



Summer Edition No. 303: June - August 2022



HERTFORDSHIRE'S Pints of View



South Herts CAMRA members amongst Camra Members Investment Club visit Fuller's Brewery

McMullen's brewery moving forward into 2022

Pope's Yard Brewery brew a special beer in aid of humanitarian work in Ukraine

Queens Head, Allens Green is East Anglia Cider Pub winner



Time to start campaigning again by Steve Bury

The first green shoots of recovery for the licensed trade are being celebrated by CAMRA in their summer of beer promotion. Some pubs and breweries have been lost but others as readers of Down Your Way will note new ventures, yes brand-new pubs are in the pipeline and as I reported in newsletter 302, Hertfordshire actually had five new breweries start-ups in 2021.

Unfortunately, the reopening following the lockdown has seen price rises in pubs. Okay, inflation is hitting everything fuel, food, utility supplies so disposable income is seriously depleted for a large part of the population. Some establishments in Hertfordshire are now charging the wrong side of £5 per pint, and like a lot of other retailers they are promising further price increases in October. I am old enough to remember when the "prices and incomes policy" was inacted and Whitbread were the first brewers to be refused a price increase by the government - halcyon days which we did not appreciate at the time.

What I have found gratifying is that the level of service has improved considerably as pubs realise more than ever that they need to keep their customers. The call has been "get out there and use your locals" the old adage "use them or lose them" could not be more important.

So now some criticism on my travels. I have had some of the usual problems and even though we are paying inflated prices it is still not uncommon to get short measure and on occasion bad beer.

So may I suggest that we focus again on two major issues that threaten cask ale?

Quality: There are many things that affect the quality of the beer in your glass, the first and most straightforward is cleanliness - cleaning the pipes regularly and good cellarmanship are key. I will quote the late great Bob Muir (former long-term landlord of the **Elephant & Castle** in Amwell, Wheathampstead) "you cannot serve consistently good real ale without throwing some away". Some of the brewers and publicans seem to have forgotten this and do not pull off beer at the start of a session - thus serving customers ale that has been in the pipes overnight or longer. This beer looks perfectly OK and is normally perfectly clear but you can tell pipey beer as soon as you taste it. The same can be said for beer from the end of the barrel - you know it's wrong on the first mouthful.

Some brewers and pub companies have installed flow meters on the pipe runs which do not take into account losses at the point of dispense.

Pubs have reduced their range of beers since reopening after the lockdown which is understandable, but even before the lockdown certain licensees were stocking too many beers. The *Morning Advertiser* (the publicans' daily paper) reported on 20 May in an article headed "Are you getting it right on cask?" that cask ale should be consumed within three days of being broached (opened), but 90% outlets selling cask ale fail this target. After the three days the beer is going to deteriorate very quickly. Off beer may not necessarily be cloudy, but will often smell of vinegar. To encourage better practices with cask, Sharp's Brewery have brought together a group of cask enthusiasts from within their owners Molson Coors business. The MA has also set up a "Cask Project" with St Austell, Marston's Carlsberg brewing company and Greene King.

There is of course still Cask Marque which individually assesses pubs' beer quality and accredited pubs display the distinctive blue hand pump signs.

What I can say is on my travels that there is still a lot of bad beer being served, and customers can only applaud these new initiatives which will hopefully bring some improvement.

Short measure: it has been mentioned many times in this newsletter and as the price of your pint goes up so does the incentive financially for the licensee. An equivalent is to imagine going to the bakers and they open up your loaf and take out two slices, then when you complain they look at you in amazement as if nothing was wrong.

Short measure is not as simple as it might appear and can be as simple as badly trained staff. Bar staff in particular seem to have an aversion to having the beer run over the top of the glass and then their hand before going into the drip tray. A lot of beer can be lost into the drip trays if it is not pulled properly. I remember highlighting a particular pub in St Albans that had little plastic ducks in the drip trays which if they started to float there was a problem to be addressed. One publican informed me that he would no longer be serving Sharp's *Doom Bar* as it fobbed too much which led to losses (beer conditioning is another issue that needs to be discussed).

We are paying for 20 fluid ounces so should get it, but the glasses in use are brim measure. CAMRA at beer and cider festivals always uses oversized lined glasses and there should be no reason why publicans and brewers should not do the same. The average beer glass does not last a long time, the complete stock can need to be replaced in under a year as glass

washers take off the logos and the salt used scores the glass. Breakages are also not uncommon and need to be taken into account.

You enter the pub and get presented with less than full measure, many comments are used “tide’s out” ‘that one’s a reverend’ (thick white collar), “bet you could get a double scotch in there” but what you should be doing is asking for a top up. On two occasions recently I have had the strange experience when asking for a “top up” have had the glass taken away and lemonade put in it. Quite clearly, I need to go to elocution lessons (I will add that I am not normally misunderstood, and am often accused of being noisy and projecting). Why people drink lemonade, lime tops or even shandy I do not know - if you don’t like beer don’t drink it.

In the past the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) led a “full pints campaign”. Some progress was made with the government saying that they would legislate to introduce oversized glasses, but this slipped down the priorities and is now forgotten about. CAMRA also issued short measure cards to be used with nonic pint glasses showing exactly how much your short pint was costing you. Again this stopped when prices started rising so regularly that we could not keep up.

My advice is simple: if something is wrong - complain, ask for a “top up”, ask for that bad pint to be replaced. Sometimes this will lead to disagreement but please don’t put up with second best or even bad. My advice to publicans is that a customer lost will complain to others. Getting a reputation for bad beer can be exceedingly bad for trade.

