



Real Ale and CAMRA

Real Ale – cask ale – is brewed from the traditional ingredients of malted barley, hops, water and brewer’s yeast then kept in casks which allow for secondary fermentation and conditioning in the pub cellar.



Unless otherwise shown in the pub details, all of the pubs in this guide use handpumps to dispense cask-conditioned beer to the customer. Since 1971 the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has fought tirelessly to promote Real Ale and continues to be the beer drinker’s foremost champion on matters as diverse as pub closures and preservation, the scourge of high Beer Duty levels, Planning, Business Rates and Pub Company restrictive practices.



● CAMRA in Hertfordshire

There are five CAMRA Branches covering Hertfordshire, two overseeing the area and pubs entered in this guide. South Hertfordshire Branch covers St Albans and the Abbey Line as far as Bricket Wood, and the Watford & District Branch covers Watford up to Garston. Each Branch offers a range of events including the popular St Albans Beer Festival in September. For more information consult the Branch websites: <https://southherts.camra.org.uk/> or <http://www.watford.camra.org.uk> . New members are always welcome.

● Opening Hours and Meal Times

The pubs in this leaflet have varied opening days and times due to a range of factors including location, seasonal variations and owner preference. Details on opening hours are available in CAMRA’s database <https://camra.org.uk/pubs/> or on individual pub websites and Facebook pages. Please check with pubs for meal times.

● Local Breweries

McMullen’s of Hertford will celebrate their 200 year anniversary in 2027 – they operate 90 pubs in Hertfordshire, London and the Home Counties. Mad Squirrel (near Hemel Hempstead) have a number of pubs in the county. Other Hertfordshire real ale brewers can sometimes be represented in the pubs of the area: Look out for cask ales from Tring Brewery, 3 Brewers of St. Albans (near Wheathampstead), Farr Brew (Redbourn) and Pope’s Yard (Watford). Pope’s Yard is a microbrewery in North Watford that brewed the Abbey Flyer Pale Ale (see panel). The brewery were very pleased with the popularity of the beer and have plans to brew it again, and also to produce some stouts - look out for news about that.

Other breweries in the Watford area include Bowtie Brewers and Oxhey Village Brewery, whose cask and keg beers can occasionally be found in select pubs in the region, and Creative Juices Brewing Company in Maple Cross, who brew keg beer for sale in their tap room but also distribute canned beer to off-licences and bars in the locality.

● Children, Accessibility and Dogs



Most of the pubs in this guide are pleased to welcome adults with children so long as they are closely supervised. However, some may operate time restrictions in the evening. The pub entries include symbols for wheelchair accessibility and WC facilities. Most of the pubs in this Guide welcome well-behaved dogs though some may not allow them inside or in eating areas.

● ‘Ask for Angela’ and ‘Ask for Clive’

‘Ask for Angela’ is a personal safety scheme started in 2016 which is used by bars and other venues. It allows people who are feeling unsafe, threatened or vulnerable to discreetly request help from staff by asking for ‘Angela’.

Similarly, the ‘Ask for Clive’ campaign works with pubs and venues to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion, create welcoming spaces, and enforce a zero-tolerance policy against LGBTQ+ discrimination and hate. Details of both schemes, and the participating pubs, can be found online.

Introduction

The Abbey Line is a 6.5-mile local railway line, which connects Watford Junction on the mainline, to St Albans Abbey station and serving 5 intermediate stations. The line opened in 1858, and was the first railway to reach St Albans.

It passes through a varied landscape, in a built-up area from Watford to Garston then, after passing under the M1 motorway it runs through woodland and open countryside for most of the remainder of the journey to St Albans. The end-to-end journey takes just 16 minutes and trains run generally hourly throughout the day, 7 days a week, with a more frequent service during rush hours.

This Rail Ale trail will guide you to the various pubs that are within easy reach of each of the stations on the route, ranging from busy town pubs in Watford and St Albans to traditional country pubs in the rural areas.

To visit more than one pub on this trail, simply hop on the next train, or take a stroll along one of the many footpaths that criss-cross the area, including the Abbey Line Trail. This is a 9-mile footpath running between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey through the beautiful countryside of the River Ver and River Colne. There are also bus routes which pass near to most of the pubs.

