011 everyone complied with this policy – except BrewDog. It was sent a series of friendly reminders without response until on the eve of the festival it was told it couldn’t have a stand as it had breached the agreement. BrewDog then put out a press statement saying CAMRA had “expelled” the brewery from GBBF. That was almost certainly the aim of the operation all along – to win some cheap publicity and damage the good name of the Campaign.

BrewDog has moved a long way from its founding mantra that it would be radically different to traditional breweries that are funded by rich

investors who control large parcels of shares. The 145,000 punks who invested more than £80 million would rule the roost at BrewDog.

It therefore came as a profound shock in 2017 when a quarter of BrewDog’s shares were sold to two companies based in the most infamous of tax havens, the Cayman Islands. One of the companies, TSG Consumer Partners, now controls 22.3 per cent of BrewDog’s shares. The deal between the brewery and the investor means TSG has priority over all other shareholders when important decisions are taken, such as BrewDog seeking a listing on the stock exchange. How very punk!

The MD of TSG, Blythe Jack, has been appointed chairman of the BrewDog board in the wake of the furore over the Punks with Purpose revelations.

Another major shareholder is John Moynihan, who chaired the finance committee of the Vote Leave organisation during the Brexit campaign. Moynihan also donated £100,000 to the Conservative party during the 2019 general election. He owns 7,142 shares. Such a source is a long way removed from the attitudes of the small investors who were impressed with BrewDog’s punkish origins – all beards and bobble hats – and the promise to be outside the mainstream of a notoriously conservative brewing industry.

James Watt has apologised to Punks with Purpose and says he will ensure staff are better treated in future, with due regard for their mental health. Blythe Jack will oversee the way staff matters are handled. Whether this will appease small shareholders remains to be seen.

BrewDog received a £25M loan from the government’s Covid Business Interruption Scheme. With many pubs and small businesses facing a difficult future, with the end of rent and rates “holidays”, did a company as cash-rich as BrewDog deserve such largesse?

It’s a sad and sorry saga that leaves the beers from Ellon with a very sour taste

Roger Protz

BrewDog loses “Tiger Strike” trademark battle

BrewDog just don’t seem to keep out of trouble and in July they lost yet another court case, this time over trademarks. The “punk” brewer lost the case brought by the Shropshire Gin Company that makes Tiger Gin and Tiger Vodka when BrewDog applied to register the trademark “Tiger Strike” for its range of spirits which include gin and vodka. The UK Intellectual Property Office ruled



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against Brewdog and awarded costs to Shropshire Gin. Employees Strike is possibly still available. The Aberdeen brewer has announced a pre-tax loss of £13.1M for 2020 on revenues that were up 10% year-on-year at £238M. The brewer succeeded in getting its heavily-hyped brands into more retail outlets but profits suffered as bar sales slumped during the pandemic.

Co-founder James Watt described 2020 as “without a doubt the toughest year in our 13-year history”

As well as the financial difficulties some of Brew Dog’s employees have formed a protest group called “Punks with Purpose” to protest at what they see as a toxic culture at the company. Sixty-one former employees and dozens of existing staff members published an open letter on Twitter in June claiming that “the true culture of BrewDog is, and seemingly always has been, fear”. “In the wake of your success are people left burnt out, afraid and miserable”.

The company responded by promising to “listen, learn and act”.

Pub companies – who they are and what they do - Part 1

A Potted History of the PUBCOs

Fifty years ago, when CAMRA was formed, the pub landscape looked very different. For a start, there were many more of them – some 75,000 against around 47,500 now. The majority of pubs (52,000 or so) were owned by breweries. The 89 small and regional breweries had 13,800 of them and the rest were in the hands of the ‘Big Six’ – Bass Charrington, Allied, Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney/Grand Metropolitan and Courage/Imperial.

Most of the other 23,000 pubs were free houses (in name anyway – many tied their beer supplies to a big brewer in return for loans and discounts). Companies that just owned pubs were few and far between – the likes of **Sir John Fitzgerald** in the North East and **Heavitree** in the South West (though they tied themselves to Bass).

Just about every pub-owning brewery rigorously imposed a supply tie on its own products. As late as the mid-1980s, I remember a Greene King director recoiling in horror at my suggestion that they allow a few guest beers in their pubs. As a result, new breweries found outlets hard to come by and we customers were hardly spoilt for choice, as a glance at a CAMRA **Good Beer Guide** of that era will reveal. Then, in 1989, along came the Beer Orders. The story of this epochal legislation (for better or worse)

is superbly told in Laura Hadland’s recent *Fifty Years of CAMRA* book but, in essence, the government acknowledged the stranglehold on the industry exercised by the ‘Big Six’ and, among other things, capped their pub ownership at 2,000.

By now, because of closures and sell-offs, the Big Six owned fewer pubs between them but the Orders still meant around 11,000 pubs coming onto the market. We, of course, dreamed of a new golden age of multi-hand pumped free houses galore, but the reality was sadly different. Companies were quickly established, usually with close links to the Big Six, to Hoover up these pubs in big batches then negotiate supply deals, invariably with the company who previously owned the place. Enterprise Inns, for instance, started off with the purchase of 368 pubs from Bass, and that’s where they bought the beer from.

In the years that followed, wheeling and dealing saw companies variously grow, collapse, merge, acquire, dispose – it was very difficult to keep up with who owned what. Some companies concentrated on managed pubs, some on tenancies, a few on a mixed model. Behemoths emerged – by 2004, Punch Taverns and Enterprise each owned more than 8,000 pubs, though both had accumulated so much debt that they ran into trouble come the financial crash in 2008, and subsequently retrenched. We’ll have a closer look at the current pub company scene in the next article.

A brief history of Punch Taverns illustrates the volatility surrounding pubcos from the 1990s onwards. Punch formed in 1997, purchasing a tranche of pubs from Bass. Two years later, they bought Inn Business (mostly former Whitbread pubs) and then the rump of the Allied estate. The managed pubs were spun off into a separate division called Spirit. In 2003, they acquired their 3,100-strong rival Pubmaster plus a couple of smaller companies. Next, Scottish & Newcastle’s managed pubs were snapped up and added to Spirit. By 2011 the impact of the crash was being felt, calling for a ‘strategic review’. Spirit was demerged and, in 2015, sold to Greene King. Come 2016, a takeover bid totalling £403M (plus the taking on of a billion pounds of debt) was accepted; 1,900 pubs went to Heineken with the remaining 1,300 residing with Patron Capital, though the Punch brand has been retained.

In the meantime, the treatment of their tenants by many of the Pubcos had become a major issue and, after years of campaigning, the Government was persuaded, in 2014, to announce a statutory Pubs Code aimed at regulating their practices and ensuring fair treatment for tenants. We’ll return to the

Code in a future article. In this context, though, it needs mentioning that the currently accepted definition of a pub company embraces breweries that own pubs – and nowadays most such companies have separate management structures for their pub and brewing operations.

Final comments. Pub companies are here to stay. There is nothing wrong with the basic model and, indeed, there are some excellent companies (mostly smaller ones) who treat their licensees well and clearly see their pubs as more than just property assets. It would, though, be difficult to argue that the ways in which some companies operate raise many issues around their custodianship of what aren't just piles of bricks-and-mortar but, in most cases, precious and valued community assets. We'll examine those issues in due course.

Val Langford

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.

