

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE

The Campaign for Real Ale

APR/MAY 1989

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 114

MAKE MINE MILD!

In their rush to over-promote lager, the brewers (with one or two notable exceptions) have tended to ignore a traditional drink that can be as light and refreshing as lager (although, admittedly, not as cold) and is a damn sight cheaper - we are, of course, talking about mild. In some parts of the country mild still outsells bitter and in these areas it has not been lumbered with the 'cloth cap/old man's drink' image prevalent in the South East and which has resulted in the demise of many fine brews. But what is 'mild'? Traditionally it was an unhopped (or only very lightly hopped) beer, lower in alcoholic content than bitters, and, depending on the brew, could vary in colour from a light amber colour through many shades of brown to almost black. However the term has also been applied to stronger dark beers (such as Marstons Merrie Monk), and to lower gravity beers which are more properly described as 'light bitters' (see below!). Despite the loss of various milds (eg real Fullers Hock, Shepherd Neame Mild, Benskins KK), a wide range of different tasting milds are still available, as those who drunk them at the recent beer festival in North London will testify. In fact those people who say they don't like mild probably have only tried the occasional pint: if they don't like the dark, creamy Batemans mild, there's always the nutty flavoured

Felinfoel mild, or the lighter coloured best mild from Robinsons, or ... Although the list isn't endless, it would be surprising if a beer drinker couldn't find at least one mild in the country to their liking! Despite the fact that mild consumption has been falling, it is not all gloom: Batemans have found that with the use of some advertising in their pubs, sales of mild have increased and Greene King have recently been giving some of their landlords the opportunity to take mild, and this has led to an increase in the number of outlets of their XX mild in the south west of the country. However the message is clear: there's only one way to ensure mild's survival - DRINK IT!

NEW IMAGE FOR AK

McMullens best selling beer, AK, is being promoted in a new way. As a beer long regarded as a light bitter rather than a mild, 'mild' is being dropped from its description and it will in future be known as 'McMullen Original AK Cask Conditioned Ale', resurrecting the name Macs have traced back to 1827. Macs have also stated that 'to avoid false rumours starting we are pleased to confirm that no change in the recipe has taken place'. I wonder who they were getting at?

The Crooked Billet

Colney Heath

Tel: Bowmansgreen 22128



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Brewers in Hertfordshire since 1827

PUB NEWS

The **Rose and Crown** at Kings Langley is living up to its claims for its guest beers. As well as Allied beers, up to four beers from other brewers are available and the choice so far has included Greene King, Marstons, Sam Smiths, Belhaven and Hook Norton. Two pubs in the Hemel Hempstead area are due for closure: the **Fountain** at Apsley (Benskins) closes in June, while the **Waggon and Horses** (Beefeater) was due for demolition in March to make way for a new shopping complex. **The Boat** in Berkhamsted is selling the full range of Fullers beers: Chiswick, London Pride and ESB. After all the talk on the type of clientele Benskins wanted to attract to La Mirage at Boxmoor, what is to be made of the fact that the entrance fee has been reduced at weekends from £8 to £4 before 10pm, and during the week from £5 to £3 before 10.30pm? Peter and Helen Burisky have left the **Crown**, Buntingford after four years of enlivening the local real ale scene. They are taking a well earned rest from the trade and are being replaced by Colin Harrington whose previous pub in Norfolk has merited inclusion in the Good Beer Guide for the last few years. The **Railway** in Buntingford has also got a new landlord in Colin Wilson who is currently commuting between it and his other pub, the **Park Tavern** in Faversham. Some people who are not leaving yet, despite the repeated rumours to the contrary, are Fred and Pauline Dudman of the GBG listed **Bedford Arms**, Watford. A new 3 year contract was signed last year and they insist that when they do decide to leave, their customers will be the first to know. The **Rose and Crown** at Baldock now has Abbot alongside its Greene King IPA. **The Fountain** at Hitchin now sports a Wells Bombadier handpump. Mansfield Riding Bitter has been on sale alongside other guest beers at the Charles Wells owned **Royal Oak**, Bushey. Wells Eagle and Bombadier are also available. The leasehold of the GBG listed **Axe and Compasses** at Braughing is up for sale. Percy Cross, one time landlord of the **Feathers** in Rickmansworth, is now running the **Cock** at Chesham. Congratulations to the **Farriers Arms**, St. Albans on being voted S.Herts branch's Pub of the Year. Incidentally this Macs pub has a cricket team playing in a local league which this year will be sponsored by Watney-Truman! The Southern Cross, once the only Watford pub offering a range of real ales, has now fully succumbed to the Berni influence with the disappearance of handpumped Ruddles County. All draught beers are now keg or top pressure.

