

FREE

Spring Edition No. 302: March - May 2022



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

HERTFORDSHIRE'S

# Pints of View



**Royston Club, St Albans (above) and Hertford Club, Hertford (right) jointly awarded Club of the Year Winner by South Herts CAMRA**



**Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty in Herongate (left) awarded Pub of the Year by Watford and District CAMRA**



Enjoy great mild beers  
in May around  
Hertford pubs – see  
page 16 for details



## The future of this Newsletter

The Herts CAMRA newsletter has been running since July 1976 without a break.

During Covid lockdown regulations stopped us publishing paper copies and instead we published a bi-monthly online only magazine, which we renamed *Hertfordshire's CAMRA Pulling Together*.

As we could not give any indication how many people were reading the online version, and of course the great pressure the whole leisure industry was under, we did not charge for the limited advertising during this period.

In total we published nine editions of *Pulling Together* over eighteen months, and all these can be read in the Herts Newsletter Archive hosted on site:

<https://southherts.camra.org.uk/news/newsletter-archive/> - along with all newsletters, back to 1976.

Last September we reverted back to paper copies but the bad news is this newsletter *Pints of View* 302 March-May will be the last printed edition to be distributed for the foreseeable future.

The reason for this is simple, we have no funds.

For those of you who do not know, we are quite particular who we allow to advertise in POV and we limit the amount of advertising so as to not drown the copy.

Advertising revenue does not cover the cost of publishing each edition, and the CAMRA branches of Hertfordshire subsidise the newsletter from their own funds. Most CAMRA Herts branches have been unable to run beer and cider festivals for the last two years and with the lack of festival revenue, branch funds are more or less exhausted. CAMRA nationally finds itself in the same situation, notwithstanding CAMRA membership subscription revenue.

### What to look forward to

Until further notice *Pints of View* will be published online, and accessed via links on all Herts CAMRA branches' websites. Each online edition will include all the usual features "Down Your Way... Readers Write, awards and campaigning articles, and of course some light hearted pieces.

Check your local branch website for updates on this - Branch Contacts page 25 lists your local branch.

Please be rest assured that as soon as we have the funds, we will be moving back to paper copies.

## Pubs Code changes do not go far enough

Responding to the Government's announcement on changes to the Pubs Code, CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said:

"It is good to see that the Government is taking forward some changes to the Pubs Code that will bring tenants in England and Wales into the scope of the Code protections more swiftly and make the Market Rent Only process faster. However, the Government has missed an opportunity in not taking up Parallel Rent Assessments for prospective tied tenants.

"Sadly, the Pubs Code is not working as intended and for as long as this is allowed to continue, licensees will suffer, and consumers will suffer detriment through further price inflation and neglected pub stock. The changes that the Government is taking forward are not far reaching enough to fix this.

"With the second statutory review of the Code commencing next year, we will be pressing the Government to make fundamental reforms that will actually balance the relationship between tenants and their pub companies, as the legislation was intended to do.

### The Pubs Code explained:

After more than a decade of CAMRA campaigning, a Pubs Code and Adjudicator was created by the government in 2016, to address the imbalance of power between Pubco's and tenants.

The Code was introduced in England and Wales to ensure that tied tenants are no worse off than other tenants and can break the tie with their pub company in certain situations. There is a Pubs Code Adjudicator, who has the power to impose financial penalties on pub companies who don't follow the Code, and arbitration powers to settle disputes between pub companies and tied tenants.

The Government is currently reviewing the Pubs Code. CAMRA is calling for fundamental changes to make sure that tied pub tenants get a fair deal from their pub companies.

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## Sign the 2022 Petition to Support Pubs and Breweries

Due to the pandemic pubs have had a devastating winter. December is a crucial period for pubs, often representing three times the trade of a normal month. This was decimated by Omicron.

### SIGN THE PETITION TO SUPPORT BEER & PUBS

Pubs need help and support yet are one of our most overtaxed industries which puts them under more pressure. If Government don't act now to help them more will close for good.

The new petition is asking for: an extension in the current lower level of VAT for food and beverages sold in pubs with a view to making this permanent; an overall reduction in beer duty and alcohol duty reforms that support British pubs and beer as a lower strength product; lower business rates for pubs equitable to other similar businesses.

Help local pubs survive and thrive, sign the petition now at [www.longlivethelocal.pub](http://www.longlivethelocal.pub) It only takes 10 seconds!

We have published this appeal on behalf of the 'Long Live the Local' campaign, which is totally independent from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – **Ed.**

## CAMRA comments on Small Brewers' Relief announcement

Commenting on the Government's latest announcement on changes to the Small Brewers' Relief Scheme, CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said:

"Small brewers across the UK have been waiting months for the December announcement, and now have some more certainty over how their tax bills will change in the coming years.

"With the bold changes to all alcohol duties proposed in the Budget, there is still more detail that needs to be worked on. We are looking forward to working with the Treasury to ensure that the wider proposals work for small brewers, and especially that the new draught beer duty rate applies to containers of 20l and over – allowing for the smaller formats that small and independent brewers most frequently supply draught beer in.

"From the announcement today, we are glad that the Treasury has made a concession on the 50% relief threshold, following representations from small brewers and consumers who were worried about

viability of small brewers and knock-on effects on consumer choice under the previous proposals.

"We understand that the changes announced today will protect around 70 of the smallest brewers from increased tax bills. Sadly, this will still mean increased bills for those producing between 2,500HL and 5,000HL per year, but the additional changes to smooth the 'cliff edge' in the relief taper should help small brewers grow more sustainably in future.

"CAMRA will continue to campaign across a range of issues affecting small and independent brewers, as they are vital to maintaining consumer choice in the UK beer market, which is increasingly dominated by the interests of a small number of global brewing companies".

**i** *Small Brewers' Relief, or SBR, (sometimes known as progressive beer duty) allows small brewers to pay a more proportional rate of duty on their beer. This allows small professional brewing businesses to compete with global brewers who dominate the marketplace. A brewer up to 5,000 hectolitres (hl) of production per year pays 50% of the standard duty rate. 5,000hl is around 880,000 pints of beer. Above 5,000hl a year, the rate at which brewers pay on the standard duty rate tapers down until 60,000hl – whereby the full standard duty rate is applied. (Source: <https://www.siba.co.uk/the-future-of-small-breweries-relief/>)*

## Guinness to build new brewery in Covent Garden

Old Brewer's Yard first brewed beer back in 1722. 300 years later, Guinness is spending an estimated £73m by Diageo to bring the Covent Garden, London site back to life.

The move has been made following the success of the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin and the Johnnie Walker, Princes Street in Edinburgh. Covent Garden is a top London tourist destination and the new 50,000 sq ft venue will create up to 150 jobs. It is scheduled to open in Autumn 2023.

Guinness claims that sales in the UK have risen by 30% and to 1 in every 10 pints in the capital. Whether Old Brewers Yard will brew or sell any real ale remains to be seen.

