

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT

OPENING TIMES



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BRANCH NEWSLETTER
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BOOZE ON THE OUSE *Massive Success*

The 16th 'Booze on the Ouse' held at the Burgess Hall, St. Ivo Centre, St. Ives in September was a massive success

More Beer Ordered

There were more people than ever through the doors, in turn drinking more ale than ever, such was the demand that we had to order another 5 kils of beer to back up the 30 kils already on tap and thirsty drinkers managed to drink that as well. Allied to that our Belgian beer stand also did a roaring trade, making the whole event a big success.

Admissions were up at every session except the well attended Saturday afternoon session and beer consumption was up by 20% on last years event with Friday

evening having an amazing 44% increase in sales against 1995, making planning for Saturday very tricky. But somehow we managed to get through, albeit with a limited range on the Sunday lunchtime, when over a 100 people turned up to listen to our folk spot.

The change in date from our usual spot in June obviously worked the trick, so we will be sticking to September again next year, so put it in your diary now.

The first beer to sell out was Cheriton Diggers Gold, winner of the Strong Beer section at the Great British Beer Festival this year. The beer that received the most votes as our 'Beer of the Festival' was Hopback Thunderstorm with 2nd Old Chimneys Military Mild, 3rd

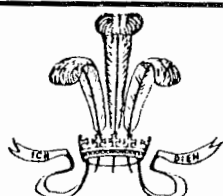
Broughton The Ghillie and 4th Woodfordes Wherry Bitter.

It obviously wasn't an easy decision as 50 different beers were voted for. And there is no pleasing some people, despite offering 59 beers plus ciders on our original selection over the course of the Festival plus another 10 on our re-order, which is practically unbeatable for a festival of our size, some punters still criticised the festival for 'lack of choice'

Next Years Logo

We also completely sold out of the specially printed commemorative glasses with 43% of attendees taking a glass home and are now trying to think of a suitable logo for next year.

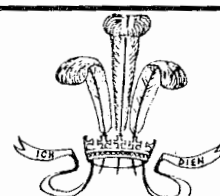
If you can design a logo, that is



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'

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NETHERGATE IPA DRAUGHT BASS GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

PLASTIC REVOLUTION TO AID MICROBREWERS

Buying and maintaining an adequate cask population has always been an enormous problem for smaller brewers.

Casks cost in the region of £60 a firkin and a brewery need about three barrels for every barrel of beer that they brew: one full en route to the pub, one empty on its way back, and one in the brewery being refilled.

Allied to this, where wholesalers are used - a necessity for most small brewers - extra barrels are required to account for the time it takes to get through their system and on top of that barrels go missing or are stolen or "borrowed". All this adds up to a large capital outlay that imposes an enormous financial strain.

Now two firms have developed plastic casks, which may not be as durable as steel, but at only a quarter of the price. Old Mill Brewery of Snaith, Humberside are using a one-trip Handicask, costing a fraction of a steel cask for deliveries of their own ales

Not in circulation yet, but on its way is a more robust version from Keg Services, Hereford. Clearly not as strong as steel but capable of surviving a number of trips, the cask is recommended for use when brewers use wholesalers.

The Society of Independent Brewers say the concept is brilliant but proving themselves in the field would be a stern test. Beer quality must be

LOCAL NEWS

The **Queens Head, Needingworth** held their 5th Annual Beer Festival in October. The Festival followed a new format, running throughout the month with 31 beers for 31 days, with a new beer available everyday through the month and proved very popular.

The **Wheatsheaf in Eaton Socon** is currently closed for total refurbishment and is expected to re-open in November.


Local drinkers will have noticed that Charles Wells' strong ale, draught Fargo has become harder to find, whilst their new, nitro-keg version of the beer, Fargo Velvet is appearing everywhere on the back of some heavy promotional spend and you can't miss the hideous dispense.

Wells dismiss CAMRA fears that real Fargo is being phased out, saying that it will become more readily available in the the Autumn, but it looks as though its future will remain under review. So where you get a choice between the two, drink the cask version, it will taste better and probably save you money !

MANY THANKS to **Ian Hornsey at Nethergate** for his invitation to look round the Clare brewery and for his hospitality in enabling the party from St. Neots Branch to try the excellent beers, including Decadent, which some of us had not had previously.

LONGER OPENING HOURS FOR PUBS IN THE BALANCE

The future of longer pub opening hours on Friday and Saturday nights hangs in the balance after the Home Office received one of the biggest responses ever to its proposals to add an extra hour. Although the Home Office itself favours relaxation, it is refusing to give any indication of the spread of responses. There is a powerful case for giving pubs the freedom to give their customers the service they require, with no more drunkenness in European capitals which had later opening hours than in London.




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GOOD BEER GUIDE 1997

Publication date: Out now
Cover Price £10.99 plus p&p.

Around 5,000 great pubs serving excellent ale - in towns, the country and seaside.

Information about meals, accommodation, family rooms and other facilities.

Listings of around 400 real ale breweries.

Features on beer quality, real cider, detailed tasting notes for all cask ales and a list of architectural gems.

