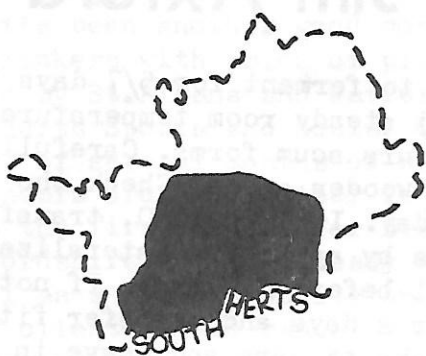




THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE SOUTH HERTS. NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1977

NUMBER 8

How Long To The 50p. Pint?

Judging by the events of the last couple months it seems that the customer is going to be asked, yet again, to dig deeper into his or her dwindling purse. Whitbread and Ind Coope seem to be the big offenders in Hertfordshire with 2 - 3 pence increases in the price of a pint. Some Ind Coope houses are now charging as much as 39 pence for a pint of Burton Ale or almost 8/- in old currency. Many of the stronger brews have gone up as much as 6 pence in the last year, and at the current pace drinkers will soon be paying an unwelcome fifty pence for a pint. At the 1976 Whitbread AGM a company executive said that there was no consumer organisation to support the average pub-goer or drinker. The big brewers seem to be happy to take advantage of the situation. The CAMRA National Executive is already looking into ways to combat excessive price increases and the Daily Mail recently revealed that rumblings were indeed reaching Parliament, MPs having had many complaints from their constituents.

Distribution

McMullens are able to produce a superb middle strength bitter for around 26p - so why not Ind Coope and Whitbread, whose ordinary bitters are weaker than McMullens Country Bitter and yet cost substantially more. Whitbread 'Draught Bitter'-a very good pint, nevertheless has to come from Marlow because the Luton brewery cannot produce real ale. In fact the Marlow brewery even delivers to Luton, to the Grapevine. Even so, transport costs should not be too much, because as the crow flies Marlow is only 24 miles from St. Albans, roughly in the centre of our area. Whatever the reasons, the increases are like a pint of Watney's Red - hard to swallow!

With their huge financial profits to maintain it's too easy for the big brewers just to put up their prices. It must be changed.

HOOK NORTON

A further brewery trip has been added to this years list: Hook Norton. See back page.

BLACKPOOL AGM

CAMRA's National AGM is to be held this year at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool on March 12 and 13.

All members are urged to attend as the meeting should be crucial in directing the future of the Campaign. Herts. South Branch will be putting forward one motion:

'This meeting feels that provision should be made to include real draught cider in future, in the National Good Beer Guide'

The CAMRA National Executive have reached a decision on what constitutes 'real draught cider' after much discussion with cider makers in the South West. They will now only give moral support to the Campaign being waged by the South-west branches. To this branch this seems to be a sad attitude of neglect after all cider is in a worse situation than beer was before CAMRA started. The Good Beer Guide would provide a good advertising platform.

NB

There has been no real draught cider commercially available in Hertfordshire since 1955 when S. Wright and Co. of Walkern stopped production and sold their orchard. Today they produce only soft drinks and bottled cider.

Smashing at Home by Jim Axford

Whilst one cannot dispute the accuracy of Dave Burns' article on home brewing (see last months Newsletter) there are one or two problems that potential/current home brewers should bear in mind.

The first point is that the unique mashing vessel referred to in David Line's book is no longer available (previously made by Amoco) and stocks in the camping shops are non-existent after last year's hot summer. I am currently experimenting with a plastic brew bucket fitted with a tap and placed inside a thick walled expanded polystyrene box (the success of which has yet to be proved). A more serious problem for some home brewers is that the whole process takes several hours and can cause domestic problems as to who has the most right to the kitchen (or the beer/food syndrome).

As an alternative, I personally find that I can make a readily acceptable beer from the following recipe which, in spite of the extract taste, is much more of a pleasure to drink than the Boots/Unican Kits and indeed some commercial beers. It takes just $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to make.

