

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT

OPENING
TIMES



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BRANCH NEWSLETTER
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'BOOZE ON INDIES

THE OUSE'

2000

14th - 17th

SEPTEMBER

St. Neots CAMRA Branch's annual showpiece, the 20th 'Booze on the Ouse' is on its way.

Once again to be held at the Burgess Hall, St. Ivo Centre venue the beer list is currently being drawn up with around 55 beers expected to be available during the course of the festival, plus the usual cider and perry and the bottled foreign beers that have become a feature.

Make a date in your diary now, the festival will run from 14th - 17th September.

Don't forget 27th CAMBRIDGE BEER FESTIVAL 22-27 May at Cambridge City Football ground with over 80 real ales.

FIGHTBACK

Britain's Independent brewers are blasting back in a powerful bid to re-establish real ale as the top tipple in the nations pubs.

For while the smooth-besotted nationals are letting cask beer die of neglect, the regionals realise that distinctive, characterful real ales are their lifeblood.

Wolverhampton and Dudley and Greene King have proved to aggressive champions of real ale., buying competitors' breweries and brands and expanding distribution across the country. Greene King brewing and brands MD Brian Field said " National brewers have deliberately chosen to drive cask beer down. Their focus is on nitro-kegs and lager. Mr Field said he hoped the time would come when consumers said: "I do not want this smooth rubbish. I want cask ale." He hoped that as national brewers continued to ignore real ale there would be a

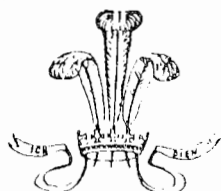
growing gap in the market for regionals to prosper.

Elsewhere, Adnams, which had a major shake-up last year, has launched its first ever TV advertising campaign, starting on Anglia TV on April 17th.

In London, Fullers have spent £1.5m on its 'Whatever you do, take Pride' campaign for London Pride, launched in april and to be repeated during Summers' Euro 2000 football extravaganza and aimed at the heart of keg and lager territory.

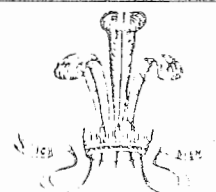
Arkeil's has spent £900,000 on a brand new pub in Swindon, Cardiff brewer Brains has mounted a £5m expansion drive into the south-west buying nine pubs in the region as part of its plan to double its eastate to 400 and Brakspear of Henley-on-Thames announced a profit surge of 19 per cent last year with profits up 25%.

Despite doom and gloom about cask ale, the regionals are moving forward to defend and expand their place in the market.



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'
(01480) 830257



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

'TIS THE TIME TO DRINK MILD

XX MILD ON THE UP

With May being the Month that CAMRA traditionally promotes mild it is good to see that sales of our regional giant **Greene King's XX mild** have soared by 25 per cent in the past year.

Most of the growth follows last years merger with Morland of Abingdon, which did not offer a cask mild. XX has also done well in the Beard's and Marstons pubs bought by Greene King.

But XX has also increased sales in Greene King's East Anglian heartland with a spokeswoman saying "that much of XX's success was due to the growing number of tenants within the Greene King estate stocking it". So if you have a Greene King local then ask your landlord about stocking XX mild.

Greene King do a cask ale roadshow for tenants and always include XX. She said "We've exposed the beer to new customers in the past year" John Norman, who chairs CAMRA's Light and Dark Support Group, which campaigns to increase sales and awareness of mild, said he was delighted by the increase in sales of XX. "At last Greene King are promoting an excellent beer," he said. "I hope the trend will continue and other brewers will get the message"

OTHER MILD NEWS

The future's bright for the UK's 100 plus mild producers as new research by CAMRA shows that one third of UK Mild producers are increasing sales.

JD Wetherspoon pledged their

support to the recent National Mild Day by selling Bateman's Mild at an unbeatable 99p per pint in all 380 of their pubs.

Mild producers are another example of Britain's smaller brewers bucking the 'so called' real ale decline.

Sarah Hughes for example, a small brewery in the west Midlands brew Dark Ruby a strong mild and show total commitment to mild by keeping mild on the portfolio, it which is rewarded by it being their best selling beer style.

The brewery is now running at full capacity and has seen a 10% increase in mild sales over the past 12 months.

Lidstones Brewery present Rowley Mild, voted Champion Mild at 1999 Cambridge Beer Festival at their tied house The Kingston Arms, Kingston Street, Cambridge

Brewery Milds + + +

Woodfordes of Norwich Mardler's Mild sales are up by 15%.

Batemans of Lincolnshire Dark Mild sales up 7%

Moorhouse of Burnley - A staggering 100% increase in mild sales since September 1999

Timothy Taylor of Keighley - Golden Best, a champion beer at this years international Brewing awards increases sales by 5%.

Highgate and Walsall Brewing Company - 25% increase in all mild categories.

Cain's of Liverpool - 5.5% increase in all mild categories.

Carlsberg Tetley of Leeds - Mild

sales up 3.5%..

All these breweries fly the flag for mild. Clearly, there's real demand for mild amongst beer drinkers. It is an interesting and flavoursome beer style enjoyed by all, both men and women, young and old.

Commitment to the mild sector backed with the punch of innovative marketing campaigns is the common theme underlying the success of these mild producers. It is nonsense to suggest there is no market for mild. Try telling that to the Bateman's and Woodfordes of the brewing community.

