

**FREE**



**HERTFORDSHIRE**

# Pints of View



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale

**Spring Edition 2024**

**Issue No. 309**



**HITCHIN RUGBY CLUB**



**THU 6<sup>TH</sup> - SAT 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

***Specials in this issue:***

**Community owned pubs and ACVs  
6 Ale Trails to get you walking (and drinking)  
St Albans' oldest pub - think you know which it is?  
Pub Signs competition**



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Georgina Donatantonio  
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Paul Ainsworth  
Roger Protz  
Steve Bury  
Will Lewis

Real stories, real people, **real ale**

# Be part of the CAMRA story

**Real ale is  
just the start...**

Join the CAMRA story  
[camra.org.uk/join](https://camra.org.uk/join)

  
Campaign  
for  
Real Ale



# Herts Personalities

## Christine Sears R.I.P.

As the sun was setting on Thursday 18th January, a large gathering congregated at the Queen's Head, Allen's Green to celebrate the life of Christine (Chris), which ended on 27th November 2023, after her battle with cancer. One of Chris's final acts was paying for the buffet and drinks!



Photo: Laura Brown

Christine Sylvia Thorp, born on 3rd August 1944 in Dartford, Kent, whilst V-1 flying bombs flew overhead on one-way trips to London, was a feisty, strong-willed and very generous person.

Chris and her husband Mark lived in Sawbridgeworth for over 30 years and were long-time CAMRA members. Chris took the post of Herts & Essex Borders Publicity Officer from 2011 until 2022 and still attended meetings between cancer treatments, when well enough. She enjoyed her beer, but in moderation, and also liked to correct the branch chairman's

grammar. From 1995 she was a member of RACS (Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth).

She and Mark would holiday in the south of France and from these trips built up a large collection of wine. Unfortunately, Mark died during the Covid19 fiasco, which left the huge collection of fine wines for Chris to work through.

Chris will be sorely missed, a no-nonsense lady who was exasperated at the misuse of language, as well as the missing apostrophe in Queens, Kings, Bulls, and any other variety of animal's Head. I'm with her on that one all the way.

**Norman Samuels**

*Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA*

**Note:** The full version of this article can be found online at <https://heb-camra.org.uk>

## Victoria Kevans R.I.P.

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Victoria (Vic) Kevans, popular landlady of the Victoria in Hitchin, passed away in January after a short battle with cancer.

Much-loved Vic took over as landlady in 2006 at the age of 25, from her mother Cilla. Under her lead, the Victoria has become a vibrant hub at the centre of the community, supporting a range of events from quiz nights & live music to comedy & cabaret including the annual Vic Fest music festival. Vic developed the Victoria into the popular and busy pub it is today, with an attractive welcoming outdoor area, and a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide.

Vic was not only the heart of the Victoria, she was also a beautiful soul and cornerstone of the community. She loved and invested deeply in our town, was a tireless supporter of charities and co-founded Hitchin Street Food. Posts on the pub's social media show how



much she was admired & appreciated, and will be greatly missed.

We thank Vic for her support of CAMRA, allowing us to hold branch meetings in the pub's historic barn, and for providing support and sponsorship to The Hitchin Beer Festival.

CAMRA North Herts sends its condolences to Vic's family & friends and staff & customers at the Victoria.

**Jeremy Kitson**

*CAMRA North Herts*



# Starting Pint

I'm used to being asked: "*Have you got enough material for the next edition?*", but whereas six months ago I'd answer: "*yes, but I'll be able to find space for a good article*", now I simply reply: "*yes*".

Thanks to everyone who contributes – either by sending in articles, writing letters, or compiling quizzes. This issue sees acclaimed and prolific **Beer Writer, Journalist** and

St Albans local **Roger Protz** return with the first of his musings in a new regular 'column', which you will have already found if you read magazines by 'leafing through' from the back cover.

I say 'return', as Roger edited **Herts Newsletter**, the forerunner of **Hertfordshire Pints of View**, for a short while back in the 1980s and has contributed articles and comment ever since.

Whilst Roger is passionate about cask-conditioned ale and a CAMRA stalwart, having been recruited to the Campaign in 1976 by co-founder Michael Hardman to edit the fledgling annual **CAMRA Good Beer Guide** and monthly *What's Brewing* magazine, he is *not*, axiomatically, against other types of beer, or their method of dispense. He *is*, however, passionately against the industrial (multinational) brewers who have commoditised 'beer' with their branded strategy of manufacturing products as cheaply as possible and letting marketing, rather than quality, drive sales growth.

Keep banging the drum, Roger.

Over the page in *Campaign Column*, there's a great piece co-written by South Herts CAMRA stalwart **Les Middlewood** and CAMRA pub preservation guru **Paul Ainsworth**. The article explains the benefits of registering a pub as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)** and encourages readers to nominate their local, especially if it might be under threat.



To summarise, a pub with ACV status cannot be legally demolished, nor converted to another use. As a consequence, the local community has a greater chance to buy and run the pub for itself.

Yes, **CAMRA** is still very much **for - Real - Ale**, however, the campaigning emphasis should now focus on keeping pubs open. A pub that closes and is either converted to flats, or

demolished, is a pub lost forever. There is no turning back. In contrast, when a brewery stops putting real ale into casks, there is always the opportunity to restart production, or, more likely, for other younger, hungrier brewers to step up to the challenge.

This issue tells the tales of some Hertfordshire pubs that are either already **Community Pubs**, or, hopefully, on the road to becoming one. Whilst there are various iterations of a 'Community Pub' with regard to ownership and how it's run, the common thread is that the community who uses the pub has a stake in it.

Also prevalent in the magazine are a number of **ale trails / pub crawls** that have either happened or are about to, in the coming weeks. If any of these pique your interest, do try one, some or all for yourself. A well organised trip to a variety of good pubs serving a range of great beers ticks all the right boxes!

Finally, the subject of **'beer temperature'** just won't go away. Those of you who were with us last summer will remember the letter criticising a local pub/brewer for serving cask ale at 'too low a temperature'. This prompted a guns-all-blazing response from the defendant and some objective comment from yours truly. I thought that might be the end of it, but, as you will find out in *Readers Write*, the genie refuses to climb back into the bottle.

**Paul Donatantonio**  
Editor

# Campaign Column

## Pubs – Assets of Community Value

We often mention the term **“Asset of Community Value (ACV)”** in these pages but what does it mean? And what are the benefits for pubs and their communities?

Under the Localism Act of 2011, an ACV listing for a community asset (a pub can qualify) is awarded by District or Borough Councils if a submission by a Community or Interest Group meets certain criteria.

Once awarded, the ACV brings some safeguards for pubs. **Should the owner of the pub decide to sell, then a six-week moratorium period can be triggered in which a Community of Interest Group can register a desire to make a bid.**

If that is the case, then the owner of the pub must allow a further six-month period for the Group to raise funds and make an acceptable offer. But should that six months expire, the owner is then free to sell to any other bidder. **Once awarded an ACV is in place for five years.**

A Community or Interest Group can be a Parish Council, or a group of “Pub Friends” set up by 21 or more local signatories.

ACV status can also help ward off **unwanted planning applications** to change the use of a pub, as most planners regard ACVs as strong

evidence that a pub is valued by its community and should therefore be protected.

In **Hertfordshire** over **forty pubs** are currently listed, the largest number of these following successful submissions by Parish Councils. The photos show two examples – one in **Colney Heath** and the other in **Ware**, but both called **Crooked Billet**! Some other pubs have ACVs that have now expired, whilst there are others where applications failed to meet the criteria.



*Crooked Billet, Colney Heath – St Albans City & District Council (ACV expires 19/12/28)*

Details of how to make an Asset of Community Value submission can be found on all Borough Council websites, where a register of all successful bids is also lodged. CAMRA also has useful pages of detailed advice which can be found at:

[https://camra.org.uk/campaign\\_resources/nominating-a-pub-as-acv-a-camra-guide](https://camra.org.uk/campaign_resources/nominating-a-pub-as-acv-a-camra-guide)

If you know of a local pub that might benefit from ACV status, don't assume that someone else will be on the case! Never forget that a pub converted to another use is unlikely to be a pub again, and a pub demolished is a pub lost forever. **Britain's heritage is at stake.**



*Crooked Billet, Ware – East Herts Council (ACV expires 09/04/24)*

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA  
Pub Protection Officer  
& Pub Data Coordinator

**& Paul Ainsworth**  
National CAMRA  
Pub Heritage Group Chair  
& Planning Policy Adviser

# Steve's Shout

## Why do Pubs serve lacklustre Beer?

I had a strange experience at a local pub/eatery. On the bar were two handpumps, each offering Marston's Pedigree; a beer that I find very satisfying though not the same since the legendary Burton Union system of fermentation-in-wood is no longer in use. "A pint of Pedigree" I asked the barperson, who replied: "it's not on". My wife chipped in at this point: "He's a real ale lover and will not be happy". The barperson replied: "We have been told not to put the Pedigree on unless we can guarantee that it will sell within three days". This sounded all very laudable and I was offered a substitute KeyKeg from Beavertown. However, as the beer is cold, fizzy, cloudy, highly hopped and expensive, I unsurprisingly declined.



Obviously the pub in question does not want to be throwing beer away, but how can they know that any cask broached will be sold within the two-day target? Is there a way to extend the beer's life and allow more customers to enjoy a pint of cask-conditioned Pedigree for longer? If so, sales go up and the problem is solved.

The first option should be to trial Race Spiles (does any reader know where the name comes from?) that allow the excess CO2 from secondary fermentation to escape, whilst only admitting air when the beer is being dispensed. They're cheap and effective at prolonging life by a day or two. The second, more expensive option, if more life is needed, would be to install a cask breather/aspirator, which fills the headspace with low-pressure CO2 (rather than air) that's not absorbed by the beer. This will add a few more days.

So, modern equipment makes it possible to extend a beer's life up to a week. But that got me thinking...

When clearing up after the St Albans Beer

Festival a decade ago, I noticed a broached firkin (72 pints) of Courage Directors bitter that was about to be poured away. Coming to the rescue, I fitted a new bung, lifted the barrel into the back of my car and arranged with a pal to drop it off in his garden shed. *[Ed: if you did that now, HMRC would have you locked up!]* We then set it up in his conservatory, so non-sterile conditions and a major change in temperature.

To drink, the beer should be cool (10 - 14 C) but for fermentation it must be warm enough for the yeast to carry on working and give the beer its condition, which is especially important when serving directly from the cask. Having collected the beer on Sunday, we started to drink it on Tuesday, with help from a few pals. A good night was had by all, but the cask was not finished and so it went back in the shed.

Unfortunately, we could not get together again until the following Saturday and in the meantime there were heavy frosts. I was concerned that once moved, yet again, to the much higher temperature of the house, the beer would be off. I needn't have worried, as nothing of the sort happened. The Directors was in as good a condition as it had been four days earlier and so we happily finished the cask!

This poses a big question; if we can treat a cask with this lack of care over a five-day period without noticeably affecting the quality of the beer, why is so much lacklustre beer being served in pubs?

**Steve Bury**  
Chairman  
Swale CAMRA

# The Royston Club

## **SOUTH HERTS CAMRA AWARD WINNER AGAIN!**



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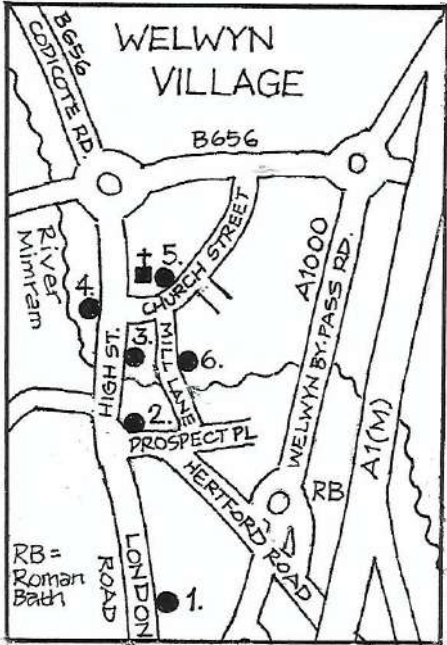
**A WARM WELCOME TO CAMRA MEMBERS & ALL**  
**12 College Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 5ND**  
**01727 853656**  **@roystonclub**



# Ale Trips & Trails

## The Old Welwyn Real Ale Trail - Saturday 11 May

Join South Herts Branch members for a real-ale ramble around the old village of Welwyn. Taking in six cask ale-selling pubs, this will be a chance to not only enjoy the beers and pubs but to tread the historic streets, spot the River Mimram and enjoy some good, friendly company!



Our itinerary:

- **1.00pm (1) Steamer**, London Road
- **1.45pm (2) White Hart**, Prospect Place
- **2.30pm (3) Tavern**, High Street
- **3.15pm (4) Wellington**, Codicote Road
- **4.00pm (5) Rose & Crown**, Church Street
- **4.45pm (6) White Horse**, Mill Lane

And if you fancy an early start, why not visit the fascinating Roman Baths located on the east side of the roundabout at the foot of Welwyn By-Pass Road. Opens at 10am.

For more details on the six pubs, please go to [www.whatpub.com](http://www.whatpub.com) and enter “Welwyn” into the search bar.

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

### Getting There...

FREQUENCY OF SERVICE	RETURN FARE		15 - 30 mins		30 mins	1 hr	30 mins	30 mins	1 hr	1 hr	1 hr
	TRAIN	BUS	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN	724	323	301	725	908	908
St Albans St Peter's Street		£4.00									
Ware crossing		£7.60				10.55					
Hertford bus station		£7.60				11.06	11.51				
Hertford North railway station	£5.70			11.35							
Potters Bar railway station	£3.55		12.16								
Hatfield town centre		£4.00						11.57			
Hatfield railway station	£2.10	£4.00	12.22					12.01			
Letchworth GC railway station	£5.00				11.57						
Hitchin railway station	£3.55				12.01						
Stevenage railway station	£2.40	£4.00			12.09						12.05
Knebworth railway station	£1.70	£4.00			12.12						12.14
Welwyn Garden City bus station		£4.00	12.28	12.20	12.20	11.30	12.25	12.28	12.18	12.48	
Welwyn North railway station			12.30	12.16	12.16				12.31		
Welwyn St Mary's Church			1.5 mile walk	1.5 mile walk	1.5 mile walk				0.3 mile walk		
Welwyn St Mary's Church			13.04	12.50	12.50			12.43	12.37	13.06	12.26

#### TRAIN NOTES

RETURN FARES ARE TO WELWYN NORTH WITH RAILCARD.  
TRAINS FROM HERTFORD REQUIRE A CHANGE AT STEVENAGE

#### BUS NOTES

£2.00 SINGLE JOURNEY FARES ON ALL ROUTES. UNLIMITED TRAVEL WITH £7.60 EXPLORER TICKETS.  
908 FROM WELWYN GARDEN CITY TO STEVENAGE. 908 FROM STEVENAGE TO WELWYN GARDEN CITY

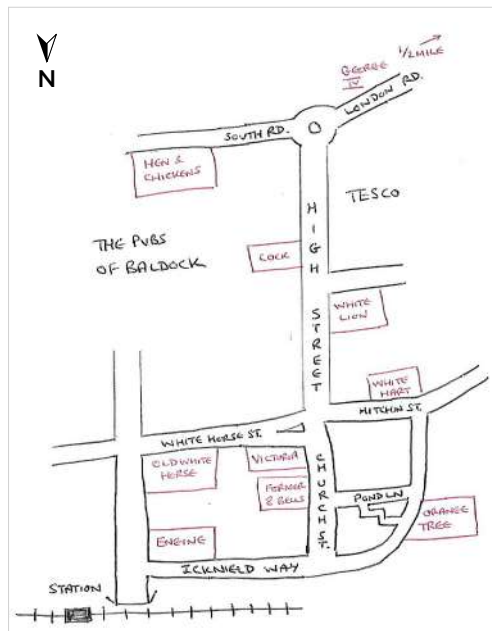
## A wander around the pubs of Baldock

Just over 100 years ago, there were over 50 pubs, four breweries and various maltings in Baldock; not bad for a town with a population of around 2,000. The abundance of pubs was due to both the high number of travellers passing through the town on the Great North Road (A1) and the fact that beer was a safer drink than water.

Below is my short tour of the nine remaining pubs, starting from the railway station.

The **Engine** has recently reopened and now offers real ales (*Greene King IPA* and *Timothy Taylor Landlord*). Whilst the pub has tended to attract a younger crowd, the new tenants are looking to revert to a more traditional pub. Next door is the **Old White Horse**; a food-led pub offering real ale from *Brewpoint*. The original White Horse was a large coaching inn, part of which remains in Whitehorse Street. Today's pub was once a taproom for the inn's staff and servants.

The **Victoria** in Sun Street is a drinkers' pub, usually serving *Doom Bar* with TV screens showing sport. From here, head down Church Street and look out for the glass panel on the door of the former Eight Bells. Turn into Pond



Lane before cutting through to the Good Beer Guide listed **Orange Tree**, which normally serves eight real ales (regulars being from *Tring*, *Buntingford*, *Titanic* and *Greene King*) along with real cider.

