

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1977

NUMBER 14

Alexandra Palace Beer Festival

The major CAMRA event of 1977 is rapidly approaching - The Great British Beer Festival which is to be held at Alexandra Palace from Wednesday 21st to Sunday 25th September. With over 100 different beers already lined up and possibly more to come the festival should prove to be the biggest beer festival this country has ever seen. As a campaigning event, there is no need to stress its importance and a good attendance should finally defeat all claims from the big brewers that there is no demand for real ale. Alexandra Palace is located between Wood Green and Muswell Hill. For people in Central and Eastern Hertfordshire it should be fairly easy to get to the festival by public transport: British Rail: Hitchin - King's Cross Line, alight at Wood Green, then W3 bus or 10 minute walk. Hertford - Moorgate Line, W3 from Wood Green. Liverpool Street - Cambridge Line, alight at either White Hart Lane or Northumberland Park, then W3 to the door. Wood Green Underground Station is further away than the main line station but is also on the W3 bus route. Those who live in the west of the county might find the journey more difficult and may have to travel via central London. There is ample car parking space at the Palace. Opening hours will approximately follow London licensing hours. Further details will appear in next month's Newsletter. If you are a CAMRA member and are willing to help, contact Denis Palmer, 41 Queens Road, Twickenham, Middlesex.

HERTS. GUIDE

'Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire 1977-78' - a guide to real ale pubs in the county - is now available, price 30 pence from either Dave Burns, 44 Torrington Dr, Potters Bar or Russell Patten, 60 Hillside Cres, Cheshunt. Please enclose a large SAE. The guide was officially launched last month in the Crown, St. Albans. Reporters from a number of the Hertfordshire local newspapers attended.

Mac's Plus

A recent meeting between Richard Steward, CAMRA's brewery liaison officer for Mac's and John McMullen, has brought some encouraging signs from the brewery. Mac's are planning to extend their handpump experiment, launched around two years ago to another five or six pubs. There are no names yet but they are likely to be managed houses. In the original experiment the pubs were initially instructed to use a blanket pressure of one pound per square inch but it is understood that pubs in the extension will probably not use blanket pressure.

Recently, Mac's newly-built or renovated pubs have featured handpumped beer on opening. It is hoped that this trend will continue in the Orange Tree at Hitchin and the New Sun at Hoddesdon.

BEER AND CIDER

Courage Director's Bitter is back at the Barley Mow at Tyttenhanger, so remaining the only pub in our area with this beer. In the next couple of months, John Blackwell is hoping to introduce Paine's E.G. Meanwhile, in St. Albans, The Jolly Sailor is now selling Bulmer's traditional draught cider.

E.G.M.

An EGM will be held in Manchester on 8 October in Manchester to sort out the festering argument about air pressure. More details will appear next month.

YOUNG'S BREWERY VISIT BY STEVE BURY

Leaving Barnet at 12 o'clock and with a half-hour beer break in the Shires Bar at St. Pancras Station (Rayment's BBA and Ruddle's Blue), I reached the Brewery Tap in Wandsworth at 2.15. This proves, I'm afraid, the inaccessibility of Young's by public transport - four changes in all, but well worth it. A lot has happened inside the walls of Young's since my last visit with the branch in 1972 - expansion has been necessary and is still in progress, to meet a demand which must have even surprised Young's themselves.

Brewery

Young's, traditional brewers since 1831 still have the 'village' atmosphere which existed when the first brew was produced on the site. The point is proven by the experience of anyone lucky enough to make a trip, for it is obvious that the old tried and trusted methods can still exist in the 1970s. We started at the barrel washing plant which is the newest part of the brewery and has been installed to speed up the turn over time for deliveries. This was followed by the bottling plant from which we followed through to the stables.

Drays

Here of course is the home of London's last working dray horses and it is one of the highlights of the trip. Unluckily, the exhibition team was out at Peterborough, so we missed 'Henry Cooper' who is said to be the largest horse in Britain (there are several close contenders - it depends on how far their shoes have worn down!). All the Young's outlets within a 10 mile radius of the brewery, still get their deliveries by horse-drawn dray which works out to be more economical than lorry delivery. A vast amount of tackle is on show in the Harness Room, where all the equipment for the 22 horses is cleaned and repaired. Outside is the farmyard, aptly named as Young's keep a goat, geese, a peahen and peacock as well as the famous ram, the company's mascot, on a spare piece of ground by the new offices. The Ram (a fine beast) was looking a bit sorry for himself, having just been shorn and the goat who should have been tethered was helping himself to the contents of an unsuspecting visitor's cycle saddlebag. Across the yard is the Blacksmith's where the horses are shod and all running repairs to wheels and ironwork of the drays is a full time job for two men. Young's still employ coopers to repair wooden casks, although more metal casks are now being used.

A DAY OUT IN WANDSWORTH!