Action needed as hundreds of pubs have failed to re-open

In response to pub closure figures for 2021, the Campaign for Real Ale calls for a VAT cut, changes to business rates systems and a new online sales tax to help give our locals a boost

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has released its pub closure statistics for 2021 and is calling for intervention from government to protect the great British pub.

The figures released today show that across Great Britain last year 290 pubs were demolished or converted to another use – an average of just over five a week.

There was an uptick in the number of new pubs being built, or existing buildings being converted into pubs, averaging just over seven new pubs

opening every week in the second half of the year. However, over 500 pubs were also classed as a ‘long term closure’ in 2021, where the building is still classed as a pub for planning purposes, but the business itself has closed or is empty and without tenants to run it, showing the lasting effects of the pandemic, and the present cost of business crisis. The Campaign has highlighted a number of steps that Government across the UK should take in response to the report, and to the cost of living crisis, including:

- An immediate cut in VAT for on trade food and drink sales, to help both businesses and consumers
- Introducing an Online Sales Tax, with the funds raised directed to relieve the grossly unfair rates burden on the pub and hospitality sector
- Using the upcoming Statutory Pubs Code Review to bring more tied tenants into the scope of the Pubs Code for England and Wales; and making sure a robust Scottish Pubs Code is introduced later this year to offer protections for tied tenants in Scotland for the first time
- Bringing forward the introduction of the new draught duty rate for beer and cider, confirming that it will apply to containers of 20L and over
- Confirming the retention of the duty exemption for small cider makers making under 70HL of product a year

Commenting, CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said:

“These figures show that whilst there is some encouraging news about new pubs opening in 2021, there is still a big problem with pub businesses not re-opening after the pandemic.

“With the cost-of-living crisis affecting consumers, and the cost of business crisis facing our pubs, brewers and cider makers, we are really concerned that this positive news from our 2021 figures will turn into a nightmare report for 2022.

“Pubs are not only vital employers, but they are key to community life up and down the country – bringing people together and tackling loneliness and social isolation. Government across the UK must do more to make sure pub businesses can survive the cost of business crisis, and that consumers can still support their local pubs at a time when household budgets are being squeezed.

“CAMRA is doing our bit, with our Summer of Pub campaign rallying people to support their locals at every possible opportunity, but we need also need action from political leaders. The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments must take action to safeguard

the future of the Great British pub so they can continue to play their part at the heart of community life in the years to come.

“That’s why CAMRA is calling for a cut in VAT for food and drink served in pubs and the introduction of fairer business rates systems which desperately need designing so that pubs are taxed fairly – together with an online sales tax so online businesses pay their fair share too.”

CAMRA Pub Closure Figures (GB) – 2021

These figures are provided in 6-month periods and cover England, Scotland, and Wales.

All data comes from **whatpub.com** – the Campaign for Real Ale’s pub database.

Net Closure Figures – All GB

These reflect the total change in the number of buildings in pub use.

Period	Closures	Openings	Net change	Net change per week
July-December 2021	145	190	+45	+1.7
January-June 2021	145	74	-71	-2.7

Permanent Pub Closures

These reflect where a pub building has been converted or demolished.

Period	Closures	Per week
July-December 2021	145	5.6
January-June 2021	145	5.6

New Pub Openings

These reflect where a new pub has been built or a building converted to become one.

Period	Openings	Per week	Conversions	New builds
July-December 2021	190	7.3	174	16
January-June 2021	74	2.8	63	11

Long Term Closures

These reflect where pub buildings have closed for business, or are empty without tenants, for a long period of time. These are not permanent closures, as the buildings remain classed as pubs in planning terms.

Period	Closures logged as long term	Per week
July-December 2021	254	9.8
January-June 2021	251	9.7

Breakdown by nation: July-December 2021

Nation	Permanent closures	Conversions	New builds	Total openings	Net change	Per week
England	131	160	14	174	+43	+1.7
Scotland	10	6	2	8	-2	-0.08
Wales	4	8	0	8	+4	+0.2

Breakdown by nation: January-June 2021

Nation	Permanent closures	Conversions	New builds	Total openings	Net change	Per week
England	131	59	10	69	-62	-2.4
Scotland	7	2	1	3	-4	-0.2
Wales	7	2	0	2	-5	-0.2

Breakdown by England regions: July-December 2021

Region	Permanent closures	Conversions	New builds	Total openings	Net change
East Midlands	10	14	0	14	+4
East of England	7	3	1	4	-3
Greater London	12	20	6	26	+14
North East	1	0	0	0	-1
North West	46	33	2	35	-11
South East	23	24	2	26	+3
South West	11	12	0	12	+1
West Midlands	13	13	0	13	0
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	41	3	44	+36

Breakdown by England regions: January-June 2021

Region	Permanent closures	Conversions	New builds	Total openings	Net change
East Midlands	5	2	0	2	-3
East of England	9	0	0	0	-9
Greater London	18	15	5	20	+2
North East	8	2	1	3	-5
North West	28	7	1	8	-20
South East	22	8	1	9	-13
South West	10	1	0	1	-9
West Midlands	10	4	1	5	-5
Yorkshire and the Humber	21	20	1	21	0

Permanent Pub Closures (GB) – pre-2021

These reflect permanent pub closures before 2021 – where the pub has been demolished or converted from pub use to another use. New pub opening figures for the same time period are not available.

