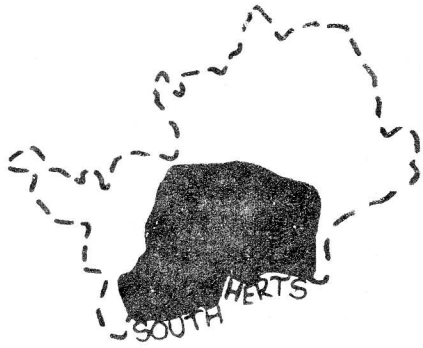


FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1977

NUMBER 10

Make May A Mild Month

With the prices of stronger beers soaring as never before, many people are switching to the cheaper beers - the bitters and milds which are normally, of course, good beers in their own right and are usually sold at a much more reasonable price. Real draught bitters have received a big boost with the swing towards real ale - but what of mild? Unfortunately mild has the dubious reputation as being the beer that the slops go back into, especially amongst older drinkers who can remember this unfortunate habit at first hand. This criticism was mainly restricted to dark mild and light mild escapes this notion relatively unscathed. But things have changed and many breweries produce superb dark milds eg. Thwaites in the north and Courage in the south. Looking for dark mild in Hertfordshire is almost hopeless, with only a handful of pubs. On the other hand the county is fairly well supplied with light mild: McMullen's, Rayment's and Ind Coope but whereas there is no threat to Mac's AK Mild which in many pubs out sells the Country Bitter, Ind Coope Light Mild is under threat of extinction (as we learned at a recent meeting with Ind Coope) - and remember, it is only a couple of years since they stopped brewing their Dark Mild and replaced it with the keg mild.

Mild and Choice

CAMRA stands for choice and as mild ales represent a significant proportion of the range of real ales available in this country it is important that we do something to improve the image of mild. Milds are traditionally low gravity and low price beers which you can happily drink all evening and offer a real alternative to the more expensive higher gravity beers.

Campaigning

In 1976 the Essex branches of CAMRA ran a very successful 'Make May a Mild Month' campaign to show the big brewers that there is still a market for mild in the south. This year most branches will be running similar campaigns in their areas.

For our part, we will be holding five Tuesday evening socials during the month, in different pubs throughout South Hertfordshire, to promote mild and to show landlords that mild is still popular and viable. Some of the pubs are introducing mild for the first time. For details see Diary of Events (back page). See you there!

Herts. Beer Festival

After much searching and head-scratching we have finally found a venue for the 1977 Hertfordshire Beer Festival - Hatfield Polytechnic, for which we are very grateful. All of the Hertfordshire branches of CAMRA will be involved in what will be the first Herts Beer Festival since the 1972 Exhibition in St. Albans. The festival will span the weekend of 1-3 July and we are hoping that it will be possible to open on all three days. Special commemorative glasses will be produced and apart from a large variety of beers (which have yet to be selected) there will be decent food and entertainment in the form of folk groups, morris dancers and perhaps even some traditional crafts.

Planning is still in the very early stages, but next month's Newsletter should have more information.

Auction

Our May branch meeting being held at The Red Lion, Radlett on 17 May will incorporate an auction of brewing paraphernalia. Already we have some interesting items but any other items of interest will be gratefully received. Please bring them along on the night. April's meeting is on 19 April at The Cricketers, Redbourn.

Ecclefechan Weekend By Three Votes Brando

Friday 25th March:

After picking people up at Barnet and Watford, we made our way up the M1 and M6 to the West Midlands. Our first stop was Netherton, home of the famous Doris Pardoe's brew. The Old Swan is a wonderful pub with the brewery at the back. A keen photographer was performing contortions to get a picture of the swan on the enamelled ceiling. As well as the excellent home brew, Simpkins was also on sale.

At 12.30 we left, as the Old Swan gets crowded at lunchtimes, and moved only a few minutes up the road to continue drinking in Dudley which has about a dozen real ale outlets (and a zoo). The well hopped beer of Banks and Hansons is drunk throughout the town. The Lamp Tavern was well worth a visit for the distinctive brew of Batham. The White Swan is a very different type of pub from the Old Swan, being very modern, but the welcome was just as good and the home brew up to the usual standard.

To Kendal

Departure from Dudley was delayed as the organiser arrived back at the coach 25 minutes late, yet we still got to Kendal just before opening time. By this stage the coach party had livened up considerably. The ale houses of Kendal are all on or near the main street which makes a pub crawl that bit easier. Yates and Jackson was available at the Globe in Market Place; the White Hart kept many of us happy with Hartleys superb beers and a large games room with pool table and dart board. The Ring O'Bells with Vaux is a superb old traditional pub next to the parish church - with waiter service, and fortunes changed hands during the games of dominoes. Sadly we had to leave Kendal before I could visit all the pubs - perhaps another time!

Hot Pot

The Cressfield Country Hotel at Ecclefechan made us very welcome helpings of hot pot served with Theakston's Bitter or Old Peculier. By the early hours most people had departed for bed - the end of a very long day.

