

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

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Breaking The Tie: Proposals

A battle currently underway in the West Country between the National Union of Licensed Victuallers and the brewing giants could very soon have more far reaching effects and spread throughout the country. The NULV are looking for 'radical alternatives' to the tied house system after tenants have been hit by escalating rents and falling incomes. Courage are one of the big offenders in the Avon area (where they hold a considerable monopoly) where due to the company's rent increases, tenants were now having to charge up to 2p more per pint than local managed houses. The NULV want to see the setting up of a new body to oversee the running of tied houses and ensure fair play on rents and tenancy agreements (I'm sure this will receive much support amongst Hertfordshire NULV members). They also want to take up CAMRA's proposal that every landlord should have the right to serve one 'untied' draught beer of his choice. Inevitably, the big brewers are against this widening of choice and the NULV proposals and have launched their own campaign to quash the ideas. No prizes for guessing which side we're on.

CHRISTMAS DRAW WINNERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Mrs A. Burns, Potters Bar. | No. A1339 |
| 2. The Robin Hood, Potters Bar | No. A1744 |
| 3. John Read, Grays, Essex | No. A1668 |
| 4. Pete Bills, Gosport, Hants | No. A1734 |
| 5. Dennis Govier, Redbourn | No. A2202 |
| 6. Mr R. Yates, | No. A0430 |
| 7. Steve Hill, Basildon | No. A2461 |
| 8. Mr G.I. Wardle, Whetstone | No. A1386 |
| 9. D.R. Linford, Potters Bar | No. A1391 |
| 10. Mr R. Warren, New Barnet | No. A1201 |
- All prize winners have been notified.

February Meeting

February's branch meeting is to be held at The Robin Hood, High Street, Potters Bar on 15 February at 8pm. This will be CAMRA's first meeting in the town, which has seen a recent boom in real ale pubs (see overleaf). If you've not been to a meeting before why not make this your first. The meetings are usually lively and informative for all those present. An extension has been applied for.

New Mac's Design

Congratulations to McMullen's on the design of their new pub, the Sun in Hoddesdon. Much thought has obviously gone into the interior design of the Sun, something which has often seemed lacking in many of Mac's new pubs of the recent past.

The John O'Gaunt in Hertford and the Saracen's Head in Ware are two examples of Mac's rather uninspired attempts of recent times. The Sun is selling Mac's Country Bitter both by handpump and top pressure so be sure to ask for the pump.

Pub Swaps

There has been no further news on the impending pub swaps between Ind Coope and Courage or Bass-Charrington which are due to start at the end of January. As far as we know there is no set schedule for the handovers, so if you come across any information please let one of the Committee know. The burning question for real ale enthusiasts is whether Courage and Bass-Charrington will see fit to introduce real beer in their newly acquired pubs (remember some of the Ind Coope pubs due to be swapped already sell real beers).

With Courage Directors sales soaring as the beer expands in the Free Trade perhaps Courage will encourage their new landlords to instal handpumps for their cask-conditioned beers. Charrington's too.

Walkabout In Potters Bar

Times have changed in Potters Bar over the last year, with the number of real ale pubs increasing from none to seven, a figure which represents around seventy per cent of the pubs in the town. In fact, somewhat surprisingly, it's even possible to contemplate a real ale pub crawl which might take the following course:

White Horse

First pub en route is the White Horse at the west end of the High Street. Once an old coaching inn on the A1 to the north, the White Horse dates back to well before Potters Bar had many buildings, let alone pubs. The first pint, Burton Ale, can be had in one of the two contrasting bars - the comfortable saloon with brass and copperware or the basic public with two dart boards.

Robin Hood

A stones throw eastwards along the High Street on the same side is the 1930's style Robin Hood which although rather crab looking from the outside is friendly inside. This one bar pub sports bar billiards (rare enough nowadays in these parts) in addition to Ind Coope's Burton Ale and Bitter. Landlord Jack Ellis, is enthusiastic about his food and beer, enough to be a CAMRA member. Our February branch meeting is being held at the Robin Hood (see Diary of Events).

Green Man

Further still along the High Street is the 300 year old Green Man. Nasty rumours abound that Ind Coope intend to knock the saloon and public bars into one bar, thus destroying the difference of atmosphere in the two bars. The public bar has pool and darts and the saloon is a popular haunt with local office workers at lunchtime. Well kept bitter and Burton Ale are available.

