

**FREE**



HERTFORDSHIRE

# Pints of View



Spring Edition 2023

Issue No. 306



*Specials in this issue:*

*Calling all Publicans and Drinkers!*

**YOUR PUB NEEDS YOU**

**The Winners! Herts Pubs of the Year 2023**



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CAMRA's WhatPub.com is a free to use app. Publicans and pub-goers can help everyone get the most out of it by keeping the information updated.

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# Campaign Column

**MEMBERS: YOU can influence the future of CAMRA...**



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## **CAMRA National Executive**

*CAMRA's AGM and Members' Weekend takes place in Sheffield starting 21st April. Voting is open for elections to the National Executive (NE), which are part of the AGM. Information on how to vote was emailed or posted to all CAMRA members in the week of 6th March 2023. It's important information.*

*Members of the NE are the Board of Directors of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited and are responsible for controlling the management and administration of CAMRA – i.e. they are formally the leaders of the organisation. Isn't there a head office? Yes, indeed. CAMRA has a small, dedicated team of employees who report to Tom Stainer, the CEO, but Tom reports to the NE.*

*The NE comprises 12 members, including our very own **Ben Wilkinson from South Herts** branch. Ben is Finance Director and has another year on the NE before being required to stand down and either retire or seek re-election.*

*This year there are six candidates seeking election, but only four vacancies! One of the candidates is none other than Herts Area Organiser, **Dean Barrett from North Herts**.*

*Take a look at the information and please make your vote count at:*

**<https://camra.org.uk/members-weekend-agm-conference/agm-2023/camra-national-executive-election-2023-hustings/>**

And if you're not already a CAMRA member, signing-up is easy! Here's the link:

**<https://join.camra.org.uk/join/camra>**

# USE YOUR VOTE



**DEADLINE**  
**Wednesday 19th April**

# Steve's Shout

## Urg! Why did that pint taste so bad?

There are, of course, many reasons why the pint you have just spent your hard-earned cash on does not meet the standard expected.

I used to work with a guy who liked to take an early (liquid) lunch, sometimes even before 12 o'clock. Of course, I'd join him. However, pubs which, as far as I was concerned, had served perfectly good beer on previous visits, would pull a pint that was often of not a very high standard; it might look perfectly clear, but the lack of condition (that sparkle and head) was immediately recognisable. We visited several pubs which had the same problem. What we were getting was 'pipey' beer.

Some pubs have long pipe runs from the cellar, which can mean up to four pints of beer is sitting idle in the pipes overnight, getting warm (not cellar temperature) and picking up dead yeasts and proteins if the lines are not cleaned regularly. This beer should have been pulled off at the start of the session and disposed of.

It's similar to when you're served beer from the bottom of the barrel; even if you haven't noticed it's cloudy, you'll certainly know something is wrong on the first mouthful.

This brings me back to one of my favourite quotes from legendary publican and cellarman, the late great Bob Muir (former long-term landlord of the Elephant & Castle in Amwell, Wheathampstead):

*"You can't serve consistently good beer unless you are willing to throw some away."*

There have been initiatives to reduce beer wastage.

A large number of pubs now use smaller bore pipes between cask and bar meaning less beer to pull off. An alternative is the python system which has either cold water or glycol running alongside the beer pipes and is encased in insulation to ensure perfect temperature control.

Unfortunately, some publicans do not recognise that cask ale and lager should be served at different temperatures and running them all through the same python system can result in exceedingly cold beer!

Another problem is that, whilst we want cask ale to be of good quality, in some venues we do not drink enough of it. Consequently, ale that should be consumed within three days of the cask being broached (opened) is still

being served when it should have been disposed of. Off beer may not necessarily be cloudy, but will often smell of vinegar.

A good pub will respond to the low turn-over by reducing the number of ales on offer or, if the throughput is still too low, ordering real ale in smaller casks (ie. 36 pint pins, rather than the standard 72 pint firkins). However, whilst this will prevent the need to ditch a half-full firkin after three days, double the quantity of beer will be wasted at change-overs due to the smaller casks being changed twice as frequently.

I really do pity the poor landlord doing his or her best to serve top quality beer without pouring all the profit down the drain!

**Steve Bury**  
Editor-at-Large



## 2 1/2 out of 3 ain't bad

Those of you who scrutinise the index page may have noticed a change in the Editorial Team from the previous issue. Allow me to explain...

Steve Bury – editor of this magazine, since it was the eight page black and white 'Hertfordshire Newsletter' in a previous millennium – has relocated to the Isle of Sheppey on (or should that be off?) the north Kent coast. Fortunately, **South Hertfordshire's** loss is only partial (as is **Swale's** gain), since **Steve** has kindly agreed to continue contributing to Pints of View and, as from this issue, will be the magazine's **Editor-at-Large**. An appropriate title for the big man!

I hope Steve's undiminished energy and enthusiasm will result in the revival of his local branch magazine, Swale Ale, which was a casualty of lockdown.

With regard to *Pints of View*, **Dean Barrett** and I will continue to share the role, however, rather than being joint editors for every issue, we will each be sole editor for every other issue... and PoV306 was my turn!

**Paul Donatantonio**  
Editor

# Herts Pubs of the Year 2023

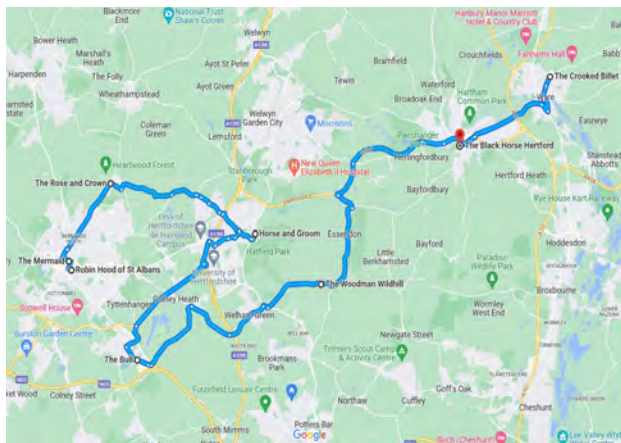
## South Herts Pub of the Year 2023

16 South Herts CAMRA Selection Panel Members met-up at the Robin Hood St, Albans at noon on Saturday 4th March for the start of a quest to find the branch's Pub of the Year 2023.

Over the next eight hours, these hardy individuals would endure a 50-mile trek

across the southern reaches of the county, from Hatfield & Hertford to Ware & Wildhill; no outpost would be too far-flung. Theirs was a voyage of discovery with a mission to find the best pub in the branch.

But before divulging the outcome, I'll provide some context by explaining the workings of POTY.



### A brief summary of POTY

South Hertfordshire has nearly 300 pubs and is split into four zones of vastly different areas, but each with a broadly similar number of beer-serving hostelries.

Late last year, branch members were invited to visit and vote on a shortlist of 21 pubs across the four zones, to find the top two in each.



- **Quality & Condition of Beer**
- **Promotion & Knowledge**
- **Cleanliness & Staff Hygiene**
- **Service, Welcome & Offering**
- **Style, Décor & Furnishing**
- **Community Focus & Atmosphere**
- **Sympathy with CAMRA Aims**
- **Overall Impression & Value**

These eight pubs were the ones being judged on the first Saturday in March.

POTY rules dictate that the discerning CAMRA devotee is required to assess when marking each pub:

Each of the eight metrics is marked out of ten, with a weighting applied to arrive at a final score and Gold, Silver and Bronze awarded to the top three.

Whilst the accolade of South Herts Pub of the Year is prestigious in itself, a further reward is the progression to the county finals in May, when the South Herts victor will be up against winners from North Herts, Herts & Essex Borders and Watford & District.

The County winner will be crowned Hertfordshire Pub of the Year and go forward to the East Anglia Regional finals, in competition with winners from five other counties: Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. This takes place in July.

East Anglia is one of only 16 Regions nationally, so winning at this level assures promotion to the upper echelons. ie. one of the top 16 pubs in the country. Things are now getting serious! Voting will cast aside 12 of the pubs, leaving just four to compete in the National Final later in the year.

This is the final round. The winner will be Pub of the Year 2023.

And by then, POTY 2024 will already be underway...

So, back to South Herts Pub of the Year: a great trip ended at our eighth pub, the Black Horse, Hertford. Following this final assessment of the day, Phil Defriez, Pub of the Year Coordinator, collected the score cards, collated the scores and was able to announce the results.

Topping the marks to bag gold and become the branch's Pub of the Year for an incredible 13th time was the **Woodman, Wildhill**! Congratulations to the pub and the other seven that made it this far.

Awards will be presented to:

- the **Woodman**,
- the **Crooked Billet, Ware** (silver)
- the **Mermaid, St Albans** (bronze)

with a report in the next edition of *Pints of View*.

**Ed**

## ARE YOU A CAMRA MEMBER?

### If not, why not join?

*See page 24 for member benefits*

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South Herts Branch Pub of the Year (POTY) 2023			
Round 1 - Zone		Round 2 - Branch	
<u>North West</u> Cross Keys Green Man <b>Horse &amp; Groom</b> <b>Rose &amp; Crown</b>		<div><div></div><div>Harpenden Sandridge <b>Hatfield</b> Sandridge</div></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Horse &amp; Groom</b> <b>Rose &amp; Crown</b></div>	
<u>North East</u> <b>Black Horse</b> <b>Crooked Billet</b> Great Eastern Tavern Old Barge Old Cross Tavern		<div><div></div><div><b>Hertford</b> <b>Ware</b> Hertford Hertford Hertford</div></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Black Horse</b> <b>Crooked Billet</b></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Crooked Billet (silver)</b></div>	
<u>West</u> Garibaldi Great Northern Lower Red Lion <b>Mermaid</b> Portland Arms <b>Robin Hood</b> Six Bells White Hart Tap		<div><div></div><div>St Albans St Albans St Albans <b>St Albans</b> St Albans <b>St Albans</b> St Albans St Albans</div></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Mermaid</b></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Mermaid (bronze)</b></div>	
<u>South</u> Admiral Byng <b>Bull</b> Crooked Billet <b>Woodman</b>		<div><div></div><div>Potters Bar <b>London Colney</b> Colney Heath <b>Wildhill</b></div></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Bull</b></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Woodman</b></div> <div>----&gt;</div> <div><b>Woodman (gold)</b></div> <div>----&gt;</div>	

Pub of the Year (POTY) 2023 - Progression to National Final			
Round 3 - Area (County) (Hertfordshire) Deadline: Sun 21st May (2-4 pubs)	Round 4 - Region (East Anglia) Deadline: Mon 31st July (6 pubs)	Round 5 - Super-Region (National) Deadline: TBC (16 pubs)	Round 6 - Final (National) Deadline: TBC (4 pubs)
<b>Woodman (South Herts)</b>			
<b>Lordship Arms (North Herts)</b>			
<b>None (Herts &amp; Essex Borders)</b>			
<b>Land of Liberty (Watford &amp; District)</b>			

## Other Herts Pubs of the Year 2023

Congratulations to North Herts pub the **Lordship Arms** Benington, and Watford & District pub the **Land of Liberty Peace & Plenty**, Heronsgate; both branch winners in CAMRA Pub of the Year 2023. They go through to the Area (County) Final where they come up against the Woodman, Wildhill from South Herts in their quest to be crowned Hertfordshire Pub of the Year.

The Herts & Essex Borders branch winner was the **Woodbine**, Waltham Abbey, which will compete against seven other Essex pubs in the County round.



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# Herts Pub, Club & Brewery News

## New River Brewery awarded silver!

*Unit 47, Hoddesdon Industrial Centre EN11 0FF*

New River's Blind Poet won Silver for the East Anglia region in the 'Session Stouts and Porters' class, which is part of CAMRA's National Champion Beer of Britain (CBoB). Gold went to Lurcher Stout from Green Jack Brewery, Lowestoft, and Bronze to Dark Anna from Chalkhill Brewery, Norwich. The top five in each class go forward to live judging by a CAMRA expert panel. We at Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA are rooting for our local brewery, as Blind Poet Smoked Porter is a favourite with our members.

A group from our branch including Tim Vaughan, Brewery Liaison Officer, was welcomed at the brewery by owner and brewer John Bourdeaux. Following presentation of the award, John thanked Tim and told us all how much he appreciated the branch's continued support and recognition of the beer!

New River opened in 2015 and delivers directly to pubs and clubs within a 50 mile radius of its Hoddesdon brewery, whilst the public can purchase online via the company's website.

**Chris Sears**

*Publicity Secretary*

*Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA*



*Brewery owner John Bourdeaux raises a pint of Blind Poet on receiving the silver award from Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA's Tim Vaughan.*

## Champion Beer of Britain... but which year?

Well done to John and his team at **New River**. I've come across **Blind Poet** twice in the last week; first at the **Victoria, Hitchin**, and next at the **Admiral Byng, Potters Bar**, along with the brewery's **London Tap**. Most enjoyable!