Saturday 26th March:

Surprisingly everybody made breakfast looking remarkably fit and ready for the trip round the 'Old Brewery' at Carlisle. Theakstons have only recently bought the brewery - it was previously owned by the state. All production of best bitter has been switched to Carlisle although Old Peculier is still brewed at the company's Masham brewery. The brewery is

old and it has been necessary to replace much of the equipment. After an expertly conducted tour by Melvin Lamb, the sales manager we had a chance to talk with him and the head brewer while tasting the beer. This proved to be very interesting. Interesting bottles lined the walls - including the one exported to the Arabs, Theakston Non Alcoholic. The label says it is a refreshing drink, the ingredients are malt, hops and carbon dioxide. The publicity surrounding this effectively killed off the mild that was launched about the same time with people thinking this was the beer they had read about, so they stayed well clear. Perhaps mild at a later date. The great thing about the tour is that Theakston's are refreshingly open with facts and figures, something which many breweries seem intent on keeping under lock and key. And what is the history behind the name 'Old Peculier'? Unfortunately it would take too long to explain here - perhaps in a future Newsletter. Thanks to Theakston's for a great tour.

Carlisle

Carlisle is very badly off for real ale pubs. Not far from the brewery is a Jennings pub - the Woolpack where we met the local CAMRA branch. There are only two others - the Crown and Mitre, a plush hotel where you had to wade through the carpet pile to get to the Railway Lounge for Jennings' bitter or Old Peculier, and the Crown which sells Youngers, but no one can really decide if CO2 is used in dispensing or not.

When we sit back and think the battle is won we should consider places like Carlisle which still have a long way to go to realise CAMRA's aims. The coach was ready to leave Carlisle but where had Mr Tony King got to? (A leading question I believe - Dayo!). After a good evening meal at the hotel the intrepid band set out to conquer (or fall to, depending how you were feeling) the pubs of Dumfries. A fun fair was in progress and the town seemed full of people. The Golden Bull was extremely popular because of the McEwans served there. Only a few yards away was the County Hotel, also crowded which sells Youngers IPA. Here we met with the Carlisle branch again. For the more energetic there were another three McEwans houses to visit.

After much singing on the coach, the evening was finished off back at the hotel.continued opposite.

Greene King Trip

'Brewery of the Month' for April featured a tour of Greene King's brewery at Biggleswade. This ex-Wells and Winch brewery now produces a wide range of brews including IPA, Abbot, Light Mild (KK), Dark Mild (XX), King Keg Abbot plus bottled beers, and supplies approximately 900 public houses and 2000 clubs and free trade outlets. (Alas, there is no pub in Biggleswade selling Greene King beers on gravity/handpump.

Hop Pellets

The water (for the liquor) is taken from their own wells and the malt grain is crushed at the brewery. The brewing process follows similar lines to most other traditional brewers but uses pelleted hops and a centrifuge to remove the hops after boiling in the coppers.

Ingredients for kegging?

Having viewed the brewing process, our charming guide, Margaret, took us to see the bottling plant in operation but the vast, brand new kegging plant (the size should warn CAMRA of future trends) was given a miss for the pleasures of gravity Abbot and IPA in the converted maltings - now a club house.

Our thanks to Greene King and the Head Brewer for a splendid tour.

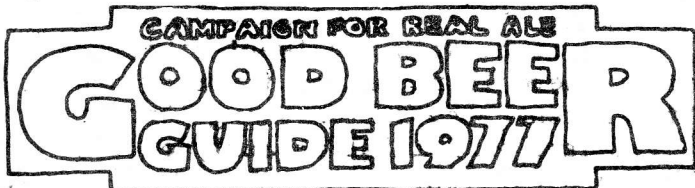
future trips:

May's brewery trip is to Hook Norton brewery, near Banbury in Oxfordshire. It is Hook Norton's 'open weekend' on 14/15th May. The branch has 15 places for each day and will be running a mini-bus on the Saturday. For further details of this and forthcoming trips to Young's, Fuller's and Guinness please contact Jim Axford, 117 Queens Road, Watford, Herts.



When 8 is 9

The eagle-eyed amongst you will no doubt have noticed that both February's and March's issues of the Newsletter were numbered Number 8. Sorry about the faux-pas - therefore this is number 10.



Now on sale in your bookshop or from H.Q. Price £1.60 (£1.40 to members).

Work on the local Hertfordshire guide is still progressing but meanwhile we still have some copies of the 1976 guide on sale at 5p + SAE. Write to the Editor.

Mild Socials

The Rose and Crown at Essenden is now selling Ind Coope Bitter and Light Mild in addition to the Burton Ale. This will be the venue for our first mild social, which will be a mild and skittles evening - come along for 8.00pm on 3 May.

On 10 May our second mild social will be held at the Crown, a new Free House in Hatfield Road, St. Albans. With a large selection of real ales including Greene King Light Mild this will be a Mild and Folk Music Evening - with music from a local group.

Hopefully at our branch meeting on 17 May we will have either one of the Greene King Milds or perhaps Bass Mild. The meeting will be held at the Red Lion, Radlett. 8.00pm.

Tuesday 24 May: A mild and darts social to be held at the Bell and Crown, Hertford. McMullen's AK Mild on sale alongside Country Bitter here - remember your darts.