Heading back towards the town centre, in Hitchin Street is the **White Hart**, which, unfortunately,



does not serve real ale. Turning into the High Street, the **White Lion** is another former coaching inn, normally offering a range of four real ales from *Greene King*, one of which is the house beer, *Baldock Pride*. Across the road, the **Cock** also offers an interesting range of well-kept real ales including the popular *Greene King*-brewed house beer, OBH (Original Brew House).

Away from the town centre in South Road is the **Hen and Chickens**, which normally serves two real ales from *Greene King*. This locals' pub has live music at weekends and is named after an early motor vehicle! Finally, the **George IV**, part of the Chef and Brewer chain, falls within the parish of Weston but is regarded as a Baldock pub, as it adjoins the southern edge of the town. There are normally three real ales available from *Greene King*.

The *Good Beer Guide* has included 13 Baldock pubs since it was first published and all nine still open have made at least one appearance. Why not try them out?

**Bryan Bird**  
Pubs Officer  
CAMRA North Herts



## North Herts make a Pig's Ear of it

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December members of **CAMRA North Herts** visited **East London & City Branch's Pig's Ear Festival**. This has been an annual excursion for some, while others joined for the first time, enjoying a Wetherspoon breakfast nearby as a settler.

The 39<sup>th</sup> running of this event was named 'Dark Side of the Pig', with a recognisably Pink Floyd-esque logo.

It takes place in the charismatic **Round Chapel**, Hackney, E5 OLY, which has a few pews remaining downstairs and all those on the balcony still in place for a sit-down, effectively making the drinkers on the main floor part of the 'show' for the audience.

The festival prominently supports local brewers, with those within 30 miles marked LOCALE BREWERY in the programme and, even closer to home, all branch breweries marked EAST LONDON.



If you'd like to brighten up a winter day this year, take a trip to Hackney and meet us there!

**Dean Barrett**  
Chair  
CAMRA North Herts



## Bushey Music Crawl 2024

The Bushey Festival is a series of events that celebrates arts, culture, and local history in Bushey every year in July. The festival is a registered charity, and the organisers hold an annual **Bushey Music Crawl** as a fundraiser in January. Pubs, restaurants, and other venues from Bushey Heath all the way down to the High Street host bands throughout the Saturday afternoon event, which has become a popular fixture in the calendar.

This year the crawl took place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January and the first band up was local covers duo **Heath**, who were performing at the **Three Crowns**. Heath are frequent visitors to pubs in the area, having previously appeared at the **Horse & Chains** and the **Prince George** in Watford, amongst others. The Three Crowns has built up a reputation over the years for its food and for providing a venue for the Bushey & Oxhey Round Table and Ladies Circle Beer Festival and we expect that reputation will continue under the new management. The ales available on Saturday were **Fuller's London Pride (ABV 4.1%)** and **Tring Side Pocket for a Toad (ABV 3.6%)**.

After traditional Irish punk folk from **Missing the Ferry** in the **Horse & Chains** it was on to the **King Stag** for some jazz standards from the **Out of Handers**. I think the diners in the pub were surprised at the size of the crowd who turned up for the crawl. Favorite tunes from the band included the soul jazz standard Sunny and Van Morrison's Moondance. Unusually for a Greene King pub, there were no GK branded beers on the bar. Instead, we had house beer **King Stag Bitter (ABV 3.9%)**

and **Vale Maybe Next Year? (ABV 3.4%)** I got the feeling the name of that beer is perhaps a dig at Dry January and failed New Year resolutions.

After classic soul from **Hayley** in Italian restaurant Barracuda and **Cover Loverz** at bar/restaurant **Par 3 Lounge** it was time for some solo guitar rock and pop from **Pip** at the **Swan**, which was absolutely rammed when I arrived.

It doesn't take many people to fill a pub as cosy as the Swan, but even so I don't think I've ever seen a place so busy. One of the women remarked that she'd never been so pleased that the Ladies was outside, since the men had to cross the pub to get to the Gents. I was worried I wouldn't be able to get to the bar, but I had no problem getting a pint of **Young's Bitter (ABV 3.7%)** in the end. My favourite songs from Pip included Blondie's Sunday Girl and The Cranberries Linger.

The final venue was the **Red Lion** on Bushey High Street. It's a Stonegate managed house and a much roomier pub than the Swan, but it was

packed for **Jukebox**, a well-drilled five-piece band who played many familiar '60s classics. I particularly enjoyed the band's harmonies on Hang On Sloopy and their very cool cover of Apache by the Shadows. The beers on offer included the latest seasonal winter ale from **Tring Going Loco (ABV 3.9%)**.

Look out for news about the Bushey Festival and next year's Bushey Music Crawl on the festival website: <https://busheymusiccrawl.org/>

**Andrew Vaughan**  
Watford & District CAMRA



*Pip performing at the Swan, Bushey*  
*QR code to Bushey Festival website.*



## Watford & District 'Pre-Xmas' Pub Crawl 2024

Every year Watford & District branch goes on a 'Pre-Xmas' Pub Crawl around different areas of London. Although the crawl originally took place in December, over the years it has managed to migrate into the New Year, where it now acts as a welcome antidote to the January blues.

Starting at the underground station, this year's route took us around Holborn, traditional home of barristers, newspapers, and the London School of Economics (LSE). The first port of call was the well-known Sam Smith's Brewery pub the **Princess Louise (1)**. The pub only has one cask beer, Sam Smith's Traditional Bitter, but it is definitely worth a visit to admire the elegant Victorian mirrored and partitioned interior. When I first visited the pub in the 1990s it was open plan, but a few years ago the brewery took the decision to return many of its classic pubs to their original layout. Sometimes Sam Smith's decisions can be controversial, but this is one we can thank them for.

Next on the list was the **Shakespeare's Head (2)** on Kingsway, a large JD Wetherspoon pub in a converted bank, which was unsurprisingly busy on a Friday night. Wetherspoon pubs

can be variable in quality, but this is one of the better ones and is accordingly listed in the 2024 Good Beer Guide.

We wandered off Kingsway, past the LSE and skirted Lincoln's Inn Fields to reach the **Seven Stars (3)**. The pub is directly behind the Royal Courts of Justice and is decorated with pictures and photographs with a distinctly legal theme. The Grade II-listed pub dates from 1602 and is a quirky little survivor that's avoided redevelopment while glass office buildings spring up nearby.

We went out onto the Strand and down Essex Street to reach the **Edgar Wallace (4)**, named after the famed crime writer. The interior is covered in advertising posters and memorabilia from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It was particularly amusing to see all the old tobacco adverts.

Just up the road is the **Temple Brew House (5)**, a microbrewery with a subterranean bar that has a tap-room vibe. The brewery produces keg beers and a range of cask ales, including a Premium Bitter, IPA, Porter, and the Pale Ale that I had.



Our route then took us down Fleet Street towards Ludgate Circus. On the way was **Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese (6)**, another classic Sam Smith's pub with a cottage-like interior and a welcome real fire. The pub was rebuilt in 1666 after the Great Fire of London and has a cosy, conspiratorial feel.

Nearer to Ludgate Circus we paid a visit to the **Old Bell Tavern (7)**, which is an **Everard's** Pub Company house, built by Sir Christopher Wren. I had a pint of the house beer, **Everard's** Pale Ale, brewed by St Austell Brewery.

It was a bit of a walk up the old route of the Fleet River to Cowcross Street and our next pub, which was the Grade II-listed **Castle (8)**. Three gold balls hang outside the pub,



*No. 7 - The Old Bell Tavern in Fleet Street*



*No. 8 - The Castle in Cowcross Street, Farringdon*

as according to the Good Beer Guide 2024 the landlord was granted a pawnbroker's licence by King George IV, who needed to pawn his pocket watch to pay his gambling debts.

A short distance away on Farringdon Road was our final pub, the **Sir John Oldcastle (9)**; another Wetherspoon pub, which is named after the Tudor nobleman who is thought to be the inspiration behind Shakespeare's character Sir John Falstaff. The pub is near to Farringdon Station, which is where our entertaining evening ended. Where will next year's crawl take us, I wonder?

**Andrew Vaughan**  
Watford & District CAMRA

## Beers & Pubs – HEB Derby Weekend

For the Herts & Essex Borders branch 2023 end-of-year weekend away, Brendan Sothcott (CEO) put forward the delights of Derby. From the initial enthusiasm there was the wait to see if the rail unions were going to scupper the outing. Finally, with the all clear, trains and accommodation were booked, and all were in holiday mode.

So, on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, a hardy group of six made it to Derby. First stop near the station was the **Everards**-owned **Brunswick Inn**, a wedge-shaped place with posh lounge, single bar and other interesting rooms. On offer were no fewer than 13 beers, of which five were in-house and three **Everards**. Those selected went down well, and were cheaper than in Herts. A quick visit to the **Alexandra Inn** followed, on the way to our hotel.

After letting our filling breakfast settle, we met up for the day's journey out to the wilds. As the bus stop was outside the Brunswick Inn, it would have been rude not to pop in for refreshment. Although before midday, it was nice to see the

pub doing a good trade. On a crisp, clear day, we travelled by yellow Skylink bus through Derby, then via Shardlow (an inland port on the Trent and Mersey Canal, much like Berkhamsted), and Radcliffe-on-Soar Power Station (Britain's last coal-fired power station, due to close September 2024), before arriving at our day's destination, the small town of Castle Donington.

Once off the bus, we went into the Castle Inn. The pub has diversified, with a formal restaurant zone, a seated area with pizza oven and a hall for entertainment. The central bar had three beers on offer: Charnwood's Vixen (4.0%) and Salvation (3.8%), both excellent and, strangely, Fuller's London Pride (4.1%), which turned out to be the most popular, locally.

The tour then headed up into the old town centre to the **Flag** micropub, which turned out to be closed, resulting in a stop at the next-door **Apiary** café bar and shop of local artwork. This has a small pub area at the front, but, being a group, we gained the back room for ourselves.

Two beers were on sale, **Timothy Taylor Boltmaker (4.0%)** and **Black Iris Snake Eyes APA (3.8%)**, so, naturally, we all went for the latter - a good pale ale enjoyed by all. The food was also excellent. Around the corner was the old village style **Jolly Potter**, with upstairs room and tiny bar, Victorian fireplace and jugs hanging from ceiling beams. Beers were **Landlord, Doom 'Thingy', Bass** and **Wye Valley HPA (4.0%)**, which proved to be a good choice. Down the stairs is a rich display of framed theatre posters dating back to the 1950s and 60s.

With the night now drawing in, we went down some steep steps to the main road and into the **Cross Keys**. Beers on offer were **Sharp's Atlantic, GK Abbot, Marston's Pedigree, and Wye Valley HPA** again. After another fine pint of HPA, we were soon on the bus back to Derby.

Arriving at the **Victoria Inn**, we were slightly worried by the door security - bouncer to you and me - and Queen Victoria would not have been amused with the interior; open plan, plenty of seating and a basic décor. In the function room at the back was a rock band. The clientele was a mix of older rockers and young punks, and on offer were seven real ales from **Leatherbritches, Dovedale, Parish, Stockport** and local **Little** breweries, I had the Little Porter, which went down well. There were also at least eight real ciders, which were very popular with the Mohican punks. Time for a curry and bed.

For Sunday we stayed local, walking across park land and the River Derwent to the **Smithfield**, which was doing a good trade at midday; a very popular local CAMRA favourite, with a large main public room. Walls décor is beer trays fixed to the walls and framed cigarette card sets. Nine beers were on offer from **Green Duck, Fyne, Burning Soul, Tindall, Two By Two, Lost Industry, Neepsend, Craven** and **Bass**, of which

there was one porter, one mild, one bitter and six pale ales. I was very happy with my dark mild **Fyne Fireside Stories (3.7%)**.

Next pub after a walk along the river was the **Exeter**. Whilst looking a little run down from the outside, inside was warm and welcoming. A small bar serves a multitude of rooms with décor from cosy home to shabby chic. The Sunday roast crowd make lunchtime busy, but we bagged a table for an hour and chose from five beers brewed by local Derby brewery **Dancing Duck** (which included an **Indian Porter (5.0%)**, **Thornbridge, Marston's** and **Little**.

I now had to head back down south, but stopped at the **Alexandra Hotel** on the way. This proper two-room establishment has not suffered the Sarah Beeny/Spoons approach

to a pub. The main public side is the plainer room, with a long bar and a mass of railway memorabilia, train and station signage. Seven beers were on offer from **Castle Rock, Blue Bee, Brass Castle, Lenton Lane, Nene Valley, and Triple Point**; their **Porter (4.0%)** being the one I went for. This is another pub with a good selection of real ciders. The lounge has a small serving bar with the walls a mass of pub and brewing memorabilia. Two museums and lots of real ale, so definitely worth a visit!

The three remaining weekend visitors headed to two nearby tap locations: firstly, the **Derby Brewing Tap House** with five real ales, (four being in-house), ranging from **Hop**

**Till You Drop (3.9%)** to **Blood Moon (4.3%)**, three ciders and lots of craft keg, and finally **Furnace Brewpub** which was dispensing seven real ales from **Furnace, Shiny, Neepsend, Blue Bee** and **Runaway Brewery**.

Fantastic! A trip to Derby is well worth it - even if you're not into trains or the local football.

**Norman Samuels**  
Herts & Essex Borders CAMRA



Victoria Inn, Midland Place, Derby





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## In May Dial 'M' for Mild

As part of CAMRA's national **Make May a Mild Month**, our annual celebration of Dark Mild is fast approaching... Hertford's Mild night has now been running since 2006.

On **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May**, four Hertford town centre pubs will each present at least one Dark Mild from across Britain – come and join the friendly throng to discover the warm and tasty world of Dark Mild. Our itinerary for the evening is:

- **8.00pm** **Black Horse** - West Street, SG13 8EZ
- **8.45pm** **White Horse** - Castle Street, SG14 1HH
- **9.30pm** **Old Barge** - The Folly, SG14 1QD
- **10.15pm** **Old Cross Tavern** - St. Andrew Street, SG14 1JA

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, but only the latter now survives as an occasional brew.

Today, some fantastic Dark Milds can sometimes be found in the most enterprising of our Free Houses. Local brewers Tring's excellent Mansion Mild, is in their core range and McMullen brews the well-known AK Original Mild – a rare example of a Light Mild. On our route is the **Woolpack** on Millbridge – perhaps there'll be time to call in for an AK!

**Everyone welcome!**

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# Beer & Cider News

## So, what on earth is Perry?



Say the word “Cider” and most people will give you a nod of understanding and a good stab at what they think it is – a wonderful, long, tasty, alcoholic drink to be respected and which is made from apples. Say the word “Perry” and the response is sometimes no more than a simple quizzical shrug. So, what is it?

Put simply, **traditional perry is made from pears**. Similar production methods are utilised as that for cider. But unlike real ale production, which can happen at any time of the year, real cider and perry are generally seasonal products and can only be made when the fruit is ripe. Production is tied to a natural cycle of the cider apple and perry pear trees found in orchards around the country. So, what is *real* cider and perry?

**CAMRA defines real cider or perry as being “fermented from the whole juice of fresh pressed apples or pears, without the use of concentrated or chaptalised juices.”**

The word ‘**chaptalised**’, as used in the definition, refers to a process where the alcohol level in a cider or perry is increased by the **addition of sugar to an unnatural level for storage**, before it is subsequently diluted with water to a desired alcohol content for sale. This process does differentiate it from ciders and perries that were once considered to be real. As an example, **Weston’s** adopt the process of chaptalisation and so their products are **not considered to be real under CAMRA’s definition**. Difficult to detect in taste alone.



Like cider apples, **perry pears** often have humorous names. There’s **Hendre Huffcap**, **Butt** and **Stinking Bishop**. In the perry making process the pulp is often more watery than in the cider making process, requiring a rest once crushed before pressing.

Of course, most of the keg ciders and fonts that we so often see lighting the bar and which are widely advertised on TV - **Strongbow**,

**Thatchers** and so on, are **filtered, pasteurised and carbonated** to deliver that clear, fizzy pint that we all know – but they **fall well short of CAMRA’s definition for real cider**.

CAMRA’s championing of cider and perry over the last 50 years has been credited with playing a significant role in keeping perry alive, **and each October the Campaign now holds an annual ‘Perry Month’ celebration**. October is a busy time in the cider and perry makers calendar, when fruit is harvested, milled, pressed and stored for fermentation and production is in full flow.



Cider and perry have a strong reputation for being made in the **West Country** and **West Midlands** but there are strong pockets in **Suffolk**, in **south coast counties** and increasingly in all parts of England. **Hertfordshire** has its own small but longstanding tradition; these days three cider and perry makers carry the flame - the well-established **Apple Cottage** at **Radwell Mill** near **Baldock** and the **Offley Cidery** at **Offley Hoo Farm**, near **Hitchin**. **Four Acres Estate** at **Little Hadham** produce bottled sparkling cider. **Apple Cottage are the only Herts maker currently producing perry** – try their delicious traditional medium/sweet perries when they are available - **Fred’s Perry** and **Perry Coma**, both ABV 6.8%.