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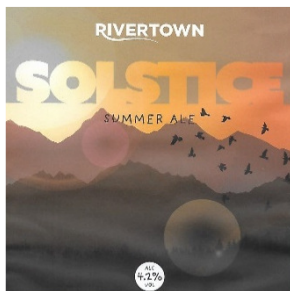
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McMullen's – Summer and Beyond

McMullen's *Cask Ale* has been withdrawn from the company's permanent range of cask ales. The beer has been a staple since 2007 when it was launched to give Mac's beer drinkers a golden beer option to complement the more traditional range of AK Original, Country Bitter and IPA. A replacement beer is being formulated and trialled and should be with us later in the year.

In the meantime, Mac's latest seasonal beer is *Rivertown Solstice Summer Ale*, ABV 4.2%, a pale straw-coloured ale brewed with traditional and modern hops, giving an excellent balance with citrus notes



coming through. The beer follows on from the popular *Freedom* which celebrated Mac's pubs re-opening following the Coronavirus lockdowns.

McMullen's have received plaudits for their community and charity work during the pandemic. It was a strong focus for the company with the donation of stock and a number of fund-raising efforts. They ran a number of "NHS shops" at the brewery and key pubs offered fresh food at cost prices to NHS workers. There were free Christmas meals for the isolated and charity donations on beer shop bottle sales. Mac's have started a partnership with Isobel Hospice called "Compassionate



Neighbours" again supporting the socially isolated.

And a marquee (pictured left) was erected in the brewery yard in Hertford acting as a Covid Vaccination Centre.

A permanent weekday brewery shop now offers bottled beers and a small range of merchandise between 10am and 3.30pm.

However, Mac's are concerned at the overall drop in cask sales that they have experienced in recent months – cask ale has a downward share of the beer market – a trend also reported nationally in some sectors. It is their "High Street" pubs and bars that have suffered most, less so their community pubs.

On the other hand, cask sales at their drive-to "Destination" inns have held up.

The company is always looking for fresh pub opportunities. New-builds are underway at Cambourne in Cambridgeshire and at Milton Keynes and there are significant pub refurbishments in London – the **Kings Arms** in Fitzrovia and the **Old Bank of England** in Fleet Street (complete with double decker bus!), both now open. Nearing completion is the **Horse and Guardsman** in Whitehall, a former Wetherspoons. In Hertfordshire Mac's are hoping to convert a former Nationwide Building Society building, the **Grange**, in St. Peter's Street, St. Albans. It will be familiar to those approaching the Arena Theatre. Being Listed it will require sensitive design, planning and implementation.

But as they continuously evaluate their tied estate, some Hertfordshire pubs (which Mac's saw as having become unviable) have recently been sold - The **Victoria** in Ware and the **Wheelwrights** in Goffs Oak. The **Old Star** in Wormley, the **Jolly Bargeman** in Ware and the historic **White Hart** at South Mimms are also closed and all are likely to be sold. McMullen's point out that in the majority of cases other Mac's pubs are nearby. CAMRA is always sorry to see pubs close. At least each of these communities have other local pub alternatives.

Les Middlewood

Problem Drinking? Britons are actually moderate drinkers

As regular as a red London bus, another report has come trundling along about "problem drinking". It repeats the media mantra that the Brits consume too much alcohol and repeatedly breach the 14 units a week guideline.

Little or no coverage was given in June to the annual figures compiled by Kirin University in Japan that lists, country by country, the consumption of beer based on litres of alcohol per head.

The top 10 countries are headed by the Czech Republic with 188.6 litres, followed by Austria (107.8), Romania (100.3), Germany (99.0), Poland (97.7), Namibia (95.5), Ireland (92.9), Spain (88.8), Croatia (85.5) and Latvia (81.4).

The UK isn't listed. It's not even in the top 20 and comes in at number 23 with a modest 70.3 litres – and that's a decrease of 1.4 litres on the previous year.

Are the figures distorted where wine is concerned? According to Decanter magazine, the UK weighs in

at number five on the list of wine-drinking countries. But consumption is modest and is half that of the United States, the world's biggest consumer of the juice of the grape.

I'm sorry to disappoint both headline writers, broadcasters and some members of the medical profession, but we are not disappearing beneath a tidal wave of booze. Whisper it quietly, but the Brits are actually quite moderate drinkers.

The facts won't detach the media from the myths. We all know that whenever there's a report about "problem drinking", the BBC will trot out the same old grainy piece of film showing a pint of beer being pulled by handpump in a pub even if the report is about wine or spirits.

During the recent lockdowns, many broadcasters have repeatedly shown large groups drinking outside pubs in Covent Garden. But Covent Garden isn't typical of London let alone the rest of the country. Few pubs and bars are in pedestrian-only precincts and if they have gardens or outside drinking areas, they tend to be at the back.

There's nothing new in wild exaggerations about alcohol consumption in this country. At the start of the century, when the Blair government announced it was relaxing licensing laws, the press went into overdrive. Civilisation was about to end and the streets would fill with drunks, we were warned, as a result of 24-hour drinking.

Even the usually sensible Radio 4 Today programme droned on endlessly about 24-hour drinking even though, when the new law was enacted, only a handful of licensed premises – mainly in airports and neighbouring hotels – opened round the clock.

Publicans who wanted to extend their opening hours had to apply to local magistrates and the police. Many were refused. Those that did stay open until one or two in the morning rapidly returned to 11pm closing for the simple reason they didn't have any trade after that time.

The media moved on to pastures new. In 2018 it went into hysterics over a report in the medical journal The Lancet that people who consumed 10 to 15 drinks a week shaved two years off their lives. One again we were all going to hell in a handcart. Nobody paid any attention to a footnote in the report that conceded that people who drank no alcohol at all had a 20 per cent higher risk of dying than those who drank in moderation.

Two years earlier we had suffered all the hoo-ha over units of alcohol. The then chief medical officer for England, Dame Sally Davies, announced that 21 units for men would be reduced to the same level for women – 14. This flew in the face of the medical fact

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that women's bodies digest alcohol more slowly than men's and they should drink less as a result.

But men and women were crudely lumped together. In announcing her recommendation, Dame Sally failed to explain why the beleaguered Brits should consume only 14 units a week while in the US and Canada it was 19, 23 in France and Italy and 34 in Spain.

In short, just about everything you read and hear in this country about "problem drinking" is a load of hokum. Drink sensibly, drink moderately but, above all, carry on drinking.

Roger Protz

Golden Award presentation for the Red Lion, Preston

On Friday 13th August, Andrea Briers, The Campaign for Real Ale's East Anglia Regional Director presented a 50th Anniversary Golden Award to the **Red Lion** pub at Preston, near Hitchin in Hertfordshire, accompanied by CAMRA North Herts members and pub regulars. The award reads "in recognition of the successes of the pub over the years; for standing the test of time, being convivial, characterful and community-focused, and consistently pouring a great pint."



At the award presentation Andrea added "I am delighted to be here to present Ray & Jo with this award and join in the celebration". The Red Lion, Britain's first community-owned pub, is one of just 32 pub winners announced by CAMRA nationally.

CAMRA's Golden Awards recognise 50 people, groups of people or businesses that have made a significant contribution to CAMRA's aims, helping us get to where we are today.

This is aimed at our campaigning heroes, the pub/club all-stars, beer saviours/custodians and stalwarts.

