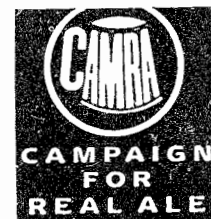


OPENING TIMES

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT



Issue No 91 March 1997

BRANCH NEWSLETTER
BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 1,500 COPIES

WINTER ALE FESTIVAL PROVES POPULAR ATTRACTION

Our Winter Ale Festival held in St. Neots at the end of January proved popular with drinkers.

This was our third Winter Ale Festival which contrasts nicely with our main festival 'Booze on the Ouse' held in St. Ives in September. There is a very relaxed atmosphere as the strong beers are sipped with the respect and reverence that their strength and flavour demands.

The ales all sold steadily with no clear favourite

among the drinkers as they tried each one in turn and because of that at opening time on the Saturday we were still able to offer all of the seventeen ales on the final day of the festival.

Added to this we were offering a selection of bottled Belgian Beers and even some mulled ale for that extra bit of warming to those visitors to the festival that had travelled a long distance to be with us and there were quite a few of those.

The number of local attendees was not as high as we had hoped, with no clear reason for that, with the two best attended sessions being Friday night and Saturday.

But for all that, it was still a successful event and one that we hope to repeat in 1998.

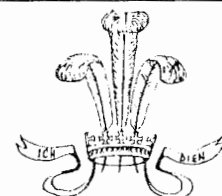
Two very different beers received votes of excellence, the very light coloured Pilgrim Conqueror and the very dark Linfit English Guineas Stout.



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'

(01480) 830257



NETHERGATE IPA DRAUGHT BASS GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

Forthcoming election delays licensing law reform

With a General Election looming, licensing reform has taken a back seat.

Firstly, Hours Reform, giving pubs the right to close at midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, fell off the action list after an unprecedented write-in campaign made it too controversial to slip through under deregulation procedures.

Now front-bench spokesman have signalled their lack of interest in calls for a new licensing bill by failing to turn up at a symposium organised by top licensing lawyer Peter Coulson who is licensing consultant to the British Institute of Innkeeping and which was attended by brewers, pub operators, magistrates, police, CAMRA and trade association representatives.

This was to discuss a draft bill aimed at sweeping away many of the legislative cobwebs which cost the industry an estimated £500 million a year.

With Labour saying that hours reform is not a priority if it wins the election any wider licensing reforms would certainly not be of great urgency to them, although industry support for a new act is growing with the Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association producing a wide-ranging paper of its own saying that "Current licensing law is hopelessly outdated"

NEW MICROS OPEN UP

Two new breweries have opened up, one in Chatteris, Cambs and the other in adjacent Lincolnshire.

Firstly, Fenland Brewery have started production in Chatteris after a local drought of more than 60 years and giving the County a boost. Where we once had at least 41 local breweries, only one - Elgood's of Wisbech remained. The last brewery to close in Chatteris itself was Lindsell's in 1932.

Dr Rob Thomas, a research chemist began brewing at **Fenland Brewery** in February. Dr Thomas has a wide knowledge and understanding of classic beer styles, with hands-on experience in this country and abroad. Fenland will be producing a variety of bitters - Fenland brewery Bitter and Doctor's orders Best Bitter as well as a variety of seasonal beers including a spicy Summer Wheat Beer (Sparkling Wit) and a warming Winter Porter (Coal Porter). Interested publicans can contact the brewery on 01354 695852.

CAMRA member Keith Emmerson and his wife Jayne have started up a new micro brewery in Market Deeping and it is Jayne who will be brewing **Deeping Ales**. While Keith continues working as a tax consultant, Jayne will initially run the brewery on her own taking on some staff in the future. Test brews were undertaken during late January and early February and one beer will be brewed initially with a reddish coloured beer with a noticeable hoppy flavour being aimed for and called Deeping Red with an ABV of 4.1%. This was arrived at by producing four different beers for a special tasting day held in February with the most popular ale going on to become Deeping Red.

The brewery equipment has been designed and built by specialist consultants with a view to obtaining quality and consistency - always a problem for small breweries - and is largely self cleaning which greatly reduces the problem of wild yeast infestation.

Jayne learnt the secrets of the trade from advisors whilst the brewery was being built, it being a new career direction for her, as she was formerly a personal assistant.

It is hoped to produce up to 40 barrels each week to supply pubs in the Deepings and further afield to Bourne, Stamford, Spalding and coming south to Peterborough. Interested publicans can contact the brewery on 01778 344718

Hopefully you will be able to try the beers in local free houses in our area, ask your landlord to give them a try and give the new boys a boost.

TIED HOUSE SYSTEM SAFE FOR TIME BEING

The tied house system is safe until 1999 following a decision by the European Commission to give a two year extension to its investigation of the British pub.

The decision had been due this year but the Commission has got bogged down in paperwork as it is also looking at the supply of other goods and services from petrol stations to perfume.

The Commission has been shaken by the level of opposition to both the threat of the tie and the guest beer policy, facing delegations from regional brewers, licencees and CAMRA.

However, if the pressure is not maintained the commission could still bow to opponents of the tie among other EU members.

