

# OPENING TIMES



BRANCH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 57

 BI-MONTHLY  
CIRCULATION 800  
COPIES

**FREE**

 CHRISTMAS  
EDITION


## Local Pub News

New Pubs at Eaton Socon Following last months article on a proposed new pub at Gt. North Road, Eaton Socon we hear of proposals for another in same road. This time Charles Wells have plans to build next to Duloe Windmill. If approval is given Christmas 1985 would be the hoped for opening date.

\*\*\*\*\*

Cuddles Whitbread have confirmed that their controversial Cuddles disco pub on Longsands is in the final stages of being sold. The new owners plan to convert it back as it once was, a traditional local, and to re-open shortly.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Three Horseshoes at Houghton now has a new landlord and also plans are in hand for alterations. Malcolm and Sharon Holmes have now taken over and are about to proceed with extensive alterations, including an extension to accommodate a restaurant area. The couple were previously at a busy Rotherham pub.

\*\*\*\*\*

J 1 and Sadie Raines of the Nag's Head, Berkeley Street, St. Neots now have Eagle Bitter available on handpump.

\*\*\*\*\*

Brian Slade, formerly of the Axe and Compass, Hemingford Abbots which he left in October has opened a brewery memorabilia shop opposite the pub.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Jolly Butchers at Houghton and Wyton is now refurbishing its lounge bar.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Cross Keys development in St. Neots may now have a small pub within its old courtyard after all. James Paine Brewery are currently negotiating terms with the developers with hopefully a positive outcome.

\*\*\*\*\*

The White Horse, Eaton Socon is undergoing a £50,000 renovation which involves new roofing and extensive interior redecoration.

Winter Brews - Now we are into the winter months its time to go searching for the winter specials. The Wheatsheaf, St. Neots is one local we know that has Christmas Ale (O.G. 1053) in stock for those in need of a warming pint. Adnams Old and Tolly Old Strong can usually be found in Cambridgeshire. Landlords, if you've got a winter special on, then let the editor know and I will give you a mention.

\*\*\*\*\*

St. Neots branch would like to add their belated thanks to Bill & Beth Reed of the Golden Miller at Longstowe for hosting the recent joint social between Cambridge, St. Neots, North Beds and North Herts CAMRA branches and for the excellent spread they laid on.

## Future Meetings

Wednesday 9th January 8.00 pm - Social at Dragoon, Brampton (Wells)

Wednesday 23rd January 8.00 pm - Meeting at Old Sun, Eaton Socon (Greene King)

Wednesday 6th February 8.00 pm - Social at Barley Mow, Hartford (Wells)  
9.30 onwards King of the Belgians, Hartford (Manns)

Wednesday 20th February - Social at Prince of Wales, Hilton (Free).  
9.30 onwards Kisby's Hut, Papworth Everard (Tolly).

EDITOR: Mike Birch, 19 Andrew Road, Eynesbury, St. Neots, Cambs.  
Telephone: Huntingdon 74497

"OPENING TIMES is published by the ST.NEOTS AND DISTRICT BRANCH OF "THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE (CAMRA)".

## BREWERY TRIP

St. Neots Branch recently went on a very enjoyable trip to Norwich Brewery, where they were taken round by a very knowledgeable and genial guide who gave us a two hour tour around the brewery followed by a very pleasant hour which we spent sampling the breweries Bullards Mild and S.& P. Bitter together with an excellent buffet tea for which we express our thanks to the Brewery. It was the guides knowledge of the history of the Norwich Brewery which prompted one of our number Dave Cox to submit the following article on Watney's which I am delighted to include.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WATNEYS

The Watney revolution started in this area in 1960 when Watney Mann Ltd (a London based company) merged with Phipps Northampton Brewery Co Ltd. In 1961 Watney Mann (East Anglia) Ltd was formed to purchase the Morgan brewery in Norwich (without public houses) from Bullard & Sons Ltd (of Norwich) and Steward & Patteson Ltd (of Norwich and Ely). Together these two breweries had previously bought out Morgan's Brewery Co Ltd and split its public houses between themselves, yet only two years later in 1953, these two companies were purchased by Watney Mann (East Anglia) Ltd. This now meant that Watney Mann owned the vast majority of public houses in a wide belt from Northampton to Norwich. Throughout the 1960's Watney Mann evaluated its new position and it was decided to concentrate brewing at the former Morgan's and Phipp's breweries, at the same time many public houses were closed. In 1964 Phipps Northampton Brewery Co Ltd changed its name to Phipps Brewery Ltd and four years later changed again to Watney Mann (Midlands) Ltd to fit in with Watney's new national image. The Brewery at Ely (which prior to Steward & Patteson's takeover in 1957 had been East Anglian Breweries Ltd) was closed in 1969. Its trading area was split between the new Watney Mann companies at Norwich and Northampton, thus, in the Huntingdon area public houses were now serviced from Northampton instead of Ely. The former Phipp's brewery in Northampton was closed around 1972 and beers for the Watney Mann (Midlands) area were then supplied by other breweries in the Watney Mann group. Demolition took place in 1974 and the Carlsberg brewery was built on the site. By the end of the 1960's keg beers had spread throughout these two trading areas and cask conditioned hand pumped beers had disappeared completely.

