

HERTFORDSHIRE'S



CAMRA Pulling Together

The online publication by Hertfordshire CAMRA branches

April/May 2020

Issue 1

**Queen's Head Allens
Green Pie Fest lives
on for its 10th year**

**Awards given to St Albans brewery 3
Brewers Brewery, and Six Bells of
St Albans**



**The Station in
Knebworth Saved**



CAMRA and Covid-19

The impact of the government announcement that all pubs clubs and restaurants should shut for the foreseeable future on 20th March, could have a devastating effect on the drinks industry. CAMRA wishes to support the licensed trade as much as it can recognising the damage that could be done to an already struggling industry.

Wetherspoons were one of the first to say that they will stay open during the corona virus crisis but of course that has been overtaken by the enforced shut down. Tim Martin, Wetherspoons owner, said that the government's decision was a "tactical error".

I wonder if all the numerous subsidised bars restaurants and clubs in the Houses of Commons are shut?

Efforts are being made to try and find outlets that are still selling real ale take-aways and further local information will be provided on CAMRA branch websites:-

Herts Essex Borders: www.heb-camra.org.uk

North Hertfordshire: www.camranorthherts.org.uk

South Hertfordshire: www.hertsale.org.uk

Watford & District: www.watford.camra.org.uk

Tring Brewery shop will remain open with extended measures to protect staff and customers. If you are unhappy to use the shop they are willing to bring your order out to your car in their car park. All the details are on their web site.

Because of the current situation the CAMRA Hertfordshire branches have decided to move to an online newsletter "CAMRA Pulling Together" with printed copies of Pints of View being suspended until we can guarantee deliveries to pubs. All CAMRA functions and meetings and award presentations have also been cancelled.

Steve Bury, Editor

The Budget - Good or Bad?

On the run up to March's 2020 budget CAMRA members contacted their MPs requesting a reduction in beer duty by 5%, a review of the business rates, and a continuation of the transitional relief until it is completed.

Announced in the budget on 11th March was the abolition of business rates for pubs with a rateable value under £51,000, and the £5000 discount for those with a value up to £100,000 which is great news for qualifying pubs, and we are glad that the Treasury has listened to our calls for action.

We received some good responses and as our readers will know it is the price of a pint that is keeping customers out of the pub. Unfortunately, no reduction in beer duty was forthcoming which was very short-sighted for a government pledging to support small businesses. The Government is recognising the value of pubs to the economy and society by freezing beer duty in the Budget. Brewers and pub companies must now ensure that prices do not increase.

The decision not to implement a preferential rate of beer duty is a missed opportunity and CAMRA will use the upcoming review of alcohol duty to continue to make the case for this, as we believe this is the best way to support community pubs.

As it is now certain that we are leaving the European Union new opportunities to support pubs have emerged. CAMRA has launched a new piece of research conducted by Europe Economics into the impact of introducing a preferential rate of duty for draught beer.

Outside the EU the Government can lower tax on beer sold in pubs as compared to supermarkets, which should encourage people to enjoy a pint in the social community setting of the pub which will, in turn, encourage responsible alcohol consumption. The research, undertaken by Europe Economics, which models several options on how much the proposals could cost was launched 4th March in the House of Commons.

Key findings include:

- Cutting draught beer duty will increase employment in the on trade.
- A reduction would help move consumption from the off trade to the on trade. Cutting draught beer duty by 5% would create £26.6m of additional spending on draught beer, and 38% of this increase would be beer that would have been consumed in bottles or cans before.
- A 5% reduction in draught beer duty would be cost-beneficial for the Exchequer as more beer

would be sold increasing income tax, VAT and excise duty.

The chancellor scrapped a planned increase in duty on beer and spirits, while tax on all other kinds of alcoholic drinks will also be frozen.

The small pub business rates discount will increase from £1,000 to £5,000.

But the measures are a "double penalty" for those worst affected by alcohol harm, charities say.

The 2020 Budget has offered an unexpected windfall for the alcohol industry, including tax breaks and cash giveaways.

The business rate discount for small pubs - those with a rateable value of less than £100,000 - will be increased from £1,000 to £5,000, partly because of the "possible impact of coronavirus".

Planned tax rises on beer and spirits were also scrapped, as part of a freezing on duty across all alcoholic drinks. This Budget marks only the second time that has happened in 20 years, the Chancellor said.

The British Beer and Pub Association described it as "a great Budget for pubs, pub-goers and Britain's world-class brewing industry".

The Association says the chancellor's measures will save pub-goers £80m and safeguard 2,000 jobs.

It points out that other measures unveiled in the Budget will also provide a boost to many pubs, including the £3,000 small business relief grant and the temporary waiving of business rates for firms with a rateable value of £51,000 or less.

MPs call on Government to see pubs as a solution not a problem

In a report published 26 February the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group, Parliament's largest cross-party issue group called for the Government to wake up to the potential of pubs in boosting Britain's economic and social wellbeing.

Ahead of the Budget, policy makers were urged to understand pubs' potential in spearheading high street revival. The report calls for a fundamental review of business rates and a reduction in beer duty to release this potential for the sake of jobs, tourism and the cultural and social enrichment of Britons.

Launching the report, the group's Chair, Mike Wood MP (Con, Dudley South) said:

"During this inquiry we heard how well-trained licensees are playing an unsung role in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities; pubs. If we're to take full advantage of

all that the nation's pubs offer as a force for good, we must first tackle their disproportionate tax bills".

Inquiry panellist and Labour peer, Lord Roy Kennedy, explained: "Pubs are one of the few remaining places where strangers can rub shoulders and trade opinions – a precious asset in an increasingly polarised society. They are also one of the unsung props of the UK's social care system; helping tackle loneliness, providing meals for the elderly, coffee clubs for young mothers, and answering the needs of dementia carers".

"We have an extraordinary community resource in our pubs: as community hubs, sports clubs, creative incubators, tourist attractions, fundraisers and as the 'third place' in people's lives. They're the UK's real 'social networks' but are paying 34% of their turnover in tax, compared to Facebook's reported 1.7%. If government is looking for ways to boost hard hit communities and revive national wellbeing, our message is clear: act now to unleash pubs' potential".

"As our inquiry learnt, pubs are paying more in tax per pound of turnover than any other outlet on the high street and any other sector of the economy. These costs are then being compounded by competition from lower priced alcohol from supermarkets".

Among its principal recommendations, the report calls for:

- A review of business rates to consider how best to shift the burden of tax away from property-based businesses.
- Pending the governments' fundamental review of business rates, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) must be better resourced to understand pubs' business models with additional resource dedicated to the appeals process until the current logjam has been cleared.
- All pubs to be able to claim the first £52k in rate relief proposed for smaller pubs.
- Government to seize the opportunity provided by Brexit to review both intent and impact of duty. The UK's brewers are a leading manufacturing success story and its pubs are a crucial part of British culture, tourism and society. Government should assess tax and duty in a broad context including impacts on employment, stimulus for home grown products, for low carbon products and health considerations including responsible drinking and personal wellbeing.
- Local authorities to understand pubs' potential in regenerating high streets and communities, and

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to build mutually beneficial partnerships to maximise benefits.

