

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT

OPENING
TIMES



Issue No 104 November 1999

BRANCH NEWSLETTER
BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 2,000 COPIES

The 19th 'BOOZE on THE OUSE' held at the Burgess Hall, St. Ivo Centre, St. Ives in September was another success with most of the beer being sold.

However, as the sales were very consistent across the whole range of beers we still had over 30 beers available at our last session on the Sunday lunchtime to satisfy the very good number of drinkers we had .

Our next Festival looms on the horizon. This will be our 6th Annual WINTER ALE FESTIVAL which is being held at St. Neots Town Football Club on Thursday 27th - Saturday 29th January. As usual we will feature around a dozen warming brews at the venue which is close to St. Neots Railway station.

NEW MEMBERS
JOIN CAMRA IN NOVEMBER OR
DECEMBER AND GET £2.00 OFF THE
USUAL RATES.

SIMPLY COMPLETE THE FORM ON
PAGE 3 AND SEND IT OFF TO HQ.

CAMRA membership is now close to 55,000 and we hope to reach the 60,000 figure very soon.

**WINTER ALE
FESTIVAL**

OPEN
Thursday 27th Jan
7.00 - 11.00
Friday 28th Jan
7.00 - 11.00
Saturday 29th Jan
11.00 - 6.00



CONGRATULATIONS
to
Toni and Dave Hanagan
of the
Green Man,
Leighton Bromswold
on being voted CAMRA's
Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year
1999

This award is the second won
by the couple who were voted
East Anglia
Pub of The Year in 1991



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'

(01480) 830257



ADNAMS BEST BITTER ELGOOD'S BLACK DOG MILD GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

THANKYOU ADNAM'S

It was on November 5th that a dozen intrepid St. Neots CAMRA Branch made the the two hour mini-bus trip to Southwold, Suffolk to tour Adnams wonderful brewery.

We knew that we were in for a marvellous day when as alighting from our bus we were greeted by the sight of an Adnams dray pulled by two superb shire horses leaving the brewery, laden with ale for delivery to their local pubs.

We then were introduced to our tour guide - Denis- who had worked as an engineer for the company but, whose knowledge on Adnams was now being put to excellent use. As the tour progressed we were amazed at his talk, certainly the most interesting and in-depth I personally had ever heard on my numerous trips around the countries breweries.

He told us how Adnams had bought and built their brewing plant piece meal from other breweries nationwide in the early seventies. Fermenting vessels from Threlfall's at a purchase price of £200, but with a transportation cost of £80,000 to bring them South and milling plant from Greenalls in 1976

Other equipment had been bought from Thwaites and our own Charles

Wells with the last two 'coppers' to be built in the UK now sitting proudly in the Adnams Brewhouse. Six superb 100-barrell open fermenting vessels from the seventies, refurbished to be as good as new, alongside 16 other FV's, the majority now made from stainless steel.

Denis told us how the business had grown into an annual turnover of £38m, brewing 500 barrells a day, using high gravity brewing techniques - beer brewed at a gravity of 1075 and then water added at about a 3:1 ratio to bring the beers down to mid gravity.

He told us how Dutch settlers in 1560 had introduced hops to England to increase longevity in the life of what then became 'beer'. Prior to this it was 'ale' that was brewed with a very short 'shelf-life'.

He then took us out of the brewhouse to show us some very unusual architecture, but you will have to go on the brewery trip yourself to see that particular sight, I won't spoil things by telling about it. The tour ended after about an hour and a half, but there was still lots more to come.

We were taken to the Red Lion, one of the local Adnams houses and treated to the best fish and chip meal I have ever had, with the largest piece of plaice one could possibly eat and, to wash it down some superb Adnams Bitter and Oyster Stout.

After this we made our own way to the 'back-room' of the Crown, who were closing at three and just caught the last drink there.

After this it was a visit to the two 'open-all-day' Adnams pubs in the town.

First it was the Sole Bay on East Green, a stones throw from the brewery and then onto the packed Lord Nelson at 5.0pm for a pre-arranged meet-up with the Adnams Brewer.

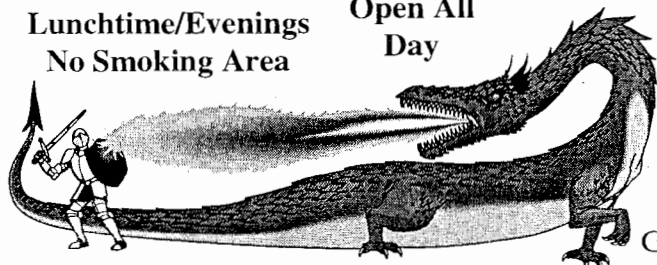
A quick jog up to the Kings Head, now open for the evening completed my own personal crawl of the town but, some of the more (fool?) hardy members of our party had interspersed a walk along the very wet and blustery seafront with their drinking pursuits.

It was very pleasing to see all the pubs visited having a full range of the currently brewed Adnams ales on sale in what is a quiet time of the year for the two. We did bump into another party of Adnams lovers who had travelled down from Leicester for the day. So between us we probably helped the seasonal averages along very nicely. It was also nice to converse with some of the locals who are understandably very proud of what they have in town. Superb tour, superb food, superb beer, superb day. Once again, thanks Adnams and thanks driver for getting me home O.K.