BOTTLED BITTER - 5 GALLONS

INGREDIENTS

- 4lbs. Malt Extract (EDME 'D.M.S' or 'Superflavex' recommended) - 2lb can
- 1lb. Cracked Crystal Malt
- 4oz. 'Goldings' hops
- 4lbs White sugar
- 1 Packet EDME Dried Yeast.

METHOD

1. Add malt extract to $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of water and heat to boiling point. Add crystal malt and hops and stir in; bring back to boil and maintain for 60 minutes.
2. Allow to cool (to avoid scalding and destroying plastic sieves etc.) to about 140°F .
3. Empty sugar into a bucket and pour on the brew, filtering with a sieve (or terylene net).
4. Sparge malt and hops with 1 gallon of hot water and throw away solids. Stir well and add cold water to increase the volume to 5 gallons.
5. Allow to cool to $65-75^{\circ}\text{F}$ (Takes about 6 hours) add yeast.
6. Leave in a warm room at about 65°F .
7. Take the specific gravity which should read around 1050+

8. Leave brew to ferment for 5/7 days in warm ($65-70^{\circ}\text{F}$) steady room temperature. After 24-36 hours scum forms. Carefully remove with a wooden spoon. Check the SG on the fifth day. If 1020-1040, transfer to gallon jars by syphoning (sterilize and rinse well before filling). If not wait a further 2 days and transfer fit fermenting cocks to jars and leave in the same room temperature for a further 7 days. Check if gravity 1000 (ie. fermentation complete). Beer ready for bottling.

BOTTLING

Syphon off into bottles adding $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon* per pint and seal. Leave for seven days at room temperature. Store 3 weeks in cool room ($55-60^{\circ}\text{F}$). *Sugar.

DRAUGHT

Syphon into gallon jars and fit rubber stoppers. Store for 4 weeks and drink in one go.

The above 5 gallons currently costs 7p per pint and, with a gravity of at least 50° , can only be described as smashing, in more ways than one. In fact, some of my friends consider that it should carry a Government Health Warning!

It isn't traditional brewing but a cheap, quick, intermediate stage between 'one-can' kits and the full brewing process.

SILVER JUBILEE ALES

It seems possible that a number of breweries will be producing special beers to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Ind Coope's bottled 'Silver Jubilee Strong Ale' is unfortunately filtered but it has an original gravity of 1100. It will sell at 35p per half pint. Youngs' 'Silver Sovereign' will sell at 25p per half pint and has an OG of 1070. Theakstons are brewing a real draught ale as are Tolly Cobbold - Tolly Royal. Courage bottled Silver Jubilee Ale will shortly be on sale and Greene King aim to brew a commemorative beer, with barley from Sandringham, which is very apt. More information will no doubt unfold as the year progresses.

For Sale

Anyone wishing to buy two Harris Beer Pumps please contact Jim Axford at 117 Queens Road, Watford, Herts.

Co-opted

Tony Burns has been coopted to the Branch Committee.

Changes

It's been another good month for real ale drinkers with pride of place being shared by St. Albans and Watford. At the West Herts Sports and Social Club, as a result of several months of negotiation, Brakspears Ordinary Bitter is now on sale. It is the first outlet for Brakspears in Hertfordshire and is already establishing itself as a firm favourite amongst the eager clientele who can also choose from Youngs ordinary and Special bitters, Bass, and Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter. Temporary membership is available at the door.

Lucky drinkers in St. Albans have gained another three real ale pubs this month. The Crown, in Hatfield Road, is an ex-Trumans house which is now selling Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter, Ruddles County, Greene King Abbot and Light Mild (which is rare in this part of the world). When completely organised the pub will have a new 'Real Ale Bar'. The Fleur de Lys in the centre of the city has introduced Whitbread Draught Bitter from Marlow. The pub has recently re-opened after extensive redecoration. The only snag is that it's 34p a pint. Lastly. The White Lion also in the city centre, has introduced Ind Coope Burton Ale and Bitter.