- The pubs sector and government to address outdated notions of employment possibilities under the auspices of the new Tourism Sector Deal.

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Drinks limit set by Wetherspoon's

Wetherspoon's pubs are limiting parents to two alcoholic drinks each if they have their children with them.

The rule was exposed when the **Robert Pocock** pub in Gravesend, Kent, put up a poster publicising it which the company confirmed. The guidelines for staff applied in its pubs nationwide and was designed to deter "unruly behaviour" by children left unsupervised. As far as Wetherspoon's is concerned, a child is anyone under the age of 16.

It has been a crime since 1902 to be drunk in charge of a child under the age of seven in a public place. The offence can be punished by a fine or up to a month in jail.

The poster since removed, read: "As part of our licensing it is our responsibility to ensure that we are protecting children from harm. Therefore adults in charge of children will be allowed to have one alcoholic drink and a further alcoholic drink with a sit-down meal."

Wetherspoon's said: "The manager took the decision to put up poster to emphasise to customers that she would not allow parents to drink while their children were running around uncontrolled in the pub. The notice had a positive effect, with mostly good feedback."

Wetherspoon's added: "This is a guideline, not a policy, the reason is that we don't want children being unruly in the pubs and parents thinking they can continue to drink while this happens."

Locally on visits to Wetherspoon's in St Albans, Watford and Borehamwood there appears to be a "buy before you try" policy where you are expected to pay for your beer when it is ordered not when it is served. What happens if you have a problem with your drink? Fortunately, this has not happened to me yet. I have challenged this and had an odd discussion around what happens if I get short measure or a bad pint, to which the reply was "I will still be on duty and behind the bar so you can raise it with me directly". It does make a mockery of try before you buy which I suppose I must now recommend you do on every purchase in Wetherspoon's. If you go to a restaurant, have a haircut, or visit any shop you would not be expected to pay before you have received the service.

Steve Bury

Farr win Award

As we were going to press it was announced that Farr Brew had won the "Best Commercial Achievement Award" which coincided with Nick Farr's birthday. The award is a national one that every brewery in Britain can enter. We congratulate Farr on their success.

Bronze Award for New River Brewery

On Saturday 22nd February members of the Herts and Essex CAMRA Branch visited New River Brewery at Hoddesdon to present John and Jeremy with the certificate for the Champion Beer of East Anglia Bronze Award in the Best Bitters Category for Five-Inch Drop.

John Bourdeaux and Jeremy Alter have been brewing for nearly five years at Hoddesdon, using water from the New River, a four-hundred-year-old canal that still takes Hertfordshire water into London. Many of their beers have names related to the canal, including *Five-Inch Drop*. The brewery has passed the half million-pint mark, with new vessels recently installed.



The award was presented on behalf of the CAMRA branch by Tim Vaughan, the Brewery Liaison Officer for New River.

Tim said it gave him great pleasure to present the award and the at the beers are always reliable. Pictured above from left to right, Tim wished Jeremy and John continued success. John replied that CAMRA has played a huge part in promoting their beers and they are happy to have visits from CAMRA groups. They are delivering to a 50-mile radius, including Colchester, Bury St. Edmunds and Kent.

Local members have enjoyed their beers in pubs in HEB Branch and we wish them their well-deserved success in the future!

Chris Sears, Publicity Secretary, Herts Essex Borders CAMRA

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Cask Ale Dead? Try Telling Five Points

In a troubled market, the East London brewer announces it has doubled its cask ale sales. How? By doing the things everyone knows need doing. Regular readers of this blog will be familiar with my long-standing involvement in the Cask Report. For the last few years, the picture has been grim. Cask – once the best performer in a declining beer market (i.e. it was in decline, but at a far slower rate than any other beer) – is now falling far faster than any other beer, with double-digit year-on-year decline.

Pundits often point to the fact that cask is unreliable, and with the rise of craft beer, drinkers can now choose flavourful, interesting beer that – even if you believe is not quite as good as cask at its best – is certainly far, far better than cask at its worst. Pubs often don't keep cask well because it requires more work, and what's the point of that when it offers the lowest margin of any beer on the bar?

The arguments go round and round, the same every year, as cask ale sales continue to dwindle.

So what a delight to hear from Five Points that they have **DOUBLED** their cask ale sales year-on-year. In 2018, cask accounted for 20% of Five Points' beer sales. In 2019, this grew to 26%. In the context of an undisclosed expansion in production over that time, cask is taking a bigger slice of a substantially bigger cake – according to the company, an increase of 325,000 pints versus the previous year.

How? Why?

Well, as one of the darlings of the craft beer scene, whenever Five Points have gone to festivals, cask has always been part of their offer. Their core range are all available on cask as well as keg.

Then last year, they introduced a new beer, available only on cask. As the craft beer world goes crazy for novelty, this beer was a best bitter – possibly the least fashionable style craft geeks can imagine.

And it went crazy.

I first realised they were onto something at last August's Great British Beer Festival, when they had two versions of Five Points Best – one brewed with Fuggles hops, one with Goldings.

They sourced these 'boring', 'twiggy' British hops directly from Hukin Hops in Kent, a fourth-

generation hop farm where the fourth generation is bringing fresh ideas to an ancient trade. And guess what? If you treat these classic British hops with the same care and attention as American hops, they're just as good – who would have thought? Different, yes, subtler, absolutely, but not boring. And definitely not twiggy.

In terms of presentation, cask and keg sit alongside each other in the company's portfolio, with the same enthusiasm around each. Five Points sell their cask



beers to local pubs with a reputation for keeping cask well. This year, they're introducing cask training for the publicans that stock their beers, financial incentives for new pubs to start stocking them, and a Cask Ambassador in their sales team to help pubs maintain quality.

This is what good cask ale look like. And the thing is, it's all there in the Cask

Report, every year, that this is what you need to do to make a success of cask.

I'm not saying that Five Points is the only brewery making a success of cask ale – talking to publicans across the country who are passionate about cask when I was doing research for last year's report, their stories were so positive I almost started to doubt the official figures on cask's plight.

But Five Points are at the absolute heart of London's craft beer scene. They don't need to invest in cask; they do it because they want to. Today's announcement about sales figures is not just significant because of the extent it bucks the prevailing trend. It chimes strongly with me because it proves what we've been saying in the Cask Report for years:

One, there's no massive prejudice against cask, you just have to give people a reason to try it, to make it relevant to them.

Two, cask belongs inside the broader scope of craft beer, not in opposition to it.

And three, there's no mystery to making a success of cask. All you need to do is to care enough about it.

Pete Brown

Stevenage 2020 Beer & Cider Festival Report

After a break of a year, the 4th Stevenage Beer Festival was back at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre between 20th and 22nd of February with a new logo, festival organiser and team running the festival.

The event was not without issues, and we start this report by way of apology for those that travelled only to find the hall lacking sufficient seating. We appreciate that many people left earlier than they had intended due to having to stand for long periods. During the planning stage we had asked for more seating to be made available than at previous Stevenage festivals, unfortunately, the venue had had problems at a recent event completely unrelated to CAMRA or beer festivals. As a consequence they wanted to apply unnecessary restrictions to our event which would have made the festival unviable, and ignored the fact that we have had no trouble at any of the festivals we have held at the venue.

