

OPENING TIMES

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT



BRANCH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 61

FREE

BI-MONTHLY
CIRCULATION 800
COPIES

James Paine

Following the article on James Paine Brewery published in our last newsletter, comment upon which made the local press - we feel that good progress is now being made. At the invitation of the brewery, members from St. Neots and other local CAMRA branches recently went along to The Kings Head, St. Neots to a 'blind tasting' evening. This consisted of tasting the three James Paine beers, plus two other regional beers, without knowing their identities. We were then asked to comment on each beer. Our general opinion was that the beers provided on the night were all in a reasonable condition - with the St. Neots Bitter easily being the pick of the James Paine beers. We still feel that the XXX and E.G. could be improved. With James Paine certainly providing a very pleasant evening - we feel that despite the difference of opinion between St. Neots CAMRA and James Paine over the quality and consistency of their beers, "relationships between us are becoming closer. This can only be beneficial, because if we can offer constructive comment to them, we now feel that this will be taken heed of.



JAMES PAINE BEERS - YOUR VIEW

Tony Bevan, Managing Director of James Paine and Andy Shaw, the CAMRA Brewery Liason Officer have together drawn up a questionnaire to determine what pub users in the St. Neots area think about the quality and consistency of James Paine beers. With the full approval of the brewery, local CAMRA members will visit James Paine outlets to ask the drinkers for their views. Copies of the questionnaire are available from the editor to anybody wishing to complete it.

Tolly Cobbold of Ipswich and local brewers James Paine have completed pub swaps affecting two local pubs. The Queen Victoria, St Neots is now a Tolly house selling Tolly original, Tolly Bitter and James Paine XXX on hand pump and the new tenants are Paul and Sharon Braker. They have moved from Newmarket and it is their first pub. The other pub is the Bell at Sawtry where David and Sally Orledge have taken over, having previously been tenants at The Ancient Shepherd, Fen Ditton for seven years. Real ales available are James Paine XXX and Tolly original.

Local Pub News

Kisby's Hut at Papworth Everard has been taken over by Jo and Jon Peters from Hitchin, Herts. Just outside Papworth the new Caxton Motel has just opened where hand-pumped Marston's Pedigree will be available, plus another real ale if sales take off.

Hayden and Karen Rowlett have taken over The Angel, Cambridge Street, St Neots. The previous tenants here, Brian and Meg Walker have themselves taken over at another Charles Wells pub, the Bell at Eaton Socon.

Tom and Betty Thompson have arrived at Ye Olde Sun, Huntingdon Street, St Neots from their previous pub in Suffolk. They have taken over from Jim and Ve Nicholls who had been incumbent since 1964 and have gone to live in Sussex. Ye Olde Sun is believed to be the oldest licensed beer house in St Neots being built around the 1650-80 period as a workers cottage and being first licensed in 1714 with beer being brewed at the rear of the premises. It has been a whitbread house since 1950 and is a listed building registered as an ancient monument.

The Royal Oak, High Street, St Ives now has Richard and Sue Bellamy behind the bar of the Ind Coope pub.

Robert and Dorothy Kett have moved into Greer King's Old Sun, Eaton Socon. Bob was born in Hampstead, London and was a chef at the Savoy Hotel in London for a number of years and has also worked for Watneys in south east London as a Landlord.

Good Beer Guide listed 'The Globe' a Charles Wells pub in Huntingdon Street, St Neots now has Simon and Julie Penn as managers and this is their first pub, though both have previous experience in the trade.

The Coneygeare, Eynesbury St Neots now has new landlords in Ian and Sharon Reeve, who have previous experience in the licensing trade. Their range of beers is currently Adnams Bitter, Adnams Extra, Ruddles County, Sam Smiths, Everards Tiger - probably the best range in the town.

The Mermaid at Ellington has discontinued its Springfield Bitter and replaced it with Boddingtons.

Two pubs in our area deserve a mention for their fund raising efforts for charity. Ian and Sue Robinson of The Crown, Eaton Socon together with their customers raised £500 by filling 38 bottles with cash in aid of St Neots Sports Associations bid to raise £1 m to provide a sports centre in the town. While John and Jackie Savory of the Longbow, Sapley organised sponsored parachute jumps by their locals to raise £1,000 to buy a guide dog for the blind.

Eric and Margaret Irving of The Greer Man, Colne won a holiday in Florida in a competition run by Manns to sell the highest barrellage over a set target.



The Crown Inn
Eaton Socon Cambridgeshire

FREE HOUSE

**REAL ALES AND BAR FOOD
AVAILABLE 7 DAYS A WEEK**

**GARDEN AND
ROOM FOR CHILDREN**

Frank and Marina Carberry have taken over The Racehorse Free House in Catworth. Frank was a fully qualified chef at an hotel in Brighton and decided to move into the licensing trade to meet people. The Racehorse is an ideal choice for the couple as Frank's brother Tony is a famous jump jockey and he himself a keen horse racing follower.

