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OPENING TIMES

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT



BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Issue No 73

BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 1,000 COPIES

'BOOZE ON THE OUSE' RETURNS

We are pleased to announce the return of the CAMRA Beer Festival. After a break, since our last festival held in St. Neots, we are this time holding the festival in St. Ives. We hope to have available such exotic brews as Batemans, Brains, Bunces, Cains, Cotleigh, Moorhouses, Tim Taylors, Titanic and Wickwar to name but a few as well as old favourites like Youngs and Fullers.

BOOZE ON THE OUSE

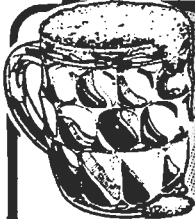
**Burgess Hall, St. Ivo Centre,
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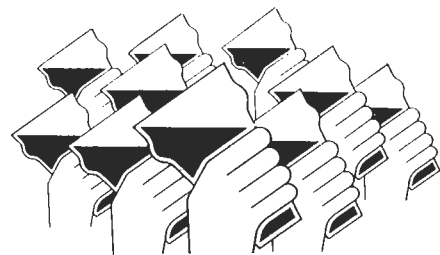


This is a special independents issue of Opening Times. In July, CAMRA, traditionally promotes the benefits to the drinker of supporting the Independent Breweries, but St. Neots Branch have never been anything if not non-conformist. So we, or I as the editor, opted to do a feature now.

Within these pages you can read about Adnams, Banks & Taylor, Charles Wells, Earl Soham, Elgoods, Greene King, Mansfield, Mauldons, Nethergate, Nix Wincott, Tolly, Woodfordes etc. These range from the large regionals to the micro brewers, but sadly, since the demise of James Paine and Hereward, only Elgoods are within our county. Perhaps, there will be a new brewery spring up at one of the County's ever increasing number of Free Houses.

However, we are fortunate to have a number of award winning successful small breweries in nearby counties.

The recent increases in real ale sales have not particularly benefitted smaller breweries. The big nationals are better placed to economise and offer discounts to the free trade. If we want to protect our opportunity for 'choice' in the future, we need to ensure the future of the Independents - and the only way to do that is to drink their ales. One good way of doing that, might be to suggest to your local that it has them as guest beers.



BACK BRITAIN'S INDEPENDENT BREWERS

MILD UPDATE — GIVE MILD A TRY OR SEE IT DIE —

Talk your landlord into putting on a mild and let us know about it. Breweries keen to put their mild into the free trade are Adnams, Batemans, Banks & Taylor and Tolly. Whilst Mansfield Mild is available to Charles Wells pubs and of course Greene King brew their own XX dark mild which is in need of a major boost if it is to survive.

Greene King are not promoting the beer at all, they would rather spend the money on the bland Rayments, instead of boosting the other jewel in their crown apart from Abbot. So if you drink in a Greene King pub, then get your landlord to give the mild a try.

GIVE MILD A TRY OR SEE IT DIE

This newsletter is published by the St. Neots branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. (CAMRA). The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches. Articles or letters for consideration for publication are always welcome. Advertising rates £5.00.psci (column width 4"). Artwork can be made up. Series discount 6 insertions less 15%. 3 insertions less 10%. Editor: Mike Birch, 37 The Broadwalk, Eynesbury, St. Neots Cambs. Tel: 0480 474497

ADNAM'S

SOLE BAY BREWERY

East Anglia's famous seaside brewery, which celebrated its centenary in 1990: 100 years of being a public company that is. For there have been references to the fine beers of Southwold and to the Sole Bay Brewery, going back to 1641.

The brewery evolved from the old brewhouse at the rear of The Swan Hotel, which was the most important inn in Southwold well before the great fire which devastated the town in 1659. Its cellars escaped and were incorporated into those of the present brewery.

Photographs taken in the early 1890's show the brewery as a very small building in the corner of The Swan yard, having been for two centuries little more than the brewhouse of The Swan Inn. Much of the present building was built in 1890.