As a piece of nostalgia (and a complete aside) many of our older readers may remember the prominence of the sweet and sparkling bottled **Babycham** from Showerings in Shepton Mallet, Somerset – aimed initially at post WW2 women, with its iconic semi-circular or triangular stemmed glass – all accompanied by a slick, cool and popular TV advertising campaign – “*I’d Love a Babycham*”. It was sold in small bottles and made from pears and heavily promoted in the 1960s to 1980s as a sort of trendy alternative to sparkling wine, often served with a cherry on a stick.



I remember one landlord in Hertford reminiscing that he once had a visit from a Babycham rep who eagerly arrived with marvellous news, opening with “*Congratulations, you have won a prize for selling more Babycham than any other pub on my patch. Tell me, you’re quite a small pub, how on earth do you do it?*”. The somewhat underwhelmed Hertford landlord looked him straight in the eye and bluntly said “*Meet the wife!*”. Oh dear, maybe not what you’d say today but the drink had already widely gained the national nickname of *The Landlady’s Tipple*, supped by many a pub landlady in the course of a day’s work behind the bar – “*three pints of bitter please... oh, and something for yourself, Beryl?*”.

Babycham is still produced and available today, though perhaps a little less in the limelight. After many years lost in the portfolio of a major drinks supplier, it is now back being produced where it all started - by Showerings in Somerset. It doesn’t qualify as a traditional real perry under CAMRA’s definition.

## PERRY

A DRINKER’S GUIDE



ADAM WELLS

And now back to the main subject..... traditional real perry. CAMRA sets aside May and October for special focus on cider and perry. So, this May, please don’t pass up an opportunity to enjoy a glass of traditional perry, if and when you come across it – it’s a beautiful, crisp and tasty long drink,

a worthy alternative to cider. A great drink in its own right - give it a try.

To find out more about traditional perry, there’s not long to wait - look out for CAMRA’s forthcoming crowd-funded book written by Adam Wells – “*Perry: A Drinker’s Guide*” - due to appear in CAMRA’s online bookshop, for sale sometime in May.

Les Middlewood  
**South Herts CAMRA**

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GOOD BEER GUIDE  
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## Thornbridge Brewery

### Innovation, Passion, Knowledge – and confidence in cask

*Riverside Brewery, Buxton Rd, Bakewell DE45 1GS*

Slick marketing and a consistent product. The reasons, in my opinion, why big-brand lagers and stouts are today's go-to 'beers on the bar'.

Unfortunately, cask-conditioned ale, otherwise known as draught real ale, is generally the polar opposite; i.e. poorly marketed and inconsistent. What else can explain why such a wonderfully diverse category, with something for everyone, is ignored by so many of today's pub-goers?

Fortunately, there are brewers who are bucking the trend and taking cask forward. **Thornbridge Brewery**, established 2005 and so less than 20 years old, is most certainly one of them.

What follows are some wise and reassuringly upbeat words from the company's co-founder and **CEO, Simon Webster**, pulled from his interview with **Morning Advertiser** reporter, **Rebecca Weller**, along with a few questions and the odd comment from me...

***"We've continued to be in growth with cask and I think it's very often about the style. I'm sure old brown cask beer may well be in decline as people move on, but cask was very much at the forefront of what we were doing when we started and we were brewing modern styles back then."***

***"Jaipur may never have been a cask beer [if we started now] but the room to market keg beers back in 2005 wasn't there."***

*Ed. How might a kegged Jaipur compare with the cask version?*

*SW. We do make Keg Jaipur too, it exists in cask, keg, bottle conditioned [BC] bottle, can and mini cask. Like any other beer, keg and cask are very different with carbonation and possibly a higher hop note on the nose. The BC bottled version is more similar to cask with lower carbonation – we use a different yeast strain for cask and keg too.*



*Ed. I expected there to be differences in the hopping and carbonation of cask/keg, but would not have guessed that you use different yeast strains. Is that something 'secret' or can I mention it in Pints of View?*

*SW. Absolutely mention it! We use a particular strain in all of our cask beers and a different one in the keg ales – we think that both yeasts get the best out of the beer in both formats.*

***"We often brewed modern styles and we've carried on doing so. Although bright cask beer, like Jaipur, is a big part of what we do, both the emerging and growing parts are with the hazy beers and things like that."***

*Ed. Why do you think hazy beers are popular with (generally) younger drinkers?*

*SW. I think they are more familiar to them than the keg beers and are also Vegan.*

*Ed. Are they visually more appealing?*

*SW. Not to a more traditional crowd who are used to seeing their cask beer pin bright.*

***"It has to be looked after and nurtured and given time to settle; that's the biggest challenge for brewers making cask and why some of the bigger breweries pull away from cask. Different breweries have different beers that need different conditions."***

***"We've found a lot of new brewers have ventured into cask because it's a great seven-day beer; it's not tied up in tanks for three to five weeks, it's able to push on and get people interested in drinking it. But the younger audience probably wants to hear about the different styles."***

***"Artisan product of the UK that can only be experienced properly in a pub."***

***"We're talking about fresh cask beer, which is a live product, so to see a beer turning over***



**every day, every two days, every three days, is perfect. Any longer and it will start to decline somewhat."**

**"As I say, it is an artisan product, it is of this country, so the idea is that people understand it's not just a flat, warm beer. It's served cool, it's served in the appropriate glassware and hopefully the story can also be told."**



*to give the beer another 7 days in cask – by delivering 'local' that beer has only been moved once, which is better for the beer, and arrives on the bar fresher and more flavoursome.*

*Ed. So the fermentation takes place at your brewery; approx 14 days split between tank and cask. Delivery direct to pubs means far less 'swishing around' when compared with delivery into a distribution*

*hub, unloading, racking, reloading etc. etc. Have I got that right, this time?*

*SW. Yes*

**"Having a champion and cellar person in a pub for cask beer is also always good, someone who can look after and cherish it."**

*Ed. I agree with so much in your article, but this maybe top!*

*SW. Thanks!*

**[Thornbridge will continue] "brewing beers that appeal to young and old with interesting styles."**

*Ed. It would be great to have Thornbridge release something special at the St Albans Beer & Cider Festival end September!*

*SW. We would love to do that Paul – let's keep in touch and make sure we get a beer out for that festival – we have a big focus this year to be at as many CAMRA festivals as we can.*

Serving drinkers with high-quality cask-conditioned ale, in a range of styles, at the correct temperature, in the right glasses can be a challenge. However, the breweries and pubs that manage it can expect to build-up a base of loyal customers, who choose beers that they enjoy and get excited about.

Rather different from the big-brand, bland-beer brigade.

Well done and thank you Simon. I'm already excited at the prospect of choosing from your range of **Thornbridge beers** at the **St Albans Beer & Cider Festival 25 – 28 Sep 2024!**

**Paul Donatantonio**

*Ed. When you say "cool", what temperature are you thinking of? According to CAMRA, cask should be served at 'cellar temperature = 11 - 13 C'. Other cask aficionados suggest 12 - 14 C.*

*SW. personally I'd always have my beer on the cooler side and I think slightly below 11 – 13 C is absolutely fine.*

*Ed. With regard to glassware, are you able to expand on this?*

*SW. I was meaning the correct glassware as opposed to another brand.*

*Ed. So Thornbridge beers should be served in Thornbridge branded glasses, rather than A N Other brand? One of my gripes is with pubs that have a nice selection of pint glasses e.g. straight, chalice etc, but when it comes to half pints there's a boring 'water beaker' that should be on a bedside table!*

*SW. Yes that's exactly what I mean – ha ha, yes I think you're correct re halves.*

**"The country is split too on whether you use a sparkler or not. Anywhere from the Midlands up they tend to use sparklers, which give the beer a nice creamy head. What also helps is serving cask slightly cooler than has been done previously; let the beer warm up in your hands."**

**"Buying local is very good because you tend to get a younger beer."**

*Ed. You seem to be implying 'the younger the better' but is this not contrary to the requirements of secondary fermentation?*

*SW. No, it's aimed at freshness – most cask beer tends to be 7-day beer and then we tend*

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# National News

## Open all hours?

At last year's CAMRA AGM & Members' Weekend in Sheffield, a motion to include pub opening hours in the Good Beer Guide 2025 was carried. There were some concerns that many pubs are now quite flexible with their opening hours, thereby guaranteeing that the hard-copy publication would provide erroneous information.

However, even when the times in the Guide are correct, the information can be misleading, as there's no longer a universal definition of 'opening hours'.

Wind back 20 plus years, prior to the 2003 Licensing Act. On Fridays and Saturdays, pub-goers knew that alcohol could be served up to 11.00pm 'closing time' and they would have until 11.20pm to 'drink up' and leave the pub. Simple!

Not so nowadays.

Closing time will sometimes mean 'kicking out time'. When that's the case, the irresponsible publicans can choose to serve right up to the close, whilst the responsible ones (yes, YOU reading *Pints of View*) will have stopped serving around 20 minutes before.

The trouble is, whilst regulars will likely be fully conversant with the pub's definition of 'closing time', the visitor most certainly won't. This can lead to unwanted fractious debate, when someone arrives at the bar 15 minutes before closing time and is told "sorry, we've stopped serving".

I'd be interested to know what readers think. Is there a problem? Is there a geographical interpretation of closing time? Which are the pubs that send you on your way 2 minutes after you've paid for your pint?



Photo: BBC via Yorkshire Post

### Opening Times

Monday	08:00 - 00:00
Tuesday	08:00 - 00:00
Wednesday	08:00 - 00:00
Thursday	08:00 - 00:00
Friday	08:00 - 00:30
Saturday	08:00 - 00:30
Sunday	08:00 - 00:00

Last December, there was a post on Discourse, CAMRA's web forum, under the heading '**Wetherspoon Opening Times**'. Geoff had arrived at the Three Fishes, Worthing, West Sussex around 11.55pm and been told he was too late, as serving had stopped at 11.45pm. The pub's closing time was shown as midnight and Geoff wondered if this was normal or an isolated case?

Having emailed Wetherspoon to seek clarification, I received the following response from the Area Manager:

*"I have looked into the points raised...and have also reviewed CCTV. To confirm, our pubs should be serving right up until closing time as standard and this looks like it wasn't the case...for this I apologise..."*

I later received another email with further unambiguous clarification from JDW HQ:

*"The opening hours displayed on our website/pub windows show the time the pub opens (but not when alcohol is available from) and when the bar closes for the sale of alcohol. On top of the latter there will be 30 minutes wind down (aka drinking up time).*

*Having spoken to a number of managers on my pub visits, the 30 minute wind down is observed as standard, though if the pub becomes empty before the 30 minutes is up, they will close the doors at that point (since no one else can be lawfully served)."*

Maybe other real-ale serving pubcos would like to email me with their interpretations of 'opening hours'?

**Paul Donatantonio**



# Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools  
to help you save it

[camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal](http://camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal)



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale



## The Crooked House – six months on

It's now been six months since the **Crooked House, Himley was badly damaged by fire, with a bulldozer then completing the destruction.** The results of the Police investigation into the events are still awaited, as is the decision of the Council's Planning Department on action regarding the unauthorised demolition.

In the meantime, **CAMRA developed its own follow-up campaigning strategy** and we have also worked with the local MP, Marco Longhi, and the West Midlands Combined Authority and Mayor Andy Street, on measures they have been pursuing.

Part of our strategy is to try and secure legislative changes that would further strengthen pub protection. To this end, on 31 January, a CAMRA delegation met with the Housing and Planning Minister, Lee Rowley MP, and his officials to discuss our potential policy solutions. As background, we presented an update on the exercise we carried out shortly after the Crooked House destruction, which found **32 apparent recent instances of pubs being demolished or having their uses changed without the necessary planning permission having been obtained.**

We focused, in particular, on two areas: the need for enforcement action to be more effective and the importance of a legal definition of a pub being introduced into planning law.

Currently, Councils have discretion on whether to investigate reported breaches of planning control and we consider this should be a statutory duty. Also, with the Crooked House in mind, we feel that **enforcement should be extended to requiring the complete restoration of unlawfully demolished pubs - a Brick by Brick Order.** Demolition of a pub should be made illegal, as against unlawful as at present,



Photo: Chris Green

*The Crooked House, The Crooked House, Somehow caught alight,  
The Crooked House, mysteriously bulldozed in the night,  
Little wonky pub, where folk forgot about their trouble,  
Funny and familiar. And flat. Reduced to rubble.*

**Pam Ayres MBE on Twitter (11/08/23)**

so that stronger penalties could be imposed.

Many of the cases we identified involved the conversion, without permission, of pubs to restaurants, despite these being in different use classes. This highlights a **grey area between where a pub stops and a restaurant starts.** Clear definitions would greatly assist the enforcement task.

Mr Rowley listened very sympathetically to our concerns and agreed that we should now discuss our proposals, in detail, with his officials. Those discussions will also cover other areas that we had no time to go into, including the **permitted development rules in Wales and Scotland, the High Street Rental Auction proposals, the Assets of Community Value regime, and unauthorised residential occupation of closed pubs.**

We will, of course, report further.

**Paul Ainsworth**  
National CAMRA  
Pub Heritage Group Chair  
& Planning Policy Adviser

**27 Feb 2024** Council has issued Enforcement Notice, whereby pub must be "built back to what it was prior to the fire" by 27 Feb 2027. [Ed: what happens on 28 Feb 2027 if it's not?]

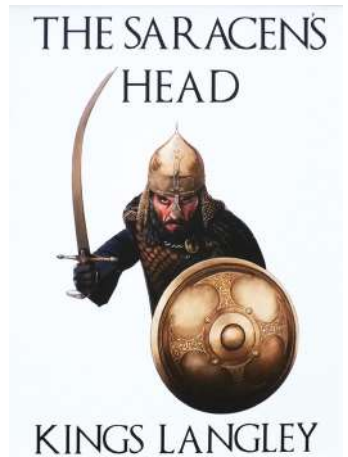
# S O S – Save Our Signs!



Highwayman, Berkhamstead

Founded in 1990, the **Inn Sign Society** raises awareness of the nation's **pub signs** and compiles a record for the benefit of future generations. Many **pub names** have links with historical events, or important people and the Society provides a forum for members to research the history of inn and pub names.

It has an active website and a quarterly full-colour journal to which members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures of pub signs and news from their areas.




Saracen's Head, Kings Langley

As inns and pubs close at an alarming rate, much local heritage is in danger of being lost forever. Pubs are not just a place to enjoy a drink; they are often the beating heart of the community and can reflect its history.

Many members take a general interest in all signs, whilst others specialise in particular counties, breweries, aircraft or railways, to name but a few.

As well as signs, the society also researches pub names and provides explanations and comments on their origins, usage and popularity. It is a fascinating subject in its own right!

<p><b>White Hart</b></p>  <p>This was the heraldic symbol of Richard II, who came to the throne as a nine year-old boy in 1377.</p> <p>Often, the white hart (a male deer or stag) is portrayed with a golden chain or collar around his neck.</p> <p>This refers to the legend, as reported by Aristotle, that Diomedes consecrated a white hart to Diana and placed a gold collar around its neck. (It is the ISS logo)</p>	<p><b>Cross Keys</b></p>  <p>Related to Christian heraldry, this refers to Saint Peter being given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>Often appears on signs close to churches indicating that the original pub building was closely associated.</p>
--	---

Examples and explanations of popular pub names from [innsignsociety.com/pub-names](http://innsignsociety.com/pub-names)

The Inn Sign Society is seeking to recruit more members and bring in new blood to help continue the good work done over the last 30+ years. For more information, including on how to join, see the website at [www.innsignsociety.com](http://www.innsignsociety.com)

If the Inn Sign Society doesn't research, capture and save our pub sign heritage, perhaps no-one will?

**Iain Perks**  
Membership Secretary  
Inn Sign Society

# Pints of View 309 Spring 2023

## Pub Sign Competition

Did you find the **SOS – Save Our Signs** article by **Iain Perks**, interesting?

Have you seen a pub sign that you really like; maybe it has a lovely picture, bright colours, interesting design, humorous image, unusual pub name, or just especially high quality?

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**The two winning entries will each win:**

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Just **ONE** entry per person, please, by: **Fri 10 May 2024**



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# Hertfordshire Quiz Competition

by David Lewis

Fill in the answers below the clues.

**First TWO correct entries drawn, each win:  
2024 CAMRA Good Beer Guide**

1. What was the name of the only English Pope born in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire?

.....

2. What is the motto of Hertfordshire County Council?

.....

3. What is the most northerly farm in Hertfordshire?

.....

4. In what year was the world's first Garden City, Letchworth, founded?

.....

5. Which is the largest parish church in Hertfordshire?

.....

6. Apart from Hertfordshire, where do 'hurricanes hardly happen'?

.....

7. What is the name of the statue, by Franta Belsky, in Stevenage Town Square?

.....

8. Which town formerly in Middlesex was transferred to Hertfordshire in 1965?

.....