CAMRA North Herts branch has regularly nominated the Red Lion to feature in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide**, in which it has featured 25 times and has recently been local, county and regional pub of the year and a national finalist.

Regulars know there's always a chance to try a variety of changing beers and ciders there as well as enjoying great food and frequent events. No wonder it's such a local favourite.

Award for the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty, Herongate

The **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** in Herongate was belatedly presented with the Watford & District CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year 2019 and Cider Pub of the Year 2019 awards on Friday 6th August. The awards were made in the pub's pavilion in front of regulars and CAMRA members who had been waiting patiently for a year and a half to join a celebration of the pub's

achievements and of a successful reopening after a year of restrictions. Branch chairman Andrew Vaughan emphasised the importance of seeing the Land of Liberty reopening and being at the heart of the community, providing a warm welcome to regulars and other visitors as well as remaining a magnet for ale enthusiasts and a great supporter of independent breweries. The presentation took place during the week of CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival in your Local and licensees Martin Few and Gill Gibson were running a festival of their own, so there were even more excellent beers than normal.



The branch wishes Gill, Martin (pictured above standing by their awards), and their staff the best of luck in returning to normal after a challenging year.

South Herts CAMRA branch's Hertford Ale Trail 2021

Our aim is to run the annual Hertford Ale Trail on Saturday 27 November, from lunchtime, taking in seven or eight town centre pubs – all offering something special on the



day. With the 2020 Ale Trail and 2020 and 2021 Hertford Mild Nights all cancelled because of the pandemic it is hoped that we can bounce back in 2021 – with an Ale Trail full of golden, traditional and dark beers. For the moment, please make a note of the date in your diary. Details and itinerary will follow in due course, on the South Herts Branch website www.southherts.camra.org.uk and in social media.

Mac's Merry go round

For those of you who have been keeping up to date with the pub news through our online newspaper Herts *Pulling Together* will know some of the changes to the McMullen's estate. The

latest of their pubs to close was the **White Hart** in South Mimms on 24th July. This followed the **Wheelwrights** in Goffs Oak which closed earlier this year. Mac's are also disposing of other pubs; the **Victoria** in Ware closed for over two years now seems unlikely to re-open as a pub. Although we may be concerned about Mac's pub closures, McMullen do reinvest in their estate and open new pubs - the latest is the purchase of **Grange House** - the former Nationwide Building Society office in St Peter's Street, St Albans.

CAMRA North Hertfordshire Branch Annual General Meeting Notice

The branch will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Friday 8th October, 2021 at the **Orange Tree**, Norton Road, Baldock, SG7 5AW from 8.00pm. The pub is only a few minutes' walk from Baldock railway station (see www.theorangetreebaldock.com/index.htm for directions).

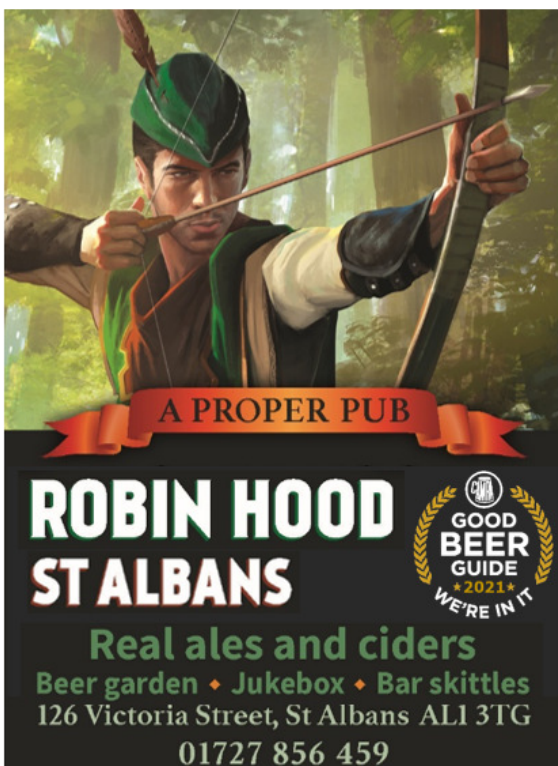
At this meeting the committee will present the Branch audited financial accounts and ask for the members' approval. The committee will also report on the events over the last year. There will be an opportunity to question the committee on the branch events. Also, at the meeting the Branch Committee for the next year will be elected in accordance with the Branch constitution (copies of which are available from the Branch Secretary:

secretary@northherts.camra.org.uk). Please note only CAMRA members can attend the branch AGM and that only North Herts Branch members can vote at the election of the committee.

Attending the AGM is a good way to see what the branch does, and we welcome branch members to get more involved in the activities of the branch. If you wish to stand for a position on the committee, nominations for membership of the branch committee shall be by email to the branch secretary (secretary@northherts.camra.org.uk).

The different committee roles are listed below:

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If you need further information on what each role entails, please get in touch. Each nomination must be signed by a proposer and seconder, where the nominee, proposer and seconder must be members of the Branch and be accompanied by evidence of the willingness of the nominee to stand. We will accept nominations at the AGM, but ideally, we would prefer nominations to be sent in advance.

Jeremy Kitson, Branch Secretary, CAMRA North Herts.

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**Deadline for Dec / Jan – Feb 2022 Newsletter
(301): Copy and Adverts – 7 November 2021**

Pints of View - 300 Echoes from a Distant Origin

It was 1976. CAMRA was attracting much interest with its battle for real ale - and South Hertfordshire Branch was playing a keen and purposeful part. Its meetings were regularly attracting thirty-five people or more and the Branch had garnered a name for being in the forefront of CAMRA's Branch campaigning, organising early beer festivals and being prominent at national events. A number of CAMRA's Branches had begun to communicate with the fast-emerging real ale campaigning fraternity through Newsletters produced by their Branch members. I was in my early twenties and was asked to draft something as a possible Hertfordshire Newsletter. It was quickly approved by the then Branch committee and a first edition was rushed out in July 1976, distributed to a few important early real ale pubs such as the White Horse in Hertford, the **Jolly Sailor** in St Albans and the **Barley Mow** at Tyttenhanger.

In comparison to today's professionally-presented *Pints of View*, its ancestor was somewhat rudimentary - a double-sided A3 sheet (folded to A4 size) typed news sheet, printed and produced monthly. The tools, techniques and funds were just not available (or invented) to produce much more. In line with the simplicity, purity and punch of the Campaign's message, the Newsletter was to include no adverts and was to be produced monthly sitting squarely behind national and Hertfordshire campaigning and branch social activity. It would log pub and brewery changes. The aim was to spread the real ale word to a wider drinking public.



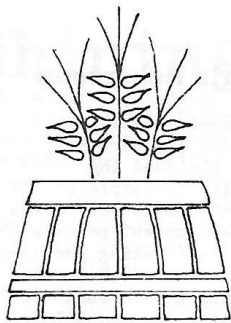
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE
**SOUTH HERTS.
NEWSLETTER**

FEBRUARY 1977

NUMBER 8

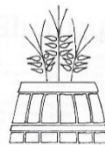
How Long To The 50p. Pint?

Fortunately, I had access to a typewriter with a wide carriage and I put together a Newsletter in a newspaper format, each page with two columns and with bold headings painstakingly applied in Letraset - a laborious process if ever there was one. The final



typed version was taken, each month, to Kenmar Press in Wood Green, North London, for production. Printing from typed copy was not always easy, nor was the journey home on the crowded rush-hour double-decker bus, armed with the heavy packages of unfolded Newsletters. Folding itself would take an hour and the Newsletters were then taken to Branch Meetings and events for distribution by keen members.

