

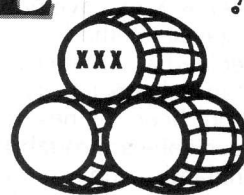
FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

LINED GLASSES
GUARANTEE
FULL PINTS



DECEMBER 1995/JANUARY 1996

CIRCULATION 4000

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WRING THE SWAN NECKS

This year's CAMRA AGM agreed that beers served by swan neck dispense or through a tight sparkler should be excluded from the description of pub entries in the Good Beer Guide, if that type of dispense system changed the traditional characteristic of the beer. The following gives some background to this decision and why CAMRA feels so strongly about it.

First, some clarification: 'swan necks' are the long, curved spouts attached to some handpumps through which the beer is served into the glass; 'sparklers' are the bit at the end of the spout consisting of a number of small holes - some sparklers can be adjusted changing the size of the holes.

These types of dispense are designed to thoroughly agitate the beer as it is poured, producing a huge head on the beer. The beer appears 'cloudy' for a minute or so until some of the air separates from the beer. It will have lost much of its carbon dioxide and so will have a smooth texture until the gas pressure in the beer is the same as the atmosphere. After that, it tastes, and is, flat.

The big head is deemed by their producers to be a desirable feature of nationally advertised brands such as Tetleys, Boddingtons and John Smiths. However, the impression that all northern beers were traditionally served with a tight head would appear to be a fallacy. Certainly there is evidence that in the Lake District for example, the beers were served with a minimal head as in the south, and our colleagues in York have also stated that there, the use of a sparkler is a new and unwanted introduction.

Some beers, particularly Tetleys, are brewed with the use of swan necks and tight sparklers in mind. For many years, pubs around Leeds and Bradford served the beer using the economiser ('autovac') system, which had the same effect in stirring up the beer, and it would appear that it was only with the banning of this device on health grounds that the swan neck came into wide-spread use. Agitation migrates some of the bitterness in the beer into the head: try tasting the froth on a newly poured pint. Beers like Tetleys are over-bittered to compensate for this, served without agitation some people will find them offensively bitter.

Continued overleaf.

Hertfordshire
South Branch
Pub of the Year
1993

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Excellent range of regular ales
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Hertfordshire
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1994



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Wring the Swan Necks continued . . .

Conversely, delicately bittered beers, such as many of those produced in East Anglia, the Thames Valley, and Southern England, have their character completely ruined by agitation. The result is distinctive, tasty beers being reduced to bland, aerated products by the misuse of sparklers and swan necks. Several brewers, notably Fullers, Adnams and Greene King have publicly come out against the use of these dispense methods on their beers. In particular, Adnams have decided as a matter of policy to try and persuade all retailers of their beers to serve the beers through half-pint pull, short-spout beer engines 'to ensure that the authentic taste of our beer comes through to the consumer wherever they are in England'. And we won't argue with that. If you think that you're getting too thick a head and you want to sample southern beers as they're meant to taste, ask the bar staff to loosen or remove the sparklers. You never know, the fact that they would then serve pints quicker, they might even appreciate it!

(With acknowledgement to CAMRA's Technical Committee and Bob Flood of CAMRA's Cambridge Branch).

HERTFORDSHIRE INNS & PUBLIC HOUSES

In November, a very interesting historical gazetteer was published. Written by Graham Jolliffe and Arthur Jones, it lists all the Hertfordshire pubs that were in existence in the 19th Century and were still open at the beginning of 1995. Surprisingly this includes a large majority of Hertfordshire pubs. The information includes the earliest date it was known to be trading as a beerhouse, ale house or inn (you will have to get a copy if you want to know the difference!)

It also lists the earlier family licensees and their histories followed by a succession of brewery owners up to the present day multitude of pub owning chain groups.

One of the co-incidences is at the Plough, Ley Green where the census of 1851 stated that it was a brewhouse occupied by John & Mary Squires and 144 years later it is still occupied by a John & Mary, not only that, both Marys are the same age.

Some of the originally sited pub references are interesting with the Wellington at Welwyn dating back to 1352, Saracens Head at Ware 1365, and the Fleur de Lys at St Albans 1449. But no mention of the Tudor Tavern at St Albans which probably goes back to the early 1300s.