We thought an acceptable compromise had been reached, but found out that they had reneged on this a very short time before the festival opened. No seating was provided on Thursday, at our request a limited amount was provided on Friday, some of which they took away again on Saturday. Unfortunately the Leisure Centre's General Manager was not present during the week so we couldn't get the situation changed during the Festival. Our Festival Organiser will discuss the event and voice our concerns about the shortcomings of the venue at a meeting with Stevenage Leisure. We will require some positive reactions to these concerns before we book the hall for next year.

Aside from the aforementioned issues, the elements of the festival which were under CAMRA's control were very successful and we welcomed almost 1600 visitors to the event. The atmosphere was convivial, and we received many positive comments about the range and quality of the beer and cider available. There was a choice of 78 real ales available covering a wide variety of styles, and around 4500 pints of real ale were drunk during the festival. New Bristol Cinder Toffee Stout was voted Beer of the festival, it was also the first beer to run dry. The International bar proved as busy as ever, with an exciting range of bottled and draught beers from around the globe. This year there was a selection of 29 Ciders and Perrys. There were also 8 Meads which proved especially popular with visitors. Customers voted Saxbys Cloudy Rhubarb as their favourite cider.

The festival is organised by volunteers from North Herts CAMRA, and would not be possible without the support of our event sponsors. The festival T-shirt

was sponsored by Stevenage FC, Bog Brew and their Brewery Tap the Broken Seal, token cards were sponsored by Buntingford Brewery. The Hermit of Redcoats pub near Stevenage sponsored the glasses, and many thanks go to all the individuals and businesses who sponsored casks. We would also like to thank Linda Barber who designed the festival logo and publicity material.

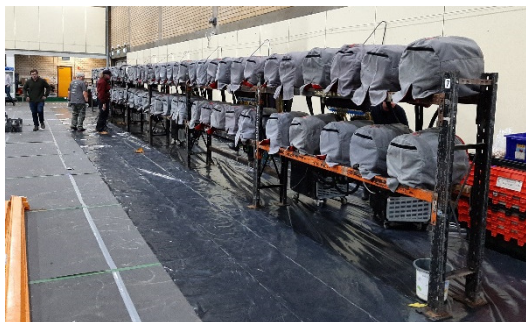
Our biggest thank you goes to the

CAMRA members who volunteered to help set up, run and take down the festival. Without their hard work and dedication the festival would not have been as successful as it was. If we get a positive response from Stevenage Leisure and a guarantee that they will address the seating problems, we will be back in 2021. In the meantime, the next festival organised by North Herts will be the Hitchin beer festival on 4-6th of June, for further details see the article or adverts in this magazine.

Pictures below:

Top - The beer is all racked

Below - Getting served at the international bar



Article by Jeremy Kitson, photos by Colin Ridgway

The Rob Muir Pie Fest Lives On

Award winning real ale and cider pub, The Queen's Head in Allens Green, celebrated its 10th annual Pie Fest in February. The event was devised by regular, Rob Muir, who sadly died suddenly in December. This year's event was held in his memory with the proceeds going to the Air Ambulance.



Rob Muir is pictured bottom right in the first Queen's Head Pie Fest in 2010. The light hearted competition

has no rules and there are no prizes, just a fun afternoon with voluntary contributions in exchange for a taste of the many entries. Anybody is welcome to enter. Running in conjunction with one of the pub's excellent beer festivals, a very varied selection

of pies were offered this year encompassing traditional British flavours to the aromatic essences of Moroccan and Malaysian cuisine. Judges, Matt Nolan and Nick Hall (pictured left), flew in from South Africa having been following the cricket there, just in time to take on



their roles and declare their favourite pies. In the savoury section, Jim Bryant's Veggie Breakfast pie was given first place. The overall winner, however, was Ally Geller with her Mini Apple and Cinnamon pies with a Salted Caramel Sauce.

In her winner's speech, Ally said, "I am amazed and delighted! I've only ever won an umbrella before. That was when I was eleven and I hadn't even entered the competition myself!" She jokingly thanked her domestic science teacher whom she said would have been very surprised.



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Goodbye from the Gate

It is sad to hear that the **Gate**, Bricket Wood closed on 8th February shortly after the last newsletter was published. The following was posted on face book and reminds me of the piece about the **Verulam Arms** (in St Albans) closure.



"Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm fully aware that speculation has been rife over the last couple of days on the all things St Albans and Bricket Wood Facebook pages, so I would just like to give you the definitive answer.

It's with a very heavy heart I have to announce that the Gate will be closing its doors tomorrow (Friday) night.

We've been here four years and there are a number of staff who have been with me for almost that long, and I have loved this pub, the "family" that run it and its customers from day 1.

We've had wonderful highs - the open mic nights, our Monday Quiz, the Birthday parties and weddings (and even non-weddings), and not forgetting the fabulous Beautiful Alice Festival that we were lucky enough to host twice.

We've served thousands of people our food and drink, and the vast majority have left happy. We built a BBQ and a bar, held gin festivals, launched a football team, said final goodbyes to loved ones, and raised thousands of pounds for charity - not least for the Beautiful Alice Foundation and the Peace Hospice in Watford.

But make no mistake, we are a small independent business and the market has been brutal for the last couple of years. Yes, I run three pubs, but no I don't own any of them - so the reason that our prices are higher than the Social for example is because I pay much, much more for my beer under the pubco model.

The Gate is a wonderful, wonderful pub, and there is so much potential with all the developments in the area - but sadly it's come too late for us. The writing was possibly on the wall over a year ago, but I was never going to give it up without a fight.

It's hard to accept that sometimes passion, enthusiasm and sheer hard work are just not enough. But our costs have risen far too much in the last couple of years and it's become unsustainable.

Charlie Wells have been good to us overall, and they fully intend to find new tenants to take it on - so

those of you who have been boldly claiming that it's "been sold to developers" are sorely mistaken. So, I want to thank the team for all their hard work at the pub, but mostly I want to thank all our customers for four years of wonderful memories and I hope I see all of you around.

I'll be raising a glass to you all tomorrow night before we depart. I hope you all believe me when I say the Gate will rise again

Thanks, and love to you all, Jamie". The Gate was closed for a long period before it was refurbished and re-opened in 2016. I endorse all the sentiments expressed above the pub has been a pleasure to visit since the re-opening.

Steve Bury

Saved - our Station

In an age where we seem to be mourning the loss of pubs it is pleasing to report that, after almost three years of uncertainty the **Station**, Knebworth re-opened on Valentine's Day after being rescued from the clutch of property developers.

The Station closed in February 2017 after Greene King sold it to a property developer who then applied for conversion of the pub upper floor and outbuildings

into residential units as well as the construction of a block of flats on the pub garden.

The loss of the one and only pub in Knebworth village provoked a strong community reaction in the form of the "Save our Station" campaigning group who worked tirelessly against the developer's plans and to have the pub re-opened.

Below: *Pints of View* North Herts District Council refused the planning application in

May 2018, but an appeal was lodged which was upheld by the Planning Inspectorate who granted planning permission for the block of flats in January 2019, but with a stipulation that the pub should



As Knebworth villagers became set to fight an expected planning application to convert the Station into a housing, will new legislation help save the pub?

remain. The developer then put the pub and a small garden area up for sale.

