

News of the Booze!

newsletter of the Surrey & Hampshire Borders Branch
of CAMRA.

1981

February - April edition

Courage.. **URGENT ACTION NEEDED**

The closure of Courage's Anchor Brewery in London is almost upon us. It seems that we are about to lose yet another local beer... but there is still enough time for Courage to change their minds if enough of their customers protest. If our voices are not heard, the last bastion of individuality in the Courage empire, the west country with its Plymouth and Bristol breweries will surely be the next to fall. Courage's keg S.I.P.A, a bland, fizzy product from their Worton Grange plant has appeared in many local pubs over the last couple of months, usually at about 5p a pint less than Best Bitter, making it cheaper even than their keg mild! If the low price persuades enough drinkers to buy this insipid brew, Courage are bound to claim a "falling demand" for cask conditioned beers. The closure of the Bristol brewery, which supplies Best and Directors bitters to this area, could then follow close on the heels of the London brewery - the fizzy "S.I.P.A." would then be certain to reach the high price of the beer it had replaced.

We, the customers, must make Courage realise that their future lies with the provision of a CHOICE of QUALITY products at sensible prices. We have seen the effects of the closure of the old Reading brewery... the replacement (by the devious method of gradually altering the recipe) of our local "best" with the Bristol version, whose quality seems to suffer at times from the journey; and of course, the price has gone up to cover the increased transport costs. We must stop the rot now - whether you are a CAMRA member or not, please write to Courages, telling them, as politely as you can, what you think of their brewery closure policies. Remind them that their competitors such as Ind Coope, Whitbread and Watneys now produce an expanding range of local cask-conditioned beers. Start a petition in your
(please turn to page 4)

EDITORIAL

First of all, I have a rather disturbing point to make: CAMRA in this area seems to be in danger of collapse as a true CAMPAIGN. Early successes have left us punch drunk; we take for granted the new beers being showered upon us and treat CAMRA as a club. But much of the real ale gained in this area could slip through our fingers unless we are prepared to fight for our beers. Many CAMRA members feel that Courage beers are no longer worth saving, but if we allow Courage to trample their customers and tenants under foot then other brewers may try to follow suit. We let them take away our local brewery with hardly a murmur of protest, and action to prevent the closure of their London brewery is beginning to look like "too little, too late". Please prove me wrong by joining the protest.

Apart from the Courage campaign there is still the tendency for only a few members to take an active interest in the branch. We really could do with some new faces at meetings - fresh points of view are always welcome.

I've done enough moaning for one issue, so now I would like to say a belated thank you
(continued on page 4)

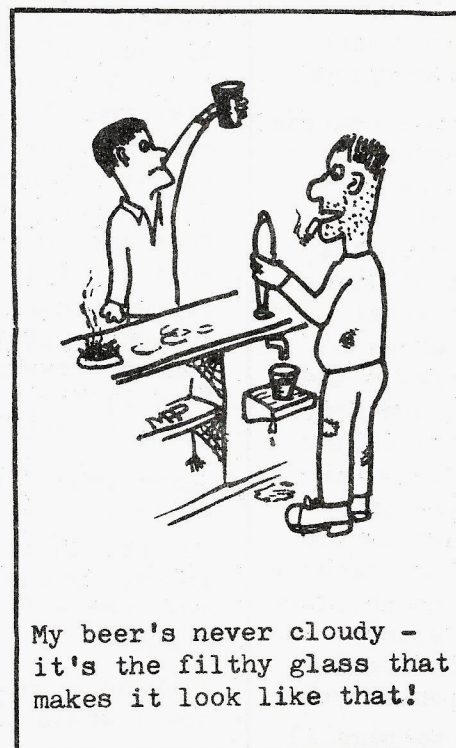
A further attraction tonight will be live music from the pub's piano.



Geoff Dye of 17, Plovers Way,
Alton has taken over from Mike
Andrew as Brewery Liaison Officer
to Ind Coope - Friary Meux Ltd.
Any enquiries regarding the
company or their products
should now be addressed through
Geoff.

The fact that one of our socials in December was held at a Watney's pub, serving beer by air pressure prompted me to think more deeply about this controversial method of dispense than I had previously done. Policy decided at a past CAMRA A.G.M. was that individual branches should decide whether air pressure is an acceptable method of serving beer or not. This is because Scottish branches have had their ale served this way for donkey's years, whereas it's a new innovation in the south. Our branch has a problem with this policy (or rather this lack of policy), because the editorial committee of Real Ale in Hampshire recognise air pressure, while the Surrey guide's committee don't - and of course the branch covers parts of both counties. My personal view is that while beer served by air can be very pleasant, and a great improvement on gas pressure, if not well looked after it can take on the characteristics of keg beer. Any reader who has taken the trouble to seek out Watney's Stag bitter straight from the cask at a beer exhibition will have no doubt, however, that there is a loss of quality when the beer is served through a DCL "handpump" in local Watney pubs.