*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.*



## Pub companies – who they are and what they do - Part 2

### The Current Pub Company Scene

*In Pints of View edition 300 we published a potted history of pub companies (Pubcos). This article explains more about the current Pubcos operating around the country.*

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. We'll concentrate here, though, on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

#### Stonegate

Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

#### E1 (Enterprise Inns)

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in

1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass. The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004, 4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand (we'll look at this operating model in the next article). By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

#### Punch Taverns

Our initial article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the 2008 financial crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted, but it's also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were



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sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

### Admiral Taverns

Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The 2008 financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marston's and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River, taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade, though there's certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

### Star Pubs & Bars

In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again, there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500.

Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, Just Add Talent. In 2020, it was fined £2m for breaches of the Pubs Code (which we'll cover in a later article)

### Greene King

In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs, nearly all in East Anglia and the South-East. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are

pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now have a more enlightened attitude.

### Marston's

The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year, Marston's merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg, but this does not directly affect the pub business.

### Mitchells and Butlers

Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B have 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholson's and All Bar One – as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

### J D Wetherspoon

Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline.

### Wellington

Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free of tie basis.

*Paul Ainsworth*

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## Greene King Dark Mild – XX Terminated

Well, I suppose this article is part lament and part strong criticism. Greene King XX Dark Mild is no more. Withdrawn as a permanently-brewed beer during the pandemic lockdowns but with Greene King words that it would still be an occasionally-brewed beer, there has been no trace of it since. Greene King's idea of 'occasional' would appear to be 'never'. Such a shame, the beer was a magnificent dark mild with a rich flavour that belied its low ABV of 3%. Brewed with crystal and black malts its underlying burnt roasted characteristics were softened with Northdown hops giving a beautifully rounded finish. No wonder it had been a regular winner of CAMRA awards, both regionally in East Anglia (2007) and nationally, one of its finest honours perhaps being when it became **Champion Mild of Britain**, just four years ago, in 2018. So pleased were Greene King that Matt Starbuck, MD of Brewing Brands said "We are delighted by this win which proves what many of our customers regularly tell us – XX Mild is a truly delicious beer and perfect for enjoying with friends, served fresh at your local. Our XX Mild is one of our longest standing beers, brewed with a similar recipe to the one used nearly a hundred years ago. The fact that it has now won this award shows that beers with heritage and quality really do stand the test of time and can often be the best". It's a pity Mr Starbuck's words didn't stand the test of time.



As with many giant brewing companies, providing permanent beers that are of smaller batch than the likes of Abbot and IPA seems to be beyond the capability or will of Greene King – XX presumably expendable in the inexorable quest for company profits.

The loss of the beer will be a sadness particularly to older members who have stayed with the Campaign since the 1970's. In 1979 the beer was facing a similar axe and the Hertfordshire Branches of the Campaign got behind a South Herts initiative to promote and save the beer, with XX posters, beer



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mats, badges, car stickers and newsletter articles – all extolling the virtues of this superb beer. It was successful and the beer gathered hero status among discerning drinkers. Greene King had thought again and the beer continued to be brewed and made available to GK tenants and the free trade. Above the beer mat and below the car sticker, both from the campaign:



Years later, in 2007 a pleasing poster and beer mat advertising campaign by the company gained more drinkers and in a joint-manoeuvre with CAMRA, mild events were held throughout the May of that year.

Dark Mild may have had its heyday in the early and middle 20<sup>th</sup> Century but CAMRA's annual "Make May A Mild Month" campaigning has helped to put a regular spotlight





on the beer style. Hertford's 17<sup>th</sup> annual Mild Night, this year called "Into the Mild Brew Yonder" will take place on the evening of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May, sadly without Greene King XX Mild.

Dark Mild popularity will always be outshone by bitters and golden beers but for Greene King to kill off a classic regularly-brewed beer by stealth is unnecessary and a blow to cask ale drinkers. A company the size of Greene King could easily afford to support a lower selling beer in its cask ale portfolio.

So, there you have it, CAMRA successfully helped XX survive 40 years ago and has promoted and lauded it ever since - but it's taken Greene King just 3 years after winning an important award to kill it off themselves. Not for the first time we ask Greene King to think again.

*Les Middlewood*

## Five new microbreweries in Herts in 2021

There were another five microbreweries set up in Hertfordshire last year, despite pressures from the coronavirus pandemic on small businesses.

The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed there were around 20 local units brewing beer across Hertfordshire as of March 2021.

That was up from 15 in March 2020, bringing the number to a record high.

The number had been steadily rising prior to the pandemic, and has quadrupled from around five breweries in 2015.

The situation in Hertfordshire reflects the national picture.

Across the UK, there were 1,545 units brewing beer as of March 2021 - up from 1,420 the year before, and a record high.

The number had dropped from 1,440 breweries in March 2019, which was the first time the number had dipped in at least the last decade - but the recent increase suggests the brewery boom is not over.

The vast majority of brewers are what the ONS refer to as micro businesses - those with fewer than 10 employees.

The number of micro businesses remained at 1,180 in March 2021, as did the number of medium and large brewers, but the number of small brewers (with 10-49 employees) increased significantly from 195 to 315.

The long-term boom in smaller businesses is partly down to a surge in the popularity of craft beer, with

increasing demand for more choice and specialist options such as vegan or gluten free beer.

The craft beer revolution was also fuelled by something called "small brewers' relief" (SBR) - a tax break introduced in 2002 by Chancellor Gordon Brown.

However, the more recent increase in the number of breweries may have been impacted by the pandemic.

During lockdowns when pubs and bars were closed, many people turned to ordering online to try beers at home - with customers particularly keen to support local, independent businesses.

## Is Mash & Coconut the UK's most expensive beer?

We now find ourselves paying well the wrong side of £4 for a pint in most of Hertfordshire, and of course we know the reasons (sign the "Long Live the Local" petition on page 4). There are of course still a good percentage of people in central London who have what appears to be a bottomless supply of disposable income to spend in up-market restaurants and bars. Paying just under £50 (over eleven times what a pint in Herts costs) is all part of this opulence. The brew in question is The Bruery's *Mash and Coconut*, a 13% ABV imperial brown ale that is sold in 770ml bottles. Mash & Coconut brewed in Placentia, California is a Bourbon barrel-aged ale, with added toasted coconut added. The resulting brew is a creamy, brown ale at 400 calories, so it's almost a meal in itself. To make a comparison a pint is 568ml so you are getting just over one third of a pint of extra strong beer more, but it is still eye-wateringly expensive.

The price would mean little to customers of Nusr-Et, a restaurant part of Salt Bae's culinary empire. It is reported that one customer appeared to have spent £37,000 at the restaurant, at one sitting. Admittedly, they did enjoy some particularly high tariff wine along with their gold-adorned steaks. A 1996 Petrus priced at £9,100, two bottles of 2003 Petrus at a total cost of £19,900, and two bottles of Dom Pérignon Rosé 2006 for £1,620. Quite an evening.

I'm off down to Weatherspoon's for a pint of Abbot and use one of my CAMRA 50 pence off tokens.



