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OPENING TIMES

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT



Issue No 75

BRANCH NEWSLETTER
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THE BEER ORDERS

A SUCCESS OR FAILURE

NOVEMBER 1ST DEADLINE REACHED

The November 1st deadline for completion of the 1989 Beer Supply Orders has passed. Can we say however, that they have achieved what they were intended to?

Under these, the big brewers must free from tie, half of their pubs above a 2,000 limit.

They have almost sold enough pubs to meet this criteria, but few pubs appear to be taking beer from new sources. The nationals are determined to ensure they capture the supply of beers to the pubs they are selling.

Nationally, CAMRA's investigations show that drinkers are seeing their locals change ownership, but that the beer choice is the same as previous and in some cases, even reduced.

SUPPLY DEALS SIGNED

Blocks of pubs are being sold off, and then supply deals commit the new chain to taking beer from the same national brewer.

The big brewers are mostly selling off their tenanted estate, leaving the licensee with a new landlord overnight. The tenant often loses his guest beer right, with all the beer being delivered from the same big brewer's depot.

CHOICE MOCKERY

This makes a mockery of the Government's attempts to widen choice and competition for

Britain's drinkers. Where these new chains do have a guest beer policy, the decision as to which beer to stock is rarely left to the licensee. The biggest supply deal of course, was the one struck between Courage and Grand Met, in their pubs-for-breweries swap.

Under this scheme, which won Government approval, more than 6,000 pubs are supplied exclusively with Courage beer.

This is why the 'Manns' pubs in our branch area offer from the standard range of Ruddles, Courage, and Websters ales.

Couple this with the Pubmaster deals made with Allied and Whitbread, which sees Tetley and Flowers in their pubs, you can see how the big breweries are limiting the choice to their own beers.

INDEPENDENTS FOR CHOICE

Fortunately, Tolly beers are still to be found in some of our Pubmaster owned houses - at least until the five-year supply deal expires. We also have enough local Greene King and Charles

Wells houses, plus good free houses to give us a wider choice of beers.

However, when the Government removed a clause from the beer orders - recommending that "pub tenants should be allowed to stock a guest beer of their choice" it explicitly stated that "such beers should not come from 'Brewer Landlords', the owners of the pubs involved" - they effectively allowed the big brewers to dominate the guest beer market by offering lists of preferred "Guest Ales" to their tenants.

The aim of the MMC and the more muted response of the Government was to offer more choice to the consumer in an attempt to break the power of the national brewers.

MORE BEER PRODUCED

The exact reverse now prevails. The national brewers produce more beer than prior to the MMC report.

Given the chaos, confusion and double-dealing that now exists, the Office of Fair Trading should tell the Government that an urgent rethink is needed to stop the nationals increasing their monopoly hold on the industry.

THE WHEATSHEAF, CHURCH STREET ST. NEOTS

★ Greene King Fine Ales ★

XX Mild

IPA

★ Town Garden

Abbot Ale

★ CAMRA ★

WINTER ALE NOW AVAILABLE

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

With winter now fast approaching and with traditional dark beer starting to enjoy a revival, we thought it worthwhile to highlight those special-brewed winter beers and increasingly popular porters.

These are strong flavoursome ales, produced to warm the cockles of your heart, and if you over indulge to dull the senses of the brain. Beers to be treated with respect and drunk slowly, but enjoyably.

Nowadays throughout the country there are more and more to choose from. We can't mention all those here, but I will endeavour to mention those that can be found locally and nearby.

Our home county offers but the one, which is of course from **Elgoods**, this is the very powerful **Winter Warmer** OG 1080.

McMullen of Hertford brew the 1070 OG **Stronghart**, which is worth the short train journey south.

Adnams, Suffolk brew **Tally Ho**, OG 1075, which will hopefully be found in a few of our free houses.

Earl Soham, Suffolk are brewers of Jolabugg OG 1060, though with the Victoria pub and brewery up for sale, it cannot be said for certain, whether it's availability will be prolonged.