Our first edition was headlined "Big Boost to Real Ale in Hertfordshire" heralding the introduction of Ind Coope's game-changing Burton Ale - Hertfordshire was to gain a further 75 real ale outlets almost overnight. But it was the February 1977 edition with its shocking banner headline "How Long To the 50p Pint?" that first attracted many readers. Outrageous - 50p for a pint, just imagine.



The Campaign For Real Ale
**HERTFORDSHIRE
NEWSLETTER**

March 1978 Number 2

Big Brewers Collar Market

In February 1978, the other Hertfordshire Branches came on board and the publication was renamed The Hertfordshire Newsletter. It now had a wider distribution and included content - campaigning, historical and social - from some excellent contributors. And in the years that followed the Newsletter gained an A5 booklet format, full colour, photographs and a new name - Pints of View. When I look back at the very first editions, I recognise both the vigour and naivety of my youth - and a campaigning zeal that so many of my generation had. The Newsletter had a strong and uncomplicated message - real ale was what we wanted and we were out to change the demoralising brewing scene of the day. With our actions and words, we needed to convince an older generation of brewers and beer drinking public - who often talked of the "good old days" - that, in this case, the "good old days" were definitely worth cherishing and preserving, not the terrible keg beers that the, mainly, larger brewers were producing, nor the favour for the use of top pressure on excellent cask ales that had spread to many a Family Brewer - even to Hertfordshire's very own McMullen's. In analysing my time as Editor, from 1976 to March 1979, I think the words written in the Newsletter do manage to convey the wind of change that was turning in CAMRA's favour.

I suppose I would like to think that the Newsletter,

This article continues on page17

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50 years of The Campaign for Real Ale and St Albans

In 2021 CAMRA celebrates its 50th



Year and St Albans holds a special place in the history of the Campaign for Real Ale. The city hosted the first ever CAMRA Branch meeting – that of the Hertfordshire Branch - and held the first real ale Beer Festival to be held in Britain. St Albans is also home to the organisation's administration, with its offices in Hatfield Road.

In 1971 four journalist friends, dismayed at the state of Britain's brewing scene and the often poor quality of beers on offer, decided to challenge the big faceless brewing behemoths of the day who were ever-increasingly buying up and closing smaller breweries and producing dreary, bland, keg beers to maximise profits at the expense of quality tasty cask beer - presiding over the demise of Britain's once rich brewing tradition. CAMRA was born. Fifty years later, perhaps CAMRA's greatest achievements have been the new and enduring passion and care for Britain's cask-brewing heritage and for providing the inspiration for a new flourishing brewing scene. Preserving the traditional and encouraging the modern. Today there are more breweries in Britain, almost than at any time in living memory - and a vast array of amazing beers to try. And Britain's beer drinkers have influence and a voice that is heard by brewers and in parliament.

St Albans: City of Beer Campaigners

CAMRA's roots were originally in Salford but when one of our founding journalists took a job in Hertfordshire and relocated to St Albans, the embryonic organisation moved with him. CAMRA was being noticed and mentioned in key publications and newspapers, rapidly striking a chord with beer drinkers with its strong campaigning message and with its own newspaper, What's Brewing. Membership quickly grew and in 1974 CAMRA's base could be found at 94 Victoria Street,



ST ALBANS
BEER & CIDER
FESTIVAL 2017

St Albans, soon to be replaced by a move, in 1978, to 34 Alma Road and ultimately, in 1995, with office accommodation at 230 Hatfield Road.

Today, membership stands at around 170,000 – a thousand members living in and around St Albans.

CAMRA has adopted the term "live beer" to refer to a whole family of beers that adopt the principle of continuing to condition in their final container, an important factor in maximising the flavour of a beer. But CAMRA singles out cask ale, which we term "cask-conditioned beer", for special reverence. It not only matures and conditions in its cask but vents any excess carbon dioxide so that it is served with full flavour at atmospheric pressure. Previous winners of CAMRA's annual Champion Beer of Britain competition (and which may be found locally) include Timothy Taylor *Landlord*, Fuller's ESB, Mighty Oak *Oscar Wilde*, Crouch Vale *Brewers Gold*, Oakham *JHB*, Harviestoun *Bitter and Twisted*, Woodforde's *Wherry*, Tiny Rebel *Cwtch* and Castle Rock *Harvest Pale*.

The Campaign in Hertfordshire

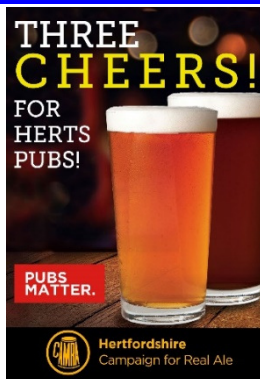
Since its establishment as an all-Hertfordshire Branch in 1972,



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE
**SOUTH
HERTS**

CAMRA's presence in Hertfordshire has grown and is now overseen by five Branches with St Albans sitting within the auspices of South Hertfordshire Branch. Covering an area from Ware and Hertford in the east, the Greater London boundary to the south and Harpenden in the north, St Albans sits close to the Branch's western boundary.

In 1972 just one City pub served traditional cask beer – the **Farriers Arms**, soon followed by the Lower Red Lion. Today most pubs offer at least one cask ale – many stocking beers from the local brewers that have emerged in the trail of the real ale revival – Farrbrew, 3 Brewers, New River, Paradigm, Mad Squirrel and Tring. McMullen's of Hertford have brewed traditional cask ales in the county since 1827. For pub details go to WhatPub at <https://whatpub.com>



The Branch has been in the forefront of brewery, real ale and pub campaigning for almost 50 years, and will celebrate its own 50th anniversary in 2022. A Branch-produced all-Hertfordshire magazine Pints of View has reached the milestone of 300 editions, keeping readers up to date with changes on the local brewing and pub scene.

St Albans Beer and Pubs Festival 2021

The city is famous for its Beer and Cider Festival, annually run at the Alban Arena in late September, sadly suspended in 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid pandemic. This year the Branch are working with local publicans to provide an in-pub Festival between Friday 24 September and Sunday 3 October. Look out for details in our festival leaflets, in Pints of View, on Facebook and Twitter or on our award-winning website <https://southherts.camra.org.uk> which also provides details of our engaging Branch meetings and friendly social events. Why not come along and join us? See our membership form on the back cover.



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SCAN ME

from its inception, right through to today's Pints of View, has played a significant part in spreading that word. The success of real ale campaigning has undoubtedly helped to lay the ground for today's brewing bonanza. But a personal sadness has been the seemingly unstoppable loss of so many great, if often small, Hertfordshire pubs – such as the Goose in Moor Green, the Chequers, Wood End, the Unicorn and Bell and Crown in Hertford, the Abbot John at Wheathampstead, the Salisbury in Essendon, the Star at Furneux Pelham..... regretfully there are so many more. And sad too that today's younger drinkers will never get to know the extent of the number of pubs that existed back then – and the fun of finding and enjoying them. A strong CAMRA priority must surely be to encourage people back to our pubs before even more are lost.