I had hoped to add a bit of context to New River's achievement by providing readers with a simple summary of the competition from first round to final. How exactly does a beer get crowned National CBoB at the annual Great British Beer Festival? My first port of call was the National CAMRA website:

Home > Beer and Cider > Awards > Champion Beer of Britain took me to a page that advises: "Judging for the competition takes around a year, starting with individual nominations from CAMRA members and local and regional competitions." On the same page I could click on "**AN OVERVIEW OF THE JUDGING PROCESS**" to download a pdf. This starts with: "*Every autumn, nominations for the Champion Beer of Britain are selected by CAMRA members...*" but then goes on to try and explain a process of voting across 12 beer styles that takes three calendar years!

As Blind Poet's most recent award was at regional level, maybe the East Anglia region website would be more informative? I decided to find out:

Home > Champion Beer of East Anglia took me straight to a page advising: "*CAMRA runs a Champion*

A yellow rectangular graphic with a pattern of small black icons (birds, insects, people, etc.) in the background. At the top, the text "NEW RIVER" is in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, with "EST. 2015" in a smaller font below it. Below this, the word "BREWERY" is in a similar font. Underneath is a stylized black wavy line representing water. Further down, the text "AWARD-WINNING BEER FROM THE RIVERBANK" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the website "newriverbrewery.co.uk" is written in a black, sans-serif font.

*Beer of Britain competition, held at the Great British Beer Festival each year. Each CAMRA region is represented in each category, therefore, we in East Anglia run a Champion Beer of East Anglia."* Unfortunately, there is no information regarding the recent award winners, so no mention of New River's Blind Poet or its journey to Silver.

As I understand it, the national 2023 CBoB will have first been nominated in 2021. What if the beer has changed during this time? And what about if an even better beer has come along?

## Queen's Head, Allens Green is a National Finalist!

*Allens Green, Sawbridgeworth CM21 0LS*



Allens Green may be a small hamlet in Hertfordshire with only one pub, but the **Queen's Head** has been punching above its weight and was voted **East Anglia Region Cider Pub of the Year 2022**

[Ed: Time to update WhatPub!]. It then went one step further and, in competition with 15 other regional winners, was voted one of only four national finalists.

Chris Rouse, Regional Cider Coordinator for East Anglia, on presenting the certificate to landlord Cliff Caswell, said that the Queen's Head was one of the best four cider pubs in England and, in his view, up to the standard of the winner [Ed: No hint of bias, I hope!]. Unfortunately [for the Queen's Head], the top award went to the Hop Inn, Hornchurch.

Chris congratulated Cliff and his team for their knowledge of cider and willingness to help cider enthusiasts. Cliff replied that he had been over the moon to win for Hertfordshire and that East Anglia was the icing on the cake, but to be a national finalist was "awesome!". The pub was reopened in 2002 on the Queen's Jubilee, following a long period of closure, so to win in Diamond Jubilee Year was fantastic. The only way a pub in a hamlet five miles from Bishop's Stortford could succeed was by serving good quality real ale, but this was added to when Cliff discovered real cider at Chappel Beer Festival and the rest, as they say, is history!

**Chris Sears**

*Publicity Secretary  
Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA*

It does seem to me like an(other) example of a complicated and protracted National CAMRA process which takes so long that the result loses legitimacy.

To give a footballing analogy, CBoB should be similar to the FA Cup; an annual competition with a simple 'road to Wembley' or Olympia, in our case.

**Ed**



Queen's Head Landlord Cliff Caswell (right) with East Anglia CAMRA Regional Cider Coordinator Chris Rouse



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## 5 Great Tap Takeovers at Great Northern

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A good real ale pub will often try and set up a Tap Takeover. This normally involves a brewery 'taking over' most of the guest ale hand pumps, or maybe installing a small stillage where casks are laid horizontally and the beer dispensed by turning the taps.

A well run Tap Takeover should be win-win for pub and brewery. The pub has an exciting event that should 'pull in the punters', whilst the brewery has an opportunity to showcase a large number of its beers, which will be the focus for the event's duration.

Sheri Edwards, landlord at the Great Northern, clearly believes in Tap Takeovers as he has organised not one, or two, but FIVE that will take place at his pub between late March and November this year.

Each Takeover will run Friday to Sunday, though there can be no guarantee that the range of beers will be available for the duration.

Incredible that Vale Brewery is the 'granddaddy' of the group, yet it's less than 30 years old!

Sheri hopes to be offering both cask and keg at the Takeovers, guaranteeing something for everyone!

*Ed*

- 24 - 26 Mar **Wiper & True**  
Bristol  
Est 2012
- 26 - 28 May **Vocation**  
Hebden Bridge, Yorks  
Est 2015
- 28 - 30 Jul **Vale**  
Brill, Bucks  
Est 1995
- 22 - 24 Sep **Burning Sky**  
Firle, Sussex  
Est 2013
- 24 - 26 Nov **Verdant**  
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## New Beer Resolution Lock 81, Creative Juices and Wishful Drinking



### *Creative Juices montage*

The number of small breweries in the country has increased dramatically in recent years but sadly the rate of closures seems almost as striking. A recent casualty in the Watford & District branch area was **Lock 81 Brewery**, which was incorporated in 2018 by Henry Winter and named after Batchworth lock on the Grand Union Canal in Rickmansworth. Despite its name, the original nanobrewery was set up at the Wenta Business Centre in Watford, the plan apparently being to eventually move to premises in Rickmansworth. The brewery never produced any real ale, but its bottled beers were well regarded, which made the closure a great pity.

The Lock 81 brewing kit has not gone to waste as several local breweries have bought items from the collection of equipment. These include Bowtie Brewery, which is a tiny venture based in Watford whose beers are currently being brewed rather sporadically. Hopefully the new kit will allow brewing there to be scaled up. Another beneficiary was Pope's Yard Brewery, based at Frogmore Paper Mill in Apsley, whose beers will probably be more familiar to readers as they are available in a number of local shops and bars, as well as at the Watford Beer Festival.

Quite a bit of the equipment was bought by **Creative Juices Brewing Company**, based at Woodoaks Farm near Maple Cross. Head Brewer Ben Janaway told me that he plans to use the kit for small trial brews. The equipment is waiting to be installed as Creative Juices have been concentrating on upgrading their tap room by putting more seating in the former milking shed and installing insulation in the roof to make it more cosy in the winter. The new features have been put to good use recently as the bar was open for longer hours than normal in the run up to Christmas and played host to the brewery's New Year's Eve celebrations. The brewery doesn't currently produce real ale, but the tap room has a beer fridge selling cans and bottles from local breweries that do produce cask beer, including

Paradigm Brewery of Sarratt and Pope's Yard. It's also one of the few outlets for Bowtie's beers, so if you see a bottle of Bowtie in there grab it quickly. To help with selling the beer, Ben has now hired Martin Lindridge to take care of sales and Paul Wonfor to manage the tap room, so hopefully he'll have more time to concentrate on trying out the new kit. Paul is already planning tap room events for the year and there was a hint that maybe the brewery could host a beer festival outside in the summer.

# Cross Keys

Harpenden



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The Lock 81 brewery may have gone but the name lives on. One of the main outlets for the beer was **Wishful Drinking**, a bottle shop and tap room in Rickmansworth that will probably be familiar to local readers. Steve Harlow and Chris Coughlan from Wishful Drinking have bought the Lock 81 name and the beer recipes and have revived it as a house brand. To celebrate the rebirth two new beers have been brewed, New Dawn and Born Sloppy, which are being contract brewed by Pretty Decent Brewery in Forest Gate.



*Wishful Drinking exterior by night*



*Wishful Drinking interior by day*

The Lock 81 beers are only available in can and keg, but there is good news for cask ale fans. Regular visitors know that Wishful Drinking previously only stocked cask ale at the weekend. However, this policy has changed, and cask is now being served every day from early January. Steve told me that they will be using pins (4.5-gallon containers) early in the week and will switch to larger volumes for the busy period near the weekend.

- **Creative Juices Brewing Company**, Woodoaks Farm, Denham Way, WD3 9XQ. Tel: 01923 771779
- **Wishful Drinking**, 124 High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1AB. Tel: 07796 147203

**Andrew Vaughan**  
Watford & District CAMRA

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## White Horse without Smoke

30 Mill Lane, Welwyn AL6 9ET



In a short article last issue entitled 'No Smoke without fire?', we relayed reports that both the Queen's Head in Harpenden and the Crystal Palace in Berkhamsted were being "handed back" to **Punch Taverns** by brewery and pub company **Big Smoke**.

It seems the reports were only half right.

Around the turn of the year, John Crowhurst, one of our roving reporters, heard from the manager of another **Big Smoke** pub that the Crystal Palace would be retained, whilst the **White Horse** in Welwyn was being taken back by Punch.

As I was intending to visit the **White Horse** to conduct a routine pub survey, this should have been an ideal opportunity to find out what was going on. My suspicions were aroused when some pre-survey preparatory work revealed that the pub's website was inaccessible, posting on its Facebook page had stopped abruptly in November, and the pub was no longer on the Big Smoke website.

Furthermore, I tried calling the pub on a Friday lunchtime, but the phone rang...and rang...and rang. So, was the pub busy, or was it closed? (Spoiler alert: don't look at the photo).

The Punch website would be more revealing...

I clicked on 'Available Pubs' and there it was: 'The White Horse, Welwyn'. Clearly, Punch were looking for either a new tenant, or a manager to run their pub.

Reading the 'blurb', I came across: "The decision to remove the dominance of Big Smoke beers will be very popular with locals. We will close the White Horse for the minimum of 1 week to ensure we can relaunch this great pub to excited regulars."

Wow! That's one messy end to a short marriage!

After a bit more internet searching, I found a new White Horse website (.co.uk had become .com).

Hoping to find out about the pub's cask ale offering, I was shocked to see a drinks range limited to: Bottles & Cans, Cocktail Menu, Spirits, Wine Cellar and Soft Drinks. ie. NO DRAUGHT BEER of any description! So that's how Punch would be removing Big Smoke's beer dominance...

I phoned the pub in February once it had reopened and spoke to a genuinely polite and helpful chap who explained that the website needed amending and the pub did indeed have a range of cask ales. I whetted my lips in anticipation of a varied and exciting list of regular and changing ales. Drumroll, please...

Regular – Doom Bar

Alternating – Landlord and London Pride

Now, I'm very happy with a well-kept pint of Timothy Taylor Landlord, but with only a 50/50 chance of it being on and Sharp's Doom Bar as the only cask alternative...

So, Welwyn locals, do write in and let *Pints of View* know whether or not the removal of Big Smoke beers has been as 'very popular' as Punch predicted.

**Ed**



Refurbished only 2 years ago by Big Smoke, the pub was shut in January so that Punch could "de-Smoke" it.

## Olde Cocks + New Team = Year of Success

16 Abbey Mill Lane, St. Albans AL3 4HE  
<https://www.fightingcockssa.com>



Back in March 2022, we reported in *Pints of View* 302 that **Ye Olde Fighting Cocks**, reputed to be the country's oldest pub dating back to AD793, had closed after licensee Christo Tofalli's firm went into administration.

However, the former manager of 12 years, Martin Robinson, and head chef of 8 years, Ian Baulsh, teamed up with Sam Walker to take over the lease and ensure that the Mitchell & Butler owned pub had not served its last pint.

After reopening on the 4th April 2022 the pub and local community are now preparing to celebrate 12 months under new management.

It's been a busy and successful year for the pub with the new landlords undertaking a mini refurbishment inside, transforming the garden, creating new dining areas and an outdoor kitchen for the spring and summer season to provide a full barbecue menu, along with pizzas from the newly installed oven.

Talking about the imminent first anniversary of the pub reopening, Martin told us:

*"Looking back over the last year, we have achieved so much, and we are truly humbled by the support of the local community. Our food offering is stronger than ever, Sunday lunches are busier than I ever remember, and our Friday live music nights are very popular and give us the opportunity to support up-and-coming local talent."*

*"We have a busy summer ahead of us; we are launching a new American-themed barbecue menu, we will be hosting a Chess Tournament on 14 May and a music festival on 15 July, which we are really looking forward to. We have also spent a lot of time improving the outside area, with new tables and benches, and we are investing in a new*



*irrigation system to keep the outside area looking green for the summer.*

*"With our ale selection, we will continue to support local brewers, including **Three Brewers** and **Farr Brew**. We are keen to ensure we have something for everyone."*

*"And while we are working hard to ensure that our pub environment is the best it can be, last year, we also embarked on a mission to clean up the River Ver, which runs past the pub."*

So, plenty to look back on and plenty to look forward to. Here's to the next 1,230 years!.

