

OPENING TIMES

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT



BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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FREE

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Local Pub News

New owners of the Grange Hotel at Brampton
a Bill and Kate Bingham.

The Three Shuttles at Tilbrook- A Good Beer
Guide 1985 listed pub - has just had its
third change of tenant in not too many months.
New faces behind the bar are now Alan and
Carol Allardice, who although Londoners, are
not strangers to the area, having been at
the Red Cow in Covington some time ago.

The Angel in Cambridge Street, St. Neots has
again won the Best Kept Cellar award in a
competition run by its owners Charles Wells
Brewery. Landlord Brian Walker and his wife
Meg have won an award for three consecutive
years, having previously won their area
awards.

The Barley Mow at Eaton Ford having just
completed extensive refurbishments carried
out by its owners Greene King now has
Abbot and I.P.A. bitters available on
handpump.

The White Horse at Eaton Socon has added
Brakspeares bitter to its existing range
of Whitbread bitters - Flowers, Castle Eden
and Wethereds.

DON'T FORGET THE ST. NEOTS BRANCH A.G.M.
WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH
THE FALCON -- BUCKDEN -- 8.00P.M.

Just out of our area in Cambridge city
centre, Charles Wells have become the
first independent regional brewer to set
up a home brew pub. December saw them open
The Ancient Druids on a site next to the
Grafton Centre shopping area. At a cost of
over £1 million, the pub is the first in
the city for many years to have its own
brewhouse. The brew-house is on the ground
floor with windows placed in the wall facing
the street to enable passers-by to view
the brewing process. With a capacity for
brewing up to fifteen barrels a week, two
malt extract beers are brewed - Kite Bitter
and the slightly stronger Druids Special.
The new pub replaces an original pub of
the same name, which formerly stood on the
site of the newly built Grafton Centre.

Also on the Brewery news front comes bad news
this time. Local Brewers Greene King have
announced that production of their XX mild
at Biggleswade brewery is down to a mere
twelve barrels a week and 'ready to die'.
So if you care about the future of one of
our local brews and can still find an outlet
selling it then now is the time to sup some.
KK and XX milds brewed at Bury St. Edmunds
though in decline are safe at this moment
in time.

Further bad news on the brewery front I'm
afraid. Another small brewery have gone out
of business. This time it is the Hereward
Brewery from Market Deeping, Lincolnshire
just north of Peterborough who have gone
into liquidation after just two years of
trading which is about par for the course
for the small breweries in todays climate.

Local Pub News

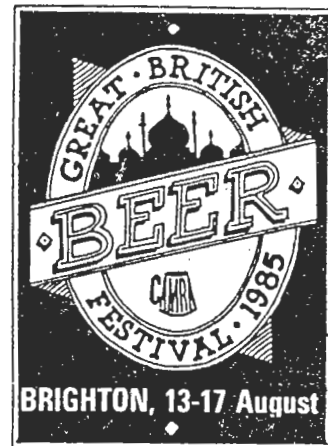
Brian and Janice Brocklehurst have recently taken over at the Three Horseshoes at Southoe, a Charles Wells house. Brian an ex-police inspector who has also served in the Coldstream guards, has made an immediate impact at the village pub. Massive refurbishments have been carried out, with the interior having been stripped out. Work will also be carried out on making the garden area more attractive. Charles Wells Eagle Bitter will continue to be available on handpump.

Shefford Brewers Banks & Taylor bring some good news on the small brewery front. They have just opened their second tied house. This is the White Horse at Dead Man's Cross on the A600 Shefford - Bedford road near Haynes just over the border in Bedfordshire. There are their own three beers available on handpump - Shefford Bitter, SPA and the 1050 strength SOS. A Charles Wells keg bitter is also available, the pub still being their property having been closed for about a year before being re-opened.

St. Neots C.A.M.R.A. Branch are running a mini-bus trip to the Greene King brewery at Bury St. Edmunds on Tuesday 19th March. The trip would commence at the brewery at 2.0'clock leaving the St. Neots/Huntingdon area at approximately 10.30 in the morning. Cost for the trip will be between £4.00 and £4.50 depending on the number of bookings. Anybody interested please contact Steve Leader on Huntingdon 75095.



Early notice is given of CAMRA's Premier event - The Great British Beer Festival.



The 1985 Festival is to be held in Brighton on the 13th to 17th August.

The venue is to be in the Conference Halls at the Metropole Hotel, which is on Brighton seafront. There are expected to be 100,000 of real ale available, made up of some 200 varieties from all over the country

On the subject of beer festivals we hear that Northants Branch have been successful in obtaining a licence for the first Kettering Beer Festival. This will be held in the Cornmarket Hall from Thursday 27 June to Saturday 29 June.

WHAT GOVERNMENTS PINCH FROM YOUR PINT



Republic of Ireland	UK	Germany	France.
£48.32 Duty 15% VAT	£30.40 Duty 15% VAT	£3.63 Duty 14% VAT	£0.91 Duty 18.6% VAT

Comparative rates of duty on 1038° OG beer.

See the article overleaf on Beer Prices!