Period	Closures	Per week
July-December 2020	161	6.2
January-June 2020	161	6.2
July-December 2019	172	6.6
January-June 2019	271	10.4
July-December 2018	184	7.1
January-June 2018	264	10.2
July-December 2017	254	9.8
January-June 2017	412	15.8
July-December 2016	257	9.9
January-June 2016	364	14.0

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Heineken plans to close Caledonian Brewery

Heineken is currently in talks with the 30 staff employed at Caledonian Brewery (pictured below) and has an agreement in principle with Greene King, which would see the brands currently produced at Caledonian – including Deuchars and Maltsmiths – produced at Greene King's Belhaven Brewery in Dunbar.



Caledonian, which has been operating since 1869, was acquired by Scottish & Newcastle in 2008, becoming part of Heineken later that year when the Dutch brewer acquired S&N.

Caledonian beers brewed in Edinburgh were regularly found in Hertfordshire and they supported the **St Albans Beer and Cider Festival** for several years. Sadly, the brewer took a change in direction and *Deuchars IPA* was no longer promoted or available.

I was fortunate to be able to visit Caledonian at the CAMRA members weekend after it had been restored for the second time following fires in the brewhouse. Fortunately like many traditional brewers Caledonian was situated next to the river which the fire brigade used to douse the flames.

A Heineken spokesperson said "The fact is, its Victorian infrastructure means significant inefficiencies and costs, particularly as it is operating below capacity. To modernise the brewery, and to meet our own sustainability commitments, would require considerable ongoing investment, which would make operating the brewery economically unviable."

Having survived several takeovers as well as the fires it is sad to see the classic site go.

Steve Bury

Stout Resistance from Pope's Yard Brewery

When Russia invaded Ukraine creating a huge refugee crisis, Geoff Latham and Barbara Leenen of Pope's Yard Brewery decided to contribute to the relief effort by brewing a special beer in aid of humanitarian work in the country. Geoff and Barbara have visited Ukraine in the past and their search for local beer styles and breweries led them to CastleHill Brewery in Lviv, whose milk stout was the basis of Pope's Yard's new beer *Stout Resistance*. Brewed in collaboration with CastleHill, the beer adapts that brewery's recipe for the malts and other ingredients available here in the UK.

The beer received its official launch on Friday 8th April at Creative Juices Brewing Company at Woodoaks Farm in Maple Cross, and members of Watford & District CAMRA branch went along to show their support. The brewery is based in converted farm buildings, with the tap room in the old grain store and milking parlour. It was oddly fitting to be drinking a milk stout in the sunken, tiled pit where the cows used to be milked. Thankfully the tap room has been completely cleaned up and decorated since those days and is a very interesting and quirky place for a pint.



Pictured above: Barbara Leenen (centre) and Geoff Latham (right) chat to members of Watford & District branch at the Stout Resistance launch.

As for the beer, *Stout Resistance* is full-bodied with a slight treacly sweetness. It's not cloying though, which makes it very drinkable, despite having an ABV of 6%. Geoff explained that the ingredients that went into *Stout Resistance* would normally be used to brew a much stronger beer, but that the Ukrainian style demands that not all the sugars are fermented, leaving a richer beer with more body.

It was available in keykeg and bottles at the launch event, but casks were being made available at **Monk's Inn** in Hemel Hempstead and **Two Trees Micro** in Watford (pictured on page 10) over the following fortnight. Geoff said that the cask version should taste slightly sweeter than the keykeg version because there's less carbonation and hence the acidity is lower.

At the time I spoke to Geoff brewing was not allowed in Ukraine, but he was hopeful that CastleHill beer could soon be in production again. He also hoped to be able to import some of their beer to the UK, which we definitely look forward to.

Ukraine Beer Aid

4 5,000 pints of beer from Varvar Brewery in the Ukrainian capital was on sale in the UK in April through Hertfordshire wholesaler Euro boozer. With many Ukrainian regions banning sales of alcohol after the Russian invasion Kyiv-based Varvar Brew was left with unsold stock which was imported to the UK.

An assurance was given that no-one will make any cash on it, it will all go back to help with the war effort.

It appears that none of this beer was naturally conditioned but the idea was a good one.

Steve Bury



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Two Trees Micro, Watford's First Micropub

Michael Ash and Kat Perry had been hoping that a micropub might open in Watford, but to no avail, so, when Michael was made redundant from his job on the railways, and Kat's work as an archaeologist was curtailed by the various lockdowns, they decided to open one themselves.

They found a small premises situated at No 18 Vicarage Road, in the pedestrianised area, unused since 1991, which they opened on the 1st March 2022 after overcoming some local objections and having to compromise by agreeing to get everyone out by 11pm, with the bar closing at 10.30. (The fact that there is an existing, reasonably noisy, bar on the opposite corner with people outside till after 11pm didn't seem to register with the licensing authorities...).

Three cask ales and a cider are usually available on handpump and these have received generally very good reviews. The beers are widely sourced, but a beer from local brewers such as Paradigm, Pope's Yard and Oxhey Village Brewery is often on sale. Four craft keg beers are also on tap, supplemented by low and no alcohol and several dozen takeaway choices. They also serve some locally produced gin and rum and bar snacks are also available.

Although small, it has helped that they now have an outside drinking area which has aided their intention of being dog and family friendly.



