

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1977 NUMBER 18

1977: The Best Year So Far

After another successful year for real ale in South Hertfordshire, and indeed in the county as a whole, Ind Coope must for the second year running take first prize for services to real ale in the area - another 20 or so of their pubs have introduced handpumps and many of their pubs, once with Burton Ale only, are now also selling handpumped bitter. Ironically, due to strike action many Ind Coope houses stocked beers from other brewers such as Brakspears, Adnams and Greene King. Ind Coope too have figured in the pub swops which will materialise in the New Year - two dozen pubs belonging to them in South Hertfordshire going, to either Courage or Bass - Charrington for pubs in other areas. Ind Coope at the moment own 60-70% of the pubs in our area, but some of the pubs to be swapped already sell real ale, so the future of real ale in these houses is speculative.

Whitbread Second

Surprisingly, Whitbread come second in pub conversions this year, bringing their Wethered's bitter up from Marlow via the London Colney depot. Unfortunately, in many cases this is being charged at extortionate prices. But Whitbread are closing their Rhymney brewery in South Wales and foisting the kegged stuff from Cardiff on the poor old taffs. Are Whitbread really interested in what their customers feel?

More Mac's

Locally, McMullens who celebrated 150 years of brewing this year, are looking more sympathetically to the real ale cause with handpumps going into their new pubs but Mac's continue to appear apprehensive about real ale. Statistic: In January 1974 less than one in ten pubs in the county sold real beer. In December 1977 this has improved to almost one in three.

Real Only from Rayment's

Rayment's, the other Hertfordshire brewery, whose future has seemed uncertain for some time, now seems safe, with sales of BBA and AK up by 20% and keg production stopped and more money available from Greene King being invested in the plant. However it is unlikely we will be seeing much Rayment's in the South Herts. area as they will not cross into... (Contd. Page 2)

Mac's: 2-1

McMullen's, who have recently been installing handpumps for Country bitter in new or renovated pubs, have come up with two new outlets this month: The Orange Tree in Hitchin and the Sun in Hoddesdon. Both pubs opened earlier this month. Bad news though from Ware, where the Millstream no longer sells handpumped AK Mild, due to lack of demand. The pub didn't sell the Country bitter and so now is a rare deletion to the Herts. guide.

Rayment's Boost

Rayment's of Furneux Pelham, has had a recent injection of cash from Greene King which seems to prove that current rumours that the brewery will close are false.

Sales of cask-conditioned BBA and AK are up by 20% and all kegging operations have been transferred to Greene King's brewery in Biggleswade.

On Tuesday 24 January, there will be a social at The Shires Bar in St. Pancras station, which sells Rayment's BBA and AK, Greene King Abbot Ale, Ruddle's County and bitter and Sam Smith's Bitter. There will be an extension until 11pm (it normally closes at 8pm) and food will be available. So, if you work in London why not miss the early train and stay for a few pints.

St. Pancras is the end of the line for trains from St. Albans, Radlett etc.

...continued from page 1.

the Greene King (Biggleswade) trading area into which we fall. Greene King, who rank eighth in the brewing world in Britain, are still very reluctant to serve their excellent beers properly in their tied houses and are investing a fair amount into a kegging plant at Biggleswade. This does seem a contradiction as handpumps are readily available to free houses wishing to sell their beers.

Free Trade

We must thank the entrepreneurs in the free trade (another four this year) who increase the choice of brews available in the area although their prices often leave a little to be desired. One exception is Trust House Forte who have developed a most enlightened policy of providing real ale in their houses at a reasonable price.

No to Tap

Following CAMRA's financial problems of last year, this year's major controversy has surrounded air pressure. Is beer served by this method real beer? An E.G.M. held to sort out the problem voted to let each branch decide as to whether they should include pubs using this method of dispense in local guides or entries for the Good Beer Guide. This will obviously lead to some inconsistencies but should please most people. The branch decided against which effectively will exclude Truman's Tap Bitter and some Watney's Fined Bitter outlets from next year's Hertfordshire guide.

