

FREE

HERTFORDSHIRE'S

Winter Edition
Dec 2021 – Feb 2022



Pints of View



With pubs returning to normal, Herts CAMRA branches are out and about and holding events supporting their local pubs, including Watford and District CAMRA branch – who are visiting the Nascot Arms, Watford, (pictured above) in the New Year

Robin Hood, St Albans

South Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year



Lordship Arms, Benington

North Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year



The Budget - Putting Cask First

There have been some really worrying articles in the press about the loss of beer sales and real ale in particular. Headlines like “Real ale vanishing from British pubs thanks to Covid as beer sales drop by 40%,” “have led to threats of pub closures”. Even though restrictions have been lifted, people are still not back in the habit of popping down to their local for a hand-pulled pint. It has been highlighted that fewer pubs are willing to serve real ale or have reduced their range because cask ale, a living product, has a shorter shelf life and if not drunk quickly (normally within five days of broaching the cask) it has to be poured down the drain.

The figures are not as bleak as the press have portrayed and were generated very shortly after the lockdown was lifted. I am not trying to say they are wrong, but trade has improved since then, though I do recognise that in some pubs the cask beer range has been reduced and in the worst instances discontinued.

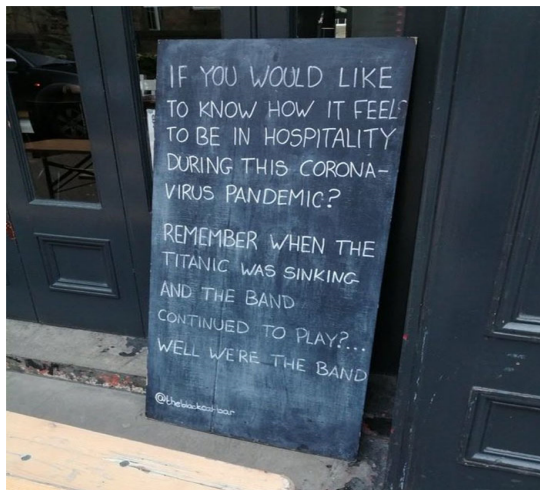
Where the range has been reduced this can only be accepted as sensible. There is nothing worse than a bad pint of cask ale and even before the pandemic it was recognised that some pubs were selling a much larger range of beers than they could ever serve in good quality.

The pubs in my area that have discontinued cask ale I must admit did not keep it in good condition so had little chance of increasing sales.

There is nothing like, or better than, a good well-kept pint of cask ale and the only place where cask ale is available is the pub or club and a few off-licenses. Brewers say the decline in real ale is putting a massive strain on the pub and brewing industry and the British Beer & Pub Association have calculated that 76 million fewer pints of cask have been sold in the nation's pubs since the pandemic. From April to July this year 113 million pints of real ale were supplied compared with 189 million during the same period in 2019, equating to a loss in revenue to pubs and brewers of £243 million in the last four months alone. Before the pandemic cask sales had already been declining from 2014 to 2019 having dropped by 17%. So if you love Cask Ale get down the pub and have a couple of pints.

The only way to give pubs a boost is by lowering overheads by reductions in tax. Unfortunately, the government has raised VAT in hospitality and tourism to 12.5% from 1st October and will return to its pre-pandemic level of 20% in April 2022.

During the pandemic, hospitality and tourism were the hardest hit sectors, with spend down £100bn*,



12,000* businesses permanently closed and 660,000* jobs were lost. However, the reduction in VAT helped protect pubs and hundreds of thousands of jobs, which has led to the open letter from CAMRA published below.

CAMRA is asking for a complete review of excise duty on draught beer, VAT in hospitality and a review of business rates on pubs. A copy of this request is below:

Levelling up Beer Duty in the Autumn Budget

“Dear Rishi Sunak,

We are writing from CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, on behalf of our 170,000 members across the UK, to urge you to introduce a new Draught Beer Duty rate in the Budget later this month.

We were delighted to see the Prime Minister holding a pint of draught bitter on his Twitter account earlier this week, and we hope this is a good sign for the Budget and CAMRA's long standing campaign to secure a new, lower rate of the duty for draught beer. A new Draught Beer Duty rate will be a significant improvement on how we currently tax beer, allowing for a reduced rate that targets beer sold on draught in pubs and the wider on-trade.

Pubs and social clubs are a force for good – they create jobs, boost local economies, foster social and community wellbeing, and help combat loneliness and social isolation. Prior to the pandemic, the beer and pub sector added £22.9 billion to the UK economy annually. This included paying £12.7 billion in taxes, £11.1 billion in wages, and £2 billion in investment.

CAMRA has already commissioned research that found that a modest reduction in tax on draught beer

could:

- Result in £26.6m of additional expenditure on draught beer.
- Pull consumption back into pubs from the off-trade.
- Create additional jobs in pubs.

A more ambitious cut could produce even greater benefits, getting more people into pubs, and putting more money into local economies – truly delivering on the levelling up agenda.

Finally, as you are aware, there are many issues facing the beer and pub sector as it undergoes a fragile recovery from the pandemic. Therefore, it is vital that the outcome of Business Rates Review delivers a fairer deal for the pub sector, and that changes to the Small Brewers' Relief Scheme do not result in some of the smallest brewers paying more tax.

Please use this Budget to seize this opportunity to level up how we tax beer, and, in the Prime Minister's own words 'Build Back Bitter'.

Yours sincerely,

Nik Antona – CAMRA National Chairman

Tom Stainer – CAMRA Chief Executive"

Thousands of CAMRA members supported an appeal to the Chancellor by sending e-mails to their MPs and on the 27th October the Chancellor delivered the Autumn Budget.

This announced that the way alcohol is taxed would be amended to increase the tax relief on beers up to 3.6 % ABV. The only down side with this is inevitably higher gravity beers will be taxed more to make up the shortfall.

There will be a lower rate of duty charged on draught beer and cider served in pubs and social clubs which was calculated at a reduction of three pence per pint but this will be absorbed by hard pressed licensees and brewers so don't expect any reduction at the point of sale.

This establishes an important principle in the taxation system for the first time: that pubs are a force for good in our communities and should be better supported to help them survive, thrive and compete with the likes of supermarkets.

For years we have campaigned for this change, and in the run up to this Budget thousands of CAMRA members emailed their MPs about our campaign for a fairer alcohol duty system and business rates.

There was also good news for our small and independent cider makers, with a new progressive duty system which will support smaller producers to grow their businesses, increasing choice of quality ciders and perries available to consumers.

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There is a lot more campaigning to be done

At the moment the new, lower draught duty rate is proposed to apply only to containers over 40 litres – which will exclude lots of small brewery beers that are commonly sold in smaller casks and kegs. That's why we will be campaigning in the coming months to reduce the threshold with a "Makelt20 litres" campaign when the government makes more details of how they intend to implement this new, lower draught duty rate.

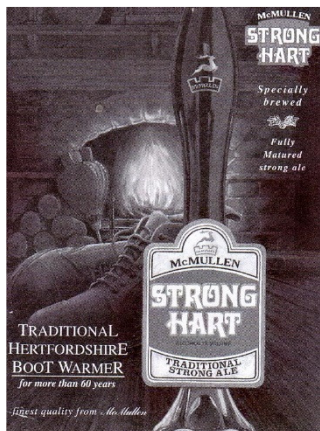
Many feel that these amendments to the tax system do not go far enough, we all know that the price of a pint at the bar is keeping a large number of customers away from pubs. Why the Chancellor cannot see that by substantially reducing the tax burden on pubs he would actually kick start an increase in beer sales, many more jobs would be created in brewing, delivery and staffing bars so the tax revenue would actually increase.

Finally, please see the two letters on this subject in "Readers Write" section later in this edition.

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.

McMullen's Shoo-In for Christmas?

For 2021 Mac's Christmas beer will again be the familiar *Bootwarmer*. There are no plans to brew cask *Stronghart*, the legendary ABV7% Christmas brew once described by CAMRA as being "liquid Christmas pudding", though a bottled version is always available from the brewery shop or website.



This advert for Stronghart, pictured left and dating from 1996 perhaps hints at the future arrival of its ABV5.2% cousin - note the word Bootwarmer in the advert.