In all, I edited thirty-three monthly editions before

FREE

The Campaign for Real Ale


**HERTFORDSHIRE
NEWSLETTER**

April 1979

Number 15

BEER SWAPPING NEXT ?

handing over to my successors, Nick and Val Page. As CAMRA has grown our campaigning methods have certainly become more measured but, hark, if you listen carefully, you can still hear that early belligerent cannon roar – deep from a real ale fervour when a sharp, noisy and purposeful simplicity coursed through our pages.

Astoundingly, we are at Edition 300! Those editions represent 45 years of dedicated campaigning. They are individually informative but collectively they also now offer an important archive of Hertfordshire pub and brewery information. Congratulations to all of the energetic editorial teams that have carried the baton, particularly to the current long-serving team. Keep reading folks, the campaign for great and well-kept real ale - cask beer - continues and CAMRA is still at the heart of it.

If you just fancy a nostalgic smile or you want to more closely investigate Hertfordshire's pubs, breweries and beers through CAMRA's Hertfordshire campaigning years, go to the South Herts Branch website:

<https://southherts.camra.org.uk/news/newsletter-archive/> where you will find a scanned copy of every edition of Pints of View and its predecessors, together with a pub and brewery index.

Les Middlewood

Newsletter Key editions with dates (Edition number in brackets)

July 1976 (1) *South Hertfordshire Newsletter* monthly edition launched which ran to edition 19. For an unknown reason, edition 9 number was skipped as edition 10 came a month after edition 8.

Jan 1978 (1) Newsletter renamed *Hertfordshire Newsletter* with edition number restarting at 1

Jun 1979 (17) First typeset copy

Nov 1979 (22) First photographs included

Mar 1980 (26) First commercial adverts included

Dec 1981 (46) First six-page edition

Dec 1986 (100) 100th edition printed on green paper

Dec 1987 (106) Newsletter changes from a monthly to a bi-monthly edition (issue number not on cover)

Feb 1997 (161) Size changes from A4 to A5

Oct 1997 (165) Edition printed in blue text

Apr 2000 (180) Renamed from *Hertfordshire Newsletter* to *Pints of View*.

Aug 2003 (200) First edition to feature a full colour page (on the front cover only)

Oct 2004 (207) Pints of View printed on gloss paper

Jun 2006 (217) Pints of View now in full colour

Feb 2020 (299) Last printed newsletter prior to suspension due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Apr 2020 (1 to 9) Online newsletter *Pulling Together*

Sept 2021 (300) Printed Pints of View resumes



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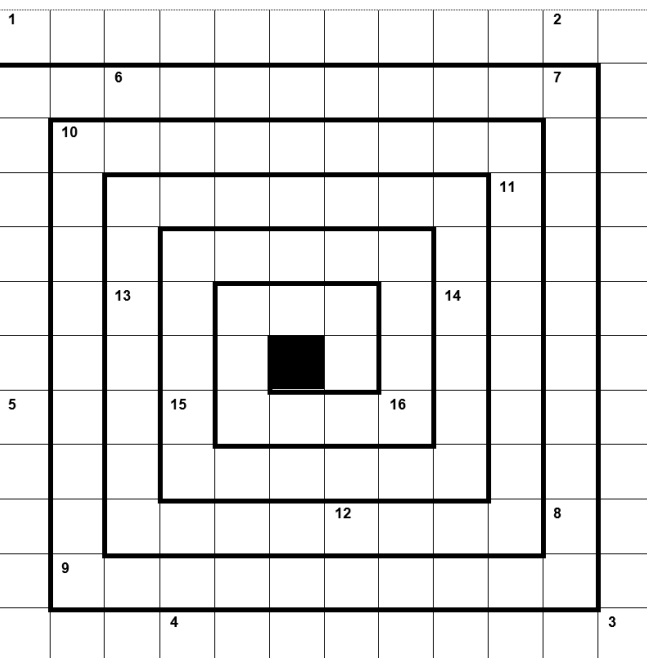
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Instructions: Starting from the top-left corner, fill in the answers from the clues given below. The last letter of the previous answer is also the beginning letter of the following one. Complete all the answers to fill in the 'Catherine wheel'.

- 1) HANDSOME WIL in Cambridgeshire
- 2) KAISERS THEORY in Woodmansey
- 3) NEVER RIDE in Penrith
- 4) ROSE ROTS in Harrowgate
- 5) SARK BOOMS in Battersea
- 6) NANDOS SET in Wrexham
- 7) EACH RIGHT in Wimbourne
- 8) NERVOUS THAI in Alva
- 9) MILK ARENA in South Yorkshire
- 10) MOPED I RENT in Tottenham
- 11) AT THE GREEN Suffolk
- 12) WOOL SLIDE in Hinckley
- 13) ONE NOTED SKY in Greenfield
- 14) LAGER CAGES in Todmorden
- 15) TO A REGAL KEY in Northamptonshire
- 16) LEAFY ROAD in Ferryhill



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A Pint at the Local – A Regular Pints of View Series

No.19 John Bunyan, Coleman Green

By Les Middlewood

A long an isolated Roman Road in the hamlet of Coleman Green, just 1½ miles south-east of Wheathampstead, is the **John Bunyan**, a pub popular with motorists, ramblers, dog-walkers, horse-riders and loyal regulars. No fewer than five footpaths and bridleways converge on the pub and remnants of the Devil's Dyke are just a 15-minute walk to the north-west.

Pub history prior to 1898 is sketchy but probability says it opened in the mid-19th Century, as a beer house, particularly serving the local community of agricultural labourers. It was then known as the Prince of Wales. By 1898 Hertford brewers, McMullen's, were spreading their wings – very settled in Hertford and East Herts and now buying pubs further afield. They acquired the pub for £500 and 'legend' says that the 7th Earl of Cowper and his successors owed the pub four shillings for their use of it but that since the Earl personally died childless in 1905 the pub has been left permanently out of pocket. Such is life. Nevertheless, the pub prospered but was renamed in the 1950s to mark the life of John Bunyan, the noted Puritan preacher and writer who in 1678 composed "The Pilgrim's Progress" a Christian allegory considered by some to be the first novel written in English.

He is also credited with the associated hymn "He Who Would Valiant Be". Bunyan spent a 12-year spell in prison for his refusal to stop preaching and after his release devotedly and doggedly carried this on. Born in Bedfordshire he preached at villages and hamlets all over central Herts and is said to have stayed occasionally at a cottage in Coleman Green. This was largely demolished in 1877 but the chimney stack remains, is Grade II listed and can be found 75 yards from the pub - before or after a pint! The John Bunyan pub abuts other terraced property and has a cosy lived-in atmosphere – nicely understated yet comfortable with an open fire and displays of over 700 plates and jugs. Good to see pub games are alive and well here - darts and shove ha'penny. Outside there is a grassed garden and a marquee has been added to cater for all weather.

Real ales are from the McMullen stable – *AK Original* and *Country Bitter* plus a monthly seasonal Mac's or Rivertown beer – currently *Summer Solstice*. Cask-conditioned beers were served using top pressure until the early 1980's when handpumps were installed and in 1989 the pub won the CAMRA South Hertfordshire Branch Pub of the Year competition. For the hungry there is good honest home-cooked

pub fayre with a daily special and there are vegan and gluten-free dishes. Children are welcome but note those under 14 are not allowed inside the pub (except to use the WC facilities).