9. Where did Daniel Defoe describe, in 1778, as a "genteel market town, very long, having but one street".

.....

10. What annual event is held near AL3 7PT?

.....

11. When was The Magic Roundabout (The Plough Roundabout, Hemel Hempstead) opened?

.....

**Entries by Fri 10 May 2024 to:**  
PoV Competition, 5 Manor Way,  
Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1EL

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

12. What event caused British Parliament to move to Hertford briefly in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century?

.....

13. Which famous scientist was a schoolboy in Hertfordshire and studied at St Albans School from 1952 to 1959?

.....

14. Which singer, with the middle name Anjanette, was born in Welwyn Garden City?

.....

15. Jack o' Legs is reputedly buried in which Hertfordshire village?

.....

16. In which two countries can you find Royston Square?

.....

17. What household item, made in Hertford, could you buy for one shilling (5 pence) in 1920?

.....

18. Which British comedian, a Harpenden resident from 1960-1984, took his name from his home town in Lancashire?

.....

19. Where was the main gate of "Slade Prison" in the sitcom Porridge filmed?

.....

20. How many people died in the Baldock Beer Disaster of 1904?

.....

## 150 Years... and still counting



Congratulations to Bateman's who are celebrating the remarkable milestone of being 150 years old in 2024. Bateman's beers are rarely seen in Hertfordshire pubs these days – more's the pity, they once were – but the Lincolnshire company is going from strength to strength with a new Head Brewer, Buster Grant and a new premium beer, **Five Generation (5G) (ABV 4.2%)** brewed with English hops Harlequin, Fuggles and Olicana and local malts. Some Hertfordshire drinkers will be familiar with some of their standard beers – classic bitter **XB (ABV 3.7%)**, the premium **XXXB (3XB) (ABV 4.8%)** and the warming **Salem Porter (ABV 4.7%)**.

Now operated by the fifth generation of the brewing family, which began with George Bateman in Wainfleet, Lincolnshire, still the brewery's home, current MD Stuart Bateman said:

*"Brewing is the backbone of our business, and we are looking forward to brewing new beers and collaborating with other breweries. We are exceptionally pleased with all we have achieved over the last 150 years and look forward to celebrating our past, but also in taking this opportunity to shout about our new achievements, from our new and modern branding to our fresh approach, which will set Bateman's on a solid footing for another 150 years."*

Bateman's, founded in 1874, are one of only a few traditional family brewers\* that have survived. The oldest five are **Shepherd Neame** (founded in Kent 1698), **Samuel Smith's** (Yorkshire 1758), **Hall and Woodhouse** (Dorset 1777), **Palmers** (Devon 1794) and **Elgood's** (Cambridgeshire 1795). These are followed by



*Bateman's Brewery, Wainfleet*

**Thwaites** (Lancashire 1807), **Harvey's** (Sussex 1820), **Theakston's** (Yorkshire 1827) and our very own **McMullen** (also 1827). In total less than 30 independent family brewers have survived since the end of the First World War. Of course, time will tell whether any of our more recent family-owned breweries will pass down the generations.

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

\* In the context of this article, 'family brewers' are the independent stalwarts of the industry; breweries owned and managed by members of the same family for a century or considerably longer.



# Brewery Visits & Tours

## Tring Brewery Tour

*Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring HP23 6HA*

Nestled in the quaint market town of Tring, in the foothills of the Chilterns, lies Tring Brewery. Better known as **Hertfordshire's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest brewery** (after McMullen), it was **established in 1992 by Richard Shardlow**, who revived the brewing industry in an area which had been dry since the last brewery closed some sixty years before.

Shardlow was already an experienced brewer having worked for the likes of Greene King, Ruddles and Devenish; he was later **joined in 2000 by Andrew Jackson** (formerly of Whitbread) who together helped propel the brewery into becoming one of the major beer producers in Hertfordshire.

Every **second Thursday and Saturday of the month**, the brewery holds tours of their brewing facilities, so, seizing the opportunity, I sought to give it a try.

As we entered the brewery, I was struck by its appearance; being merely a converted cow shed purchased from the adjacent farm; repurposing buildings is a common feature in modern-day brewing. Access to the brewery was via the beer shop, on the left in which there was a tasting bar where visitors could try samples of **Colley's Dog (ABV 5.2%)**, **Pale Four (ABV 4.6%)**, **Citra (ABV 3.9%)** and, their August monthly special, **Dapper Deer (ABV 3.9%)**. There were dozens of packs of bottles throughout the vicinity, along with other bits of memorabilia including caps, hoodies, clay beer mugs, coasters and beer flavoured food such as beef jerky and chutney flavoured with **Death or Glory (ABV 7.2%)**, along with a hot sauce flavoured with **Raven King (ABV 5.5%)**. Every nook and cranny was taken up, and, being crowded, it was quite difficult to get around! To the far right of the shop, was the Brewery Bar where visitors could sample various cask and keg beers, before purchasing takeaway bottles. Gift Packs were also available.

As 2pm struck, a group of us were taken into the brewing area by **PR Director [Ed: and Mid**



*Once a cow shed, but now Tring brewery*

*Chilterns CAMRA chair*] **Jared Ward**. The brewing area was closely packed with **Conditioning Tanks** of various sizes, with the largest containing session beers destined for the cask trade, and the smaller ones intended for monthly/seasonal specials and bottling. Jared assembled the group of us, and began an extensive history lesson about the brewing of beer from its humble origins up to its mass industrialisation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He then discussed the various types of malt that the brewery uses, such as **Pale Malt** which they use as a base for all their beers due to its high fermentable content, **Crystal Malt** which they use for additional flavour and colouring (for amber/brown coloured beers) and **Chocolate Malt** which they use to colour their darker ales such as Stout. I was intrigued to hear that they only use a small amount of this, which, nonetheless, makes all the difference to the colour of the brew.

To get a better idea of how malt works, we tried samples of cask **Side Pocket (ABV 3.6%)**, **Ridgeway Bitter (ABV 4.0%)** and **Tea Kettle Stout (ABV 4.7%)**, where Jared described how each of the three beers was developed with the various malts that give the beer styles of **Golden Ale**, **Bitter** and **Stout** their respective appearance and flavour profile. We then got to sniff and try some of the malt grains. The Pale Malt had a delicate flavour, whilst the Crystal Malt was slightly more pronounced with a touch of sourness, and the Chocolate Malt tasted like Burnt Toast which, understandably, gives Stouts and Porters their characteristic dark colour and roasty 'n' toasty flavours.

Following on from this, Jared talked extensively about hops, including their important keeping and sterilisation properties, and the various





*Tring PR Director Jared Ward enthusing about Tring Brewery and its beers*

hops the brewery uses to help give Tring beers their distinctive flavours. One beer he mentioned in detail was **Raven King (ABV 5.5%)** which we subsequently got to try. It was a punchy, hazy IPA with a medley of tropical flavours and aromas wafting through, made possible through the likes of Mosaic and Citra hops thrown into the mix. [Ed: As far as I am aware, keg Raven King was developed from cask White IPA, which was so good that it won 'Beer of the Festival' at St Albans in 2019]. We then had the chance to sniff these two hop varieties, with the latter being distinctly citrusy in aroma to help give this beer its distinctive edge.

Moving along, we encountered the mighty **Mash Tun**, where the milled malt (grist) is mixed with hot water (liquor) and the resulting wort is then filtered and drained, with the spent grain being donated to the neighbouring farm for use as animal feed. The wort is transferred to the **Copper** where hops are added prior to the end of the boil, before the wort is sent to a **Fermentation Vessel**.

Jared then took us to one of those vessels, where yeast is added to convert the fermentable sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. **All Tring beers are brewed with the same yeast**, which is used 24/7 in order to keep it viable. Even when the brewery suffered a power cut during lockdown, the brewing process had to be kept going using emergency generators! The beer created was an Imperial Stout version of their **Tea Kettle Stout (ABV 4.7%)** measuring a hefty 11% ABV. At the time of writing, it has never been released commercially.

As the tour came to a close, Jared took us back



*Bottles galore in the Tring Brewery Beer Shop*

to the Conditioning Tanks where he described the varying times that each beer matures (conditions) before being dispensed into casks and bottles.

Jared explained that, once a cask is opened (tapped), the beer should be consumed within three/four days before it turns stale, sour and flat. However, some pubs use cask breathers to extend the life of the beer to around a week. These work by supplying low-pressure carbon dioxide (or another inert gas) into the space created in a cask when the beer is dispensed. Without a breather, the cask vents to the atmosphere allowing air into the space, which spoils the beer. To ensure that Tring Brewery beer is being kept well, Jared regularly visits Hertfordshire pubs and assesses all aspects of the beer's quality.

After 90 or so minutes, the tour was over and a group of us spilled out into the shop to browse around and sample yet more brews before buying. After much deliberation I took home a trio of their small-batch beers: **Raven King (ABV 5.5%)**, **Ashwell's (ABV 4.5%)** and **Dagmal (ABV 5%)**; along with a coaster of the Brewery's iconic mascot, a pipe-smoking toad that adorns the labels of the bottled version of **Side Pocket (ABV 4.5%)**.

The tour was an interesting experience that I would thoroughly recommend. Not only do you get to understand the brewing process; you can also sample a wide range of Tring beers. So, if you happen to be in the area, avoid the Grand Union Canal and Taxidermy Museum... and head down to Tring Brewery instead!

**Mike Goldwater**  
Enfield & Barnet CAMRA

# Herts Pubs, Clubs & Breweries

## Rose & Crown – Community Pub in Aston

10 Benington Road, Aston, Stevenage SG2 7DX



*Rose & Crown Aston Ltd. directors: Graham Saunders, Roger Cottam, Graham Ellis, Brian Woodget and Steve Brown*

The **Rose & Crown** in **Aston**, closed for business in December 2014. This June, almost 10 years after it stopped selling beer, **the pumps will be active again** thanks to a determined group of villagers who have bought their local and rescued it from being turned into residential accommodation.

The **grade II listed pub** on **Benington Road** was sold to a developer by brewery **McMullen** in 2015. However, a series of planning applications for up to 10 homes on the plot were rejected by East Herts District Council after substantial and organised objections to the planning applications by the villagers.

In 2022 a deal was struck with the developer that saw **locals** support a smaller housing scheme on part of the pub's land in return for the opportunity to purchase the building, car park and a small garden. **Over 80 residents of Aston** are now **shareholders** in **Rose & Crown Aston Ltd.**, having each contributed between £500 and £25,000 towards the £285,000 fund that has enabled the pub to be bought and subsequently refurbished prior to opening.

Although none of us has run a pub, with our backgrounds in different industries and

businesses, we believe that, between us, we have the experience and **passion to make it work**. A contractor experienced in refurbishing pubs was appointed and work on both the outside and inside started in January. Meanwhile, the overgrown garden and adjacent car park have been cleared by local volunteer labour - all of whom are investors!

The internal refurbishment includes a kitchen and accommodation above the pub consisting of 3 large rooms plus a bathroom for the incoming live-in landlord.

We are looking for the pub to be tenanted by a **landlord with experience in serving well-kept Real Ales** and hope that CAMRA will be able to assist us. *[Ed: Your local CAMRA branch is North Herts and they will indeed be very pleased to help and support you; a community owned pub is something very special]*. It is important that he or she understands what we are trying to achieve and helps bring back the **community spirit**.

The Rose & Crown had been part of village life for decades, **used by all generations and various sports & social clubs**. It was heart breaking to see it close and face a future as modern housing. Whilst recognising the huge challenge ahead, we hope that the **right tenant** will see **the love that the villagers feel for the pub** and will help us make it a **successful and happy place once more**.

If you would like further information or are interested in the tenancy, then please email [randcrownaston2018@gmail.com](mailto:randcrownaston2018@gmail.com)

**Brian Woodget**

*Director*

*Rose & Crown Aston Ltd.*

**Footnote from Ed:** The pub is now on CAMRA's list of Community Pubs with its own entry at <https://communitypubs.camra.org.uk/pubs/371> The website has a wealth of information about the different types of Community Pubs along with full statistics and an up-to-date list.

# Plough – to become Community Pub in Ley Green?

Plough Lane, Ley Green, Hitchin SG4 8LA

**Ley Green** is difficult to find, being in a small hamlet near **King's Walden**, midway between Stevenage and Luton, but being described as near Hitchin! Its one pub, the **Plough**, has been serving ale for nearly 200 years. The building is **Grade II** listed and the interior is recognised by CAMRA's Pub Heritage team as being of **Special National Historic Interest** (one star). The pub was granted **Asset of Community Value (ACV)** (see page 6) on 15/12/20.



bed private home, with the pub being lost forever.

However, within two months, a **cash offer** had been submitted by Ley Green Community Asset, to purchase the freehold interest of the pub.

As of 16th February, North Herts Council has received in excess of **200 formal objections** to the planning application and more than 700 people have joined the 'Save the Plough @King's Walden' Facebook group.

When, last summer, the owners, **Admiral Taverns**, put the pub up for sale, villagers responded by forming a group as part of a plan to buy and run the pub themselves and, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, **Ley Green Community Asset Ltd.** was formed. Reports suggest that Admiral Taverns were unwilling to engage with the company and on 22<sup>nd</sup> November a planning application was made to convert the building into a four-

Locals, pub goers and CAMRA members will be hoping that the planning application is rejected and the villagers are successful in their efforts to restore the pub's fortunes and make it the **hub of their community**.

I wish them luck.

**Paul Donatantonio**

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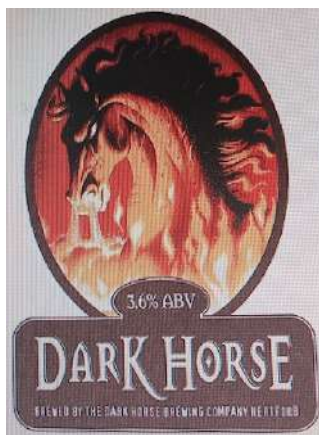
## Whatever happened to... Hertford's Dark Horse brewery

When the **Dark Horse brewery** opened on 17 September 1994, it was the completion of a long-held ambition of Ian Harvey, owner of the **White Horse** in **Castle Street, Hertford**. Ian had bought the Free House in 1985 and over the ensuing years the pub had built a strong reputation for excellent cask beer keeping. Ian had set about sensitively refurbishing the characterful former beerhouse into the multi-roomed pub that we see today. This soon included the construction of a two-storey extension to the rear and the excavation of a new state-of-the-art cellar. The cellar was adapted for the installation of a 3-barrel brewery, designed with the expertise of Rob Jones of the **Pitfield brewery**. Rob remained at the brewery for three-months formulating and overseeing the beers. The brewery was capable of brewing two 1½ barrel brews concurrently, the beers casked into specially commissioned wooden barrels. With the initial intention of brewing beers in the ABV 3% - 4% range, priced at £1.20 - £1.30. Two beers were launched - a premium bitter **Unicorn (ABV 4.1%)** and **Light Brigade (ABV 3.6%)**. A trial beer **Heavy Brigade (ABV 4.6%)** quickly followed.

However, it became apparent that these beer names were already registered elsewhere so new titles were required for the beers. In 1995 **"Unicorn"** became **"Sunrunner"**, **"Light Brigade"** became **"Dark Horse Ale"**, **"Heavy Brigade"** morphed into **"Black**

**Widow"**, another beer, **Ginger Blonde (ABV 3.5%)**, became **"Fallen Angel"**, and a new heady beer, **Crazy Horse (ABV 5.3%)**, became **"Death Wish"**. The reputation of the beers soon spread, with other Free Houses and Beer Festivals requesting the beers - they were even being sold in the House of Commons.

At the end of 1996 Nigel Vogt became the landlord; his arrival was heralded by a new welcoming beer called **"New Nigel"** that sold at 80p per pint.

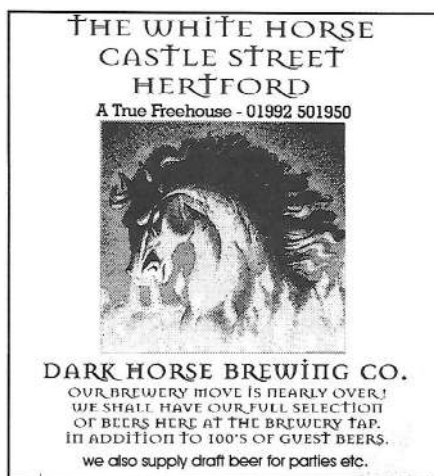


Demand was soon becoming a pleasant problem, outgrowing the capability of the pub-based brewery. New premises needed to be found and were identified in **Adams Yard**, off **Maidenhead Street** in central Hertford - just 350 yards from the pub. Relocation work ensued, additional equipment bought and the new brewery opened in late 1996. **Dark Horse** beers were now being stocked in Fuller's pubs and by Wetherspoon's. In 1997 the **Assizes** pub in **Hitchin**

was acquired (renamed as the **Sunrunner**) a further outlet for the brewery beers.

A Dark Mild was added to the beer range and beer was made available for takeaway. **"Fallen Angel"** scored an impressive third place in CAMRA's East Anglian beer competition - not bad as there were 112 competitors.