The Abbey Flyer Pale Ale

The Abbey Flyer pale ale is a specially commissioned craft beer originally brewed to celebrate the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership’s 20th anniversary and also national Railway 200 celebrations at the 2025 St Albans Beer & Cider Festival.



Created in collaboration with Pope’s Yard Brewery in North Watford, the beer pays tribute to the much loved Abbey Flyer – the affectionate nickname for the branch line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey. It also honours the iconic peregrine falcons that nest high on St Albans Cathedral, the true “Abbey Flyers” that inspired both the name and the brew’s striking visual identity.

The beer label, designed by Nick Thompson of Lemondrop Creative, blends the elegance of 1920s–30s rail travel with the soaring grace of the peregrines, creating a design that feels proudly local yet timeless.

The Abbey Flyer beer also reflects the CRP’s commitment to environmental stewardship and community collaboration, including support for the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and local conservation efforts along the line.

Look out for pubs along the line serving this delicious brew.



About the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership

The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership works to connect communities along the Watford–St Albans line, celebrating local identity while supporting sustainable, accessible rail travel. Guided by the four pillars of Community Rail—community engagement, social inclusion, economic development, and environmental sustainability—the partnership delivers projects that make the line welcoming, vibrant, and useful for all.

From creative station improvements to events and educational activities, the CRP champions “Being Kind Along The Line,” encouraging respect, friendliness, and pride in our stations and shared spaces along the route. Together, we help the Abbey Line thrive as a valued community asset.



● Buying your train ticket

Tickets can be purchased online from the train operator’s website or app, National Rail website, ticket vending machines located at the train stations and the Smart Card scheme. To learn more about the Smart Card scheme and how to purchase one, check the London Northwestern Railway website.

At Watford Junction, you can purchase tickets from the ticket windows in the booking hall. For passengers joining the Abbey Line service from further afield via Watford Junction, if you have not been able to purchase a ticket by the time you get to Watford Junction, you can buy one at the excess fare window located by the exit barriers inside the station or ticket vending machines located on platform nine.

Pay-as-you-go with contactless is now available at all Abbey Line stations. Please note: Oyster cards will not be accepted for travel.

Pay-as-you-go with contactless may not be the best way to pay for you, so please read the London Northwestern Railway website to familiarise yourself with this payment option.

● Explore the Abbey Line Trail

The Abbey Line Trail is a self-guided nine mile walking route commissioned by the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership and created by Countryside Management Hertfordshire. It links Watford Junction to St Albans Abbey Station, winding through beautiful stretches of the Colne and Ver Valleys.

● Plan Your Own Pub Trail

The trail can easily be walked in shorter sections, making it perfect for a relaxed day out – especially when combined with a visit to a pub along the route. Thanks to the Abbey Line train service, you can walk a section, enjoy a drink or meal, and hop back on the train to your starting point.

● Walk a Little or a Lot

Whether you’re after a gentle stroll between station stops or a full nine mile adventure, the Abbey Line Trail offers something for everyone. Each section is clearly waymarked both to and from the stations, making it easy to follow.