National News

The article on Watneys in our last newsletter seems to have been the kiss of death to their Norwich Brewery. It has been announced that they are to cease brewing at their King Street site by April 12th, with the loss of 155 jobs. Reasons for the closure were given to be 'that the brewery was an ale brewery with no lager capacity - and that it is lager the public want. It was considered for investment in lager production but the high cost of conversion owing to the restricted site was against it'

Local CAMRA opinion however is that that an artificial demand has been created for lager, with mass advertising and that traditional ales have received relatively little backing. With other brewers in the area such as Adnams, Greene King and Woodfordes thriving on the booming local demand for traditional ales, this would certainly appear to be the case.



The pubs and beers will remain under the Norwich Brewery banner, with the brewing carried out at either their London or Manchester plants.

The current range of Bullards Mild, S+P bitter, Manns IPA, Manns Bitter and Tamplins bitter will continue to be available - but of course will have to be trucked in long distances. This gives rise to fears about beer quality and price rises to meet freight costs.

The tragic irony is of course that the brewery should be closed at the time when it had achieved success in reproducing beers killed by earlier Watneys closures - S+P Bitter and Bullards Mild.

Other news from Watneys is that they are to merge their two northern breweries, Websters of Halifax and Wilsons of Manchester. The new company will be called Samuel Webster and Wilsons Ltd.

Allied Breweries are also re-organising their internal structure. Ind Coope East Anglia and Ind Coope East Midlands are being brought together to form Ind Coope Allsopps. The new division will be responsible for a total of 726 pubs throughout East Anglia and the East Midlands, which of course includes our local area. The current range of beers supplied to our area will continue to remain the same, however Ind Coope say that a new beer - Allsopps Bitter - could obviously become a possibility.

Allsopps was once one of the best known brand names in the UK. until the name was ceased to be used in 1959. Their familiar trademark, the red outstretched hand, will be used to promote the new company, which will have its base in Leicester.

Sam Smiths build up of shares in Jennings of Cockermonth appears to have ceased, and Jennings are now confident that there will be no takeover bid from Sams. While Jennings would like to remain independent, they say that any bid would have to be referred to their shareholders. CAMRA has formed a special action group in readiness to fight any takeover bid.

Licensing Laws

Latest news on the subject of more flexible licensing laws is that the Government look set to let pubs in England and Wales unbolt their doors for all-day drinking.

Following much public pressure Home Office ministers have alerted MPs that they are ready to agree to pubs deciding their own opening hours. Legislation is expected to be piloted through Parliament next year. A report being drawn-up for the Home Office on eight years of flexible hours in Scotland will show that there has been no increase in drunkenness north of the border.

Despite the inevitable fierce opposition from anti-drink bodies flexible pub hours would be a long overdue reform.

Friary Meux have already told their tenants and managers that if flexible hours come in, the company would ask their pubs to open for a minimum of 9 hours a day on weekdays. Landlords would have the benefit of choosing hours best suited to their customers needs.

MORE BREWERY CLOSURES EXPECTED.

A report on the future of the brewing industry predicts yet even more brewery closures. With the level of spare capacity nationally at around 53% drastic measures have to be taken to reach an acceptable level of half that. The report can see only three ways out:

A rise in consumption of 22%

A 20 fold rise in exports
Further brewery closures

With the first two alternatives unlikely then the signs are not good. With the current crop of small brewery closures only scratching the surface, it would seem that closures on the line of the Norwich Brewery i.e. regional arms of big breweries may become more frequent, bringing forth the shortcomings as mentioned in our Watneys article.

Total UK beer production for 1984 was a figure of 36.72m barrels, a decrease of 0.4% against 1983.

With the budget fast approaching it is not very comforting to know that British Beer is already grossly overpriced. Whilst in some pubs this may be due to grasping brewers or landlords - the chief culprit is the Government. Beer in Britain is taxed more heavily than in any other EEC country except the Irish Republic. The UK Duty rate is £30.40. per 100 litres of a 1038 original gravity beer. Duty paid is more than 50% of the ex-brewery price of the beer we drink. Using the German taxation rate for example, a 60p pint would cost 44p and a pint of strong ale at 85p would be 63p.

At present rates, every time you buy a pint, its half for you and half for Mrs Thatcher, isn't it time she bought a round for a change?

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Future Meetings

Wednesday 20th March - ST. NEOTS BRANCH A.G.M.

THE FALCON - BUCKDEN 8.00pm.

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Wednesday 3rd April - Meeting Crown, Eaton Socon - 8.00pm.

Wednesday 17th April - Social at The Crown,

Litlington 8.00 to 9.30pm.

9.30 onwards Darby and Joan, Abington Piggots.

Wednesday 1st May - Social at The Queens

Head, Needingworth 8.00 to 9.30pm.

9.30. onwards The Chestnuts, Needingworth.

BITTER BLOW TO BEER.

Crops of Fuggles and Goldings hops in Hereford and Worcester are being badly hit by disease. With these hops flavouring 25% of bitters brewed, this must be viewed with great concern.



"As you're new to the village there's just one thing you've got to know - we don't like a man who sips his beer!"