Bootwarmer, annually produced since 2002, is full of rich smooth flavours using Progress, Bramling

Cross and Fuggles hops – and is based on a recipe from earlier times.

Eva Joins the Brewing Team

At the brewery, a new under brewer has been recruited. Eva Butters started in the autumn, fresh from completing an MSC brewing degree at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Eva will be assisting head brewer Chris Evans with the existing range of Mac's beers – AK, Country and IPA – together Bootwarmer and Mac's/ Rivertown seasonal ales.

Les Middlewood

Beer Tasting in Watford

On Friday 29th October Bowtie Brewers and Pope's Yard Brewery were serving up their locally brewed beers at the Market Lates event at Watford Market. It was a rare chance to try Bowtie's Old London Porter along with a range of Pope's Yard's beers, including the session golden ale Hoppy Hornet, inspired by Watford FC. It was a busy night for Bowtie brewer Peter Hodge (left in the picture above) and Pope's Yard's Geoff Latham and Barbara Leenen as customers were deep at the bar



throughout the evening. Another Market Lates event was scheduled for 3rd December. Hopefully we'll be seeing our local brewers there again.

Traditional English Bitter – Time to Shine Again?

There is no doubt the we now have a very vibrant and colourful brewing scene. Innovative brewing techniques have given us golden ales, American citric IPAs and new stouts and porters, all with an ever-increasing presence on pub handpumps. Many of these beers are excellently created so this article should not be seen as a criticism. But this rise appears to have come at the expense of our traditional British beers – "those ordinary brown beers" as I am hearing them mentioned in many a pub. Sales are falling. Have we still craved them? Should we be concerned?



When CAMRA started in the early 1970's it was rare to find many golden or pale coloured beers in the south of England, certainly in Hertfordshire. There were some nationally – the lamented and original draught Boddington's *Bitter* immediately comes to mind, but they were more likely to be found in the north of England. Other than the occasional dark mild or a strong ale or two, our cask beer palate, as it stood in Hertfordshire, largely comprised of a range of traditional beers – "brown beers" – bitter and special - produced by each of our family and Independent brewers and some made by the Big Brewers of the day. It's what we were trying to protect. And as our campaign succeeded these beers grew in popularity, as did the number of them. The characteristics of those beers, largely made from English malted barley and English hops, might not

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give the same quench as a modern golden ale or the same taste rush of a citric beer, but the more measured subtlety of a traditional English bitter is surely still a flavour to behold and enjoy.

As interest in British brewing burgeoned in the last quarter of the 20th Century, not surprisingly so did innovation. Brewers now had the space and opportunity to experiment. Our campaign spread



beyond our shores, notably to the USA who were suffering their own brewing destruction at the hands of their own Big Brewers. Over time and as their recovery grew their new wave of brewers and beers began to influence ours. British brewers began searching for new inspirations, in continental,

American and New Zealand hops and a whole new gamut of golden and citric ales duly followed, and new beer types were established. Our brewing scene is the richer for it.

But is this new wave of beers about to eclipse the very traditional bitters that we fought so hard to popularise and save? The hit on traditional bitter sales appears to be particularly affecting many of our family brewers who are perhaps a little less agile in adopting the new, whilst still needing to protect the past for their tied house regulars. What should we do?

Keep drinking traditional bitters, revisit them, keep asking for them. And CAMRA should make new efforts to promote these beers to ensure they continue to feature on the handpumps in our pubs. When kept in great condition who can fail to enjoy a pint of Adnams *Southwold Bitter*, Bateman's *XB*, Butcombe *Original*, Courage *Best*, Brakspear *Bitter*, Elgood's *Cambridge Bitter*, Fuller's *London Pride*, Harvey's *Sussex Best*, Hook Norton *Hooky*, McMullen *AK & Country*, Marston's *Pedigree*, Otter *Bitter*, Wadworth *6X*, so many more...you name them.

Les Middlewood

Mermaid South Herts 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.



Pictured above left to right with the award are myself, and managers Mark and John with their award. John and Mark, who have managed the Mermaid since 2013, inherited from the previous manager what had become a real cider tradition, and in 2014 won the very first South Herts CAMRA Cider and Perry Pub of the Year award. From then on they have confirmed their dedication to the cause for cider, 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! (*January is Wassail Time* – Page 20)

Brian Page - South Herts Branch Cider and perry representative

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Deadline for Mar – May 2022 Newsletter (302):

Copy and Adverts – 7 February 2022

North Hertfordshire Cider Pub of the Year

The North Hertfordshire Branch Cider Pub of the Year is the **Garden City Brewery & Bar** in Letchworth Garden City. Congratulations to Nick and Holly and their team on winning the Cider POTY, an



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award they previously won in 2018 and 2020. The pub opened in 2016 and brews its own beers on site, they also offer a great range of guest beers. They have also gained an excellent reputation for serving quality ciders. An extensive range is available



including local ciders from Apple Cottage in Baldock, as well as an ever-changing selection from cider makers across the UK. The

pub holds regular cider festivals, most recently in August. The Garden City Brewery is open from Wednesday to Sunday (check the hours on their website: www.gardencitybrewery.co.uk), and is located in The Wynd in Letchworth, a few minutes' walk from Letchworth Garden City railway station.

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Windmill, Charlton Update - September 2021

This is a quick update to alert you to the fact that the owner has indicated to North Hertfordshire District Council that the **Windmill** will be open for business by late spring 2022. Whilst this a positive move, a planning application has however also been submitted, which we urge you to look at. The application 21/02206/FP is on the North Herts district Council web site.

Whilst a description of the proposed works states 'Installation of an external staircase, external cladding and bike rack', a more detailed examination of the attached plans shows proposed extensions to the building and a new vehicular access to the rear garden from Charlton Road. An external staircase and access point would enable separation of the property by creating an upstairs flat which would run contrary to the business model that experts have advised us as being the best option for the long-term sustainability of a community pub such as The Windmill, i.e., on-site staff accommodation for security and hospitality.

Our concern is that these proposals fail to justify an operational need which will support the retention of. The Windmill, sited within both Green Belt and a Conservation Area, where any proposed development is required to preserve and enhance the character and special features of these protected areas.



Please take a look at the application where you can also view the objections that have been raised

by our steering group. We believe it is vital that any proposals for The Windmill are both detailed and clear and have the long-term sustainability of this much-loved community asset at their heart. Indeed, regular visitors to Charlton may have noticed car park restrictions that the owner has now imposed which are not in the spirit of maintaining future goodwill and custom from the local community.

Phil Jarvis - The Windmill Community Pub Ltd

Ed Says: Unfortunately, this report fell between editions of *Pints of View* so the closing date for objections has been missed. The message did get circulated and 24 objections in total were lodged.

• *The Windmill Public House is a traditional meeting place and community focus for the village. It is also registered as an Asset of Community Value [ACV]. It is within a conservation area and adjacent to Charlton House which is a historic listed building within the Green Belt. The pub was sold to a developer, along with its car park, and closed in 2015, hence the campaign to re-open it.*

Watford What's On

As pub-going continues to return to some form of normality, Watford & District branch are starting to add more events to the social calendar. So, here are few things that are in the diary for the next few months.

We'll be meeting up at the **Regent Club** on St Albans Road on Thursday 9th December. The club has an interesting range of ales and a quiz night on Thursdays, which should be good fun. Clubs often only stock keg beer, but there are several clubs in the branch area that serve real ale. These include the nearby **Glenn Social & Sports Club**, the **Bushey Conservative and Unionist Club**, the **Oxhey Conservative Club**, the **Abbots Langley Club**, the **Croxley Green Community Club**, the **Croxley Guild of Sport & Social Club**, and the **West Herts Sports Club**. If you know of other clubs in the area that stock real ale, please write in or send an email to the contact address below.

On Saturday 18th December we'll be presenting our **Pub of the Year 2020** award to the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** in Heronsgate, which will give everyone a great excuse to pay a visit to the pub for their Christmas Beer Festival, which takes place from the 17th to the 25th December. Hopefully we'll see plenty of winter ales on the bar to drink by the pub's roaring real fire.