The Adnams name was first associated with the brewery in 1872, when George and Ernest Adnams arrived from Berkshire to take over the Brewery. Adnams became a public company in 1890, in order to finance the re-building of the brewery. The family connection continues, with present Chairman being John Adnams, grandson of Ernest.

Adnams currently brew 6 real ales, Mild (OG 1034), Bitter (OG 1036), Old (OG 1042) a winter brew, Extra (OG 1043) hard to find, but due to be relaunched under a new name, Broadside (OG 1049) and Tally Ho (OG 1075) a Christmas barley wine, first brewed in c.1880!

Adnams serve real ale in all their 69 tied houses, which are almost without exceptioned houses. Local deliveries are carried out by drays drawn by the Percheron horse. Adnams deliver direct within a 70 mile radius of the brewery. Free trade outlets, numbering over 2,000, and being 84% of the total trade are served from depots in Norwich, Maidstone and Heathrow.

BANKS & TAYLOR



Founded in 1981, in Shefford, Beds. and now serving a tied estate of 9 pubs, with three in London, one in Northampton and Bedfordshire, amongst which is the brewery tap, The White Hart, Also some 80 outlets in an expanding free trade in the Home Counties and East Anglia. Joint founders were Mike Desquesnes and Martin Ayres, but with their surnames not having the right ring to them, they settled for the maiden names of their mothers.

Now have an impressive array of nine beers in the portfolio, with the addition of mild, stout, 2XS, Black Bat and Old Bat in recent times: Shefford Mild (OG 1035), Shefford Bitter (OG 1038), SPA (OG 1041), Edwin Taylor's Extra Stout (OG 1045), Shefford Old Strong (SOS) (OG 1050), Shefford Old Dark (SOD) (OG 1050), 2XS (OG 1058) Black Bat (OG 1064), Old Bat (OG 1080)



CHARLES WELLS

CHARLES WELLS

Successful family-owned brewery, established in 1876, which has an ever expanding tied estate, stretching from Lincolnshire to London of currently 353 pubs of which 339 serve cask beer. Also there is a free trade of 450 outlets.

Have a portfolio of only two beers: Eagle Bitter (OG 1035) and Bombardier (OG 1042). Bombardier has in fact been re-launched, with new keg fonts and new pumpclips in an attractive burgundy and gold livery. A television advertising campaign, plus expenditure on bus side advertising and PoS and leisurewear make it the biggest promotional investment in a bitter by the brewery. The brewery say that "We have decided to give our flagship best bitter the quality image a true quality product deserves" Indeed we at CAMRA are pleased to see a real ale given this sort of backing.

The new Bombardier has a low Co2 content and is especially brewed for dispense through a sparkler attached to the tap nozzle to give a creamy head to the beer. So local drinkers will have noticed a change in their pints appearance.

GREENE KING



East Anglia's largest regional brewery, needing little introduction to local drinkers, dating back to 1799, although it was 1887, when Ben Greene and Fred King combined their Bury operations. Now, only producing cask conditioned beers at Bury St. Edmunds; Biggleswade producing lager only. Have their own maltings on the Bury site. They closed the excellent Rayments, Furneux Pelham brewery in 1987, but have used the Rayments name for its Rayments Special Bitter (OG 1040). This was launched in the wake of the closure and was intended to replace Rayments BBA. Being sweeter than the other GK beers, it is struggling to find devotees within CAMRA, but its sales figures indicate an overall customer liking for it. However, Greene King have targeted drinkers in their expanding South-East trading area and it could be these, who are providing the bulk of the sales.

The other beers in the portfolio are XX Mild (OG 1032), IPA (OG 1036), Abbot Ale (OG 1049) and the Nov-Jan brewed Winter Ale (OG 1060).

It is the Mild, which attracts most CAMRA members. This is a very drinkable dark brown, ale, but unfortunately its future is under great threat. Declining sales, not helped by the complete lack of promotion by the Brewery, would seem to be sounding the death knell Abbot, of course needs no words from me, its fame going before it, and IPA being a good session bitter.