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## 100 year beer festival

34 Station Road, Welham Green AL9 7PG

To celebrate its centenary, **North Mymms Social Club**, South Herts CAMRA Club of the Year 2022, held a 'small-but-perfectly-formed' beer festival back in December, and very enjoyable it was, too! Whilst the total offering of six cask ales (four from the specially installed stillage, along with two regulars on the bar) might initiate an urgent call to the supplier in some multi-ale pubs, prices were reasonable and quality was excellent. The four festival beers were:

- Tring: Moongazing 4.2% ABV
- Tring Santa's Little Helper 4.8% ABV
- Tiny Rebel: Cwtch 4.6% ABV
- Lister's: Dark Mild 3.7% ABV

Though not members of the club, being card-carrying CAMRA members, the South Herts contingent was made to feel very welcome – so much so that I ended up visiting on two further occasions over the weekend.

The club hopes to run another beer festival in the summer, which might involve a BBQ. It's still in the planning stage, but I'm keeping my fingers crossed!

**Ed**



*Ales & Smiles! - (3rd from left) **Andy Taylor** (ex club Chairman) and (far right) **Keith Dixon** with a few members from South Herts CAMRA*



Celebrating  
100 years of  
Ownership



**NORTH MYMMS SOCIAL CLUB**  
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Continuous rotation of great ales from a wide range  
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**South Herts CAMRA Club of the Year 2022**

 [facebook.com/NorthMymmsSocialClub/](https://facebook.com/NorthMymmsSocialClub/)

## Windmill turns to CAMRA for real ale advice

Charlton Road, Charlton, Hitchin SG5 2AE

A pleasant Sunday morning in February saw the good lady and me strolling to the **Windmill in Charlton**, near Hitchin. The pub, (and I use the word cautiously), has been the subject of a long campaign to save it. In September 2022 it reopened, rather differently to how the campaigners expected. (See the last issue Pints of View 305, page 31).

Anyway, the landlady was there that morning (probably every morning) with a small group of apparent regulars and a few likely casual walkers like us. Her name is Madelaine Moore and she's an American chef, that day resplendent in her colourful hat as you can see. Anyway, I asked if she'd mind giving a short interview for Pints of View and stuck my phone under her nose. It went something like this (edited from 2 minutes)...

*"The community has been great and I wish we'd get more real ale drinkers giving Twitchell a chance".*

It was clear by her gesture that Madelaine meant Buntingford Brewery, Twitchell 3.8% ABV.

*"But, yeah, it's been great and, like, everyone who comes in has an opinion and they're comfortable enough to tell us, and we love it, so it's been very nice. Even getting to know Bryan [Bird - CAMRA North Herts Pubs Officer] who's been really kind*

*telling us about real ale, because I didn't drink beer before this experience. And so he gave me a little education, so it's really been very nice!"*

I then asked Madelaine how she found the place.

*"Well, my husband's an architect, so it came through him. Basically we heard through the grapevine about it and I wanted to stretch my culinary skills again, so we thought we'd give it a go!"*

Madelaine Moore and Bryan Bird, a bit of alliteration going on here, ooh and Buntingford Brewery!

So, why not give the place a go? It's currently more restaurant/café than pub, serving bag-in-box ales and ciders as well as delicious-looking food along with coffees and teas.

It's a picturesque 35 minute walk from Hitchin station, and if you have time, there are plenty of great pubs to stop off at: the **Albert, Radcliffe Arms, Bricklayers Arms, BBs Bar, Half Moon** (branch Pub of the Year 2022), **Three Moorhens...**, you really are spoilt for choice! And, if you're peckish, I'd recommend the **Victoria** for its Dirty Dough Pizza and Bun Lovin' Criminals burgers. Other food is, of course, available. For details go to <https://whatpub.com/> and search for Hitchin Station.

**Dean Barrett**  
North Herts CAMRA



American landlady and chef at the Windmill -  
Madelaine Moore!

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## The Black Horse – A Pub with Rugby at its Heart!

29-31 West Street, Hertford SG13 8EZ



In West Street, Hertford, the Black Horse has forged a reputation for good beer, good food and a pub full of community credentials. At its heart is a love for sport – particularly rugby. Now a Free House owned by Darren Shanley, back in the 1970s it was owned by Greene King, a southern outpost to its growing tied estate and with a reputation for its draught Abbot Ale and its strong bottled companion St. Edmund's Ale (both stronger then). A mix of the two "Abbot and Eddie" was a fearsome cocktail. The pub was usually packed to the gills.

The strong rugby connection first emerged on a Tuesday night in 1976 when a typical discussion between three rugby-loving friends in the bar gradually edged towards "so, why don't we form a team?". Ian Butler, Brian Pearson and Tony Bebbington put the word about and soon, on a Sunday after 2pm pub closing time, 30 interested people marched into John Hart's nearby house. About 15 were players, others friends willing to help. Training soon began and in February 1977 a match was arranged between The Black Horse RFC and Welwyn RFC V's. The Horse lost 18 – 13, its first ever points scored by Rob Bellion [Ed: !], its first ever try scored by Brian Pearson. Five matches followed that season and the team was on its way.

Initially, the rugby establishment scorned the pub team – Ian Butler remembers a former Stevenage

RFC Secretary, startled that his team were trailing to the Horse, yelling "Come on, they're just a bunch of hippies." Well, it was the '70s.

The Club was soon on its feet and, after a few seasons of away matches, a home was found at Balls Park in Hertford; the pitch over-arched by a huge tree bower. Players from both competing teams enjoyed after-match sessions at the pub and, like many a rugby club, humour was at its core.

A weekly award – a wooden spoon made by one of the players dubbed The Guinness Straining Drinking Spoon (but with an unprintable alternative award title) – was (and is still) presented to a club member for no particular reason other than a mild misdemeanour or just 'cos, well, why not? The spoon and the Trophy de Turner, a shield made by player Rob Turner, still hang in the Pub's "Rugby Room" along with many a photograph and other artefacts.

The Club were allowed to play in local cup competitions but thought the way to achieve a wider acceptance was to gain RFU Affiliation – unheard of for a pub team. This took patience and persuasion but was first gained in the late '80s – a letter of Affiliation dated 1993 is displayed on the pub wall.



*Early Team photo (L-R) Back row: John Hart, Tony Meadows, Brian Moslin, Tony Bebbington, Steve Bacon, Brian Pearson, Keith Pearson, Rob Bellion. Front row: Rob Turner, Richard Gilson, Ian Butler, Paul Sanderson, Norman Murphy, Nick Hollands, Nick Bebbington*

Separately, Dave Wright, the then landlord, operated an Abbot Club. To join, five pints of Abbot had to be consumed in a single session. A special award was given to those quaffing ten. Of course, most of the Rugby Club were soon members. Ian remembers a favourite away-match port of call as being the Cabinet at Reed – a superb rural pub of the day, now much missed but then offering great

beer direct from the cask (Adnams, Tolly Cobbold, GK, Marstons and Courage) and where the Black Horse players were made more than welcome.

Current Club President, Denis Stubbins, used to live next door to the pub, in what is now the "Rugby Room", before the cottage was subsumed into the Black Horse, and though he was never a player he has been a lifetime supporter. He says: *"After home matches it was all back to the pub for a hearty meal of Braughing sausages and mash – washed down with Abbot and IPA (or "Eddie" for the brave). The spirit in the Club has always been brilliant".*

But though the rugby was fun, the matches were always played at full pelt with no quarter given. The Black Horse gained a strong reputation as worthy opponents. The Club formed a long relationship with Lourding Club de France a Paris team with regular home and away matches and much merriment – beer in England, Pernod in France.



(L-R) Denis Stubbins, Ian Butler and Adrian Lee

Current Club captain, Adrian Lee, was appointed in 2013 but was a player for 10 years before that. Ian and Denis are keen to recognise the work Adrian put in to keep the Club together during and after Covid. The Club currently play in the Herts/Middx Merit Table competition taking them to places as far west as Beaconsfield, Chesham and north to Letchworth – its more recent honours include: Herts/Middx Merit Table 4 Champions 2016/2017 and Smallest Rugby Club World Cup Plate Winner 2015.

And the teams' drinking Boat Race team are now undefeated in 10 years of attempts by other teams. It's a traditional rugby challenge and the Black Horse are exceedingly good at it.

Adrian explained that the Club is mainly funded by "Froth" – Friends of the Horse – with players, friends and supporters guaranteeing at least £5 per month. With support undiminished during the pandemic, the club is well-funded to continue. But it has seen a drop-off in available players – something experienced by many local teams. And drink driving has curbed the match-day drinking antics enjoyed by the first generation of players.

So "Cluster Rugby" is now being played – Black Horse have teamed up with Datchworth Rugby Club III's to form a Saturday team. Home games are now played in Hoe Lane, Ware, courtesy of Hertford RFC.

If you are interested in finding out more about the club and perhaps putting on your boots, please make contact with Adrian via the club website,

<https://www.blackhorserfc.com>

That first conversation between three friends in 1977 has led to almost 50 years of Club rugby. It is hoped that the 50th year might be marked with a special match – perhaps a game against Blackheath, recognised as the country's first independent rugby club. That would be nice! Can it happen? Adrian said "We are working on that one". Beer will oil the celebrations.

Current pub owner and landlord, Darren, says "The Rugby Club and the pub are entwined to the core. The locals ask after the boys and actively attend home games. The pub uses rugby as its differentiation with other local pubs. Live rugby takes precedence over any other TV sport. We are a true rugby pub". Even a new extension built at the rear of the pub was named "The Scrummery".

Perhaps the final word should go to Ian Butler, player, founder member and ex-president. "Things were very different back in the '70s, the rugby rules have since changed significantly – and there was a different sort of social life – but the Club has continued well through the years. There is a strong playing ethic but always with fun, some beer and the pub at its heart".

The Black Horse is in the Good Beer Guide 2023 and offers up to 6 cask ales and a wholesome food menu.

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

## White Hart Tap

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# Calling all Publicans...and Drinkers!

## Publicans

CAMRA's WhatPub website is Britain's most comprehensive database of the nation's pubs, listing almost 35,000 pubs, clubs and bars. It provides customers with free access to information about YOUR PUB. So, having brought customers to your front door, let's not disappoint them by giving the wrong description or out-of-date opening times!

It is important that your WhatPub entry is kept up to date, and whilst the local branches work very hard trying to make the information relevant and current, CAMRA members can't be everywhere all the time! This is where YOU, the publican, can help CAMRA to help you.

Go to [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com), search for your pub (name and part address/post code) and check the information. Maybe something needs correcting; opening hours, regular beers, facilities, transport connections? Or perhaps the description of the pub, its history and the photo can be improved upon?

It's very simple to contact CAMRA with your changes using a phone or laptop/PC.

See **'How to update WhatPub'**, opposite.

## Drinkers

Sitting in your local, enjoying a quiet pint, might be a good time to check if the WhatPub entry is up to date. Has one of the regular beers changed? Has the pub stopped showing live sport on the TV? Is there something else you've noticed? Take a look at the pub's entry by searching **whatpub.com**. If you think a change is needed, see **'How to update WhatPub'**, opposite.

Once that's done, how about using WhatPub to plan your own 'ale trail' (or 'pub crawl' as some of us still call them)? A geographic search by county, town, first part of post code etc is easy, as is using the filters to narrow down your choice based on a list of features and facilities. And as WhatPub is provided by CAMRA, a filter on the homepage allows a search for only those pubs and clubs that serve real ale.

All pubs are included: from village locals to destination pubs; from town community pubs to city centre bars; and from historic pubs of architectural interest to slick modern outlets.

Whatever your taste, you're almost guaranteed to find a suitable pub in any part of the country.

## How to update WhatPub

### Non-CAMRA Publicans and Drinkers:

1. Search for your pub, then click on **'updates on the pub'** in the pink box (you can also use **'Submit Updates'** if on a PC/laptop).
2. In the three boxes enter: **Your Name, Your Email Address, Your Message**. Your message should list the required amendments and let WhatPub know if you are the publican.
3. Now confirm that you're not a robot and click on **'Send to CAMRA'**.
4. You will receive an email from CAMRA with a copy of your message and confirmation of the Local CAMRA branch it has been forwarded to.
5. Your suggested amendments will be received by a designated CAMRA Officer from the Local Branch. Once authorised, WhatPub will be updated.