Back to Watford and the now traditional 'Get away from the family' social



at the **Nascot Arms** (above) will be shunted forward from New Year's Day to Bank Holiday Monday 3rd January 2022. It's a chance for members we don't see that often to meet up for a seasonal drink as well take part in a fun, informative and fiendishly difficult quiz set by Bill Austin. Expect to find out a few things you didn't know about ale, brewing and local pubs, past and present.

Friday 21st January sees the return of our traditional 'Pre-Xmas' London Pub Crawl. Once upon a time it was genuinely before Christmas but got pushed back later and is now stuck on the wrong side of New Year. Still, it gives everyone a reason to go out at a time of the year that's normally rather quiet for pubs. Organiser Rick Clark plots a different route each year and we've had crawls in Islington, Kentish Town, Hackney and Kensington to name but a few. The 2022 edition is set to start at the **Hamilton Hall** Wetherspoon pub at Liverpool Street Station.



Left: The Southampton Arms in Kentish Town. Just one of the places visited on past 'Pre-Xmas' pub crawls

Right: Bar Billiards at the Pembury Tavern in Hackney. Jumping off point for a pub crawl that took in pubs in Homerton and Stratford.



In February we've lined up visits to pubs in Croxley Green and Abbots Langley, so if you live in those areas check the branch diary in this edition of *Pints of View* or visit our website.

Many pubs and clubs don't announce events until quite late, so there's a good chance we'll be adding more to our calendar after *Pints of View* is published. Keep an eye on our branch diary and social media to look out for late breaking news or changes.

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Swan Opens St Albans' First Roof Garden

St Albans' first pub roof garden has been officially opened to mark the McGuinness family's 10-year anniversary at the **Swan** in Upper Dagnall Street.

The official opening was made by the Mayor, Councillor Edgar Hill following three weeks closure of the pub to undertake the work at a cost of £75K.

The new roof garden marked the family's 10-year anniversary at the pub and also the pub's 250-year anniversary.

St Albans has many pubs and long serving publicans. Two who stand out are Steve McConnel who has been at the **White Hart Tap** for twenty-six years and Dave Worcester who has moved from the **Lower Red Lion** to the **White Lion** and then back to the Lower Red so may have totted up more years in total.

The organisers thank all who supported the festival this year and look forward to welcoming more again in 2022.



For more information see:

<https://northherts.camra.org.uk/hitchin/> and
<https://www.facebook.com/NHCAMRA> including

more pictures.

Dean Barrett

North Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year Presentation

The North Hertfordshire Branch presented the 2021 Pub of the Year award and Stag trophy to The **Lordship Arms**, Benington on the 5th of November. Branch chair Paul Coard presented the award to Alan and Daphne Marshall, in the pub packed with regulars and a large contingent of branch members. Alan and Daphne Marshall have run the pub since 1993. At the time they took the pub on it had been under threat of being turned into housing. Since then, the pub has been a permanent fixture in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** and has won the branch pub of the year award on numerous occasions, most recently in 2020. The Lordship Arms is located in Benington, a small village few miles south east of Stevenage. There are eight hand pumps for casks ales, three regular beers and five guests. The beers cover a range of styles to cater for every taste. The beers are always served in excellent condition, the Yorkshire Heart *Blonde* available on the evening was exceptionally good. Congratulations to Alan and Daphne and their small team of Nikki, Sam and Dennis for this well-deserved award.



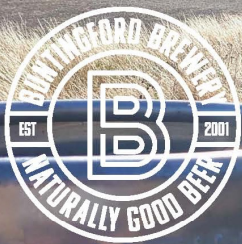
Left: North Herts Chairman Paul Coard (right) presents the POTY award and Stag Trophy to Alan & Daphne Marshall

Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

Just four weeks after this year's rescheduled festival, next year's dates have been announced as 9th – 11th June, 2022. The co-organisers, CAMRA North Herts, Hitchin Rugby Club and Hitchin Round Table were delighted they could eventually stage a festival on 23rd – 25th September this year after no physical event was possible in 2020 and were eager to plan ahead for 2022.

The timing and the arrangements this year made it quite a different festival with the marquee at the Rugby Club being used only for drinking and all beers and ciders being served from a bar outside the club pavilion. It was lower in capacity and in variety of drinks, as the rugby season was on and the ground was shared with matches. But the weather was great for late September, which meant many enjoyed the autumn sunshine and mild evenings outside. It had a great atmosphere which visitors and volunteers clearly enjoyed, drinks virtually sold out and many left positive comments on social media. 'Great to be back' seemed the common sentiment. The CAMRA Ticket system was also successfully used for the first time at a festival for the advance tickets only event, and IT and Events teams from CAMRA St Albans HQ gave excellent support, in advance and on site. Local sponsors also gave generous support.

Nevertheless, everybody is looking forward to a full-size festival again next year, so it's reverting to its normal June timing, outside the rugby season, so it'll have a bigger marquee, much more outside space and, of course, back to a bigger beer and cider selection.



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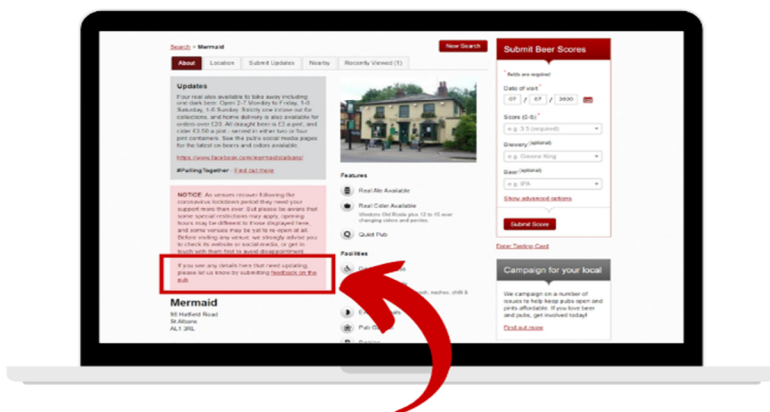
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South Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year Awards

Robin Hood, St Albans hits Gold

St Albans pub the **Robin Hood** has been adjudged the best pub in the CAMRA South Herts branch area and been awarded their Gold Pub of the Year 2021.

Over the last few years, the Robin Hood has developed a reputation for the high quality of their real ale as well as a good selection of real ciders. Formerly a Whitbread pub, the Robin Hood is now owned by pub group Stonegate, and although pub licensee Jim sometimes struggles to get the exact real ales he would like via their designated distributors he still manages to have interesting and tasty offerings on all three handpumps.

Harvey's *Sussex Best* is a permanent fixture on one of the pumps, with a range of guest beers, often from local breweries occupying the other two.

The South Herts Pub of the Year award was presented to Jim, licensee wife Liz and his team during the very successful **St Albans Beer and Pubs Festival** at the end of September and attracted a large crowd of regulars including local MP and local resident Daisy Cooper.

The award was a well-deserved reward for the pub which, during the difficult period of Covid lockdowns, had continued to supply customers with take-away and deliveries of real ales and ciders.

Pub of the Year (POTY) surveying in the South Herts branch was delayed because of lockdown restrictions which meant a later than usual announcement of the branch's Pub of the Year award. However, despite these restrictions POTY judges were able to visit the pubs in contention for the award and found the real ale at the Robin Hood outstanding.

The South Herts branch covers almost 280 pubs and this is the first time that the Robin Hood has won the top award.

Completing the POTY 2021 podium winners, the **Crooked Billet** in Ware won the silver award and the **Woodman** in Wildhill the bronze.

Life has been tough for all the pubs in our branch area but they have battled through and nearly all are back trading as normal, although some may still close a little earlier in the evening if there are no customers. So please continue to support our local pubs, in their own way they are all winners.

Iain Loe

Straight Silver for the Crooked Billet, Ware

Many congratulations to Bev Gefaell, her team and her regulars at the **Crooked Billet** in Musley Hill, Ware, winner of the Silver award in South Herts Branch's 2021 Pub of the Year competition.