LOCAL NEWS

The newly refurbished **Wheatsheaf, Eaton Socon**, a Charles Wells house has a regular guest beer to complement its Wells ales. These will change on a monthly basis and when we called in Batemans XXXB was on tap.

The **Three Horseshoes** at **Ramsey** is giving a try to beers from the new Fenland Brewery with Fenland Brewery Bitter and Doctor's Order Best Bitter making an appearance.

Good Beer Guide listed pub, **The Ferry Boat Inn** at **Holywell** is still open for business despite the fire that caused about £500,000 worth of damage.

Two Green King houses have new licencees, new tenants at **The Windmill, Somersham** are Terry and Allison Barnes previously at The Welsh Harp in Waltham Abbey, Essex and in **St. Neots**, Patricia Fordham has taken over at **The Falcon** in New Street.

The **Crown, Eaton Socon** a noteworthy free house listed in the Good Beer Guide for ten years is up for sale for £280,000.

The **Rose** at **Biggleswade** has re-opened as a freehouse. The **White Hart, St. Ives** has re-opened after its refurbishment. The **Cock** at **Broom** has now been listed as a Grade II building.

The **Original Brew Bar** has opened in at the Hollywood Bowl in Stevenage Leisure Centre, brewing on the premises with a five barrel plant as part of the Bass Leisure Group.

The **Old Bridge, Huntingdon** are having their reknowned Beer Festival and Barbecue on Sunday 24th May. It's £12.50 a ticket which are strictly limited and only available in advance, highly recommended! Another Beer Festival is being held at the **Queen's Head, Needingworth** from 27th March to 2nd April and will feature about 25 beers from small breweries.

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 April 8th - Social - **New Sun, Kimbolton** (Free) 8.30pm and then **The Tavern, Gt. Staughton** 9.45pm
BRANCH AGM Tuesday April 22nd - **Nelsons Head** (Greene King) 8.30pm All members welcome - please bring your membership card.

Tuesday 6th May - Meeting - **Queens Head, Needingworth** 8.30pm

Wednesday 28th May Joint Social with Peterborough Branch at **The Bell, Stilton** 8.30pm

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

None of the beers featured have appeared at the pub before with five of the stronger beers available on gravity and the six handpumps on the bar showing a changing range.

Amongst the beers featured will be Brewery on Sea - Spinnaker Buzz, Churchend - Pooh Beer, RCH - Fiery Liz, Commercial - Knobwilter, Clarkes - Festival Ale, Strip and at it - Freeminer, Little Avenham - Pickled Priest, Marston Moor - Brewers Droop, Moorhouses - Pendle Witches Brew and several Icen Brewery beers.

TETLEY IN MANAGEMENT BUY-OUT?

Tetley could be sold to its Leeds management as the £200 million takeover of Carlsberg-Tetley by Bass looks set to drag on beyond the General Election.

With the Bass bid showing no signs of being resolved, the buy-out of the brewery which sells Britain's second biggest selling cask bitter is a very strong possibility.

Fewer national brewers will lead to less competition and CAMRA feels that the Bass takeover would hit consumers through higher prices and poorer choice with some existing beers bound to be axed in a streamlined portfolio.

Mergers since 1989 have invariably acted against the interests of the ordinary consumer and failure to block this merger will only accelerate this disastrous trend.

NITRO-KEG NOT SO WONDERFUL

'The first signs of a media backlash against the curse of nitro-keg beers has appeared in two prestigious titles with damning articles in the Daily Telegraph's Weekend section and in XL magazine. Brands such as Kilkenny, Caffrey's and Wexford were dismissed as plastic beers.

Included among the quotes were "The great mass of Britons seem determined to wave goodbye to quality and hello to crap"

"As a nation, we're easily duped to desire the clean, the processed, the emasculated - hence the endless rows of uniform but tasteless fruit and vegetables that line our supermarket shelves. The same thing is happening to beer"

"At a time when odd flavours and complexity are welcomed in food, blandness is being openly embraced with the accompanying drinks."

"This year CAMRA celebrates 25 years of fighting the good fight. They saved us from the original onslaught of fizzy keg beer. Now they face the marketers' new breed of the bland, the bad, and the ugly."

SPARKLERS DO KILL - OFF FLAVOUR

Another CAMRA enemy, the tight sparkler (the nozzle attachment to a real ale dispense pump) does knock the flavour out of your pint according to the results of a tasting held by Heart of Warwickshire CAMRA aimed at finding whether typical drinker can tell the difference between beer squirted through a sparkler and beer served as the brewer intended.

Results were very much in favour of the beers served without a sparkler and although based on only a small sample of drinkers it would be useful to repeat the test with different beers country wide to see if as these results indicate, that CAMRA is not alone in believing that sparklers alter the flavour of beer.

JOIN CAMRA NOW

Just fill in the form below and send your remittance (Payable to CAMRA) to

The Membership Secretary, CAMRA,
230, Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW
Rates are Single £14, Joint £17 (at same address)
Student/OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £8
Joint OAP £11 (at same address)
For Life/Overseas rates please ask for details

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

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

I enclose a cheque for

Signed.....

Date.....