

FREE



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1976

NUMBER 2

KEEPING IT COOL...

One of the less desirable effects of the weather lately is the difficulty which many landlords are having in keeping their beer. After two years of once-off heatwaves it's about time they did something about it. For many pubs this may mean the installation of coolers for the cellar. One thing which doesn't help is that many CAMRA members, who are supposed to know about ale, continue to drink beer which shouldn't even be served. At one pub recently the publican observed:

"I know you CAMRA members will drink anything but...." If people think that the throats of CAMRA members are drains down which anything masquerading as 'Real Ale' can be poured, then we'd better start changing their minds.

Don't be afraid to return an undrinkable pint. Many landlords serve good beer well - and they're the ones that deserve our support. If the others want our money let them earn it.

Thirsty?

What are you doing on Tuesday, 24th August? The branch has organised a pub crawl around Hertford. If anyone is interested, we will be meeting at The Bell and Crown, 29 Cowbridge, (which is fairly near the centre of Hertford), at 8.00pm. Breweries represented in Hertford include McMullens, Greene King, Adnams, Youngs and Ind Coope.

A map of the town is available from Marion Birch, 139 New Road, Croxley Green, Herts. - please send a stamped addressed envelope.

The branch is always willing to consider new ideas for social events, darts matches, brewery trips etc., if you have any please contact Marion.

Campaign Fund

A donation of £50 from branch funds was made to the Campaign Fund last month. Grants from this fund enable branches to tackle projects which might otherwise be outside their reach financially, such as beer exhibitions and local guides.

Silent Majority

As in any organisation there are always the active members and those who prefer to take a quieter stand.

The Hertfordshire South meetings usually draw between thirty and forty people (depending on the venue) but the vast majority are 'regular' faces.

In the Herts. South branch area we know there are a large number of CAMRA members, yet only a fraction of the total turn out at branch meetings and social events. Many people have other commitments but probably there are others who have never even thought of coming along to a branch meeting, which is a shame as they are forfeiting their chance to have a say in branch policy and also missing the latest local news.

With this in mind the branch is going ahead with an experiment to try and involve more people.

A letter and a copy of the Newsletter will be sent to members living in the vicinity of that month's branch meeting. Hopefully we should be able to gauge response by increased turn-outs at meetings.

How South Herts Started

BY JOHN GREEN

The Herts South branch began life in December 1972, one of the first to be formed. Hertfordshire had provided a large number of the first members, no doubt due to the fact that one of the four founders (now on the National Executive) then lived in St. Albans, working on the local Evening paper.

The Founders

Two groups of people formed the hard core of local campaigners in those early days: one a bunch of largely indiscriminate drinkers previously assembled under the banner of the 'Herts and Bucks Full Timers', who realised that beer from the barrel was better than the likes of DD, Tartan and Tankard, but needed CAMRA's early experts to explain exactly why; the other consisting mainly of employees of the printing industry of Watford, whose enthusiasm was inspired by the indefatigable John Hanscombe, still known to shed a few tears at the mention of Harman's of Uxbridge or Chesham and Brackley. The surgical treatment which he proposed for the perpetrators of the brewing industry's decline would certainly have precluded the practice of family businesses being handed down from father to son.

First Meetings

The first meeting of the then Hertfordshire branch took place just before Christmas 1972 in the Farriers Arms, St. Albans, at the time the only pub in the City selling real beer. McMullen's Country bitter had recently been added to the AK mild which had always been available on draught. From the 40 or so members present the first committee was elected.

All of the early meetings were held at the Farriers until it became apparent that the bar was neither big enough nor private enough to contain the increasing numbers present, so a move was made to the Two Brewers, Chipperfield Common. The Builder's Arms at New Barnet was also tried but that was even smaller than the Farriers! The White Hart in Old Welwyn finally provided a useful alternative.

Not Much Real Ale

Pubs with acceptable beer were very difficult to find in those days. Watford, Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield were

completely 'dry', St. Albans had only one real ale pub and the others were scattered amongst outlying hamlets and villages still untouched by general policy. Had the branch had the manual and financial resources to produce a complete guide to Hertfordshire at the time there would have been precious few entries - perhaps 60 or 70.

Comparing the first guide of a couple of years ago with the latest amply demonstrates the advances attributable to the National and Local campaign, with the new Ind Coope beer the icing on the cake.

The Branch Now

The original branch area has contracted with the growth of CAMRA as a whole, Mid-Chilterns, North Herts, Enfield and Barnet, and Hertfordshire-Essex branches having been formed since we started.

We are entitled to give ourselves a small pat on the back but the work is far from over. The choice and availability of beer has increased beyond what we thought possible a few years ago, but it is still not enough. We know that we, and we hope also you, will continue to consolidate on the improvements made to date. Maybe we can get Benskin's to re-open; the battle might then have been won.

Beer Mats

The branch hopes to produce some beer mats in the near future. These will be available to anyone prepared to pay for them, although the branch will distribute some, free of charge, to local pubs. Groups of members or other branches who can raise the £15 or so for 1000 mats are welcome to send their orders to:

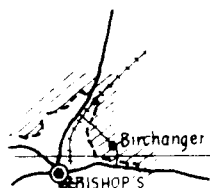
D. Burns,
16 Garthland Drive,
Barnet,
Hertfordshire.

At the moment we are finalising the design and any ideas from members are welcome. Please send to the above address.

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Revised
1976
Edition



The revised 'Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire' is now available, price 10p from Neil Campbell, 105 Batchwood Drive St. Albans, Herts.