And More

Ardley, Wood End The Chequers is now selling Abbot Ale on gravity in addition to IPA.

Barkway The Tally Ho! on the A10 is now selling Abbot Ale.

Great Munden The Plough now has Rayments Bitter on sale alongside the Abbot Ale.

Harpenden The Fox on the A6 now sells Ind Coope Burton Ale and Bitter.

High Cross The White Horse now has Ind Coope Bitter on sale as well as Burton.

Hitchin The George has Burton Ale and Bitter while The Highlander now has Dark Mild in addition to Abbot Ale and IPA.

Letchworth Letchworth Garden City Hotel has added Theakston's Old Peculier to its selection of draught beers.

Welwyn Garden City The Hollybush has only recently come to light as selling Charrington's IPA although it has been doing so for a number of years

Chipping The selection at the Countryman now reads Burton Ale, Abbot Ale and Adnams.

Therfield The Fox and Duck is now also selling Theakston's Old Peculier.

Bull's Green Nr. Datchworth. The Horns is now selling Whitbread (Marlow) Bitter.

Potters Bar now has its 4th real ale pub: The Chequers in The Causeway, which has Burton Ale on gravity - very rare.

Lunchtime in Ware

Ware is famous for a number of reasons, such as the maltings, John Gilpin and second rate comedians making jokes about its name. As a real ale drinker, to me it's famous for another reason - it's a good place for a beer - or at least a few. With five McMullens pubs selling real ale and a Greene King pub it's a good place for a pub crawl

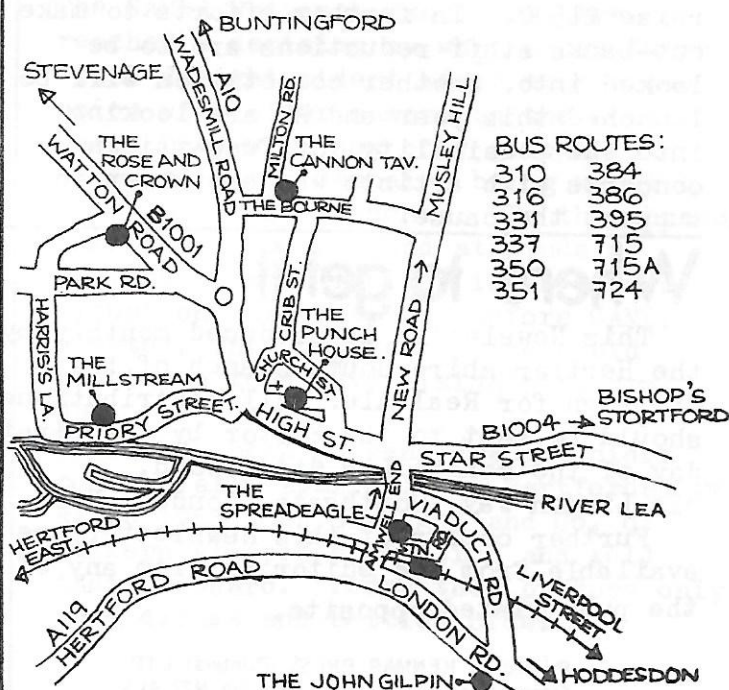
Starting Gun

Starting at the John Gilpin, a modern McMullens pub, a pint of Country Bitter adequately quenched my thirst until we reached the Spreadeagle, some 300 yards along the road. The new landlord, overjoyed to be back to McMullens land after two years in the Norfolk beer wilderness made us welcome with some tasty AK Mild before we pressed on to the Punch House, a Greene King pub in the middle of town.