BREWERY TAKE-OVERS

Scottish and Newcastle have failed with their £124m take-over bid for Matthew Brown. After a nine month struggle the battle ended somewhat dramatically, with the proud banner of independence flying high over the Blackburn brewery. Scottish and Newcastle fell foul of their own deadline of 3.30 pm December 11th. At the arrival of this time, they extended the offer to 5 pm giving themselves 90 minutes to raise their shareholding to over the required 50%. However, upon appeal by Matthew Brown to the City take-over panel the deadline was re-instated as originally agreed, at which time Scottish and Newcastle held only 29.9% shareholding. Thus the bid was deemed to have failed. However, the fact that the Monopolies Commission allowed the bid to proceed in the first instance has sparked off a new round of takeover fever.

Hanson Trust have bid £1.9 billion for the Imperial Group who only days earlier agreed a £1.22 billion merger with United Biscuits. Imperial of course, are the parent company of Courage and the possibility would exist of the brewing arm being sold off.

Other big news is of course the £1.8 billion bid for Allied-Lyons by Elders IXL the Aussie brewers which undervalues the shares against the current market price. With Allied having 7,000 pubs in the UK a successful bid would obviously greatly affect the face of pubs in many towns all over the land.

Batemans of Wainfleet, Lincs is up for sale because of a family feud. John and Helen Bateman want out and they own 60% while George Bateman owns the remaining 40% and wants to keep the firm independent. Valuation of the brewery and its 98 pubs and three hotels is around £10 m and several would-be buyers have looked around the brewery.

Bathams of Brierly Hill who have all 8 of their tied houses in the 1986 GBG are not looking to sell but suggest that if an offer they couldn't refuse came in, then they would be foolish not to take it.

Hoskins of Leicester have gone to the City in search of cash by offering 3.5 million shares at 60p each.

FLEXIBLE LICENSING HOURS

The campaign for flexible licensing hours has taken another step forward with the news that the Isle of Man Parliament, The Tynwald, has granted flexibility for the islands' pubs. Subject to approval by the legislative council, pubs on the island will be able to select their own hours between 11 am and 11 pm starting from mid-May.

The Thatcher Government has been attacked for "ducking" the issue of flexible hours. Lord Erroll - author of the famous Erroll Committee Report says that they lack foresight in failing to debate flexibility in the coming months. He understood the Government's reasoning in avoiding two hornets nests in one session - the other being Sunday shop opening. However, with more and more MPs getting behind the campaign it is now only a matter of time!

ST NEOTS PUB TO BE CLOSED

A local Charles Wells tenant is being forced out of his pub by a 50% rent increase claims John Raines of The Nags Head, Eynesbury. He and his wife Sadie have spent £2,500 on improvements to the small pub and say that it isn't big enough to get the increased turnover necessary to cover the rent increase. Although trade has increased at the pub by the setting up of darts, domino and crib teams and it being an integral part of the local community, the Raines feel they have reached the limit of profitability obtainable. The brewery have therefore given them notice to quit and they will have to leave by November 1986. The pub will then be de-licensed and closed unless bodies like the National Union of Licensed Victuallers and CAMRA can bring about a change of mind.

BREWERY TRIPS

BREWERY VISIT ROMFORD

Regular readers of this newsletter may think, "Oh no, not another Brewery visit". You may ask why keep visiting Breweries. Once you have seen one you have seen them all. Well each and everyone is unique, just as the beer they produce. Therefore, it was with the usual excitement that a number of branch members and friends made the trek down to Romford to visit the vast Mega Brewery. What would we find? A modern brewery full of stainless steel and flashing computer consoles, being excorted round by well rehearsed dolly birds.

Well we were in for a pleasant surprise!

After negotiating our way into the brewery, a story in itself, we were shown to the hospitality room for a few drinks. Our guides for the evening were the Head Brewer himself and two of his Technical staff. The brewery was as we feared all stainless steel and computers, but lurking in one corner we found some lovely old coppers installed around the beginning of the century. These had only just been taken out of use. By now our thirsts and bladders were getting the better of use, so we were grateful to get back to the bar for some more relief.

Our hosts, I'm sure tried to drink us under the table, but we had to concede defeat as the time approached midnight.

One of our more memorable visits, I'm now looking forward to the next.

ROY ENDERSBY

Local CAMRA members also recently paid a visit to Banks and Taylors Micro Brewery in Shefford. This time - just a short walk from one part of the brewery to the next. An informative tour of the compact but highly efficient set-up, being followed by a sampling of the pleasant brews produced - firstly at the brewery itself then at the brewery tap - The White Horse at Deadman's Cross, Haynes. Here the latest addition to the range of beers was tasted - this being Shefford Old Dark, a sweetish 1050 O.G. Beer. With the brewery empire now standing a 6 pubs, the White Horse remains, the nearest consistent outlet for their products. Perhaps soon one of our local 'free houses' will take the beers on a more permanent basis!