After a certain amount of trial and error in gauging their customer footfall, the **Two Trees** (pictured above) is now closed on Monday, opening at 5pm on Tuesday; 3pm Wednesday to Friday; and noon on Saturday and Sunday. They are liable to close at 9.30pm on a Sunday unless you contact them in

advance to let them know of your "coach party's" visit...

Interestingly, the name "Two Trees" does not originate from the number of trees outside in the pedestrianised street, but rather from the surnames of the proprietors! It is indeed a very welcome addition to the Watford beer scene.

Noise Abatement notice for Farmers Boy, St Albans

The **Farmer's Boy** in London Road St Albans has promoted live music in their garden for the past 14 years, using their beer garden every Saturday afternoon between 2.30-5pm. Considering the early finish it was surprising that they have received a noise abatement order from St Albans District Council (SADC) which could threaten the pub's viability.

Various measures including making sure the performance faced out towards London Road, ensuring there is a day of rest



following any event, concluding live performances by 6pm and managing bands' sound levels. £2,000 had been spent on acoustic blankets following persistent complaints from one neighbour.

A SADC spokesperson said: "In this case, we received complaints from several residents about noise levels from amplified music played outdoors. We therefore had a legal duty to serve a noise abatement notice requiring the pub to reduce the noise to an acceptable level. Our officers continue to work with the pub and the community to help them achieve this".

Oxhey Village Brewfest 2022

The Oxhey Village Brewfest has been another victim of the pandemic over the last couple of years. Thankfully on 23rd April it was back, with simultaneous beer festivals held by the **Rifle Volunteer** and **Villiers Arms** in collaboration with Oxhey Village Brewery and the Oxhey Village Environment Group. This was the fourth such event, which has been held since 2017 and promotes the local breweries and pubs involved while also raising funds for Watford Peace Hospice.

Both pubs had stillages set up with casks of Oxhey Village's Gold and Ruby ales and a range of beers

from Tring Brewery, Rebellion, Wantsum and Chiltern, as well as cans from Creative Juices Brewing Company. The weather was fine, and the pubs were busy inside and out with groups of friends, families, and keen ale drinkers. The Villiers Arms had its stillage set up in a covered patio area adjacent to the pub garden. I had a pint of *Chiltern Black* in the garden at the Villiers before heading over to the Rifle Volunteer, where licensee Chris Pyrke was serving beers from the stillage. I had a pint of *Wantsum Black Prince Mild* from the bar and a Tring *Citra Session* from the stillage.



Above - The garden at the Villiers Arms during the Oxhey Village Brewfest.

Sadly, I missed out on the Beer of the Festival, which was *Oxhey Village Gold*. However, Oxhey Village Brewery's beers have been popping up in venues around the wider area. The Load of Hay and Two Trees Micro have both been serving Oxhey Village beers recently. Also, there's no need to wait until the next Brewfest to visit the Rifle Volunteer and the Villiers Arms. See contact details below and Facebook links for events at the pubs or look for them on CAMRA's own WhatPub guide (whatpub.com). Rifle Volunteer, 36 Villiers Road, Oxhey, WD19 4AJ www.facebook.com/TheRifleOxhey Villiers Arms, 108 Villiers Road, Oxhey, WD19 4AJ www.facebook.com/thevilliersarms

Andrew Vaughan – Watford & District CAMRA

The Grand Junction Arms in Bulbourne, Tring re-opens

On 28th March, Tring-based pub company, The Oakman Group, unveiled the restoration of Tring's Victorian canal-side pub, the [Grand Junction Arms](#), following a six-month, £1.2m extensive redesign and renovation. It is a year since The Oakman Group acquired Joycelyn Neve's six North-West seafood pubs to form their new Seafood PubCo. The Grand Junction Arms will serve food from both land and sea.

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The pub's Victorian heritage has returned with wood panelled walls and the original horseshoe shaped bar has been reinstated. There is a wood-burning stove in a reclaimed fireplace and there's room for up to 80 diners. There is an all-weather heated outdoor dining terrace with a communal circular fire pit and dedicated bar. The Towpath Beer Garden alongside the canal has been levelled and is overlooked by three glazed igloos known as 'OakPods' where groups of six can enjoy a private dining experience in their own personal bubble.

Oakman also run the **Beech House**, St Albans and another Beech House is due to open in Watford in the autumn. Another site in Harpenden is set to open towards the end of this year.

Trading Standards

If you have a complaint about short measure, lack of a price list or misleading promotion of products, and fail to get a satisfactory response, contact:

Citizens Advice consumer helpline

Telephone: 03454 04 05 06

Or scan this code:



Herts CAMRA Branches' County Pub of the Year

Members of the Hertfordshire branches visited the three contenders over a number of weekends in April & May. These contenders were already adjudged to be Pub of the Year in North Herts, South Herts and Watford & District Branches.

They were reviewed not only for the quality of their ales, but also a number of weighted factors that ensure that the winner will give visiting drinkers and locals alike the best all-round experience.

Indeed, all three of the pubs can certainly be considered to do that, as the scoring was really close. In the end, a winner was decided and it is frequent past winner the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** in Heronsgate. Their reputation has been long established. Indeed, the place became a pub in the late 19th Century. Congratulations go out to Gill and Martin who'll see their pub now entered in the regional stage of the Pub of the Year competition.

The other worthy contenders were the **Woodman** at Wildhill and the **Half Moon** in Hitchin.

Give all three a visit. We're sure you'll enjoy them. Our judges certainly did!