WINTER ALES

Further eastwards in Lowestoft, Suffolk, one of our newer breweries - **Forbes**, started in 1988 are brewing **Black Shuck**, which as it's name implies is a very black and intense stout, OG 1052 plus **Merry Monarch** OG 1069.

Also in Suffolk is **Greene King's Winter Ale** OG 1060, which has found it's way into The **Wheat-sheaf, St. Neots** and hopefully will make an appearance at the **Millers Arms, Eaton Socon**, as well as other local Greene King houses willing to take it.

Nethergate, from Clare, Suffolk brew **Old Growler** OG 1054 a wonderfully complex dark ale, based on an old London Porter recipe. This is of course brewed all-year round but is especially enjoyable in the cold winter months.

Over in Essex, **Crouch Vale** are producing **Santa's Revenge**, OG 1055 and the curiously named **Willie Warmer** (?) OG 1060. Still in Essex, we have **Ridley's**

Christmas Ale OG 1050.

The county of Norfolk offers a profusion of winter ales. The prizewinning **Woodforde's Norfolk Nog** OG 1049 a very good, dark brew probably the pick.

Not to detract from the others though, being **Mauldons Christmas Reserve** OG 1065, a sweet ale, fairly pale in colour for a strong beer.

Over at **Reepham** Brewery there are three ales: **Bircham Bitter** OG 1046, an amber/tawny beer, **Smugglers Stout** OG 1045 and **Brewhouse** OG 1055 a full bodied bitter.

Lastly in Norfolk, I hear of another of our newer micros producing two winter ales. The **Reindeer** in Dereham Road, Norwich, which has it's brewery visible from the pub's bar is producing the aptly named **Red Nose** OG 1057 and **Sanity Clause** OG 1067.

The very last mention goes to another pub brewery, but a bit nearer home, **Nix Wincott** in Turvey, Beds. They have their **Winky's Winter Warmer** OG 1059.

Let us know of any regular outlets for these or any other winter ales, and we'll give them a mention.

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APPLICATION FORM

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....POST CODE.....

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.
I enclose a cheque for £10 (£14 if overseas).

Signed..... Date.....

ELGOOD'S



October saw the local branch venture eastwards to Wisbech and Elgoods brewery, the only surviving brewery in Cambridgeshire.

As we approached on the A47, we looked out through our bus window and could see the classical Georgian building nestling beside the River Nene on it's North Brink site. Unfortunately, we were on the opposite bank, so we continued our bus ride into the town centre and grab a cab to the brewery.

Upon our arrival we were introduced to the head brewer, Sir Henry Holder, the only titled working brewer in the country.

Before Elgood's, he was at Whitbread's Rhymney brewery in mid-Glamorgan, leaving just three years before brewing ceased there.

However, it is Elgood's who have call on his wealth of knowledge,

though unfortunately for them, he will retire in March next year, a difficult man to replace.

After being ruled by 'Accountants' at Whitbread, he found Elgood's a totally different experience altogether. Decisions here are usually taken by three people: Sir Henry, managing director Nigel Elgood and sales director Terry Stork.

One of those decisions was to install a mini-brewery, which was one of the more interesting parts of the trip. This consists of two, ten-barrel and a single five barrel fermenter. This enables them to brew small batches of beer, such as the excellent Black Dog Mild supplied to our beer festival in June, and to experiment with new beers.

The nearby Nene is utilised by Elgoods, not to make the beers I hasten to add, but running through pipes, to cool the mash before the fermentation process begins.

The brew is further cooled in open cooling tanks, where the cooling

winds at the top of the building is allowed to pass across by the opening of special vents at the sides of the building.

Certainly, the trip showed the brewery to be very traditional in it's production processes. No computerised systems here.

Sir Henry has had his differences with CAMRA in the past, but despite this CAMRA and Elgood's appear to have many common causes. So hopefully we can work together in the future.

After the trip we were treated very hospitably at the nearby Elgood's house, the Red Lion.

Here we were joined by several of the Elgood's sales team as well as Sir Henry. We thank them all for their time and the obvious pleasure in having us at the Brewery.