The tied estate currently stands at 850, although some still serve the beers through top pressure mini-handpumps. A large free trade of 2,000 outlets in the South-East is also served.

NETHERGATE



Set up in 1986, by three partners, in the busy Suffolk market town of Clare, Suffolk. One partner, Head Brewer Ian Hornsey, has very definite ideas on brewing beer. He says he wants to brew old-fashioned beer and do things in the old fashioned and proper way. Only traditional methods are used: no sugars, colourings or hop extracts in the recipe. Initially, Nethergate brewed only the one beer - Bitter (OG 1040), which won the Best Bitter award at the Cambridge CAMRA beer festival for three consecutive years. This is based on a recipe formerly used at Ramsden's brewery in Halifax, and dating back to 1934.

A second beer - Old Growler (OG 1054) was launched in late 1988 and is also an award winning ale based on an old London Porter recipe.

A third beer Nethergate IPA (OG 1035) is not an India Pale Ale: the initials stand for Ian's Personal Ale. Ian says he is fed up with beers masquerading as IPAs, since they are nothing like the original recipes of heavily hopped beers of high gravity.

Even though being based in "Greene King Country", Nethergate, through the quality of their beers have managed to establish themselves and now have roughly 100 outlets in Suffolk, Essex, Cambs and Herts. Indeed, in December 1991, they took over The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir Street, Cambridge as their first tied pub, the official opening of which the branch attended. So I take this belated opportunity to thank Ian and all at Nethergate for a very enjoyable evening.

TOLLY



A campaigning success story, this brewery was re-opened in 1990, after all production had been moved to Camerons in Cleveland, following the Brent Walker takeover. A management buy-out has enabled all the old Tolly beers to be brewed in their proper home once again. Brent Walker take supplies for its East Anglian estate - the former Tolly pubs - of which there are a number in our area. However their ongoing availability there is uncertain, as the deal with Allied is seeing Tetley replacing Tolly in some of these pubs.

The beers, form a strong portfolio: Mild (OG 1032), Bitter (1035), Original (OG 1038) and the winter brew Old Strong (OG 1047) available November to February. Currently, the new enterprise have no pubs of their own as yet.

WOODFORDE'S

Established in late 1980 by Roy Ashworth, a former banker with no professional background in brewing, though he had enthusiastically made his own beer for some fifteen years, prior to that. The romantic name of Woodforde's came from Parson Woodforde, a high-living clergyman of the eighteenth century, whose diaries have been on the best-seller lists for the past few years.

Roy, was inspired to start a brewery by his wife, Isobel, who conceived the idea whilst watching a T.V. documentary about the Blackawton Brewery. So, although it took two years of preparation, Woodforde's were born. At first on an industrial estate in Drayton, Norwich followed by a move in 1983 to new premises at Erpingham, Norfolk in an old stable block next to the Spread Eagle pub. Here, the landlord was John Marjoram, who became a partner and lent his years of experience in the trade to the business to good effect.

Despite initial setbacks, including a fire which destroyed much of their equipment, Woodforde's have now prospered and moved on again to premises in the picturesque Broadland village of Woodbastwick, Nr. Norwich.

MANSFIELD

Mansfield Brewery are included, because of their beers availability as a guest in Charles Wells houses.

One of the Country's major regionals, Mansfield now have a much stronger commitment to real ale than in the early 1970s, when they turned their back on cask beer. 1987 saw them introduce Riding Traditional Bitter (OG 1035) a distinctive, dry, hoppy brew and the dry hopped Old Baily (OG 1045) - named after one of the brewery's founders - well balanced, rich and creamy as replacement for 4XXXX. This was followed in 1990 by Riding Dark Mild (OG 1035) with a chocolate malt taste, and very drinkable. This in fact has been a most welcome develop-



ment and resulted in in mild sales reversing a 5% per annum decline into a positive growth, with the other beers also showing rising sales figures to reward the new commitment.