OOPS . . .

Rule Number 1 when criticising other people's failings make sure that what appears in print is correct! The Feb/Mar edition was particular prone to breaking that rule. Firstly the list of pubs accidentally omitted from the 1989 GBG should have included the Bull (not the Bell) at Bovington - apologies. Secondly, as many of you noticed, a right cock-up was made in listing the new permitted pub opening hours. As the article was commenting on ignorance of the law it was particularly embarrassing. For the record the permitted hours laid down in the 1988 Licensing Act are: 11am-11pm, Monday to Saturday, 12-3pm and 7-10.30pm Sunday, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Meanwhile the people who are paid to know about such things are still making their own interpretations of the new Act. In Hampshire magistrates threatened that they would not renew licenses unless the opening hours were displayed outside the pub. Although this was something that CAMRA hoped would be part of the legislation and applauds those pubs who do have external signs displaying their hours, it was not included in the new law and legal opinion is that it is not grounds for refusing a renewal.

A REAL ALE RAMBLE

The following are notes of a ramble which as well as giving you some exercise will lead you to some fine country pubs. Set off across Cassiobury Park, cross over the river and canal by the lock and turn right, up into Whippendale Wood. Ignore the path to the car park, drop down the hill, and cross a flat open area, keeping to the right and following the footpath and bridleway onto Rosebarn Lane. Turn right to the Clarendon Arms, which is worth a stop for its choice of ales.

Turn right by the Clarendon, cross over the M25 and after Yew Court Farm turn left at the signposted footpath. This path leads you across a field, round the edge of a wood, and onto a farm track leading to Newhall Farm (ignore the track crossing your route) and then to Deadmans Ash Hill, where you turn right and drop down to Bottom Lane.

The first turn on the right, a narrow lane which winds up through the woods, brings you to the Good Beer Guide listed Cart & Horses, Commonwood. This is an excellent pub (Benskins and Tetleys) with a very good menu (bring your appetite!), and a pleasant, popular garden.

If you still have some energy left, retrace your steps, taking the right fork into the valley, cross Bottom Lane and up Red Lion Lane into Sarratt, passing Red Lion farm (was there a Red Lion pub in Sarratt?). Turn left at Sarratt and come to the Boot. This is also GBG listed and serves Benskins, Tetleys and Burton. Again there is good bar food, and often a welcoming real fire while the flower arrangements in the other fire place are a speciality of the house.

Turn left out of the Boot and carry on past the Cricketers (Courage Best and Directors, if you must stop), then turn right towards Sarratt church which is worth visiting. However opposite the church is the Cock, another fine GBG listed pub with good quality food, and serving Benskins and Friary Meux.

When you've finished drinking, turn left out of the Cock and take the footpath on the left out of the second bend of a 'Z'. This leads over fields, the M25, and round some farms to Sarratt Road. This can be very muddy in winter, and is not very obvious in places, so take a map and look out for the directional arrows. Turn right onto the road and then left onto a track at a right-angled bend. This doubles back for a short way but then a right turn at a farm leads down the side of a wood back across Rosebarn Lane. The path rises steeply through the wood, across the golf course and back to Cassiobury Park. Distance about 9 - 10 miles and the use of an OS map to supplement these notes is advised. Happy walking and drinking.
Rambler.

BEER FESTIVAL PUB

Have you imagined having a beer festival in your own village and within walking distance? If it's a reality and it's in N.Herts you must be a neighbour of mine in Ickleford, because visiting the Cricketers in Arlesey Road, is just like visiting a beer festival. 8 beers are usually available during the week with 10-12 at weekends.

Mine hosts Ian and Sharon have been resident for over a year and from the very beginning have provided a fine selection of true British beers from near and far. Ian's and my favourite is Adnams bitter, which is always available, but a wide range of other beers from all over the country have been on sale including Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Thwaites bitter, Burton Bridge bitter and Old Expensive, Batemans bitter, Felinfoel Double Dragon, Hook Norton best bitter and Old Hookey, Wadworths 6X, and Banks and Taylors SOS and SOD.

None of the beers are served until they are at their very best, a warm welcome is assured, and a cool pint is always available. Needless to say, the pub is in the 1989 Good Beer Guide. See you in there.

Brian Mason

Allan and Ann will welcome you



to the Jolly Waggoners and trust you will enjoy our Greene King real ales from the cask, home made pies, real Abbot Ale, Cob bread. A traditional pub. Table reservations. Telephone Walkern 350 A La Carte menu — Good Wine List.