Cider

The branch's motion put forward at the national AGM was accepted so real draught cider will be featured in the 1978 Good Beer Guide which should be available next April. The £4 membership adopted at the AGM caused concern at the time but this has not been realised which only goes to prove the commitment of the members to the campaign.

Festival

The most memorable of the branch activities in the last year was the Hertfordshire Beer Festival at Hatfield Poly in July. I think all would agree it was an excellent event although not without fault and next year's festival is already under consideration, which will hopefully be even better. A close second in the branch events was the weekend trip to Ecclefechan and Theakston's Carlisle brewery - three days of gross over indulgence. We are all looking forward to next year's weekend trip - probably Bateman's of Wainfleet. The branch also ran twelve other brewery trips this year, some good and some bad but all interesting. Already we have

three brewery trips arranged for next year: Ridley's, Rayment's and Brakspear's.

Guide

The Hertfordshire Guide to real ale pubs in its new improved format proved a good seller again, clearing 3000 copies without much trouble and next year's should be better still and it is hoped to keep to the same price. The guide continues to prove there are still many who like to seek out a good pint.

Where Next?

As I have hinted earlier, the campaign is a long way from over. Courage are pressing on with their gigantic megakeg-gary near Reading that has potential capacity to take over from their Bristol and London breweries as well as Reading. This mustn't happen and with pubs still being ruined - genuinely old pubs being made to look like fakes and public bars being lost to 'Poacher's Bars' and 'Potter's Bars' with fancy prices - we must show the unlovable brewing giants that they cannot dictate to us what we should drink and where to drink.

Vote with your feet! and more power to your elbow. Merry Christmas, (your loving Chairman),

Bob.

by Bob Norrish.

Handpumps for Fined

Watney's Fined Bitter, which is now fairly well represented in South Hertfordshire, is to be sold on handpumps! This, however, is not quite what it seems because the handpump, fitted on the bar, actually activates an electric dispense system or an air pressure system, the same system used for the dispense of Truman's Tap bitter. Whether it is Grand Metropolitan's policy to go over completely to air pressure remains to be seen.

Mild to Go?

Current rumour circulating is that the future of Ind Coope's KK Mild may be in doubt. This has been a recurring rumour since Ind Coope withdrew their cask-conditioned Dark Mild a couple of years ago. At our Ind Coope brewery visit last year, Ind Coope officials said that the light mild was just about viable.

Party

The branch's New Year Party will be held at Bramfield Village Hall on Friday 6th January starting at 8pm. Tickets are £2.50 from Adrian Green, 102 Selborne Rd, Southgate, London, N.14. Wide range of beer and food, disco and live group.

December Pub News

Quite a few pre-Christmas changes this month. Apart from the Mac's changes mentioned on the front page here are the latest changes:

Barnet Ye Old Monken Holt is now selling handpumped Courage Director's bitter. The Hadley Hotel in Hadley Road is now selling Watney's Fined Bitter.

Bricketwood The Black Boy is now selling Ind Coope Bitter alongside the Burton.

Buntingford The Jolly Sailors will soon be selling Director's. The pump is now fitted so it's just a matter of the first delivery. This breaks a duck for the town which previously had no real ale outlets.

Bushey Heath The Black Boy now has Ind Coope Bitter to go with the Burton Ale.

Chandlers Cross The Clarendon Arms which normally sells Ruddles County, Young's Special and Sam Smith's bitter, sometimes stocks Burton Ale.

Chapmore End The Woodman, already selling Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale by gravity, will shortly be adding both Light and Dark Mild to their range. Well worth a visit.

Cockfosters The Trent Tavern is now selling Director's to go with the Best Bitter and Dark Mild. The Trent can now claim to be one of the rare Courage pubs to sell all three cask-conditioned beers. The Cock Tavern and the Jester are now selling Ind Coope Bitter alongside the Burton Ale.