The pub has for 20 years been run by the De Noronha family – first Chris and Sally and now son and daughter-in-law, Anthony and Faith. Anthony says "We are a proper old-fashioned welcoming country pub with some modern twists – we have a stone-bake pizza oven and you can charge your mobile phone in all corners of the pub". A Celebration Day takes place on Sunday 12 September – to allow people to celebrate all those occasions forbidden under the pandemic lockdown. There will be an outside bar, music and food. For vintage car lovers there are meets every third Thursday lunchtime of the month. The Lotus Car Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month. In the summer the John Bunyan is open 11.30 – 2.30 (closes 3pm on Fridays) weekdays and from 6 – 11.30pm (closes Mon evenings). Open all day at weekends from 12 noon (closes 7pm on Sun). In the winter it closes during Saturday afternoons. Buses can set you down at either end of the narrow Coleman Green Lane but it will be safer to alight at Wheathampstead and take a 1½ mile footpath walk to the pub – use Explorer Map 182. The 304 service from St Albans to Wheathampstead, the 366 from Welwyn Garden City to Wheathampstead or the 610 from Hatfield to Wheathampstead (all Mon-Sat) may best suit. For motorists, Coleman Green Lane is off the B653 east of Wheathampstead or the B651 south of it.

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

Sandridge Pubs and Beerhouses

Until the early 20th Century Sandridge was a self-sufficient village with local employment being mainly agricultural together with associated trades. For the purposes of this article, I shall provide an account, solely, of the pubs within the village rather than taking the parish boundaries as my remit. The latter would have included Bernards Heath, Marshals Wick and Jersey Farm areas until 1904 when the southern part of the parish became that of St. Saviour's and 1943 when Marshalswick became another new parish. Marshalswick was the new spelling for the area then being developed by Nash Homes.



Starting from the north, the first hostelry we encounter is the **First & Last** beer house at 9 High Street which operated as a licensed premises from 1860s until the

late 1890s. The name needs no explanation. The subsequent renaming to the **Poor Man's Friend** is not so obvious. The only references I have found to such an unusual name come from Bridport in Dorset and refers to Dr Giles Lawrence Roberts (1766 – 1834) who developed an ointment to cure wounds and skin ailments which he dispensed locally from his apothecary. He would often provide cures to the poor at no charge. I have not seen any link between this doctor and Sandridge. As many of Sandridge's residents were paid less than 12 shillings (60p) a week working on local farms, the name change may refer to some local benefactor. Poor Man's Friend is also quoted by MP in Charles Dickens' novel 'The Chimes'. Maybe, some local historian can enlighten us as to the real reason for this renaming.

The next premises we encounter is the **Queen's Head** 7 Church End, a weatherboarded pub, facing the church, which opened about 1725. As a Thomas Kinder pub, it passed to Adey and White brewers in St. Albans then on to J W Green in 1936 becoming Flowers, Whitbread, Laurel Inns and Enterprise Inns now trading as El. Kinder retained a maltings at the rear of the pub. The Post Office Directory lists Thomas Grey as Licensee in 1882, Thomas Clark and his wife Eliza by 1886. Emily Atkins had taken on the living by 1922.



Back in the High Street we come to the **Bell** at number 29. This possibly opened prior to the Queen's Head as a vestry meeting was held there, rather than at the Queen's Head, in 1725. The Bell closed as a pub in late 1890s and became Darby's store for 78 years and is now the village stores.



Next to the Bell at 31 High Street is the **Green Man**. Although the present building is Edwardian, the licence dates back to 1739 in an earlier building on the same site. By 1890 Charles Munt held the licence together with his wife and 6 children.



Charles, who was also listed in the 1891 census as a farming engine driver was still at the helm in 1912. There is a gap in my records but by 1926 his wife Elizabeth held the licence and still held it in 1933 by

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which time she would have been 80 years old. At one time she had a woodcutting machine which she kept in the woodyard behind the Rose and Crown. Immediately opposite, on the corner of House Lane is the **Rose & Crown**, originally the **Rose**, at 24 High Street. It is claimed to be 15th century although the



earliest reference so far found is 1640 which still makes it the oldest pub in the village. It is the other Adey & White pub which went via J W Green and

followed the same changes of hand as the Queen's Head. Behind the pub, on what is now the car park were stables and a paddock together with a woodyard. The licencees changed frequently at the end of the 1800s with the Post Office Directory listing George Fancourt in 1882, Frederick Bush in 1886, Tom Jackson by 1890 and Henry Norman by 1902. Stability soon came and Henry Boaler is listed on various dates between 1912 and 1937

Further along the road was a short lived beerhouse converted from 2 cottages at 40 and 42 High Street named the White Horse. Henry Faulder held the licence in 1890 and lived here with his wife Sarah and 5 children. The licence had been surrendered and the property reconverted to 2 cottages by 1900.



Our final port of call is at 84 High Street. By 1852 a wheelwright's shop traded on this site but a devastating fire on 22nd April destroyed it and caused serious damage to 10 adjacent properties. A quick rebuild on the site by local builder John Lattimore allowed him to open the new building as the Woodman beer house with him as licensee; the name being taken because a



woodyard was located to the rear. William Crain was in charge by 1890 and his wife in 1902. By 1926 Albert Gudgeon ran the business and did so until at least

1937. Trading at this location ceased in 1952 and the building is now a private house named Woodman House.

What of the current situation in 2021? The three beer houses have all gone although the buildings all

remain as private dwellings. The Bell pub is trading still but as the village shop.

The other three pubs still remain; all offering quality real ales and home prepared food. It is advisable to check pub websites for service times and put through a booking for meals especially for Sunday lunch which all three offer:

www.roseandcrownpubsandridge.co.uk

www.facebook.com/Thequeensheadsandridge/

www.greenmansandridge.co.uk/

It is possible to access the village by bus 304, 305 and 357. Although there is no evening bus service, there is still, at time of writing, a Sunday service with a 357 from St. Albans city station at 11.50 via St. Peter's Street enabling one to arrive in the village 'for the bolts' so leave the car at home and allow the driver to enjoy a drink too.

Pictures of buildings formerly the White Horse and Woodman courtesy of CD: BEFORE THEY ALL DISAPPEAR, The Pubs & Pub Signs of St. Albans and its Parishes by Rosemary Wenzel & Tony Stevens

John Crowhurst

Taking Rover to the pub

Not, not that sort of Rover, though I'm sure there is a potential for a guide to the do's and don'ts when taking your dog with you to the pub! What I'm going to look at in this article are the various 'Rover' bus tickets that can be used to get you to the pub by public transport.

Rover tickets (also called Day or Saver tickets) can be used for unlimited travel within a certain area on the routes of one or more bus operators. The three main bus companies in Hertfordshire (Arriva, Centrebus and Uno) each have their own Rover tickets. If you know that all the places you would like to travel to are served by the buses of just one of these operators, then their own ticket makes sense. However there is also a range of tickets that can be used on any bus, regardless of the operator. These are marketed under the Herts CC 'Intalink' banner. They are a little more expensive, but it is generally worth it for the greater flexibility they offer. All these tickets are valid for the whole day, from the first bus to the last.

The ticket that offers the greatest scope is the Intalink Explorer, which costs £9 per person (or a terrific value £17 for 4 people) for unlimited travel on virtually all buses in Hertfordshire, plus parts of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex.

For more local travel, there is a range of BUSnet tickets for some of the main towns (Hemel

Hempstead, St Albans, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield). Like the Explorer, these tickets can be used on all buses in the designated area, with each area covering the town and generally some nearby villages. These vary in price from £4.50 up to £6.50 per person for a day's travel (there is no 4-person option).