The Crooked Billet is a small Victorian-built wet-led pub deep in the heart of a residential area in the north of Ware. There are effectively two rooms – a largish bar with TV sport – and a smaller “snug” with comfortable seating and a chance to play darts. Outside there are tables against the street pavement and to the rear there is a small garden. Bev keeps two changing cask ales during the week with an extra beer at the weekends, often a dark beer, mild, stout or porter. At the presentation evening in October, we enjoyed *Otter Bitter*, Deuchar's *IPA* and Nethergate *Old Growler*.

Once a tied house to both McMullen's and Greene King, the Billet has for some years been owned by Admiral Taverns and Bev is in her third year as a leaseholder having honed her cask ale keeping skills with time spent working under previous leaseholders Stuart West and Sue Pateman before taking the leap into lease holding herself – although pub keeping wasn't a total surprise because in previous times Bev had managed a number of McMullen houses. The pub has now gained a further entry in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** and has now amassed 23 inclusions in total.

The award was presented by South Herts Chair, Iain Loe, who outlined the reasons for the Billet's high ranking in the competition – not for only selling great cask ale but for a pub that is inviting, welcoming and comfortable – an excellent community local. Just the place, in fact, to meet friends, enjoy good beer,



Above: Licensees Liz and Jim Pratt (third and second from right) with their team to the left, display their Pub of the Year 2021 award with South Herts Chair Iain Loe, right.



conversation and fun. The pub has now added Silver to its previous Gold and three Bronzes.

In accepting the award Bev (pictured left with South

Herts CAMRA Branch Chair Iain Loe, right) was very keen to say how thankful she has been for the support of family, friends and customers, particularly in the last two years during the pandemic – tough times, not just for the pub but for many in the community. She said “The quietness of the lockdowns gave me time to realise that the pub is more than just the pub, it’s about other social things as well – people and community – and I began to think how I and the pub could help. In the latter part of the lockdowns, as restrictions eased, we started our “Local Social,” inviting people in for tea and a chat – it’s continued every Wednesday morning since and we also have a Monday afternoon knitting group”.

Admiral Taverns must have also seen the pub’s potential – the pub closed for a month after our award ceremony for repairs and a well-earned redecoration, with new flooring, some new furniture and a log burner, together with fresh signage and groundwork outside. But at the heart of the changes was the need to protect and cement the pub’s strong community credentials – along with great cask ale, of course.

The Crooked Billet is open for beer 4-11pm Monday – Friday and 12-11pm Saturday & Sunday. Do pay a visit.

Les Middlewood

Bronze Award for the Woodman at Wildhill

It has been a long tradition for the **Woodman** at Wildhill to win CAMA awards, I remember doing presentations when I was Chair of the branch in the 1980s. The competition between the 300 pubs in the South Herts branch area has become fierce and the difference in the number of votes for each of the final eight was very close indeed this year. The Woodman has been a fantastic beer led country local since the late 1970s and been run-by the Craig family for over 25 years. The present hosts being Vicky and Tom who took over from Graham and



Ros. Changing from tradition and honouring the staff (who let’s face it are vital part of the experience when you visit) Sam and Anna (pictured above) received the award from South Herts CAMRA’s Paul Woodhouse on Thursday 4th November. If you have not been to the Woodman it is well worth a visit, and if you have not been in for a while it’s about time you popped in again.

Steve Bury

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Underwhelmed by the budget

Am I alone in being completely underwhelmed by this autumn budget news? Reports are that this will save 3p per pint. Really? I very much doubt it and in any case this is hardly a meaningful amount. In the same week one pub chain boss announced that the price of a pint would have to rise by 30p to cover the rise in the national living wage.

CAMRA has never been a campaign for cheap beer but for me this shows the complete futility in banging on about beer duty. People in London seem happy to pay £5-7 per pint. CAMRA seems to ignore that.

I welcome the 40-litre container limit. Anything which stops brewers using keykegs and the like should be welcomed. These breweries churn out beers sold at exceptionally high prices for what I believe is an inferior product. The high price of beer is partially down to the dubious practices and dispensing methods of these breweries. What has CAMRA said about that? Only that they want to keep these breweries in business by campaigning for a lower limit!

And we've got to wait 18 months before any of this comes into effect!

Oh well - off to the pub!

Phil Defriez

Covid recovery not at this price!

Pubs will never recover from the covid shutdown charging £5 for a pint of real ale, more for lagers and continental brews.

The government needs to make a massive cut in tax for pubs, to make drinking in them affordable for the ordinary drinker - after all, I thought that was who public houses were meant for - and make alcohol expensive to buy from any other outlet. This may also help with problem drinking, as pubs are a controlled environment, and if landlords are not constantly under pressure to pay the bills, they may be encouraged to exercise their right to refuse to serve inebriated customers.

Michael Fuller

Ed says: I can do nothing other than heartily concur with both Phil's and Michael's correspondence. The problem is the price of a pint at the bar is and has been keeping customers away from pubs long before the covid lockdown, and unfortunately the Chancellor has done nothing to rectify this.

Bus route 500 kicks trend

Going against the trend of many years, there are now later bus journeys being operated on bus route 500 (Watford to Aylesbury via Hemel), following a government grant.

This means there are now hourly buses up until around 22:00 - 22:30 on Monday to Saturday evenings.

The full timetable can be found at:

<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/find-a-service/500-aylesbury-to-watford>

Exact times can be found at the bus stops.

It seems to have been a well-kept secret up until now, so as it is likely to be "use it or lose it" it would be good to give it some publicity and makes a change from bus services being reduced or withdrawn!

Peter Brooks

Ed Says: Can I firstly apologise to Peter for not getting this letter in edition 300. Considering my complaint about the 602 route this is good news indeed.

Good day, from our New Zealand correspondent

I would like to congratulate on your excellent magazine which I get sent to me by a friend in St Albans.

I am from England and have been living in New Zealand for 18 years. I am also an old member of CAMRA and was one of the first members to join our organisation over here, SOBA Society of Beer Advocates.

I am a publican and left a pub, the **White Hart** in Bideford, Devon in 2004 and opened the first Craft beer bar in Marlborough here. Had twelve taps of craft beer, no mainstream. My advert was "No crap on tap".

I collected most kegs from the breweries and only put on beer that I liked. It went very well and we won a few certificates over the years.

My car number plate is SOBA 1. We have a magazine every two months but I admit I get more satisfaction from yours than I do from ours.

I find things out from yours that I cannot see elsewhere. This Celebration issue 300 which I have now been sent had a brilliant article about BrewDog. I am returning to England, hopefully prior to Christmas and will be looking for a pub to lease.

Mike Pink

Ed Says: Good to know that the newsletter is getting such a wide circulation. As far as finding a pub to lease in the UK Mike should not have a problem the trouble will be finding the right one on the right terms.

Benskins and the Beer Orders

I was interested to read Val Langford's article because I well remember the Government's ill-



conceived Beer Orders of 1989. Ultimately it did the trade no favours at all but one of its early results was the closing and boarding-up of many of those remote pubs that were the hub of their local community. Like most breweries, we at Benskin's had a few barely profitable tenancies where we allowed loyal tenants to remain on a minimal rent because their pub served a social need for the local community. However, when the breweries were told to reduce their tied estate, these unprofitable pubs were the first to go. In many cases these were bought by enthusiastic but inexperienced licensees who soon discovered that they were running an unprofitable business so, throughout the country, village pubs were closed and boarded-up depriving the local community of their main centre of hospitality. Many of the licensees running these remote pubs knew their customers so well that the absence of a regular caused much concern and enquiries would be made to ascertain the welfare of the missing person! I knew of one tenant who provided lunch for one absent regular until the man had recovered sufficiently to return to the pub!

Although all our licensees were tied to the beers they could sell, many of our houses were permitted to sell certain guest beers well before the Beer Orders came into force. But I like to feel that most beer-drinking customers used our pubs because of the excellent quality of the Benskin's *Bitter*.

Sam Hall

Ed Says: Good to hear from Sam again. I am sure he's missed the **St Albans Beer & Cider** festival as much as I have so let's look forward to 2022. The Beer Orders as Sam said did the trade a lot of damage but we were in different times when landlords had security of tenure and were not burdened with the excessive tax regime that exists now.