Dean Barrett

North Herts CAMRA Good Beer Guide roll of honour

With CAMRA recently celebrating its 50th birthday, I have often wondered which of the North Hertfordshire pubs have appeared in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** on the most occasions. Last year's Covid lockdowns provided me with more than sufficient time to go through old copies of this publication and the leading entries are: 28 entries: **Lordship Arms**, Benington

27 entries: **Maidens Head**, Whitwell and **Crown**, Buntingford

26 entries: **Plough**, Ley Green and **Red Lion**, Preston.

25 entries: **Windmill**, Charlton.

The Lordship Arms first appeared in the guide in 1995 and has been an ever present since then reflecting the excellent quality of the beer on offer. It is no surprise that this has also been a recent pub of the year.

In joint second place with 27 entries are the Maidens Head in Whitwell (now sadly closed) and the Crown in Buntingford. The Crown first appeared in the 1986 guide and remains a current entry.

Just 1 entry behind at 26 appearances, are the Plough in Ley Green and the Red Lion in Preston.

The Windmill in Charlton was a regular entry in the early years of the guide and is currently closed although there is a local campaign to re-open this venue.

In some of the earlier editions, there were also try / other recommendation sections for each county. I have included pubs which were included in this in my calculations.

Prior to 1974, there were forerunners to the Good Beer Guide. If anyone has any details of Hertfordshire entries then I will be most interested to learn of these and I can be contacted on the following email address:

pubsofficer@northherts.camra.org.uk

A full list of entries is currently being added to the North Herts CAMRA website.

Bryan Bird - Pubs Officer, North Hertfordshire CAMRA, website: <https://northherts.camra.org.uk>

Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival 2022

The **Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival** is run by the North Herts branch CAMRA, Hitchin Round Table, and **Hitchin Rugby Football Club**.

After a hiatus in 2020 and a scaled-down event in 2021, this year's full-size festival is

approaching fast! It's on 9th - 11th June, 2022,

Thursday evening,

Friday afternoon and evening, and Saturday afternoon and evening.

The festival organisers have ordered 96 real ales, around 50 real ciders and will also be offering KeyKeg & international beers and mead totalling more than 200 varieties. These will all be served in the large marquee familiar to festival-goers from 2019 and before. Outside there will be a variety of food vendors covering all tastes, and Artystar, CAMRA North Herts' merchandise partner, will be both selling and offering live screen-printing of t-shirts on-site.



Advance packages of entrance, a glass and the first £10 of drinks tokens can be bought in advance from CAMRA's Tkty platform. Using this link will let the organisers know you're a Pints of View reader. Advanced ticket-holders are guaranteed entry on their chosen date and this year's festival glass – pint or half.

All draught beers and ciders will be available in pints, halves and thirds, so you'll have the choice to try as many as you like.

The festival is run entirely by volunteers from the three supporting organisations, and is sponsored by local businesses. You'll find it at Hitchin Rugby Club, King George V Playing Fields, Old Hale Way, Hitchin, SG5 1XL from 5 PM on Thursday 9th June and 12 noon on the Friday & Saturday.

Queens Head, Allens Green: East Anglia Region Cider Pub of the Year 2022

We are very pleased to announce that the **Queens Head** in Allens Green, CM21 0LS, is this year's East Anglia Region Cider Pub of the Year. Pictured below is Queens Head landlord Cliff Caswell being presented with the Herts Essex Borders CAMRA Branch Cider Pub of the Year

Award, from branch Cider Officer Janet Bullerwell.

CAMRA East Anglia region is comprised of six counties (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk), and nine judges took part in the regional pub cider judging.

County cider Pubs of the Year winners are below:

Bedfordshire: **Sir William Peel**, Sandy

Cambridgeshire: **Drayman's Son** - Ely

Essex: **Compasses** - Littley Green

Hertfordshire: **Queens Head** - Allens Green, Sawbridgeworth

Norfolk: **White Lion** - Norwich

Suffolk: **Walnut** - Stowmarket

Chris Rouse - Regional Cider Coordinator, East Anglia



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South Herts CAMRA's Pubs of The Year

CAMRA's Pub Of The Year is a national competition and we are pleased to announce the winners for South Hertfordshire:-

Gold - **Woodman** at Wildhill

Silver - **Crooked Billet** at Ware

Bronze - **Old Cross Tavern** at Hertford

As usual the competition results were very close and the finalists are judged not only on their beer and cider but also the service provided and support for CAMRA's aims as well as other criteria.

The Woodman at Wildhill will now go into the next stage, which is to find the pub of the county. Once the county section is completed the winning pub will go into the regional judging - in our case East Anglia. The Woodman went on to the County Pub of the Year competition - see page 12.

Branch members on CMIC visit to Fuller's Brewery

South Herts branch members were amongst a party of the CAMRA Members Investment Club (CMIC) to visit Fuller's brewery on 18th May.

CMIC is a group of CAMRA members who club together to buy shares, in the main, companies who brew or retail real ale. The Club was founded in 1988 and currently has just over 3,000 members and investments of over £21m.

Until Covid the Club organised several visits a year to UK breweries with an annual overseas trip as well as hosting an annual lunch and AGM at the **Victoria** in Beeston.

With restrictions easing brewery visits are resuming. The trip to Fuller's was the first by the Club since the sale of their brewery to Japanese brewer Asahi. The Fuller's company retains control of the pub estate. Normally visitors to the brewery would have congregated at the brewery tap the **Mawson Arms**. Sadly, the pub, still owned by Fuller's pub company, is closed with an uncertain future. So, our party met at the brewery shop where we were logged in. The shop has a bar for on and off-sales although with beer prices matching nearby London pubs at £5.50 a pint and £3.50 a half, there were few takers from our group.

