

Durham Drinker!

News for Discerning Drinkers in the City and County of Durham



ISSUE No. 1

FREE

JULY, 1978

Ten up for Durham

REAL ALE CAMPAIGN STARTS TO BITE!

TEN CASK CONDITIONED BEERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE WITHIN A TWO MILE RADIUS OF DURHAM MARKET PLACE:-

VAUX SAMSON (Original Gravity 1042.3)
SUNDERLAND DRAUGHT BITTER (1039)
LORIMERS SCOTCH (1036.3)

CAMERONS STRONGARM (1041.5)
BEST BITTER (1036)

BASS DRAUGHT BASS (1044)
EXTRA LIGHT BITTER (1033.6)

THEAKSON OLD PECULIER (1064.3)

S/SMITHS OLD BREWERY BITTER (1039.9)

McEWANS 80/- SPECIAL BITTER (1043.3)

Two more cask beers could be added to this list soon:-

WHITBREAD TROPHY (1040.2)
Should return to "The Buffalo Head" soon.
Keep asking for cask.

THEAKSTON BEST BITTER (1038.5)
Could be made available by some enterprising landlord with a little encouragement. Keep suggesting cask!

Three more real ales are a distinct possibility for the future:-

THEAKSTON LIGHT MILD
Already available at one free house in the county.

CAMERONS DARK MILD (1031)
CAMERONS CROWN ALE (1051)
Not yet available in cask form, but hopefully Camerons may put this right in the near future.

The real ale revival in Durham is getting under way, led by a small but determined group of people who care about Britain's traditional beers. Why not join them and add your voice to the call for a better choice for the North East drinker. You can become a CAMRA member for as little as £1.00 per year, so please tear off attached form and join the campaign for real ale.

A REAL ALE PUB CRAWL ROUND DURHAM CITY.

A couple of years ago, a tour of the real ale pubs in the centre of Durham would not have taxed the drinking capacity of anyone who was not actually tee-total. Nowadays, it is probably wiser to tackle the job in several stages to avoid exhausting your taste buds.

We start at Church Street Head where the "New Inn" serves a good pint of Bass Extra Light by hand pumps. This is not the most exciting of beers, but is worth sampling as a starter. Our route is then down hill to the "Half Moon" at the foot of New Elvet. This popular pub uses handpumps to serve Bass Extra Light and the stronger Draught Bass which is the strongest beer in the region. A third pub in this area, "The Victoria" in Hallgarth Street, has been nominated to serve McEwans 80/- Special Bitter in the near future, and will demand a slight detour between the New Inn and the Half Moon in days to come.

Crossing the river by Elvet Bridge and turning left into Saddler Street, we could go next to the "Buffalo Head", but the supply of cask Whitbread Trophy has been suspended during modifications to the cellar and our visit is best postponed for a couple of months. Instead we will visit the "Shakespeare" where the landlady, Annie Gloyne, now serves a beautiful pint of McEwans 80/- Special Bitter by handpump. In fact, it is so good we shall probably stay for more than one pint before crossing the market place to the "Big Jug" in Claypath. Most of the beer sold here is processed, but it is still the only outlet in Durham City for the

famous "Old Peculier" from Theakstons of Masham which is served by gravity direct from the cask. By the time you get there, the landlord may well be serving McEwans 80/- as well. Finally, there is time for a nightcap at the "General-Gordon" further up Claypath where another excellent pint of McEwans 80/- can now be obtained. After sampling this one, our taste buds must have a rest until another day.

Stage two of our tour starts at "The Elm Tree" in Crossgate where the landlady, Nancy Rix, and her husband Joe recently won the cask and keg section of the Vaux Best Kept Cellar competition. The care lavished on their cellars is reflected in the quality of the beers they serve. Lorimers Scotch and Vaux Samson are both served by electric pump and are highly recommended.

