

FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale

HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

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NUMBER 20

XX — ELLENT NEWS!



At Greene King's Annual General Meeting at Bury St Edmunds in August, the company's Chairman, John Bridge, in an unprecedented announcement to shareholders thanked CAMRA for its support and success in promoting Biggleswade-brewed XX dark mild. Mr Bridge said that because of CAMRA's efforts, sales had increased for the first time in many years.

CAMRA's fight to save Greene King XX looks like being one of the campaign's major local successes. At the beginning of the year, Greene King could not assure the future of XX. Sales were down 30 barrels per week and the brewery refused to spend any money to promote a beer which was excellent to drink but difficult to obtain. It was left to the customers to take action themselves if they wanted to carry on drinking XX so spearheaded by the Hertfordshire branches of CAMRA, a campaign to popularise XX got under way.

Reassuring

Beer mats, posters, badges and car stickers were produced, and many new outlets for XX were found, both in Greene King's own pubs, and in free houses. By April, Greene King announced that sales of XX were running 20 per cent above last year's figures. Recently, Greene King director Timothy Redman has taken the unusual step of writing to all the company's landlords stocking XX to reassure them that there are no plans to stop producing the beer — news which will gladden many hearts.

Credit is due all round — to those landlords who have always had faith in XX and those who have been newly converted; to Greene King for sensibly taking note of customer preference; but most of all to you the drinker, for your discretion in sticking with this unusual dark brew in these days of light fizzy beers.

XX still accounts for only a very small proportion of Greene King's beer sales, so let us not be too optimistic. We should keep drinking XX, and tell our friends about this tasty brew.

- Hertfordshire's mild drinkers were dealt one blow at Greene King's AGM. Mr. Bridge confirmed, in answer to a question from CAMRA, that there were no plans to revive Rayment's AK light mild, last brewed at Furneux Pelham in January of this year.

Peter Lerner

FULLER FLAVOUR

An agreement has been reached between big six giants Charrington and Chiswick brewers Fuller, Smith & Turner for a small scale pub-swap venture. In all, seven pubs will go from Charrington to Fuller, with four going to Charrington from Fuller. Both companies fully back the idea that the consumer will gain by the increased choice of products in the areas involved, so come on Ind Coope, what about it? Even four would make a difference!



TIE BREAKER

Beer starved Courage Eastern pub tenants have thrashed out a new agreement with their brewery, allowing them greater freedom to buy outside the tie. A joint statement issued in August by the company and NULV's Courage Eastern Tenant Stream says that an interim agreement under which tenants already buy outside the tie when the brewery is unable to meet delivery orders will be given the 'utmost flexibility'. The situation will be reviewed this month. It was felt that the persistent shortage of beer supplies — particularly cask-conditioned ales — made the new arrangements vital for tenants to survive. You have to agree with them.



NEW MAC'S ALE, BUT....

McMullens now have a new beer on sale in their pubs. It is called Mac's No One Draught, and in the lowest price bars of Mac's managed houses it will sell at 35p a pint. Hold it a minute! No. One — isn't that their bottled Pale Ale? Unfortunately, yes, and the new brew is a keg pale ale. Mac's have 'felt a need — particularly to meet the specialised requirements of some free trade customers — for a brewery-conditioned draught beer in keg (in addition to lager) to be included in their range'. They have left the decision to tenants as to whether they stock the beer or not.

Oh well, at least the new Mac's t-shirt is out — win one on page three!



GRAFFITI CORNER

Heineken refreshes the prats that other beers cannot reach.

BOURNE DRINKERS VISIT BREWERY



A party of CAMRA members from Herts North, Herts South and Doncaster visited a brewery on Saturday 18 August, and managed to drink it completely dry of finished beer in the course of sampling. This amazing feat took place at the tiny Bourne Valley Brewery at Andover in Hampshire after a lunchtime session in nearby Stockbridge. This brewery commenced production in November 1978 after past CAMRA national Chairman James Lynch and his partner John Featherby decided to put CAMRA's ideals into practice. They risked their homes and futures by launching yet another of the many new small breweries which are springing up all over the country to meet the demand for a choice of real ale, which most of the established industry seems reluctant to offer.