Copies can be obtained from: Hertfordshire Publications, New Barnfield, Travellers Lane, Hatfield, AL10 8XG, tel: 01707 281581 - ask for Jean Brand (mornings only). The price is £18.00 plus £1.25 for postage & package, cheques made payable to Hertfordshire Publications.



'NEW' BEERS

McMullens Stronghart has recently been relaunched for the winter period. First produced on draught in 1989, this 7% abv beer, is matured for three to four times longer than normal cask beers, while the bottled version is allowed to mature for up to a year.

Greene King have been changing the way they produce their Abbot Ale. They have slowed the fermentation process so that the beer spends at least seven days in the fermenting vessels, and the use of hop oils has been replaced by late hopping with Kent grown Target and Challenger hops. The result is intended to retain the bitterness and fruitiness, while removing some of the harsher, acidic flavours.

CIDER PIPS

Matthew Clarke, the owners of Gaymers cider, have taken over Taunton Cider to form the second largest cider company in the country. They will have about 43% of the cider market compared with the leading company's, Bulmer's, 52%. Despite the concentration of the market, the Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, did not see fit to refer the deal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Somerset council have been giving grants to create small orchards of traditional cider varieties to replace some of those lost in the past 40 years. There are about 6000 varieties of apples, commercial orchards are dominated by just nine.

JOIN CAMRA NOW!

These are difficult and unsettling times in the brewing industry. Takeovers, mergers and brewery closures are back in fashion and the result will be less choice of fewer quality ales.

CAMRA's voice needs to be heard. We already speak for nearly 50,000 beer drinkers but we need more members so that our views are taken even more seriously. CAMRA is the only representative of the consumer in the beer world in Britain.

Remember, traditional pubs are still under threat, beer duty is still too high and drinkers can still legally be served short measure. CAMRA wants to change all that!

Annual membership of CAMRA is only £12 (single) or £14 (joint). Send your full name, address (including postcode), telephone number and your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to: The Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, AL1 4LW.

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THE A TO Z OF BREWING (cont.)

Old Ale	British term for a medium strength dark beer usually brewed in the winter.
Original Gravity (OG)	A measurement of the density of fermentable sugars in the mixture of malt and water which a brewer begins a given batch.
Pale Ale	A term used in Britain to indicate a premium bitter. Mainly used for bottled beer.
Pasteurisation	Heating beer to 60 - 79°C to stabilise it microbiologically. This process is applied to filtered bottle beer and keg beer.
Pils or Pilsner	A term normally applied to pale dry lager.
Porter	A dark (often black) medium strength ale which is named after London market porters who popularised it in the eighteenth century.
Priming	The process of adding sugar at the maturation stage to promote secondary fermentation.
Real Ale	Cask conditioned beer which undergoes secondary fermentation and is served without the aid of gas. Handpump and gravity are the most popular method of dispense. Electric pumps are popular in the East Midlands whilst Scotland favours air systems.
Reinheitsgebot	German purity law which requires that beer is made from malted grains, hops, yeast and water AND NOTHING ELSE. I'll drink to that.
Scotch Ale	Term used for malty ales brewed in the 'Scottish Style'.
Squares	Square fermenting vessels popular in Yorkshire.
Steam beer	Trademark of the Anchor brewery of San Francisco. A hybrid of ale and lager which is fermented at very high temperatures in shallow vessels which gives off steam during the brewing process.
Stout	A black roast ale. English stout tends to be sweet. Irish stout is more bitter and intense. Ignore keg stouts and go for the real thing such as Cropton Scorsby Stout or bottle-conditioned Courage Imperial Russian Stout.
Trappist	Abbey style beers brewed by five Belgian and one Dutch secular orders. They tend to be very strong which accounts for the brothers vows of silence!
Urquell	German for 'source of'. Hence Pilsner Urquell - Pilsner from Urquell.
Vienna	Amber red or medium dark lager originally produced in Vienna.
Weisse or Weizen	German terms for white beer. Generally fruity and spicy they make an excellent post breakfast beer.
Wort	The solution of grain sugars strained from the mash tun. Basically raw beer.
Xingu	Black beer from Brazil
Yeast	A single celled fungus which digests sweet sugars from the wort and turns them into alcohol and carbon dioxide.
Zenne valley	Flemish river valley to either side of Brussels where lambic is traditionally brewed.
Zwickelbier	German term for an unfiltered beer.