Again unluckily, we were unable to see the early stages of brewing, as the Brew House capacity is at present being expanded (as a compensation Young's generously gave us each, a glossy-paged book describing the company's history and brewing techniques). We did however see the fermenting vessels, the oldest being slate (Sam Smith's is not alone) and the newest nylon. The two famous beam engines, 110 and 140 years old had been temporarily shut down while the work is in progress. Young's have a very keen staff including their boiler man, who went to great lengths to give us an in depth instruction on the furnaces and their workings. Most of us came out fully trained to take over on his retirement!

Tap Room

The last stop was the tap room, an out-building with old Victorian etched pub windows and racked wooden barrels. We were able to sample the three regular Young's cask-conditioned beers - Special Bitter, Bitter and Best Malt Ale. Thanks to Betty Moran who showed us around and also to Young's for receiving us and for the excellent tipple afterwards. At half-five we drifted out to the Brewery Tap and later all met up in the Grapes. I must add that it's amazing how the right measure makes one unbelievably accurate at darts - and yet, one more pint and you can't even see the board! Finally, thanks to the chap who put me straight when I couldn't find the Underground Station.

Whitbread

The Bull in Wheathanpstead has recently had a face-lift. A lick of paint and a new sign but now there is no indication of who the pub belongs to, or what brews you might expect (is Whitbread a name to be ashamed of?). However, someone has had the good sense to put in a pair of handpumps to serve the Wethered's Bitter from Marlow. Although it as a fine beverage (with a below average gravity of 1035) this really is a bit of a rip-off at 35 pence a pint. The Waggon and Horses in Marlow, Hemel Hempstead, has had the renovation 'treatment' and is now a pub come steak-house and Wethered's Bitter is now available, an innovation indeed in this Ind Coope stronghold. BOB NORRISH.

Profit?

With bills for the Herts Beer Festival still coming in, we still can't say exactly how much we've made, yet it is a profit.

Home for Ind Coope Doing What?

Well, it isn't exactly new - more done up to look like new (to quote an old Peter Sellers phrase). It is in fact part of what was the Clarendon Hotel in Watford. The building and old stabling area have been tastefully restored internally and externally and fitted out to form Ind Coope's new offices (now that the old Benskin's site is finally being closed) and called 'Benskin House'. The pub (to the left of the offices) has one bar and offers handpumped Burton Ale, Bitter and Light Mild alongside pressurised and keg products and is being run by a manager. Special features are the internal decor - Victoriana. O yes! it's called the Pennant - the old Benskin trademark. The prices are: Burton Ale 37p per pint; Bitter 30p; Light Mild 28p per pint.

From the information received to date in the branch's Price Survey, some of the Whitbread and Greene King pubs have increased their prices by two and in one case three pence per pint. The Goat in St. Albans has put an incredible 4 pence on their Whitbread (Marlow) bitter, in the last three months. Further increases from Young's (2 pence) and Ind Coope (1 pence) are now confirmed. The following pubs offer good buys in our area:

The Red Lion, Radlett:

Greene King Abbot Ale: 32p per pt.
Greene King IPA : 28p per pt.
Bass : 30p per pt.

The Bell and Crown, Hertford:

McMullen's Country : 28p per pt.
McMullen's AK Mild : 26p per pt.

The Odd Fellows Arms, Watford:

Ind Coope Burton Ale : 33p per pt.
" " Bitter : 26p per pt.
" " Mild : 24p per pt.

The above information is taken from information supplied by branch members for last months Prices Survey. JIM AXFORD.

BEER TENT & CAMPING

The branch will be helping to run a beer tent on 28th August at Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, at a fete being jointly run by the college and St. Albans City Council. Further details will be available at our August branch meeting.

Now, if you're really adventurous, you won't want to miss our Camping Weekend at Southwold on Sat-Sun, 10th and 11th September. Southwold is of course the home of Adnams and there are many Adnams pubs to choose from in Southwold and neighbouring Walberswick. The campsite is in Ferry Road, Southwold. £1.25 per tent per night. (showers etc). Meet Harbour Inn early Saturday lunchtime (on River Blyth).

Anyone who says that CAMRA should concern itself only with real ale, and nought else will find from a trip through What's Doing the branch diary in What's Brewing, that his plea is in vain. In amongst the inevitable pub crawls and darts matches lies a mind boggling array of activities - not all connected with beer. I hope that the Lake District branch enjoy their 'special booze' this month, whatever that is. My deepest condolences, however, to SW Dorset who will be suffering a bout of Conger-Cuddling over the Bank Holiday Weekend, instead of enjoying it with the rest of us. No doubt Naughty Nuns better steer clear of the Bath branch's Merrie Monk evening this month - perhaps they could tell us what a Carmamble is?