Single factory unit

Bourne Valley Brewery (BVB) was named after the location of Jame's present home, but is found in the unlikely setting of an Andover light industrial estate, and occupies a single factory unit. The process flowsheet and materials used satisfy CAMRA's ultimate ideals for the brewing of real British beer whilst taking advantage of the economics and convenience of modern hardware and technology.

The brewery would be called a pilot plant by any process engineer (such as myself) and can all be seen in one glance. It comprises the following traditional flowsheet. Malt is raised by a sack hoist to a staging where it passes through a grist mill into the mash tun below. Hot water, or liquor in brewing terms, is added and the mashing process extracts fermentable sugars from the malt. The resulting solution (wort) is pumped up to one of two coppers on the staging along with more hot liquor which has been sprayed (sparged) through the grains to recover the maximum values. The coppers have wooden stave outer construction with electric immersion heaters, which boil the wort with hops. Wort drains by gravity to the stainless steel hop-back below which retains the spent hop flowers, and is then pumped through two series of heat exchangers (coolers) to reduce the temperature from near boiling to 130 °C (55 °C) and into one of the four stainless steel fermenting vessels. Yeast is pitched and fermentation converts the wort into beer. A home made copper cooling coil is placed in the vessels to control temperature, and excess yeast is scooped off with a plastic bowl on a stick! Beer is racked straight into metal or wooden casks and dosed with finings to clear it. Operating variables such as temperature, quantities and time are recorded by whoever is brewer.

Thus, only water, malted barley, hops, yeast and finings go into the beer, with no sugar or adjuncts. There is no chilling, filtering, pasteurisation or carbonation at Bourne Valley. Malt is supplied from the North of England Malt Roasting Company which supplies several established real ale breweries. A mixture of Golding and Bramling Cross hops from Kent are used. New factory units at Andover do not have wells sunk into the Chalk, so "Burtonised" tap water is used as liquor. The yeast originates from the Belhaven brewery and has a long life, not requiring to be replaced after each brew.

Dictated by demands

The capacity of BVB is only about 12 barrels per day (or 2 cubic metres, 450 gallons). In a typical brew, 500 gallons (2.3 m³) water, 670 lb (304 kg) malt, 12lb (5.4 kg) hops and 12lb yeast are used. There is no stockpiling of finished beer at the brewery, and brewing is dictated by outlet demands, leaving little stock in hand. That is how we managed to drink them dry! Only one beer is produced, called Andover Ale (no kidding)— a light coloured bitter which has an original gravity of 1040 degrees.

Good fertiliser

The scale of operations allows the flexibility for brewing special ales for customers. Paines of St. Neots do this also, and their brewery includes a number of similar small fermenters (see June 1979 Newsletter). BVB is situated in an area where there is no shortage of breweries distributing good beers to the free trade, thereby setting strong competition. However, BVB distribute Andover Ale to about twenty free houses in north Hampshire, Berkshire, London and north Surrey. No pressure dispense is allowed. The brewery also sells 4½ gallon polypins and 2 gallon "Lynchpins" (wince!). James and John are extremely conscious of the efficient use of resources. For example, the wort heat-exchangers heat the incoming liquor for mashing, the spent grains are profitably sent to a local farmer as cattle feed, and the spent hops make a good fertilizer for John's garden. Most brewers keep their secrets very closely, but here is a hint for would-be brewers: if you want no trouble with flies and wasps in the brewery, keep a pot of stale beer in the room.

Can't brew enough

Teething troubles such as starch haze and difficulty cleaning wooden casks are now largely overcome, and the present problem is that they cannot brew enough. During the visit, James was busy sparging a mash, copper boiling, filling a fermenter from the hop-back, and skimming a yeasty brew. He told me that they try to keep the work down to 24 hours a day and 7 days a week! Joking apart, it means a 6am start in the brewery most days.