*Steve Bury*



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## Fighting Cocks, St Albans goes into liquidation

It is very sad to see the message below from Christo Toffelli of the **Ye Old Fighting Cocks**. Statement dated February 4<sup>th</sup> 2022 is below:

"It is with great sadness that I have to announce that today, after a sustained period of extremely challenging trading conditions, YOFC Ltd has gone into administration. Along with my team, I have tried everything to keep the pub going. However, the past two years have been unprecedented for the hospitality industry, and have defeated all of us who have been trying our hardest to ensure that this multi award-winning pub could continue trading in future. Before the pandemic hit, the escalating business rates and taxations we were managing meant trading conditions were extremely tough, but we were able to survive and were following an exciting five-year plan and were hopeful for the future.



However, the Covid-19 pandemic was devastating and our already tight profit margins gave us no safety net. This resulted in us being unable to meet our financial obligations as they were due, creating periods of great uncertainty and stress for all who worked for, and with, the pub.

It goes without saying I am heartbroken: this pub has been so much more than just a business to me, and I feel honoured to have played even a small part in its history".

I don't think anyone will disagree that Christo has put his heart and soul into the Fighting Cocks; in better days he was even contemplating putting a micro-brewery on site. The pub does have a good trade during the summer months and attracts tourists and Mitchells & Butler the owners have made a commitment to re-open in the *Morning Advertiser* publication. It is a pity to see the Fighting Cocks become a victim of the pandemic and an unfair taxation system but hope the pub will not be shut for long. We wish Christo and his team all the best for the future.

As if things were not bad enough the Morning Advertiser reported that the PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) had approached Mitchells & Butlers who own the Fighting Cocks and proposed that they re-open the pub under a new name and serving a completely plant-based menu. The PETA

suggested that the new name should be either Ye Olde Clever Cocks, Happy Hens, Cheeky Chooks, or the pubs name for a period from 1756 the Three Pigeons. At least I suppose that the PETA would support real ale? The Morning Advertiser asked Mitchells & Butlers for a comment but had not received one by the time of them going to press.

## Plans for Rose & Crown, St Albans refused

St Albans district council have refused a planning application 5/21/2639 for the **Rose & Crown**, 8-10 St Michaels Street, St Albans. They gave details of the reasons for their decision part of which said:

"Insufficient information has been provided to fully establish the impact of the proposal on the fabric of the listed building from the conversion of the dwelling and restoration works to the pub, or to establish the impact of the proposal on the long-term viable use of the listed building. Whilst less than substantial harm would be caused, this is not outweighed by sufficient public benefits in this case, including securing the listed building's optimum viable use, to outweigh that harm. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policy 86 (Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest) of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021".



It seems very like that a revised plan will be lodged and we hope that the Rose & Crown will re-open later in 2022.

## Tudor Rose, Hemel Hempstead temporarily closed over anti-social behaviour

Magistrates have granted a closure order for The Tudor Rose in Hemel Hempstead following police reports. After an incident on 1<sup>st</sup> February the pub was described by police as a hotspot for chronic anti-social behaviour. The pub was found to be operating without the appropriate authority or staff in place.

Stonegate Group, the pub's owners will now



undertake a six-week refurbishment and appoint a new landlord.



Sgt Mike Saunders from Hertfordshire Police said: "They have assured us that the new landlord is someone they know and trust, who has a

wealth of experience in the management of licensed premises and dealing with any potential issues that might occur.

"We hope this result will provide some respite from the ongoing issues suffered by neighbours and improve their quality of life."

He added that the pub was "part of the community" and hoped it "becomes a focal point again, but this time for all the right reasons".




**South Herts CAMRA  
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## Watford & District CAMRA Pub of the Year 2020 – Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty

**W**atford & District branch paid a visit to the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty's** Christmas Beer Festival on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December. As part of the evening, licensees Martin Few and Gill Gibson were presented with the branch **Pub of the Year** award for 2020, which should have been presented earlier in 2021 but was delayed due to the pandemic. Branch chairman Andrew Vaughan made the presentation, during which he praised the pub's support for small brewers at a time when many pubs were being more conservative in their range of real ales. The Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty is a true free house and Martin and Gill have always run it with real ale from microbrewers as the most important aspect of their business. The pub stocks a changing range of up to eight beers, with ales from Tring, Downton, and Mighty Oak amongst the most popular choices and enough handpumps for many selections from other breweries, including quite a few unfamiliar names. There's also a selection of cider and perry, with Weston's, Gwynt Y Ddraig and Sandford Orchards being amongst the suppliers. Martin and Gill took over the pub in 2005 and it has been a regular entry in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** every year since then. It's also been recipient of the branch Pub of the Year award on 12 occasions. The Pub of the Year award is given not just for beer quality, but also for other criteria, such as support for CAMRA's aims. CAMRA supports rare beer styles and promotes variety and distinctiveness, and the Land of Liberty is one of very few pubs in the area that serves mild ale and other traditional styles and frequently serves beers from breweries that would very rarely be seen in other pubs in the area. The pub also uses lined glasses rather than brim measure glasses, ensuring that the customer gets a full pint. Other criteria for the Pub of the Year competition include those important qualities that make a great pub: atmosphere, welcome and community focus. For example, the pub regularly holds charity quizzes and holds a curry competition in which pubgoers compete to cook the best curry and raise money for charity in the process. So those are just a few examples of how over the years the Land of Liberty has shown itself to be a classic community pub and a place where you can get an excellent pint of beer from Britain's small brewers. The branch wishes Martin and Gill the best of luck as pub trade continues to recover from the pandemic and urges

CAMRA members and other pub goers to go out and support their local pubs.



***Pictured above:** Presentation of the Watford & District Pub of the Year 2020 award to the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty. Watford & District chairman Andrew Vaughan (left) and licensees Gill Gibson and Martin Few.*

## Royston Social Club wins South Herts CAMRA's Top Club Award

**T**he **Royston Social Club**, one of St Albans oldest licensed clubs has won the South Herts branch Club of the Year 2021. Originally founded in the 1930s as the College Club, and changing its name to The Royston Social Club in 1952, the Royston is situated in an area of St Albans with few other licensed premises, especially after the closure and demolition of the nearby **Camp**. The Club usually has three cask ales on handpump, priced very competitively and often a real cider as well.

The Club's award was presented to the Club's long-serving landlord, and CAMRA member, Barry Lloyd by outgoing Branch Chairman Iain Loe when South Herts held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Club in January this year. The 2021 Club of the Year award was jointly won by The Royston and the **Hertford Club** in Hertford.

Both Clubs exemplify the best in members' Clubs in South Herts area, offering well-kept real ales at competitive prices to their members and guests. Card carrying CAMRA members can gain access to both clubs.

The South Herts branch AGM attracted about 50 members and for the first time in several years a full branch committee of 14 people were elected to hold office for 2022. The new chair of the branch was elected by the new committee in early February.





**Pictured above:** South Herts CAMRA's outgoing Branch Chair, Iain Loe (left) presents the award to Royston Club landlord Barry Lloyd.

Keep an eye on the branch website [www.southherts.camra.org.uk](http://www.southherts.camra.org.uk) for news of all the events planned for 2022, the branch's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

## The Hertford Club - Club of the Year 2021

I am pleased to announce that the **Hertford Club** has been elected CAMRA South Herts branch Club of the year 2021. The Hertford Club in Hertford is a private members club where card carrying CAMRA members are welcome. With careful budgetary control and wonderful support from its members, the Club is recovering well from the Covid lockdowns and although currently offering only two ever changing cask ales, it is hoped this will soon be back up to three and of course there is a real cider in the cellar from a local cider maker.