Elstree The Fishery also now sells Ind Coope bitter together with Burton Ale.

Hertford The Two Brewers, a recent convert to real ale has replaced Courage Best Bitter with Director's. Charrington's Crown is also available which, incidentally, is being brewed at present in Ipswich by Tolly Cobbold.

St. Albans The Adelaide Wine Bar, surprisingly in Adelaide Street, has recently introduced Abbot Ale on gravity. The Black Lion also now sells Abbot Ale.

DOWN WITH REAL ALE!



Above, is the design featured on the top side of the branch's new beer mat.

Naturally enough, the reverse side has an empty glass, with information on CAMRA and details of membership. The mats are being made available to other branches for distribution to pubs and should prove a good campaigning venture. The mat was designed by branch secretary, Dave Burns, so if any branches are interested contact Dave at 44 Torrington Drive, Potters Bar, Tel: Potters Bar 51492.

Hertford Meeting

On 17 January 1978, the branch will be holding its first-ever branch meeting in Hertford - at the Dimsdale Arms in Fore Street. Real ale will be available in the meeting room, a barrel of Country bitter and a barrel of A.K. Hopefully members in Hertford, Ware and the surrounding area will come along - meetings are usually lively affairs and always interesting.

Another first will be the February meeting which is to be held at the Robin Hood in Potters Bar - details next month.



The End of Red?

Watney's Mortlake brewery is rumoured to be being modified, enabling the plant to brew Fined Bitter, which is at present being brewed in Norwich and transported to the south-east. And even more surprising rumour is that they are to stop brewing Watney's Red altogether. We'll just have to wait and see what happens in the New Year.

Old Ale

There doesn't appear to be, as much Old Ale around as there was last Christmas, but one pub in our area is selling Wethered's Winter Royal - The Royal Oak at West Hyde. This particular brew has an original gravity of 1051.

For Sale

One pub up for sale is the Plough in Tyttenhanger - presumably the license as well. This Whitbread house must have suffered due to its proximity to the Parley Mow which is just down the road of course.



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 to improve the lot of the drinking person.

For your £4.00 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 £4.00 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.

Diary

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Dec 20 A.G.M and December Branch Meeting:
The Garibaldi, Albert Street, St. Albans (Ind Coope) 8pm.
The branch Christmas Draw will be held at the meeting.

Jan 6 The New Year Party:
At Bramfield Village Hall. 8pm.
Featuring a wide range of real beer, food, disco and a live group.
Tickets, at £2.50, are available from Adrian Green, 102 Selborne Rd, Southgate, London, N14.

Jan 17 January Branch Meeting:
The Dimsdale Arms, Fore Street, Hertford. 8pm. (McMullen's). Real ale will be available in the meeting room.

Jan 24 Rayment's Social at The Shires Bar,
St. Pancras Station. For details see front page.

Jan 16 Social with Herts/Essex Borders
Branch at The Coach and Horses, Nazeing (Ind Coope) 8pm.

Hertfordshire North Branch

Jan 11 January Branch Meeting:
The George, Bucklersbury, Hitchin. (Ind Coope) 8pm. At the meeting voting will take place for the North Herts 'Pub of the Year'

Jan 18 Social at The March Hare, Stevenage
(Charrington's) 8pm.

1978 HERTS. GUIDE

Next year's 'Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire' is already in preparation and is aimed for publication in February/March.

If you have any last-minute changes to the guide, please forward these to the guide editor by 31 December: Dave Burns, 44 Torrington Drive, Potters Bar.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Finally, a Merry Christmas to everyone reading the Newsletter and we hope to see you at one of our branch events in the not too distant future.

NEWSLETTER

This Newsletter is produced monthly by the Herts. South Branch of CAMRA. All contributions should be sent to the editor by the first day of the month.

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