Builders Arms

Further afield in Heath Road, Little Heath (a 15 minute walk) McMullen's Country Bitter is available at the Builders Arms, a modern pub which has only recently started selling the beer after a break of about a year. Make sure you ask for Country from the handpump. Darts can be played and chicken in the basket is available at the bar.

Willyotts Manor

Another 15 minutes walk down into Darkes Lane and beyond the railway station is Willyotts Manor with Bass and Charrington's IPA on handpumps. This 16/17th century oak beamed building once housed the District Council offices - it has been tastefully renovated to include

a restaurant and a comfortable bar. This pub is Potters Bar's latest real ale outlet.

Potters

In stark contrast, a more misguided attempt at modernisation comes in the shape of The Potters. Once, as the Potters Bar Hotel it was incongruous but an acceptable Ind Coope establishment who ran it on a lease from Whitbread. Now as a Beefeater Steak House selling Wethered's Bitter on handpumps, it is rather outlandish to say the least. No matter, by this time you should have had enough not to care too much.

Strafford Arms

Still standing? All those capable of the four minute mile (after at least six pints) and it is now five to eleven, should be able to enjoy a last pint at the Strafford Arms in Mutton Lane, with a choice of Ind Coope Mild, Bitter and Burton Ale. The Strafford has recently been undergoing redecoration.

Hic!

Well there we are burp!(sorry), a sort of mini tour of Potters Bar; of course the crawl can be done anyway you wish, or not at all (that is if your New Year resolution is total abstinence). Perhaps the branch may organise such a crawl some time this year.

POTTERS BAR



Pub News

Another hatful of real ale conversions this month throughout the county and a number of changes:

Barkway The Chaise and Pair, a Free House, is now selling Courage Directors, Greene King Abbot, IPA and Dark Mild.

Bishops Stortford The Bakers Dozen in Water Lane, a recently opened Free House is now offering eight real ales:

Rayment's BBA, Abbot Ale, Ind Coope Burton Ale and Bitter, Mac's Country bitter and AK Mild, Ruddle's County and Blue.

The Three Tuns is offering either Abbot or Rayment's on gravity, in alternation.

Buntingford The Jolly Sailors is now selling Courage Director's on handpumps.

Colney Heath The Crooked Billet, yet another Free House, has recently introduced real ale: Wethered's Bitter, Adnam's Bitter and Abbot Ale, but landlord, David Hughes aims to keep the pub's family atmosphere intact which will be a pleasant change - Hertfordshire already has its fair share of trendy Free Houses.

Harpden Abbot Ale on gravity is back at The Inn on the Green but probably only for the rest of the winter.

Hitchin The Sir John Barjeycorn has added Burton Ale to the handpumped Ind Coope Bitter.

Hunsdon All pubs in the villages of Much Hadham, Little Hadham and Hunsdon now sell real ale, not bad considering a year ago there was only one (plus the Crazy Pub). Two recent conversions in Hunsdon complete this real ale success story:

a) The Crown, which is now selling Ind Coope bitter on handpump and

b) The Fox and Hounds is now selling handpumped Mac's Country Bitter.

Potters Bar a) The Builders Arms in Heath Road, Little Heath, is now selling handpumped Mac's Country once again.

b) Willyots Manor, in Darkes Lane has installed handpumps and is now selling Charrington's IPA and Bass.

Ridge The Old Guinea now has Ind Coope's Burton Ale and bitter on handpumps.

Ridge Hill On the A6, The Waggon and Horses (Free House) now sells Courage Directors Bitter.

St. Albans The Adelaide Wine Bar is now a deletion, having installed keg Abbot.

For the record, The Black Lion's range of real ales now reads as follows: Abbot, Sam Smith's OBB and Ind Coope Bitter.

St. Pauls Walden The Strathmore Arms has Adnam's Bitter on gravity.

(more changes on back page).

St. Pancras Evening

If you've got an evening free on 24th January, why not pop down on the train to St. Pancras Station, where the London and Hertfordshire branches will be holding a social in the station's Shires Bar, which sells Rayment's BBA and AK, Abbot, Sam Smith's OBB, Ruddle's County and Blue.

The bar will be open until 10.30pm - it normally closes at 8pm and food will be available, which apparently is a cut above the normal BR sandwiches and rolls etc.