BVB are supplying ten barrels of Andover Ale to the Great British Beer Festival in addition to their regular trade. Their enthusiasm and hard work is impressive, and we are very grateful that they should spend their time hosting CAMRA visits. John and James have shown that small is indeed beautiful and are a shining example to the brewing industry and licensed trade that there is demand for choice of real British beer. CAMRA's loss of a national chairman in August 1978 was the beer drinkers gain of a new brewery. The CAMRA branches and, I am sure, readers of this newsletter wish James and John well in their venture. One day their beers may reach Hertfordshire. We look forward to it.

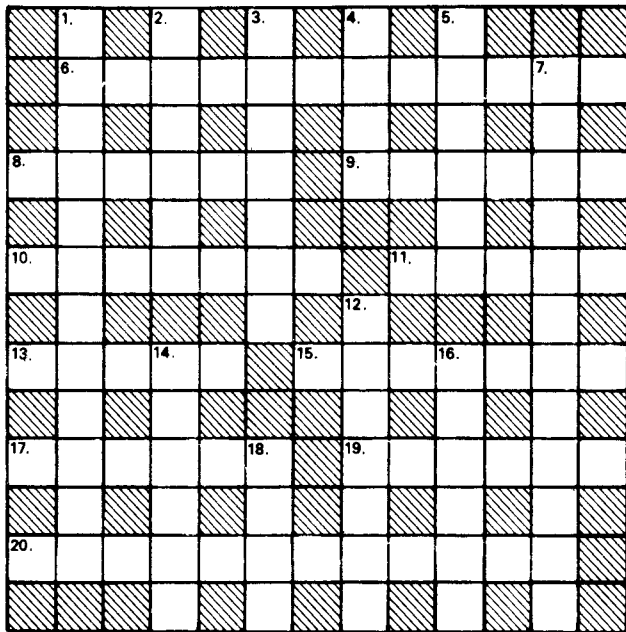
Steve Barber

RIGHT LINES

Fears that the takeover of Ipswich brewers Tolly Cobold by the giant shipping firm Ellerman Lines could jeopardise future real ale production can be dispelled with the news that Tolly are to launch a medium price/gravity beer on October 1st. 'It is designed to appeal particularly to the local real ale market', said John Webb, the firm's technical director. 'It will be sold on handpump only in 1500 free-trade outlets, as well as selected tied houses', he added.

CAMRA-WORD NO. 2

by Sandie & Peter Lerner



Across

6. Could have free house in middle of third London airport (12)
8. Irregular ones at Colney Heath and Symonds Green (6)
9. Best-selling CAMRA guide to these? (6)
10. 10.30 and 5.30 (7)
11. This type of pub does not get into the Good Beer Guide (5)
13. Drink does this at a beer festival (5)
15. Sounds like Mother's barrel (7)
17. Northampton-brewed Carlsberg certainly isn't (6)
19. Boiler in old brewery — uses a lot of energy (6)
20. Jolly man from Dunbar (8,4)

Down

1. Beer with Asian connections (5,4,3)
2. Thieved (6)
3. Sampling (7)
4. Of ancient herioc legend (4)
5. Barley wine (6)
7. Your order for May (1,5,2,4)
12. Dudley or Kimberley? (7)
14. Beer drinkers should watch this (6)
16. _____ to your local (4,2)
18. Home of Boddington's trademark (4)

THIS MONTHS PRIZE is a spanking brand-new McMullen's T-Shirt for the first three correct entries received. Please send completed entries to The Herts Newsletter Editors, 28 Inkerman Rd, St. Albans, Herts., stating size of shirt required. The editors decision is final.