Mystery Tour

Those of you who prefer something a little more mysterious might like to try their hand at finding out what happened to the roof of the coach in Bromley branch's Mystery Open Top Bus trip. Maybe the Gravesend and Dartford branch could tell them - theirs was no mystery. However, West Middx. branch have been lumbered with a mystery coach. Will the owner please ring the branch contact. Although vying for a place as the most unusual sounding event of the month is Chelmsford and Mid-Essex's 'English Electric Valve Jubilee Fete', Gravesend and Dartford must take the prize with their sinister sounding 'Official branch trial of Tap Bitter'. Would the defendant please rise.

DAVE BURNS.

SNIPPETS...

At our last branch meeting, Marion Birch our Social Secretary resigned. We would like to thank her for all the great work she has done in the last two years. The meeting, held at the Cricketers in Redbourn was affected by an industrial dispute at Ind Coope involving an electrician and beer ran out half way through the evening. Business was rushed through and we all moved to wetter climes.

The branch's Folk Evening, held at the Crown in St. Albans made the handsome profit of £1.43 but the evening was a success if under attended. The bill was topped by the Tippen Family.

Readers might be interested in a special bus service that Mitdish Motors of Ruislip are hoping to run on 11 September. The service, Stevenage - Wood End (lunchtime) or Weston - Hertford (evening) will pick up at/drop off at a number of real ale pubs. Details from Mr. Taffel 01-429 0108 (evenings).

Changes

Aston End The Crown is now selling Ind Coope Bitter on handpump.
Elstree The Waggon and Horses will soon be selling handpumped Light Mild alongside the Ind Coope Bitter and Burton Ale.
Stevenage The Marquis of Lorne in High Street is now selling Greene King Abbot. Corens Mill, a Whitbread/Beefeater House is now selling Wethered's Bitter on handpump.
Watford West Herts.Sports and Social Club is soon to introduce McMullen's AK Mild in place of Sam Smith's OBB.
Wheathampstead The Bull is now selling Whitbread (Marlow) Bitter.
Woolmer Green The Red Lion has introduced Ind Coope Burton Ale.

DARTS

The London CAMRA Darts League has been won by West Middlesex Branch who beat Enfield and Barnet Branch by 4 - 3 in an exciting final, after being 0 - 3 down.

Courage Petition

In the March '77 edition of the Newsletter we wrote an article about the closure of Courage's Reading Brewery and how the new Worton Grange plastic keg plant, with an initial capacity of 1½M barrels per year, will not be producing any cask-conditioned beer. The local CAMRA branches were hoping to get the signatures of 200 publicans, who receive their beer from the Reading brewery, on a petition asking for the Reading cask-conditioned beers to be continued to be brewed. Over 250 such signatures have so far been collected and the petition will be presented to Courage at noon on 6 September at the Courage (London) Brewery - The Anchor Brewhouse, Horselydown, SE1 (on the south side of Tower Bridge). This remarkable achievement certainly deserves the support of all CAMRA members, so turn up at twelve-noon on the 6th and show your support.

MEMBERSHIP

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 £4.00 as my annual subscription.

Name
 Address

 Signature

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

DIARY of EVENTS

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

- Aug. 23 August Branch Meeting
 The Garibaldi, Albert Street, St.Albans (Ind Coope) 8.00pm.
 CAMRA Chairman, Chris Bruton and our new Regional Organiser, Dave McKerchar, will be at the meeting.
- Aug. 28 The branch is helping to run a beer tent at Ambassador College, Bricket Wood. (see inside).
- Sept. 6 Social with South Bedfordshire branch at The Queens Head in Southdown Road, Harpenden. (Ind Coope) 8.00pm.
- Sept.10 and 11. Camping weekend in Southwold (for details see inside).
- Sept.13 September Branch Meeting
 The Red Lion, Watling Street, Radlett (Greene King and Bass) 8.00pm.
- Sept.30 Brewery Trip: Guinness, Park Royal London NW10. starting 2.15pm. Tickets are available from Jim Axford: Tel.01-759 4321 x6119 (wk)
- Oct. 26 Social with Hertfordshire North Branch at The Old Rose and Crown in Watton Road, Ware. (McMullen's) Starting around 8.00pm.

Hertfordshire North Branch

- Aug. 24 Social Evening at The White Horse, Weston, (Greene King) 8.00pm.

Herts/Essex Borders Branch

- Sept. 5 Informal meeting at The Old English Gentleman, Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey (McMullens) 8.00pm.
- Sept.10 Coach Trip. Day outing to Southwold. Contact Steve Marlow, Tel: Harlow 30450.
- Sept.13 Branch Meeting. The Axe and Compasses, Aythorpe Roding (Ind Coope) 8.00pm.

Enfield and Barnet Branch

- Sept.14 Branch Meeting. The King George, High Street, Barnet (Charrington) 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.
 STOP PRESS:
 The Harrow in Verulam Road, St.Albans is now selling Ind Coope Burton Ale.