

# FREE



## THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# SOUTH HERTS.

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1977 NUMBER 7

## 150 Years of 'Macs'

In 1827 Peter McMullen established a brewery in Back Street (now Railway St.). Hertford. Today, 150 years later, the firm of McMullen and Sons is still going strong and is still very much the family concern that it was then.

The first brewery was later moved to the site now occupied by The Woolpack public house and finally, in 1891 a new brewery, the present one, was built in Hartham Lane.

The Company expanded quickly during the late 19th century, firstly by buying up public houses and also by taking over other breweries such as the Cannon Brewery in Ware (1864), the Star Brewery also in Ware (1874) and the Waltham Abbey Brewery (1898). Along with the breweries came their tied estate and by 1897, when the firm was incorporated as a limited company, it owned a total of 90 pubs. For many years McMullen and Sons operated side by side with the Hope Brewery at Old Cross, Hertford. In 1922 this, with its 20 pubs was also absorbed.

### Macs Today

Today McMullen own around 200 pubs and also run a chain of off-licenses.

The brewery, stores and plant have all been modernised over the years to keep up with increased demand, but the brewery itself still contains a lot of older equipment, such as the copper-lined oak fermenting vats, giving it a satisfying traditional 'feel'. Two 'real ales' are produced; Country Bitter with an original gravity of 1042, and the deservedly popular AK Mild (O.G.1033), both of which can be had unpressurised in a fair number of houses. In general McMullens ales represent excellent quality and value for money which makes it more of a pity that they are all too often marred by the use of top-pressure.

Despite the celebrations, McMullens have no plans for a special brew to mark the occasion.

### Congratulations

The branch would like to congratulate McMullen's on their last 150 years and we look forward to a prosperous future for them.

## 1000 extra pumps

Obviously Ind Coope's experiment with real ale in the south has been a tremendous success because now we hear that they intend to install a further 1000 handpumps into pubs in the south and no doubt many of them will find their way into Hertfordshire pubs.

One of the pleasing side-effects of the introduction of Burton Ale is the way that many of Ind Coope's pubs have reverted to selling ordinary bitter on handpumps as well. Let's hope this trend continues during 1977.

## Prices Up

Congratulations to Whitbread who have started the year in classic style by announcing a 2p price increase on a pint - this being on top of the 1p added by Mr Healey. Surely at a time like this it amounts to a very bad public relations exercise which the L.V.A. aren't too happy about either.

And wasn't Whitbread the company who were recently putting questionnaires on their advertisements to find out what their customers liked. Do they conclude from the results that their customers would like a 2p increase in the cost of a pint. Whitbread Marlow Bitter already sells at about 28p a pint in Hertfordshire and for a beer of only average strength (1035.4) this is very expensive.

# Mashing at Home

by Dave Burns

It always seems strange to me that many home brewers who, as CAMRA members, condemn the use of substitutes in commercial beers will quite happily use hopped malt extract in their own. Made this way they can never reach the quality of the best traditional beers and always have a characteristic 'extract tang'. The way around this is to brew from malt grain.

However, this involves mashing which, until recently, seemed rather too complicated for the home brewer.

## Mashing Process

Mashing is necessary to convert the unfermentable starches in the malt grain into fermentable sugars. Commercially this is done by mixing the crushed malt with hot liquor (water) and keeping the 'mash' at a constant temperature for a few hours. During this time two enzymes collectively known as Diastase, make the conversion. The temperature is quite critical, and depends to some extent on the type of beer to be brewed, but it is generally around 150°F. The resultant 'wort', a solution of sugars and other substances, is run off into the boiler, the grains being sprayed, or 'sparged' with more hot liquor to remove the last remnants of fermentable material.

Obviously, this seems a rather involved process to copy in the kitchen, but it can be done quite simply.

## Do It Yourself

The method is given in detail by David Line (who devised it) in his 'Big Book of Brewing' (Amateur Winemaking Publications). It involves the use of an insulated food container, the type used for keeping food cool when camping etc.

The crushed malt is placed in the container and the hot (about 170°F) water added. When mixed the cool grain will reduce this to around 150°F. The lid is placed on the container and put in a warm place for at least three hours. During this time the temperature should not drop more than a couple of degrees. At the end of this the wort is run off and the grains sparged using more hot water sprayed on top. I use a plastic barrel full of hot water with a watering-can rose attached to the tap.

The resultant wort is then boiled with the hops in the normal manner.

