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ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT

OPENING TIMES



Issue No 90 December 1996

BRANCH NEWSLETTER
BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 1,500 COPIES

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO ALL REAL
ALE DRINKERS!!**

**3rd
WINTER ALE
FESTIVAL
BECKONS**

No help for our Brewing industry from the Chancellor in his Budget



**WINTER ALE
FESTIVAL**

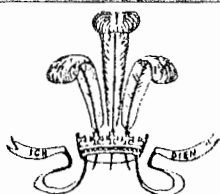
ST. NEOTS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB,
CAMBRIDGE ROAD, ST. NEOTS,
22nd - 25th JANUARY 1997

Although Chancellor Kenneth Clarke reduced duty on spirits - which make up less than 8% of pub sales - there was no reduction on Beer Duty, which was frozen. Beer sales account for 60% of pub business and calls from CAMRA, the Brewers Association and the Independent Family Brewers of Britain to lower duty rates were ignored.



Open
Wednesday 22nd 7.00 - 11.00
Thursday 23rd 7.00 - 11.00
Friday 24th 7.00 - 11.00
Saturday 25th 12.00 - 6.00

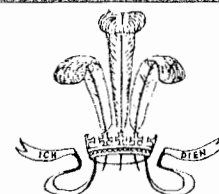
Soft Drinks & Spirits Bar



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'

(01480) 830257



NETHERGATE IPA DRAUGHT BASS GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

CAMRA's 25th ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL ATTRACTS 5,000 VISITORS

The Beer Festival held in St. Albans to celebrate 25 years of CAMRA attracted 5,000 drinkers who enjoyed over 160 real ales between them, with the original order being drunk dry and a back-up supply needed.

The Festival was officially opened by Michael Hardiman, one of the four original founder members of the Campaign.

The Festival saw an informal tasting of 14, past Champion Beer of Britain winners with Pitfield Dark Star - winner in 1987 emerging as the clear winner.

CAMRA CELEBRATES 25 YEARS IN STYLE

CAMRA's Silver Anniversary was also commemorated with a lunch at Whitbread Brewery, Chiswell Street, City of London which attracted 96 members and guests including many supporters from the brewing industry.

The lunch which took over five hours had an accompanying beer for each course with a short explanation as to why that particular beer had been selected.

A great time was had by all, certainly by members of the local branch who attended and had the chance to renew old acquaintances with fellow members and friends from the trade.

LOCAL NEWS

The **Plough, Eynesbury** is now a free house and mine hosts Dave and Kath Neilson are in the process of cellar improvements which when finished will allow the installation of three handpumps. We'll let you know what beers are going to be on offer, once we know.

The **Cock at Broom** is the subject of a spot listing to preserve its interior, in the light of proposals by Greene King to refurbish. The Cock has been licensed since 1836 and is Bedfordshire's only entry in CAMRA's national inventory of outstanding pub interiors, with its main claim to fame being that it is one of a handful of pubs with no bar counter. Its present layout of small rooms contribute to its character and although Greene King say that any alterations they make would only be made with the fullest consultation, the East-Beds CAMRA branch in whose area the pub is, feel that they need to obtain a statutory listing.

Greene King have announced the closure of its 250 year old **Biggleswade** brewery. The Brewery ceased brewing real ales in the early nineties - they are all brewed at Bury St. Edmunds - and is now given over to lager production, will close in April 1997 with the loss of 100 jobs. The closure is blamed upon the prolific amount of imported beer and lager now being brought into the country by cross channel trippers.

Cambridge CAMRA Branch are holding their **Winter Ale Festival** from 9th - 11th January at the Students Union Building, Anglia Polytechnic, East Road, Cambridge with lunch and afternoon sessions free but evening sessions are by advance ticket only, available from The Cambridge Blue/St. Rhadegund in Cambridge or by post from 9, Willingham Road, Over, Cambs. CB4 5PD.

Nethergate Bitter from Nethergate Brewery, Clare, Suffolk became the first ever **Champion Beer of East Anglia** in a CAMRA competition where all CAMRA members from the region were asked to vote for the best ales that are brewed in the area. The six beers with the highest number of votes were then blind-tasted at the Norwich Beer Festival. Other results: 2nd Adnams Bitter, 3rd Mauldons Blackadder, 4th Woodfordes Wherry, 5th Tolly Cobbold Mild and 6th Adnams Broadside.

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.

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

BEER DEAL GOES FLAT?

The Trade President Ian Lang has blocked the proposed £205million takeover by Bass of Carlsberg-Tetley which would create the biggest brewer in British history with the new group controlling 70 per cent of the beer market.

CAMRA has attacked the merger, as it has severe implications for choice in pubs.

However the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is expected to allow the plan to go-ahead on conditions after its investigation which is due to make its report by March 24th.