Knebworth Parish Council, with the assistance of a low interest loan from central government, had their bid to buy the Station accepted in autumn 2019 with the intention to let the pub to a commercial operator. Roll on to the turn of the year and the Parish Council, now owning the Station, began the refurbishment having concluded the recruitment of local couple Lloyd & Becky Willis as tenants to operate the pub on a five-year agreement. Lloyd & Becky are no strangers to the licensed trade nor the village having 24 years of hospitality trade experience whilst living in Knebworth for the last 12. Their introduction to the area came with a stint managing the **Tilbury** in Datchworth back in 2007 and, liking the area so much, they bought a house in Knebworth.

Lloyd's experience was tapped into by the Parish Council and, at the request of Councillor Adrienne Charters, assisting the sub-committee that was tasked with overseeing the purchase and re-opening of the station. He says himself that he did not envisage he would end up running the business. That said, he admits he was becoming weary in his previous role as an Area Manager for the Brewhouse and Kitchen chain. Perhaps this is a case of the right opportunity at the right time?

If the three weeks since opening are anything to go by it does look like Lloyd and Becky have got the format spot on. Being free of tie they are able to stock and vary the product mix as the business evolves. Quality ales, wine and food are at the heart of the operation. Local ales from Buntingford, Mad Squirrel and Tring breweries have all been seen on the bar in the first few weeks. The use of seasonal, fresh and local produce is a key part of the small but tempting food menu. You'll see meat from the Trussells, the local butchers, as well as Dawlicious Ice Cream from Hertford Heath.

The Station is firmly back in the Knebworth community and is already making a significant contribution back into the local economy with all but one of the dozen employees hailing from Knebworth.

The battle for the Station is won; It is well and truly back, firmly a part of the Knebworth community. Let's raise a glass to that!

Andy Rawnsley, photos from Lloyd Willis.



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South Herts Pub of The Year

There are around 300 pubs in the CAMRA South Herts branch area so all the eight finalists listed below have achieved a great deal by getting on the shortlist. The pubs went through two surveys one in the latter part of last year when the final eight were decided and another this year by a selected panel. The results are below.

- 1 **Old Cross Tavern – Hertford** Gold
- 2 **Crooked Billet** - Colney Heath Silver
- 3 **Six Bells** - St Albans Bronze
- 4 **Mermaid** - St Albans
- 5 **Woodman** - Wildhill
- 6 **Black Horse** – Hertford
- 7 **Reading Rooms** - Wheathampstead

8 **Mad Squirrel Tap Room** - Harpenden (now closed)
Can I congratulate the winners especially the Old Cross Hertford which will now be entered into the next stage of the competition, the CAMRA Hertfordshire Pub of The Year. As some of you will know the Mad Squirrel Tap Room has been sold and has now closed. The presentation at the **Six Bells**, St Albans took place on Thursday 27th February (see below) the other awards presentations to the Old Cross will be on Tuesday 28th April at 8pm and the Crooked Billet on Tuesday 14th April. Both events will be reported in the next POV.

Steve Bury

Awards for 3 Brewers and for the Six Bells, both of St Albans

On 28th February CAMRA members and locals alike packed the **Six Bells**, St Albans for two important CAMRA awards. The first to see the 3 Brewers of St Albans receive their Silver medal award for **East Anglia Strong Ale of the Year**. The brewery was founded in 2012 to brew "Radically Better Beer".

The award for *Special English Ale* (4.7 ABV) was presented by St Albans Beer & Cider Festival Organiser, John Bishop who described the beer as "a robust and full-bodied premium ale made with chocolate malt and choice English hops and packed with flavour".

Alan Oliver from the Six Bells then stepped forward to receive the Bronze medal award in the 2020 South Herts CAMRA Pub of the Year competition. John praised Alan and the team at the Six Bells for their excellent quality beer, service, community focus and sympathy with CAMRA aims. Despite tough economic times and huge business rate increases the Six Bells continued to thrive because of its

commitment to high standards. He reminded the assembled throng that the Six Bells was the only pub that day open in St Michael's Village and that drinkers must continue to use their pubs or risk losing them.

Below: South Herts CAMRA's John Bishop (left) presents the Silver Award to Mark Fanner from the 3 Brewers of St Albans



Below: South Herts CAMRA's John Bishop (left) presents the Bronze Award to landlord Alan Oliver of the Six Bells, St Albans.



South Herts branch meet with Daisy Cooper MP

South Herts CAMRA committee members were pleased to accept an invitation to meet with Daisy Cooper the new Lib Dem MP for St Albans at CAMRA HQ on Thursday 13th February. John Bishop, St Albans beer & Cider Festival Organiser, Steve Bury, Editor *Pints of View*, and Branch Chair Iain Loe joined Ellie Hudspith and Tom Stainer CAMRA CEO to discuss local and national issues.

We discussed business rates which it has been promised by this government will be reviewed. St Albans pubs received excessive increases which led to the save St Albans Pubs campaign and up until

now relief has only been available for those with rates of £51K or below which does not help a large number of pubs. More relief was announced by Savid Javid at the end of January but he of course has now resigned. We then moved to excise duty and explained that a reduction in duty could be a win win with an increase in trade, more beer being brewed and more jobs in production transportation and pubs. A reduction in tax could actually help the government coffers.

Pictured below (left to right): Daisy Cooper MP and South Herts CAMRAs John Bishop, Steve Bury and Iain Loe



The Pubs Code was also talked about as we have seen the inability to negotiate a reasonable lease cause three local publicans to leave what should be viable pubs.

We also mentioned the role pubs can play in stopping social isolation.

We mentioned the 50th Anniversary of the Campaign which is on 15th March next year, and it is hoped that we will have a display in the St Albans museum and may be even in the House of Commons. Daisy was happy to receive the branch pennant which she said would be on display in her office.

There was a good exchange of views and we have a lot in common.

Hertfordshire's Pints of View is produced by the Herts & Essex Borders, North, South Hertfordshire and Watford & District Branches of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches.



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Black Horse Colney Street revisited

Inspired by recent comments in *Pints of View* about the old **Black Horse** pub in Colney Street, I have done some detective work. My most surprising discovery is that there were actually two versions of the pub.

Its opening date is unknown, but a local map from 1934 clearly shows the Black Horse opposite the old **George & Dragon**, whose building survives as a private house. Last year an invaluable article by Chris Scivyer for the Park Street Residents' Association included a photo of the Black Horse, plus a glimpse of the pub sign on the eastern side of Watling Street. The pub, a post office and several houses were demolished in 1958 to make extra space for Handley Page aircraft factory.

A new Black Horse was opened a few hundred yards to the south (excellent photo in *PoV* 298), and this was the pub that closed in 2001 and met a fiery end circa 2003. With admirable scepticism, *PoV* 204 (April/May 2004) commented that the only conceivable way for a fire to occur "was if a bird had flown by and dropped a flare down the chimney". This was included in an article entitled, "What is it about Watling Street? - more pub losses".

This is of course a minor piece of local history but an interesting one, I feel. I've written to Jack Adams, author of "The Old Scrapbook", with these findings.