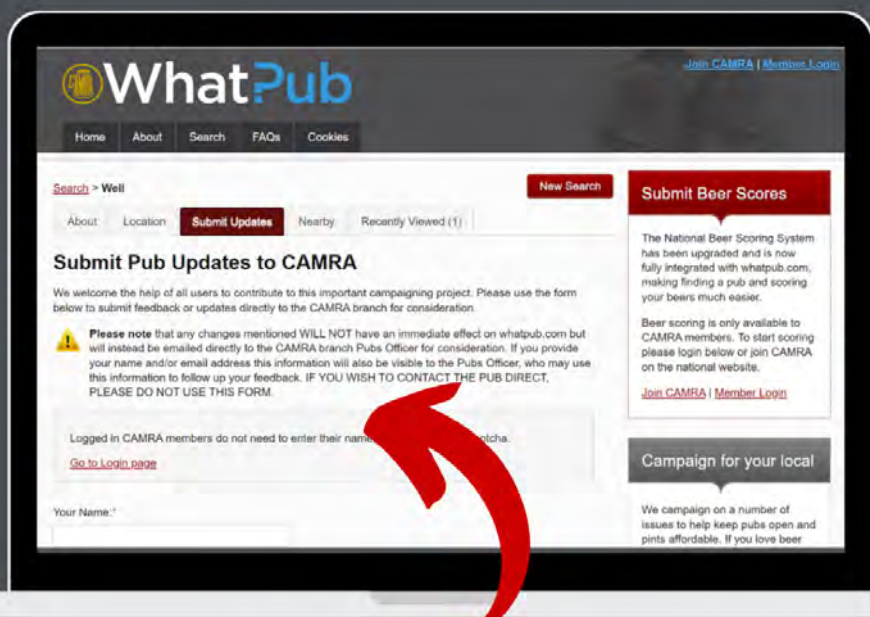
### CAMRA Members:

1. Search for your pub, then click on **'updates on the pub'** in the pink box (you can also use **'Submit Updates'** if on a PC/laptop).
2. Click on **'Go to Login page'**.
3. Enter your **Member Number** and **Password** then click on **'Login'**.
4. Scroll down the list and click on **'Yes'** next to the item you want to change. This will open a drop-down box.
5. Type your change(s) in the box.
6. Repeat for each item you want to change.
7. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on **'Send to CAMRA'**.
8. Your suggested amendments will be received by a designated CAMRA Officer from the Local Branch. Once authorised, WhatPub will be updated.

# Help us power



# What?Pub



Help keep WhatPub up to date by using the feedback form to let us know about any changes at the pub:

[www.whatpub.com](http://www.whatpub.com)



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale



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**YOUR LOCAL**

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

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

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

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

**10 HAVE YOUR SAY**

## What's yours?

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



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale

## A Beer Engine First for Tewin at the Rose & Crown?

1 Upper Green, Tewin AL6 0LE



All cask ale drinkers welcome the sight of a gleaming set of handpumps as they enter a pub - the pumps hopefully represent the chance to enjoy a well-kept pint of cask conditioned beer. Handpumps have become synonymous with real ale.

But imagine the days of around 1800, when they had been recently invented. How strange they must have appeared on the bar! Beer engines as they were more properly known, were becoming a great assistance to many landlords by pulling beer up from cellars, though they came with the necessity to clean pipes and working parts to avoid infections. Beer engines replaced the simple effort of pouring beer direct from the cask through wooden or metal taps – and often saved on the legwork of climbing and descending cellar stairs to fetch beer.

There are few written accounts of their invention or their appearance on bars – yet one reference is surprisingly close at hand. John Carrington was a Hertfordshire farmer and diarist, based at Bacons Farm at Bramfield, East Herts whose son “Jack”

operated as a tenant at the Rose and Crown in Tewin. Imagine John’s surprise on Saturday 29 June 1805 when first seeing the newly installed contraption at the pub! He said: *“Spent at Hartford 1 shilling at Bull. After went to supper at sons Tewin as putting down ingen to draw the beer by Handcock Hartford”*.

This account of Jack’s enterprising move is thought to be one of the first written references to a beer engine being installed outside of London.

In 1811 Jack, who continued his father’s diary, recorded: *“Mowbray, glazier, here from Hertford mending the beer engine”*. Early beer engines required a regime of regular maintenance.

The invention of the beer engine in Britain is usually ascribed to Joseph Bramah who took out a patent in 1797. He may have built on previous designs tabled a century earlier in the Netherlands. But

Bramah’s device was not the one that came into commercial pub use. The name of the inventor of the beer engine (and its handpump) that we associate with today has been lost in time, though manufacturers quickly multiplied at the turn of the 19th century. Makers emerged in south London, then Bristol, Birmingham and elsewhere. Perhaps the most well-known manufacturer during the days that led towards the real ale revival of the 1970’s was Gaskell and Chambers with its range of Dalex beer engines. Currently, leading manufacturers include Masons of Birmingham, Angram of Thirsk and RLBS of Keighley. The Rose and Crown is now owned by Greene King. It’s a lively two-bar village local offering food with plenty



*Beer engine from 1890 catalogue*

of community activity and a range of cask beers – all, of course, served by handpump!

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

# Pints of View 306 Spring Wordsearch

First correct entry drawn wins:

**The 2023 CAMRA Good Beer Guide**

Second correct entry drawn wins:

**The 2023 CAMRA Good Beer Guide Glass Cloth**

W	H	E	E	L	W	R	I	G	H	T	A	S	O	T
B	C	S	U	F	F	O	L	K	P	U	N	C	H	D
E	F	R	B	L	A	C	K	S	M	I	T	H	L	D
G	H	O	W	O	M	Y	E	L	R	A	B	T	R	R
I	S	H	I	V	E	P	O	R	T	E	R	A	B	I
J	M	E	G	A	L	L	I	T	S	K	Y	P	U	P
P	I	R	B	R	E	W	L	U	M	T	P	I	N	T
M	L	I	O	N	R	P	O	O	H	S	A	I	G	R
U	D	H	O	G	S	H	E	A	D	T	K	V	P	A
P	C	S	Z	P	C	A	S	K	U	R	V	A	E	Y
D	W	E	E	I	Y	P	H	B	E	E	R	M	A	T
N	A	B	L	N	I	C	A	D	F	C	G	E	L	A
A	H	B	I	L	G	Y	L	E	T	U	O	T	S	P
H	U	J	E	K	A	I	F	C	O	O	P	E	R	L
P	M	O	N	I	K	R	I	F	B	I	T	T	E	R

## Beer Trivia Wordsearch

Find all **32 words** in the grid to your left

Place all the beer related terms listed below in the grid going forwards, backwards, diagonally, horizontally and vertically.

**ALE, BARLEYMOW, BEERMAT, BITTER, BLACKSMITH, BOOZE, BUNG, CASK, CELLAR, COOPER, DRAY, DRIPTRAY, FIRKIN, GYLE, HALF, HANDPUMP, HOGSHEAD, HOOP, KILDERKIN, MILD, PORTER, PIN, PINT, PUBLIC HOUSE, SHIREHORSE, SHIVE, STAVE, STILLAGE, STOUT, SUFFOLKPUNCH, TAP, WHEELWRIGHT.**

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

**Entries by Friday 12th May to:**

PoV Competition, 5 Manor Way,  
Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1EL

**Photocopies/scans/photos are acceptable**

## PINTS OF VIEW 305 CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

**Congratulations to our two winners!**

**1st prize 2023 CAMRA GBG:  
Rachel McKay, St. Albans, Herts.**

**2nd prize 2023 CAMRA GBG Glass Cloth:  
Anthony Toole, Harpenden, Herts.**

SOLUTION BELOW

T	H	E	H	O	L	L	Y	A	N	D	T	H	E	I	V	Y
U	Q	U	E	I	E	I	C	E								
B	L	U	E	T	I	T	S	T	A	I	N	L	E	S	S	
E	I	D	H	L	L	G	L	T								
R	A	T	I	O	N	A	L	E	I	T	E	R	A	T	E	
S	A	R							N							
O	B	L	O	N	G	N	I	G	A	R	D	L	Y			
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# Beer, Cider & Industry News

## Not such an open and shut case...

Back in 1974, when CAMRA was in its infancy and many of its 5,000, or so, members were not long out of their teens, the Good Beer Guide (GBG) listed just 180 UK breweries operated by 105 companies.

Nearly two decades later, the 1993 GBG list had grown to 168 independent breweries, six National brewers; Allied, Bass, Courage, Guinness, S & N and Whitbread with 18 breweries between them, and a further 57 brew pubs making a grand total of 243 breweries across the nation.

Fast forward to 2022 and... unfortunately, the GBG no longer provides numbers for operating breweries, though it lists approximately 150 breweries that are purported to have closed during the year.



*Opened by Jennings Brothers in 1874  
Closed by Carlsberg-Marstons Brewing in 2022*

Other sources provide alternative closure figures.

According to information collated by Beer Nouveau, a total of 83 breweries closed in 2022 (<https://beernouveau.co.uk/2022-closures>), whilst Quaffale gives a slightly higher figure of 86 (<http://quaffale.org.uk/php/yearlist/closed/2022>).

That's quite a spread of figures, but whether 150, 86 or 83, the number of closures is, on the face of it, quite shocking, with established names including Dark Star and Jennings making the headlines and providing added poignancy.

However, when discussing brewery closures it would surely be remiss not to consider breweries that have opened during the same period? Quaffale reports 64 new breweries opening in 2022 and helpfully

suggests that the total number of breweries at year-end was in the region of 1,900-1,925. This compares with the Morning Advertiser's widely reported figure of an impossibly precise 2,426 at the end of 2021 (along with 200 new breweries during the year).

Deducting Quaffale's 64 new breweries figure from the 86 closures, results in a net closure of 22 breweries which, based on a total of 1,900, gives a closure rate of a little under 1.2%.

Figure-wise, that is not so shocking, but the trouble is the lack of any detail regarding capacities lost and gained, nor any breakdown of what type of beer was/is being produced, let alone whether it's cask, keg, bottles, cans etc.

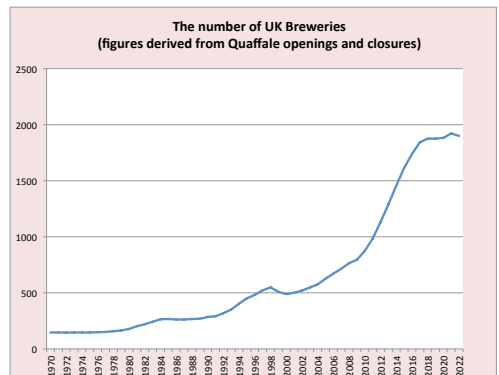
To arrive at a proper understanding of where we are and in what direction the industry might be heading requires in-depth analysis as, without the facts, it is all too easy to make subjective judgments based on anecdotal evidence.

For instance; that today's new breweries tend to be owned by independent and enthusiastic young brewers, who are as keen to produce exciting, high quality beers as they are to make a profit.

Or, maybe, that the multi-national conglomerates controlling a large part of the industry crave rationalisation and cost reduction, care not a jot for provenance, and are interested in the brand rather than the beer.

Perhaps CAMRA should set up a group with a remit to produce a report, whilst there are still plenty of breweries to report on? I think we need to know what is really happening.

**Ed**



Cheap, or too cheap?

First, Tim Martin welcomes in 2023 with 99p pints of Ruddles Best and, within a month, he's increasing prices on food and drink by 7.5%!

99p per pint = £71.28 per standard cask (72 pints, known as a firkin) and that's before taking ullage (wastage) into account (see Steve's Shout on page 5). Then there's the cost of running the pub, paying for head office, and shareholders will expect a profit (well, they used to).

Clearly, the new year pricing was an unsustainable gimmick; a loss leader designed to hit the headlines and bring in customers who would, hopefully, buy other drinks that might even make JDW money.

But what of Spoons' regular day-to-day pricing post increase?

With nothing better to do one (cold and dark) February evening, I decided to put the Wetherspoon app to work and check out what Team Tim were up to in Hertfordshire. As a western portion of the county is within Mid Chilterns CAMRA, the survey would include pubs in their branch. I then got a bit nostalgic and was minded not to leave out Barnet, erstwhile part of the county prior to the 1st April 1974 boundary changes and, unsurprisingly, in Enfield & Barnet branch.

Finally, just for the hell of it, I would add a couple of London 'mainline terminus' Spoons, easily reached from our area, should drinkers like the idea of spending a small fortune getting into London to pay more for their beer.

The table to your right summarises cask ale prices across 21 pubs offering, at the time of survey, anything from three to 11 cask ales. Five pubs, representing 23.8% of the total number, are included in the Good Beer Guide 2023. This compares with 200 Spoons pubs nationally from a UK total of 844, which represents...23.7%. Now that is almost spooky!



Hertfordshire 1955-1974

It can be seen that, other than in Watford, prices across Hertfordshire *Pints of View* territory range from the 'entry level' £1.71 or £1.82 per pint for Ruddles Best / Green King IPA, through £1.99 to £2.57 for Sharp's Doom Bar and guest ales generally, to £2.26 to £2.78 for Green King Abbot. Interestingly, Watford commands a premium.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the average price of a pint of draft bitter (ie. cask and keg) was £3.57 in January 2023, whilst that for lager was £4.23. Maybe Wetherspoon's stated policy to remain "as competitive as possible" should be revised to "as low as possible"?

But surely ultra-low cask prices are an unquestionably good thing for us ale drinkers?