New Year Party

The branch's New Year Party proved yet again to be a resounding success with beers from Theakston's, Brakspear's, Greene King, Adnam's, McMullen's and Rayment's, helping proceedings and plenty of bread, pate and different cheeses to savour. Entertainment was in the form of a disco (thanks to Richard Steward) and Anderson Shelter, who first played an acoustic folk spot and later got everyone on their feet dancing with an hour and a half's worth of rock classics. Thanks very much to them. Demand for tickets was once again exceptional and around 130 people turned up for the Party.

Weekend Trip

This year's branch weekend trip away will be to The Vine, Skegness (It's So Bracing), a Bateman's hotel selling real ale. The weekend trip, starting 24 February will include a visit to Bateman's brewery in Wainfleet and will give all those present the chance to visit such places as Lincoln and Boston amongst others and taste the delights of many different breweries including Elgood's, Ward's, Shipstone's, Hardy's and Hanson's, Paine's, Bass-Worthington's and Ruddle's.

The weekend trip will cost approximately £20 (but probably not more) and this will include bed and breakfast at The Vine for two nights and one evening meal and the coach trip. The coach will start from Barnet Odeon on Friday 24th and other pick up points can be arranged according to who is going. Further details are available from Adrian Green, 104 Selborne Road, Southgate, London, N.14. Tel: 01-882 6406 (home) or 01-633 7446 (work).

Please send a £5 deposit if you wish to reserve a place. One thing's for sure, if it is anything like last year's Ecclefechan trip (which it should be) it will be a great weekend, and well worth every penny.

Pub News

Completing the list of this month's pub news are:

Shenley Pink's Hotel, which of course already sells Young's Special and Sam Smith's OBB, has recently added Abbot.

Tyttenhanger The Barley Mow has Brakspear's 4X on sale alongside the usual wide range of real ales.

Waltham Abbey In Essex of course, but only just. In the Market Square, the Green Dragon now sells Burton Ale. Waltham Abbey already has many McMullen and Ind Coope pubs selling real ale.

Waltham Cross The Castle is now selling Ind Coope Bitter on handpumps.

Wadesmill

One pub with problems appears to be The Feathers in Wadesmill - at the time of going to press they hadn't had any real ale since the beginning of December. Perhaps instead of putting on three real ales they should have concentrated on one and built up from there. A pity really as real traditionally dispensed beer would certainly be in keeping with the history of this old coaching inn on the London to Cambridge route.

Big Hand For Bob

At last month's AGM, Bob Norrish retired as Chairman of the branch after $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (2 as Chairman) on the Committee. The vote of thanks and hearty round of applause he received were richly deserved for all the hard work he has put in and are echoed in these pages. Jim Axford will be the new Chairman and Chris Storey was elected to an otherwise unchanged Committee.



MEMBERSHIP

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 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.

If £4 is too much, why not join as an Associate Member for £1.

For further details of membership, please write to: The Membership Secretary, The Campaign for Real Ale, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3BW.

Diary of Events

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Jan 17 January Branch Meeting

The Dimsdale Arms, Fore Street, Hertford (Mac's). 8pm. Mac's AK and Country on gravity will be available in the meeting room.

Jan 24 Social at The Shires Bar, St. Pancras Station (details on page 3).

Feb 15 February Branch Meeting

The Robin Hood, High Street, Potters Bar (Ind Coope). 8pm. An extension has been applied for.

Feb 24 - 26 Branch weekend trip/brewery visit to Bateman's (for further details see page 3).

Hertfordshire North Branch

Jan 18 Social at The March Hare, Stevenage. 8.00pm. (Charrington's).

Feb 8 February Branch Meeting. The Roebuck, Stevenage (Abbot and Rayment's BBA). 8pm.

Feb 15 Social at The Maiden's Head, Whitwell (Mac's Country). 8pm.

Herts/Essex Borders Branch

Feb 7 Social, at The Crown, Hunsdon. (Ind Coope). 8pm.

Feb 20 February Branch Meeting and Annual General Meeting being held at High Wych, Memorial Hall. Courage beers will be available.

Last and First

This issue of the South Herts Newsletter will be the last. Next month the branch is embarking on a new Newsletter with neighbouring Hertfordshire North branch and Herts/Essex Borders branch. It is hoped that the new Newsletter, as yet unnamed, will still retain information of a local feel, while at the same time broadening to include news from all over the county and articles of general interest.

Yours truly will be editor of this venture, so if you have any ideas or any thoughts concerning real ale, Herts pubs or indeed anything surrounding the world of beer please drop me a line:

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