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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THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2022 WE'RE IN IT

Pints of View Edition 300 corrections

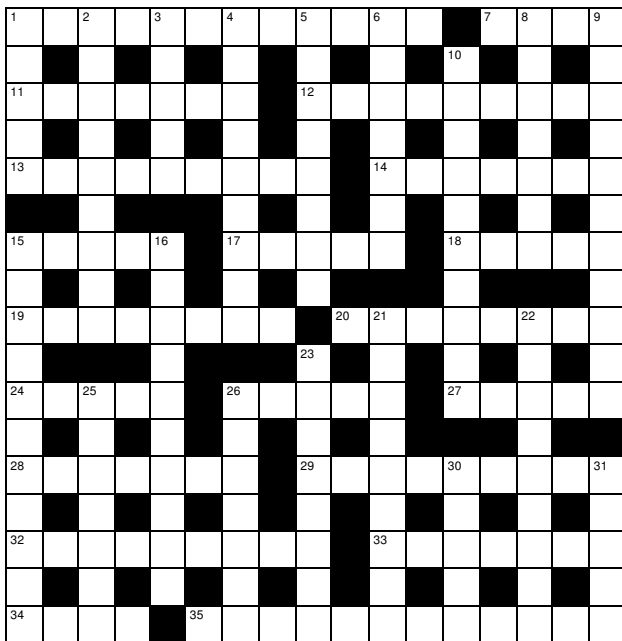
There were several errors in the last edition of Pints of View.

Page 7 Val Langford was credited with having written "Pub companies- who they are and what they do - Part1" the article was actually written by Paul Ainsworth.

Page 7 again below the wrongly credited article the blue box refers to "Pulling Together" not "Pints of View".

Page 10 and 11 "Mac's Merry go round" all the information was contained in "McMullen's – Summer and Beyond" on pages 8 and 9.

Page 19 The text in the purple box says "1st winner drawn wins a signed CAMRA 2022 Good Beer Guide." The prize was a 2022 Good Beer Guide but not signed, when Roger Protz was editor, he used to do Guide signings at South Herts CAMRA's St Albans Beer & Cider festival. Not only has there been no festival this year, Roger is also no longer the editor. Page 21 and 22 "Sandridge Pubs and Beerhouses" the picture on 22 shows the Rose & Crown in St Michael's village in St Albans (currently closed) not the **Rose & Crown** 24 High Street Sandridge – our apologies to the present tenants.



Send Entries by 15 January 2022 to:
Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley,
Herts, WD7 9EA.

Photocopies are acceptable

Your

Name:.....

Your

Address:.....

Your

Postcode:.....

ACROSS

- 1 Seasonal beer, not summer cooler (6, 6)
- 7 Arm perhaps principally located in man's body (4)
- 11 Strangle scruffy toerag – about time! (7)
- 12 Dress enthralling presenter with time in deserted location (5, 4)
- 13 Tries to fit in genuine practice (9)
- 14 Charge cheap? I'm amazed (7)
- 15 Some thunder or rain, maybe, to begin with (5)
- 17 Group of 31 or short month, with 26 across? (15)
- 18 Perfect claim for holder of cards? (5)
- 19 One who watches some cricket having ale with no head (8)
- 20 Mac's Country? Yes and no (8)
- 24 Hunting dog loses black bird (5)
- 26 Strange story in article (5)
- 27 Dangerous for broadcaster to follow scripture (5)
- 28 Not knowing girl coming to Herts town (7)
- 29 Remote, it crashes to surface of Earth (9)
- 32 Animal made uncomfortable in dry or stormy surroundings (9)
- 33 A great noise within is enduring (7)
- 34 Uncommon beer a reveller consumes (4)
- 35 Main player in The Star of Bethlehem? (7, 5)

DOWN - Continued

- 6 Self-centred person, say, is in over the top (7)
- 8 Place on its own is nothing, dead (7)
- 9 Rely on break – one of three around now (4, 7)
- 10 Sprite sets about a member of the family (10)
- 15 Very busy, as anywhere might be this season (6, 5)
- 16 With crazy mad vibes, he was naughty (10)
- 21 Restrict prisoner's exercise (9)
- 22 A big line's coiled for this descent (9)
- 23 DIY's made problematic – not happy (8)
- 25 Big noise changing lead for star attraction (7)
- 26 Mean to state how old one is (7)
- 30 Window in college (5)
- 31 Cardinal's importance after leader deposed (5)

Winner of Edition 300 Catherine Wheel is:
I. Blackmore, St Albans. **SOLUTION BELOW**

DOWN

- 1 Bet comedian has a half of beer (5)
- 2 New potholer scrambles to top of the world (5, 4)
- 3 Next ration contains more (5)
- 4 He won test unusually somewhere in North London (9)
- 5 Control but see a rule get broken (8)

D	O	W	N	H	A	M	I	S	L	E	A
O	K	S	A	N	D	S	T	O	N	E	S
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B	K	O	A	T	O	A	K	N	E	H	O
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S	L	O	G	D	R	A	Y	G	E	R	S
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E	A	S	I	L	L	E	T	A	G	H	I
T	N	U	O	T	S	E	I	V	R	A	R
S	O	O	R	E	V	I	R	N	E	D	E

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

No. 20 – The Chequers Inn, Wareside

By Les Middlewood

A scan through back copies of *Pints of View* and its predecessors quickly confirms that, in Hertfordshire, the **Chequers Inn** has one of the longest pedigrees in supporting new local brewers. In 1982 it was Ware's Victoria and Lilley's Mickles breweries, in 2000 it was Green Tye brewery and a pub-badged beer brewed by Dark Horse of Hertford, then followed Buntingford

brewery and now it's the beers from the Hadham brewery. Not a bad tradition at all for a pub

in Wareside, a village close to the River Ash and with its own famous tradition of treacle mining.

The Chequers dates at least back to 1756 when Victuallers Billeting records show that the pub, then known as the Chequer and Bowl had stabling for 4 horses. Losing its "Bowl" in the 19th century, the building is now Grade II listed – of late 17thC timber-framed construction with later alterations and improvements but still displaying exposed timbers and other period features. It became part of the Hawkes tied estate, brewers of Bishop's Stortford, who were founded in 1780 but were sold to Benskin's in 1898. In 1957 Benskin's sold out to Ind

Coope who, now as part of Allied

Breweries, sold the Chequers as a Free house in 1978, when



Everard's Tiger could be enjoyed in the pub for 48p per pint.

In the distance, pictured above, the Chequers in an early 20th Century photo courtesy of Hertford Museum's on-line photographic archive:

www.hertfordmuseumimages.org

In the pub a further picture, dated c1878, clearly shows the Hawkes brewery livery on the panel above the front door.

Matilda Faint was a landlady who commanded the bar for over 40 years in the second half of the 19th C but today's owner, Douglas Cook and his family

have now amassed over 26 years of their own – and they're still counting. Landlord Doug says "We're a traditional village boozer, without piped music and TV but full of conversation, fun and local networking." Landlady Julie added "People sometimes comment that our rooms have a front-room atmosphere". In the pandemic lockdown the pub opened a grocery shop with Doug baking bread and making biscuits. It also offered real ale takeaways. These excellent efforts were not missed by Herts & Essex Borders Branch who presented the pub a Real Ale Heroes award.

Today the pub offers three cask beers - always Hadham's Treacle Mine IPA plus two changing guest ales. The pub has appeared in 30 editions of CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide**. There are four characterful rooms, one with a log fire and one which has become popular for family get togethers. Outside there are tables to the side on an area of decking and also at the front adjacent to the road. The pub is open from 12-3pm and 6-11pm Monday to Saturday, 12-10.30pm on Sundays. Good traditional pub food is available 12-2pm; 6-8.30pm

Dating in parts from the 15th century and a Grade II listed building, Lombard House has been home to this Private Members Club since 1897*

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014 - 2022

4 hand pumps and real cider

This is a wonderful time of the year with lots of things happening. Take a look at our new website at: www.hertford.club

Come join us by the cosy fire

New members are currently welcome although

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CAMRA members may be signed in on production of their CAMRA membership card

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Monday to Saturday and 12-3pm; 6-8pm Sundays. Cask beer and cooked meals are also available for takeaway. There are five traditional ciders, from various producers and in the back bar you will find a surprisingly large library of books, all free, on a take one, bring one basis. The pub is dog-friendly. The Chequers (car park to the rear) can be found in the centre of Wareside, on the B1004, a pleasant rural road that connects Ware with Widford and Much Hadham. Passenger trains may have deserted the village in 1964 but the nearby former track bed forms a lovely footpath or cycle path that stretches a couple of miles. The M3 and M4 buses offer a limited service, running a circular route to and from Ware railway station, Mondays to Saturday.