The Real Ale in Surrey policy of excluding pubs using this dispense may have something to do with the news that at least one Watney pub in Surrey has had its DCL pumps removed and beer engines installed in their place - despite Watneys' recent statement that only new outlets for cask beers could have them. The fact that Watneys have now recognised the old-fashioned beer engine as the correct method of serving a pint of cask-conditioned ale is certainly due to the cold shoulder given to air pressure by most CAMRA branches, and if you like your pint of Tamplins now, you'll certainly enjoy it far more served in its 'real' form rather than as an 'almost real' ale! I would be very interested to hear from CAMRA members and other readers of News of the Booze who have views either for or against air pressure. I'll try to coax a small prize from the committee for the sender of the most interesting letter on this or any other beery subject!

- Mike Andrew.



 Blackwater Valley
CHRISTMAS PARTY 

The office Christmas party is fading in your memory; you have probably forgotten who bought you that tie, and even the hangovers are now just bad dreams. Some of us, however are fortunate enough to remember the excellent CAMRA Christmas party at the Royal Staff, Aldershot. Many thanks are due to Mike Roberts, who organised the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Young, whose food, beer and hospitality were, as usual, first class; and last but certainly not least the highly entertaining Live Wire Theatre Company whose "Victorian Entertainment" had everyone in stitches... Sydney (Mr. Birdie) Tweet's pheasant impersonation was a masterpiece!

WHITBREAD PROBLEMS

Southern TV's Day by Day programme on 21st of January brought news of massive redundancies at Whitbread's Romsey and Portsmouth breweries, which will result in a number of pub closures. The same programme also featured an interview with Tim Amsden on the subject of CAMRA's report on the "Big 6" entitled "Who's pint is it, anyway?".

SORRY...
additions to Real Ale Clublist have been held over due to shortage of space.

NEWS OF THE BOOZE EDITORIAL ADDRESS

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COPY DATE FOR NEXT EDITION:

FRIDAY, MARCH 20th.

diary dates

- 4th. FEB. (Weds.) Seven Stars, Swan Lane, Guildford - social.
9th. FEB. (Mon.) White Horse, High St, Alton - social.
10th. FEB. (Tues.) Imperial Arms, north Farnborough - COURAGE CAMPAIGN SOCIAL.
17th. FEB. (Tues.) College Arms, Maybury, Woking - social.
24th. FEB. (Tues.) Hop Blossom, Long Garden Walk, Farnham - see page 2.
4th. MAR. (Weds.) Tour of Guildford pubs - Britannia, Millmead 8/8.30pm; Royal Oak 9.30pm.
5th. MAR. (Thurs.) Queen's Head, The Borough, Farnham - your last chance to drink Gales 5X at a meeting this winter.
6th. MAR. (Fri.) THE ANCHOR, NORTH WARNBOROUGH (near Odiham) - JOINT SOCIAL WITH NORTH HAMPSHIRE BRANCH.
13th. MAR. (Mon.) Hen & Chicken, Upper Froyle (on A31) - Brakspear mild & Special, Badger & Ringwood 49er, plus the biggest log fire in the area!
17th. MAR. (Tues.) Crown & Anchor, Old Woking - a newly 'real' pub.
19th. MAR. (Thurs.) Royal Staff, Staff Road, Aldershot - social.
1st. APR. (Weds) The Albert, Stoke Road, Guildford - darts evening.
2nd. APR. (Thurs) Anchor, Cove - social.
10th. APR. (Fri.) FARNHAM PUB CRAWL - starting from the Blue Boy, Station Hill; 8pm. start for 8.30 departure.

SNIPPETS

Ballards of Rogate have provided the area with yet another new beer: a strong winter brew (o.g.1061) called "Wassail". It is available for a limited period at the Sandrock, in Wrecclesham.

The Woolpack, Elstead has handpumped Friary Meux bitter.

The Pride of the Valley, Churt now sell an excellent, cheap pint of K&B mild, in addition to bitter and occasional Old Ale or Festive.

The Albion, Farnham now has real Directors.

Congratulations to Andy Harris and his fiancée on their forthcoming wedding.

Please help to deliver newsletters in north-west Aldershot.

"FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS"

Probably the most enjoyable social event is the inter branch games night. These events give you a chance to meet members in other branches and are a good excuse, if ever one was needed, for some serious discussion (or drinking). The recent inter branch games night which took place between ourselves and the Portsmouth and Reading branches was no exception.

The match was held at the Jolly Drover, Hill Brow, near Liss. This is a large Whitbread pub on the A3 and only 10 yards in Hampshire. The pub serves excellent quality Pompey Royal and Strong Country Bitter on handpump. If you are in this area the Jolly Drover is well worth a visit, the bar snacks are very good and in winter there is a real log fire, a bit of a rarity these days.

Back to the meeting, a three strong (?) team from Alton eventually arrived, after my car had died en-route, to be greeted by cries of "where's the rest of your team?". This was slightly embarrassing as both branches had brought about 25 people. Luckily Mick and Lesley Andrew arrived in a borrowed car, so we joined forces with the Reading branch and helped them crush the mighty Portsmouth team.