Well, in the short term, yes, so long as we don't overdo it every night. But longer term? The fact that sales of cask continue to decline, despite the heavy discount to lager whose sales are actually increasing suggests that the relationship between selling price and sales volume is tentative, at best.

Anecdotally, I see many customers ordering drinks at the bar and then tapping to pay, with barely a glance at the display. It does make me wonder just how important the cost of their pint really is...

Ed

Pub	Area	County	CAMRA Branch	Ruddles / GK IPA	Doom Bar	Abbot	Guest	No. of Cask Ales	*CAMRA GBG2023
William Aylmer	Harlow	Essex	Herts & Essex Bdrs	£1.71	£1.99	£2.68	£2.46	6	
Last Post	Loughton	Essex	Herts & Essex Bdrs	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Port Jackson	Bishop Stortford	Herts	Herts & Essex Bdrs	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	5	
Star	Hoddesdon	Herts	Herts & Essex Bdrs	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Moon and Cross	Waltham Cross	Herts	Herts & Essex Bdrs	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	5	
Crown	Berkhamstead	Herts	Mid Chilterns	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	1
Full House	Hemel Hempstead	Herts	Mid Chilterns	£1.71	£2.26	£2.26	£2.26	8	2
Angel Vaults Inn	Hitchin	Herts	North Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Three Magnets	Letchworth	Herts	North Herts	£1.82	£1.99	£2.35	£2.35	5	
Manor House	Royston	Herts	North Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	7	1
Standing Order	Stevenage	Herts	North Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	5	
Hart & Spool	Borehamwood	Herts	South Herts	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Harpfield Hall	Hatfield	Herts	South Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Six Templars	Hertford	Herts	South Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78		3	
Admiral Byng	Potters Bar	Herts	South Herts	£1.71	£2.26	£2.26	£2.26	9	6
Waterend Barn	St Albans	Herts	South Herts	£1.82	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	6	
Pennsylvanian	Rickmansworth	Herts	Watford & District	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	**£2.57	7	
Moon Under Water	Watford	Herts	Watford & District	£1.92	£2.89	£3.11	£2.89	8	
Railway Bell	New Barnet	Gtr London	Enfield & Barnet	£1.71	£2.57	£2.78	£2.57	8	9
Barrel Vault	St Pancras	London	N. London	£3.10	£4.39	£4.59	£4.39	11	
Hamilton Hall	Liverpool Street	London	E. London & City		£4.39		£4.39	6	

\*Consecutive years in CAMRA Good Beer Guide (GBG)  
\*\*£2.57 - for 3 guest beers, but £4.25 for Thornbridge Jaipur

## Confident-in-cask Cornish crafter comes to St Albans. Crikey!

<https://verdantbrewing.co/>

'Craft' Cornwall brewer Verdant is selling cask ale for the first time since its foundation in 2014. The Penryn based company will launch a core range of four traditional style cask ales: pale, golden, best bitter and porter that are very different from the hazy, juicy IPAs, and double IPAs the brewery is known for.

As the brewery's range of craft beers are some of the more expensive available, we can expect the trend to continue, which will be sold on the basis of cask being a premium product.

Hearing about a new brewery investing in cask and championing its quality is really good news and a poke in the eye of those Doom-mongers who see the eventual demise of real ale as being inevitable.

## 78 more Spoons to fork off and another: Knight's Templar, Holborn

We reported last issue that JD Wetherspoon had put 32 of its pubs on the market. Since then, another seven pubs have been added to the list, of which three are in London and the south-east.

Possibly of more relevance to Hertfordshire territory readers/drinkers is that the one Spoons up for sale in our county, the **Colombia Press** in Watford, is now closed without a buyer having been found. Didn't company spokesperson Eddie Gershon say: *"We understand that customers and staff will be disappointed. The pubs will continue to operate as Wetherspoon outlets until they are sold."*

In fairness, the **Moon Under Water** is only 0.2 miles down the same road, so Watford drinkers looking for an alternative Spoons don't have too far to stagger. Furthermore, I would hope and expect that staff will be able to find suitable employment elsewhere, bearing in mind the current job shortages within hospitality.

I've not been to either pub, but would be interested to hear from readers who have been to both: has uncle Tim closed the right one? The decision could, of course, have been driven by financial considerations that will only be apparent to JDW head office.

Below is a list of the additional 3 south east pubs:

### SOUTH EAST SPOONS

Fareham, Hants - Lord Arthur Lee  
Hammersmith, London - Plough & Harrow  
Holloway, London - Coronet

On a more cheery note for Spoons fans, whilst JDW sold 10 pubs last year (ie. in addition to the 40 the company is looking to sell), two new pubs were opened and a further three openings (all in London) are already imminent.

The full cask range of Argal 4.4% ABV golden ale, Penpol 3.8% ABV pale ale, Lamanva 4% ABV best bitter and Burnthouse 4.6% porter are available at the brewery's taproom in Cornwall, along with 16 keg lines and wood-fired pizzas, for drinkers needing something to wash down.

And *Pints of View* readers keen to try Verdant's beers, but not so keen on the trek south-west, will be delighted to learn that the **Great Northern, St Albans** has booked a Verdant Tap Takeover...but you'll need to be patient as it's not until 24th to 26th November!

**Ed**

### Erratum

In the last *Pints of View* (no. 305), an editorial addition on page 29 to Les Middlewood's article "Summer Bronze in the Old Cross Tavern" stated that current owners, Nigel "Bev" Beviss and Mary Gianoli, founded the pub in 1999. This was incorrect. It was Bev and Terry Bell who jointly opened the pub in 1999 - a business partnership that continued for a couple of years. Since then, Bev and Mary have carried the pub forward through to the present day. Apologies to all concerned for the error. *Ed*.

## OLD CROSS TAVERN

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Award winning Town Centre Real Ale Free House  
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breweries including dark beers / Belgian beers

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**Ed**

# Readers Write

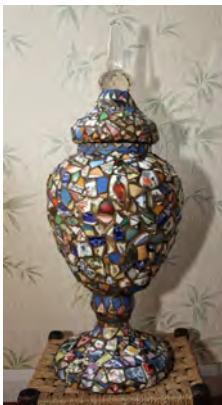
## Spirit of St Albans

I enclose a photocopy of a 'thingamabob' which my maternal grandmother converted from a receptacle that dispensed spirits [whisky] from behind the bar.

It came from the Mile House public house, which stood in London Road, St Albans. She knocked the tap off and covered it in some sort of putty; and then pressed coloured pieces of broken crockery into it. It's dated September 1931. That's what you did before television!

I'd like to know what the original receptacle was called; and also what this artistic conversion is called. I've also got a rose bowl and lid similarly converted.

Yours truly  
**Howard Green** Photo: Will Lewis



**Ed says:** The 'thingamabob' might well be all that has survived from *The Mile House*; a pub first mentioned on a 1766 map, that became a *Beefeater Steakhouse* in 1979, was latterly the *Grill Bar* and eventually razed in 2004 to make way for housing. To answer your first question: the correct name for the receptacle would appear to be a 'samovar' (a Russian word originally for a metal urn of similar shape, used to boil water). As for the second, maybe the art of converting receptacles into 'thingamabobs' using broken crockery is a form of mosaicing?



## DYLAN'S ST ALBANS



**Dylan's St Albans is now on untappd.**

Scan the QR code for today's beer list and events.

—

**dylanskingsarms.com**



## 2 Nights Out – on the Milds

**St Albans – Sat 13<sup>th</sup> May**

**Hertford – Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

As part of CAMRA's *Make May a Mild Month* our annual celebration of Dark Mild is fast approaching....

On **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**, four **Hertford 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 Dark Mild. Our itinerary for the evening is:

- **7.45pm**      **Black Horse - West Street - SG13 8EZ**
- **8.30pm**      **Hertford Club - Bull Plain - SG14 1DT**
- **9.15pm**      **Old Barge - The Folly - SG14 1QD**
- **10.00pm**    **Old Cross Tavern - St Andrew Street - SG14 1JA**

The lead-up event on **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May** will see ten pubs spread across **St Albans** serving Dark Mild. Visit as many or few as you wish! Most pubs are open from noon:

- Beehive - 2 Keyfield Terrace AL1 1QL
- Farmer's Boy - 134 London Road AL1 1PQ
- Great Northern - 172 London Road AL1 1PQ
- Mermaid - 98 Hatfield Road AL1 3RL
- Peahen - 14 London Road - AL1 1NG
- Robin Hood - 126 Victoria Street AL1 3TG
- Royston Club - 12 College Road AL1 5ND
- Six Bells - 16-18 St Michael's Street AL3 4SH
- White Hart - 4 Keyfield Terrace AL1 1QJ
- White Lion - 19 Sopwell Lane AL1 1RN

### ***A brief history of Dark Mild...***



*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 become the nation's favourite beer. By the late 1960's none of the remaining Hertfordshire brewers were still brewing cask-conditioned Dark Mild. Courage and Ind Coope Dark Milds could occasionally be found – and sometimes Greene King XX Dark Mild. Only the latter survives - and now only as an occasional brew.*

*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 local Free Houses. McMullen's brew the well-known AK Original Mild – a rare example of a Light Mild!*

***Everyone welcome!***

# Bits & Pieces

## YOU were there!

Thanks to all of you who sent in a selfie to match-up with your face on last issue's St Albans Beer & Cider Festival centre-spread and front cover.

The first name 'out of the cask' was **Sanjay Patel** who wins FREE VIP ENTRY to this year's festival, which will run from Wed 27th to Sat 30th September.

And a huge thanks, also, to South Herts CAM(e)RA man **Will Lewis** who took all the great festival photos.

## Delivering Pints of View

Getting 8,000 - 10,000 copies of Pints of View into the pubs, clubs, libraries and museums of Hertfordshire and beyond relies on an army of ready, willing and able volunteers who we refer to as 'distributors'.

Boxes of the magazines are delivered by our printer into ten or so 'hub-pubs' from where the distributors collect pre-arranged quantities for dropping-off at whichever establishments they have elected to deliver to.

If you are aware of a pub or club that sells real ale but is not currently receiving *Pints of View*, do please let us know by sending an email to [distribution@pintsofview.camra.org](mailto:distribution@pintsofview.camra.org).

And if you would like your name to be added to the list of volunteers, do also let us know. Whilst some distributors deliver to 20+ pubs, there are a few who deliver to only one. To coin a phrase: "*Every little helps...*"

## Calling all Pints of View Distributors



As you may have noticed, *Pints of View* has dedicated the front cover and a full page article on the importance of keeping WhatPub updated.

If you are distributing the magazine, you can assist further by checking that

the details held on WhatPub are accurate. For instructions of how to make amendments, please go to the article on page 22.

Finally, would distributors please check that the pub or club has a magazine holder for displaying *Pints of View*. If holders are required, please let us know which pubs need them and we will then work out the most practical way of getting them to you.

## Beer Festival Trips

Do you like the idea of joining other Branch Members on a trip to one of the many beer festivals in our Region? If so, have a look at the CAMRA BeerCider Festivals list on page 22 and let *Pints of View* know which festivals you'd be most interested in by sending an email to [editor@pintsofview.camra.org](mailto:editor@pintsofview.camra.org).

## £2 Bus Fare Cap

CAMRA is urging members to visit pubs using the **£2 bus fare cap**. The scheme was due to end on 31st March but has now been extended until 30th June. Making a trip to Rickmansworth and Maple Cross to support local pubs and breweries sounds like a good excuse. If you live in Watford the discount applies to the 724 and 321 as well as other buses directly operated by Arriva. Watch out though! Some of the smaller bus companies are not applying the cap, which is a shame since they often operate routes to rural areas that you'd think would be more in need of affordable bus fares.

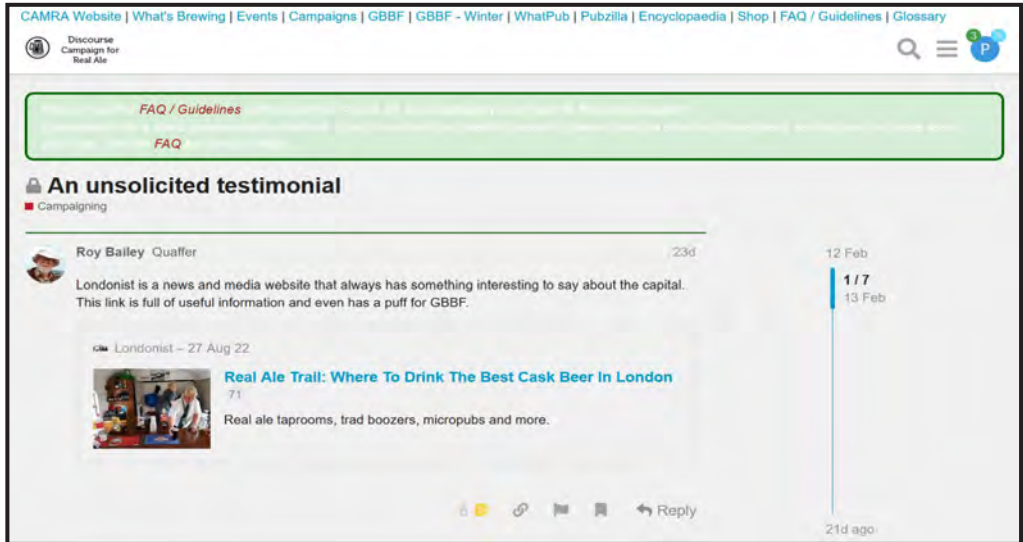
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Full rate card on page 2

# The curse of Discourse!



Six months ago, I had not heard of the CAMRA Members' Forum, Discourse, let alone used it. It was at a South Herts branch meeting that someone (yes, you Dave Wright) suggested I should find time to have a look at Discourse as there was plenty of interesting discussion about, beer, pubs, breweries and CAMRA that I probably ought to know about as editor of Hertfordshire's premier magazine.

