



Hertford in 1900

From the Black Horse to the Old Cross Tavern via the Salisbury Arms and the Old Barge - An Historical Pub-Crawl

This walk treads a path between six real ale pubs and passes two fizz pubs. In 1900 this walk would have passed twenty real ale pubs and what a different town we would have encountered. Without restaurants, shops and today's level of street lighting, the town would have seemed dark, drab and, in places, daunting. Today's road layouts have, in some instances, completely altered the streetscape. There was no real evening economy and any visitors from neighbouring towns and villages were long gone for the day. But, on the other hand, the town had over 80 pubs!

If Fore Street was the town's main street and thoroughfare, Railway Street, formerly Back Street was down on its heel, adjacent to the grim slums of Butcherley Green.

The temperance movement was gaining support and what with the First World War, and the newfound strength and hopes and dreams of those who had given so much, the first twenty years of the twentieth century were to see the demise of 27 pubs in Hertford. As the century continued and people began to gain the wealth to follow other pursuits, this trend continued and continues still today - since 1980 the town has lost a dozen pubs and gained very few to replace them. The traditional pub seems under threat. We must support it. CAMRA not only fights to promote real ale but supports traditional town and country pubs – the "locals" and community pubs. If this resonates with you why not consider joining.

And why this route? For no other reason than that the six pubs offer some great beers, brewed locally and from further afield. And the roads between will allow you a chance to dream back to the time when there literally was a pub on every corner. Cheers.



SOUTH HERTS BRANCH



No.1 The Black Horse. The pub since at least 1817, it originally only operated from the taller of the two buildings as a beerhouse and in 1900 was owned by Wickhams of Hertford who were based at Millbridge. Wickhams became part of Wells and Winch and the Millbridge brewery was bombed out of existence by the Luftwaffe in WWII. Now owned by Greene King. *Along West Street we would have passed Nicholls brewery which succumbed to the construction of Gascoyne Way. Look out for the Brewers House on the left.* **REAL ALE**



No. 2 Black Swan. Demolished for the by-pass, in 1900 this was a Benskins pub (later Ind Coope). In Victorian times the pub had a theatre and hired out rowing boats for people to use on the River Lea. The pub was a community pub in the true sense of the word, acting as base for the issuing of pension payments and sometimes as a church and funeral parlour. Closed in 1959. *In 1900 West Street curved to the right and up an incline to join Castle Street at its junction with Pegs Lane. Now we must cross Gascoyne Way using Evron Crossing.*



At the end of the terrace of buildings that include the White Horse stood....

No. 3 Gladstone Arms. Another demolition caused by the by-pass, it was leased then bought by McMullens. It may have occupied a site formerly taken by the Castle Inn. The pub shown here was largely re-built but closed in 1965.



No. 4 White Horse. Originally a beerhouse, it was acquired by Nicholls as one of only three tied houses – the others being the Two Brewers and the Warren House in Bengoe. The beerhouse had one bar and a downstairs second room which was subsumed into the pub as late as the 1960s. The pub was fully opened up in the late 1980s and the upstairs rooms opened to customers. The Dark Horse brewery was stationed here between 1994-96. Sold to Fullers in 1999. **REAL ALE**



Carry on to the end of Castle Street, where it veers to the left. Cross over and you will pass

No. 5 Old Waggon and Horses. Owned by William Baker of the Hope Brewery, the pub was one of the most heavily adorned in Hertford with livery covering most of the pub's external plasterwork – advertising Babers Entire ale. It closed in 1917, the Hope Brewery being bought out by McMullens three years later. The building still stands and is easily recognisable – now an antiques shop adjacent to the Indian restaurant.



No. 6 Blackbirds. A pub with a history dating back to at least 1621, once known as the Magpie after the Pye, a mansion that previously stood on the site. By 1710 the pub was known as the Blackbirds and later as the Three Blackbirds. The pub was largely rebuilt in 1876 and was owned by Christie, the Hoddesdon brewer. In 1900 the pub had a bar, tap room and parlour and the double gateway led to a coach house and stabling. In 1996 the pub re-launched as the Fledgling and Firkin, a tag which lasted barely 7 years. **NO REAL ALE**



No. 7 Salisbury Arms Hotel. Hertford's very own county hotel which has offered accommodation to many a famous soul and which has a history traceable to at least 1421 – then known as the Bell. Today's architecture stems mainly from the seventeenth century. The pub name changed to the Salisbury in 1800. Bought by McMullens in 1891, the pub once had an additional bar – which ran as almost a separate pub – known as the Salisbury Tap, accessed from Church Street – now rebuilt as the restaurant. **REAL ALE**



Over the road and round the corner to Salisbury Square but just before the White Hart look out for...

No. 8 Victoria. Formerly owned by Christie's by 1891 it had been acquired by Phillips brewery of Royston. It closed in 1919 and the building later housed a sweet shop.



No. 9 White Hart. The oldest pub name in Hertford. In 1900 it was owned by Pryor Reid, brewers in Hatfield but 9 years later it was purchased by McMullens. The core of the building is 17th century but there were significant alterations in the 18th and 19th century and regular later refurbishments which have completely obliterated the multi-roomed ground floor which until the 1950s had four drinking areas. The yard had stabling and access direct to Market Street and the pub was still a hotel in the 1950s **REAL ALE**

Salisbury Square was not formed until 1925 when the demolition of two back-to-back former pubs paved the way for its creation

No. 10 Vine. This faced the Gravesons building. Formerly known as the Christopher the pub closed in 1903 and was subsequently occupied by the offices of Hertfordshire County Council's Education Department before demolition. *and...*





No. 11 Red Cow. This faced the Flower Pot. Previously called the Labour In Vain, the pub had once been in the ownership of two Hertford brewers – first Thomas Fitzjohn and then Moses Cater. By 1900 it was in the hands of Christies of Hoddesdon. Closing in 1910 the pub became a cycle shop before its demolition.