Tim Holman

Ed Says: I published a photo of mine in *POV* 298 showing the Black Horse in October 2001 shortly after it was closed, I recorded the date on the back. Jack Adams has had an extended holiday in Japan so was not available for a while in 2019 I will hopefully catch up with him and provide a copy of my snap. As for the two new photos I have not seen them before but do most certainly fill in the gaps about the origins of the pub which I am sure Jack will be most interested in. I'm impressed that Tim has got a copy of *POV* 204 in which I wrote:-

"The Black Horse - It is forgotten how long ago the pub shut again. It had been built in the sixties to meet the needs of the workers in the industrial estate, which at that time was a major employer. Things changed and although the pub had an excellent outgoing couple running it up until closure it was sold by then owner Pubmaster to a mystery buyer. It was later revealed that the owner lived in Thailand, but this was never confirmed and the pub site soon fell into disrepair. There were several dumped cars in the car park and it was finally security-boarded up and steel girders buried into the entrance months after closure. Apparently, the new owner was having

trouble getting planning permission to redevelop the site and despite the now high level of security the building spontaneously caught fire. The only seemingly conceivable way this happening was if a bird had flown by and dropped a flare down the chimney. The site is still empty to this day; the pub sign removed and the pub a heap of rubble in the car park".

Last Orders Please

A recent memory lane trip concerning old pub customs reminded me of closing time calling. This was usually done by the male landlord but other methods were sometimes used such as bell ringing, trumpet blowing or ancient car horn honking. Whatever the manner favoured to encourage swift removal of slow drinkers from the premises, it was always received with dismay and disbelief ("it can't be chucking out time already"); however, at times it could also be amusing.

My first memory of a landlord calling time was on holiday with my parents in Looe, Cornwall, we were staying in a hotel opposite a nearby pub **Ye Jolly Sailors** and because of my young age and early bedtime I heard the gruff cry "Time called. . . TIME". Ten minutes later came another plea in louder gruffer and slightly hostile tones "come along you lot. . . TIME". After another five minutes came the final almost aggressive warning - "TIME. . . TIME. . . YOU 'EARD?".

From my nearby bedroom I thought this bar badgering very funny but when older, occasionally being a recalcitrant punter myself, I wasn't so amused. In certain pubs though there were landlords whose last order bidding I did find humorous, here are some examples:

PUB NAME: **Kings Head**, Winchmore Hill, N21

LANDLORD: Mr. J. Barnes

LAST ORDER CALL: "Study the clock gentlemen - study the clock".

COMMENT: A politely spoken request from gentleman Barnes himself

PUB NAME: **Five Horseshoes**, Lt. Berkhamsted, Herts

LANDLORD: Name unknown

LAST ORDER CALL: "Any more for any more?", and later... "Your very last order ladies & gentlemen PERRR....lease".

COMMENT: A very well-kept pub run by the amicable landlord and his wife several years ago.

PUB NAME: The **Flask**, Highgate Village, N.6

LANDLORD: Name unknown

LAST ORDERS CALL: "It is well past the bewitching



hour - haven't you any homes to go to?"

COMMENT: The regular northern bar-steward was a great character always smiling and jocular but often the worse for wear which eventually led to the giving of his final orders.

PUB NAME: The **Sun**, Northaw, Herts.

LANDLORDS: Vic & Marie

LAST ORDERS CALL: "Close the book Marie - we're under starters orders".

COMMENTS: Wonderful old diminutive couple: Marie was so small she had to stand on a large box to see and serve over the bar. Vic's last orders call clearly indicated their love of horses and going to the races

Wonderful memories never to be heard again but such closing time orders are not necessary now due to changes in licencing laws and probably lack of customers too.

Judy Pryke

Ed Says: I do remember ten minutes drinking up time and frantic calls of "last orders at the bar" ten minutes before closing time, that was lunchtime as well as in the evening. Jersey in the Channel Islands was even more bizarre open all afternoon except for a half hour break there was no drinking up time and once the last bell went you were out. In the more rural areas this was not a problem but in St Helier it caused numerous ejections of visitors. I feel an article coming on.

More Draught Bass

Following the article by Roger Protz in POV 299 can I let your readers know that draught Bass is regularly available at the **March Hare**, Dunton, 34 high Street Biggleswade. This pub is well worth a visit for its range of well-kept beers.

Malcolm Olver

Ed Says: I have consulted *WhatPub* (the CAMRA national pubs database) and the March Hare has been a pub since 1840, called the Wheatsheaf up until 1990's. Following closure, it was bought and reopened as a free house in 2010. Since then they have not looked back and were CAMRA East Beds pub of the year 2013. *Whatpub* does say that the real ale range is ever changing, so it might be advisable to check that Bass is on before you make a long journey to visit the pub. Why not also ask your local free house to stock Bass it's a cracking pint?

Old Fox update

Your article Pub Losses and Gains in the last edition asked for an update on the **Old Fox**, School Lane, Bricket Wood and I'm writing with information

obtained from the Landlord (when he was in residence), local community and Lord Munden.

The landlord purchased the pub from the brewery when they were told to reduce their debt and he paid the asking price of £475,000 because his wife always wanted to run a pub - a comment that she later refuted. Neither had experience in running a pub and it was a slapstick affair, no beer on tap at the start and at the end nobody knew when the pub was going to be open or not. If no one turned up for half an hour or so then he closed the pub, so nobody knew when to go or not. (Hearsay: he was a builder by trade and there was a large plot of land behind the pub which he wanted to develop. The land immediately in front of pub is owned by the Lord of Manor, Lord Munden. The Lord told me this, so development could not go ahead)

In 2016 the floor collapsed in the pub bar, so the pub closed, not to be reopened since.

Sometime in 2018/2019 it was listed as an Asset of Community Value at the request of local residents. Hearsay, that the pub was put up for auction and the result is not known. A notice was put up locally saying that the owner wished to sell the land (note land and not pub was quoted). The Old Fox was listed as an asset of community value ACV on the 8th May 2019 and I understand from the Lord of the Manor, verbally, that the local residents could not raise the funds required to purchase the pub and there the situation remains. In the yard there are a number of vehicles and building equipment.

Interestingly adjoining the plot was a derelict semi-detached house owned by the Lord of Manor that has since been refurbished which is looking very nice with a large plot of land.

I would like to think the pub could be re-opened but fear a match will be put to it one day

Ron Drew

Ed Says: Can I point out that as published in every edition of this newsletter "Views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches". I thank Ron for his candid report back and remind readers that he has identified some of his comments as hearsay. I have no means of contacting the owner of the Old Fox for comments.

Maths lesson for the Editor

I had a day out from Leicester to visit St Albans with a friend of mine, and we had a very enjoyable time visiting the many pubs.

I picked up a *Pints of View*, and visited the Boot as my friend likes *Bass* (article p10).

Regarding your article about Fuller's on page 7, I would like to point out that £11.7 million is still a



profit, just a reduced one.

Peter Tomlinson

Ed Says: Peter, you are correct. Fullers were in profit, an error made by the newsletter,

Green Dragon update

I recently did a reconnoitre of pubs in the Sarratt area and wish to advise you that as of 17th February the **Green Dragon** is closed with much scaffolding and building material around. I spoke to a local resident who informed me that it was scheduled to re-open on St Patricks day 17th March. However, I would estimate it would be lucky if it was open before early summer.