1999 was to be a pivotal year. **"Castle Street Bitter"** was added - Dark Horse became the first British brewery to use Canadian Ahtanum



*Dark Horse advert from  
Pints of View in 1996*

hops - but Ian had decided to sell the brewery and it was bought by a group including local entrepreneur Craig Ravenscroft and fronted by brewer Derek Reece. However, very soon after, it became known that the **White Horse** was also to be sold - to Fuller's. In one stroke Dark Horse had lost its "brewery tap" and its major local outlet, and although the initial Fuller's strategy was to run the White Horse as a "Freestyle" pub offering both Fuller's beers and a good range of beers from elsewhere, the Dark Horse beers soon faded from the pub's handpumps.

Dark Horse continued with Derek as head brewer, brewing at Adams Yard, diversifying to brew "house" beers for a number of local pubs. The **Woodman** at **Wildhill** took Dark Horse beers. In 2001 the **Tilbury** pub in **Datchworth** was purchased. When Derek moved on, Tom Maderios, a brewer formerly of **Oakham brewery**, was engaged. But the task of finding pubs to take the beer had become an enduring and insurmountable problem - so many new breweries were competing for the same handpumps - and a decision was taken to close.

On 8 March 2002 the brewery was put into receivership. There was time for one last brew - with faltering humour called **"Dead Horse Ale"** devoured to the last drop by drinkers at the **Lower Red Lion** beer festival in **St Albans**. There was a very short-lived attempt to revive the brewery as **Tilbury Ales** but there was no way back and some of the brewing plant was sold locally to **Buntingford brewery**.

The **Dark Horse Brewing Company** formed a small but important chapter in the real ale revival - particularly in **Hertfordshire**. The beers became consistent and well thought of - a great find for real ale drinkers at the time. It's just a pity that they are not here for today's beer drinkers to try.

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

**Note:** *There is no connection to the modern-day Dark Horse brewery of Hetton, near Skipton in North Yorkshire.*



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## Ye Olde Fighting Cocks – maybe the earliest example of a pub claiming to be the oldest pub!

The oldest pub in Britain is a thorny issue and one that is likely going to lead to plenty of arguments, hopefully good-natured ones in a pub. There are many problems with trying to prove that a pub is the oldest. Many early ale houses would have developed from private houses selling beer to neighbours – in the early medieval period it was common for widows to supplement their income in this way, and ale keeping was one of the few respectable professions for women. When it comes to identifying buildings, however, most alehouses or tipping houses wouldn't differ architecturally from any other house, and before the 16th century, there is little surviving evidence of regulation to supply documentary evidence.



*The Fighting Cocks on a postcard of 5th December 1911*

There is also the question of what counts as a pub. The **Olde Fighting Cocks** has long claimed to be the oldest pub in Britain, but there are a number of similarly old establishments in the town of St Albans itself and just because a building is old doesn't mean that it was built as a drinking establishment. Most venues seem to slip into the business after a previous life. One exception appears to be the building on the **corner of Sopwell Lane and Holywell Hill**, formerly the **Crown & Anchor**. The best-preserved medieval building in St Albans, it appears to have been constructed for a burgeoning beer scene that by this time was being boosted by the doubling of the population that took place in the 16th century as well as growing trade from passing coaches. However, the **Crown & Anchor** stopped serving in the 1950s and has now become a private house.



*The Antelope and its yard from the Gentleman's Magazine, Vol XXIV, 24th September 1845*

The earliest recorded establishment that I have come across was the **Antelope**, built on the corner of **George & Spicer Street** in the thirteenth century to provide a lodging house for pilgrims coming to view the shrine of St Albans. Pilgrims would often be provided with board and lodging – including ale – in the expectation of a suitable donation at the Abbey, and a number of what became St Albans earliest pubs – the **Great Red Lion**, The **Fleur de Lys**, and the **White Hart** – appear to have started out as pilgrim houses. Other early drinking establishments were owned by the Abbey or other religious orders and rented out to entrepreneurs – the **George**, which gives **George Street** its name appears to have



*The Fleur de Lys in 1964*



*The George Inn, looking up George Street towards High Street in 1905*

been operating as an inn by 1401 while the **Bell** in **Chequer Street** was being rented for this purpose from St Marys nunnery by 1446. Unfortunately, neither the **Antelope** nor the **George** survive as drinking establishments (or indeed architecturally) while the **Bell** is now a Café and Restaurant.

The **Peahen** at the top of **Holywell Hill & London Road** was a privately owned and operated inn by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, apparently independent of the abbey, no doubt taking advantage of the growing coaching trade to and from London – St Albans was a town where fresh horses might be taken on, and passengers supplied with food and drink. Like the Great Red Lion, it was torn down at the end of the 19th century in favour of a more modern building.

Around two dozen drinking establishments are mentioned in a survey of 1556 – apart from those mentioned above, only the **King Harry**, on the **outskirts of St Albans** still exists today, although again, it has been rebuilt since. There is a reference to 'Le Bell in St Michaels' in 1596 that looks like a reference to the **Six Bells**, still operational and the **only pub within the old Roman town of Verulamium** (although I don't think it can claim to be that ancient). The **Goat** in **Sopwell Lane** was built around 1500, as a medieval H shaped Hall House, but didn't become a coaching inn until later, possibly around 1649.

So, which qualifies as the oldest in St Albans? **The earliest surviving venue that is still serving drinks** seems to be the **Fleur De Lys**, one of the pilgrim houses, although most of the building is now sixteenth century at the earliest. Similarly, The **White Hart** on **Holywell Hill** appears to have begun as a pilgrim house, although my

sources can't trace it back quite as early as the **Fleur**. The **Peahen** has operated from the same site since the fifteenth century, while the **Six Bells** may go back to the sixteenth. The **Boot** was being run by the widow Beaumont by 1719. There was another tallying of drinking establishments in the Victuallers Billeting List of 1756 when the **Cock**, the **Goat** and the **Lower Red Lion** are all present and correct.

**What then of the Fighting Cocks?** Tellingly, it isn't mentioned in the 1556 survey, and research by the St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society suggests that, while the building may be sixteenth century, the earliest confirmed date of it acting as an alehouse is 1756 when it was trading as the **Three Pigeons** alongside the other venerable establishments mentioned in the Victuallers Billeting List of 1756. **It's certainly old, but not in all likelihood the oldest, although it is one of the earliest establishments to make such a claim!**

**David Thorold**

*Curator of Collections  
(Pre-Historic to Medieval)  
St Albans Museum*





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## East Barnet Residents fight for their Prince of Herts

When I were a lad, the 'Barnets' were at the bottom of Hertfordshire, and not the tip of Greater London.

East Barnet had five pubs open in the 1970s, of which four have closed. At the foot of Cat Hill, the **King's Head**, which became the Drum, closed in 2006 and is now a veterinary surgery; the **Cat & Lantern** in East Barnet Road was a 1970s shop conversion that opened as a wine bar and closed in 2008; and heading north out of the village towards New Barnet, the **Bell & Buck** and the **Alexandra** closed in 2010 and 2013, respectively.



So, what of the one pub that remains?

The excellent, *GBG 2025*-listed **Prince of Wales**, on Church Hill Road at the heart of the village, opened in 1876, is owned by Stonegate, who bought it from Mitchells & Butlers (M&B) in 2010, and may well have been previously owned by Charrington's, which merged with Bass and M&B in 1967.

Busy and characterful, Stonegate recently spent £290,000 on a summer 2022 refurbishment and so, one would have assumed, its immediate future was assured. That being the case, I was shocked when, in early January, I heard that the pub would be closing and the site sold for redevelopment.

Saddened, also, as I grew up nearby and have returned to the Prince of Wales on numerous occasions to enjoy a few pints of cask with my mate, watch Arsenal on TV, or see a live band. Certainly, the pub has always been lively and the beer good.

Then I remembered... *Stonegate*... and the company's well-publicised financial 'troubles' (back in Feb 2023, Bloomberg reported that "*Stonegate's* Caymans-registered parent company *TDR Capita* was looking to sell off

*1,000 of its 4,500 pubs 'to pay down some of its £2.6bn debt pile'*") – so probably not a case that the Prince was another failing pub.

Thankfully, the local community has taken up the fight. Within seven days of Stonegate's announcement, East Barnet Residents Association was preparing an application for the pub to be registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), whilst a local councillor set up a change.org petition '**SAVE THE PRINCE OF WALES PUB EAST BARNET**' to garner local support. Now, less than two months on, over 3,000 signatures, together with the collective efforts of councillors, the residents association,

**Enfield & Barnet CAMRA** and the local MP, has resulted in an application being both submitted and accepted.

Hopefully, Stonegate will decide that the money and effort involved in contesting the decision could be better spent elsewhere. They have until the 26th March to lodge an appeal...

Failing that, with an ACV secured, the local Community will have a chance to buy the pub, or it might end up being bought by another (big or small) pub company. Either way, it would continue to be a pub.

East Barnet *needs* a pub, and as the closest to the Prince of Wales is 0.7 miles away in New Barnet, I am sure that if offered up for sale on the open-market as a PUB, rather than a 'piece of real estate', there will still be plenty of interest.

**Paul Donatantonio**

**Footnote from Ed:** To find out why a pub registered as an **ACV** is likely to not just survive, but thrive when community owned, please read **Campaign Column** on page 6 and two articles about community pubs in **Herts Pubs, Clubs & Breweries** on pages 32 & 33.

# Crossover's Champion Beer

Every year at the **St Albans Beer & Cider Festival**, Hertfordshire breweries are each asked to submit one beer of any style to compete in a 'blind' tasting to find **Hertfordshire Champion Beer of the Year**. The judging panel is made up of members from the Hertfordshire CAMRA branches including renowned beer experts, trained tasters and those with a lifetime of practical experience!

The **winning beer in 2023** was Crossover Blendery's **Damascene 2023 (ABV 6.3%)**, a blend of 1, 2 and 3 year-old golden ales, spontaneously fermented, aged in French oak barrels and refermented on Damascene damsons grown in Worcestershire.

On 9<sup>th</sup> December, CAMRA members from several Hertfordshire branches descended on **Crossover Blendery**, near Baldock, to make the presentation.

On receiving the award from South Herts CAMRA Chair Ian Boyd, Crossover founders **Charlie Wood** and **George Stagg** said how delighted



*South Herts CAMRA Chair, Ian Boyd and Crossover Brewery's Charlie Wood*

they were to have won and for the recognition of their outstanding and unusual beers.

**Will Lewis**  
*South Herts CAMRA*

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# Wether Report

## 'Spoons Breaks Hearts – Hart & Spool to Leave Herts

Hi Eddie

As you will know, there's been something of a local uprising since the announcement that the **Hart & Spool** would be closing in March when the lease expires.

You're possibly aware of [change.org](https://change.org) 'Help us prevent the Closure of JD Wetherspoon's Hart & Spool in Borehamwood'. As of today it has 1,100 signatures.

I'm not surprised, as the town is a beer desert when it comes to cask-conditioned ale.

### Borehamwood

30,011 adult population

2 pubs serving cask ale within 1 mile of railway station

(the other pub being Stonegate's Good Champion (ex Wishing Well) with only Doombar.

Compare this with my home town.

### Potters Bar

18,754 adult population

5 pubs serving cask ale within 1 mile of railway station

I don't doubt that the Hart & Spool will be closing based on a commercial judgement.

Would you care to comment on whether the company feels that Borehamwood is not the right town for a Wetherspoon pub, or is the Hart & Spool not the right pub, in which case are you seeking an alternative?

Cheers!



Photo: Wikimapia

Paul, thanks.

We wouldn't comment further on this.

Thanks

**Eddie Gershon**

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Full rate card on page 46



# Why Sneer at Wetherspools?



I saw the above chat on Discourse, CAMRA's web forum, under the heading **'Why Sneer at Wetherspools?'** and felt compelled to investigate.

Firstly, are Paul's disposal figures correct? Has ***"Tim got rid of 313 of his former venues, 28% of his empire"***? Well, yes, according to the excellent and reliable <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ccaaipa/pubs-spoons.html> compiled by North London CAMRA's Wetherspoon fan John Paul Adams.

Since the first Wetherspoon pub opened in Muswell Hill, London, in 1979, a further 1,129 have followed. The closures of 313 *do* represent nearly 28% of the total.

So, Tim Martin is responsible for decimating the UK pub scene? Well, maybe not if Ben's suggestion is correct that ***"he probably opened most of them in the first place"***.

Whilst all pubs are part of our heritage and culture, closing a 200 year-old village local and redeveloping the site for housing, is emotionally rather different to selling a 20 year-old conversion from a furniture shop that is set to become a branch of Toolstation.

And, putting emotion to one side, a conversion was never a pub in the first place.

As my research could not hope to cover all 1,130 pubs nationwide, I decided to pull together information for all the Hertfordshire 'Spoons and include Barnet, which, when I grew up there, was the southernmost part of the county, and not the northernmost tip of London!

	OPENING DATE	PRE PURCHASE	SOLD DATE	POST SALE	TODAY (FEB 24)
HIGH BARNET: MOON UNDER WATER	1988	NIGHTCLUB (BROOKES)	2005	PUB (MISTY MOON)	PUB (BUTCHER'S ARMS)
NEW BARNET: RAILWAY BELL	1990	PUB (RAILWAY BELL)	OPEN		
BOREHAMWOOD: HART & SPOOL	1994	BAR (RIVERBOAT)	CLOSING		
WATFORD: MOON UNDER WATER	1995	RESTAURANT	OPEN		
LETCHWORTH: THREE MAGNETS	1996	RETAIL	OPEN		
ST ALBANS: CROSS KEYS	1996	OFFICE	2012	RESTAURANT (BILL'S)	RESTAURANT (BILL'S)
BERKHAMSTED: CROWN	1998	PUB (GALLERIA BAR)	OPEN		
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: FULL HOUSE	1998	CINEMA	OPEN		
POTTERS BAR: ADMIRAL BYNG	1998	RETAIL	OPEN		
RICKMANSWORTH: PENNSYLVANIAN	1998	RETAIL	OPEN		
WALTHAM CROSS: MOON & CROSS	1998	RETAIL	OPEN		
STEVENAGE: STANDING ORDER	2000	BANK	OPEN		
STEVENAGE: STANDARD BEARER	2000	POST OFFICE	2020	EMPTY	AREA REGENERATION
WATFORD: COLOMBIA PRESS	2000	BAR (ICE-O-BAR)	2023	RESTAURANT (SoBe)	RESTAURANT (SoBe)
SOUTH OXHEY: WETHERSPOON'S	2000	PUB (PHEASANT)	2008	PUB (OX)	AREA REGENERATION
CHESHUNT: KING JAMES	2001	RETAIL	2021	RETAIL (TOOLSTATION RETAIL (TOOLSTATION))	
ST ALBANS: WATEREND BARN	2005	RESTAURANT	OPEN		
HERTFORD: SIX TEMPLARS	2008	CLUB	OPEN		
ROYSTON: MANOR HOUSE	2013	CLUB	OPEN		
BISHOP'S STORTFORD: PORT JACKSON	2014	NEW BUILD	OPEN		
HODDESDON: STAR	2014	PUB (SALISBURY ARMS)	OPEN		
HITCHIN: ANGEL VAULTS	2015	CLUB	OPEN		
HATFIELD: HARPSFIELD HALL	2015	NEW BUILD	OPEN		

Of the 23 Wetherspoon pubs:	PUBS OPENED	PUBS SOLD	PUBS AFTER SALE	PUBS TODAY
4 were previously pubs	4 PUB BEFORE PURCHASE	1	1	0
18 are still open (1 no longer Wetherspoon)	2 NEW BUILD	0	N/A	N/A
Therefore, a net gain of 14 pubs	17 CONVERSION	5	1	1
	23 TOTAL	6		

The top table chronologically lists every one of the 23 'Hertfordshire' pubs opened by Wetherspoon and shows that 6 were sold (26% of the total, compared with the 28% national figure). However, the table also shows that only 4 of the 23 were bought as pubs (of which 3 remain open) with the other 19 being either conversions or new builds.

So whilst Paul's closure figure is correct, Ben's reference to the vast majority having been opened by Wetherspoon provides the context.

In summary, the 18 Hertfordshire pubs still trading represent a net increase of 14 pubs since the Moon Under Water, High Barnet, opened 35+ years ago.

Maybe, Sir Timothy Randall Martin should be given 'Freedom of the County of Hertfordshire'?

Paul Donatantonio

# Reader's Wrong?

## Too Expensive by Half!

Do you remember reading Brian Penn's letter in the last issue (Winter 2023)?

Brian felt, and no doubt still feels, aggrieved when he orders a half and is charged more than half the price of a pint. He cited an example of two halves costing £5.00 versus £4.60 for a pint. I responded with an explanation of why the cost of serving two halves is greater than one pint and defended the right of a pub to make an appropriate surcharge.

I dare say that Brian took a sharp intake of breath, shook his head and vowed to fight on... or maybe 'write on' to another magazine with a more sympathetic editor. Many of you reading this will probably agree with Brian.

