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THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1976 NUMBER 3

EUROBEER - Good or Bad?

The EEC Commission has recently put forward a directive which aims at common controls on the production of beer in the nine member countries. It contains a list of the materials which would be allowed in the production of beer and lager. The Technical Committee of CAMRA has written to the Ministry of Agriculture expressing concern over some of these proposals. Some of them do represent a step in the right direction, such as the labelling of bottle and barrels with a list of any additives used. However, there is no provision for displaying these at points-of-sale in pubs and worse still the definition of permitted additives is far too loose. One additive, formaldehyde, is commonly used as a preservative for dead bodies and can be dangerous if taken in sufficient quantity! The levels of adjuncts - substitutes for malted barley - would also be too great, up to 40%, according to the Committee. What's more, the directive contains no mention of beer production, conditioning or dispense - all of which undeniably affect the final quality and flavour.

The proposal would seem to be drawing the line at the lowest level and will put the official seal of approval on inferior products. If this directive comes into effect it can only encourage brewing down to a level instead of up to a standard, and then the term 'Eurobeer' will become yet another insult along with 'keg' and all the others.

1977 Guide

Branch Committee members are already discussing plans for the 1977 local beer guide, provisionally called: 'The Hertfordshire Beer Drinkers Almanac'. The new guide will be in book form, containing as much useful information as possible and should hopefully be available for Christmas 1976 - price: around 30 pence.



ADNAMS CREEP INTO HERTS.

The largest single event of the last year has of course, been the introduction of Burton Ale. Yet spare a few moments perusing 'Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire' and its Amendments and another new beer to the area becomes apparent - Adnams - the friendly family run brewery of Southwold, Suffolk. Until recently Adnams have essentially relied on their tied houses and the Free Trade in and around Suffolk. Now, through delivering to distributors, Adnams have been able to increase their hinterland as far west as Hertfordshire.

Adnams bitter, with an original gravity of 1036, is regarded as one of the finest beers brewed in Britain and certainly one of the most distinctive.

Brewing on the Sole Bay site in Southwold goes back to the 17th Century although Adnams began brewing in the 1870s (in fact parts of the present day cellar date back 300 years).

Adnams bitter is now available in seven Hertfordshire Free Houses - the latest being The Fox and Duck, Therfield and The White Horse, Hertford.

You'll pay more than the Southwold price of 21p a pint but give it a try!

A Visit To Courage

BY STEVE BERRY

Well, what a day this turned out to be! I came to the Courage (Reading) Brewery with twelve others in a mini-bus driven by a lunatic with no sense of direction and a magnetic attraction for the tail-end of lorries. Due to many detours and diversions, plus several trips around Reading's one-way system, including one which took us past the brewery heading down a bus lane in the wrong direction, we finally entered the brewery complex at about 2 o'clock where we were met by Dave Henman, Beds. Chairman, who was coming round with us.

We all went round the corner to The Horn, the nearest pub to the brewery (sorry, the nearest sells Morlands on top pressure). Anyway we all found a good pint of Directors and some light snacks. The barmaid who I presumed was the landlady started taking offence about the standard of dress of some of us. She complained about Tom's jean jacket - quite usual attire these days and when I left to check everything was organised at the Brewery office and returned wearing a singlet (having removed my jumper), I was informed that I would not be served. I didn't want serving anyhow - real bad luck for her after all she'd only sold 26 pints of Directors and all her rolls and sandwiches in 20 minutes.

To the brewery

We all left for the brewery and met Bob Norrish and Jim Axford at the office. We were taken round by one of the brewery guides and given a comprehensive tour of the older part of the Brewery, which still produces the real thing. Among interesting equipment was an 1869 round copper fermentation tank and at the other end of the time scale, a brand new nylon fibre tank, first shown at the Brewex exhibition last year. We also visited the bottling plant and cannery, luckily on the way to the sampling room.