Well, I'm pleased that I listened to Dave, because there is indeed lots of lively and engaging debate. And what with the CAMRA's AGM and Members' Weekend just around the corner, that debate has got 'fruity' as members use Discourse to publicly question the candidates standing for election to the National Executive (NE).

Discourse is also a place where members can recommend other websites, articles, blogs etc. that are likely to interest our community.

One such recent recommendation was the Londonist website and its beer and pub related article:

*'Real Ale Trail: Where To Drink The Best Cask Beer In London'*

Researched and written by Londonist Features Editor and recently-signed-up Croydon & Sutton CAMRA member, Will Noble, the opening paragraph sums up beautifully what I'm looking for when choosing somewhere in London to drink:

*Warm Doombar [sic] pumped through dirty pipes, be gone! Gallons of delicious, fresh cask beer can be found across London these days — you just need to know where to look. Here's a round up of the best places in London to drink a range of exciting (and exceptionally kept) real ale.*

Will then lists 50+ of his favourite places across the capital to get great cask ale. It's clearly laid out, with chatty descriptions and good photos. The venues are listed alphabetically within the following categories:

- Taprooms with great cask beer
- Micropubs with great cask beer
- Traditional boozers with great cask beer
- Craft beer pubs with great cask beer
- Beer festivals with great cask beer

If there was a 'map view', it would be perfect!

The Beer festivals section gives CAMRA a warm mention (thank you, Will) and suggests clicking on the link to CAMRA's website to see what's on.

Unfortunately, CAMRA's website is not quite as informative or well laid out as might be hoped; it's something of a struggle to find the 20 or so festivals across the country whose budgets have been approved by the powers that be (ie, National CAMRA). 150+ other CAMRA festivals WILL run, but, until formally approved, they are excluded. I would have thought that a 'To Be Confirmed' label should get around that minor issue.

Of much more help to *Pints of View* readers is our listing on page 41. Most of the information about the 24 festivals was provided by the East Anglia region website, which has an easy-to-find 'Beer Festivals' tab on the homepage.

Anyway, all these websites receive my endorsement, so do take a look.

<https://discourse.camra.org.uk> (Members only)

<https://londonist.com>

<https://eastanglia.camra.org.uk>

What started as a recommendation for CAMRA Members to visit Discourse, has meandered somewhat, as it's all too easy to get side tracked.

That, of course, is the curse of Discourse.

**Ed**

## South Herts CAMRA 2023 AGM & Branch Meeting - report

The South Herts Branch AGMs alternate between the East and West sections of the branch, and this year was the turn of the Eastern Front. All was not quiet, however, as 38 members turned up and beer and cider was flowing well. Our host was the Hertford Club, in Bull Plain, Hertford, and as usual, proceedings were lively.

While a good number of attendees were predictably from just around the corner, within a stone's throw, or at best a 15 minute stagger, there was a good turnout from all corners of the branch, supplemented by a few from other branches, and even one brave soul from the West Country. The 724 bus from St Albans was so packed it couldn't muster its usual speed, and was 10 minutes late due to the extra weight it carried!

The usual suspects were in attendance, and a good number of fresh faces were also welcomed. No doubt, word of a free buffet had spread widely. I conducted the proceedings, which were ably recorded by John Tubridy, who gleefully announced it would be his last effort to skilfully translate the mumbblings of the assembled crowd into what are rather generously called branch minutes. John will now bravely direct and oversee the necessities to ensure a successful SABCF for 2023.

The branch was relieved to hear from treasurer John Lightfoot, that after several years in the doldrums, it was now in a fairly good financial position, thanks to the success of the 2022 St Albans Beer & Cider Beer Festival (SABCF). Furthermore, thanks to the sterling efforts of Paul Donatantonio, the *Pints of View* magazine was now up and running again in print form and was even self-sufficient funding-wise. With an average age of 58, membership stood at 1,980 and had held up well during the epidemic. Clearly members had not been tempted to attend Downing Street work gatherings.

Ably directed by Les Middlewood, a large number of pub surveys (263, no less) had been successfully completed through 2022, thanks also to the hard work of the membership trawling around pubs and clubs recording details of their operations, whilst no doubt having a rewarding libation or two to test the

offerings. And following selfless tastings and chin-stroking by members, eight pubs were chosen to fight it out for the branch pub of the year (POTY), to be decided by up to 16 brave judges in a future minibus trip. Likewise, club, and cider pub of the year were soon to be chosen from carefully compiled volunteered short-lists.

All fourteen nominated members were unanimously voted on to the 2023 Committee by the assembled membership, who were no doubt afraid that if they hadn't done so, one of them might be put forward to do some work. Photos of the new committee will

be circulated in good time, but during the remainder of the AGM, they could be easily identified by the large number of twists in their arms.

During the proceedings, John Lightfoot was presented with the Dave Burns Award for his meticulous and faultless management of the branch and beer festival finances over several decades, an honour that is only occasionally conferred to a member for outstanding contributions to the branch.

The AGM concluded with a most engaging presentation by Joe Brouder, owner and Managing Director of Vale Brewery, who gave an enthralling talk on the operations and future plans of the brewery. Several Vale beers were on offer during the afternoon, with the Black Beauty Porter almost completely

selling out during the proceedings. A trip to the brewery is being planned for later in 2023.

A pre-organised pub crawl of Hertford was meant to follow. But members rather ignored the carefully constructed plans and, like dust in the wind, quickly spread all over the town. With the added weight amassed by each attendee during the day, it was doubtful whether the returning 724 bus could have coped, so a fleet of Bolt and Uber cabs ensured that the St Albans members got safely back to the Robin Hood, where further drinks suggested that not only future branch operations but also most of the world's problems were about to be solved.

**Ian Boyd**

Chair, South Herts CAMRA

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

**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014 - 2023**

**Up to 4 hand pumps and Real Hertfordshire Cider and/or Perry**

**Spring is on the way and our lovely garden will be one of the best places in Hertford to enjoy sunshine and refreshment**

**New members are currently welcome although we are quickly becoming full**

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01992 421422**

## Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA 2023 AGM - report

The Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA branch (HEB) 2023 AGM landed this time in the far east of Bishop's Stortford, only inches from the Essex border guards. It was an ideal location being welcomed in the Tap Room by manager and owner Nik Lemmens the actual Belgium Brewer, within the Links Business Centre. Here they produce craft Belgium style beers, and not actually being real ale, it was neutral territory.

A star-studded evening of local celebrities was unfortunately marred by other engagements. Footballers were missing due to playing, training, the odd court case and being on the waggon. Top legal stars were absent due to court cases involving footballers and broadcasters. Politicians were busy with other jobs and legal people. Actors were, well acting, doing their lines, some of which were written down (!) while popastic types were just plain slumming. So once again we were restricted to the usual suspects who turn up at meetings and trips out.

The master of ceremonies for Monday 13th February was Brendon Sothcott, now a local and a Senior Test Train Engineer (so he gets to play on a big train set paid by the workers) who hails originally from Harlow, Essex. He has been in charge as chairman (or chairperson) of this CAMRA branch, for decades. So, after a couple of loosening-up halves of strong and interesting craft brews it was down to business for the packed crowd of 18.

The branch, we were glad to hear, was financially fine and going forward in the right direction. Membership has fallen but this does seem to be nationally and

mainly due to the lack of beer festivals and CAMRA people being more of the senior types in our society.

The very good news though was centred around the Queen's Head at Allen's Green (NW of Sawbridgeworth). This pub won HEB 2022 Pub of the Year, HEB 2022 Cider Pub of the Year and became a 2022 national finalist, and so is one of the top four in the UK for cider. As we are split over two counties, I must also name that over the border the Woodbine (east of Waltham Abbey) is the HEB Essex 2022 Cider Pub of the Year. Yes, we live in deepest cider country. It was also confirmed that the Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust was HEB 2022 Club of the year and made it to the Super Region Final. Well done to all involved.

Other business centred on the voting for the HEB entries to the 2023 GBG, which, being split across two counties, resulted in two sets of voting forms. We have always had enough contenders for the Hertfordshire area but normally struggle for Essex candidates. This is partly due to Harlow being the largest conurbation in our Essex area and where a couple of committee people live, as beyond here it is a sparsely populated area where you can be lucky to have any pub in the village.

After the scores and planning our next meetings, the AGM came to a happy close. It was time for a final drink and chat and then scatter home through the descending fog on this crisp and clear night.

**Norman Samuels**

*Joint Publicity & Joint Pubs Officer  
Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA*

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# Down Your Way

## Year End Special Report (aka *Bitter End*)

2022 should have been a new dawn, with the worst of the pandemic well and truly behind us and the fruits of 'Borexit' ripe and ready for plucking. But, of course, it didn't quite go like that.

Vladimir Putin's 'special military operation' aka invasion of Ukraine, sent the energy 'market' into a frenzy, giving suppliers the opportunity to cash-in, big time. And whilst soaring electricity and gas prices might have been the biggest threat to pubs (and breweries) we now know that leaving the EU coupled with COVID left their joint mark, by significantly reducing the numbers available, willing and able to work; especially within hospitality. On top of all that, the rampant inflation dramatically reduced the disposable income of most pub goers.

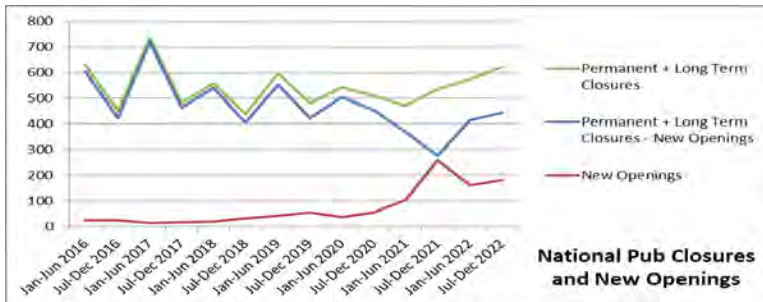
However, despite all the doom and gloom, the sector actually showed some resilience. The graph above is derived from figures provided by Paul Ainsworth chair of CAMRA's Pubs Heritage Group.

Whilst closures continue at an alarming rate, nothing extraordinary happened in 2022; possibly surprising bearing in mind what pubs were forced to endure. The worry is that pubs which managed to pull through last year will capitulate if they don't return to profitability in 2023. Time will tell...

Closer to home, Down Your Way has been handed a variety of good, bad and so-so news stories over

the last year. Whilst 28 'Glass Empty' (ie. negative) reports might seem like a large number, it can be difficult to tell what is 'new news' and what is 'old news' recycled.

For example, the White Horse in High Cross has been closed since the beginning of 2017 but recently been given the go-ahead for a change of use. Consequently,



there is now no chance of the pub opening again as it transitions from Long Term Closed to Permanent Closed. However, in reality, the coffin lid had probably been nailed down years ago.

On the 'Glass Full' side, 36 positive reports include 26 pub refurbishments which, as far as I am aware, is all 'new news'.

There can be no doubt that these are worrying times; more so now that the Energy Bill Relief Scheme is ending on 31st March. However, it would be very wrong to believe that the only news is bad news. Let's just hope that the next Year End Special Report is not looking back on an 'annus horribilis'.

**Ed**

**GLASS EMPTY** - above are the negatives from 2022. Might be the sad news of a once-loved boozer being bulldozed, a pub being put up for sale, or the relatively minor withdrawal of cask ale from behind the bar.

**BALDOCK:** The **Templars** Hotel & restaurant in the High Street, which did not re-open after COVID, has had a planning application approved to convert the bar area into en-suite units for the homeless.

**BENINGTON:** The Grade II\* listed **Bell**, which has not re-opened since July 2021 was granted Asset of Community Value status by Benington Council last year. It is being advertised for sale at £799K.

**BOREHAMWOOD:** Following a major refurbishment and development of the car park into flats, the **Wellington** stopped selling real ale.