If so, you and Brian must believe that those of us drinking pints should subsidise those of you drinking halves in order that beer can be sold at the same 'price per pint', whatever the glass size. As a pint drinker, I should probably resent that!

But I don't. I'm as content when there is no surcharge as I am when it's reasonable;

maybe up to 5%. Thereafter, as the surcharge increases, my level of content decreases, though not in a linear fashion.

Below is a table of actual prices found in a few South Hertfordshire pubs this January when visiting with Good Beer Guide (GBG) 2025 judging in mind:

CAMRA rules dictate that the 'condition' of the cask-conditioned ale is the only criterion for assessing a pub with regard to GBG. Therefore,

I was obliged to ignore the outrageous 'pricing structure' in place at pub number 3. As far as I am aware, the lack of a price list on display at the point of sale was also of no relevance.

I do hope that I've unwittingly stumbled on the worst case of half-pint profiteering, but if anyone knows differently, do please let me know.

**Paul Donatantonio**

**Footnote:** If this was a tabloid, I would have named and shamed. But it's not, so I didn't.



**£6.00**



**£7.60**

Pub	Beer	ABV	Pint	2 x Halves	Mark-up	Price List
1	Fullers Seafarer's	3.6%	£5.60	£6.80	21.4%	No
	Fuller's London Pride	4.1%	£5.80	£6.80	17.2%	No
	Fuller's ESB	5.5%	£6.00	£7.60	26.7%	No
2	Fuller's London Pride	4.1%	£4.90	£5.00	2.0%	Yes
3	Fuller's London Pride	4.1%	£4.20	£4.20	0.0%	No
	Timothy Taylor Landlord	4.3%	£4.20	£4.20	0.0%	No
4	Tring Side Pocket for a Toad	3.6%	£4.40	£4.40	0.0%	Yes
	Parkway Eat Drink & Be Merry	3.7%	£4.40	£4.40	0.0%	Yes
	Parkway Polly Wants a Cracker	4.5%	£4.60	£4.60	0.0%	Yes

# Readers Write

## 1970 Prize Winner!

Dear Sir,

Forgive me, but I think that I had a conversation with you at the White Horse in Hertford a short while ago when I recalled the episode of claiming my two bottles of St. Edmund ale from Greene King in 1970.

As I did not write back to them until 2020 I was quite surprised to receive a case of 6 bottles of Abbott in a lapse of 50 years.

Anyway, you found that this was a good story so I enclose copies of the original 1970's letters and my more recent aside. I had no other acknowledgement from them.

When I look back on my teenage years when I had to endure the likes of Watney's Red Barrel and had Goope bitter being introduced to Abbot Ale from the wood in Chappamere and in 1969 was certainly crossing the rubicon.

Indeed, having just recently had an operation to open up the urinary tubes I can only think that the 'half tanker' load of real ale may have made a contribution.

Anyway, I hope that you find the enclosed of interest. Please do not hesitate to contact me (no, I am not on line - email still!) but might just be out at a suitable hospitality.

With kind regards

*Murray Coleman*

Murray Coleman.

**Ed says:** Yes, Murray, we did indeed meet at the White Horse back in November when South Herts CAMRA, along with members from branches further afield, were trailing the plentiful and beautiful Hertford boozers. As our encounter was early in the afternoon, I remember it well!

I hope readers enjoy your story in type-written print, as much as I did on the day, from 'the horse's mouth', as it were. I'm sure they will.

20th July, 2020.

The Managing Director.,  
Greene King & Sons, Limited.,  
Westgate Brewery  
Bury St. Edmunds  
SUFFOLK

Dear Sir,

Following these 'testing' times when life has become so disrupted, my thoughts turned to enquire if brewery tours will continue and if so when? Having been on tours in Germany and the United States a visit to Greene King would be educational.

I enclose for your personal a copy of a letter sent to me in 1970 entitling me as a prize winner, to two bottles of St Edmunds ale. Now, I know that it was not recently (note my new address) but as a pensioner living on this coup and the occasional small crust from my neighbours bird table I thought that I should claim my ale, especially as the value of four shillings and eightpence (approx. 23 pence in now money) is not insignificant in these troubled times.

Having taken legal advice from the highest in the land (sadly Sir Edward Marshall Hall died in 1927) the Attorney General informs me that the undated voucher should still be redeemable especially as it is signed by the Chairman and Managing Director.

I look forward to hearing from you with regard to the resumption of brewery tours plus the opportunity to claim my prize.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Murray Coleman.

A sampler of Abbot Ale since 1969.

Enc: Copy letter.  
Copy Voucher.

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Bury St. Edmunds 2071

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. M. Coleman,  
95 Firs Park Avenue, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21.,  
has won a consolation prize of 2 bottles of St. Edmund  
Ale in our competition for this beer.

He is therefore entitled to present this voucher to any Retail stockists of this beer and we would be grateful if, on its presentation, arrangements could be made for the above quantity to be given to Mr. Coleman in exchange for this voucher. On his next visit, our representative will be pleased to redeem the voucher for cash to the full retail value of 2/6d. per bottle.

*J. H. A. Clarke* Chairman  
(J.H.A. Clarke)  
*W. J. Bridge* Managing Director  
(W.J. Bridge)



## Warm & undrinkable... should be unthinkable

I have no idea what the 'correct' temperature [of beer] should be. I do know warm real ale is undrinkable. I've rarely found it a problem in winter months, but quite often have to switch to lager or cider in the summer, at least initially.

I remember one occasion during the summer heatwave when in my usually excellent local it tasted like bath water. By contrast the San Miguel tasted like nectar.

**Michael Fuller**  
Harpenden

## Chilled Beer's still a Hot Topic

Hello Paul,

I am writing in response to your comments in Issue No.308, following my letter regarding the temperature of cask beers at The Elephant and Castle. Your comments about 14 C being too warm for your palate but fine for "socks and sandals" CAMRA members does indicate that you are not fully aware of the brewing process but are considering the beer temperature purely from the point of view of consumption and contact with the palate. The recommended ambient temperature of 54 - 57 F [12.2 - 14.4 C] for conditioning cask beers is not simply a 1960s fad, but has always been part of the brewing process - and, incidentally, I have never worn sandals in my life!



*Craft Brewer  
Harvey's - est. 1790*

When the beer arrives at the pub, fermentation is still taking place within the cask and correct

**Ed says:** *Imagine that was your first encounter with cask-conditioned ale; you'd probably never return to it again. Same can happen when a pub serves flat, tired and stale beer to an unsuspecting customer. It just should not happen.*

*When it comes to real ale, I think there's a growing problem of untrained publicans and an unaware public. Maybe the brewers and CAMRA can work together to reverse this?*

venting and temperature control are vital if the beer is to be presented in its best condition. If the temperature is too low the beer will never come into its full condition and, instead of a glass full of brisk piquant flavour, possibly hoppy and perhaps rather heady, which leaves a pleasing after-taste and an attractive lace on the glass, you will end up with a boring, flat tasteless drink - quite unlike those dispensed at the St Albans Beer Festival. Consequently, most of the beers I tasted there last September and in previous years must have been conditioned at the correct temperature; a great job by CAMRA members!

If you prefer a colder beer I suggest you drink lager.

I must say I was somewhat taken aback by the fiery comments in the Farr Brewery letter [WhatsApp message]. I have frequently told the boss, in the pub and on occasional visits to the Farr Brewery, before it moved, that his beer is too cold but, nevertheless, I have always supported that local brewery, even to the extent of providing an old carpet to help cover the floor in the visitors' bar.[]

Incidentally, he did say the award was for "craft beer... not cask ale." In my letter I did make the assumption that craft beer is a form of cask-conditioned beer. If it is not, perhaps someone could kindly tell me?

No offence intended, best wishes.

**Sam Hall**

**Ed says:** You're correct, Sam, to presume that I am not fully aware of the brewing process, however, I'm not sure that's relevant. Whatever temperature cask-conditioned ale should be stored at in the interest of secondary fermentation, my interest is the temperature of the beer in my glass. And as I said in issue 308, 14 C is too warm for me!


You put a case forward for 12.2 - 14.4 C, however, within this one issue of Pints of View, CAMRA stalwart Steve Bury (page 7) talks of 10 - 14 C, Thornbridge CEO & Co-Founder Simon Webster (page 21) prefers a temperature slightly below 11 - 13 and Michael Fuller, in another letter, writes that "warm real ale is undrinkable."

Furthermore, according to [cask-marque.co.uk/beer-temperature](https://cask-marque.co.uk/beer-temperature), "the recommended dispense temperature of the majority of brewers is between 11 - 13 C. Cask Marque audits to a required range of 10 - 14 C, allowing a little leeway."

*I conclude that the ideal temperature of dispense is subjective and, therefore, far better to serve a cooler beer that will naturally warm-up, than a warmer one that won't cool down.*

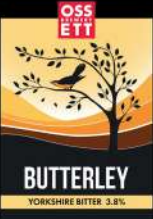
*By the way, 'socks & sandals' was lifted directly, tongue-in-cheek, from Farr's crowd funding appeal. I assume it was a term used to caricature the 'traditional' CAMRA member who, according to folklore, enjoys boring, flat, luke-warm, malty brown beer, as opposed to some of today's more weird, wild & wacky creations.*

*Finally, I am very happy to associate the word 'craft' with 'cask-conditioned ale'. In fact, esteemed beer writer and Pints of View columnist Roger Protz has been using the term, since the last millennium, to describe the country's family brewers who have been plying their craft for centuries. Regretfully, many CAMRA members are not so enlightened and want to ban the word...*




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## When is a pint NOT a pint in JDW?

I was recently in The Full House, Hemel Hempstead for a pint of *Mad Squirrel London Porter* [ABV 5.0%] and asked the barmaid to top up as there was about 15mm of head. It came back with 10mm but when I asked for a further top up was told that it is a pint and that a 5% head is permissible.

Is that fact? I thought one could always ask for a pint of liquid; hence why CAMRA support use of oversized glasses.

**Philip Allen**

**Ed says:** Great question, Philip. Unfortunately, the law does not define whether a pint includes the head. Nonetheless, there's a guide to what's acceptable, neatly summed-up by John O'Donnell, of CAMRA's Technical Advisory Group:

*"Over the years, trading standards bodies have generally accepted that a pint comprises a minimum of 95% liquid and 5% head, although CAMRA's policy has long been that consumers should be able to expect a full liquid pint."*

*So your barmaid was correct; a 5% head is permissible. However, as standard pint glasses (Conical, Nonic and Tulip) are about 150mm tall and wider at the brim than the base, a 10mm head will be MORE than 5%.*

*But it's not that simple. Whilst a 5% head is right*



*Approx 7% head  
(in Conical glass)*



*Approx 15% head (in Tulip glass)*

*for some beers, it's not enough for many. In fact, the 7% head on my recent pint of Kirkstall Three Swords (ABV 4.5%) was borderline too small.*

*And going by the front cover of CAMRA's Beer magazine Winter 2023, and the advert on page 44, our Campaign would appear to agree.*

*Brim-measure glasses preclude the serving of a perfect pint. Few drinkers want beer with no head, yet most prefer a pint of liquid, which is what we think we paid for.*

*Recognising this, CAMRA produced a Policy Document calling for oversize line-measure glasses (OLMGs). That was in 1992...*

*Wetherspoon tried OLMGs in 1998, but reckoned that customers complained of being short measured. I reckon the bean-counters felt that too much beer was being given away.*

*Anecdotally, most staff in my local do their best to serve a pint with a not-too-big head. Seeing the time taken and the beer wasted makes me wonder whether the JDW cost comparison between brim-measure and OLMGs was done correctly.*



*Approx 10% head (in Nonic glass)*

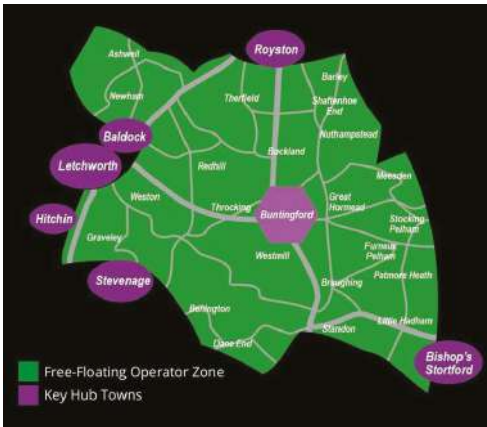
# Travel Watch

## HertsLynx explained

With summer on the way, it's time to visit and support some of the more remote country pubs in the county which are off the main bus routes. Hertfordshire has two demand-responsive minibus schemes under the HertsLynx branding at <https://www.intalink.org.uk/hertslynx>

HertsLynx offers a flexible way to travel by bus, with no timetable or set routes. Instead **passengers can choose from a wide variety of pick up and drop off locations within designated operating zones**. Passengers can select where and when they would like to travel, either by using the HertsLynx app, via the booking website <https://bookings.hertslynx.co.uk/login> or by calling 01992 555513. More information about making a booking can be found here: <https://www.intalink.org.uk/booking-hertslynx-trip>

HertsLynx North & East Herts covers the villages in the north east of the county, but now **extends south to Ware and Hertford**, which is not shown on the map, below. For a list of the towns and villages served go to <https://www.intalink.org.uk/hertslynx-north-east-herts>



HertsLynx Dacorum started in November 2023 covering the area north of the A41 between Hemel Hempstead and Tring. Unfortunately, there's no printable map, so you'll have to

go to <https://www.intalink.org.uk/hertslynx-dacorum>

**Fares are capped at £2** until December 2024. **SaverCard holders** and children can travel for £1.50 for journeys of under 2 miles. Concessionary passes are also valid. The operation is mainly from 07.00 to 19.00 so do check that your chosen pub will be open during the operating period.

## \$ullivan joins the £2 club

Since my transport report in PoV 308, I am pleased to report that Sullivan Buses has now signed up to the £2 maximum bus fare in Hertfordshire meaning that the **84, 306 and 398** services are now included in the scheme.

**John Crowhurst**  
South Herts CAMRA

## The Orange Tree Norton Road, Baldock



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**Perfect for parties, celebrations and meetings**  
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# A Mixed Year for our Herts Pubs

2023 was another difficult year for our Hertfordshire pubs and publicans - there were all of the national pressures that are affecting pubs - high taxation, business rates, VAT, energy costs, cheap supermarket beers and increasing home consumption. And it sometimes seems that there is no respite from the hardships that are thrown at our pubs. So, as in previous years, Hertfordshire has seen a mixed bag of closures, openings, refurbishments, investments and relinquishments.

## Closures

There were a handful of permanent pub closures in Hertfordshire during 2023.

The micro-pub phenomenon was late in arriving in Hertfordshire and it has been sad to see a number of them close in 2023. They all opened full of hope and energy but after strong efforts sadly couldn't find their way to be sustainable in the longer term. The **Hertford Tap** (formerly the **Crafty Duck**), the **Local** in Markyate (a noble 7-year stint) and **Bedtime Beers** in Welwyn Garden City all fell into this category and are missed. Whilst the **Two Trees** in Watford is doing well, 2024 started with the devastating news that the **Monks Inn** in Hemel Hempstead was to close in January (see Down Your Way on page 53).

In 2023 Wetherspoons took a decision to close the large **Columbia Press** in central Watford. Also closed for good were the **Two Brewers** in Hertford (for residential use), **Jolly Sailors** at Buntingford (to re-open in 2024 as a restaurant?) and the **White Horse** at Tea Green (now an events venue). A number of other pubs closed and were put on to the market during 2023 (or continued to be on the market from 2022) awaiting buyers or new leaseholders. These included the **Bell**, Benington, **Axe and Compasses**, Braughing, **Cricketers** at Ickleford, **Engine** at Baldock, **Bull** at Gosmore, **Three Tuns** at Great Hornead and **White Horse**, Wareside. Some await clarity about the way forward - McMullen's **Baker Arms** at Bayford, **Robin Hood and Little John** at Rabley Heath, **Yew Tree** in Walkern, **Lion** at Eastwick and **Globe** at Codicote fall into this category.

We continue to oppose the sale of pubs to speculative developers without them first having been offered for sale on the open pub market. And it is incredibly sad to see a number of pubs sold but then boarded up with then no apparent movement from the purchasers. Some may have had planning applications rebuffed but in the right hands might have found continued pub life. The following have been closed for many months or now years, sometimes grimly boarded or bollarded and a blight on local streetscapes. The **White Hart**, South Mimms; **Jolly Bargeman** and **Albion**, Ware are amongst them. A Planning Application for housing on the car park of the former **Long Arm and Short Arm**, Lemsford was passed and an application for the **Chequers**, Potters Bar, including its loss to housing is awaiting a decision.

There is a continued churn of town centre bars, often late-night venues coming and going on a regular basis - and usually offering no real ale.