The Punch House sells both Abbot and IPA on gravity and is worth a visit but not in large numbers as this is essentially a quiet pub. The Millstream, down by the river Lea serves AK Mild on handpump. The Cannon Tavern is another Mac's pub, with a lively public bar. We finished the lunchtime off in the Rose and Crown (not to be confused with the New Rose and Crown down the road which is a Greene King pub with only top pressure). This Mac's pub is shortly to be extended, not too drastically I hope. A couple of pints and a chat with the new friendly tenants and it was 2.30.

Ware is a comparatively cheap place for a drink and when it's Mac's you can be sure you're getting value for money!

WARE



Brewery Weekend

There are still about ten spaces left for people wishing to come on the branch's weekend trip to Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, from 25 - 27 March 1977. The trip will incorporate a Saturday morning visit to Theakston's Carlisle brewery. We will be staying at the Cressfield Country Hotel at Ecclefechan, which sells Theakston's Bitter and Old Peculier - perhaps even Theakston's naturally conditioned Silver Jubilee Ale. Meals will be provided on the Friday night, all day Saturday and Sunday morning with a packed lunch for the return journey.

En Route

First stop on the Friday lunchtime will be the famous home brew pub - The White Swan at Netherton, near Dudley.

There will also be ample time to sample the delights of such beers as Yates and Jacksons, Hartleys, Jennings and Vaux(Edinburgh).

The weekend will cost £22.50. A deposit of £10 should be sent to Marion Birch (who will also be able to supply further details) at 139 New Road, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts.
Tel: Rickmansworth 72119 (work)
73913 (home)

Overdraft Cut

CAMRA's overdraft of £16,000 has been cut to £8,500 thanks to donations from branches totalling £7,500 so far.

52 branches have donated - 35 of these from the South. Herts South branch have donated £100 but the richest branch appears to be Cambridge who managed to raise £1500. In further efforts to make cut-backs staff reductions are to be looked into. Another competition will be launched this year and HQ are looking into the possibility of fund-raising concerts with artists who are known to support the cause.

Where to get it

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.

Further copies of this Newsletter are available from the editor or from any of the pubs listed opposite.

DIARY of EVENTS

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

- Feb 22 February Branch Meeting
West Herts. Sports and Social Club, Park Avenue, Watford.
8.00pm. Selection of Real Ales.
Michael Hardman, Editor of What's Brewing will be speaking at the meeting.
- Feb 26 Brewery Trip to Paine's of St. Neots.*
- Mar 25-27 Weekend trip to Ecclefechan incorporating brewery trip to Theakstons (Carlisle). See opposite.
- Mar 28 March Branch Meeting
The Goat. Sopwell Lane, St. Albans
8.00pm. Whitbread (Marlow).
- * For the Paine's trip and forthcoming brewery trips to Greene King (Biggleswade), Hook Norton and Fullers, please contact Jim Axford, 117 Queens Road, Watford.

Hertfordshire North Branch

- Feb 23 Social: The Windmill, Charlton
8.00pm. Charles Wells.
- Mar 16 March Branch Meeting
The Red Lion, High St. Stevenage.
8.00pm. Greene King.

Herts/Essex Borders Branch

- Mar 3 Informal Meeting: The Windmill, Thundridge. 8.00pm. McMullens.

Mid-Chilterns Branch

- Mar 7 AGM and March Branch Meeting
The Rose and Crown, Tring.
8.30pm. Greene King/Worthington.



MEMBERSHIP

CAMRA is an independent organisation fighting to improve the quality of beer and pubs. To join send £2.00 to The Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 34 Alma Rd, St. Albans, Herts. You will receive a copy of the monthly 'What's Brewing' - the newspaper on what is going on in the world of beer.

Harpenden
Hatfield
Hertford
New Barnet
St. Albans
Shenley
Thundridge
Tyttenhanger
Watford

The Queens Head
The New Fiddle
The White Horse
The Railway Bell
The Jolly Sailor
Pink's Hotel
The Windmill
The Barley Mow
The Victoria Tavern