Not much has changed around the brewery since the Asahi takeover. *London Pride* is still more than 50% of total beer production.

The group had a chance to sample the 2022 version of Fuller's *Vintage Ale* which this year is brewed with

all English ingredients using Bramling Cross and a new hop Emperor. The Beer should be available in bottle-condition form in October, but hopefully we may be able to obtain some in cask for the **St Albans Beer Festival** in late September.

We also had a quick preview of the Platinum Jubilee Ale which was to be launched in the following week in time for the festivities.

As usual the tour ended at the **Hock Cellar** for some sampling, i.e., drinking the 9 cask ales on tap.

Unfortunately, the Asahi takeover has seen sampling (drinking) time curtailed to make room for the next tour. So, the South Herts members took a walk in the sunshine along the Thames Embankment to Hammersmith taking in some hostelries including the **Dove**, where we squeezed into the smallest public bar (according to The Guinness Book of Records) being joined by a CAMRA and Club member from Hull.



Above – the CMIC party at the Fuller's brewery

If readers would like to know more about the Investment Club they can click on the Club website www.cmic.com or contact the CMIC Herts Ambassador Dave Wright who will be pleased to elucidate further.

Dave Wright



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Mild Was the Night - in Hertford

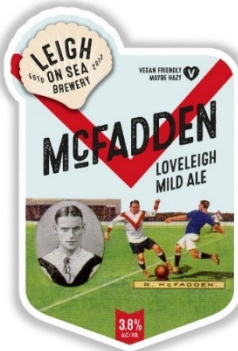
Four pubs in Hertford took part in this year's Mild event "Into The Mild Brew Yonder", held in May as part of CAMRA's longstanding "Make May A Mild Month" campaign. Attracting a throng of over 25 South Herts Branch members and friends, the **Black Horse**, **Crafty Duck**, **Old Barge** and **Old Cross Tavern** each prepared a dark mild for the delectation of our group.



At the timbered Black Horse, the excellent Tring Brewery *Mansion Mild* was available. A 3.7% ABV smooth, sweet and creamy, quaffing mild named after Tring Park House

which was originally built in 1685 to a design by Sir Christopher Wren. In the hands of the Rothchilds family from 1872 to 1935 and then the Rothchilds Bank during WWII, in 1945 it passed to the Arts Educational School – now known as the Tring Park School for the Performing Arts.

At the **Crafty Duck**, Hertford's first micro-pub, we found Leigh-on-Sea Brewery's *McFadden Mild* (ABV 3.8%) brewed with Amarillo, Perle and Magnum hops, resulting in dark chocolate and coffee flavours. The beer was first brewed for Leyton Orient FC Supporters Club but proved to be so popular that a further brew was



soon made for CAMRA's **Pigs Ear Beer Festival** in London. The beer was named in memory of Richard McFadden, who was (Clapton) Orient's player and member of the "Footballers Regiment" in the Great

War who, alongside other Orient colleagues, lost his life at the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

At the riverside **Old Barge**, Mad Squirrel's *Red Dawn*



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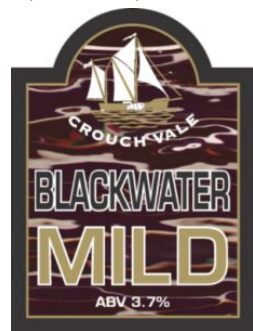
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Mild (ABV3.7%) featured on the handpumps. Brewed occasionally, the seasonal beer has a dark, mahogany red hue with a nutty and malty finish. Red Dawn Mild is a survivor from Red Squirrel Brewery, once based in Hertford but now in Potten End near Hemel Hempstead – the company renaming itself as Mad Squirrel in 2017. Finally, at the **Old Cross Tavern**, Crouch Vale's *Blackwater Mild* (ABV3.7%) and Timothy Taylor *Golden Best* (ABV 3.5%), the former a smooth and malty mild celebrating the river close to the brewery in Essex, the latter considered by many to be the last of the true Pennine light milds – crisp and amber, an excellent session beer. And that was it – a fine end to another great mild night in the town. Many thanks to all of our pub participants – let's hope mild features more regularly at the bar in our Hertfordshire pubs. Hertford's Mild Night has run since 2006. See you next year.



Les Middlewood

Praise for GK XX mild and Newsletter

I refer to the article on page 7 of issue 302 regarding the demise of Greene King XX Mild.

I can report that I enjoyed it on five visits to the **Star** in Godalming between 7 January and 4 February and that it was as good as it has ever been. As your article states it is no longer a regular brew but it *is* available. I would also like record my appreciation of this issue which is probably one of the most informative you have in my opinion ever produced, difficult to absorb so much new news.

I sincerely hope you will find a way to continue in hard copy. I really appreciate the effort made to produce issues since lockdowns and post them to me.

Colin Marshall

Ed Says: Strangely Greene King XX Mild seems to be available in off licenses and selection boxes in Tesco. This beer is of course pasteurised, carbonated and comes in 500ml bottles.

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**

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Pints of View 303 Beer Name Prize Sudoku

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O		L		T		G		D
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				O	G	R		
			F				D	S
L					I	T		

Fill in all the squares in the grid below left so that every row column and each of the nine three by three squares contain all the letters of a beer brewed by Stratton Lane, Winchester, Hampshire..