The Club chairman, Barbara Flowerdew – pictured here receiving the award with Club manager Aiden Perrins – said the Club is very proud to have been given this accolade again and is pleased to continue to work with CAMRA and towards our aims.

*Brian Page, Branch Cider and Perry representative*

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## Mermaid, St Albans Cider Pub of the Year 2021

I am pleased to announce that the winner of the South Herts CAMRA Cider and Perry Pub of the Year award 2021 is the **Mermaid**, St Albans.

I hope you all enjoyed the St. Albans Beer and Pubs Festival earlier this year. The final Pub Trail of that Festival ended here at the Mermaid, where – as I just happened to have it with me (or perhaps I had been carting it around all day and I was itching to get rid of it.) - I took advantage of their Beer and Cider Festival as the ideal opportunity to present this prestigious award.

Mark and John, the managers of the Mermaid since 2013 inherited what had become a real cider tradition at the Mermaid and in 2014, following on from the previous manager having won the very first South Herts CAMRA Cider and Perry Pub of the Year award in 2013, continued that tradition and won the award for themselves. From then on, they have confirmed their dedication to the cause, holding annual cider and perry festivals and winning this award every year since. Quite a record, don't you think? Well done to them both and congratulations – Wassail!

*Brian Page, Branch Cider and perry representative*



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**THE WHITE HORSE, WELWYN  
6<sup>TH</sup> MAY - 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

**THE QUEENS HEAD, HARPENDEN  
13<sup>TH</sup> - 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

**THE CRYSTAL PALACE, BERKHAMSTED  
20<sup>TH</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY**



## Into The Mild Brew Yonder

Our annual Hertford celebration of dark mild (now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year) is soon to be upon us.

On **Tuesday 24 May** four town centre pubs will each be presenting at least one Dark mild from across Britain – come and join the friendly throng and discover the world of Mild.

Our itinerary for the evening is:

**7.45pm**      **Black Horse, West Street**  
**8.30pm**      **Crafty Duck, Parliament Square**  
**9.15pm**      **Old Barge, The Folly**  
**10.00pm**    **Old Cross Tavern, St. Andrew St**

Dark mild was once the most popular beer in Britain but gained an increasing reputation for poor quality post-WWII leading to it

disappearing in many areas as bitter climbed to be the nation's favourite beer. By the late 1960's none of the remaining Hertfordshire brewers were still brewing cask-conditioned dark mild and the likes of Courage *Dark Mild*,

and Coope *Dark Mild* and Greene King *XX Mild* were increasingly hard to find. Until recently XX remained – though increasingly hard to find – a survival mainly attributable to heavy and persistent CAMRA campaigning that had persuaded Greene King to stop swinging the axe that had, on many occasions, hung over the excellent award-winning beer. But news on XX is not good – see separate article on page 7.



In the 1970s South Herts Branch formed a local campaign to champion the beer style and whilst it never recovered to regular mainstream availability in Hertfordshire, its

appearances on the bar became more often and are well-received to this day – particularly during May when CAMRA's "Make May A Mild Month" gives the beer fresh impetus.

These days, local Hertfordshire brewers such as Tring and 3 Brewers have a Dark mild in their standard portfolio and the beers can sometimes be found in enterprising Free Houses. McMullen's brew the popular *AK Original Mild* – a rare example of a light mild – which is available in many of their tied houses across Hertfordshire and, of course, in Hertford itself. Maybe you might find time in our

itinerary to reacquaint yourself with an AK, either in the **Woolpack** on Millbridge or the Salisbury Arms in Fore Street.

Why not rise from that comfortable armchair, take a bus or train into Hertford town centre on 24 May and join us walking.....

**Into The Mild Brew Yonder.**  
**Everyone welcome!**



## The Good Beer Guide 2022 has sold out!

But you can still find *The Good Beer Guide* pubs by making the most of our **Good Beer Guide App** with a database of all of *The Good Beer Guide* Pubs and more venues serving real ale across the UK!

### Good Beer Guide App

The Good Beer Guide app compiles data from over 40,000 licensed premises, over 13,000 beers and 2,000 breweries. The data is collected and maintained by CAMRA members and is powered by WhatPub, CAMRA's online pub database.





## Hertfordshire's Pub Losses and Gains 2021

By Steve Bury

2021 was a difficult year for all publicans. Not only confronted with the well documented and longstanding issues affecting pubs but with the additional nightmare of the Coronavirus with all its ramifications. Many pubs remained closed for lengthy periods and some operators also took the opportunity to reassess their businesses, some using the time to refurbish and redecorate, closing and then re-opening pubs during the twelve months. Some pubs closed and re-opened with new tenants or managers but sadly some pubs will never open their doors again, being sold or converted for other uses, subject to planning applications and decisions. And as readers of *Down Your Way* in Pints of View will know some pubs have remained closed for many years, boarded-up and shamefully devoid of life. Yet some are still clinging to a possible pub future, often buoyed by determined action from local community groups.

On the positive side a small number of new pubs have opened or are due to open in the coming months – often town centre shop conversions but occasionally newbuilds.

We will not list all of the temporary short-term closures but here is a summary of what we have found:

## Pub Losses in 2021

**Baldock:** Closed since 2019, campaigners to re-open the **Boot** were dismayed with North Herts District Council's decision to allow conversion to residential use.

**Bushey:** Closed in 2020, the **Royal Oak** had its ACV status cut short in 2021 by Hertsmere Borough after approval was given to convert the site for flats.

**Cheshunt:** Wetherspoon's **King James** was lost, now an electrical supply business.

**Chipping:** The **Countryman** is now a private residence.

**Codicote:** The **Bell Motel** closed. Plans have been submitted for conversion to housing.

**Darley Hall:** The **Fox** closed with the retirement of its owners.

**Elstree:** Confirmation of closure of the **Fishery** opposite Aldenham reservoir came when the buildings were re-opened as an Indian restaurant.

**Goffs Oak:** McMullen's sold the **Wheelwrights**. Its owner is unknown but a pub future is unlikely.

**Great Horstead:** The **Three Tuns** closed with the departure of the tenants. It is closed but new tenants are hoped for.

**London Colney:** With flats already constructed on land at the rear, a planning application was accepted

to convert the long-closed **Golden Lion** building into flats.

**Reed:** Actually lost in 2020, the **Cabinet** now operates as an Indian restaurant.

**Shenley:** The **King William IV** was finally lost to housing.

**South Mimms:** McMullen's sold the **White Hart** to Grigg's a local developer. Planning applications for a change of use are to be expected. An ACV application by the South Mimms parish council was refused by Hertsmere council on the grounds that it had "no reasonable chance of success".

**Wadesmill:** The **Anchor** closed and was followed with a planning application for residential use with was granted by East Herts District Council, despite a huge amount of objection from local people.

**Ware:** The **Jolly Bargeman** was closed by McMullen's, its future unclear. Mac's also sold the **Victoria** which is likely to be converted for residential use.