LOCAL MILD OUTLETS

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**
Ansell's Mild

**St. Neots,
Lord John Russell**
Bateman's Mild

**Gt. Staughton
White Hart**
Bateman's Mild

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

LICENSING LIFELINE FOR LOCAL PUBS

Sweeping licensing reforms proposed in the Governments White Paper, published in April could be a shot in the arm for Britain's ailing community pubs.

NO FREE-FOR-ALL

As expected, it is not proposed to offer a 24 hour free-for-all. Licencees will have to submit their proposed hours for approval in advance, and the councillors who will take over the licensing function from magistrates will have the power to reject unsuitable hours such as 3am closing in quiet suburbs.

Licencees will also have to submit operating plans detailing proposals for dances, live entertainment, TV Sport, and dining, for approval in advance, giving neighbours a say in how their locals are run.

PUBS MORE FAMILY - FRIENDLY

Another proposal is to make pubs more family-friendly by abolishing the failed Children's Certificate in

favour of a presumption that properly supervised children should be allowed into almost all pubs.

The Government sees this measure, along with a change to allow over-16's to drink wine with pub and restaurant meals as well as beer and cider, as a civilising influence on pub culture.

The proposals are still along way from becoming law - they could come into force next Summer if all goes smoothly - and CAMRA still faced a fight to stop them from being watered down.

RESIDENTS HAVE THEIR SAY

With people having more say in what goes on at their local, the feared chaos with pubs open 24 hours a day will not happen. If residents believe it will cause major problems, the pub is unlikely to be able to open much beyond existing permitted hours.

ANTIQUATED LAWS

The current laws date back to the first world war and obviously its a different world today.

PREVIOUS LAW REFORMS PAY-OFF

When all day opening during the

week was introduced in 1988 and in 1995 when Sunday afternoon opening came along the doom mongers predictions of streets filled with drunks were not met. Indeed people drank more slowly and there was no significant increase in consumption or alcohol related crime.

PRESSURE EASED

Kicking people onto the streets all at the same time causes problems, queues for taxis and kebabs cause tension and can lead to trouble.

If new laws allow pubs to stagger their closing times, then it is fair to assume that pressure on public services will be eased.

LAGER LOU IMAGE TO GO?

Who knows, over the next decade perhaps a more permissive approach to opening hours will help us shake off the label of 'lager louts of Europe'.

It is quite reasonable to suggest that a more relaxed approach will eventually convince our young that they don't have to get as drunk as possible, as quickly as possible, in order to have a good time.

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.....

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ADDRESS.....

St. Neots

.....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 NEWS

*Welcome to Christine and Erich Bresitz, new publicans at the **Royal Oak, Hail Weston**. They are serving excellent Wells Eagle and a constantly changing range of 2 guest ales.

*Welcome also to Elaine and Peter Johnstone, who have recently taken over at the **Harrier, Brampton**. Peter is currently offering Shepherd Neame Spitfire and a guest ale. He is planning a major refurbishment in June - watch this space for details.

*Susanna and Nick Steiger, previously of the Old Bridge Hotel, Huntingdon, have transformed the **Grange, Brampton** into a hotel, restaurant and bar. The bar is currently offering Greene King IPA, Abbot and Marston Pedigree, but Nick has plans to offer a broader range of ales in the future.

OTHER NEWS

Hertford family-brewer McMullen's has dedicated its seasonal beer to celebrating the award of Cask Marque plaques to almost all of its managed estate. Nearly 90 of the brewery's 95 pubs have now won Cask Marque accreditation, awarded for beer quality. Special Reserve Premium Bitter at 4.6% ABV uses the Cask Marque logo on the pump clip and in point of sale material and is the first time any brewer has used the material in this way.

Not so far away from our branch area is the Rushden Historical Transport Society Club, Rushden, Northants which is joint winner of CAMRA's Club of the Year Competition. This gas lit former railway station waiting room is a must for the real ale lover who also pines for the bygone age of the steam railway. There is normally a choice of beers from microbreweries. The Red Shed in Wakefield, West Yorkshire shared the accolade.

'FRESH REAL ALE' BACKED BY SAINSBURY

Supermarket giant Sainsbury is to increase the distribution of Charles Wells innovative real ale PET Pack.

Launched last year, (and successfully tried out by the editor I hasten to add, who approved of the flavour) under the slogan "fresh real ale", the pack consists of a two-litre PET bottle of Eagle or Bombardier filled direct from the conditioning tank, yeast and all, and a special easy to assemble (well I did it) dispense unit.

The beer has been on test since last summer in special chilled cabinets at 13 branches of Sainsbury's, with trade press reporting that other retail chains are showing an interest in the product.

Since the launch, Wells have had to iron out a dispense problem whereby the air inlet clogged and the bottle compressed.

Taste tests conducted by both CAMRA and the brewers Guardian tend to support the brewery's claim that the product is far closer to draught real ale than any other sort of packaged beer in the shops.

NOW ON LINE

Visit **St. Neots CAMRA Branch** newly opened website:

www.stneotscamra.co.uk

News about your local pub for inclusion in **Opening Times** is always gratefully received.

Write or E-mail the editor:
mike@rowleypark.freeserve.co.uk

BRANCH DIARY

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

Thursday 25th May - Trip to **Cambridge Beer Festival***

Tuesday June 6th - Open Meeting - , **White Hart, St. Ives** - 8.30pm

Thursday June 14th - Trip to **Potton Brewery***

Tuesday July 4th - Open Meeting - , **Lord John Russell** - 8.30pm

* Contact Kathy Hadfield 01223 496658(W) or 01480 496247(H) for further details

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