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BRANCH DIARY

Hertfordshire Branches Liaison Meeting - Monday 24th April, **Rose & Crown**, Hoddesdon, 8.30pm.

Hertfordshire North Branch

Wednesday 12th April - Branch meeting and social at the **Rose & Crown**, Ashwell, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 26th April - Social at the **Robin Hood & Little John**, Rabley Heath, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 10th May - Social at the **Chequers**, Anstey, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 24th May - Social at the **Bell**, Cottered, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 14th June - Branch meeting and social at the **White Hart**, Baldock, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 28th June - Joint social with N.W. Essex branch at the **Six Bells**, Sandon, 8.30pm.

Contact: Paul Coard, Hitchin 37249

Hertfordshire South Branch

Tuesday 11th April - Branch meeting - 8.30pm **Woodman**, Wildhill

Tuesday 25th April - Pub of the Month - 8.30pm **Prince of Wales**, Hertingfordbury

Tuesday 9th May - Branch meeting - 8.30pm **Cricketers**, Redbourn

Tuesday 23rd May - Pub of the month - phone contact
Contact: Bob Norrish, Harpenden 69923

Mid-Chilterns Branch

Contact: Roy Humphrey, Hemel Hempstead 833451

Watford & District Branch

Wednesday 5th April - Two pub social: 8.30pm **Kings Head**, Abbots Langley, 9.45pm **Royal Oak**, Abbots Langley

Wednesday 12th April - Branch meeting: 8.30pm **Kings Head**, Hunton Bridge

Wednesday 19th April - Beer Tasting Competition: 8.30pm **West Herts Sports Club**

Wednesday 3rd May - Social, **Halfway House**, Rickmansworth, 8.30pm



Contact: Martin Few, Watford 52412

PUB FOLK

The Hoddesdon Folk Club, meeting at the Old Bulls Head, Ware, will be presenting the following performers:

April 14 - Sarah Grey; April 21 - Geoff Higginbottom;
April 18 - Portway Pedlars; May 12 - Mike Silver;
May 19 - Pete Morton; May 26 - Chris Wood.

Peter & Lesley Reynolds welcome you to

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BREWERY NEWS

The campaign against Greenall Whitley's plans to close the Davenports brewery is gaining strength. Birmingham City Council have taken an interest and as well as moving to have the brewery buildings listed are now exploring the possibility of setting up a municipal brewery. It appears that if the Davenports beers are switched to Shipstones, Greenall's will start high gravity brewing, which means that most beers will be derived from the same source, being 'watered down' to the required strength - Shipstone's beers are liable to suffer as well. If you want to help stop the closure, write and tell Greenall's chairman, Christopher Hatton, what you think about his decision, at Greenall Whitley plc, PO BOX 2, Warrington WA4 6RH.

Ma Pardoe's (otherwise the Old Swan) at Netherton, has been sold by Hoskins to the Wiltshire Brewery for £304,000. Hoskins acquired the pub from Netherton Ales a BES company set up to rescue the premises after the legendary Doris Pardoe died. The management of the brewery at the pub had been assigned to Hoskins by Netherton who still owned it, and it seems likely that this management deal will be passed on to Wiltshire.

The Goose Eye home brew pub in Yorkshire has closed and its equipment bought by the Trough brewery of Bradford. This will allow them to now produce full mash brews rather than using malt extract as they have done in the past. However there are hopes that a new small brewery will be set up using the Goose Eye name. Crown Breweries at Pontyclun will stop brewing by September when all production will have been switched to Buckleys.

Allied have taken the strange decision to close the brewery at their popular home brew pub the Mineral in Wrexham, on 'commercial grounds'.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

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

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SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I/We enclose remittance for individual/join membership for one year: U.K. £9

Overseas £12

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:

**THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, CAMRA LTD.,
34 ALMA ROAD, ST. ALBANS, HERTS. AL1 3BW.**

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire North, Hertfordshire South, Watford & District and Mid-Chilterns branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd or its Branches. Any articles or letters for publication should preferably be typewritten and double-spaced; handwritten items should also be well spaced and as legible as possible please. Send to: Eric Sim, 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 8QL.

Subscriptions: £2.50 for 12 issues. Send to: 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts. AL10 8QL. Cheques payable: CAMRA Herts Campaigning Fund.

Advertising: £8 per 2.5 cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact **Eric Sim** ☎ **Hatfield 60647** for details. **COPY**

DATE FOR June/July EDITION: 1st May.

Composed by D & S Graphics on Macintosh DTP Quark Xpress .1 Peerglow Centre, Marsh Lane, Ware, Herts. ☎ (0920) 60228.