Completed entries by 14 August to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA. The winner drawn wins a CAMRA 2022 Good Beer Guide.

Your

Name:.....

Your

Address:.....

Postcode:.....

**Winner of Pints of View 302 Pub Related
Wordsearch**

F Pryor of Hertford

How Much?

Tom Kerridge who at present seems to be a celebrity chef of choice by the media came under criticism in the *Metro* and the *Daily Mirror* in March. Tom, who runs an event in Verulam Park in St Albans every September and gives advice on how to turn round pubs and restaurants as well as supporting cask ale, was admonished for the price of a half board stay at his upmarket gastro pubs. For a two-person two night stay at the **Hand and Flowers** and dinner in the **Coach in Marlow** will cost £1,000 and the deal is only available on Tuesdays. As the Hand and Flowers is the world's only Michelin two-star pub and you will receive a voucher for the third pub owned by Kerridge, the **Butchers Tap & Grill**, this may not seem unreasonable to some. All the pubs are within one mile of each other. One comment was "you could get a two week stay in Malta for the same price".

Drink Beer - Save the Planet

The largest island in Sweden is Gotland where the population of 60,000 are having a constant battle with pollution from agriculture and the sewerage system. They have limited fresh water supplies and have come up with a novel solution using human urine. 70,000 litres of urine have been harvested from waterless urinals which is then turned into fertiliser. Well, you are asking what has this to do with beer. The fertiliser gives the best results when used to grow barley, which I hope we all know is one of the four ingredients used in making beer. Less water is used and sewage



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produced but of course the beer when drunk will produce urine and so the cycle continues.

Hertfordshire's Pints of View 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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Baldock: The **George IV** closed for a short while in March for refurbishment. This food orientated pub now falls under the Chef and Brewer umbrella. There is now a dedicated bar area for non-diners. The staple beers are Greene King *IPA* and *Abbot* with plans to use a third handpump for beers from local brewers on a changing basis.

Borehamwood: The **Wellington** no longer sells real ale, we had great hopes for the pub following a major refurbishment which included the development of the car park into flats. Sadly, the *London Pride* and *Doom Bar* have gone.

Bulbourne: The **Grand Junction Arms** has re-opened following refurbishment (see page 11).

Gravelly: The owners of El Bar de tapas in Stevenage have taken over the **George & Dragon** and it has now reopened serving English food with a modern twist. Real ale continues to be available.

Chorleywood: The **Old Shepherd** has reopened following extensive refurbishment by owners Red Oak Taverns, and according to reports is being managed by the same team as the **Anchor Tap & Bottle** in Croxley Green. Real ale is available, including beers from Tring Brewery.

Dane End: The **Boot** has a change in licensee with Mick Beardsley retiring and passing over the reins to Gemma Allan who also lives in the village.

Hatfield: The **White Hart** re-opened on 14th April following a £300k refurbishment. The pub has gone back to its original name having been called the **Town Inn** for a few years. No mention of real ale in the press release, can we have an update please?

Haultwick: There is no fresh news from the **Rest and Welcome**. The new owners have had a couple of failed planning applications and there was rumour that it will open up again as just a country pub. The building at the moment is boarded up and is looking very neglected and in a sorry state.

Hertford: The **White Hart** in Salisbury Square has reopened after a refit by McMullen's aimed at younger pubgoers. Buildings at the rear now house additional bars and, high up in the yard, a DJ booth oversees the throng. Real ale comes in the form the Mac's or Rivertown seasonal cask beer, only available in the main pub bar. The Hertford brewer has also recently opened its latest pub (sadly not in Herts) the **Warbler on the Wharf** in Milton Keynes at the **Campbell Wharf Marina** on the Grand Union canal. McMullen's are carrying out a full refurbishment of the **Salisbury Arms Hotel** in Fore

Street which will be closed until late in 2022. We welcome Dan Cory the new tenant at the **White Horse** who has worked previously in other pubs in the town. Fuller's beers will include London Pride, ESB and Hophead with, hopefully, a special (and food) to follow once the pub has settled. Dan aims to build on the pub's unique former beer house and atmospheric credentials and its important real ale history for CAMRA.

London Colney: The **White Horse** is shut, with a sign outside saying Punch Lease for sale. When the previous tenants left in January it was thought that someone had been found to take over the pub - this is obviously not the case. There has now been a proposal by Punch to keep the pub but build on the garden. An ACV (Asset of Community Value) is being sought.

Much Hadham: The long-closed **Jolly Waggoners** is subject to a planning application for demolition and the construction of four houses.

Norton: The **Three Horseshoes**, closed for refurbishment, is due to reopen 23 May as part of the Stonegate group.

Nuthampstead: Stuart and Jenna Johnson have left The **Woodman** bringing to an end almost 40 years of family association. They are moving onto **The Tivoli** bar in Cambridge which is re-opening. The Woodman will continue to trade.

Potters Bar: Closed for over two years a planning application has now been submitted to convert the **Chequers** into residential accommodation and new houses built on the car park.

Radlett: It has been reported that John and Mark of the **Mermaid** St Albans have signed a lease to open the **Railway Tavern** in the premises known as the **Office** on Watling Street near to the station. Real ale was available when the Office opened but was discontinued in 2020. The bar is a shop conversion which has had many different names over the years. We wish them both all the best with the venture which will be completely independent of the Mermaid. It has also been reported that John Cushworth has enhanced his acting career with an appearance on *Coronation Street* in May following his success in the Voltarol advertising campaign.