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PUB NEWS

The **Malta**, Batford, has been gutted by fire.

The **Bull** at Cottered, has reopened after 3 months of refurbishment and alterations.

Terry & Stella Ryan have taken over the **Black Horse**, Chorleywood and we wish them well in the onerous task of following Peter and Jan Roberts. While the new tenants settle in, food will only be available at lunchtimes. The latest report was that Jan was much improved after her recent operation.

The **Old Shepherd**, Chorleywood, is now selling Flowers Original alongside Greene King IPA.

Despite our report in the last edition, the **Hollybush** at Elstree has not closed for refurbishment. Our apologies for the error.

The former home-brew pub, the **Fishery** at Elstree, has been bought by McMullens.

Changes are afoot at the **White Horse** in Hertford. Firstly, the redoubtable Ellie Rose has decided on a change of career and has been replaced as manager by local lad Nigel Vogt. To celebrate his arrival the Dark Horse brewery produced a special ale 'New Nigel' at 80p a pint which was received with acclaim by the regulars, and not just because of the price'

Secondly, it now looks increasingly likely that the Dark Horse brewery will be moving from the cellar of the White Horse to a new stable somewhere in the locality in the near future. Explaining the reasons behind the move, proprietor Ian Harvey says that it will give scope for increased production and will be much more 'visitor friendly'. Queue here for brewery tours.

Still in Hertford it is understood that plans to change the **Blackbirds** to a Scruffy Murphy's has now been reverted back to a Firkin Pub, but it is not yet known whether it will brew on site.



APOLOGY

The newsletter wishes to apologise to the Battleaxes at Elstree for reporting in the October/November issue that it was closed for refurbishment when in fact, it has remained open.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 12th December 8.00pm, Branch Meeting at **The Elephant and Castle**, Amwell near Wheathampsted.
Tuesday 23rd January 8.00pm, Branch Meeting and A.G.M. at CAMRA HQ in St. Albans.

Contact- Bob Norrish: 01582 763133 x2554(w); 01582 769923(h)

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Contact: Paul Coard 01462 437249 (h)

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 6th December, Breweriana Auction, 8.00pm, **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford. Viewing of lots from 7.30pm.

Friday 15th December, Branch curry evening in Abbots Langley, ring contact for details.

Friday 29th December, post Christmas prandial perambulation. Ramble starting at Tring station 10.15am, it is rumoured that establishments purveying liquid refreshments might be encountered en route.

Wednesday 3rd January, GBG social, **Bedford Arms**, Watford, 9.00pm.

Friday 12th January, Pre-Xmas (1996) pub crawl, starts at the **Warwick Castle**, Maida Vale, 5.00pm, **Truscott Arms**, 6.00pm full details from branch contact.

Wednesday 24th January, Pub of the Year Award, location to be decided!

Contact: Tony Smith 01923 221155

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contacts: Graham Darby: 01279 415895(h) or Derek Wisdom 01279 414200(h)

MID-CHILTERNES BRANCH

Contact: Chris Pontin 01494 78624(w), 01494 775409(h).

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 15th January 8.30pm **The Assizes**, Bancroft, Hitchin

PRO ACTIVE SITE

A symbol not yet used in the Good Beer Guide is one to indicate pubs which have a condom machine. However, such a symbol is used in a new Welsh Brewers sponsored guide to the 222 pubs in Cardiff. One pub that apparently does not qualify for the symbol is the Custom House "the world famous red-light pubs" in Cardiff's docklands. There condoms are given away free, and the pub surveyors "found some female customers to be extremely friendly"!

The Greyhound (Free House)

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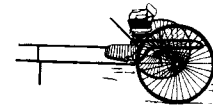
GOOD BEER GUIDE

A reminder that the 1996 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide is now on sale, and at 546 pages its the largest ever. One reason for the increase in size is the section listing the breweries: there are 57 new breweries listed. Around 5000 of the best beer pubs are listed together with details of the facilities they offer.

The guide is available at all good bookshops at £9.99, or from CAMRA branches, or direct, post-free, from CAMRA at 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW (cheques paid payable to CAMRA; for credit card sales ring 01727 867201).

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