Mike Birch

Food Available
Lunchtime/Evenings
No Smoking Area

Open All
Day



The George & Dragon

267, Great North Road, Eaton Socon
(01480) 474381

'Probably the Cheapest Bar Food in Town'

Greene King Ales IPA XX Mild Plus Guest Beer

BIG BREWERS HAMMERED IN 2000 GOOD BEER GUIDE

THE ALE TIDE IS BEGINNING TO TURN.

As the 2000 edition of the Good Beer Guide shows, more and more regional and smaller craft brewers are reporting increasing sales and profits for cask beer.

The likes of Belhaven, Brakspear, Fuller's, Moorhouses, Shepherd Neame, Timothy Taylor and Young's announce booming sales while Adnams is rebranding its cask beers as part of a five year plan to boost its brands.

Even the mighty Bass, which has largely abandoned cask beer for a decade, has inserted colour leaflets in the trade press for draught Bass and its reduced real ale portfolio.

Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz said: "The 2000 Guide is probably our toughest for years: we hammer

the national brewers for turning their backs on real ale.

"The so-called real ale crisis is the result of the nationals abandoning cask ale. The media has focused on the closures of Morrells, vaux and Ward's as proof that real ale is in decline, but those closures have nothing to do with beer sales and everything to do with companies being asset-stripped."

More than two dozen new breweries are listed in the 2000 Good Beer Guide, a sign, says Protz, that small brewers are optimistic about the future.

"But there's no room for complacency," he added. "Even if Bass does start to promote its cask beers again it will never win back the market share the likes of Draught Bass once enjoyed."

"Big brewers have fuelled real ale's decline by substituting keg variants

of brands like Tetley, John Smith's, Boddington, and Stone's for the cask versions."

"The big brewers are strangling beer choice in pursuit of bigger profits from processed lagers and keg beers."

"Bass and other nationals see cask beer as a minority style to be sold at premium prices in upmarket pubs. CAMRA has to make it the people's beer again and that's why we have to support regional and microbrewers who pin their faith on the style." Proof positive that consumers want to drink real ale comes in the shape of CAMRA's rising membership. Following hugely successful beer festivals in London, Olympia and Peterborough, membership is now close to 55,000.

Numbers have more than doubled in the past 10 years - a fact that suggests it is the national brewers not drinkers who are out of touch with the modern beer market.

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)

Under 26: £8 date of birth

For Life/Overseas rates please ask for details

NAME.....

Opening Times
104
St.Neots

ADDRESS.....

.....POSTCODE

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Rules.

I enclose a cheque for

Signed.....

Date.....

Contact the editor by E-Mail

**If you wish to contribute to
Opening Times you can
E-Mail to:**

**mike@rowleypark.
freeserve.co.uk**

LOCAL M I L D OUTLETS UPDATE

We have a Mild outlet, with the Millers Arms, Eaton Socon ceasing to serve a mild. However, the better news is that the Lord John Russell in St. Neots is now serving its Batemans Dark Mild from a newly installed hand-pump, giving that wonderful creamy-head the beer demands..

Mild outlets as we know them:

Eaton Socon
George & Dragon
Greene King XX Dark

Hilton,
Prince of Wales
Elgoods Black Dog

Huntingdon,
George Hotel
Theakstons Mild

St. Ives,
Black Bull
Ansells Mild

St. Neots,
Lord John Russell
Batemans Mild

Gt. Staughton
White Hart
Batemans Mild

If you know of any mild outlets not listed, let the editor know.

LOCAL NEWS

The **Green Man, Leighton Bromswold** has added another award. It has won the accolade of Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year 1999. A certificate in recognition of this achievement will be presented to Landlords Toni and Dave Hanagan on the evening of Sunday 28th November.

The **Merry Boys, Eynesbury, St. Neots** is serving the seasonal Black Baron from Greene King as well as its usual IPA and Abbot.

The fast growing Cask Marque scheme has awarded Mel Pilson at **The Royal Oak, St. Ives** with a plaque. Other local pubs that have already received the award are The Bulls Head, St. Neots and The Cock at Gamlingay.

One of the veterans of the real-ale off licence scene is bowing out after 18 years. John Harling has put the Good Beer Guide listed **Jug & Firkin** in Mill Road, **Cambridge** up for sale saying he needs a change - and a break from working seven days a week.

In his time competition had intensified dramatically, with only a handful of specialist beer off-licences nationwide. Now, even though they couldn't match the 250 British and imported bottled beers sold at the Jug & Firkin, local supermarkets were carrying far wider ranges. The J & F has always been a big supporter of British micro-brewers' bottled beers, let's hope whoever takes it over continues in the same vein.

BRANCH DIARY

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

Friday 26th November - Mini Bus Trip to:
Crown, Earith - Green Man, Colne - Prince of Wales, Bluntisham - Pike & Eel - Queens Head, Needingworth .

Saturday 27th November - Regional Meeting - **White Bear, Royston**

Tuesday 7th December - Meeting - **Lord John Russell, St. Neots**
- 8.30pm

Wednesday 5th January - Meeting - **Prince of Wales, Hilton**
- 8.30pm

Friday 14th January - Xmas Social, **Green Man, Leighton Bromswold**
- 8.30pm

Thursday/Friday/Saturday 29th January - **WINTER ALE FESTIVAL** -
St. Neots Town Football Club

Tuesday 8th February - Meeting - **Exhibition, Godmanchester** -
8.30pm

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