Lastly on Tuesday 31 May, a social for those in the west of our area at The Victoria Tavern in Queens Road, Watford. Ind Coope Mild and Bitter/Burton will be on sale and the evening will feature the grand raffle for a barrel of mild. Tickets will be on sale at all the socials.

Decorations

The Punch Bowl in Ware is to be redecorated or rather refurbished, as Greene King's plans for the pub are major to say the least. The premises next door, now a shop but once a pub itself will be incorporated into the new pub. These plans are a shame - it's worth preserving as it is.

Ecclefechan contd.

As well as the home-made live entertainment there was the inevitable competition to find 'The Slob of the Trip'.

There were quite a few contenders, with two favourites, but eventually the worst man deservedly won. Congratulations Chris!

Sunday 27th March:

Now we were looking rather the worse for wear, but there was still 100% turn out for breakfast. We took our leave from the hotel after thanking Terry and his wife warmly for their hospitality. It had been a great weekend but there was still one more stop - Lancaster. It was Sunday lunchtime and another 24 pubs to choose from with beer from Yates and Jackson, Mitchells, Bass and Hartleys. I don't think anyone managed to visit all. And so back to Hertfordshire - for an evening's drinking of course!

Changes

Borehamwood The Wellington now has Ind Coope Bitter on sale in addition to the Burton Ale.

Bricketwood The Fox and Hounds now has Ind Coope Bitter on sale. The Gate has introduced all three Ind Coope cask-conditioned beers - Burton Ale, bitter and light mild.

Flaunden The Bricklayer's Arms, at Hogspit Bottom, Flaunden has until recently only sold Ind Coope beers. Now Adnams bitter and Ruddle's County is on sale.

Hatfield The White Hart, a new pub in the centre of Hatfield now has Ind Coope Bitter on handpumps.

Hertford The Old Barge has introduced Burton Ale.

St.Albans The Great Northern has swapped Burton Ale for Ind Coope Bitter. The Boot now also sells Ind Coope Bitter alongside the Burton Ale. The Crown, in Hatfield Road has added draught Bass to the large range of beers already available on handpumps: Greene King Abbot Ale and Light Mild, Ruddle's County and Sam Smith's O.B.Bitter.

Watford The One Bell now has Burton Ale on sale.

DIARY of EVENTS

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

- Apr 19 April Branch Meeting
The Cricketers, Redbourn.
(Ind Coope) 8.00pm.
- Apr 21 League Darts Match v East London.
The Railway Bell, New Barnet.
(Ind Coope) 8.00pm.
- May 3 Mild Social. **Rose & Crown. Essendon**
- May 10 Mild and Folk Music Evening.
The Crown, Hatfield Road, St.Albans.
(Greene King, Ruddles, Sam Smiths & Bass) 8.00pm.
- May 13 Pub Crawl of Hertford with West Middlesex Branch.
- May 17 May Branch Meeting plus auction of brewery paraphernalia. The Red Lion Radlett (Greene King, Bass) 8.00pm.
Hopefully a Greene King Mild and perhaps Bass Mild will be available.
- May 19 Social with South Bedfordshire branch. The Live and Let Live, Pegsdon (Near Hitchin). 8.00pm
(Greene King on gravity).
- May 24 Mild and Darts Evening. The Bell & Crown, Cowbridge, Hertford.
(McMullen's) 8.00pm.
- May 26 Friendly Darts Match v Enfield and Barnet Branch. The Railway Bell, New Barnet. (Ind Coope) 8.00pm.
- May 31 Mild and Pub Games Evening (plus Grand Raffle) The Victoria Tavern, Queens Road, Watford (Ind Coope) 8.00pm.

Hertfordshire North Branch

- May 11 May Branch Meeting
The Chequers, Woolmer Green. 8.00pm.
- May 14 Mild Beer Exhibition. Therfield Village Hall. This Saturday exhibition will feature predominantly Milds with some Bitters.
- May 18 Mild Social. The Plough, Gt.Munden
(Greene King, Rayment's) 8.00pm.

Herts/Essex Borders Branch

- May 10 Informal Meeting. The Woodman, Wormley West End (off A.1170)
(McMullen's) 8.00pm.
- May 17 May Branch Meeting
The Three Horseshoes, Spellbrook, Near Bishop's Stortford (off A.11)
(Rayment's) 8.00pm.

This Newsletter is produced monthly by the Hertfordshire South branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. All contributions should be sent to the Editor by the first day of the month: Les Middlewood, 81a Linden Way, Southgate, London, N.14 4NG.
Further copies are available from the Editor - please send large SAE.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of beer and pubs throughout the country. Why not join and help us improve the lot of the drinking person?

For your £2.00 subscription you will receive a copy of the monthly 'What's Brewing', CAMRA's newspaper on what is going on in the world of beer.

SOUTH HERTS NEWSLETTER

I wish to become a member of CAMRA Ltd.
I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.
I enclose £2.00 as my annual membership subscription (Any additional amount will be welcomed as a donation).

Name

Address

Signature Date

Please send to: The Membership Secretary,
The Campaign for Real Ale, 34 Alma Road,
St.Albans, Herts, AL1 3BW.