**Waltham Cross:** Planning permission was granted to convert the **Plough** for residential use.

**Watford:** The long-closed **One Bell** was finally lost - to become a restaurant.

**Weston:** The **Red Lion** re-opened for weekend trading in the Summer.

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**Wormley:** The **Old Star** was closed by McMullen's in 2020 but remains boarded-up.

On the brewery front, **Gold Bear**, based in Hertford but brewing in Suffolk, closed their operation.

### Earlier Closures – But Still Alive?

A number of pubs have been closed for many years but where an outcome is still awaited. There is hope yet that some of these may still have a future as valuable community pubs, notably:

**Aston:** The saga of the **Rose and Crown** continues. Closed in c2015 a planning permission was finally given in 2021 to retain the pub but allow the construction of four houses on the pub garden. This seemed really positive for the pub but Aston Parish Council have since advised that the sale of the whole site to a new developer had fallen through – they are aiming to set up a meeting with the current owners around now.

**Colney Heath:** The **Chalkdrawers**, boarded-up and now closed for many years. St Albans District Council refused permission for the conversion of the pub to offices with accommodation. This was appealed to the Secretary of State and for the following reason(s): "It has not been demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that the loss of the public house is justified in this case, nor that it could not continue to operate as a Public House or that the alternative community uses have been fully explored. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Policy 67 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994." The appeal was refused. I don't know if Bluestone Landscapes Ltd (who I assume are the new owners) have any grounds for appeal to the Secretary of State against this decision.

**Elstree:** The former **Plough** appeared to have a projected future as the **Aldenhams Arms**, though the pub company website has now deleted any reference to it.

**Gaddesden Row:** The **Old Chequers** remains closed.

**Haultwick:** The **Rest and Welcome** still remains closed. Is there a glimmer that its future could still be as a pub?

**High Cross:** Closed for some years, a number of planning applications have been submitted to convert the **White Horse** and its grounds to housing. The latest awaits a decision.

**Kimpton:** Closed for many years and with refused applications for conversion to residential use, a fresh application in 2021 for the **White Horse**, which included a micro-pub was also turned down. The pub remains closed but locals are still campaigning

for the pub to re-emerge.

**Old Bricket Wood:** The long-closed **Old Fox** is up to sale, though will need a planning change if there are plans to convert it to residential use. Its Asset of Community Value status expires in October.

**Potters Bar:** The **Chequers** remains closed, since 2019, with little news of what will happen next. The **Green Man** - closed for much longer - may have a chance of some form of survival if recent planning applications curry favour.

**Radlett:** The **Cat & Fiddle**, thought to now be owned by Barnet Football Club withdrew its planning to convert the pub into a cardiac centre. We await further news.

**Rickmansworth:** The **Tree** is closed but is it under offer? New planning and listed building consent applications aim to redesign and refurbish the interior of the Mill End pub. We hope it re-opens as a pub.

**Ware:** The **Albion** was sold to a local resident – and remains closed. News of future plans is awaited.

### New Openings in 2021

**Bulbourne:** The **Grand Junction** was bought by Oakman Taverns and has undergone a significant refurbishment. Opening 28 March

**Cheshunt:** The **Windmill** re-opened now in the hands of Red Oak Taverns. Sadly, no real ale

**Epping Green:** After a sizeable makeover it was good to see the **Beehive** re-open its doors.

**Essendon:** After three years of closure and refurbishment there was a welcome re-opening of the **Rose and Crown**.

**Flamstead:** The **Spotted Dog** was bought by four villagers and re-opened in August as a fine-dining pub.

**Flaunden:** After a lengthy period of closure, the **Green Dragon** re-emerged – and with its important heritage taproom very much intact.

**Hemel Hempstead:** A new beer and cider shop, the **Hops and Apples**, opened in Jupiter Drive.

**Hertford:** After months of closure due to a pub company collapse, the **Hummingbird** re-opened under new ownership – but sadly with no real ale.

**Royston:** The **Coach & Horses** re-opened in Autumn following at least two years of closure.

**St Albans:** A brand new Young's pub, the **Alban's Well** opened in St Peter's Street on the former British Home Stores site. The **Verulam Arms** re-opened with new owners after an unfortunate spell of being renamed the Rabbit Hole.

**Stevenage:** The **Vincent Motorcycle** was refurbished, reopening as the **Shephall Tavern**.

**Welwyn:** The **Rose and Crown** re-opened after a major refurbishment.

**Weston:** Sold by Greene King, the **Red Lion** is now a free house.

The Big Smoke Pub Company were busy acquiring pubs in Hertfordshire – now operating the **White Horse**, Welwyn; **Queen's Head**, Harpenden; **Crystal Palace**, Berkhamsted and **White Lion** in St Albans. Hertfordshire's own Farr Brew continued to seek out new pub opportunities adding the **Bull Inn** in Whitwell to their portfolio.

## New Openings Planned for 2022 and Beyond

**Charlton:** It has been a long, long road for local campaigners but it would appear that the **Windmill** is likely to re-open in the late spring. We await confirmation. If that happens expect a celebratory article in *Pints of View*.

**Harpenden:** Oakman Inns are to open a new pub to be called the **Kingston Arms** in a premises previously occupied by M&Co.

**Letchmore Heath:** News has reached Pints of View that the **Three Horseshoes** has re-opened after a significant refurbishment. Two real ales are served.

**Mill Green:** Owners, Hatfield House's Gascoyne Estate, have prepared the long-closed former **Green Man** as a shell to be kitted by a new pub operator. The pub is being marketed.

**St Albans:** The **Rose and Crown** in St Michaels, closed for many months, is due to reopen in 2022. A new pub, the **Hub**, fashioned from the former Loch Fyne restaurant is also planned to open this year.

**McMullen's** have bought the former **Grange** building in St Peter's Street and are aiming to convert the former Nationwide Building Society building into a pub with a projected opening date of 2023. A new **Quiet Man** (already popular in Hertford and Ware) is due to open in Chequer Street this spring.

**Watford.** Mad Squirrel brewery are looking to open a tied pub in King Street. Town planning permission and a licence was obtained for a new micro-pub, the **Two Trees**, due to open imminently in a former hairdresser's salon in Vicarage Road.

## Worries For 2022

There could be a number of pubs to worry about in 2022:

**Baldock:** The **George** and the **Templars** have not re-opened since the lockdown.

**Benington:** The **Bell** has not re-opened since covid lockdowns.

**Great Horstead:** The **Three Tuns** freehold is up for sale.

**Harpenden:** The **Amble Inn** is currently closed and up to let by leisure property agents Fleurets.

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**Woolmer Green:** The **Chequers** on expiry of lease has been taken back by the brewers. Future uncertain.

**St Albans:** The **Farriers Arms** is currently up for sale with the forthcoming retirement of the current owners. With its importance to the community and to the history of CAMRA in Hertfordshire, it is of concern that this iconic pub might be lost. Residents are applying for Asset of Community Value status. The pub remains open. **Ye Olde Fighting Cocks** has gone into administration. see article page10.