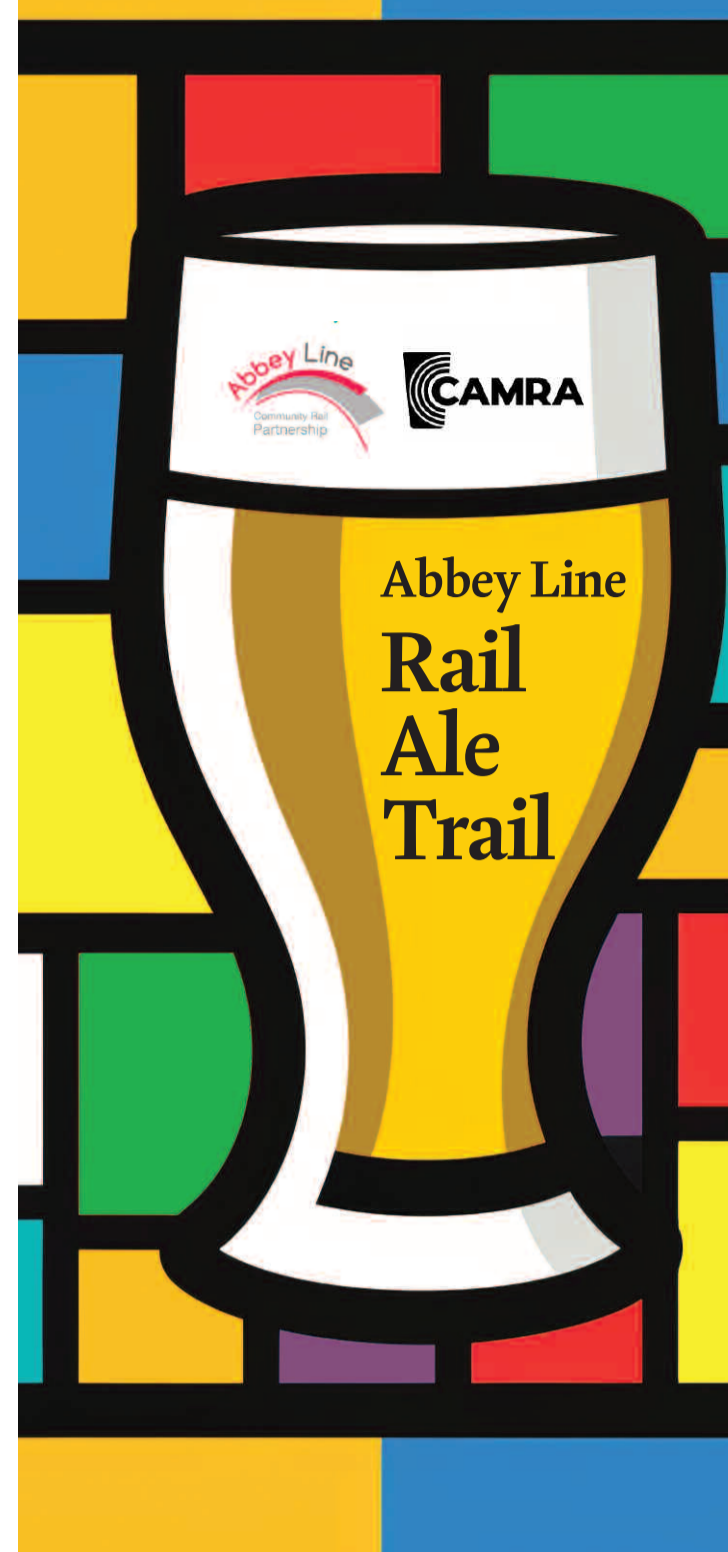
● Trail Sections

- St Albans Abbey – Park Street – 3 miles
- Park Street – Bricket Wood – 3 miles
- Bricket Wood – Garston – 2.75 miles
- Garston – Watford North – 2.5 miles
- Watford North – Watford Junction – 1.75 miles

Walk one section, mix and match, or complete the whole route – and enjoy a friendly local pub along the way.

Please Note

The trail is open all year round. Some parts of the route can become muddy or waterlogged after heavy rain, and alternative paths aren’t always available – so come prepared with suitable footwear. A downloadable map of the full trail is available at: <http://abbeylinecommunityrail.org.uk>

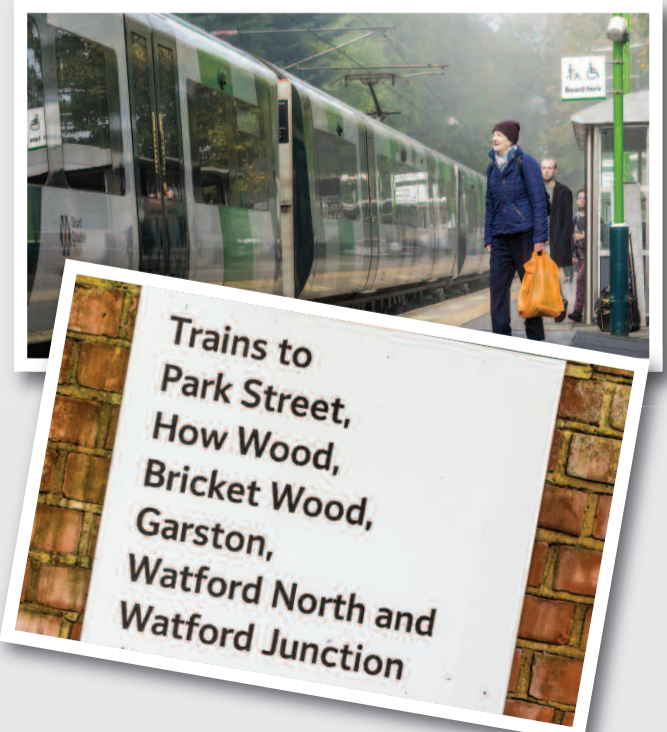


Scan these QR codes with your mobile :