THANK YOU TOLLY

Many thanks to Brian Cowie joint Managing Director of Tolly Cobbold for travelling all the way from his Ipswich base to address a branch CAMRA meeting at the Hare & Hounds, Eynesbury.

He gave us a very informative talk, an hour long on Tolly Cobbold's history and plans for the future.

Main topics were the concern and attention paid to the quality and distribution of the breweries beers, which are predominantly available in this area in the old Paines/Tolly pubs.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank him for the branch invitation to the Naming Ceremony for their 1993 Beer of the Year in December.

FUTURE MEETINGS

December 2nd - Meeting at Queen's Head, Needingworth 8.30pm.

December 11th Mini Bus trip to Prince Albert, Stow-cum-Quy. For further details contact Steve Leader 0480 475095



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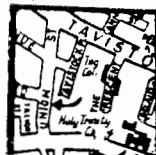
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LOCAL NEWS

We are pleased to see the **Queen Adelaide** at **Croydon** has re-opened after a long closure.

After a period of being boarded up and increasing dereliction, the free house has re-opened under the ownership of Walter & Jean Buck. Together with daughter Gillian and her husband Alastair, they are steadily re-establishing the pubs trade. Real ales currently available are Greene King IPA and Abbot.

★

Another previously boarded-up pub, which has re-opened is **Kisby's Hut** at **Papworth Everard**. The freehouse, opened by a company called *Splash Public Houses* on September 11th with new landlords Kevin and Janet O'Brien behind the bar, and its current range of real ales features Adnams Broadside, Charles Wells Bombardier and Boddingtons.

As far as we know, Kisby's Hut is owned by Papworth Village Settlement and leased out. It was formerly leased to the old Tolly Brewery, before being leased direct to the last incumbent as a free house. It has seen a few landlords come and go in the last few years, with many locals preferring to drink at the social club in the village. This has meant the pub struggling to pay its way, perhaps the new landlord will manage to turn the trade around. A pub has stood on the existing site for almost 500 years but the current building is mainly Victorian. Indeed a feature has been made of an Elizabethan gable-end wall which was uncovered during the refurbishment, and this can now be seen in what has always known

as the Tudor Bar.

Many thanks to one of our local drinkers for supplying information on Kisby's Hut. If you wish to send the editor any news relating to your local, it would be most welcome, as we found it impossible to keep in touch with all that's happening in pubs in our branch area.

★

The **Dun Horse** in **St. Ives** has changed its name to the **Aviator**, we don't know why, perhaps they will explain the connotation to us sometime. Anyway, pay the pub a flying visit! Real ales available there are Courage Directors, Ruddles County, Websters, Marstons Pedigree and Tetleys.

★

Still in St. Ives, we hear that the **Greyhound** has added Courage Directors to its range.

★

The **Hare & Hounds** in **Eynesbury** has taken delivery of the first batch of this year's Tolly Old Strong to come out of Ipswich. Other beers currently on handpump are Tetleys and Flowers Original. I am however trying to get the landlord to put the Tolly Mild back on.

★

Many thanks are due to John Dyke at the **HRC Club** at **Hartford**, for his kind invitation to hold a CAMRA Social there in October. This was in conjunction with their 'Roundhead Club' Beer Festival.

Thanks to them we were able to sample Brains and North Yorkshire Breweries Flying Herbert on the night of our visit.

★

ADVERTISE WITH US

I can't resist having a few words on a recent advertising feature in one of our local free papers.

In an advertising feature relating to the Peterborough Beer Festival, there were supporting adverts from fizz only pubs, but carrying CAMRA logos, which was a bit irksome.

Other pub adverts had beers I'd never heard of like Wadsworth, or did they mean Wadsworths, perhaps?

There was one pub advertised as selling real ale, which we know to be keg only, and another as selling Charles Wells Noggin among its real ale range - very interesting for a keg beer!

Whilst support advertising for a CAMRA festival is most welcome, surely so many errors of information in one feature is bad journalism.

So landlords if you're advertising your pub and beers do it with the people who know their pubs and beer - the CAMRA Newsletter, "Opening Times". By doing so you will help us to produce a quality newsletter, which promotes your pub.

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