Local Pub News

The Prince of Wales, Hilton, free house had been bought by Mr & Mrs Lester-George who also run the Rupert Brooke at Grantchester. Real ales currently available are Brakespeares Ordinary, Samuel Whitbread Strong and Castle Eden Ales.

The Montagu Arms, Grafham has been taken over by John Curran and Alan Maskall who have extended the real ale range. Marstons Pedigree, James Paine EG, Bass and Greene King IPA being available.

The Crown, Eaton Socon will be having Fremilins, Youngs SPA and Marstons Pedigree over the next few weeks and will then be having Tetleys bitter permanently, the next nearest outlet being Holme, nr Peterborough.

The Crown at Great Staughton now has Adnams Bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

The Darby and Joan at Abington Piggots now serves Badger Bitter, Adnams Bitter and all the Greene King beers, i.e. XX, IPA and Abbott.

Musician Enid Richardson has taken over as landlady of the Waterloo House a Manns pub in High Street, Huntingdon. She hopes to introduce music in a big way to the pub with scheduled entertainment every week.

The Golden Miller, Free House at Longstowe, currently listed in the 1986 Good Beer Guide, has just changed hands. David and Pauline Harber have moved in after previously managing the club bar at Royston Football Club for six years. The previous owners of the pub, Bill and Beth Reed have gone out of the trade and moved to Duxford. Real ales presently stocked are the seasonal Adnams Old, Adnams Bitter, Bass and Marstons Pedigree. The couple intend to make The Golden Miller more of a village pub once again and less of a restaurant, whilst still serving bar food.

Free Beer for Famine Fund

Four East Anglian breweries have supplied free beer to a fund raising event for Save the Children Fund held in Cambridge, Guildhall by Folk Against Famine. Greene King, Tolly Cobbold, Charles Wells and local brewers James Paine all deserve a big thank you for their kind gesture.

Huntingdonshire Real Ale Guide

We are pleased to announce that we have now published our new 'Guide to Real Ale in Huntingdonshire' price 50p. The guide lists all known outlets for real ale in the old county of Huntingdonshire, plus surrounding parts. Copies are available from many real ale pubs in the area or in case of difficulty, apply to Editor, together with an s.a.e., size 9" x 6" postage value 18p.



Future Meetings

Wednesday 19th February

King William IV, Fenstanton
- 8 p.m. - 9.30 p.m. then at
The George, Fenstanton from
9.30 p.m. onwards

Wednesday 5th March

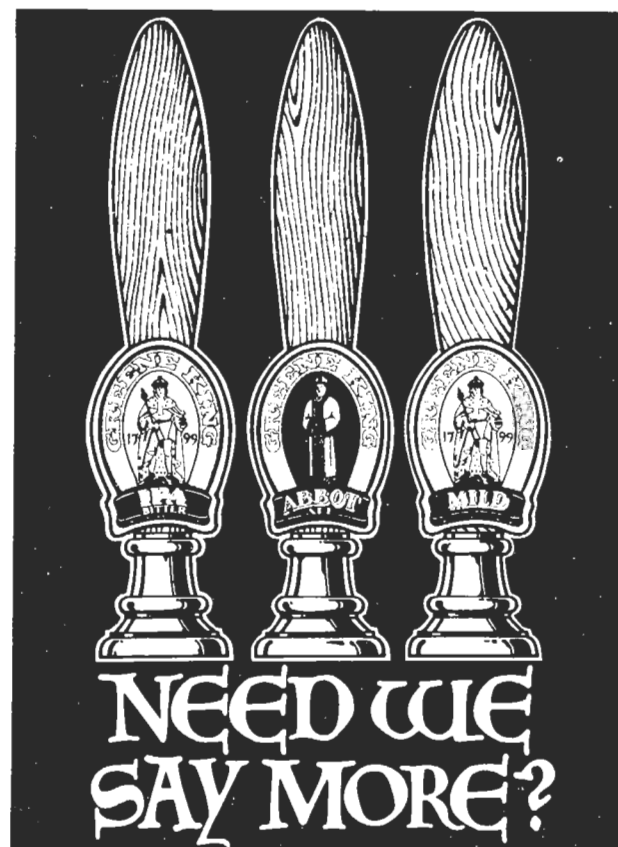
Bassingbourn
- Red Lion/Pear Tree 8 p.m.

Wednesday 19th March

Pub crawl St Ives, Royal Oak
- 8 p.m.

GreeneKing Simpsons Ale

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, Greene King are test marketing a 1033 O.G. beer. Local CAMRA members Geoff Parsons (pulling the pint), Steven Leader, Roy Endersby and Mike Birch are among those pictured at Good Beer Guide listed pub, The Wheatsheaf, St Neots testing the beer for themselves. General consensus was that it is a very pleasant tasting beer representing good value for money. The other pub in our area testing the beer is The White Swan at Conington.



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

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