- to read more about the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, and things to do and see in the Abbey Line area <https://abbeylinecommunityrail.org.uk/>
- for Abbey Line train times and real-time travel information <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>
- To read more about the Intalink Partnership and to get help with bus timetables, maps and journey planning intalink.org.uk
- for CAMRA membership and benefits camra.org.uk

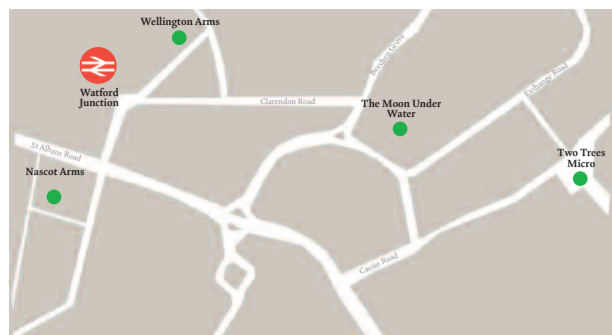
All the information within this leaflet was correct at the time of publication and given in good faith. However, the Community Rail Partnership and CAMRA cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions. We would, however, appreciate notification so that errors can be corrected.

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Watford Junction

The station is situated about 800m north of the vibrant town centre. Of the pubs shown here, the Nascot Arms and Wellington Arms are within 500m of the station, while the other two are a bit further away in the town centre.



Nascot Arms, 11 Stamford Road, Watford, WD17 4QS
Tel: 01923 231336



One bar pub tied to Greene King that also serves Timothy Taylor's Landlord and guest ales. Multiple TV screens show most major sporting events and the pub also hosts a Thai restaurant called Mr Tings. The restaurant business is separate from the pub, so all drinks should be ordered from the pub bar. The food is popular and booking via <http://www.mrtingthaicuisine.co.uk> is often necessary.



Moon under Water, 44 High Street, Watford, WD17 2BS
Tel: 01923 223559

High street Wetherspoon pub housed in the building that was once destined to be Watford's Metropolitan Line station (it was a tearoom at the time). There are three distinct drinking areas within the pub and food is available throughout, although the rear of the pub is quieter. A



patio can be found outside at the back which serves as the smoking area. The only dogs allowed are guide/assistance dogs.

Two Trees Micro, 18 Vicarage Road, Watford, WD18 0EH

Micropub located in a pedestrianised section of Vicarage Road and serving four microbrewery cask ales, three real ciders/perries, and four craft keg beers. A selection of bottled fine cider and perry, and a range of refrigerated cans and bottles of various styles are also stocked. The pub hosts tap takeovers, fortnightly quizzes and other events. There is a small outside seating area. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays; hours may vary on Watford FC matchdays.



Wellington Arms, 2 Woodford Road, Watford, WD17 1PA Tel: 01923 220739

Formerly the Wellington Arms Hotel this traditional corner pub still retains B&B rooms and a residents' licence for guests. Multiple screens show football and other sports.

Entertainment includes pub games such as darts and a monthly soul disco. The pub serves Fuller's London Pride and up to two guest ales, usually from Tring Brewery.



Watford North

Turn right on leaving station and walk 500m along Bushey Mill Lane to:

Tudor Arms, Bushey Mill Lane, WD24 7TQ Tel: 01923 225105



Large Greene King pub located on the Tudor Estate and occupying the place where the estate's sales offices once stood in the 1930s. Food is served and entertainment includes sports TV, a quiz on Wednesdays for Macmillan cancer support and karaoke on Friday nights. There is a function room upstairs and a children's play area in the garden.



Garston

Take the exit for The Gossamers, turn right and then left in to Falcon Way. At end of Falcon Way continue on to footpath under the motorway bridge and along to the pub. Please note: Footpath is unlit. Distance 900m.

The pub can also be reached from Bricket Wood station via an attractive woodland walk, distance approximately 2.400m.