THIS EDITION

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced monthly by the Herts North, Herts South and Herts/Essex Borders branches of CAMRA. The editors would gratefully receive any item of news for future editions, but due to the improvement in type layout of late, may we ask for typed articles if possible to help shorten production time. We are now considering applications for ¼ page advertisements (current newsletter distribution is 3000) and can be contacted at the following address for further discussion Val or Nick Page, 28 Inkerman Road, St. Albans ☎ 33810.

QUICK ONES



LONDON'S NEWEST

After more than its fair share of problems, London's newest brewery — Simon's Tower Bridge — is expected to be brewing from early September. Built under the shadow of the huge Courage London plant and sponsored by CAMRA Investments Ltd, the brewery will initially supply four of the City's free houses and should also be available at the Great British Beer Festival.



THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

Bedford brewers Charles Wells have offered a prize of £50 plus an engraved tankard for the guzzler who visits the most Wells pubs before the end of 1979 — a competition which they say was prompted by the increasing interest in real ale! There are 270 of their tied houses, of which about 120 are 'real', but unfortunately only four of these are in Hertfordshire. They are the Jolly Sailor, St Albans, the Suffolk Punch, Boreham Wood, the Windmill, Charlton and the Cat & Fiddle, Pirton. There is a selection of consolation prizes also, and all you have to do is get the landlord of each pub to sign one of the special 'Eagle' beer-mats that he will have. Happy drinking!



LITENING STRIKE

You will almost certainly be familiar with the recent tide of rip-off 'lite' beers and lagers that are washing up on our shores, but beware, there's more to come. Coates Gaymers Ltd — the cider brewing arm of Allied Breweries — have just introduced Gaymer's Lite Cider for all you obese millionaires out there somewhere. Ironically, the nation's first low carbohydrate cider goes on the market at a time when the real farmhouse 'scrumpy' makers are facing a rough time. A proposed Common Market alcohol tax drastically increasing the duty payable on brews between six and ten per cent proof is being fought by Somerset cidemakers, who would be forced to sell a strong brew at about **four times** normal price (or dilute it) if the bill became law. Bureaucracy and Allied rule OK!

*The editors fully understand the unfortunate limitations of diabetic drinkers.



WICKED FUN

A much better way of staying slim and fit than drinking lite cider, is to come on the 'Wicked Lady Fun Run' around Nomansland Common, near Wheathampstead, on Sunday 16th September. Owner of this excellent free-house, Mr Douglas Payne, opens an invitation to young and old to enjoy a quick dash around the one, two, or four mile course, starting at around 10 am and finishing with some form of resuscitation afterwards.



ERRATA

Apologies to well-known Welwyn Times historian, Mr. Martyn Cornell, whose article in last months edition became the subject of over enthusiastic editing and should have read as follows:

para 4 line 3 'measured their beer in 'kinderkins...'

para 4 line 10....were 4/4d for a kinderkin of best beer'

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Hertfordshire North Branch Borders Branch
Peter Lerner ☎ Ware 830616 John Hurrell ☎ 01-529 7495

PUB NEWS

Bishops Stortford — Tony's Bar (Devoiles Lane) now has Adnam's Bitter on handpump.

Chenies (Bucks) — Younger's No. 3, a new brew to the area, is now on handpump at the Bedford Arms.

Croxley Green — Another KKasualty with the Sportsman replacing Ind Coope Mild with Burton Ale.

Datchworth Green — The Inn on the Green has reinstated Ruddles County on handpump.

Great Offley — The Wethered's push continues, with the latest reported outlet being the Red Lion in this village in the north-west of the county.

Hertford — A former Ind Coope House, the Bluecoat Boy, has been purchase by Mr. Gordon Davies. After extensive renovations, the pub will re-open as a free-house. The popular Bottles wine bar has dropped Wells Bitter, but retain Fargo on handpump.

Hitchin — The 3 Moorhens now with Abbot and IPA on electric pumps.

Ickleford — Cricketers, Paines special mild — a dark mild on gravity.

Little Gaddesden — 1979 Good Beer Guide entry, the Bridgewater Arms, is up for auction in mid-September.