- There are already a number of amendments to the guide, as follows:
- Baldock Delete the Hen and Chickens
 - Brent Pelham Add The Black Horse
 - Greene King Abbot and Adnams bitter (G)
 - Charlton The Windmill sells Wells Bitter and Fargo, not mild.
 - Codicote The Goat, gravity not pumps.
 - Epping Green Burton Ale not mild.
 - Hemel Hempstead Delete The Great Harry.
 - Cheshunt The Red Lion is in Enfield.
 - Hay Street The Adam and Eve: Only very occasionally at weekends.
 - Hitchin Delete The Three Moorhens - supply is very occasional.
 - Hooks Cross Delete The Three Horseshoes
 - Letchworth The Garden City Hotel; Add Adnams Bitter (gravity).
 - Little Wymondley The Plume of Feathers: Real Beer not always available.
 - Norton The Three Horseshoes: sells Charrington IPA & Crown, no mild
 - Redbourn Also sells Burton Ale.
 - Reed The Cabinet: Add Adnams Bitter (G)
 - Stevenage The Two Diamonds also sells McMullens Country.
 - Symonds Green The Crooked Billet also sells light mild.
 - Wallington The Plough also sells light mild.
 - Waltham Cross Add The Vine, High Street McMullens Country and AK mild.
 - Wildhill The Woodman is a Free House.

The branch would be pleased to hear of any further changes that members have found.

Looking Around

Those of you who read such things may have seen the yearly report of Whitbreads, from their Chairman, Mr. Alex Bennett. One short section reads as follows:

"We hear criticisms from some people these days that only beer served straight from the cask, or through a beer engine is 'real beer'. All beer served in our houses is brewed from traditional materials and is real beer. The method by which it is dispensed provides beer at its best and ensures that it is always in first-class condition."

I like the reference to 'some people' in the first line. He seems almost as reluctant to name names as he does to face facts.

* * *

Batchwood Hall, the Council-owned pub and restaurant in St. Albans, so nicely surrounded by golf course, putting green, tennis courts and bowling green has reportedly been making a loss of £1000 a month. Previous attempts to point out to them that there is money to be made in selling real ale seem to have fallen on stony ground. Now the managers have been suspended pending investigations into excessive loss of funds. Perhaps the Council might still find its way clear to install some good, traditional beer.

PUB OF THE MONTH

The main objective of 'Pub of the Month' is to get people acquainted with the various pubs and brews available in the area.

As a bonus, if you can complete the card by getting the landlord of each pub to sign in the appropriate place, bring the card along to the next branch meeting - you stand to win a prize. This months pubs are:

1. The Victoria Tavern, Queens Road, Watford. Burton Ale
2. The Oddfellows Arms, Addiscombe Rd, Watford. Burton Ale
3. The Jolly Sailer, Stonecross, St. Albans. C. Wells
4. Pinks, Rectory Road, Shenley. Sam Smiths + Youngs

The Southerner ?

If Ind Coope are so convinced about the future of real ale as to produce Burton Ale for several hundred outlets, then why do their current T.V. advertisements always show a completely gas only pub? They do have quite a few of the other kind.

The comment at the end of the commercial about I.C. bitter being brewed specially for the South is somewhat at odds with what I've heard from officials of the aforementioned company. They say that Romford and Burton brewed bitters are supposed to be identical! Most drinkers would agree that the Northern bitter is far superior, so where does that leave us with regard to I.C.'s attitude towards the South?

DAVE BURNS. * * * *

This newsletter is produced monthly by the Hertfordshire South branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. All letters, contributions should be sent to the Editor by the first day of the month.

Editor: Les Middlewood,
81a Linden Way, Southgate,
London, N14 4NG.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of

beer and pubs. Why not join and help us improve the lot of the drinking person? For your £2 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. I agree to abide by the ideals of the Campaign and I enclose £2.00 as my annual membership subscription. (Any additional amount received will be welcomed as a donation)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel.No.....

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

- Sept. 2 Social, and Darts Match v Enfield and Barnet branch, at The Green Man, Potters Bar. (Ind Coope Burton Ale) Starting 8.00pm
- 21 Branch Meeting. White Hart, 2 Prospect Pl, Welwyn (Whitbread Marlow) 8.00pm.

Enfield and Barnet Branch

- Sept. 8 Branch Meeting. Ring Tony Littler 01-626 1515 x2706
- 18 The branch is running a day coach trip to Portsmouth & Brighton leaving Barnet Odeon at 7.45am and Enfield Town at 8.00am. Fare £3.00. Brews include: Brickwoods, Hall and Woodhouse, Harveys, Eldridge Pope, King and Barnes etc. For further information write to, or ring: Colin Roddett, 8 Blenheim Close Winchmore Hill, N.21. Tel: 01-837 4242 x100.
- Aug. 21 The branch runs an information stand at the Friern Barnet Show. Friary Pk. 2.00

Mid-Chilterns Branch

For information of Branch Meeting ring **Dick Chapman**, Tel: Chesham 6703

North Herts Branch

For Branch meeting contact Dennis Robertson, Tel: Stevenage 782779

Herts-Essex Borders Branch

- Sept. 4 Day trip to Southwold, (Adnams Ales). Contact Dennie Martin, Tel: Gt.Dunmow 2602 For Branch Meeting also contact the above.

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Further copies of this Newsletter are available from the Editor or here:

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| <u>St.Albans</u> | The Jolly Sailor |
| <u>Shenley</u> | Pinks Hotel |
| <u>Hertford</u> | The White Horse |
| <u>Thundridge</u> | The Windmill |
| <u>Hatfield</u> | The New Fiddle |
| <u>Watford</u> | West Herts Spts & Social Club. |