Old Fox, School Lane, Bricket Wood, AL2 3XU Tel: 07768 590037



Remote modernised 17th century country pub with two log fires and a huge garden with children's playground in pleasant rural surroundings. Fully refurbished - the pub serves well-presented food every day until early evening.

Occasional live music on Saturdays in summer. 3 beers available, Tring Side Pocket for a Toad, Timothy Taylor Landlord and a changing beer.

London Northwestern Railway



St Albans Abbey

3 Miles
4 minutes
1hr 30 Mins

Park Street

3 Miles
4 minutes
1hr 30 Mins

How Wood

2.75 Miles
3 minutes
1hr 15 Mins

Bricket Wood

2.5 Miles
3 minutes
1hr 15 Mins

Garston

1.75 Miles
2 minutes
45 Mins

Watford North

1.75 Miles
2 minutes
45 Mins

Watford Junction

3 Miles
4 minutes
1hr 30 Mins

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Milton Keynes

Watford North

Watford Junction

Central London

St Albans Abbey

A414

Park Street

How Wood

Bricket Wood

A404

Garston

Watford North

Watford Junction

Central London

St Albans Abbey

A414

Park Street

How Wood

Bricket Wood

A404

Garston

Watford North

Watford Junction

Central London

St Albans Abbey

continued



Garibaldi
61 Albert Street, St. Albans, AL1 1RT Tel: 01727 894745



A fine example of a back-street local, situated in the heart of Sopwell. Named after the 19th century Italian patriot who allegedly lodged in St Albans while in exile.

Serves an extensive range of Fullers ales. The landlord has previously won the Fuller's Master Cellarman award. Home cooked roasts on Sunday (booking advised). A genuine community pub, hosting various charity events. Three TVs showing sports events, one outside in the garden. 4 regular beers from the Fullers range are available and a changing beer.



Hare & Hounds, 104 Sopwell Lane, St. Albans, AL1 1RL
Tel: 01727 855565



A low ceiling split-level pub in the conservation area of the city, not far from the cathedral. The entrance area is a snug and the area left and right-angled to the

bar offers a variety of seating. The area at the rear is where TV sport can be watched. There is a pleasant garden with children's play area and decking.

Three cask ales are usually available and the Welsh licensees do a fine job of showcasing beer from their home nation. There is 25% off the price of a cask ale pint on Mondays.

Ye Olde Fighting Cocks, 16 Abbey Mill Lane, St. Albans, AL3 4HE
Tel: 01727 869152



The pub stakes a claim to be the oldest pub in England, dating from the late 8th century though the current building was finished in 1485 and renamed from the Round House circa 1800. It still retains many original features such as low ceilings, various nooks and crannies and a bread oven next to one of the fireplaces. There is a large refurbished garden to the rear with a new marquee and enclosed garden area for children.

There is also some seating to the front of the pub by the river. Parking nearby is limited but there are car parks a pleasant walk away through Verulamium Park and along the River Ver. Up to 7 changing beers are regularly available.

Bricket Wood

On leaving the station turn left and walk along Station Road for 300m to:

Bus 361 stops outside the station and runs Mondays to Saturdays to Chiswell Green and St Albans, and to Radlett and Borehamwood.



The Gate, Station Road, Bricket Wood, AL2 3PW
Tel: 01923 670497



Friendly pub serving the local community. The freshly made home cooked food, including brunch, is very popular. All ages and families always welcome with a bar and dining area leading to extensive enclosed garden. The front bar has a tiled floor, large fireplace, rustic furniture. The side bar is a dining area and opens out onto the patio and large garden. There is a large car park and large marquee for functions, weddings and parties. Quiz on Tuesdays, open mic sessions on Fridays and occasional live music on Saturdays. Sharps Doom Bar is the cask ale, but it is not always available - call ahead to check.

While at Bricket Wood, why not visit The Tea Room at Bricket Wood Station?

Located in the beautifully restored station building, the Tea Room serves delicious, locally sourced drinks, cakes and light lunches. View the website for current opening times and details.



How Wood

This pub lies approximately 1500m from How Wood station, and is accessed by footpaths, including the Abbey Line Trail.

Buses 361 & 362 stop in Radlett Road (Old Parkbury Lane stop), about 400m from the pub. Both routes run to St Albans, and to Radlett and Borehamwood. Bus 361 operates Mondays to Saturdays, bus 362 operates Mondays to Fridays.