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or

Mike Birch,
10 Squires Court,
Eaton Socon, St. Neots
Tel: 01480 395505

THE WHITE HART

Sheep Market, St.Ives
Tel: 01480 463275

REAL ALES AVAILABLE:
Fullers London Pride
Fullers Chiswick
Flowers IPA

Outside Bars Catered For

BED & BREAKFAST
Discount to CAMRA Members

CAMRA CALLS FOR PROPOSED MERGER TO BE REFERRED TO MMC

Bass have recently announced that they are to take over Carlsberg-Tetley to once again become the largest UK brewer with around 40% of the UK beer market. With Scottish Courage's having 30%, then 70% of the total beer sales in the UK are controlled by just two companies. CAMRA is calling for the proposed merger to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, if this is not a merger that will lead to a near monopoly then what is? There will be the usual spokesman announcing that there are no plans to close any breweries, but in a year or so closures will regrettably be announced for economic reasons.

CAMRA launched a petition to its opposition to this at the Burton Beer Festival, Burton on Trent being the home town of Burton Ale, one of the beers threatened by the merger as it is very close to the strength of Draught Bass. Also Stones Bitter and Tetleys are too close to kept in the same portfolio, in fact wherever two brands compete it is likely that one will be dropped. Another side-effect would be the extra financial muscle that would offer larger discounts than ever, thus forcing independent beers from free house bars and guest beer pumps.

DO YOUR DUTY, CHANCELLOR

As the next Budget approaches, in the continuing battle to raise the Chancellor of the Exchequers' awareness of the need to reduce duty on British beer, members of the Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) took to the streets once again to make their voices heard. with seven traditional horse drawn drays led through London to the Houses of Parliament.

Delegations from Bateman's, Thwaites, Shepherd Neame, Fuller's, Young's, Ridley's, McMullen, Everards, Adnams, Arkell's, Gale's, Hook Norton, Elgood's and Eldridge Pope joined the demonstration against a Government which they might have expected to have a natural sympathy with them.

A barrel of British beer was poured down the drain, symbolising the loss of British jobs due to the influx of duty-paid, personal import of cheap alcohol from Europe. With the livelihoods of landlords, tenants and brewers all under threat as sales fall, jobs are lost and pubs closing down, particularly small community pubs which rely on beer sales.

As CAMRA has long said, unless the Chancellor takes action, this situation will worsen and we stand to lose an important part of our culture and heritage. However, with the Government's need to tackle it's debts a cut is unlikely!

something to do with the local history of St. Ives and surrounding area then let the editor know and there will be a pint or two in it for you if your effort is selected.

WINTER ALE FESTIVAL

Make a date to be at our 3rd Winter Ale Festival, which will once again be held at St. Neots Town Football Club from Wednesday January 22nd to Saturday January 25th.

This means an extra session on Wednesday evening, but we will be closing at 6.00 on the Saturday evening as attendances have dictated these new opening times. Once again we will be offering around 15 warming winter ales that in general are only available during the winter months..

This event is also growing in popularity, so hopefully we can look at similar increases in sales figures as we promote real ale.

HOPS BACK?

Traditional Fuggles and Goldings hops are set for a comeback after 15 years of shortages.

Problems started in the early 1980's as ale sales went into decline, with brewers holding surplus stocks of the hops and more lucrative crops were used such as the more resistant Target variety.

However new plantings of the two varieties which preserve more of the hop aroma have led to an increased demand with a bumper harvest in comparison to the last few years.

The hop industry has fought its way back from supplying a half of the British brewers needs to two-thirds and indeed are now also supplying micro-brewers in North America keen to revive the genuine ales long abandoned by their own big brewers.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION THREATENS TIED HOUSE AND GUEST BEERS

Britain's brewers have launched a new document defending the tied house system against the European Commission review. The Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association praises the traditional tenancy and warns that if the review ends Britain's exemption from the Treaty of Rome, all benefits of the tied house system will be lost, with British pubs having the lowest on-trade prices and widest choice of beers in Europe.

Similarly the EC has announced that the British guest beer law contravenes the Treaty of Rome.

The Beer Orders of 1989 gave the right for tenants to buy one real ale from a supplier of their choice, giving wider choice for drinkers with new beers stocked by thousands of pub tenants, more interest in traditional beer and a lease of life for small independent brewers. This legal challenge could prove very damaging with possible scrapping of the guest beer rule, leading to the biggest brewers heavily advertised beers swamping the market.

BRANCH DIARY

All are welcome to attend our socials and meetings, which are held usually every other Tuesday at different pubs throughout our branch area.

Tuesday November 19th - Social - **Cock, Gamlingay** (Greene King) - 8.30pm and **Chequers, Little Gransden** (Free) - 9.45pm

Tuesday 10th December - Meeting - **Prince of Wales, Hilton** (Free) - 8.30pm

Christmas Social - January 10th - **Green Man, Leighton Bromswold** (Free) Contact Kathy Hadfield On 01480 496247 (Social Secretary) for transport details of possible mini-bus.

For further details contact: Roy Endersby (Chairman) on 01480 473364

Landlords Book Your Advertising Space Now for inclusion in our **Christmas** issue, Final Copy Date December 3rd. Ring Mike Birch on 01480 395505 Rates are detailed below

JOIN CAMRA NOW

Just fill in the details below and send with a cheque for £12 or £14 for joint membership (Payable to CAMRA Ltd) to The Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230, Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW

APPLICATION FORM

NAME.....
 ADDRESS.....
POSTCODE

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

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