In 1972 the Watney Mann group was taken over by Grand Metropolitan Hotels Ltd who had also purchased Truman, Hanbury, Buxton & Co Ltd of London in 1971 and renamed that company Truman Ltd. Watney Mann Ltd became the holding company for the brewery companies in the Grand Metropolitan group and in 1974 its name changed to Watney Mann & Truman Holdings Ltd. Under Grand Metropolitan control each brewery company was allowed to develop its own identity and the Watney name has been dropped outside London. So, in 1976 Watney Mann (East Anglia) Ltd became The Norwich Brewery Co Ltd and in 1977 Watney Mann (Midlands) Ltd became Manns Northampton Brewery Co Ltd. The Norwich Brewery Co first used a line drawing of Norwich Castle Museum as its trademark but has now changed to an oak tree in gold. A caption at its base reads "local brewers since 1844", this being the date when John Morgan bought the brewery. Manns Northampton Brewery Co uses St. George and the Dragon as its trademark, this generally appears alongside the name of the pub and sometimes as a fixture above the innsign. Originally this trademark was used by Mann, Crossman & Paulin Ltd of Whitechapel, London (this company merged with Watney, Combe, Reid & Co Ltd in 1958 to form Watney Mann Ltd). Norwich Brewery and Manns Northampton Brewery bottled beers have also appeared.

The brewery companies now under the control of Watney Mann & Truman Holdings Ltd are Manns Northampton Brewery Co Ltd (no brewery, beers are supplied by other breweries in the group), Norwich Brewery Co Ltd, Ushers Brewery Ltd (Trowbridge), Watney, Combe, Reid & Co Ltd (London), Truman Ltd (London), Wilsons Brewery Ltd (Manchester), Phoenix Brewery Co Ltd (Brighton, no brewery,

beers are supplied by other breweries in the group), Samuel Webster & Sons Ltd (Halifax) and Drybrough & Co Ltd (Edinburgh). These companies control the tenanted public houses in their areas. Managed public houses are controlled by Berni Inns Ltd ( a national Restaurant chain e.g. The Paul Pry, Walton, Peterborough) and the recently named Host Group Ltd (formerly Chef & Brewer Ltd). The Host Group is split into eight regions, namely Hamden, Anglia, Thames, Wessex, Sovereign, London, Gateway & Pennine Hosts, Huntingdon and district falling into Hamden Hosts trading area. The Host Group has developed several new concepts under the 'Open House' theme which are particularly aimed to appeal to families and women (e.g. Sports formerly The Lord Protector, Huntingdon and Spikes formerly The Halcyon, Peterborough). The Chef & Brewer name is being retained as a trading identity and embraces the more traditional style of pubs (e.g. The Falcon, Huntingdon).

A welcome change which has followed all the company renaming has been the reintroduction of cask conditioned beer. Locally Manns IPA & Bitter, Stag Bitter, Wilsons Original Bitter and Ushers Founders Ale are available on handpump in Manns Northampton Brewery Co and Hamden Hosts public houses. Further east Norwich Brewery Co and Anglia Hosts public houses offer S & P bitter, Bullards mild and Websters Pennine bitter on handpump. At present there is a wide choice of cask and keg beers on offer to the drinker yet less than 10 years ago only Watney keg beers were available.

---

## National News

In yet another takeover, Blackburn brewery Daniel Thwaites have succeeded in a £5 m deal to takeover Yates and Jackson of Lancaster. It has already been announced that Yates and Jackson's brewery is to close on January 21st 1985, with redundancy notices issued to all Yates and Jackson employees. The move signals the end of 2 real ales of good reputation and an independent Lancaster brewery in business since 1878. Thwaites say that there would be no special brews of Yates and Jackson beers made at their Blackburn brewery. Lancasters other brewery, Mitchells are negotiating with Thwaites to purchase the Yates and Jackson brewery premises as their own present premises are very cramped for space.

However, CAMRA feels that it is this kind of takeover which led to the appalling reduction in regional brews in the 1960's which is why protests have been made to Thwaites with requests for them to reconsider the closure.