Tiny Rebel Sanctioned over Advertising and Art Work

Tiny Rebel Brewing has for the third time been found to have breached rules including appealing to underage drinkers, sexual references and causing offence.

The Newport (South Wales) brewery also fell foul of the Portman Group's rules on marketing drinks as clearly alcoholic.

Tiny Rebel has withdrawn four beers from sale and said it was working closely with the regulator.

The Portman Group said it received complaints from the Metropolitan Police, Alcohol Focus Scotland and a member of the public, leading it to review eight beers.

They were: *Bump 'n' Grind*, *Cherry Bomb*, *Clwb Tropicana* cans and four-can packaging, *Double 99*, *No Capes*, *Original Nuttah* and *Cali Pale*.

The regulator upheld complaints for six of the beers. In the case of *Original Nuttah*, the panel ruled the name - along with imagery on the can - was "likely to be taken as a derogatory reference to mental illness and was likely to cause serious offence".

Bump 'n' Grind had a "direct association with sexual activity", while *Cherry Bomb* was said to have displayed elements associated with soft drinks, rather than alcoholic ones.

No Capes and the four-pack for *Clwb Tropicana* were ruled to breach codes of practice on not appealing to under-18s.

Double 99 also breached the same rule and the panel also ruled it "encouraged immoderate consumption" of alcohol.



The panel dismissed two complaints, against *Clwb Tropicana* IPA single-can packaging and *Cali Pale* Ale.

The brewery has its headquarters in Newport, and will celebrate its 10th birthday next year.

Panel chairwoman Nicola Williams said: "Tiny Rebel's product range has had problems across a range of areas, but in particular with designs that have a particular appeal to under-18s, although this has not been its intention."

"It is essential that alcoholic products are aimed squarely at adults and clearly communicate their alcoholic nature."

"Equally importantly is the need to avoid widespread offence, particularly around mental health."

The brewer said it had voluntarily stopped making *Bump 'n' Grind*, *Cherry Bomb*, *No Capes* and *Original Nuttah*, while working to resolve packaging issues with the other two beers.

Founded in 2012 by Brad Cummings and Gazz Williams, the company went from making homebrew in a Newport garage to establishing a headquarters in the city, along with bars in Cardiff and Newport.

Its first beer *Cwtch* was named champion beer of Britain in 2015, but also had two complaints against it upheld by the regulator in 2017 and 2019.

It was ordered to redesign its cans on both occasions, including being told to remove its trademark teddy bear logo.

Responding to the latest ruling, an official for the brewery said: "At Tiny Rebel we take all consumer complaints very seriously, as well as our wider social responsibility."

"We'll continue to work closely with the Portman Group and are committed to following their guidance".

Don't drink anything from a can

It has been known for quite some time that canned foods affect blood pressure, but many people including myself did not appreciate that this applied to canned drinks as well. A study done in Korea in 2014 compared drinks in glass bottles to those in cans and it was found that canned beverages can increase your blood pressure by sixteen times. The strange idea that there is nothing wrong with beer in cans, promoted by so called craft brewers over the last five years seems now to be false. I always had a problem with real ale in a can as how are you supposed to leave the sediment in the can if you can't see through the container it's served from?

Steve Bury

CAMRA Launches Drink Greener

At the end of October CAMRA launched its drink greener campaign to highlight how drinking locally brewed cask ale and natural cider and perry is more environmentally friendly than the keg products sitting alongside it on the bar.

Celebrating pubs,
clubs, brewers,
and cider makers
ahead of COP26



The key messages are below:

- Drinking local beer, rather than imported, is better for the environment - you can save 65g of CO₂ for every pint!
- Beer served on draught has even more benefits as the materials used in every step of the supply chain can be reused. This means no waste is created.
- Brewers across the UK have already produced innovative technological breakthroughs designed to save water and energy and reduce emissions and waste.
- The CAMRA LocAle scheme has been promoting pubs that serve local beer since 2007.
- Traditional cider and perry is usually made close to the orchard where the fruit was harvested and is often sold to local consumers, which reduces transport emissions.
- The orchards that produce fruit for cider and perry absorb carbon and contribute to biodiversity.

These are just some of the key environmental benefits associated with the pubs, clubs, brewers, and cider makers we campaign for.

Man Announces he will Quit Drinking - by 2050

A Sydney man has set himself the ambitious target of phasing out his alcohol consumption within the next 29 years, as part of an impressive plan to improve his health. The program will see Greg Taylor, 73, continue to drink as normal for the foreseeable future, before

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reducing consumption in 2049 when he turns 101. He has assured friends it will not affect his drinking plans in the short or medium term.

Taylor said it was important not to rush the switch to non-alcoholic beverages. "It's not realistic to transition to zero alcohol overnight. This requires a steady, phased approach where nothing changes for at least two decades," he said, adding that he may need to make additional investments in beer consumption in the short term, to make sure no night out is worse off.

Taylor will also be able to bring forward drinking credits earned from the days he hasn't drunk over the past forty years, meaning the actual end date for consumption may actually be 2060.

The big question is what exactly is he drinking? We know there is a revival of naturally conditioned beers being brewed in Australia but somehow, I don't think that is his usual tipple. Anyway at 70 I intend to follow the same regime.

Steve Bury

Sawbridgeworth Charity Event

Several pubs in the Sawbridgeworth area took part in the Macmillan Cancer Charity Morning on 24th

September 2021, including the **George IV**, with landlady Dawn pictured here with her Raffle.

Some other pubs who raised money were the **Gate**, the **White Lion** and the **Queen's Head**, Allens Green.



January is Wassail time

It's time to Wassail again if you want a good apple and pear harvest and it is important that you take part in the ancient tradition of wassail in January to ensure that we have a good crop and abundant cider and perry. The name originated from the Saxon "waes hael" literally translated as "good health" or "be healthy" and that involved drinking cider and visiting orchards. Cider was the staple drink of the working classes from serfs followed by farm labourers right through until the industrial revolution. The wassail should take place on 17th



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January which is the old twelfth night after Christmas, and is conducted to ensure a good harvest and that the orchard is protected from a late frost. Of course, if you have a lot of orchards,

they can't all be done on the same night, so a little flexibility is allowed. Ceremonies vary involving different characters and often the local Morris dancers and can start with those present selecting a Queen and Princess who will approach the central tree and recite: - 'Here's to the old apple tree, That blooms well, bears well, Hats full, caps full, Three bushel bags full, All under one tree'. Some groups light twelve small bonfires around the orchard and a thirteenth Judas fire which is then stamped out. Torches are optional, and in modern times of health and safety (they are hot and on fire) lanterns or battery powered ones are used. The Queen then places a cider-soaked piece of toast or cake in the fork of the central tree followed by apples being thrown at the trunk. Again, in some cases a burning



lantern of Herefordshire thorn is hung from a branch of the tree. A momentary silence follows after which is the cry of "Oh lily, white lily!". Then a shotgun (loaded with a cartridge filled with salt) is fired through the branches - again this can be replaced by fireworks being set off, or the assembled crowd making as much noise as possible by shacking stones in tins and banging metal instruments. The aim of the exercise is to scare away the bad spirits from the orchard. The wassail song is then sung by all present: *A wassail, a wassail, the moon shines down, Our apples are ripe and the nuts they are brown, And whence thou mayest bud dear old apple tree, And when thou mayest bear we sing unto thee With our wassail a-wassail a-wassail*

Oh apple tree proper, bud bloom and bear So that we have plenty of cider next year And where there's a barrel, we hope there be ten That we may have cider when we come again. This is then followed by cider drinking; the wassail bowl is passed round for people to fill their cups and some groups use mulled spiced cider for this. A good wassail will then adjourn to the pub. Not mentioned earlier in this article is the optional traditional rural dress which can include the blacking up of faces. Further reference on Wassailing:

www.ianwhite.info/Urban_Wassailing.html

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South Herts CAMRA Branch AGM 2022 Sat. 22nd January

The Royston Club, St Albans - Formal Notice

The branch will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday at **The Royston Club**, 12 College Road, St Albans on Saturday 22nd January 2022.