As an example of the scope of these tickets, this map below shows the area that is covered by the St Albans BUSnet All Zones ticket. This covers an area out to Markyate in the north, Hatfield in the east and Radlett to the south,



All the bus tickets mentioned above can be bought from the driver on the first bus you board. Also, gone are the days of hunting around for change before you get on the bus – all the main operators accept contactless payment for all tickets. The prices shown were correct at June 2021.

This article would not be complete without mentioning the PlusBus ticket. PlusBus is a discount price bus pass you buy with your train ticket. Like a rover ticket, it offers unlimited travel on all the buses in the specified area. It is useful if you will be travelling by train to the town where you will be doing your crawl, and will then be using the bus to get around that town. PlusBus tickets are available for all the main towns in Hertfordshire (and across the country), and represent very good value. The cost is different for every town, but in our area, they are generally between £3 to £4, in addition to the cost of the rail ticket – but if you have a Railcard, you get one-third off the price. A PlusBus ticket can only be purchased at the same time as the train ticket, but can be bought online or at the ticket machine or ticket office at the station. Before travelling, it is

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worth checking how wide an area is covered by the PlusBus ticket that you will be using, as they often include nearby towns and villages. You can do this at the www.plusbus.info/home website. For example, the ticket for Watford goes out to Croxley and Rickmansworth, and the Hertford ticket covers Ware as well.

Now you have decided which ticket you will be using, you need to find out the times of your buses and where they stop. When you are planning your pub crawl, the 'Location' tab for each pub in <https://whatpub.com/> will show the nearby bus routes (on the app, go to the 'Transport' tab). To find out bus times, go to www.intalink.org.uk/ where you can either search for a particular bus route, or enter your start point and destination and it will show you the options. Happy roving!

Alan Wallace

Ed Says: During the pandemic some services have been cut. I can see no way that bus companies can show that this is due to a reduction in use as quite obviously people were being advised not to travel. One casualty was the 602 Watford to Hatfield service which had its last bus of the night removed from the March timetable. This means that you can't travel much after 8pm when in the past the last bus

left St Albans at a more suitable 10pm. The 602 is a Uno Bus and the company was set up to ensure that students could get back to their halls of residence in the evening. The first response from Uno Bus to the cut was that they are short of drivers (not covid as expected). If you know of any other routes that have had service cuts please inform us, and of course complain the company involved.

Living next to a pub

I recently spent a couple of hours watching a meeting of St Albans City and District Council (SADC) Licensing sub-committee hearing an application from a local pub to extend their operating hours and to install an outside bar to cater for their customers.

The application generated a couple of dozen objections from local residents. They were not objecting to the pub per se. They were perfectly aware of the presence of the pub when they bought their property, and in many cases made that purchase because of the presence of the pub.

They liked the idea of living next to or near the pub. They used the pub and welcomed its continued existence.

But, and it is a big But, over the years they had seen that pub change from cosy, corner community local to a "prime sports bar" location with a much more noisy, younger clientele using a new large outdoors decked area, operating for longer hours and with the subsequent increase noise from TVs, music systems and live music.

So how much say should local residents have when their local pub dating back to the 19th Century decides to embark on a radical operational change? If they object will they just be regarded as a bunch of NIMBYs (or should that be NIMLP – not in my local pub!)

What will an increasingly noisy pub do to the value of their properties? New residential flats and houses converted from previous office space are being developed close to the pub. Will the new residents feel entitled to object to the way the pub is operated? This is not going to be an isolated incidence, as more city centre office space is converted to residential use will the new occupants of those properties seek to curb the way any long-standing local pub is being run?

For myself, I have lived next door to a pub for the last 30 years and over that time seen it go through several changes of ownership, operation and name. The **Farmers Boy**, the **Wine and Ale Café**, TFB and back to the **Farmers Boy**.

The outside area has been developed to increase the number of customers and to allow live music, BBQs etc

I suppose I am lucky in that my flat overlooks the pub, so I can look down on the pub activities, enjoy the music if I wish from the comfort of a deckchair on my flat roof, or close my double-glazed windows and ignore it. There is some noise but that is to be expected, and there is more noise generated by traffic on the main road by which I live.

I knew what I was buying and that there was a pub next door, and generally speaking I have been very happy with way that things have turned out. Though I won't mourn the demise of The Wine and Ale Café. In general, a pub licensee and staff, have a duty of care to ensure that their customers conduct themselves responsibly and do not create annoyance to local residents. And local residents should expect that they will experience some noise from their nearby pub. In the same way as if you buy a house next to a farm you may expect to be woken early by the crow of a cockerel, or if next to a dairy hear the early morning clatter of milk bottles.

It would seem that the easiest way forward is for a pub licensee to maintain good relations with local residents and for local residents to make regular use of the pub next to which they have chosen to live.

If you ever do have a spare hour or two during the day, I would recommend tuning in to one of the SADC Licensing sub-committee hearings. They won't be as riveting viewing as *Emmerdale* or *EastEnders* but you may discover something about the St Albans pub world!

Iain Loe

Why Beer Mats Don't Fly

What many people do not know is that beer mats were originally introduced to go on top of your glass not underneath it. Pubs like other buildings of the time were often dirty scruffy places in past with thatched roofs and no ceilings and the mats like the lids on tankards where to stop detritus falling from above into one's glass. As time passed and buildings improved the mats became a good source of advertising and a means of soaking up minor spills as well as a source of amusement when used as missiles. Although beer mats have been thrown about on numerous drunken occasions it is impossible to produce any accuracy. Propelling mats frisbee style across the bar always ends with the same result, the rotating mat flips onto its side and randomly crashes into the ground.

Unravelling the physics of flying beer mats has been selflessly researched by Johan Ostmeyer and two colleagues: Christoph Schürmann and Carsten Urbach at the University of Bonn in Germany. They have even built a device that fires them automatically into the air. With some theoretical work thrown in, this team has solved the mystery of why beer mats turn on their sides and are even able to predict how other flying discs should behave like CD's and playing cards.

The team began with a theoretical approach taking the beer mat as a thin disc with a certain radius and mass. When thrown, the rotation makes the disc stable as it flies but this only lasts a short while. That's how the flight begins, gravity however quickly causes the disc to drop, changing its angle generating lift but not through the disc's centre of mass. Instead, the lift acts much closer to the leading edge which creates a turning force that causes the disc to flip onto its side, so that it cuts through the air vertically. This mat turning onto its side is predictable, the team's theory predicts it should happen after about 0.45 seconds.

There is another effect at work, however. When the disc is vertical, there are two possible configurations — the disc can have backspin relative to its direction of movement or it can have topspin. It turns out that that backspin state is stable, while the topspin state is not.

Ostmeyer and co then compared the theoretical analysis with experimental evidence, which they gathered using a home-made beer mat launcher. (It turns out that humans cannot launch beer mats with an accuracy that is sufficiently repeatable — a problem possibly related to beer.)

The researchers found the mats behaved in exactly the way their theory predicted.

The team says the theory allows them makes predictions about other flying discs. A flying playing card will flip after only 0.24 seconds, a CD after 0.8 seconds and a much larger and heavier discuss after 16 seconds.

Frisbees, of course, are different and have different aerodynamic properties due to their rounded down edges and, thus, enjoy a significantly extended stable flight time," say Ostmeyer and co.