Using this method should allow the amateur to produce beers every bit as good as commercial ones. If you intend trying it I would certainly recommend buying David Line's excellent book which not only gives full details of the system but also a complete background to the brewing process.

## Social in Pegsdon

It was with some anxiety that I set off on the frosty night of 9th December on the 20 mile journey from St. Albans to the Live and Let Live at Pegsdon.

It was when I walked in and saw all the sandwiches on the tables that I knew I had made the right decision. Our host had laid on Greene King IPA and Dark Mild as well as his usual Abbot.

While some preferred to play darts, most of us joined in the sing-song accompanied by one of those pianists who could play anything requested, which ranged from rugby songs to Christmas Carols and even Jerusalem. About 10 o'clock a plate full of pasties came round and shut us up for about two minutes before going into a grand finale.

I think it quite safe to say a good time was had by all. Moral of this tale - Don't miss the next branch social!

BOB NORRISH.

## New Year Party

Friday 7th January was the night of the Branch New Year Party at Bramfield Village Hall, near Hertford. As usual there was a large selection of real ale: Eldridge Pope IPA, Fuller's ESB, Abbot Ale, Adnams Bitter and Old, Theakston's Bitter and McMullens AK Mild. A large variety of cheeses was provided and both live music and a disco helped to put a swing into the evening.

I saw quite a few people aimlessly staggering around with glazed eyes and bulging stomachs, which is always a good criterion when assessing a booze-up. And of course, there was not a drop of beer left in the place by 12.30am.

We would like to thank all those who made the evening a great success, especially the group, Anderson's Shelter and the Barley Mow for the license.

# AGM

Last month's branch A.G.M. held at The Cricketers in Redbourn turned out to be a very lively affair with much discussion and argument provoked by head-quarter's financial plight. After much debate £50 was donated to HQ and a further £50 which is to be paid back to the branch at some future date. A lot of criticism was pointed towards HQ for leaving the financial problems to increase to the point where branches had no alternative: either donate or say farewell to CAMRA. A lot of members felt this was a case of pointing the gun at your head (giving us 2 weeks notice) and were bitter because with so many irons in the fire, the £100 was needed for the many branch projects running at the moment.

The new branch constitution was accepted with a few minor amendments.

Sadly, both Neil Campbell and Richard Steward decided to stand down from the Committee. Both have done sterling work for the Campaign in the years they have been on the Committee, for which the branch is very grateful. Russel Patten was elected and will take over as Treasurer and Minutes Secretary. This leaves one vacant position:

## Committee

Bob Norrish	Chairman
Dave Burns	Secretary
Russel Patten	Treasurer/Minutes Secretary
Adrian Green	Events Organiser
Marion Birch	Social Secretary
Jim Axford	Press Officer

## THF real ale

As reported recently, Trust House Forte are to put real ale into most of their pubs and on 5 January at The Red Lion, Radlett, the official launching took place. The Red Lion has of course sold real ale for a long time now, but the launching gave both Trust House and CAMRA representatives a chance to exchange views and ideas.

## Live K.B.

Bill Tidy's Daily Mirror comic strip, The Fosdyke Saga has been brought to life on the stage. Surely the sequel must be Keg Buster.

# Ally Pally Ale

Those drinkers living in South Hertfordshire will probably be interested to know of 2 major beer festivals to be held on our doorstep during 1977 - and both to be held at Alexandra Palace in North London.

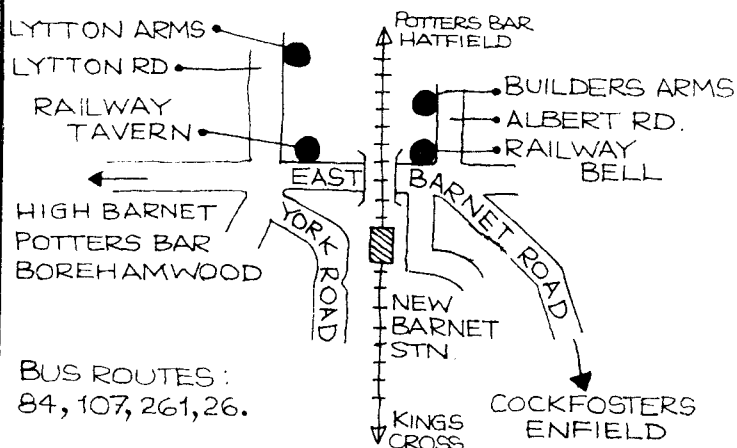
The first will be held in June, featuring beers available in the London area and will be part of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations. The event is being organised by the Greater London Council but the London branches of CAMRA will be responsible for running a number of real ale bars on the site.