A short walk by Allergate brings us to the "Colpitts" hotel in Sutton Street which serves Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter by handpump. This is another excellent beer with a distinctive taste, probably resulting partly from the fact that it is still fermented in "Yorkshire Squares" made of solid blocks of slate. The "4X" mild used to be cask conditioned but is now all processed because of a shortage of wooden casks - Sam Smiths like to advertise their real ale as "Drawn from the wooden cask" and use steel containers only for their keg beers - so we shall leave it alone.

Our next call is at the "Pot & Glass" on the A167 in Crossgate Moor. This would involve a long uphill walk, so a ride on a No. 65 bus is recommended. The real ale here is electrically pumped Sunderland Draught Bitter, recently introduced by Vaux as a replacement for Gold Tankard Keg, and itself usually found in keg form. Opinions vary greatly about the quality of this drink, but there is only one way to decide whether it is to your own liking! Of all the locally produced beers, this is by far the most limited in availability.

Another ride on a 65 bus takes us next to the "Happy Wanderer" in Finchale Road, Framwellgate Moor, for another sample of handpumped Draught Bass. A short walk away is Front Street where we can sample more of Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter in pleasant surroundings at the "Marquess of Granby" before crossing the road for our first taste of Camerons ales. Strongarm and Best Bitter are available from electric pumps at the "Queen's Head" and from handpumps at the "Victoria Bridge", and both are very pleasant drinks.

We have visited a total of twelve pubs and sampled ten different cask beers. Another day, we can continue our tour by visiting some of the real ale pubs in the areas outside the city such as Gilesgate Moor, Sherburn Village, Witton Gilbert and Pity Me. We shall not, as things stand at present find any more different cask beers, but we shall be able to sample more of the same in different surroundings, and we may even find that some taste better elsewhere. The quality of cask beers depends to some extent on the skill of the landlord, and visiting different pubs in search of the perfect pint is a very pleasant occupation. Good hunting!

According to a current advert on TV - "Harp Lager puts the fires out". Can't help feeling that water would be cheaper!

REAL BEER IN THE NORTH EAST

CAMRA defines "real" ale as beer which is brewed from natural ingredients and palced unfiltered into casks where it continues to ferment. It is delivered to the glass by any method that does not involve the use of gas pressure. With "keg" beers however, the yeast is filtered out at the brewery and the remaining "dead" beer has to be livened up by pumping in carbon dioxide gas artificially. Consequently, the beer is very fizzy and often tastes more like gas than like beer.

"Real beer in the "North East" is the title of a booklet published by the local branches of CAMRA which gives details of all the cask beers available in the region, and all the pubs in the region known to serve real ale. Copies, price 50p each, are available from many local pubs and bookshops or by post from 10, Main Street, Ferryhill, Co. Durham. (Please enclose 9" x 5" s.a.e.).

Some changes have taken place (mostly for the better) since this booklet went to press:-

ADDITIONAL OUTLETS

- DIPTON—
 FLINT HILL INN—McEwans 80/- (H)
 CHESTER-LE-STREET—
 LAMBTON ARMS—McEwans 80/- (H)
 DURHAM CITY—
 BIG JUG, CLAYPATH—Theakston OP McEwans 80/- + Strongarm (H)
 DURHAM CITY—
 GENERAL GORDON, CLAYPATH—McEwans 80/- (H)
 DURHAM CITY—
 SHAKESPEARE, SADDLER STREET—McEwans 80/- (H)
 FRAMWELLGATE MOOR—
 HAPPY WANDERER, FINCHALE RD.—Bass (H)
 PRESTON-LE-SKERNE—
 BLACKSMITH'S ARMS—McEwans 80/- (H)
 SPENNYMOOR—
 RECREATION CENTRE—Sam Smiths OBB (H)
 SEDGFIELD—
 NAG'S HEAD, WEST END—Bass (E)
 SHOTLEY BRIDGE—
 CROWN & CROSSED SWORDS—McEwans 80/- (H)
 PLAWSWORTH—
 RED LION—McEwans 80/- (H)
 HASWELL—
 GREY HORSE—Samson (H)
 HOLMESIDE—
 WARDLES BRIDGE INN—McEwans 80/- (H)
 EVENWOOD—
 BAY HORSE—Whitbread Trophy (H)