This is interesting work that will inspire many hours of intense research in local hosteleries around the world.

During the covid lockdown beer mats have been removed from pubs. As things return to some sort of normal, they will be back.

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This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur. News items are supplied to meet newsletter deadlines, and which in some cases may unfortunately be out of date upon publication. Comments or additional information should be sent to our contact details on page 20

Batchworth Heath: The freehold of the **Prince of Wales** was being advertised by Derrick Wade Waters Chartered Surveyors and Property Consultants in late 2020. It is no longer being advertised and there is some evidence that it has been sold.

Chorleywood: The **Old Shepherd** is closed. The tenancy was being advertised by Red Oaks Taverns on 22nd May.

Essendon: The **Rose and Crown** remains closed – over two years after its planned re-opening date following refurbishment. The pandemic has of course played a part but when an Asset of Community Value application was made (following on from one that had expired after 5 years) it was first approved by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council but then rejected by them on an appeal by the pub owners. Despite this we very much hope that the pub will re-open – it is the last remaining pub in the village, summer is passing - and residents and visitors are feeling parched.

Goffs Oak: McMullen's have closed and sold the **Wheelwrights**. Its future as a pub seems extremely unlikely.

Harpenden: In Southdown the **Skew Bridge**, now under ownership of the Big Smoke Pub Company, is currently closed for refurbishment and is scheduled to open on 1 September. The pub is also reverting back to its original name – the **Queen's Head**.

Hertford: The **Hummingbird** in Fore Street has reopened, now operated by the owners of the Belle pub in Bassingbourn, Cambs. It's primarily a gastropub and specialises in cocktails and spirits with bar and restaurant areas. Sadly, there is no real ale although the door is not closed to it if enough people ask – the handpumps are there on the bar! It's currently closed on Mondays and Tuesdays but otherwise open all day. Music at Hertford's **Corn Exchange** has been taken over by those running the **Horn** in St Albans and the **Horn** at the **Half Moon** in Bishop's Stortford. Real ale was often available at the **Corn Exchange** on gig nights, with tapped casks on the bar – let's hope that still happens in the future. Often carrying on under the radar both during and post-lockdown, a shout out for Ray at **Mind The Gap** at Hertford North railway station – where one pin of real ale is usually available. Arrive early for your train!

Mill Green: It appears that building works have started on the **Green Man**.

Oxhey: The **Victoria** has reopened after an extensive

internal refurbishment which has led to its removal from CAMRA's Historic Pub Interiors list. No real ale.

St Albans: Big Smoke Brew Co, who also own and run The **White Horse**, Old Welwyn, assure us that The **White Lion**, Sopwell Lane St Albans will be reopening at the end of August; although it appears that planning problems may see this date slipping to later in the year.

St Ippollitts: The **Greyhound** is being redeveloped as housing.

Ware: The **Albion** remains closed with rumours that it has been sold – its future remaining unclear. Following the sale of the long-closed **Victoria** (its future as a pub doubtful and unclear) Mac's have now also closed the **Jolly Bargeman**, an estate pub in the north-east of the town.

Watford: The **Prince George** reopened in April under the management of the Burrows family. It is now a sister pub to the **Royal Oak** in Watford Heath and the **Horse & Chains** in Bushey. Like those pubs, there is a focus on pub grub with a South African theme. Real ale is available, usually from Tring Brewery. **Bar Bodega** closed abruptly on 14th June. There is no indication when or whether it will reopen. Mangan's bar on Market Street has now been renamed the **Market Tavern**.

Whitwell: The **Maidens Head** is due to be converted to residential use.

Wormley: The **Old Star** remains boarded and closed. It is understood that McMullen's are selling the pub.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

ALL HERTS CAMRA BRANCHES

Thu 14 Oct: Herts Liaison Meeting – **Royal Oak**, Tabard Street, London SE1. 7pm.

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

Tue 7 – Sat 11 Sept: Chappel Beer Festival, Chappel & Wakes Colne Station, Station Road, Chappel, Essex, CO6 2DS

North Hertfordshire CAMRA

Wed 1 Sept: Letchworth Social – **Arena Tavern**, **Crafty's**, **Garden City Brewery** and **Three Magnets** – Starts at 8pm

Wed 8 Sept: Ickleford Social – **Ickleford Special Social** – 8 pm, **Cricketers**, 8.45 pm, **Old George** & 9.30 pm **Plume of Feathers**. This is a chance for Branch Members to say a fond farewell to the two landladies Theresa & Chris at the Plume of Feathers after more than 27 years. Starts at 8pm

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

Thu 23 - Sat 25 Sept: Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival - **Hitchin Rugby Club**. See back page and North Herts Website for more details. Please note that this is a ticket only event. No tickets on the door.

Fri 8 Oct: North Herts Branch & Interim AGM - **Orange Tree**, Baldock. Starts at 8pm

Wed 20 Oct: Stevenage Social - Starting at **Royal Oak, Old Town Bar, Rump & Wade** and **Standing Order**. Starts at 8pm

Wed 3 Nov: Branch Meeting - Venue TBD

Wed 17 Nov: Letchworth Social - Starting at **Broadway, Platform, Garden City Brewery** and **Three Magnets**. Starts at 8pm

Wed 1 Dec: Baldock Social - Starting at **Hen & Chickens, Cock, White Lion** and **Orange Tree**. Starts at 8pm

South Hertfordshire CAMRA

Tue 21 Sept: Branch Meeting - **Robin Hood**, St Albans. 8pm.

24 Sept - 3 Oct: St Albans Beer and Pubs Festival 2021- Individual Events as follows:

Sun 26 Sept: A Learn and Discover event with CAMRA's Alex Metcalfe. **Tue 28 Sept:** An Evening with Roger Protz - **Robin Hood**, Victoria Street, St Albans - 8pm. Roger will be discussing a range of beers, from bitters to golden ales and IPAs to stouts and porters, examples of which will be available to sample on the night. Free entry. **Wed 29 Sept:** "The Joy of Beer" - A talk and Beer Tasting with Roger Protz - **Olde Fighting Cocks** St Albans - 8pm. The talk will include five beer samples. Cost £10 - pay on the night. **Thu 30 Sept:** A Beer Dinner - **Lussmanns Restaurant**, Waxhouse Gate, St Albans. 8pm. Diners will be accompanied by Roger Protz and Andre Lussmann with beers selected to match the evening's menu and explanations as to why! Cost £20. **Date TBC:** A History of St Albans Pubs. A talk by David Thorold, Curator of St Albans Museum. All details TBC. **NOTE:** A number of other events are being planned and an on-line map of the festival's participating pubs will become available nearer the time.

Tue 19 Oct: Branch Meeting - **Black Horse**, West Street, Hertford. 8pm.

Tue 16 Nov: Committee Meeting - Venue TBC. 7.45pm.

Sat 27 Nov: Hertford Ale Trail - a tour of 6 - 8 excellent real ale pubs. From 1pm. All details TBC - see our website for updates.

Watford & District CAMRA

Thu 2 Sep: Rickmansworth social - **Fox & Hounds**, 183 High Street, WD3 1AY, 8pm; **Wishful Drinking**, 124 High Street, WD3 1AB, 915pm; **Pennsylvanian**,

115 - 117 High Street, WD3 1AN, 10pm.

Mon 25 Oct: Branch AGM - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

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