The second is CAMRA's National Beer Festival to be held in September. The last CAMRA Festival in 1975 at Covent Garden was a huge success but in 1976 a suitable venue couldn't be found.

On a local scale, the Branch is looking into the possibility of holding a Hertfordshire Beer Exhibition.

## Beer In Town No.4. New Barnet

- The Lytton Arms: 24 Lytton Road  
Watney's Fined Bitter.
- The Railway Tavern: 3 East Barnet Road  
Charrington's IPA.
- The Railway Bell: 13 East Barnet Road  
Ind Coope Bitter and Burton Ale.
- The Builders Arms: Albert Road  
Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale.



The 1977 Hertfordshire Real Ale Guide is still being compiled at the moment but there are still a few 1976 editions available from Russell Patten, 16 Garthland Drive, Arkley, Barnet, Herts. 01-440-6566 (Tel).

# Changes

In a recent spate of activity, St. Albans has gained an extra three real ale pubs, while in the north of the County, Hitchin is rapidly acquiring a good selection of real ales, with another three new outlets this month:

St. Albans The Rose and Crown, The Six Bells and The Verulam Arms are all now selling Ind Coope Burton Ale.

Hitchin i) The Ship now sells McMullens Country Bitter. ii) The Sailor Boy has introduced Whitbread (Marlow) Bitter. iii) The George now sells Ind Coope Burton Ale.

Other changes this month:

Ickleford The Old George is selling Greene King Abbot Ale on gravity.

High Cross The White Horse now sells Burton Ale.

Chipping The Countryman has replaced Burton Ale with Adnams Bitter.

Essenden The Rose and Crown now sells Burton Ale.

Hatching Green, Harpenden. The White Horse is rumoured to be selling Whitbread (Marlow) Bitter. Can anyone confirm this?

# DIARY of EVENTS

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

- Jan 18 January Branch Meeting  
The New Fiddle. St. Albans Rd. West, Hatfield (just off A1) 8.00pm. Ind Coope.
- Jan 27 Darts Match v Romford Branch.  
The Angel, Sun Street, Waltham Abbey. 8.00pm. McMullens.
- Feb 26 Brewery Trip to Paine's, St. Neots \*
- Feb 9 Brewery Trip to Whitbread, Marlow \*
- Feb 15 Brewery Trip to Charles Wells, Bedford \*
- Feb 22 February Branch Meeting  
West Herts. Sports and Social Club, Park Avenue, Watford. 8.00pm. Selection of Real Ales.

## Hertfordshire North Branch

- Jan 26 Social. The Plough, Léy Green. 8.00pm. Greene King.
- Feb 9 February Branch Meeting  
The Chequers, Woolmer Green. 8.00pm. Ind Coope.

## Enfield and Barnet Branch

- Feb 15 Social with North London Branch  
The Queens Arms, Kilburn.

\* For details of the above-mentioned Brewery Trips, contact Jim Axford, 117 Queens Road, Watford, Herts. or tel: Horley 72661 (work number).

# Where to get it

This Newsletter is produced monthly by the Hertfordshire South Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. All contributions should be sent to the editor by the first day of the month: Les Middlewood, 81a Linden Way, Southgate, London, N14.

Further copies of this Newsletter can be obtained from the editor or from any of the pubs listed below:

<u>Harpenden</u>	The Queens Head
<u>Hatfield</u>	The New Fiddle
<u>Hertford</u>	The White Horse
<u>New Barnet</u>	The Railway Bell
<u>St. Albans</u>	The Jolly Sailor
<u>Shenley</u>	Pink's Hotel
<u>Thundridge</u>	The Windmill
<u>Tythenhanger</u>	The Barley Mow
<u>Watford</u>	The Victoria Tavern

STOP PRESS:

Crews Hill The Plough now sells Mac's Country Bitter.



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of beer and pubs throughout the country. Why not join and help us improve the lot of the drinking person?

For your £2.00 subscription you will receive a copy of the monthly 'What's Brewing', CAMRA's newspaper on what is going on in the world of beer.

### SOUTH HERTS NEWSLETTER

I wish to become a member of CAMRA Ltd

I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

I enclose £2.00 as my annual membership subscription (Any additional amount will be welcomed as a donation).

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

. . . . .

Signature . . . . . Date . . . . .

Please send to: The Membership Secretary  
The Campaign For Real Ale, 34 Alma Road,  
St. Albans, Herts, AL1 3BW.