Now sell real ale in most of their 340 tied houses. Riding Bitter and Dark Mild are to be found increasingly in our area, due to the reciprocal trading arrangement with Charles Wells.

MAULDONS

A FAMILY TRADITION SINCE 1795

Established in Sudbury, Suffolk in 1982 by the former Head brewer of Watney's Mortlake Brewery. Has no pubs of its own but supplies over 150 Free Trade outlets in Suffolk, S. Norfolk, Essex, Cambs and Herts. They also provide house beers for their local pubs. For a small brewery they have a very impressive portfolio of 9 beers:

FA Mild (OG 1034) a hard to find dark mild, Golden Brown (OG 1034), Bitter (OG 1037), Porter (OG 1042), Old (OG 1042), Squires (OG 1044), Special (OG 1045), Suffolk Punch (OG 1050), Black Adder (OG 1055), Christmas Reserve (OG 1065) The most famous of these illustrious brews is the formidable Black Adder, the Champion Beer of Britain 1991 as it won the prize at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival held at London Arena last year. A magnificent achievement for a small brewery. If you get to try the beer then beware, for it is a dangerously drinkable beer for its strength and it should be making an appearance at our St. Ives Beer Festival in June

NIX WINCOTT

Began brewing at The Three Fyshes Inn, Turvey, Beds in 1987 with Two Henry's Bitter (OG 1040). Have since added Old Nix (OG 1058) and Winky's Winter Warmer, a dark, Christmas Ale. They supply eight other pubs.



The now well established brewery, has brought much needed choice to the formerly Watney dominated area. Their beers are brewed from 100 per cent East Anglian malt and contain no cheap sugars or chemical additives, and are now nine in number:

Mardlers Mild (OG 1036)

Broadsman Bitter (OG 1036)

Wherry Best Bitter (OG 1039) award winning ale,

won prize at GBBF 1989 for best beer from a new brewery.

Norfolk Porter (OG 1042)

Old Bram (OG 1044) a winter ale,

Phoenix XXX (OG 1047)

Norfolk Nag (OG 1049)

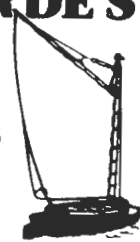
Baldric (OG 1052)

Headcracker (OG 1069)

No tied houses, but 225 free trade outlets in Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire.

WOODFORDE'S

Norfolk Ales



ELGOOD'S



Based at The North Brink Brewery since John Elgood, a maltster by trade and twice Mayor of Godmanchester, purchased the brewery in 1878.

Although there has been a building on the site from at least 1680, when it was an Oyl Mill and Granary, beer has been brewed there for almost 200 years. The building was converted into the classical Georgian brewery in 1790, it's outward appearance remaining the same today.

Among the first inns bought by the brewery and still owned today are The Spread Eagle and Hare & Hounds, both in Wisbech and The Queens Head at Emneth.

With a tied estate of 50 pubs, within a thirty mile radius of Wisbech, with all but two selling real ale and also around 150 free trade outlets, they employ 45 people and have a fleet of 6 delivery drays.

The company remain loyal to traditional brewing methods - using only natural ingredients, malt, hops,

sugar, yeast and "roasted" barley - and currently regularly brew, two traditional cask beers:

The recently re-named **Cambridge Bitter** (OG 1036), formerly EB, which is now so called to give prominence to the fact that Elgood's are the county's only brewery and to assist in sales in the "Guest" beer market. This is a predominantly malty beer, with a delicate hop and fruit aroma.

Greyhound Strong Bitter or **GSB** (OG 1045) is a premium beer with a light hop aroma. Malt is pronounced throughout, with bitterness in the aftertaste. A beer that is becoming increasingly rare, so try it when you find it.

Also, they produce a seasonal **Winter Warmer** (OG 1080) each Autumn, with a bottle - conditioned version (OG 1070) also available.