## Advertising in Pints of View

**Due to lack of funds, we are temporarily suspending printed editions after this one. Upon return of our printed newsletter, advert rates for this will be as shown below:**

### Printed Page Size and Cost (excl. VAT)

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**Good signs at the local**

There is no need to be concerned about the survival of our great English beers, many of whom you mention in the article in edition 301. This Christmas, visiting pubs in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, the pubs selling these American style IPAs, having lost a lot of the traditional British beers - often Charles Wells/Marston/Carlsberg houses - were empty, and what few punters there were, were drinking lager or Guinness. The ones serving the great beers CAMRA has been fighting to preserve all my adult life, in great condition, were packed and thriving.

Long may it continue!

*Michael Fuller*

**Ed Says:** Good news indeed. My experience has been mixed but things are definitely improving so let's hope all this "Dry January" does not get much support. Remember, we in the UK are the moderate drinkers in Europe

**Price check at the Red Lion**

I have had complaints recently of the effect that "Pints of View" has not contained communications from me!!

So, to put things right may I comment on the two letters in edition 301 regarding prices of real ales, especially the figure of £5 and £5-7 per pint.

May I suggest that you rich dwellers of Hertfordshire get on your bikes and travel to the **Red Lion**, Snargate (Appledore station ¾ of a mile on frequent bus 11B). There between the hours of 12pm-3pm 6pm to 9pm on Tuesdays to Sunday (incl.) they can enjoy three or four real ales (all independents) for £3.20 to £3.40 (and that is after a recent price increase) enjoy in a bar that is covered with CAMRA certificates. And only 50% of the customers still have straws in their mouths - mind you 70% of them have their trousers tied up with string. But the beer is always top-notch.

*Rodney*

**Ed Says:** I have received correspondence from Rodney before but what he sends me is handwritten and sometimes hard to decipher, thus no second name as I could not read it. As far as the Red Lion pub recommendation, I believe that if it is near Appledore station then it is near New Romney in Kent - hardly an evening stroll from Hertfordshire, unfortunately. If I am wrong, please correct me.

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](mailto:pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk)

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Completed entries by 17 May to: Steve Bury, New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.

1<sup>st</sup> winner drawn wins a signed CAMRA 2022 Good Beer Guide. Photocopies acceptable.

Your Name:.....

Your Address:.....

Your Postcode:.....

Place all the pub related terms listed below in the grid going forward, backwards, diagonally horizontally and vertically

BARLEY MOW, BARREL, BAR TOWEL, BEERMAT, BEERTAP, BELL, BREWERY, BUNG, CIDER, CHOCK, DARTBOARD, FIRKIN, GLASS, GOBLET, HALF, HANDPUMP, HOGSHEAD, INGLENOK, INN, KILDERKIN, LAST ORDERS, LICENSEE, LOUNGE, MIRROR, PINT, PUBLIC BAR, REAL ALE, SETTLE, SHIVE, SNUG, SPILE, STILLAGE, STOOL, TANKARD, TAVERN, TUN

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

### No 21 - The Robin Hood & Little John, Tonwell

By Les Middlewood

Sometimes pubs quietly go through the years without fanfare – just occupying a place in the local community or quietly providing a service for motorists, ramblers and cyclists. When the village of Tonwell (pronounced “tunnel”) was bypassed in 1987 by the new A602 road, the **Robin Hood and Little John** perhaps lost much of its passing trade but nevertheless found a way to press on. Sold by McMullen’s in 1990, it became a free house, owned by Julian and Sheila Harding, still publicans at the helm and now for some 32 years.



The pub’s history is a little hard to confirm.

Records say there was a brewhouse in the village kept by

Edward Foster in 1722 and Edward Odell in 1748. And Victuallers Billeting Records tell us that a Magpie alehouse with stabling for 11 horses existed in the village – thought to be the pub we see today. The Robin Hood and Little John pub name was already in existence when it was sold to Benjamin Gilman in 1800, a Hertford brewer who had inherited the Cross Keys brewery in Fore Street, Hertford five years previously. The pub was acquired by McMullen’s during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with Martha Foskett as tenant in 1851 who continued for many years and by Thomas Baggs Vye in 1914, landlord for over 15 years.

Grade II listed, the Robin Hood and Little John is of late 16<sup>th</sup> Century or early 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber-frame build, extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and much altered in the last two hundred years. The roof, once thatched, is now tiled. For a time in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the village post office and shop transferred to the pub after the previous one was demolished, though this arrangement ceased in around the 1980s. In 1991 the pub was opened out internally into one bar. The 1996 Hertfordshire Real Ale Guide commented that it had been “cleverly renovated, now one bar on two split-levels plus a dining room” and at that time serving a number of real ales. By 2000 it was offering beers from the Dark Horse brewery of Hertford. The roaring fire is a strong feature in colder times. Work to convert the under-used restaurant room for accommodation use may take place later this year but the pub will otherwise remain largely the same.



(left, undated photo from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century).

In total eight accommodation rooms can be booked – five to the rear, added

in 2000 and three in space above the pub, all popular with visitors to the area and with local businesses for their staff. There are pleasant patio areas to the rear. Dogs are not allowed inside the pub.

As for many pubs the pandemic has provided a challenge. Sheila said “We currently have fewer drinkers than before but our food side is definitely picking up. Like a lot of village pubs, late evening drinking is on the wane – something that was happening before the pandemic – we would definitely welcome more drinkers”. But despite those recent setbacks, Julian and Sheila have enjoyed their

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**email: [whtpub@gmail.com](mailto:whtpub@gmail.com)**



time at the pub, “32 years is a long time but the pub has been good for us” they said. To tempt cask ale drinkers there are two hand pumped beers on rotation from local and national brewers. Dining customers, including members of the U3A, come from near and far in Hertfordshire.” The popular menu has a strong following and can be described as ‘traditional English pub food’, most of which is homemade.

The Robin Hood and Little John is open Tuesdays – Fridays 12 – 2.30pm and 6 – 9.30pm (11pm on Fridays), 12 – 3pm and 6 – 11pm on Saturdays. It is closed on Sundays and Mondays. The 383/384 Monday to Saturday bus service links Tonwell with Hertford, Ware and Stevenage.

## It's Pagan - you would not Adam & Eve it!

It's quite some time since I have written anything on pub signs in this newsletter, and have recently acquired a copy of C. R. Swift's, *Inns and Inn Signs* which was published in Victoria Street St Albans. I don't know the date but a hard back copy was sold for ten shillings and six pence. The **Jolly Postie** in Royston's recent award by the Pub Sign Society has also inspired me to write something on the origins of pub signs.