Chris Long

Green Dragon part II

- The new owner hopes to re-open the pub at Easter (this seemed wildly optimistic to me)
- The building has been extended & the car-park expanded
- It is a Grader-II listed building and part of it had to be rebuilt, so some roof-tiles had to be removed & each one was uniquely numbered to it could be put back in its previous position
- the iconic green-dragon figure-head that looked over the hedge down the hill to Latimer from the back garden was being "refurbished" in Ireland and would be returned to its original position

Steve Brazier

Ed says: Chris and Steve bring the number of reports to three informing me that the Dragon is closed. The Pub Losses and Gains article in our previous Feb/March 2020 edition took a lot of time to get together, with the information for it coming from a large number of sources. My computer crashed recently and so far I have not found the source of the misinformation on the Green Dragon.

Rest & Welcome update

In your Feb/March 2020 edition you have asked for any update on the **Rest & Welcome**, Haultwick. I live opposite but have no inside information. It is a very unassuming building with little heritage value and the owner wants to spend a great deal of money bringing it back into use as a pub. This is so rare and yet it seems they'd rather it just fell down than work with the owner to get it re-opened.

The council turned down the plans for a second time on 3rd April 2019. Below is an extract from the decision: -



'Refuse Planning Permission For the development proposed in your application received 6th November 2018 and registered on 8th November 2018 and shown on the submitted plans.

The reason(s) for the Council's decision to refuse permission for the development is/are:

1. The proposed development, by reason of the inappropriate alterations to the external appearance of the building, would fail to respect the historic character of the Listed Building. The historic significance of this heritage asset would therefore be harmed, and the special interest of this Listed Building would not be preserved. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to policies HA1 and HA7 of the East Herts District Plan 2018, as well as Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

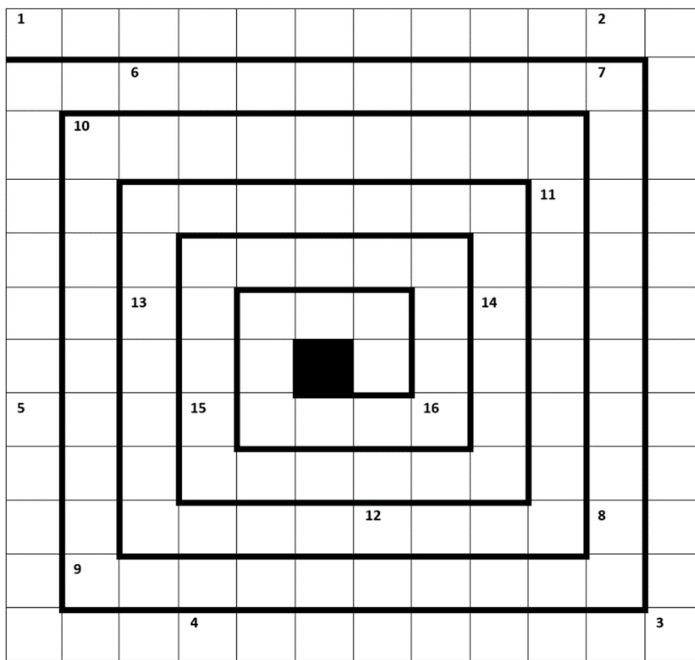
2. The proposed development, by reason of the inappropriate location of the staff parking area, would result in noise disturbance to the detriment of the neighbouring residential property. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to policies DES4 and EQ2 of the East Herts District Plan 2018.'

The owner has said she will give it one more go but understandably having been refused twice she is much less motivated than she was – and the building just continues to crumble in front of my eyes.

Derek Wheeler

Ed Says: I have followed the sad demise of the Rest & Welcome with dismay. I do not claim to be a planning expert and in the past have fought against inappropriate changes to pub interiors and exteriors. The last set of plans to me seemed reasonable, and as Derek has said it is very rare that the kind of money needed to restore the pub is willing to be spent.

Any comments, articles or letters for publication are welcome. Please send to: **Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.** Or send an Email to us at: pintsofview@hotmail.co.uk



Completed entries by 17 JMay to: Steve Bury, 14 New Road, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9EA.
 1st winner drawn wins a signed CAMRA 2020 Good Beer Guide. Photocopies are acceptable.

Your Name:.....

.....

Your Address:.....

.....

.....

.....

Your Postcode:.....

Instructions: Starting from the top-left corner, fill in the answers from the clues given below. The last letter of the previous answer is also the beginning letter of the following one. Complete all the answers to fill in the 'Catherine wheel'.

- 1) HANDSOME WIL in Cambridgeshire
- 2) SEEK HAIRY SORT in Woodmansey
- 3) NEVER RIDE in Penrith
- 4) ROSE ROTs in Harrogate
- 5) SARK BOOMS in Battersea
- 6) NANDOS SET in Wrexham
- 7) EACH RIGHT in Wimborne
- 8) HOT VENUS AIR in Alva
- 9) MILK ARENA in South Yorkshire
- 10) MOPED I RENT in Tottenham
- 11) AT THE GREEN Suffolk
- 12) WOOL SLIDE in Hinckley
- 13) ONE NOTED SKY in Greenfield
- 14) LAGER CAGES in Todmorden
- 15) TO A REGAL KEY in Northamptonshire
- 16) LEAFY ROAD in Ferryhill

Sudoku POV 299 - an apology

The Sudoku in the last edition Pints of View 299 was very hard indeed as three letters in the top line were missing, and I was amazed to receive some correct entries. As regular puzzlers will I hope know, I always have the beer name in the grid. As usual a draw of correct entries was done and the winners are:

S. Hoad, Watford and D. Bushnell, St Albans

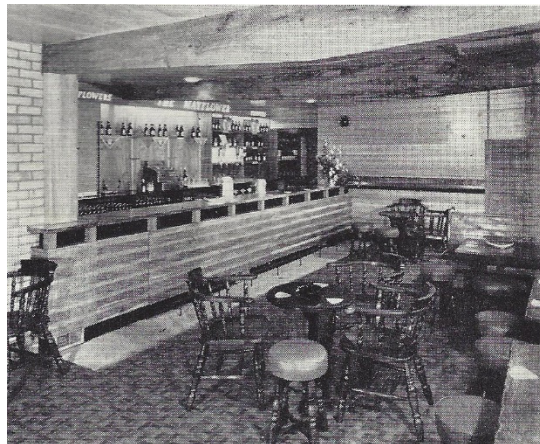
SOLUTION BELOW

D	Y	N	I	L	E	O	B	M
E	B	O	N	Y	M	I	L	D
L	M	I	B	O	D	E	N	Y
B	D	E	Y	N	O	M	I	L
M	O	L	E	D	I	B	Y	N
N	I	Y	M	B	L	D	O	E
Y	N	D	O	E	B	L	M	I
O	L	M	D	I	N	Y	E	B
L	E	R	I	M	Y	N	D	O