## Sold But Still Very Much Alive

We must encourage and support those people who have taken the plunge and bought pubs. The **John Bunyan** at Coleman Green was bought by Anthony and Faith Denoronha, former tenants to McMullen. Now a Free House the pub is pressing ahead with beers from 3 Brewers of St Albans. Popular real ale pubs, the **Farriers Arms** in St Albans and the **Old Cross Tavern** in Hertford, changed hands but continue in a successful vein. Peach pubco bought the **Three Horseshoes** at Letchmore Heath. A positive planning application has been made for the **Rose and Crown** in St Albans (currently closed) to continue as a pub. We await the outcome but hope to witness a strong future for the pub.

## New Leaseholders and Managers

There will always be a churn of Leaseholders and Managers across the county. Best wishes to the dozen or more publicans who became new leaseholders or tenants. These included at the **Hare and Hounds** in St Albans, the **Rose and Crown** in Sandridge, **Lord Haig** in Hertford, **Fox** at Aspenden, **Chequers** in Barley, **Three Crowns** in Bushey, **Candlestick** at Essendon West End and **Rifle Volunteer** in Oxhey. At the end of the year a further dozen pubs were still open but were being actively marketed seeking new leaseholders, though it should be said that the continuing economic uncertainty has hugely reduced the queue of prospective publicans to a trickle. Many directly managed pubs saw fresh appointments, sometimes more than one in the year.

## Refurbishments

There were significant pub refurbishments or redecoration works around the county including at the **Stag**, Heronsgate, **Harpenden Arms** in Harpenden and **Blackbirds** in Hertford. Spare a thought for the **Crooked Billet** in

Colney Heath which in November suffered a lorry crashing into its side, putting a complete bar area out of use. The damage will take deep into 2024 to be repaired, but the pub is open and offering a warm welcome.

## Community Buy-Outs

Congratulations to the community group that purchased the long-closed **Rose and Crown** in Aston, due to re-open later in 2024. We hear that there are ongoing efforts from community groups or individuals that might assist in securing a future for the **Plough** in Ley Green and the **Baker Arms** in Bayford.

## The New Ones

It is rare these days to see full conversions of existing buildings to pubs. The most spectacular in 2023 was the striking internal design of the **Saint and Sinner** in St Albans, a listed building in St Peter's Street remodelled and opened by McMullen's with two cask ales. In Hitchin the **Craft and Cleaver** opened sadly with no real ale. In Royston, the former **Coach and Horses** re-opened after a year, now tastefully refurbished as the **King James** and offering a range of real ales.

Can there still be hope for the long-closed **Rest and Welcome** at Haultwick? A recent planning application might suggest so and could the **Green Man** in Mill Green, near Hatfield soon re-emerge after so many years of closure? There are signs that it might.

## In Summary

Hertfordshire may have done better than many other counties in England – fewer closures than in the post-Covid years – and there is some optimism about the future. But in many cases this optimism is still frail. Publicans are having to dig deep and come up with increasingly new ways to make their pubs viable, sustainable and enjoyable for their customers. We urge the Government to keep the future of pubs high on its agenda – our communities need them. And we need to get down to visit our pubs for a pint to support them.

Keep abreast with changes in *Down Your Way*, a feature in all editions of *Pints of View*.

**Les Middlewood**  
South Herts CAMRA

**Not a CAMRA member?**  
**Go straight to**  
**[camra.org.uk/join/](https://camra.org.uk/join/)**

# 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 61 for contact details).*

## PUBS IN TOWN

PUB EVENT & BEER GUIDE



PUB FINDER



EVENT GUIDE



BEER ALERTS



**ASHWELL:** As we went to press the ***Bushel and Strike*** was closed. A message in the window suggested that this was a temporary situation.

**ASTON:** Following the welcome news that a village community group has purchased the ***Rose and Crown*** (full report page 32) closed since 2014, work should be underway by the adjacent housing contractor to create a car park, access road and other related work, as well as refurbishment of the pub itself by the community group, all leading to a summer re-opening.

**BALDOCK:** After a short closure the ***Engine*** in Station Road has re-opened with new leaseholders. Greene King IPA and Timothy Taylor's Landlord are on the handpumps. The pub is to regain its traditional feel.

**BARLEY:** A belated welcome to the Reeves family who took over the ***Chequers*** late last year. Two real ales are available – and an extensive menu.

**BAYFORD:** the ***Baker Arms*** remains closed. The Friends of the Baker Arms group which recently achieved Asset of Community Value (ACV) status for the pub have now gained the support of the Plunkett Foundation (a charity which works with rural communities in Great Britain to create and run community-owned businesses) in its attempts to secure a continuing future for the pub. As it stands the pub still appears on McMullen's website seeking a leaseholder. The pub has the advantage of a number of hotel accommodation rooms.

**BERKHAMSTED:** Lussmann's, the Hertfordshire chain of restaurants, have opened in the High Street as the ***Five Bells***, occupying a former long-since closed pub building of the same name. Non-eating drinkers are welcome in the front bar, though currently there is no intention to introduce real ale.

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD:** The ***Half Moon*** re-opened in November after a period of closure. Welcome to Jonny Burns and Ben Johnson who have taken over, keen to bring back live music and entertainment to the pub. Currently there is just one real ale, though others may follow.

**BOREHAMWOOD:** In a surprise and depressing move Wetherspoon's have announced the forthcoming closure of the ***Hart and Spool*** (see Wether Report page 41) in Shenley Road at the end of its current lease. A precise date is awaited but rumours suggest it could be as early as March this year. This is bad news for town centre drinkers who will lose a popular gathering place and even worse news for cask ale drinkers – the pub has been a beacon for real ale since it opened in the 1990s. Borehamwood is one of the most poorly served towns in Hertfordshire for pubs and real ale. Only two of the remaining eight pubs sell cask beer – the

**Good Companion** in Shenley Road with Sharp's Doom Bar and the **Mops and Brooms** in Rowley Road, Well End with a range of McMullen handpumped beers. The **Hart and Spool** will become the sixth pub in the town to close since the turn of the century. Will any of the other town centre pubs pick up the real ale slack?

**BRAUGHING:** Welcome to Harriet Dearman who has taken over at the **Brown Bear**. Harriet previously worked for leaving tenants Steve Banfield and Catherine Murphy during their time at Buntingford brewery. A range of real ales awaits customers. The **Axe and Compasses** stays closed and is on the market. Offers in excess of £510,000 are sought. Alternatively, a free-of-tie lease can be negotiated.

**CHESHUNT:** The **Old English Gentleman** in Turners Hill remains boarded up and closed with seemingly no current plans being made for its future. There had been no real ale. The new landlady at the **Roman Urn** is Geraldine Malone although no cask ale is currently on offer. Cask ale is a rarity in the town with only McMullen currently flying the flag - at the **Crocodile**, the **Maltsters** and the **Old Anchor**.

**CODICOTE:** Closed for a number of months the **Globe** was expected to re-open in late February or early March with new McMullen leaseholders. More information in our next edition.

**COLNEY HEATH:** Stick with the **Crooked Billet** which suffered significant damage when a lorry ploughed into it in November. The pub is open while remedial works are agreed and then implemented. In December St Albans City and District Council awarded the pub Asset of Community Value (ACV) status following a submission by the Colney Heath Residents Association. In recent times there were four pubs in the village (lost are the Chalkdrawers, Cock and Queens Head). Now only the **Crooked Billet** remains.

**COW ROAST:** The long-closed **Cow Roast** pub building has been completely overhauled and re-opened in late January as we went to print. Now called the **Artisan** and food-led, specialising in open-fire grilling, we await to hear details of any cask beers that might be available at the bar.

**DANE END:** The **Boot** which received a makeover before re-opening in December has

new leaseholders though initially no cask ale.

**EASTWICK:** The **Lion** is currently closed with McMullen seeking new leaseholders. Mac's indicate that they have long-term plans to renovate and redecorate the internals of the pub.

**FLAMSTEAD END:** News has reached us that the **Freemasons** (no real ale) is closed with no further information about its future.

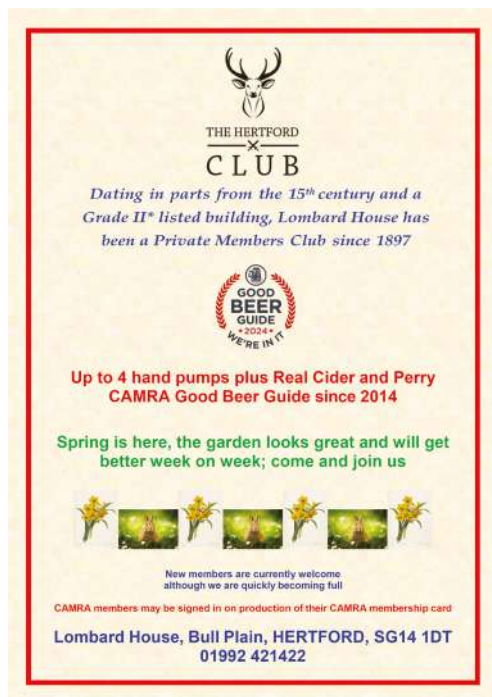
**GOSMORE:** The **Bull** is still closed and is offered up for freehold sale or leasehold.

**GREAT HORMEAD:** After a number of temporary lets and a refurbishment, the **Three Tuns** is again closed. The leasehold is available.

**GREAT WYMONDLEY:** Welcome to Rebercca Merrifield, new leaseholder at the **Green Man**. Open from noon to 11pm, there is cask ale and lunchtime/evening food.

**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:** At the break of the New Year we heard the terrible news that the **Monks Inn** in Marlowes was to close. Since its creation in a former betting shop in 2018, the award-winning micro-pub had become a beacon for real ale drinkers in the town but has now succumbed to the economic pressures facing pubs and drinkers. In a heartfelt Facebook statement owner Clint Whitaker said *"My friends. It is with the saddest heart that I must inform you that Monks will be closing its doors on the 14th January. It in fact breaks my soul as this is a pub that now holds Legendary status. But the cost of living has killed our punters' ability to go out. With energy companies charging 3 or 4 times the rent of the property, business rates trying to recoup what was lost during Covid, it's become impossible to meet even the cost of the staff, who all regularly give me freebies. We have dropped from 17 firkins a week to barely 7 and that kind of turnover doesn't meet the bills. I am broken. I love Monks but we are pissing in the wind. To those of you who have dedicated your business to us, I am so sorry. But we creep ever deeper in debt and I just can't ask anymore of you"*. Clint's frustration and passion for his venture is made crystal clear in that statement. What a sad loss - we wish Clint, his associates, staff and all those involved in the **Monks Inn** all the very best for the future. The pub was a credit to all of you.





**HERTFORD:** The **Old Cross Tavern** in St Andrew Street, now under new ownership and management, has introduced revised and longer opening times – Sun-Mon 2pm-9pm; Tues-Thurs 2-11pm; Fri-Sat 12 noon – midnight. The **Greyhound** in Bengoe Street continues with Thai food and Mac's cask ales and has a quiz on the third Thursday of the month. Just down the road the **White Lion** has earned a great reputation for its Sunday lunches and evening meals. Live music and TV sport regularly feature with Timothy Taylor Landlord, Sharp's Doom Bar and an occasional guest ale waiting for you. In a new venture the landlords at the **Black Horse, White Horse, Old Cross Tavern and Hertford Club** are to run a joint beer festival at their pubs/clubs, all over the Easter weekend. Pop down to any of these pubs for the festival and you will find an increased range of cask and craft keg ales, from golden to dark beers – over 60 beers at the four pubs in total. **The Hertford Club** is now offering an interesting menu of hot meals (including Caribbean options) from Tuesdays to Sundays.

**HERTFORD HEATH:** Greene King are

advertising the lease at the **Silver Fox** which remains open offering Greene King IPA on handpump. The pub has become popular with darts players – 5 dart boards! – even before the effect of the recent Darts World Championships which has spawned increased participation in a number of pubs in the county.

**HODDESDON:** The **King William IV** tucked away in Lord Street is currently closed with its lease advertised.

**ICKLEFORD:** The **Cricketers** remains closed – the pub is currently up for sale with an asking price of £700,000.

**LEMSFORD:** Planning permission has been granted for 4 houses to be built on the car park of the former **Long Arm and Short Arm**. It seems that the pub building is untouched by the application with the developers – Griggs – saying it could be used as a commercial unit, but would require Change of Use permission.

**LETCHWORTH:** **Khoi Khoi**, has closed. The modern bar in Eastcheap once sold two cask ales.

**LEY GREEN:** Admiral Taverns put the **Plough** (full report page 33) up for sale in July 2023. With Asset of Community Value status in place locals were given a period of time to see if they could come together to buy the pub. A planning application has been lodged to convert the pub for residential use but local interest is gathering to retain the building as a pub. Updates are being posted on the "Save The Plough @ Kings Walden" Facebook page.

**MILL GREEN:** The **Green Man** has been closed for many years but has been refurbished. We continue to wait for news of the timescale for the pub re-opening.

**NEWGATE STREET:** A welcome to Tim Aziz who in September took the reins at the **Crown**. Cask beers are initially Sharp's Doom Bar plus a guest ale.

**POTTERS BAR:** Closed since December 2019, a fresh planning application has been lodged to convert the **Chequers** and its grounds into flats and housing.

**RABLEY HEATH:** The **Robin Hood and Little John** has been closed for many months. It remains that McMullen are seeking suitable leaseholders to re-open it.



SAVE ST ALBANS  
PUBS.

## A PUB IS FOR

# LIFE



**ST ALBANS:** The **Rose and Crown** in St Michael's remains closed with a fresh planning application submitted which will include for re-opening the pub. Decision awaited. The **Hare and Hounds** in Sopwell Lane is now offering a discount on cask ale for CAMRA members. Beers include Brains SA and Reverend James. **Mad Squirrel Tap & Bottle Shop** in Heritage Close/Waxhouse Gate off High Street now giving a 5% discount on the price of a cask pint to card carrying CAMRA members. Owners of the **Quiet Man** chain, with pubs in Hertford and Ware, have withdrawn from opening a pub in Chequer Street but considering one in Woolwich, south-east London! The **Peacock** in Hatfield Road is closed, apparently for a further refurbishment. There had been no cask ale for some time. The **Great Northern**, in London Road, has two cask and craft ale tap takeovers approaching - Siren Craft Brew beers from 22-24 March; Ossett Brewery beers from 24-26 May. A summer beer festival follows from 4-7 July.

**SANDRIDGE:** A big hello to Teresa and Adrian Taylor new leaseholders at Stonegate's **Rose and Crown** which re-opened in December. The gastropub is now open every day 12-11pm

initially with Timothy Taylor Landlord, Greene King Abbot Ale and Sharp's Doom Bar cask ales, a selection which may change as time passes.

**STEVENAGE:** Greene King are advertising for leaseholders at the **Marquis of Granby**, North Road (under offer) and at the **Marquis of Lorne**, High Street. Refurbishments are planned for both pubs. Having been refurbished early in 2023, reports are that the **Emperors Head** is currently closed.

**TEWIN:** Greene King are advertising the lease at the **Rose and Crown**. The pub remains open offering a range of cask ales.

**WALKERN:** The **Yew Tree** has been closed for many months but McMullen continue to seek the right tenants with a view to a future re-opening.

**WALTHAM CROSS:** McMullen have completed a refurbishment at the **Wheatsheaf** in the High Street but currently no Mac's handpumped beers are available.

**WARE:** After a period of closure and previous time as a Mexican restaurant. **Jacoby's** is back. Based at the historic and atmospheric Churchgate House in West Street - there's a full bar service including a single handpump initially offering Timothy Taylor's Landlord. Up at **Ware Rugby Club**, in Hoe Lane, a range of St Austell ales are available for thirsty supporters and visitors at home matches and during club opening times.

**WARESIDE:** The future of the **White Horse** is still unclear - it remains closed.

**WATFORD:** The **Oddfellows** in Fearnley Street has reopened after refurbishment. Watford and District Branch would like to welcome Tom Leveridge, the new manager. A couple of handpumps on the bar with Marston's Pedigree as a regular. The **Horns** in Hempstead Road has also re-opened under the management of Sam Wakeling. Former landlord Denis Cook has been brought back to organise the live music. **Mad Squirrel Tap & Bottle Shop** in King Street now giving a 5% discount on the price of a cask pint to card carrying CAMRA members. The **Cother Arms** and **Beech House** are no longer selling real ale.

**WELWYN GARDEN CITY:** Sad to report that the **Bakehouse** has stopped selling cask ale. Local members are seeking to get this decision reversed. A Marston's pub with no cask Pedigree seems like a very strange prospect indeed.

# Regional CAMRA Festivals

## Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival 2024

CAMRA North Herts are delighted to announce that the **Festival** will take place on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of June**. The venue for the three-day event will again be **Hitchin Rugby Club**, Old Hale Way, SG5 1XL.

In addition to an extensive selection of over **100 Cask Ales**, there will be a **KeyKeg Bar** with an exciting range of **Craft Beers**, and a well-stocked **International Beer Bar**. On offer at the **Cider Bar** will be **50 Real Ciders & Perrys**, along with a selection of **Mead** which has proved very popular at previous festivals. A **range of food** will be available to satisfy all tastes. Tickets will be available on the door or can be purchased online in advance.