Pub signs go back a long way and if we start at the Roman invasion (there were of course drinking establishments when they got here) the “Locum Bibendi” places of drinking/ imbibing would have a wreath of holly hanging outside. When the Romans left, brewing and pubs became largely under the authority of the monasteries and the pubs would receive religious names. One example being the “Cross Keys” the sign of St Peter and a stopping point for pilgrims, in Hertfordshire normally on their way to St Albans Abbey and the saint's shrine. Christianity had taken over from paganism but not without accepting some of the ritual and ceremonies. The “Green Man” is a good example where the Green Man would dress in a suit of fresh green leaves to welcome spring and fertility and dance around the village or hamlet visiting the pubs on his way. Another pub sign, the Acorn or “Ackhorne” (the original spelling) is again based in pagan sex and fertility ritual. The Adam & Eve goes back to pre-Christian times and the story of the beginnings of life and the first man and woman also features in Judaism and Islam. Again, Christianity took over the symbolism and forbidden fruit from Pagan and sex worship. Adam & Eve have been on the Arms of the Fruiterers



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Steve Bury

## Mick Martin Obituary

We are sad to inform readers that Mick Martin, long-time member of CAMRA and South Herts branch, died at his home on 15<sup>th</sup> February. Mick was 74 and had suffered with the chest complaint COPD for over five years and had been confined to his home in isolation for two years during the Pandemic. He was an active member of the branch having been on the committee and was a regular staff member at the **St Albans Beer & Cider Festival**. Before retirement he worked for Metroline and also on the trains on the Euston to Liverpool route. He lived in Potters Bar where he had



cared for his mother for many years, he leaves a son and a daughter.

Mick was a lovely man with a great sense of humour, passionate real ale drinker and breweriana collector and will be missed by all who knew him. So, when you next go down the pub raise your glass and give a toast to Mick.

*Paul Woodhouse*

## South Herts CAMRA Branch – 50 Years Old

### The Story of Local Cask Ale Campaigning 1972 – 2022: New booklet out now

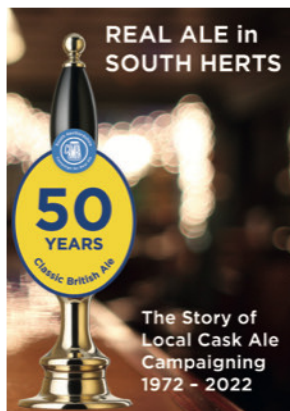
Since its first Branch Meeting in November 1972, when the Hertfordshire Branch formed in St Albans, real ale has had a loyal, local and campaigning friend in CAMRA. And Hertfordshire Branch was at the apex of the early vanguard that fought to change the British brewing scene, promote great cask ale and to bring it back to our pubs.

As other Branches were formed in the county, South Herts Branch remained custodian of the original torch and is now celebrating 50 years of real ale and pub campaigning.

This story is told in a new booklet prepared for the Branch celebrations in 2022. It comprises 26 colour pages packed with local campaigning information and facts, wending its way through the 50 years with stories, reports, quotes, photographs and illustrations.

The booklet can be purchased for £4.50 at Branch events throughout 2022 or for £5.20 (incl. 70p p&p) by cheque made payable to "CAMRA South Herts Branch" from Les Middlewood, 67 Cromwell Road, Hertford, SG13 7DP.

For those wishing to pay by BACS please email [booklet@southherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:booklet@southherts.camra.org.uk) with your name and address, confirming a transfer payment of £5.20 to Sort Code 60-10-18, Account No. 81509626. "CAMRA South Hertfordshire Branch". Please enter your name as the reference. Details can also be found on the South Herts Branch website: [www.southherts.camra.org.uk](http://www.southherts.camra.org.uk)



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# THREE CHEERS!

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**Hertfordshire**  
Campaign for Real Ale

*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*

**Abbotts Langley:** The **Swan** had six real ales on offer on our visit **Greene King IPA & Abbot, Swan House Ale**, 3 Brewers **Golden**, **Rebellion Smuggler** and **New River Blind Poet**.

**Bayford:** Welcome back to Martin and Beverley Jackson at the **Baker Arms**, this time as direct McMullen tenants. They were previously managers to another tenant but left in 2018. Mac's AK and the seasonal special are available.

**Bedmond:** The **Bell** now serves real ale – **Greene King IPA & Old Golden Hen**.

**Bricket Wood:** The **Black Boy**, is now closed on weekday lunchtimes, opening at 4 pm. The **Gate**, declined taking PoV as "*it would make the bar look untidy*". Still sells real ale.

**Codicote:** Planning permission has been granted to build nine houses in the car park at rear of the former **Bell** motel which closed in 2020.

**Epping Green:** The **Beehive** has re-opened after a complete and impressive refurbishment by the landlord's brother during the lockdowns. Serves **Greene King IPA & Abbot**.

**Flamstead:** The **Spotted Dog** re-opened mid-August as a *fine-dining* pub after being bought by four villagers just before the first lockdown. Serves three real ales: **Tring Side Pocket**, 3 Brewers **Blonde** and **Banks Wainwright**. The **Three Blackbirds**, re-opened mid-September with a new owner, Paul Gould, who owns some other pubs in Hertfordshire, including the **Royal Oak** in Old Stevenage.

**Graveley:** The **George & Dragon**, closed on Boxing Day with new tenants due to take over in March.

**Great Horstead:** **Three Tuns** is up for sale at £390,000 on a freehold basis. Agents acting are **Everard Cole Ltd** of Cambridge. **Baron Brewing** are up and running in buildings on farmland in the village. Specialising in craft keg beers in cans, it is operated by Jack Baron, former under-brewer at McMullen's.

**Harpenden:** As at going to press the **Bistro Gautier at the Amble Inn** is currently closed and up for let by Fleurets. We welcome Naomi Garcia who has taken over the **Marquis of Granby** in Crabtree Lane. Naomi, who took over the pub in November has a long-established presence in Harpenden, having previously worked in the **Gibraltar Castle** and **Oddfellows Arms**. One of Naomi's first tasks was the installation of a glass washer (previously there was none) and a replacement of the beer lines, and which was reflected in the excellent pint of **London Pride**

consumed on the visit there. Other beers served are **Adnams Ghostship** plus a guest beer. The two-bar pub maintains the pool table and Sky TV in the public bar, and to attract diners lunchtime meals (Including Sunday roasts) and evening sharing platters (such as tapas) are being served. Future exterior decoration work is also planned.

**Hemel Hempstead:** The **Tudor Rose** has been temporarily closed, see page 10.

**Hertford:** Refurbishment work at the **Corn Exchange** in Fore Street has been carried out, the music venue re-opening in mid-February. Sadly, real ale is no longer available at **Mind The Gap**, the café/shop at Hertford North station. Recent take-up by travellers and local residents had been very slow leading to too much wastage. There may be a reassessment later in the spring. At the **Crafty Duck** you can now enjoy your pint with a toastie or cheeses from a cheeseboard. A planning application has been made for improvements and alterations at the historic **Salisbury Arms**.

**Letchmore Heath:** The **Three Horseshoes** has re-opened following major refurbishment work.

**Newgate Street:** The **Crown** re-opened with new owners after a refurbishment during the first lockdown, serving **Adnams Ghostship & Doom Bar**. It offers 20% off food for over 65s weekday lunchtimes. The **Coach & Horses**, has reduced its range to two real ales.

**North Mymms:** The **Woodman**, serves **Greene King IPA** and **Abbot**.

**Park Street:** We apologise to Nicola Ellicott landlady of the **Falcon** for the entry in the last edition of the newsletter. The pub has been open since the last lockdown and is most certainly not going to change hands. Things are hard enough for pubs without this sort of misinformation. They are serving three real ales **Tring Side Pocket for a Toad**, **Greene King IPA** and **Abbot Ale**. All the regular events are still taking place including open mic night and the pub games teams. The pub does not open on Mondays which may have led to the confused and incorrect report.