The Mayflower (now the Sheldon Inn), Welwyn Garden City

Our pubs change with the times because they are a part of our culture. Culture itself can be defined as 'the interface of the human psyche with the environment', consequently, in more simple words 'as the world changes so does our culture'. Therefore, as the world changes so do our pubs change. Sometimes the change is great and obvious but sometimes it is subtle. The **Mayflower** at Sloansway, Haldens, is an example of subtle changes. This was a modern estate pub built in December 1964 to serve Haldens. Why name this landlocked pub after a ship taking pilgrims to America in 1620? A hint to how The Mayflower gained its name comes from the April 1965 Whitbread Magazine: "Mr Dick Brennan, who acted as chef on the voyage of the replica of the Mayflower, which crossed the Atlantic in 1956, opened a new Flower's house, The Mayflower, Welwyn Garden City, last December." In this naming process, we can see how easy it is to let details of our history slip through our fingers. Who was Dick Brennan? Was he local or was he on the board of Whitbread? [All info gratefully received details below] Unless we have kept a copy of this 54-year-old magazine such ephemera of history just melts away as our world changes. We can see the changes in the photographs, the changing culture produces different furniture designs for example. One of the most telling examples of how our culture has changed is in the dedicated purpose of the rooms.

Below – the bar from Whitbread's 1965 magazine



As the magazine informs us: "It has a committee room (below) and a stage which has been built in conjunction with the Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation." 1965 really was a

different world, just 20 years after the war, a strong majority Labour government in power and a vision that our communities would be served by committees. So much so that a pub, a commercial operation, could yield a substantial part of its floor space to a committee room! Such management of commercial architecture just would not happen today.

Below – the bar from today's Sheldon Inn



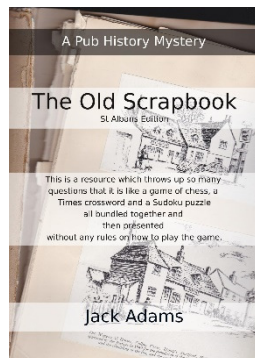
Today the Mayflower has been re-branded and is **The Sheldon Inn**. Promoting itself as a family friendly venue with a sit-down restaurant menu of popular food, this is a great change from the world where entering the pub on your 18th birthday was a rite of passage. Calling a pub opened in 1965 an 'old pub' really tests our definitions in pub history but the old pub, the Mayflower, has to be seen as an old pub. An old pub from different times, serving different needs in what was then a changing world as it is today. Notes: An extended article with more images can be found online at jackadamsauthor/blog. If you have any information to add to the history of The Mayflower you can contact Jack on his website. Anecdotal stories are most welcome; let's keep history human!

Thanks to Mick Fit of **North Mymms Social Club** for donating his collection of Whitbread Magazines for pub history research.

Jack Adams

See Jack's pub archive history (right) at:

<http://jackadamsauthor.com/scrapbook/>



Having the right chef can make you. Having the wrong one...

Food outlets improve, and decline. The chef is a vital component in delivering the quality of food you want to be known for, whether it's a plate full of acceptable food, or genuine gourmet dining.

The first task is to determine what level of customers you are catering for. Are you looking for low priced, high volume; high class food outlet, or somewhere in between? Once you've decided on your market, it's essential to employ the right chef to meet that market.

Your chef should be working with you to determine the menu choices, and the prices you should sell at. Meat has increased in price quite significantly in recent years, and passing that on has been difficult in many places. It's essential therefore that you establish the demographic of your customers, and deliver the quality and value of food that meets it.

Your chef should also be heavily involved in reducing waste. What is left on the plate? If your chef

shows no interest in reviewing what people leave, how do you cut out this waste, with its implications around customer satisfaction, or in reality dissatisfaction? The chef has to care about what isn't

consumed at every level. If customers leave the same items and a pattern develops, action needs to be taken to rectify the waste. Stack it high and sell it cheap still needs to observe this basic process, but in the higher priced, quality outlets it's an indicator if you have the right person for the job!

We have witnessed outlets where the chef has totally ignored the profitability of the plates he produces. Chefs are trained to ensure the cost and sales prices are

connected. You must ensure they apply these principles in delivering your establishment's profitability, not just satisfying customers. After all, the profit motive is why you have the business in the first place!

First published in "Beer Round Ere" the Peterborough CAMRA newsletter



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Why Bar Staff Hate Customers

It's quite simple really but when it comes to serving people being behind the bar has its shortcomings. So here is the customer's guide to ordering drinks.

Please remember to order drinks one at a time as we like to run backwards and forwards it keeps us fit.

When ordering a round make sure you don't know what you want when you arrive at the bar, we like to stand around whilst you nip back to the table or shout across the room to find out. Of course, the other people at the bar do not mind waiting either and if they start moaning it is hardly your problem. Once you have received two drinks please take them back to your table for a chat before returning to pay, we'll still be waiting, were not going anywhere and we appreciate the rest. On a large round this can continue almost indefinitely.

Always order *Guinness* last, we like you to stand at the bar with all your other drinks whilst we do the double pour and let it settle. We of course are always pleased when we don't do this and have to be reminded to top it up.

Never put the money in a bar person's hand. They like to pick it up of the bar especially if it's all in small change and in a puddle of beer.

Never say "please" or "thank you" it only irritates us. Always wait until you have been told how much the round is and it has been rung up before asking for crisps, snacks etc. (when requiring ready-salted crisps please ensure that you are told the full range of flavours available before asking for "Plain" it helps us learn the stock).

When buying a pint for Jim or Tom etc., please don't ask them what they want, just tell us their name or point to where they are standing because we like to guess and get a real thrill when we get it right.

If when arriving at the bar and there are others waiting before you please shout up before them as we like to be abused by people who think they have been served out of turn on purpose. It is our fault of course as we have the ability no matter how busy it is to track the exact time and order that customers arrive at the bar.

In the event that you may have to wait for over two minutes at the bar please don't hesitate to heckle and exclaim that it has been at least half an hour, it keeps staff on their toes as they have no concept of time. Tapping a coin on the bar can be equally as effective. The last bell of course is just to make sure you are awake and have heard the first one, there is no point in asking for last orders until the towels are up and the staff have started cleaning up.

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Why Customers Hate Bar Staff

Having given instructions on how to treat bar staff and order drinks it is only fair to air the customer's side of the argument.

The first problem on entering the bar can be finding one (barperson that is). It seems that these days everything other than serving customers comes first. Checking the toilets, wiping down the tables, replacing beer mats, stocking shelves, washing glasses and many other mundane tasks all come before selling the products, which after all is what puts the money in the till and pays their wages.

When you do spot one, who is not doing any of the above they are idly chatting to customers who have already been served, but let's face it you weren't in a hurry.

A friend of mine would comment, "I must be wearing the cloak of invisibility".

If you want to be welcome whatever you do don't complain no matter how bad the service or quality. Dirty glasses (lipstick is my pet hate) or short measure should be accepted as an occupational hazard, after all it's not every pint, or is it?

I may be getting older but I do find that the appearance of the barperson has a great deal to do with the service they deliver.

There seems to be a certain group of bar staff who have no comprehension of what a complaint is or what to do about it. When presented with a pint that looks like muddy pond water, or is an inch short of the brim they ask blankly what is wrong.

Although modern tills log each drink and tell staff how much the change is to be given, they still regularly manage to get it wrong.