Rickmansworth: The **Golden Duck Taproom** is open at Rickmansworth Cricket Club under the management of Sam Wakeling. At the time of visiting there was a wall of keg beers and one regular cask Sam hopes to increase the number of cask beers.

St Albans: Work has started on the **Grange** building in St Peter's Street which McMullen's hope to have open in 2023. Work continues on what will become the **Quiet Man** in Chequer Street, with completion expected later this year. James Ward, general manager at the **Mad Squirrel Tap**, is moving on. His replacement will be Peter Hamilton. Peter currently runs MS's bar in Amersham and his new remit in St Albans will include training managers across the whole estate. It is reported that Peter is a keen cask ale drinker.

Ware: A planning application has been lodged for a change of use and building works to convert the **Victoria** into residential accommodation. We believe that the **Jolly Bargeman** has been sold – presumably to be demolished for housing. The **Albion** remains closed. A Change of Use application has been submitted on a new building in Amwell End - to open as a micro-pub specialising in craft keg beers.

Watton-at-Stone: The **George and Dragon** has undergone substantial refurbishment, inside and out, by Greene King, back offering an interesting pub menu and GK ales.

Welham Green: The **Hope & Anchor** has re-opened

but unfortunately, it does not sell real ale.

Weston: The **Cricketers**, owned by Anglia Counties Inn is reportedly being transferred to new owners Red Cat Inns. Red Cat also owns the **Bricklayers Arms** in Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead.

Woolmer Green: The **Chequers** has re-opened 9th April following a refurbishment and has new tenants.

Wormley: The Old Star has now become Manto's – a swanky restaurant. Needless to say, no real ale is served.

Watford: **Two Trees Micro** has now opened on Vicarage Road. There are three handpumps serving beers from microbreweries, including local breweries like Pope's Yard, Paradigm and Oxhey Village Brewery. The pub also sells real cider. Stonegate Pub Company has closed **Bosley's** in the town centre. According to agents Fleuret's website it has been let subject to contract. The **White Lion** on St. Albans Road reopened after a short closure for refurbishment.



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All Hertfordshire CAMRA Branches

Tue 23 Jun: Herts Liaison Meeting – via Microsoft Teams link only. 7:30pm

Sat 2 Jul: Regional Meeting – **Ferry Lane Social Club**, Ferry Lane, King's Lynn. 12 noon

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

Sat 18 – Sun 19 Jun: Gibberd Garden Beer Festival – Marsh Lane, Harlow, Essex CM20 0NA. 12pm – 8pm. [Tickets bookable on-line on this link](#) or on the day at the gate – cost £7 including free celebratory glass. Refreshments available until 6pm.

Tue 6 – Sat 10 Sept: Chappel Beer Festival 2022 – Chappel Station, Colchester, C06 2DS. The event is still 'Work in Progress', [please click this link for updates](#). Provisionally tickets will go on sale from Midnight 1 August 2022. Tickets will be limited and sold on strict first come, first served basis.

North Hertfordshire CAMRA

Thu 9 – Sat 11 Jun: Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival at Hitchin Rugby Club. See article on page 12 for more details.

South Hertfordshire CAMRA

Tue 14 Jun: Branch Meeting – **Hertford Club**, Hertford. 8pm. Speaker: Brian Page "CAMRA and Cider – an update on what is now considered real and why".

Tue 19 Jul: Branch Meeting – **Horse and Groom**, Hatfield. 8pm. TBC Speakers: Steve Bury and Les Middlewood "Stories from the South Herts Branch Early Years Pt 2"

Tue 16 Aug: Committee Meeting – **Hertford Club**, Hertford. 7.45pm.

Watford & District CAMRA

Wed 15 Jun: Watford social - **Market Tavern**, 28 Market Street, WD18 0PY, 8:30pm; **Two Trees Micro**, 18 Vicarage Road, WD18 0EH, 9:15pm.

Thu 23 Jun: Rickmansworth and Croxley Green social - **Golden Duck Taproom**, Rickmansworth Cricket Club, Park Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1HU, 8:15pm; **Sportsman**, 2 Scots Hill, Croxley Green, WD3 3AD, 9:15pm.

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

Sat 2 Jul: Sarratt and Belsize social - **Cricketers**, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 6AS, 12:45pm; **Boot**, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 6BL, 2pm; **Plough**, Dunny Lane, Belsize, WD3 4NP, 4pm.

Sat 9 Jul: Official opening of the new bar at the **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 1pm.

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

Fri 12 Aug: Chorleywood and Heronsgate social -

Rose & Crown, Old Common Road, Chorleywood, WD3 5LW, 8:30pm; **Old Shepherd**, Chorleywood Bottom, WD3 5JH, 9:15pm; **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Long Lane, Heronsgate, WD3 5BS, 10pm.
Mon 22 Aug: Branch meeting - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

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Chairman – Brendan Sothcott, Tel: 01279 507493

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

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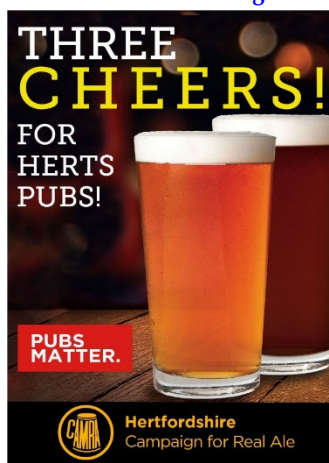
Watford & District CAMRA

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