Room for a Sample

We entered a large plush bar, rather like a hotel's and met the barman who wasn't exactly putting himself out to make us welcome. I couldn't believe my eyes! - the party before us was two Frenchmen and a girl, the barman drew a half a pint of J.C. (yuck) and poured it into three wine glasses for them. Everyone relaxed into the armchairs and

got stuck into some good sandwiches and a pint of Best Bitter, (Directors isn't brewed at Reading). I had a chat with the guide about the brewery, which is definitely under threat of closure - the foundations already being laid for the new complex. The fears expressed in 'What's Brewing' (August) seem justified - site closure, no real ale production and staff cuts are definite possibilities.

Beer from Bristol

If all goes as planned by Courage, real beer will be brought from Bristol to supply pubs in Reading's large supply area. This will of course mean high transport costs causing Courage to persuade publicans to change their dispensing methods.

Anyway, back to the trip - I was informed that the bar was going to close in ten minutes at 4.30pm, so I gave the lads a call for last orders. Most of us got another pint in, much to the dismay of the barman.

A Comparison

I have, with the branch, visited Gray's, Young's and Fuller's, all family brewers which must make a difference as we always got a good drink at the end of the trip. The difference here was that most of us got two pints, some rushed three - I got four but was frowned upon, I presume for taking advantage.

Now some of you reading this article may think we are ungrateful but I have written it as it happened, maybe we were all spoilt by last year's excellent Fuller's trip.

Twelve slightly disillusioned drinkers returned to the coach and Dave, Bob and Jim slipped away to Henley to sample some Brakspears.

Guide Amendments

Aspenden The Fox also sells light mild

Bourne End The Anchor: Add Ind Coope Bitter and Burton Ale.

Chorleywood The White Horse - delete - unpressurised Abbot is very rare

Datchworth The Inn on the Green. Charles Wells Fargo bitter replaces Sh. Neame.

Great Munden The Plough. Also sells Rayment's AK Mild. Continued Back Page.

CAMRA Darts

The branch darts team continued their undefeated run with a 5 - 4 win over Enfield and Barnet branch this month, at the Green Man, Potters Bar. After electing to play the best of three straight 'eights' the opposition crumbled to a 2-0 defeat, but on deciding to play the 'fours and twos' squared the match at 4-4. Rich 'Dickie Mint' Willett planted the winning dart for Herts South in a deciding eight-a-side game. So 5-4 to Herts South.

With seven matches played (and won) and one friendly to come against South Bedfordshire Branch at Redbourn, the branch confidently look forward to the opening match of this year's London CAMRA Darts League - which we have entered for the first time.

League Set-up

The League, has been split into four regional groups, the winners of each group progressing to a semi-final. Herts South's group rivals will be Romford; East London; North London; and Enfield and Barnet (again?). It seems the prize will be money for branch funds.

The first match is at home against Romford branch, venue and date to be decided, but it must be played before the end of the month. October's match will be against Enfield and Barnet branch.

Players

For all those wishing to play for the branch: you must belong to CAMRA and you must be registered as a player with this branch. The branch is looking for a 'pool' of 12-15 players, so please contact Marion Birch Tel: Rickmansworth 73913 - who will also be able to give you details about matches.

The list of victories reads:

1. Enfield and Barnet	Away	5 - 2
2. The Hares	Away	4 - 3
3. Enfield and Barnet	Away	6 - 1
4. South Bedfordshire	Home	6 - 1
5. Radlett Round Table	Home	4 - 3
6. Mid-Chilterns	Away	5 - 2
7. Enfield and Barnet	Home	5 - 4

HANDPUMPS FOR SALE

The branch has for sale a bank of 2 handpumps - at around £80 a bargain for any landlord considering introducing Real Ale into his pub. Contact: Dave Burns, Tel: 01-440-6566.

Beer Monopolies

The Mid-Chilterns Branch of CAMRA, our western neighbours, have had their comprehensive report of the number of outlets for beer controlled by Allied Breweries (Ind Coope and ABC) referred to the Monopolies Commission.

The area they investigated covered parts of Herts, Beds, and Bucks. It was found that Allied control 70% of the pubs in this area and under the 1973 Fair Trading Act - 25% of business in an area is needed to establish a monopoly. However one of the greatest problems in preparing this report was one of trying to ascertain what defined an area in this case, is it a licensing area, three counties or the whole country?