The AGM will be preceded by a normal branch meeting which will start at 1.00pm. This will be followed at 3.00pm approx. by the AGM. At the AGM our branch committee for 2022 will be elected.

Please note the following arrangements for holding the AGM, as agreed by CAMRA's national executive. Nominations for membership of the Branch Committee shall be either by email or in writing to the current Chair Iain Loe, 130A London Road, St Albans AL1 1PQ or email:

chair@southherts.camra.org.uk in each case signed by a proposer and seconder both of whom should be members of the Branch, and accompanied by evidence of the willingness of the nominee to stand. If a vote is required a secret ballot will take place at the AGM.

Closing date for nominations is 14 days prior to the

AGM, i.e., **Saturday 8th January.**

If you are intending to attend the branch meeting and AGM make sure you bring you CAMRA membership card; you will need it to vote and also to enter the Club.

A buffet will be provided and note The Royston Club usually has 3 cask ales on offer at a very competitive price.

I hope you will be able to attend the AGM and seriously consider standing for the Branch Committee. Our branch has over 2,000 members and I hope from amongst this membership there are enough enthusiastic people to take on the challenge of being a member of our branch committee. In 2022 we will be marking the Branch's 50th anniversary, it will be great if we can have a full-strength Committee to organise a truly great 12 months of celebration.

To begin the celebrations of our 50th year, longstanding Branch members, Steve Bury, Bob Norrish and Les Middlewood will tell us about some of the campaigning escapades that marked those years at this meeting.

Iain Loe - Chair CAMRA South Herts Branch

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 15

Aldenham: The **Roundbush** has changed hands. We welcome the new owners unfortunately we do not have any further details.

Bayford: The McMullen tenancy at the **Baker Arms** is being advertised.

Broxbourne: We welcome the new manager at the **White Bear** Natalie Curtis. At present the single real ale is Sharp's *Doom Bar*, but it was kept well. She is hoping to do more real ales later.

Cheshunt: The **King James** the Spoons place, has gone. It was a shop lease and they let that run out over the lockdown. We now believe it is now an electrical supply place. The **Windmill**, Windmill Lane, is open, no real ale, and right by the station. It has been saved and redecorated by new owners Red Oak Taverns. The pub has struggled as a lot of trade came from the former Tesco HQ around the corner which has now been converted to 1,800 houses and shops which may secure the pub's future.

Darley Hall: The Fox, has closed and the owners, Peter and Linda, have retired.

Essendon: The **Rose and Crown** has re-opened after a three-year closure which has spanned a refurbishment, a pandemic and refurnishing. With the work completed the pub is now offering Eagle IPA and Marston's Pedigree and there is a full lunchtime and evening menu. Initial opening hours are as follows: Mon (closed); Tues 12-4; Wed-Sat 12-11 and Sun 12-10

Great Hormead: The tenants of the **Three Horseshoes** have left and pub has closed. Will welcome any update.

Harpenden: On 18 November Oakman Inns held a showing of the plans (subject to planning permission approval) for their forthcoming new pub in the High Street in the former M&Co shop. We can reveal that the pub, to be called **Kingston House** is planned to be opened in December 2022. Our branch member who attended the event and saw the plans reports that the cellar will be at the back, with a central bar serving draught beer including local Herts or Bucks real ales. The first floor is more of a restaurant and above that there is a rooftop eating and drinking area with another small bar and a retractable roof for the summer. Our reporter was overall impressed with the high-quality design, and could see why it will take a year to implement.

Hemel Hempstead: The Hops & Apples, a new beer and cider shop has opened located in Jupiter Drive – further details at: www.hopsandapples.co.uk

Hertford: It's an affectionate farewell to Mark and Annie Griffin at the **White Horse** in Castle Street. In their three years, Mark and Annie have transformed the pub, keeping **Good Beer Guide**-quality Fuller's cask ales and receiving many plaudits for their excellent Thai food - and their sterling work in providing takeaway beer and food during the pandemic lockdowns. We wish them well for the future. After a break in Thailand, you might find them running another pub next year, though probably not in Hertfordshire. Incoming leaseholders are business partners Tony Harding and Anthony Rosier who have a number of other pubs in Hertfordshire including the **Estcourt Arms** in Watford and (recently) the **Oak** in Stanstead Abbots. Sunday lunches are already available and a new weekday traditional pub fayre food menu has been developed. Tony is hoping to increase afternoon weekday afternoon opening but note that the pub will be closed on Mondays. In time Tony is also hoping to extend the real ale offering from the current four Fuller's ales. Pub regulars are making an application to renew the Asset of Community Value status the pub has held for the last five years. Nico Vidot and business partner Adam Robinson are the new leaseholders at the **Greyhound** in Bengeo. Nico and Adam are no strangers to Hertford also being leaseholders at the **White Lion**, 200 metres away on Bengeo Street and been developing new ideas and a lunchtime and evening Thai menu for the **Greyhound**. McMullen's AK and the Mac's seasonal cask ale are on offer. Real ale appears to be back at the **White Hart** in Salisbury Square which is now just stocking the seasonal ale from McMullen's. A planning application to convert the **Two Brewers** in Port Vale into residential accommodation is still awaiting a decision after many months. The pub remains open but rarely with real ale. Pints of View is very sad to hear that **Lord Haig** tenant Simon Bliss has passed away after a short illness. The town centre local sells large amounts of Mac's AK and occasionally a seasonal ale – and has been a popular live music venue at weekends. The pub remains open whilst new tenants are found. The **Practitioner**, Mac's large town-centre bar, no longer sells cask ale. Matt Shipton, owner of the **Quiet Man** (and who also has a **Quiet Man** in Ware), is opening a third outlet in Chequers Street in the centre of St Albans. Refurbishment is currently underway and it is hoped these will be complete at the end of January

or in early February 2022. Refurbishment work at the **Corn Exchange** in Fore Street is being carried out and is set to complete in early 2022. The music venue is being taken over by the group which already runs the **Horn** in St Albans and the **Half Moon** in Bishop's Stortford. We don't yet know if real ale will feature.

Hoddesdon: The **Rye House** licensee Andy Whitaker is giving Greene King discount for Camra members so remember to show your card. The **Bell Hotel** is now independent, landlord is Graham Kerry and licensee Keda Hughes. The **White Swan**, High Street is now a True Pub Co, lease from Greene King. New manager/licensee is Charlie Simpson, four hand pumps on.

London Colney: Mev Moorpan and Simon Niemec who have been running the **White Horse** for the last ten years are leaving at the end of the year. We wish them all the best for the future. They have been selling beers from 3 Brewers and Sharp's **Doom Bar**. Let's hope the cask ale continues.

Medburn (Elstree): The **Waggon & Horses** has discontinued real ale. On a recent visit they were using the handpumps as kitchen roll dispensers.

Mill Green: As mentioned in edition 300 the **Green Man** has had its building works completed over five years since its closure. The grade II building has been extended with a new adjoining timber barn and room for 70 covers. The pub owned by the Gascoyne Estate is for let as a shell by Street Property Consultants price to be negotiated.

Norton: Three Horseshoes – A lease is for sale £175,000 (Fleurets).

Radlett: The **Office** in Watling Street no longer serves real ale. The **Mens Club** has very sportingly not charged subscriptions recognising that they were not open for long periods during the lockdowns. They still sell an excellent pint of Tring **Ridgeway** at a very competitive price. The **Broadwick** previously the **Railway** is closed for another makeover and is now named the **Storia**. The ex-pub has not sold real ale for many years and it is unlikely it will be reintroduced.