**Pirton:** The **Fox**, has had a £170,000 refurbishment including a new kitchen which will enable food to be introduced. Going forward, the garden will be overhauled later this year. There are four real ales available on handpump.

**Radlett:** The **Mens Club**, Watling Street, welcomes card carrying CAMRA members to enjoy a **Tring Ridgeway** and other beers at competitive prices.



**Royston:** Congratulations to the **Jolly Postie** on winning a Pub Sign Society award for their very distinctive three-dimensional pub sign. The award was presented on 21<sup>st</sup> January. The **Coach and Horses** reopened November following a two-year closure. Real ale available with a staple of Sharp's **Doom Bar**. The **Conservative Club**, a members club situated in Kneesworth Street, is now Cask Marque accredited serving Greene King *IPA* and *Abbot* the regular beers. **Royston Golf Club** offers three changing real ales. Staff are very supportive of real ale and is also Cask Marque accredited. Again, this is a member's club. **Bar 11** - a small bar in John Street is serving o real ale. The **Old Courthouse**, an historic building in Fish Hill is tastefully decorated but unfortunately does not serve real ale.

**St Albans:** The **Farrriers Arms**, Lower Dagnall Street, birthplace of Hertfordshire CAMRA has the freehold for sale.

**St Margaret's:** We have a new licensee/manager at McMullen's **Jolly Fisherman**. This is Kristi Kaljunki who hails from Estonia. She has previously worked on the ferry between Helsinki in Finland and Tallin in Estonia, which sounds far more fun than working on the Isle of Wight ferry. Though naturally a lot colder on the winter trips. In England she has been in a Fuller's establishment in busy Covent Garden, so a family pub on the River Lee should be a breeze.

**Wadesmill:** Despite a huge number of public objections, East Herts District Council has depressingly given approval to the change of use of the **Anchor** to residential use.

**Ware:** The **Crooked Billet** reopened prior to Christmas after a fine refurbishment which has kept the traditional community essence of the pub whilst bringing more decorative warmth and additional seating in the larger of the two rooms. A good job all round by Admiral Taverns and landlady Bev Gefaell. The pub currently has two changing real ales usually with three at the weekends – often a dark beer. The pub's important community credentials are further demonstrated by the defibrillator which is mounted on an outside wall. The Billet opens at 4pm on weekdays and is open all day on Saturday and Sunday. A planning application has been lodged for a change of use and building works to convert the **Victoria** into residential accommodation. The **Albion** and the **Jolly Bargeman** both remain closed.

**Watford:** Oakman Inns has applied for Change of Use and alterations for **Intu 49 – 51 High Street**, Watford. Their plan seems to be to change it into a Beech House pub. Conditional planning permission

has been granted. Conditional planning permission has also been granted for the **Two Trees Micro** pub on Vicarage Road. The **Estcourt Arms** no longer sells real ale - the handpumps have been removed from the bar. **Bar Bodega** on the Parade has reopened under the name **Marcel's**.

## CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

### Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

See branch website for event updates

### North Hertfordshire CAMRA

**Wed 16 Mar:** CarShare Crawl, Stevenage New Town, starts 8pm at **Tom Tiddlers Tavern**, then on to **Fisherman**, Shephall Tavern and **Old Mutual Friend**.

**Wed 30 Mar:** Hitchin Social, starts 8pm at the **Highlander**, then on to **Coopers Arms**, **Sun Hotel** and **Angel Vaults**.

**Sat 9 Apr:** Afternoon Social / Crawl, Stevenage Old Town, starts 2.30pm at **Old Town Bar**.

**Wed 13 Apr:** Letchworth Social, starts 8pm at **Arena Tavern**, then on to **Broadway Hotel**, **Garden City Brewery** and **Three Magnets**.

**Wed 27 Apr:** CarShare Countryside Crawl, starts 8pm at **King William IV**, Mangrove Green, then on to **Lilley Arms**, Lilley; **Green Man**, Great Offley and **Red Lion**, Great Offley.

**Fri 6 May:** AGM and Branch Meeting, 8pm at (venue tba).

**Wed 11 May:** Stevenage Social, starts 8pm at (venue tba).

**Wed 25 May:** CarShare Countryside Crawl, starts 8pm at the **Globe**, Codicote, then on to the **Goat**, Codicote; **Bull**, Whitwell and **Red Lion**, Preston. For further information and any changes to the above listing, see Branch Website.

### South Hertfordshire CAMRA

**Tue 15 Mar:** Branch Meeting – **Old Barge**, Hertford. 8pm.

**Sat 19 Mar:** Hackney Pub & Brewery Trail – To various establishments incl. Hackney Tap and the **Cock Tavern**. Meet Hackney Central Station at 11.45am

**Tue 19 Apr:** Branch Meeting - **Harpenden Arms**, Harpenden. 8pm. Speaker: TBC

**Tue 17 May:** Committee Meeting – **Radlett Men's Club**, Radlett. 7.45pm TBC

**Tue 24 May:** Into The Mild Brew Yonder – Hertford's Annual Mild Trail. Meet **Black Horse** 7.45pm then **Crafty Duck** 8.30pm, **Old Barge** 9.15pm and **Old Cross Tavern** 10.00pm. **See article on page 16.**

# CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

## Watford & District CAMRA

**Thu 17 Mar:** Bushey social - **Bushey Conservative Club**, 7 High Street, WD23 1BD, 8:30pm; **Red Lion**, 50 High Street, WD23 3HN, 9:15pm; **Swan**, 25 Park Road, WD23 3EE, 10pm.

**Mon 28 Mar:** Branch AGM - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

**Wed 13 Apr:** Watford social - **Prince George**, 151 St Albans Road, WD24 5BB, 8:30pm; **White Lion**, 79 St. Albans Road, WD17 1SJ, 9:15pm; **Wellington Arms**, 2 Woodford Road, WD17 1PA, 10pm.

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

**Sat 21 May:** Chorleywood social - **White Horse**, Rickmansworth Road, WD3 5SD, 1pm; **Black Horse**, Dog Kennel Lane, WD3 5EG, 2pm; **Rose & Crown**, Old Common Road, WD3 5LW, 3pm.

**Mon 30 May:** Branch meeting - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

## CAMRA BRANCH CONTACTS

### Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

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## Make May a Mild Month

Every May CAMRA branches across the country celebrate 'Mild May', an initiative to celebrate and highlight the beer style Mild, which was recently under threat of extinction due to a drop in popularity.

To help revive the Mild beer style, CAMRA branches encourage local pubs to have at least one Mild on the handpumps during the month of May, and some organise trips to pubs and breweries that embrace and support the beer style.

Mild is usually dark brown in colour, due to the use of well-roasted malts or roasted barley, and which tends to fall into the 3% to 3.5% ABV category, though a number of brewers are bringing strength back into style. Look for a rich malty aroma and flavour, with hints of dark fruit, chocolate, coffee and caramel, with a gentle underpinning of hop bitterness.

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