Of course, bar staff are all underpaid and over worked, do not know why they accepted the job in the first place or why they carry on doing it. This by the way explains why I gave it up a long time ago.

Both Articles above by Steve Bury

You can't beat a bit of crumpet

Not every crumpet meets the standards set by the factory, whether they're too holey, or not holey enough, so it good to hear that they can be put to good use despite being 'wonky'.

We have mentioned in this newsletter a beer made using stale bread called "Toast", well wonky crumpets are now being given new leases of life thanks to Warburtons' new product *Toasted Crumpet IPA*.

In case you were wondering how it all works, some of the malted barley you would usually use to make beer is replaced with crumpets, which extracts



starches and sugars and breaks them down into fermentable sugars. This means that the crumpet does more than just flavour the beer.

Nothing like a bit of crumpet with your bit of crumpet.

Trading Standards

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

Citizens Advice consumer helpline

Telephone: 03454 04 05 06

Internet link:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/#h-how-to-report-a-trader-to-trading-standards

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This section contains information from a large number of sources and occasionally errors may occur. News items are supplied to meet newsletter deadlines, and which in some cases may unfortunately be out of date upon publication. **Comments or additional information should be sent to our contact details on page 16.**

Following Government instruction with effect from 20 March all pubs have since closed until further notice

Amwell: The **Elephant & Castle** lease has been taken over by Farr Brew. The pub closed for a short spell in March.

Bricket Wood: The **Gate** closed 8th February (see article page 10) and re-opened on 20th March with new landlord Ben Satchfield who also runs the **Olde Kings Arms** in Hemel Hempstead.

Bushey: A new planning application has been submitted to convert the **Royal Oak** in Bushey to flats and an appeal has been lodged against the decision to reject the previous application. The pub remains closed.

Codicote: It has been reported that the **Bell** motel closed on 28th February further details needed.

Colney Heath: The **Crooked Billet** no longer sells food on Saturday evenings everything else is exactly as published in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2020**. We would like to congratulate Wally Julie and the staff on their Silver award in South Herts Pub of The Year. See article page 12.

Epping Green: The **Beehive** is still open despite an expected closure for refurbishment this January (reported in PoV 299). The closure for refurbishment is now expected to take place "later in the year".

Flamstead: The lease of the **Spotted Dog** changed hands in February and underwent a short closure for a facelift. Jon and Kyle who also run the **Swan** in Markyate now have two pubs.

Flaunden: It appears that the information on the **Green Dragon** in the *Pub Losses and Gains* article in the last POV was incorrect and the pub is still closed. See "Readers Write".

London Colney: Hoardings are up on the **Golden Lion**, closed now for over two years.

Harpenden: The **Mad Squirrel Tap Room** has been bought by a local businessman and closed on 8th February. The **Slug & Lettuce** was closed in Feb/Mar for a refurb and re-opened 9th March as the **Wheatsheaf**, three real ales are available - *Rev. James, Doom Bar* and *Black Sheep*.

Heronsgate: Congratulations to the **Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty** which has won Watford & District **Pub of The Year** and **Cider Pub of the Year**.

Hertford: A refurbishment **Duncombe Arms** has completed with the pub now called the **Hertford Bell**. It now offers GK *Abbot* and *IPA* plus a GK guest beer from the company's list. TV Sport is to the fore and the welcome internal refit has taken away trip hazards, provided improved WC facilities and

introduced new furniture. There is a wall featuring a written summary and photographs of the pub's past and the importance of Thomas Duncombe, MP, to the town's history. Work is ongoing to refurbish the large external drinking area at the rear where former "Duncombe Arms" pub livery and signage will feature. Food is available all day and there are growing live music sessions on Saturday evenings.

Kings Langley: The Saracen's Head did close for 6 weeks in January for a refurbishment and re-opened in February, and is now being run by Peter Dillingham, the landlord of The **Black Boy** in Bricket Wood. It now has two large television screens, a copper surface on the bar, and currently serves Sharp's *Doom Bar*, Tring Brewery's *Colley's Dog* and Timothy Taylor's *Landlord*.

Knebworth: We are delighted to announce that after a long campaign by locals the **Station** re-opened on 14th February. It was well attended, in fact the place was packed, and *Spitfire*, *Landlord*, a Tring beer, and *Citra* all available! and they are serving food as well. This is a great result for the local area, which has

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been without a pub for 3 years. See article page 10.

London Colney: The **Bull** now always sells a Locale sourced from the SIBA list and the garden was refurbished in 2019. It has been reported that the **Green Dragon** has moved from lease to a managed pub.

Reed: On Wednesday the owner/occupier of the **Cabinet** lost his appeal against an enforcement notice to stop him using the pub as domestic residence only. He now has six months to vacate, or open, let or sell as a pub. The village have arranged a pop-up pub to celebrate on Saturday 4th April at Reed Village Hall, 6.30 to 10pm

Rickmansworth: New planning and listed building consent applications have been submitted to redesign and refurbish the interior of the **Tree** in Mill End. From the proposed plan it looks like it will remain as a pub.

St Albans: The **Victoria** closed on 3rd February for a major refurbishment. The **Verulam Arms** re-opened in Feb as the **Rabbit Hole**. New owner Chris Warren (thus the silly name) has bought the ten-year lease. As far as we know there is no real ale. The **Water End Barn** Wetherspoon shut for a short spell in March for a refurbishment. The **Rose & Crown** St Michael's closed in February and the lease is for sale. A large amount of work was done on the pub the last time it was taken over.

Shenley: The **William IV** sold to developer Griggs last year has had the original planning permission withdrawn and an application to develop the whole site including the pub into four two-bedroom apartments. Hertsmere Council application No 20/0121/FUL.

South Oxhey: The tenancy of the **Dick Whittington** is on the market. The pub is owned by Ei Group.

Ware: A planning application has been submitted by McMullen's for the construction of an extension and major revamp and extension of internal bar areas at the **Victoria** in Star Street. There will be associated landscaping works. Welcome to the new landlord of The **Punch House** - Reuben Barker, they stock five ales from Greene King and genuine guests. Welcome to the new landlord of the **Waterside** Paul Mulcrone, they stock eight ales from nationals and LocAles. Also welcome to Alex and Stella at The **Exhibitionist Café Bar** in the High Street. Usually one ale direct from the cask is available at weekends; On the 3rd Sunday of each month they have an 'Ale on Sunday Session' with live music and two/three ales. Breweries stocked are usually from Hadham, Farr and Gold Bear. Farr's bottled ales also stocked.

Watford: The **Prince George** on St. Albans Road closed abruptly on or around the 21st January. Owners Ei Group are looking for managers to take it on. For cider fans, Weston's **Old Rosie** is now on at **O'Neill's** next to Watford Junction station.

Welham Green: We are pleased to announce that the **Hope & Anchor** is definitely selling real ale again, so far **Black Sheep** and **Doom Bar**.

Welwyn: The **Steamer** has been taken over on 4th March by Ben Gill who also runs the **Coach & Horses** in Old Hatfield.

CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

All planned CAMRA Branches activities for publication have been suspended until further notice. Please check individual branch websites for individual Hertfordshire branch updates.

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