Allied's reaction to the report, according to the Luton Evening Post, was one of surprise, although they have known of its existence for some time. They also mention that an Allied Brewery - conditioned beer recently won the Best Bitter in Britain title in the Sunday Mirror - Tetley Drum Keg, while in the Ind Coope region they recently introduced a new cask-conditioned beer, Burton Ale, served through beer engines. This is all true - but not very relevant to owning 70% of the pubs within the area. Take Watford for instance, of the 135 pubs in the town, 106 belong to Ind Coope (78%). Other examples are: Hatfield (64%), St. Albans (50%) and Dacorum (Hemel Hempstead etc: 75%).

AT YOUR LIBRARY

There will be an exhibition of the brewing process, beers, pubs, drinking customs etc., with special local information, on display at Croxley Green library during October and later at Watford Central Library.

PUB OF THE MONTH

Collect signatures (from the landlords of any 3 of the 4 listed pubs), bring the card along to the next branch meeting and you stand to win a prize:

1. The Plough, Flamstead
End. McMullens
2. The Wellington, Bore-
hamwood. Ind Coope
3. The Yew Tree, Walkern
McMullens
4. The Garden City Hotel
Letchworth. Adnams

Whitbread Coming?

Rumours that Whitbread may be fitting handpumps back into four of their pubs in Hertfordshire have been growing during the last month. This would be very good news indeed, especially as Hertfordshire can only boast two Whitbread pubs selling Real Beer: The Royal Oak at West Hyde, and The White Hart at Welwyn.

MORE GUIDE CHANGES

Hertford The White Horse. Add Adnams
Little Wymondley The Plume of Feathers
 reinstate - now has handpumped Abbot.
Piccot's End The Boar's Head. Addition.
 Ind Coope Bitter, Burton Ale & Mild.
Sarratt The Boot. Ind Coope have
 installed three handpumps.
Therfield The Fox and Duck. Addition.
 Adnams Bitter and Mild
Walkern The Yew Tree. Addition.
 McMullens Country and AK Mild.
Wheathampstead The Cherry Tree, Lower
 Luton Road. Addition. Ind Coope
 Burton Ale.
Elstree The Battleaxes. Add Ruddles
 (to be confirmed)



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

Oct. 26 Branch Meeting. 8.00pm
 West Herts. Sports and Social
 Club. 8 Park Avenue, Watford.
 (Fullers, Samuel Smiths,
 Youngs and Brakspears).

Enfield and Barnet Branch

Oct. 13 Branch Meeting. 8.00pm
 The King George, High Street,
 Barnet. (Charringtons)

North Herts Branch

Oct. 13 Branch Meeting. 8.00pm
 The Three Horseshoes, Norton,
 Nr.Letchworth. (Charringtons)
 Sept. 22 Joint Social with North Bed-
 fordshire Branch at The Cross,
 Beeston, Near Sandy. 8.00pm
 29 Folk Social at The Anchor,
 Weston. 8.00pm (Greene King).
 Oct. 9 Harvest Festival. All Day.
 The Bell, Therfield. (Grn.King)
 20 Social at The White Horse,
 Weston. 8.00pm (Greene King)

Mid-Chilterns Branch

Branch Meeting. Contact Dick
 Chapman. Tel: Chesham 6703.

Herts-Essex Borders Branch

Branch Meeting. Contact Dennie
 Martin. Tel: Gt.Dunmow 2602.

Where to get it

This Newsletter is produced monthly by the Hertfordshire South Branch of The Campaign for Real Ale. All letters, contributions etc. should be sent to the editor by the first day of the month:
 Les Middlewood, 81a Linden Way,
 Southgate,
 London,
 N14 4NG.

Further copies of this Newsletter can be obtained from the editor or from any of the pubs listed below:

Harpenden The Queens Head
Hatfield The New Fiddle
Hertford The White Horse
St.Albans The Jolly Sailor
Shenley Pink's Hotel
Thundridge The Windmill
Watford West Herts. Sports
 and Social Club.