The highlights of the darts match were Mick demolishing his opponent in under two minutes and Lynette winning her first game since losing two darts behind the piano at the William Cobbett some time in 1973.

At cribbage I partnered Dick from the Reading branch, who looked and dressed exactly like Keg-Buster, and we managed to win 2 out of 3 matches.

The evening finally degenerated into a drinking and talking session, punctuated by me winning first prize in the raffle. All in all it was a very good evening, marred only by the low turn-out from the host branch, us!!!

Both Portsmouth and Reading want a re-match in the summer, possibly at the Jolly Farmer, Blacknest. The next joint social will be with the North Hampshire mob in early March, see this issue, and will be a crawl around North Warnborough, the Anchor and Swan (Courage) and the Jolly Miller (Eldridge Pope). Let's hope we get a bigger turn out this time!!

FOR ANY READERS WHO ARE NOT ALREADY
MEMBERS OF CAMRA...

Application for Membership

I/We wish to become a member/members of the Campaign
for Real Ale Limited. I/we agree to abide by the Memorandum
and Articles of Association of the Campaign and
enclose £ as an annual membership subscription.

membership rates:

full member: £5 (£7 overseas)

husband & wife: £6

FULL NAME(S).....

ADDRESS

Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real
Ale Limited. Applications should be sent to Membership,
34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts.

CAMRA AGM 1981

Don't forget that the CAMRA A.G.M.
takes place at Durham University
during the weekend of March 27th -
29th. Full board at the University,
from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch
can be had for only £27, or B&B for
just £14. Naturally, there will be
plenty of ale available, and a good
time is guaranteed. If you don't
fancy driving all that way, see below.
Accommodation details are in "What's
Brewing", but note that bookings must
be made by the end of February.

COACH TO DURHAM

NORTH SURREY BRANCH HOPE TO RUN A COACH
TO DURHAM FOR THE A.G.M. - COST IS EX-
PECTED TO BE APPROX £15 RETURN, AND THE
COACH WILL PICK UP IN OUR AREA IF
REQUIRED. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE
CONTACT:

WILLIAM HILL,
CLARENDON,
16 HEATHERDALE ROAD,
CAMBERLEY.

Campaign for Regal Ale?

When Young's brewery, Wandsworth cel-
ebrates its 150th anniversary in Feb-
ruary it will be honoured by a visit
from the Queen. Hopefully the local
CAMRA branch will be able to sign her
up!

BREAST BITTER!

The British Medical Journal recently
reported that a new-born baby suffered a
mystery bowel disorder after leaving the
hospital. The cause was eventually
traced to the mother's liking for Greene
King and Ruddles bitters, which were
affecting the baby's favourite draught
tipple!

THE PUBS OF RIPLEY

I was almost giving up hope of ever receiving any
news from the Guildford & Woking area, when I
received a very welcome note from Nick Spindler
of Ripley, who also enclosed a press cutting
concerning certain properties of Greene King and
Ruddle's ales (below). Nick wrote that "the local
'crawl' around the pubs in Ripley went well - it
was a pity it clashed with the Unicorn (farewell
to Gale's) night... I can't promise that it is a
rival for Farnham, but for 5 pubs it doesn't do
badly. Here they are:

The Ship:	Courage Best & Directors
The Talbot:	Bass and Royal Oak
The Half Moon:	Fuller's London Pride & E.S.B. Young's Special & Ordinary Gales H.S.B. King & Barnes Festive Wethered S.P.A. Sam Smith's

The White Hart and The Anchor:

Friary Meux and Burton Ale

I make that 14 different beers - I only managed
four on the evening but it is walking distance so
I've got no excuse for not going back!"

Thanks for the news, Nick.



ACTION NEEDED...
cont'd from page 1

COURAGE

local Courage pub - petition forms are
available from News of the Booze, or you can
save time by writing it yourself: something
on the lines of "We, being customers of
Courage pubs, object to the closure of the
Anchor Brewery, London as we believe that
this will further reduce availability and
quality of Courage cask conditioned beers
and result in increased prices. We ask you
to reconsider the brewery's closure,
particularly in the light of the trend,
already recognised by other brewers, toward
local beers." Get as many people as possible
to sign it and write their addresses, then
send it, before the end of February along
with your letters of complaint, to CAMRA's
Regional Organiser, Colin Riddett, 20,
Chart Street, London N1. Colin will then
ensure that your objections become known to
the right people at Courage's.

EDITORIAL (cont'd from page 1)

to Alan and the rest of the committee for
awarding the Cyril Preston Pot to me at the
A.G.M. I was too surprised to say much at
the time, and I can think of many who are
more deserving of the trophy, but thanks
very much indeed - Cyril's Pot looks very
handsome on the sideboard and will take
pride of place until the next A.G.M.

- Mike