Radlett — Bar alterations at the Red Lion Hotel have revealed handpumps for Greene King IPA, Bass and Ruddles County, replacing the old electric pumps.

Ware — The Angel is now selling real Ind Coope Bitter and Burton Ale.

Water End — The Maypole is reported to be selling Ind Coope Bitter on handpump.

Welwyn Garden — The Beehive now serving Wethered's from handpump.

WHAT'S ON

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

September 11th Tuesday

Darts match vs Dynamic Sports Club (British Aerospace), Stevenage. 8.00pm. (Greene King/Rayment). Contact Eric Sim on Hatfield 60647 if you are interested in participating.

September 16th Sunday

Hertfordshire CAMRA Treasure Hunt. Starts at the Fox, Kinsbourne Green, at 2.30 pm. OS Sheet 166 needed, plus a copy of the Herts Real Ale Guide. Entrance fee 50p per person and first prize is a pin of Greene King Dark Mild.

September 18th Tuesday

BRANCH MEETING At the Dimsdale Arms, Fore St., Hertford. 8.00pm (McMullen).

September 22nd Saturday

Joint branch social with South Oxon and South Hants branches at the White Hart, Benson, Oxon. 11.00am (Morrell). Contact Dave Burns for more details on Welwyn 7805

September 27th Thursday

Brewery trip to Young's. Unfortunately already fully booked.

September 29th Saturday

Visit to the Brewery Museum, Stamford, Lincs. Contact Tony King on 01 952 6080 for more details.

October 16th Tuesday

BRANCH MEETING — venue to be announced later.

HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH BRANCH

September 12th Wednesday

September BRANCH MEETING at the Old Bull, Royston. Guest speaker Joe Goodwin, Chairman of CAMRA'S National Executive.. 8.00pm (Charrington, Bass, Courage)

September 19th Wednesday

Social at the Red Lion, Woolmer Green. 8.00pm. (Ind Coope)

September 26th Wednesday

Social at the Fox & Hounds, Barley. 8.00pm (Adnams, Courage, Greene King).

October 9th Tuesday

BRANCH MEETING at the Sun, Hitchin, 8.00pm. (Charrington)

HERTS/ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

September 17th Monday

Social at the Boar's Head, Hoddesdon. 8.00pm (Ind Coope)

September 25th Tuesday

BRANCH MEETING at the Phoenix, Tillwicks Rd. Harlow. 8.00pm. (Courage)

September 27th Thursday

Social and 'Farewell' to the landlord of the Nags Head, Moreton. (Mr. Surrige) 8.00pm. (Charrington)

LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

September 2nd — 9th

GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL At Alexandra Palace, North London.

September 6th — 8th

SECOND BEDFORD BEER FESTIVAL at the Corn Exchange, Bedford.

September 29th

FOURTH LUTON FOLK FESTIVAL at the recreation Centre, Old Bedford Rd. Luton. Real ale bar run by South Beds. CAMRA.



CAMRA — WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Basically, the chance to keep drinking the real ale you obviously enjoy! CAMRA is the organisation that kept real ale available — and a powerful voice in demanding that it stays available too.

Okay, CAMRA membership costs £4 a year. But what's £4 for adding your voice and safeguarding your favourite brew? You know the alternative! In addition, you receive your member's handbook, CAMRA'S lively monthly newspaper 'What's Brewing', discounts on many brewing books and products, and the chance to partake in brewery trips, get involved with Beer Festivals and mix in the company of Real Ale drinkers like you!

Join CAMRA'S ranks now by filling in the coupon below.....try three months trial CAMRA membership FREE — with no obligation to join! You will receive your handbook, What's Brewing etc, but if you decide not to join, simply cancel your standing order (at any time during the next three months and your money will be refunded).

Please enrol me as a member of CAMRA I understand I am under no obligation: if I do not wish to remain a member after three months FREE trial, I can cancel my order and my money will be refunded. If I wish to stay a member I need do nothing and I will automatically retain my membership until I cancel my order

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