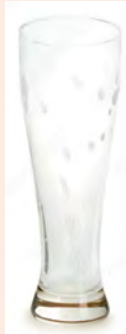
**BOVINGDON:** The **Bob Sleigh Inn**, closed in 2014, has a planning application to convert the site to 67 homes.

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

**HERTFORD:** Real ale no longer available at **Mind the Gap**, the café/shop at Hertford North station.

**HIGH CROSS:** Closed for a number of years, the **White Horse** was given the go ahead for a Change of Use to residential, despite local opposition.

**HERTFORD:** Stonegate's **Snug** in Railway Street re-opened in



November 2022 as a cheese, wine and cocktails bar with no real ale and has been renamed *Vintage*. A planning application to turn the **Two Brewers** into flats was finally approved in late 2022. Although the Port Vale pub has not regularly offered any real ale for some time, in the 1980's and 90's it was a popular traditional street corner local offering two or three cask ales. As it stands the pub remains open.

**HODDESDON:** The **Bell Hotel** no longer serves real ale.

**ICKLEFORD:** The **Cricketers** was put up for sale at £850k with agent Sidney Phillips & Co.

**MUCH HADHAM:** The long-closed **Jolly Waggoners** was subject to a planning application for demolition and the construction of four houses.

**OLD BRICKET WOOD:** The **Old Fox** which has been closed for several years was put up for sale even though it is ACV listed.

**POTTERS BAR:** Closed since Dec 2019, the **Chequers** pub on Coopers Lane, was retained in a planning application to build a block of 10 flats in the garden, however, the application was withdrawn. No further news. Only half a mile away on the High Street, the 17th **Green Man** closed in 2014, eventually had an application approved for the building of 18 flats in the rear garden along with change of use for the pub to a ground floor office with flat above. The flats are now completed but the old pub is still a building site. Hopes of it remaining a pub are long gone.

**ROYSTON:** The **Coach & Horses**, which re-opened last year following two years' closure, has closed again and is up for let. Owner Star Pubs is planning a complete refurbishment and proposing a name change to King James. Cask Ale will be retained.

**STEVENAGE:** the **Almond Tree** no longer serves real ale.

**GLASS FULL** - this section summarises the positives from 2022. Could be anything from the grand opening of a new real ale pub to the rather less dramatic introduction of cask to a current 'keg' pub. Other undoubtedly good news is the re-opening of a pub after closure and refurbishment.

**BALDOCK:** The **George IV** re-opened after refurbishment. Food led under the Chef and Brewer umbrella, but with a dedicated bar area for non-diners. Regulars Greene King IPA and Abbot with plans for a local brewer changing beer.

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

**BOREHAMWOOD:** The **Wishing Well**, was renamed the **Good Companion** "a traditional Craft Union Pub Company free house" with two hand pumps, one serving Doom Bar the other for guest beers.

**BRICKENDON:** The **Farmer's Boy** re-opened with new management after a refurbishment. A range of four or five real ales, with Sharp's Doom Bar as staple and often a Hertfordshire guest ale.

**BULBOURNE:** The Oakman Inns owned **Grand Junction Arms** re-opened in March 2022 following an extensive redesign and renovation.

**TEA GREEN:** The **White Horse** was put up for sale in October 2022 at £550,000 and is now under offer.

**WADESMILL:** Despite a huge number of public objections, East Herts District Council gave approval to the change of use of the **Anchor** to residential use.

**WARE:** News on two McMullen owned pubs that won't be serving ale again. A planning application was lodged for change of use and building works to convert the **Victoria** into residential accommodation, whilst the **Jolly Bargeman** was sold for £715,000; presumably to be demolished for housing. The Stonegate owned **Albion** remains closed.

**WARESIDE:** The Grade II listed **White Horse** is up for sale as a pub advertised at £699,950. The community group, Save the White Horse Wareside, opposed the back-up plan to convert to residential and succeeded in getting the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value, though the owner is appealing the decision.

**WATFORD:** Stonegate owned **Bosley's** in the town centre closed in February 2022 when the lease expired. The building was taken over by Barrio and opened again towards the end of the year. Real ale has been replaced by Latin inspired drinks, music and atmosphere. The **Horns** closed its doors on 30th October for what might have been the last time but opened up again on 18th November after the general manager decided to fight to keep it running. The **Estcourt Arms** no longer sells real ale; the handpumps have been removed from the bar.

**WELHAM GREEN:** The 17th century Grade II listed **Hope & Anchor** was sold by Stonegate and a planning application approved to convert the building into three dwellings with another six on the site.

**WORMLEY:** The **Old Star**, which closed in 2020, has been sold by McMullen's and converted to Manto's Meze Bar & Grill, a Turkish eatery offering no real Ale.

**CHESHUNT:** The **Maltsters** re-opened in late 2022 after a refurbishment by McMullens

**CHORLEYWOOD:** The **Old Shepherd** has re-opened following extensive refurbishment. Real ale is available, including beers from Tring Brewery.

**CHARLTON:** The **Windmill** re-opened on 10th September with real ale and cider available.

**EPHING GREEN:** The **Beehive** re-opened after an impressive refurbishment. Serves Greene King IPA & Abbot.

**ESSENDON WEST END:** The **Candlestick** re-opened with new management after a period of closure.

**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. The **Three Blackbirds**, re-opened mid-September.

**GRAVELEY:** The **George & Dragon** re-opened serving English food with a modern twist. Real ale still available.

**GREAT HORMEAD:** The **Three Tuns**, re-opened on 17th September after a 12 month closure during which a refurbishment was carried out. **Baron Brewing** up and running in farmland buildings operated by Jack Baron, former under-brewer at McMullen's. Craft keg and cans.

**HARPENDEN:** The **Amble Inn**, formerly Bistro Gautier at the Amble Inn, reopened in Christmas 2022 following a 10-month closure. The Stonegate pub is more back to basics with less emphasis on gourmet food and the addition of Sky TV. The pub is free of tie, with a guest beer yet to be added to its permanent beer, Timothy Taylor Landlord

**HATFIELD:** The **White Hart** re-opened on 14th April 2022 following a £300k refurbishment. The pub went back to its original name having been called the **Town Inn** for a few years. However, the two handpumps are gone, so no real ale. After a major refurbishment by McMullen's, the **Harrier** reopened in November renamed the **Hatfield Tap**, Mac's cask ales on handpump.

**HERTFORD** The **White Horse** re-opened. Fullers ESB, London Pride and Hophead are on the pumps plus occasional fourth beer. Refurbishment work at the **Corn Exchange** in Fore Street was carried out, the music venue re-opening in mid-February 2022. McMullen's **Salisbury Arms Hotel** in Fore Street re-opened in December following a significant refurbishment of bars and restaurant plus upgrades to hotel accommodation. Historic features have been protected, the atmospheric snug room remains and a rear outside drinking area has been created. McMullen's cask ales feature on the two handpumps.

**HITCHIN:** The **Coopers Arms** had a McMullen re-fit, with AK and IPA on handpumps.

**LETCHMORE HEATH:** The **Three Horseshoes** re-opened following major refurbishment work.

**MUCH HADHAM:** The **Bull** now has Asset of Community Value status, thanks to the Save the Bull action group.

**NEWGATE STREET:** The **Crown** re-opened with new

owners after a refurbishment during the first lockdown. Serves Adnams Ghostship & Doom Bar.

**NORTON:** Stonegate group pub The **Three Horseshoes**, re-opened following refurbishment.

**PIRTON:** The **Fox**, had a £170,000 refurbishment including a new kitchen enabling food to be introduced. Four real ales on handpump.

**RICKMANSWORTH:** The **Golden Duck** Taproom opened at the Cricket Club under new Management. Wall of keg beers and one regular cask,

**STEVENAGE:** The **Fisherman** in Fishers Green was taken over by McMullens. The pub closed for a refurb and re-opened under Macs Chicken & Grill sub brand. Macs cask ales served.

**WADESMILL:** The **Feathers**, a Chef and Brewer pub with accommodation, had an internal/external refurbishment.

**WARE:** The **Hop Box** opened in Amwell End following a successful change-of-use planning application. The pub has a craft keg and bottled beer bar. The **Crooked Billet** reopened (actually end 2021) following an extensive but sympathetic refurbishment. Two changing real ales plus often a dark at weekends. After a four-week shutdown for refurbishment including a new outside seating area, the Greene King owned Grade-II listed **Punch House** re-opened in November.

**WATFORD:** Oakman Inns opened a **Beech House** pub in Watford Town Centre. The **Mad Squirrel Tap & Bottle Shop** opened on King Street and the **Wishing Well** on St. Albans Road re-opened as the **Cotter Arms** after a refurbishment. All have cask ale. **Two Trees Micro** opened on Vicarage Road with three handpumps serving beers from local microbreweries. Lastly, the **White Lion** on St. Albans Road re-opened after a short closure for refurbishment.

**WATTON-AT-STONE:** Greene King pub the **George and Dragon** re-opened following a substantial refurbishment, inside and out. Interesting pub menu and GK ales.

**WOOLMER GREEN:** The **Chequers** re-opened 9th April following a refurbishment and new tenants.

**WELWYN GARDEN CITY:** A new craft beer and bottle shop **Bedtime Beers**, opened in the town centre. One real ale on handpump.

**GLASS HALF FULL / GLASS HALF EMPTY - finally from 2022, news that is either something of a curate's egg, or can only be judged with the benefit of hindsight.**

**HERTFORD:** The **Old Cross Tavern** was put up for sale by owners Bev and Mary who are hoping to retire.

**LONDON COLNEY:** The **White Horse** re-opened on 24th June following six months closure and a £500k refurbishment. Punch Taverns original intention was to convert the car park and garden into housing, but this was opposed. Unfortunately, cask ale was removed and the manager said it will not return

**ROYSTON:** The **Old Courthouse**, a historic building in Fish Hill, was tastefully decorated but does not serve real ale.

**ST ALBANS:** The **Hare & Hounds** closed for only

three days in September when the previous landlord left (unable to agree terms of a new lease with pubco Stonegate) and a new publican took on management of the pub

**WALKERN:** Marcus and Amy Wan left the MacMullen's owned **Yew Tree** on 27th August after 12 years following expiry of the tenancy agreement. The pub website states that the pub is being refurbished with an expected re-opening on 19 December 2023.



# Down Your Way

*This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur or the information may be out-of-date upon publication. Comments or additional information should be sent to the editor (see page 2 for contact details).*

**BALDOCK:** The **Cock** will be holding its usual spring Beer Festival Fri 12th to Sun 14th May.

**BARLEY:** The **Chequers** lease is up for sale at £75,000. Acting agents are Everard Cole Ltd.

**BERKHAMSTED:** Unconfirmed report that the **Crystal Palace**, currently tenanted by Big Smoke, will be returned to Punch.

**BISHOPS STORTFORD:** Suffolk brewers **Adnams** have opened an off-licence at 10 High Street – their first in Hertfordshire – selling beers, spirits, merchandise and gift sets.

**BUNTINGFORD:** The **Jolly Sailors** closed in January. There are local unconfirmed rumours that it is being turned into a Thai restaurant.

**CHORLEYWOOD:** 18th century Greene King pub the **White Horse** re-opened on Monday 23rd January. Cask includes GK IPA and Tring Side Pocket

**HARPENDEN:** The **Queens Head** in Southdown re-opened in February following two months' closure and is now run directly by Punch (formerly Big Smoke were tenants). Current beer choice is more familiar: Timothy Taylor Landlord, Sharp's Doom Bar, and St Austell Tribute.

**HATFIELD:** The Gascoyne Cecil owned Grade II listed **Green Man** pub that closed in 2011 has been let following an extensive renovation. It is part of a small development of 9 homes in the hamlet of Mill Green with completion anticipated in May. Just across the Hertford Road from Mill Green, another Grade II listed Gascoyne owned building, the **Bush Hall Hotel** that closed two years earlier in 2009, is expected to be opened this year by Oakman Inns. The massive refurbishment will result in a modern pub and restaurant, with 14 room hotel and riverside terrace.

**HERTFORD:** The **Hertford Tap** "opened" as a pop-up in what was previously the **Crafty Duck**, but then closed shortly after in January.

**LEMSFORD VILLAGE:** McMullen announced that the **Long Arm Short Arm** had been sold and would close on 17th March.

**LITTLE WYMONDLEY:** The **Plume of Feathers**.; landlords Vicky and Chip left the pub in January. A facebook message (21st October) highlighted the problems in the pub sector. The pub is temporarily closed in the meantime. We wish Vicky and Chip all the best for the future.