**THWAITES**

A subject dear to the editors heart was the topic of a recent article published by CAMRA's Norwich and Norfolk branch's 'Norfolk Nips', so I make no apologies for re-printing the article in full. **WHEN IS A FREE HOUSE REALLY FREE?**

Throughout England, small breweries are suffering from the tough, sometimes brutal competition of the bigger, established brewers. In the recent times several mini-breweries have actually closed down, among them Brightlingsea and Penrhos to name but two. Although some of them are victim of their own quality of product or lack of good marketing, many are suffering for a different and more sinister reason.

The policy of large brewers to lend vast amounts of money to landlords is making a mockery of the term "Free House". The loan is generally linked to a barrelage agreement between the brewer and the landlord, concentrating solely on beers supplied by that brewer. The need for a landlord to then sell vast quantities of a certain beer or range of beers is inevitably going to cut down the choice to the drinker. Some breweries use the small print of the loan arrangement to squeeze rival brews out, and so a "free-house" gradually becomes anything but that.

continued overleaf/....

continued ...

### WHEN IS A FREE HOUSE REALLY FREE?

Everyone must be familiar with establishments which proclaim themselves to be free-houses, but which actually sell a range of bland, nationally-available beers from one or two of the large breweries.

The price of defaulting on the barrelage agreement can be very high. In some cases the landlord may have to sell the pub to the brewery, and thus another free-house disappears.

Norfolk is a major battleground on this front. Many free-houses in the county have taken some sort of loan, either from a national concern or from one of the big locally-based brewers. Clearly this threatens the continuing success of the regions local mini-breweries, and means that choice to the drinker is steadily diminishing. Locally in Cambridgeshire, the same can be said of our free-houses.

Many local drinkers are far from happy with this situation. We suggest you make your views heard. Furthermore, exercise your freedom of choice by patronising free houses that can offer you a true and fair selection of local and national brews.

Competition between breweries is a fair concept but the use of the loan-tie as a lever to force out the products of a rival brewery is NOT allowing fair competition to take place. The smaller, poorer, but often better breweries are threatened as their beers are squeezed out of the free trade. We must be vigilant and discerning - we must work to keep our much-loved small breweries and their products alive, against the backdrop of this aggressive and unjust practice.

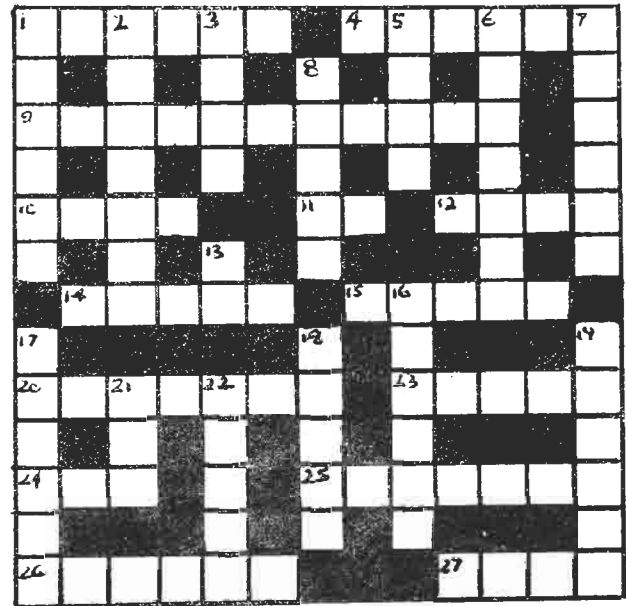
\*\*\*\*\*

### Crossword

We have decided to introduce a crossword from time to time. Return your entries to the editor by the 20th January, when there will be a draw. The name of the winner will be published in the next newsletter and the prize will be £3.



### CROSSWORD



### Clues - Across

1. A ruby wine-er (6)
4. There's no Everards Beacon here (6)
9. Now the Longbow (11)
10. Don't have one for it (4)
11. National Trust (2)
12. Minty sport? (4)
14. Ales and Stout etc. (5)
15. Alcohol producer (5)
20. The only one with a pedigree (7)
23. Eldridge oak (5)
24. Peters sediment (3)
25. He's happy in Houghton (7)
26. Village on A1 selling Paines in Bell (6)
27. I've had enough (4)

### Clues - Down

1. Delivered daily (6)
2. It's what it's all about (7)
3. Always (4)
5. Stale smell (4)
6. Holiday makers pay up as a matter of duty (7)
7. Motorbikes get hooked on it (6)
8. Single out the giant (5)
13. Heraldic gold (2)
16. The place with a River view (6)
17. Happy Ales (6)
18. They are self opinionated (5)
19. More than one (6)
21. A herb (3)
22. "Shut that door" it's vicious (5).