Lastly, their **Mellow Mild** is made available in cask conditioned form for special events. One such event is our very own Branch Beer Festival, being held June 18 - 21 at St. Ivo Centre, St. Ives where this plus Cambridge and Greyhound Bitters should hopefully be on tap.

EARL SOHAM

Started in April 1985 to supply its own pub, The Victoria, Earl Soham, Suffolk which is where the brewery is based.

They now own a second pub, the Tram Depot, Dover Street, Cambridge. This Good Beer Guide listed pub was once the stables of the Cambridge Street Tramway Co. and has now been superbly converted. Here you will find the full range of the Brewery's beers:

Gannet Mild (OG 1033), Victoria (OG 1037), Albert Ale (OG 1045)) and the winter only brew Old Cyril (OG 1060-76), the recipe for which tends to change from batch to batch!

Gannet Mild won a mention at the 1991 GBBF, Champion Beer of Britain competition. It was a runner-up to the first three beers in the mild section - no mean achievement.

LOCAL NEWS

The Jolly Sailor, Ramsey a GBG entry will be changing hands in the summer, when the current landlord retires after 28 years at the pub. However, more immediate changes are afoot, when the Brent Walker owned pub changes its present Camerons range of beers to the Allied range now being forced on it. So expect to see Burton Ale and Tetley on the bar.

We are glad to hear that **The White Horse, Newtown, Kimbolton** has re-opened. After the Free House closed, it was feared that it would become a private residence and yet another of our pubs would be lost. However it re-opened on Feb 7th and now has Tetleys and ??? available on handpump.

Brent Walker owned, **The Hare & Hounds, Eynesbury** is now selling Tetley Bitter alongside its Tolly Mild and Original. Another BW pub, GBG listed, is now selling Tetleys and Flowers Original to replace its Tolly beers, **The Victoria, Huntingdon. The Wrestlers, St. Neots** has been "pub swapped" from Allied to BW - no real ale though. The **Hardwicke Arms, Arrington** is boarded up, to join **The Queen Adelaide, Croydon, Kisby's Hut, Papworth and The Queen Victoria, St. Neots** on the presently closed list. The **Cockney Pride, Longsands, St. Neots**, a pub closed for some time now sports an "under offer" board. Could be some action here soon?

We hear of revised opening times at **The Millers Arms, Eaton Socon**. From Monday to Thursday, they are 12.00 - 14.00 and 17.00

- 23.00, whilst Friday and Saturday is 12.00 - 23.00 with normal Sunday hours.

New Free House

Over at **Ramsey**, Maurice Stimpson has now purchased **The Three Horseshoes** from John Smiths, where he was formerly tenant. The GBG listed pub, a pleasant back-street local, is now selling Theakstons Best, Theakstons XB and Youngers IPA. So we lose the only John Smiths tied house in our branch area, but gain some beers that are not that widely available on our patch.

New incumbents in early March at the **Unicorn, Ramsey**.

Up for sale

Still in **Ramsey**, **The George Hotel** is up for sale if you've got £225,000 to spare. Available at the same price is **The Jolly Abbot** Free House, **Abbotsley** and for a mere £150,00 you can have **The Barley Mow, Hartford**, currently a Manns house. **The Plough, Eynesbury**, (Fizz only at present), another Manns house is on the market at £125,000 upwards.

Presently closed, but undergoing major refurbishments is the **Unicorn, Kings Ripton**.

Mansfield Riding is now available at **The Swan, Offord Cluny**, alongside the existing Eagle.

Well worth waiting for

DRAUGHT BOMBARDIER Best BITTER

CHARLES WELLS

DRAUGHT BOMBARDIER Best BITTER

CHARLES WELLS

The advertisement features a central handpump with a glass of beer to its left and a can of beer to its right. The handpump and can both display the 'Draught Bombardier Best Bitter' branding and the Charles Wells logo. The background is dark with a subtle pattern. The text 'Well worth waiting for' is prominently displayed at the top in a large, white, serif font.