**ST ALBANS:** Work to create the **Saint and Sinner** in St. Peter Street was delayed into the New Year. At the time of going to press McMullen's had not declared an opening date and were awaiting sign-off from the council. We hope to see Mac's real ales at the bar. No news on progress at either the proposed **Quiet Man** in Chequer Street, nor the **Rose and Crown** in St. Michael's, which remains closed. The **Verulam Arms** has re-opened under the ownership of Dick Morgan's pub company. As Dick's son, James, owns the Big Smoke Brewing Company, the wide range of cask and keg features beers from Big Smoke. A beer festival will be held from 12 noon Fri 21st to Sun 23rd April with 15 cask ales, 8 ciders and 20 kegs plus a hog roast on the Saturday. The **King Harry** has closed for refurbishment and is expected to re-open 23rd March. Real ale is being sold, once again, at the **Victoria**. Finally, the **White Lion** is another Big Smoke pub reported to be going back to Punch for them to manage.

**STANSTEAD ABBOTTS:** After closing in October, the Fuller's owned **Oak** has re-opened under new management with Fuller's beers available.

**WALTHAM ABBEY:** The McMullen owned **Crown** has been sold to Red Oak Taverns who will "invest in improvements at the pub." With this acquisition, the growing London-based pubco now has 211 pubs.

**WATFORD:** The **Nascot Arms** is under new management and Mr Ting's Thai restaurant returned to the pub in February.

**WELWYN:** The **White Horse** closed in early January and reopened later in the month having been taken back by Punch from Big Smoke. (See page 16).

# Herts CAMRA Diary

The listings below are colour-coded **North Herts**, **South Herts**, **Herts & Essex Borders** (no entries this edition) and **Watford & District**. However, all CAMRA members are very welcome to attend all CAMRA Branch Meetings and Social Events. Please visit the Herts Branch websites for up-to-date information. Addresses can be found on page 42

## MARCH

### Monday 13th: **H&EB Branch Meeting**

8.30pm **Black Lion**, High Road, Essex

### Thursday 16th: **W&D Bushey Social**

8.30pm **Three Crowns**, 1 High Rd, Bushey WD23 1EA,

9.15pm **Horse & Chains**, 79 High St, Bushey WD23

1BL, 10.00pm **Swan**, 25 Park Rd, Bushey WD23 3EE

### Tuesday 21st: **SH Branch Meeting**

8.00pm **Horse & Groom** 21 Park St, Hatfield AL9 5AT

### Wednesday 22nd: **Hitchin Social**

Starting 8.00pm **Orange Tree**, then onto **Three Moorhens**, BB's Bar and Half Moon

### Monday 27th: **W&D Branch AGM**

8.00pm **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Ave, Watford, WD18 7HP

## APRIL

### Wednesday 5th: **Stevenage Outskirts CarShare Crawl**

Starting 8.00pm **Shephall Tavern**, then onto **Old Red Lion**, **Tom Tiddlers Tavern**, **Fisherman and Marquis of Granby**. (It's OK if you want to do this one by bicycle instead!)

### Tuesday 11th: **H&EB Branch Meeting**

8.30pm **The Bull**, Much Hadham

### Thursday 13th: **W&D Watford Social**

8.30pm **Two Trees Micro**, 18 Vicarage Rd, WD18 0EH, 9.15pm **Moon Under Water**, 44 High St, WD17 2BS, 10.00pm **Wellington Arms**, 2 Woodford Rd, WD17 1PA

### Saturday 15th: **Buntingford Social**

Train Stevenage 11.34, Hitchin 11.39, Letchworth 11.45, Baldock 11.48 to Royston. Then Bus 18 Royston Station 12.08, visit **Fox & Duck**, then **Black Bull and Crown**. For the return journey, we'll be booking a HertsLynx Bus for 15.00, and will need to know the number of passengers, so if you're planning to join then send email before Saturday 8th April to [chairman@northherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@northherts.camra.org.uk), stating whether you are a fare-paying or a bus-pass passenger

### Wednesday 19th: **SH Branch Meeting**

8.00pm **Bull**, Barnet Rd, London Colney AL2 1QU

### Wednesday 19th: **Letchworth Social**

Starting 8.00pm **Arena Tavern**, then onto **Crafty's**, **Garden City Brewery** and **Three Magnets**

### Tuesday 25th: **W&D Branch Meeting**

8.00pm **Oxhey Conservative Club**, Keyser Hall, Lower Paddock Rd, Oxhey WD19 4DS.

### Friday 28th: **NH Branch AGM**

8.00pm **Orange Tree**, Baldock.

## MAY

### Wednesday 3rd: **Countryside CarShare Crawl**

Starting 8.00pm **Cricketers at Weston**, then onto **Rising Sun** Halls Green, **Jolly Waggoner** Ardeley and **White Lion** Walkern.

### Saturday 13th: **SH St Albans Social**

#### **A Mild Night Out / Save St Albans Pubs**

Starting 12 noon.

### Saturday 13th: **Old Stevenage High Street**

#### **Afternoon Social**

Starting 12 noon **Old Town Bar**, then onto **Broken Seal**, **Rump & Wade**, **Standing Order**, **Marquis of Lorne** and **Chequers**.

### Saturday 13th: **W&D Chorleywood Social**

1.45pm **Rose & Crown**, Old Common Rd, WD3 5LW,

2.45pm **Old Shepherd**, Chorleywood Bottom, WD3

5JH, 3.45pm **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty**, Long Lane, Heronsgate, WD3 5BS

### Monday 15th: **SH Committee Meeting**

7.45pm **Cross Keys**, 39 High St, Harpenden AL5 2SD

### Monday 15th: **H&EB Branch Meeting**

**Queen's Head**, Allan's Green

### Monday 22nd: **W&D Branch Meeting**

8.00pm **Croxley Guild of Sport**, The Green, Croxley Green WD3 3TH

### Tuesday 23rd: **SH Hertford Social**

#### **A Night Out on the Milds**

7.45pm **Black Horse**, West St Barnet Rd, 8.30pm

**Hertford Club**, Bull Plain SG14 1DT, 9.15pm **Old**

**Barge**, The Folly SG14 1QD, 10.00pm **Old Cross**

**Tavern**, St Andrew St SG14 1JA

### Wednesday 24th: **Hitchin Social**

Starting 8.00pm **Anchor**, then onto **Millstream**, **Albert** and **Radcliffe Arms**

## JUNE

### Friday 2nd: **Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival Promotion Crawl** [CAMRA garb encouraged!]

Starting 7.00pm **Albert**, then onto other pubs

### Saturday 10th: **Puckeridge & Braughing Social**

Starting 12 noon **Crown & Falcon**, then onto **White**

**Hart**, **Axe & Compasses**, **Brown Bear** and **Golden**

**Fleece**. Transport details to the start and from finish will be on Branch Website nearer to the date.

### Wednesday 14th: **SH Branch Meeting**

8.00pm **Old Barge**, 2 The Folly, Hertford SG14 1QD

### Thu 15th - Sat 17th: **Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival**

**Rugby Club**, Old Hale Way, Hitchin

# CAMRA Beer/Cider Festivals

*The festivals listed below are all CAMRA events, unless otherwise stated. Festivals shown as \*TBC\* are proposed but unconfirmed. Other festivals are scheduled to take place, as shown, but may be subject to changes or cancellation. We suggest you check directly with the organiser.*

## APRIL

### Maldon Beer & Cider Festival

Tue 25 – Sat 29

Cygnets Room, Swan Hotel, Maldon

## MAY

### Biggleswade Beer Festival

Thu 11 – Sun 14 May

Biggleswade & District Conservative Club

### Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 22 – Sat 27 May

Jesus Green, Cambridge

### \*TBC\* Colchester Summer Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 31 May – Sat 3 June

Arts Centre, Colchester

## JUNE

### \*TBC\* Colchester Summer Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 31 May – Sat 3 Jun

Arts Centre, Colchester

### Thurrock Beer & Cider Festival

Tue 6 – Sat 10 Jun

Civic Hall, Thurrock

### Braintree Real Ale Festival

Thu 15 – Sat 17 Jun

Bocking Arts Theatre (formally Braintree Institute), Braintree

### Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

Thu 15 – Sat 17 Jun

Hitchin Rugby Club, Old Hale Way, Hitchin

### \*TBC\* Gibberd Garden Beer Festival

(CAMRA bar at non-CAMRA festival)

Sat 17 – Sun 18 Jun

Gibberd Garden, Harlow

## JULY

### Maidenhead Beer & Cider Festival

Fri 7 – Sat 8 Jul

NMCC Sports Bar, Maidenhead

### Chelmsford Summer Beer & Cider Festival

Tue 11 – Sat 15 Jul

Admirals Park, Chelmsford

### \*TBC\* Epping Ongar Railway Real Ale Fest

Fri 21 – Sun 23 Jul

Epping Ongar Railway, Ongar Station, Ongar

### \*TBC\* Ipswich Beer and Cider Festival

Thu 27 – Sun 30 Jul

St Clement's Church, Star Lane, Ipswich

## AUGUST

### Great British Beer Festival

Tue 1 – Sat 5 Aug

Olympia, London

### Peterborough Beer Festival

Tue 22 – Sat 26 Aug

Embankment, Peterborough

### \*TBC\* East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 23 – Mon 28 Aug

St Edmundsbury Cathedral

## SEPTEMBER

### \*TBC\* Chappel Summer Beer Festival

Tue 5 – Sat 9 Sep

East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel

### \*TBC\* Letchworth Garden City Beer & Cider Festival

Thu 21 – Sun 24 Sep

CAMRA Marquee, Garden City Brewery & pubs in and around the world's 1st Garden City

### \*TBC\* St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 27 – Sat 30 Sep

Alban Arena, St Albans AL1 3LD

### \*TBC\* Letchworth Real Ale Pubs Ale Trail

Thu 21 Sep – Sun 1 Oct

11 days & lots of pubs during National Cask Ale Week

## OCTOBER

### \*TBC\* Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 4 – Sat 7 Oct

Corn Exchange, Bedford

### \*TBC\* Sth Wood'm Fer's Beer & Cider Fest

Thu 5 – Sat 7 Oct

Village Hall, South Woodham Ferrers

### \*TBC\* Norwich Beer Festival

Mon 23 – Sat 28 Oct

St. Andrew's & Blackfriars' Halls, Norwich

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER


### \*TBC\* Pigs Ear Real Ale Festival

Tue 28 Nov – Sat 2 Dec

Round Chapel, Hackney, London

# Herts CAMRA Contacts


## NORTH HERTS CAMRA

 [northherts.camra.org.uk](http://northherts.camra.org.uk)  
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[chairman@northherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@northherts.camra.org.uk)




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 [facebook.com/CAMRANorthHerts](https://facebook.com/CAMRANorthHerts)  
 [instagram.com/camranorthherts](https://instagram.com/camranorthherts)


## SOUTH HERTS CAMRA

 [southherts.camra.org.uk](http://southherts.camra.org.uk)  
Chair: Ian Boyd  
[chair@southherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@southherts.camra.org.uk)

Branch contact: Ben Wilkinson  
[contact@southherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:contact@southherts.camra.org.uk)


 [facebook.com/camrasouthherts](https://facebook.com/camrasouthherts)  
 [instagram.com/southhertscamra](https://instagram.com/southhertscamra)  
 [twitter.com/SouthHertsCAMRA](https://twitter.com/SouthHertsCAMRA)

## HERTS & ESSEX BORDERS CAMRA

 [heb-camra.org.uk](http://heb-camra.org.uk)  
Chair: Brendan Sothcott  
[chairman@heb-camra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@heb-camra.org.uk)

Branch contact: Graham Darby  
[secretary@heb-camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@heb-camra.org.uk)

## WATFORD & DISTRICT CAMRA

 [watford.camra.org.uk](http://watford.camra.org.uk)  
Chair: Andrew Vaughan  
[chair@watford.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@watford.camra.org.uk)

Branch contact: Andrew Vaughan  
[branch@watford.camra.org.uk](mailto:branch@watford.camra.org.uk)

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SATURDAY 20TH MAY 2023

Join us onboard our special charter train as we journey from London and the south east to Barrow Hill Roundhouse in Derbyshire. Our train of heritage British Rail Mk2 coaches, led by powerful freight locomotives courtesy of GB Railfreight, will be picking up at **Finsbury Park, Potters Bar, Stevenage and Peterborough** en route to **Barrow Hill**.



### Our destination - Rail Ale 2023 Beer Festival

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Fares		Station	Depart	Arrive
Standard Class Adult	£119.00	Finsbury Park	07:15	20:00
Standard Class junior	£109.00	Potters Bar	07:30	20:20
First Class Non-Dining	£169.00	Stevenage	07:45	20:40
First Class Dining	£279.00	Peterborough	09:00	22:00
Rail Ale 2023 discounted entry	£10.50			

Provisional timings, to be confirmed prior to tickets being sent out. Please note First Class Dining not available from Peterborough.

[www.ukrailtours.com](http://www.ukrailtours.com)

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**AT HITCHIN RUGBY CLUB**

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Packages in advance online now

Friday - Noon to 11PM Saturday - Noon to 10PM. Scan QR code



HitchinBeerCiderFestival



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HERTS**



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