This is a shared CAMRA event, which would not be possible without **volunteers** from **CAMRA North Herts** and **Hitchin Rugby Club**. Volunteers are required for setting up the festival, during the three days it runs and for take down on the morning of Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> of June. **Volunteers** will



be rewarded for their time with **beer tokens**.

If you would like to help, please drop an email to [nhcamra.staffing@gmail.com](mailto:nhcamra.staffing@gmail.com).

All the latest festival information is available via social media [Facebook@HitchinBeerCiderFestival](https://www.facebook.com/HitchinBeerCiderFestival) and on our festival website [HitchinBeerCiderFestival.org.uk](https://HitchinBeerCiderFestival.org.uk). Please turn to the inside front cover of this magazine for links or to scan the QR code.

**Jeremy Kitson**

*Co-organiser*

*Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival*

*The Hertford Easter  
Cask And Keg Hunt*

*29th March - 1st April*



**The Black  
Horse**



**THE HERTFORD  
CLUB**



**OLD CROSS  
TAVERN**



*The*  
**WHITE  
HORSE**

*Over 60 Beers!*



# No Great British Beer Festival in 2024

CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) held annually in London is taking a year off in 2024. Organisers and volunteers are now exploring a variety of options to ensure the festival will return in 2025.

CAMRA's events director Catherine Tonry said: *"While we are understandably extremely disappointed CAMRA's flagship event will not take place next year, we are now looking at a range of options for its triumphant return in 2025. It has been a difficult decision to make as it is the highlight of our calendar. Unfortunately, our current venue could not offer us the dates we needed. It is essential the Great British Beer Festival is the absolute best it can be for our valued volunteers,*

*wider membership and customers. Ongoing building works could also affect CAMRA being able to host its top festival to the high standards customers and members have come to expect.*

Catherine added: *"While other venues have been explored, due to timescales, costs and our requirements we have not been able to secure a suitable site. While this was not a decision taken lightly, we will now look forward to the future and continue with plans for 2025, looking at a variety of options and venues."*

If you are looking for an alternative Beer Festival fix please see the list of forthcoming Hertfordshire and Regional CAMRA Festivals below:

## APRIL/MAY 2024

### Maldon Beer and Cider Festival

Wed 10 – Sat 13 April

Cygnets Room, Swan Hotel, High Street, Maldon, Essex

### Biggleswade Beer and Cider Festival

Thu 9 – Sat 11 May

Biggleswade Conservative Club, St Andrews Street, Biggleswade, Beds

### Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 20 – Sat 25 May

Jesus Green, Cambridge, Cambs

### Colchester Summer Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 29 May – Saturday 1 Jun

Colchester Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester, Essex

## JUNE/JULY 2024

### Thurrock Beer & Cider Festival

Tue 4 – Sat 8 June

The Civic Hall, Blackshots Lane, Grays, Essex

### \*TBC\* Braintree Real Ale Festival

Thu 6 – Sat 8 June

Bocking Arts Theatre (formally Braintree Institute), Bocking End, Braintree, Essex

### Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

Thu 6 – Sat 8 June

Hitchin Rugby Club, Old Hale Way, Hitchin, Herts

### Gibberd Garden Beer Festival (CAMRA bar at non-CAMRA festival)

Sat 15 – Sun 16 June

Gibberd Garden, Marsh Lane, Harlow, Essex

### Ealing Beer Festival

(London's biggest beer festival)

Wed 10 – Sat 13 July

Walpole Park, Ealing, London W5 5BS

### Chelmsford Summer Beer & Cider Festival

Tue 16 – Sat 20 July

Admirals Park, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, Essex

### Epping Ongar Railway Real Ale Festival

Fri 26 – Sun 28 July

Ongar Station, Ongar, Essex

## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

### Peterborough Beer Festival

Tue 20 – Sat 24 August

The Embankment, Embankment Road, Peterborough, Cambs.

### \*TBC\* Clacton Real Ale and Cider Festival

Wed 21 – Sat 24 August

St James' Hall, Tower Road, Clacton-on-Sea

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

Wed 21 – Mon 26 August

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

### \*TBC\* Watford Beer Festival

Thu 22 – Sat 24 August

Halsey Hall, Rickmansworth Road, Watford, Herts

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

Tue 3 – Sat 7 September

East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel and Wakes Colne Station, Wakes Colne, Essex

### St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 25 – Sat 28 September

Alban Arena, St Peter's Street, St Albans, Herts





St Albans' favourite summer beer festival  
**Friday 12 - Sunday 14 July**

With over 30 real ales,  
ciders & sparkling wines

Plus live music and  
street food all weekend



St Saviour's Church, Sandpit Ln, St Albans AL1 4DF  
For more info find us online at [beerandfizz.com](http://beerandfizz.com)



# Herts CAMRA Diary

The listings below are colour-coded **North Herts**, **South Herts**, **Herts & Essex Borders** 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 61.

## MARCH

### Wed 13: HEB Branch Meeting – Bishop's Stortford

8.30pm. **Half Moon**, North Street, Bishop's Stortford

### Wed 13: NH Social – Royston

8pm. Commencing at the **King James**, Kneesworth Street. Moving on to the **Jolly Postie**, Baldock Street, **Banyers**, Melbourne Street and the **Manor House**, Melbourne Street (**Chequers**, High Street optional).

### Fri 15: W&D Social – Croxley Green

8pm. **Coach & Horses**, The Green, WD3 3HX, then 9.15pm **Artichoke**, The Green, WD3 3HN, finishing 10pm **Sportsman**, 2 Scots Hill, WD3 3AD.

### Sun 17: Silver Hertfordshire Beer of the Year Award

4pm. **John Bunyan**, Coleman Green Lane, Coleman Green, Nr. Wheathampstead, AL4 8ES

### Wed 20: SH Branch Meeting – Harpenden

8pm. **Harpenden Arms**, High Street, Harpenden.

### Mon 25: W&D Branch Meeting and AGM – Watford

8pm. **Essex Arms**, Langley Way, Watford, WD17 3EG.

### Wed 27: NH Social – Hitchin

8pm. The **Highlander**, Tilehouse Street followed by **Coopers Arms**, Tilehouse Street, **BBs Bar**, Bridge Street and **Half Moon**, Queen Street, Hitchin.

## APRIL

### Sat 6: SH County Pub of the Year & Cider Pub of the Year Selection Tour

Details to be confirmed

### Mon 8: HEB Branch Meeting – Sawbridgeworth

8.30pm: **George IV**, Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth.

### Sat 13: W&D Village Social – Oxhey

1pm. **Rifle Volunteer**, 36 Villiers Road, WD19

4AJ, then 2pm **Villiers Arms**, 108 Villiers Road, WD19 4AJ, finishing 3pm **Railway Arms**, 1 Aldenham Road, WD19 4AB.

### Wed 17: SH Branch Meeting – Hertford

8pm. **Black Horse**, West Street, Hertford.

### Wed 17: NH Social – Letchworth

8pm. **Three Magnets**, Leys Avenue, followed by **Garden City Brewery**, The Wynd, **Crafty's**, Leys Avenue and **Arena Tavern**, Arena Parade.

### Sat 20: NH Countryside Tour

Pickups starting at 1pm in Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock & Stevenage. Visiting the **Station**, Station Approach, Knebworth, the **Tilbury** and **Plough** in Datchworth, and Woolmer Green for the **Chequers** and **Red Lion**. This will be by minibus or car share. Save the date and register interest to [chair@northherts.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@northherts.camra.org.uk)

### Mon 29: W&D Branch Meeting – Watford

8pm. **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP.

## MAY

### Thur 9: W&D Social – Watford

8.30pm. **Oddfellows Arms**, 14 Fearnley Street, WD18 ORD, then 9pm **Two Trees Micro**, 18 Vicarage Road, WD18 OEH, finishing 10pm at **Moon Under Water**, 44 High Street, WD17 2BS.

### Sat 11: SH Spring Ale Trail – Old Welwyn Village

1pm. **Steamer**, London Road then 1.45pm **White Hart**, Prospect Place; 2.30pm **Tavern**, High Street; 3.15pm **Wellington**, Codicote Road; 4.00pm **Rose and Crown**, Church Street; 4.45pm **White Horse**, Mill Lane, Welwyn. (See page 9).

### Tue 14: SH Committee Meeting – Hatfield

7.45pm. **Horse and Groom**, Park Street, Hatfield.

### Mon 13: HEB Branch Meeting – Waltham Abbey

8.30pm. **Woodbine**, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey.

### Sat 18: SH Mild Trail – St Albans

Details TBA.

Tue 21: SH Mild Night – Hertford

8pm. “Dial ‘M’ for Mild.” Four pubs, commencing **Black Horse**, West Street, then 8.45pm **White Horse**, Castle Street, 9.30pm **Old Barge**, The Folly and 10.15pm **Old Cross Tavern**, St Andrew Street, Hertford. (See page 17 advert).

Tue 21: W&D Branch Meeting – Oxhey

8pm. **Oxhey Conservative Club**, Keyser Hall, Lower Paddock Road, Oxhey, WD19 4DS

Fri 24: NH Branch AGM – Baldock

8pm. **Orange Tree**, Norton Road, Baldock. All CAMRA members welcome. We will receive reports from all the Committee members and elect or re-elect the Committee for 2024/5. A formal notice and agenda will be sent to members in advance

Fri 31: NH Pre-Festival Promotional Social – Hitchin

7:30 pm. **Anchor**, Cambridge Road, followed by **Millstream**, Cambridge Road, **Radcliffe Arms**, Walsworth Road, **Beer Shop**, Hermitage Road and **Bricklayers Arms**, Queen Street, Hitchin. Optional other pubs may follow.

JUNE

Thu 6 – Sat 8: Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

**Hitchin Rugby Club**, Old Hale Way, Hitchin. Save the Date! Tickets will be on sale on the door and in advance. (See front cover and page 2 advert)

Mon 10 Jun: HEB Branch Meeting – Green Tye

8.30pm. **Prince of Wales**, Green Tye

Wed 12: SH Branch Meeting – Welham Green

8pm. **North Mymms Social Club**, Station Road, Welham Green.

Sat 15 – Sun 16: HEB Gibberd Garden Beer Festival

(CAMRA Bar in a non-CAMRA festival) Gibberd Garden, Marsh Lane, Harlow, Essex.

Mon 24: W&D Branch Meeting – Watford

8pm. **West Herts Sports Club**, 8 Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP.

Fri 28: W&D Social – Chorleywood and Heronsgate

8.30pm. **Rose & Crown**, Old Common Road, WD3 5LW, then 9pm **Old Shepherd**, Chorleywood Bottom, WD3 5JH, (both Chorleywood) finishing 10pm **Land of Liberty**, **Peace & Plenty**,

Long Lane, Heronsgate, WD3 5BS.

JULY

Sat 13: W&D Summer Social – Sarratt and Belsize

1pm. **Cricketers**, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 6AS, then 2pm **Boot**, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 6BL, finishing at 3pm **Plough**, Dunny Lane, Belsize, WD3 4NP.

Sat 20: SH Branch Meeting & Special General Meeting – Hertford

1pm. **The Hertford Club**, Bull Plain, Hertford. Speaker TBA.

Mon 29: W&D Branch Meeting – Watford

8pm. **Essex Arms**, Langley Way, Watford, WD17 3EG.

Pints of View 308  
Catherine Wheel Solution

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

PINTS OF VIEW 308 COMPETITION

Congratulations to our two winners!  
Don Gregory, Stevenage, Herts.  
Richard Palmer, St Albans, Herts.

Thanks to one of our winners, Richard Palmer, for pointing out that TWISTED OAK is a brewery in Wrington, Somerset and not Warrington. The ‘deliberate mistake’ didn’t seem to put him off, or all the other readers who successfully completed the wheel.

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**COPY DEADLINE (ARTWORK): Fri 10 May 2024**

## Subscriptions

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# Roger... and out

## Duty on your Beer is financing NHS

Here's a sobering thought: you're in the pub and decide to treat yourself to a pint of high ABV ale. I bet you don't realise that approaching £2.00 goes to the government in duty and VAT? Buy the equivalent in Germany, another great beer drinking country, and the tax take will be fraction of what we pay over here.



I once asked Peter Lilley, at the time the MP for St Albans and a government minister, if he would cut beer duty. He gave me a withering look and said: *"Cut duty? How do you think we finance the NHS?"*

We finance the NHS through income tax and national insurance and shouldn't have to top-up those taxes with hard-earned money from our pints. It's unsurprising that many people can no longer afford the pleasures of the pub and, instead, buy cheap beer from supermarkets.

We now have the perfect storm. Covid lockdowns and the energy crisis led to 500 pubs pulling down the shutters for good last year, while 80 breweries produced their final brews. All the signs are that the Grim Reaper will continue to scythe the pubs and breweries at a similarly alarming rate in 2024.

Clobbering pubs and breweries with punitive levels of duty, business rates, energy prices and VAT adds up to the economics of a mad house. Pubs contribute £26 billion a year to the economy and account for 936,000 jobs. Duties on alcohol in 2023 amounted to £12.4 billion. Driving pubs and breweries out of business inflicts painful damage on a goose that lays very large golden eggs.

Last year the Chancellor of the Exchequer responded to calls from CAMRA and the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) by freezing duty on draught beer. It was a small step in the right direction but more, far more, needs to be done.

Ahead of the March Budget, CAMRA, SIBA and the Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) have written to the Chancellor calling for the tax on draught beer and cider to be 20% lower than supermarket alcohol. The trade body the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) has also weighed-in with a call for a 5 per cent cut in duty that, it argues, would create 13,000

new jobs for pubs and breweries. Far from bringing in less money to the Exchequer, these measures would result in people returning to pubs and consuming more beer.

Our country is in desperate need of a Minister for Pubs and Breweries – someone charged with boosting the industry – so let's all lobby this year's electoral candidates to create the post when a new government is formed. A top priority, along with slashing duty, should be addressing the absurd anomaly whereby supermarkets can claw back their VAT payments on alcohol. Next would be the reform or scrapping of the out-dated business rates regime that taxes a pub based on how much it sells, rather than the size of the premises.

Look just across the Channel for inspiration. A few years ago, when French president. Francois Hollande cut VAT on restaurant meals from around 20 to 6 per cent. More recently, President Macron has invested millions of euros in traditional cafes that he calls *"the beating hearts of our communities"*.

Pubs and breweries are the beating hearts of our communities and need similar support. As the old saying goes: *"Abuse them and you'll lose them."*

**Roger Protz**  
Beer Writer

South Herts CAMRA

# QUEENS HEAD

## Free House



**Cider Pub of the Year  
Hertfordshire Winner 2023  
National Finalist 2022  
East Anglia Winner 2022**



**Bar: Mon - Sun      Meals: Wed - Sun**

**Allens Green, Sawbridgeworth, Herts. CM21 0LS  
01279 723393 email [cliff@shirevillageinns.co.uk](mailto:cliff@shirevillageinns.co.uk)**



## 'AUTHENTICALLY BREWED' LOCAL BEERS

The term 'authentic' is defined as 'in the traditional or original way'  
- it also means being 'true to your own values and spirit'

What makes Harvey's beer authentically brewed?

**A HERITAGE, GRAVITY FED,  
'TOWER' BREWERY**

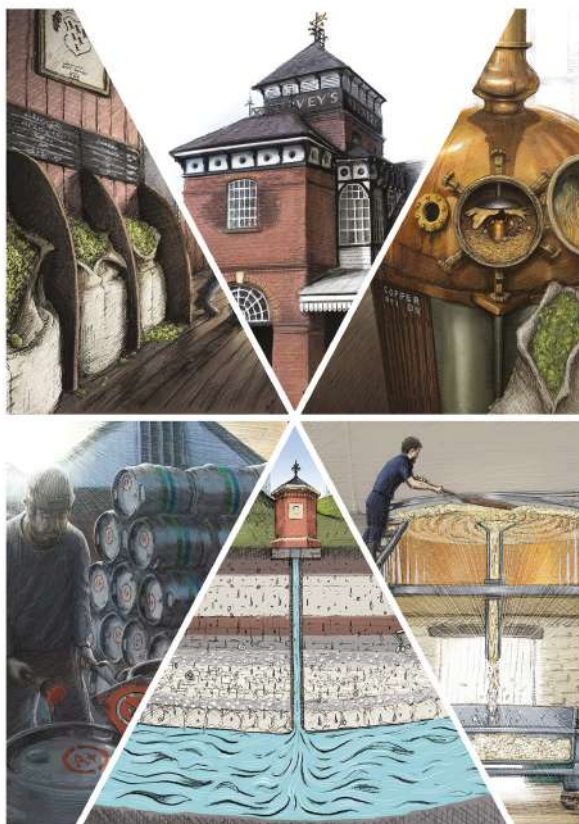
**FRESH SPRING WATER FROM  
OUR ARTESIAN WELL**

**COPPER FABRICATED  
BREWING KETTLES**

**LOCAL, WHOLE LEAF HOPS  
AND A TRADITIONAL HOP BACK**

**OPEN FERMENTING VESSELS  
WITH GRAVITY SKIMMING**

**A UNIQUE YEAST, RE-PITCHED  
FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS**



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