Rickmansworth: The Grade II listed **Tree** in Mill End is closed and is being advertised for sale by James A Baker, chartered surveyors. The freehold is available for £525,000 plus VAT and the pub is apparently under offer.

Smallford: The **Three Horseshoes** has re-opened following a major refurbishment.

St Albans: The **White Lion** reopened Wednesday 6th October with new general manager Michele Britton. They sell five cask ales plus two cask ciders with a

similar food & beers menu as the **Queen's Head** in Harpenden. There has not been much structural change inside and a thorough paint job to dark blue/green with the Snug still intact. The big decked and grassed garden is unfinished and currently inaccessible. The next pub in their chain will be the **Crystal Palace** by the canal near the station in Berkhamsted. The **Verulam Arms** has re-opened with its former name after periods as the **Foragers** and the **Rabbit Hole**; but still serves two real ales. Looks like an expensive restaurant. The **Beech House** in St Peter's Street was closed for several weeks at the end of November for a refurb and is due to re-open 2nd December. The **Farriers Arms**, which hosted Hertfordshire CAMRA's first ever branch meeting in November 1972, has just been put up for sale on the Rightmove property website for £725,000.

Stanstead Abbots: We welcome John Gleeson new licensee at the **Oak**.

Stevenage: The Crooked Billet, pub / restaurant which closed last year is being converted into the Tranquil Turtle restaurant.

Waltham Abbey: The **Plough** (no real ale), is closed and up for conversion to flats. Exact development plans are unknown.

Ware: The closed **Albion** has been bought to probably be converted into residential use. Anyone who knows the pub will mourn this loss – its unique bar and bar-back, its exposed timbers and cosy charm – things that had attracted CAMRA to list it as a "historic pub interior of some regional importance". A planning permission will be needed for a Change of Use. The **Jolly Bargeman** and the **Victoria** also remain closed in the town.

Watford: Mad Squirrel Brewery has successfully applied for a licence to open a pub in King Street, Watford. There has also been a licence application for a micropub in Vicarage Road.

Woolmer Green: The **Chequers**, closed on 7 November following expiry of lease. Nick and Marian Darter had been landlords since 2003 and built up the business which included a mini zoo. The pub has appeared in CAMRA's **Good Beer Guide** on numerous occasions since 2003. We, like the over 2,500 locals who signed a petition to save the tenancy, are sad to see them go.

Wormley: The **Old Star**, High Road is still closed following complaints about rowdy football followers to the police. It is a Mac's pub that no longer appears on their web site. There is talk of a new manager being appointed but this is not confirmed. It is a beer led pub and not a foody place future uncertain. At the **Queen's Head** the manager is Keith Buckle. At

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Campaign for Real Ale

present there is only GK - IPA real ale on sale.

Belated Pub roundup!

Can I apologise to Steve Brazier and the pubs mentioned for not getting these updates in POV 300? Taking this into account please accept that some of the information may be slightly out of date.

Abbotts Langley: The **Swan** has six real ales on offer: Greene King IPA and Abbot, *Swan House Ale* (?), 3 Brewers *Golden*, *Rebellion Smuggler* and New River *Blind Poet*.

Bedmond: The **Bell** now serves Greene King IPA and *Old Golden Hen*.

Bricket Wood: The **Black Boy** is now closed weekday lunchtimes opening at 4pm. The **Gate** is still selling real ale.

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

Newgate Street: The **Crown**, re-opened with new owners after a refurbishment during the first lockdown, serving Adnams *Ghost Ship* and Sharp's *Doom Bar*. It offers 20% off food for over 65s weekday lunchtimes. The **Coach & Horses** is currently serving only two real-ales.

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

Park Street: The **Overdraught** is selling Greene King IPA and Tring *Side Pocket*. The **Falcon** appears to be closed and there are rumours of a new owner.

Welham Green: The **Hope & Anchor** re-opened in the summer of 2019 after being closed for years, but closed again in August 2021 after several complaints about noise. It currently has a *pub closed* sign outside.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA

See branch website for event updates

North Hertfordshire CAMRA

Fri 17 Dec: Hitchin Christmas Social – starts 7.30pm at the **Albert**, then on to the **Victoria**, **Bricklayers Arms**, **BB's Bar** and **Half Moon**.

Wed 5 Jan 2022: Open Branch Meeting - **Dun Cow**,

32 Letchmore Rd, Stevenage SG1 3PR. All members welcome, 8pm

Tue 11 Jan: CarShare Countryside Crawl, for which we recommend sharing a car with a nominated non-drinking driver. Starts 8pm at **Strathmore Arms**, St Pauls Walden, then on to **Lytton Arms**, Old Knebworth; **Station**, Knebworth and **Bucks Head**, Little Wymondley.

Wed 19 Jan: Royston Social – starts 8pm at the **Jolly Postie**, then on to **Old Bull**, **Banyers House** and **Manor House**.

Tue 1 Feb: CarShare Countryside Crawl, for which we recommend sharing a car with a nominated non-drinking driver. Starts 8pm at **George IV**, Baldock, then on to **Cricketers**, Weston; **Three Horseshoes**, Willian and the **Fox**, Willian.

Sat 12 Feb: Provisional date for Minibus Social – pickups from 6pm in Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock. Planning to visit the **Brown Bear**, Braughing; **White Hart**, Puckeridge; and three others.

Wed 16 Feb: Stevenage Old Town Social - starts 8pm at the **Broken Seal**, then on to **Red Lion**, **Marquis of Lorne** and **Chequers**.

Wed 2 Mar: Open Branch Meeting - **Hitchin Rugby Club**. All members welcome, starts 8pm.

South Hertfordshire CAMRA

Tue 14 Dec: Branch Meeting - **Robin Hood**, St Albans, 8pm

Wed 29 Dec: Sopwell Sweep – Social trip to seven pubs around Sopwell Road, St Albans. Starting at the **Beehive** at 1:30pm. See details page 9.

Good Beer Guide 2023 Selection Meeting Dates

Please ensure you bring your CAMRA membership card along with you

Tue 11 Jan 2022: Pub Selection Meeting: NW Zone — **Horse and Groom**, Hatfield 7:30pm

Thu 13 Jan: Pub Selection Meeting: NE Zone — **Hertford Club**, Hertford. 8pm

Sat 22 Jan: Pub Selection Meeting: South and West Zones - **Royston Social Club**, St Albans. 12:30pm

Sat 22 Jan – Branch meeting followed by AGM: **Royston Social Club**, St Albans 2pm then 3 pm for AGM – see page 21 for details.

Watford & District CAMRA

Thu 9 Dec: Club social - **Regent Club**, 227 St Albans Road, Watford, WD24 5BH, 8:30pm.

Sat 18 Dec: Pub of the Year 2020 presentation - **Land of Liberty**, **Peace & Plenty**, Long Lane, Heronsgate, WD3 5BS, 8:30pm

Mon 3 Jan: Get away from the family social - **Nascot Arms**, 11 Stamford Road, Watford, WD17 4QS, 1pm.

Mon 17th Jan: Branch meeting - **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP, 8pm.

Fri 21 Jan: 'Pre-Xmas' Pub Crawl - Starting at **Hamilton Hall**, Liverpool Street, London, EC2M 7PY, 6pm.

Fri 4 Feb: Croxley Green social - **Artichoke**, The Green, WD3 3HN, 830pm; **Sportsman**, Scots Hill, WD3 3AD, 9:15pm.

Fri 18 Feb: Abbots Langley social: **Swan**, College Road, WD5 0NR, 8:30pm; **Compasses**, 95 Tibbs Hill Road, WD5 0LJ, 9:15pm.

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

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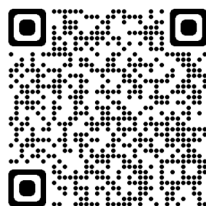
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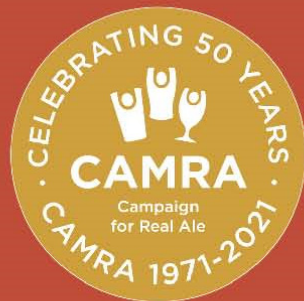
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