Look over to Greggs the bakers. Those tell-tale windows...



No.12 Flower Pot. Formerly known as the Coal Hole, the pub was once owned by Lord Townshend. It passed between Hertford brewers Thomas Metcalf and Percy Hargreaves but in 1896 was rebuilt for Watford brewers Benskins, closing as a pub in 1972.

*Turn the corner into Bull Plain and just passed the Stone House – not a pub at all until 1997 when it first opened as the Prince Regent. **NO REAL ALE***



No.13 Bull. Occupying the building now housing Hertford Cameras, the Bull was by 1903 owned by Rayments of Furneux Pelham but the name had once been used for a pub at the corner of Maidenhead Street and Bull Plain and, previously to that, by a pub on the corner of Fore Street and Church Street which changed its name to the White Swan (now Gays the newsagent). The pub in Bull Plain was sold to Pryor Reid but it closed in 1917.

Over the canal bridge and on to...



No.14 Old Barge. Today's Barge, which replaced a previous pub of the same name, was largely rebuilt in the 1890s and was purchased in 1891 by Hawkes, brewers from Bishops Stortford. It passed to Benskins in 1903 and today it is owned by Punch Taverns. **REAL ALE**

Through the Folly, turn left at Thornton Street, up on to Hartham Lane and follow the road round to the left.



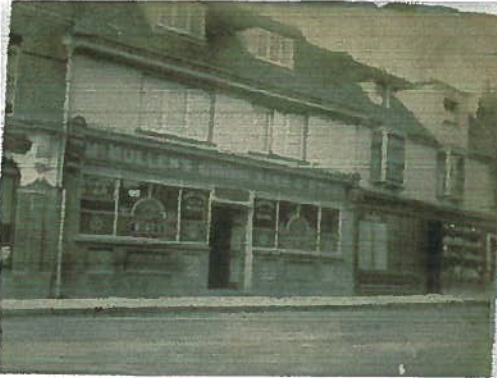
No. 15 Unicorn. Closed since 1984, the decaying pub stands testament to better days when it was part of a community of small cottages which stretched back round to the Folly. In McMullen's hands since 1891, the two bar layout included a tiny saloon at the front. Now sold on to Sainsbury's who (if they have their way) will demolish it. *Just a few steps further on the left up Hartham Lane stood..*

No.16 Red Lion Railway Tavern (no picture available), a pub owned by Pryor Reid of Hatfield. It closed in 1919 and was later demolished by McMullens, the land built on for brewery buildings.



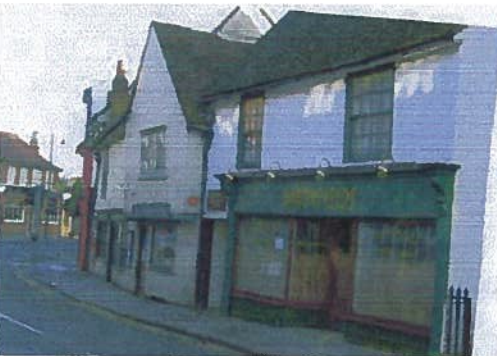
Up at the T junction, and opposite, just to the right the current building once housed ...

No.16 Great Northern Tavern. Owned in 1900 by the Hope Brewery it subsequently was purchased by McMullens and was later renamed the Bear's Ear, closing in 1958. Used as offices by Mac's, its interior bar area was still largely intact until 2004 when the building was sold and stripped out before being refurbished.



Turning left towards Old Cross look out for the existing pub-style windows which signify this building as

No.17 Ship. Famous for a 3D model full-rigged ship which buoyed above the front door, the pub name moved from an older building, demolished in 1890, in Cowbridge. A wall sign proclaimed "AK – The renowned ale – pure and refreshing". The pub closed in 1974 and is now a fabrics shop but the windows give away its previous incarnation as a town pub.



Turn right into St.Andrew Street and look over to the Paddyfields Chinese Restaurant, the former home of

No.18 Prince Albert. Owned by Youngs of Hertford it passed to Pryor Reid in 1903 but only survived, as a pub, until 1910. The yard once housed stables, a piggery and a hen-house. Its drinking days temporarily re-emerged in the 1980s, when a wine bar opened and closed.

Immediately to the right of the Albert was.....



No.19 Cranbourne Arms. In the brickwork to the right of the front door it is still possible to make out the circular shape of a pub sign. Owned by the Marquis of Salisbury, this first became a pub around 1850. The pub was leased to Wickhams and survived their takeover by Wells and Winch though not their takeover by Greene King in 1961. The pub closed in 1954.

Step to your right and enter the welcoming front door of....



No.20 Old Cross Tavern. Not a pub at all until 1999 when an antique shop was converted, to turn the building into a pub and what has now become one of Hertfordshire's premier real ale Free Houses. Now with the addition of its very own brewery, brews under the "Oxt`Ale" banner are being perfected and sampled by the palates of Old Cross regulars at the bar. **REAL ALE**

Now, further along St.Andrew Street were the Wellington, Kings Head, Three Tuns, Little Bell, Red Lion..... but maybe that's for another walk.