Moor Mill, Smug Oak Lane, Bricket Wood, AL2 3PN
Tel: 01727 875557



A Beefeater in an old watermill on the River Ver, with a restaurant area on the first floor and three separate bar areas on the ground floor, where drinks, snacks and light meals can be enjoyed.



Although the building last operated as a mill in 1916, the watermill is still functional, and is encased for viewing within the building - an impressive sight.

Outside there are pleasant gardens alongside the river, a pond populated by geese and ducks, and a children's playground, making the pub popular with young families. Despite being very nearby, the M25 motorway is well screened and surprisingly unintrusive. No cask ale available.

Park Street

On leaving the station turn left into Watling Street. Both pubs are on the right hand side, close together, approximately 400m from the station.

Bus 362 stops in Park Street (War Memorial stop), which is close to both pubs. It operates Mondays to Fridays to St Albans, and to Radlett and Borehamwood.



The Falcon, 72 Park Street, Park Street, AL2 2PW Tel: 01727 873208



A down-to-earth two-bar community pub dating from around the 17th century. There is live TV sport and a range of pub games including darts and crib with teams. The two regular beers are Greene King IPA and Tring Side Pocket for a Toad.

Overdraught, 86 Park Street, Park Street, AL2 2JR Tel: 01727 768221



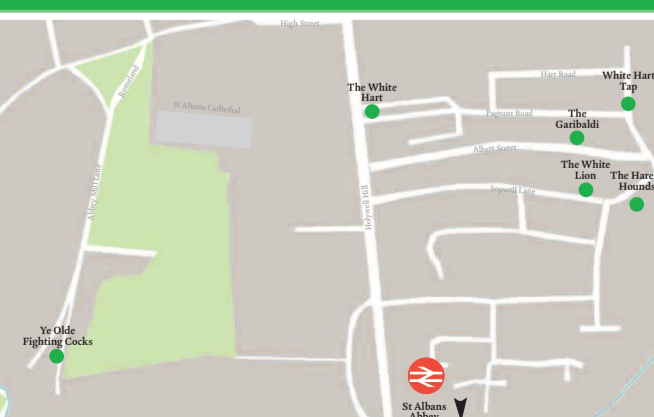
Traditional, family-friendly village pub, featuring a split level bar with beams, brass and a listed fireplace. Adorning the walls are a range of sporting photographs. Meals are served daily with food prepared from locally sourced produce. Poker is played Tuesday evenings.

There is a garden with children's play equipment and a pool table in the newly-built annex. The regular beer is Fullers London Pride.



St Albans Abbey

St Albans is famed for its pubs, and has more pubs per square mile than any other town or city in Britain; it currently boasts over 35 pubs selling cask ale. It is not possible to show them all here - instead this Trail just lists those pubs that are easily accessible from the station. All the pubs shown here are within 900m of St Albans Abbey station.



White Hart Hotel, 23-25 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, AL1 1EZ
Tel: 01727 853624



A genuine Grade II* Tudor hotel on the old coaching route through St Albans, one of the oldest buildings in the city, situated opposite the famous Abbey. Atmospheric, it is reputed to be haunted. There are two small cosy bars and an oak-panelled Tudor dining room. A pianist plays on Saturday evenings. There are no regular beers, but one changing beer, often featuring local breweries such as 3 Brewers of St Albans and beers from Oakham. Real Ale Discount Scheme available to CAMRA members.

White Hart Tap, 4 Keyfield Terrace, St. Albans, AL1 1QJ
Tel: 01727 860974



This one-bar, back-street local features four regular beers from the Punch Taverns list, plus two free of tie, including regular options from microbreweries. Two real ciders are also on offer. Home-cooked food is served daily lunchtimes and evenings with roasts on Sundays. Quiz night is Wednesday. Public car park opposite, heated covered smoking area outside. Barbecues are held in the summer with occasional beer festivals.



White Lion, 91 Sopwell Lane, St. Albans, AL1 1RN Tel: 01727 857011



This Grade II 16th-century pub balances the traditional and contemporary. An intimate front bar is dominated by four handpumps (not all necessarily in use at all times) while a larger main bar offers comfort for drinkers and diners. The large reappointed rear garden is a sunny summer haven. Excellent home-cooked food is served every day.

Pub facilities