This would mean massive job losses of around 2,000 and the disappearance of some nationally known beers.

It is likely that Bass will have to sell either some of its pubs or beers to receive the MMC's blessing.

GUEST ALE DECISION DELAYED

The European Commission have announced a one month delay in making a decision on Britain's guest Beer Rule after a meeting with the European Brewers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry. At the meeting it was argued that cask-conditioned beers are not a purely British phenomenon, and that many French, Belgian and German brewers were entitled

When the Guest Beer policy was first drafted by the British Government, the proposal to allow tenants of pubs owned by national brewers to buy a cask-conditioned ale of their choice was cleared by the European Commission. So it is very annoying that the EC has now changed its mind, if the guest beer policy was considered legal in the early 1990's why suddenly, is it now a threat to the fundamental ideals of the union?

It needs to be stressed that Britain offers by far the widest choice of beers of any European Union member countries and has by far the greatest penetration of its internal market by imported beers. It is indeed a rare sight to see any British brewed beers on sale in a French, German or other European bar. Scrapping or weakening the guest beer policy would not allow more Bitburger or Budvar to be sold in Britain, it would be the likes of Carling, Caffreys, Carlsberg and other beers from the big breweries that would benefit.

CAMRA does not oppose the Commission's threat because it comes from foreigners, but because it is wrong. It threatens drinkers rights to extend choice and diversity as well as the future of British regional brewers who are hanging on by their fingertips with swathes of the "free trade" closed to them as a result of big brewers discounts, and the power of their advertising budgets. Remove their ability to sell to national brewers' tied pubs and they have no chance, and will be driven out of the market and out of business.

That is why the Commission must be challenged and defeated and CAMRA has launched a vigorous campaign to stop this latest bout of meddling by the EC to British interests.

If you also oppose this threat then write to your local MP at The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or alternatively direct to the EC: L Gonzales Vague, Head of Unit DGXV, European Commission, Rue de la Loi 200, Brussels, B 1049 Belgium..

EURO COMMISSION PUTS OFF TIED HOUSE SYSTEM REVIEW

The European Commission has put off for two years its long feared review of the tied house system, giving itself until 1999 to decide how to reform the exemption - if at all. One of the biggest hurdles is the sheer complexity of the problem facing the Commission with widely differing tie systems existing across Europe.

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

3rd WINTER ALE FESTIVAL BECKONS

Following on the success of the two previous festivals, The 3rd Winter Ale Festival will once again be held at St. Neots Town Football Club from January 22nd - 25th.

Winter ales are booming this year with nearly 100 seasonal cockle warmers listed in the 1997 Good Beer Guide and more are being launched for Christmas. They come from the biggest breweries and smallest alike and can be very strong, ranging from rich, vinous barley wines to malty old ales and we hope to have a good representation available from Belhaven, Branscombe Vale, Fullers, Gales, Harveys, Kelham Island, King & Barnes, Pilgrim and Wickwar to name a few.

There will also be Adnams Mild and Nethergate Bitter to give you the choice of a not so strong ale if that's what you prefer, plus also a selection of bottled Belgian beers and a couple of bottle conditioned English brews.

NITRO THREAT - GROWS AND GROWS

'Real ale sales are falling fast due to the impact of nitro-keg' says top, Bass spokesman Chris Whitworth as he spoke at a CAMRA seminar on beer quality.

He says that "sales of premium cask ales were falling by 10 per cent a year, while standard ales are declining even faster, by 12 per cent, with the decline predicted to end in 1999 when nitro-keg sales are expected to peak".

His company are expected to spend £10m next year promoting Caffreys on TV and just £2m on all its cask brands and say that "there are too many real ales on sale. There will be casualties" he said "Beers without allegiance will disappear, fewer brands will be available, enabling their remaining beers to have better throughput and consistency"

Bass beers will be sold throughout the country by swan-neck dispense and quarter pint beer engines and these beers will be restricted to "quality" pubs. "Cask ale should be a 'must stock' item for quality outlets" he said, implying that pubs not listed as 'quality' ones will have only nitro-keg and lager.

His views were countered by Mike Powell-Evans, head brewer at Adnams who said "Good beer will always sell" he said, "Keg beer is made - cask beer is created"

CAMRA of course has always opposed the elitist view that real ale should only be on sale in one per cent of the country's pubs. All pubs should be offered the choice of real ale and brewers should ensure that it is served in good condition. we want cask beer available in back-street locals as well as up-market eateries.

Locally, Charles Wells are offering nitrokeg versions of their beers in many of their tied houses, so make sure you ask for the cask version if you want the real thing.

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.....

FOR QUALITY
THE HAPPY BREWER
 Est. 1985
 BREWING AT HOME

Never knowingly undersold on choice, service or value"

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