AMENDMENTS

- SEATON—
 SEATON LANE INN—Add Theakston Mild (G) McEwans 80/- (G)
 TANTOBIE—
 BIRD INN—Add Theakston Best Bitter + Whitbread Trophy
 WEST CORNFORTH—
 SQUARE & COMPASS—Add Bass (E)
 BISHOP AUCKLAND—
 KINGS ARMS—Delete Theakston OP & Best Bitter
 HESLEDON—
 GOLDEN CALF—Add Camerons BB
 CORNSAY—
 ROYAL OAK—Delete Draught Bass

If you discover any other changes that have taken place, please inform our Pubs Officer, Ian Miller, at 4, Hillcrest, High Shincliffe. (Tel:Durham 62199).

TARGET 150

The immediate aim of the branch is to increase the number of real ale outlets in County Durham to 150. Reference to the local guide and amendments shows a current total of 138, split between the supplying breweries as follows:-

SAM SMITHS	OLD BREWERY BITTER	5
McEwans 80/-	SPECIAL BITTER	11
WHITBREAD	TROPHY BITTER	10
THEAKSTON	OLD PECULIER	6
	BEST BITTER	9
	LIGHT MILD	1
VAUX	SAMSON	11
	SUNDERLAND DRAUGHT BITTER	2
	LORIMERS SCOTCH	14
BASS	DRAUGHT	10
	EXTRA LIGHT BITTER	21
CAMERONS	STRONGARM	54
	BEST BITTER	43

NB. Several free houses sell beers from more than one brewer.

Scottish and Newcastle are at last gaining momentum with their promised expansion of outlets serving McEwans 80/-, and several more are expected in the county soon. Bass are encouraging landlords to change to real ale, or to add draught bass in pubs where only the ELB is cask conditioned.

Whitbread have suggested that they may start to promote cask Trophy from Castle Eden brewery under a new name to differentiate it from keg and tank beer.

Theakston and Sam Smiths are committed to their real ales and seem likely to continue their slow increase of free trade outlets.

Camerons are impossible to predict, and we can only hope that they make Crown Ale and Mild Ale available in cask form soon.

Vaux are the real problem. In spite of their claim to be committed to real ale, they seem reluctant to do anything to promote its sale. They always insist that it is available to any landlord who requests it, so the onus is firmly on CAMRA members and supporters to demonstrate the demand to landlords. Please give us YOUR help. 150 pubs is only the immediate aim.

DURHAM BEER FESTIVAL (Preliminary Announcement)

A Branch sub-committee has now been formed to organise the third annual Durham Beer Festival. This will be open to the public on Friday and Saturday, 1st. and 2nd. of September between 11 to 3pm. and 6 to 10pm. in the ball-room of Dunelm House, new Elvet. There will be at least 25 different beers available including many which are not usually available in the county. There will also be food available and live folk music in the evenings from "The Trotter Band". Admission will be 20p. at lunchtime and 30p. in the evenings but season tickets for the whole weekend are available for 60p. (40p for CAMRA members) by writing to Pip Taylor, 12, North Terrace, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, enclosing an s.a.e. and p.o./cheque. Make a note of the dates and spread the word among your freinds.

TALKING POINTS

Have you noticed the latest adverts for Whitbread Trophy showing a huge glass of beer in a field, seeminly anchored to the ground by ropes? The inscription reads "Whitbread Trophy - big enough to satisfy your beer buds". This may be a fair description for cask trophy, but the anchor ropes seem to indicate a beer so full of gas that it's about to fly away like a balloon! Let's hear your ideas of the theory behind this strange poster.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Durham branch meet twice monthly, once in Durham City area and once elsewhere in the county. One meeting every second month is usually a formal business meeting and the others are social occasions during which news is exchanges on an informal basis. Future meetings are scheduled as follows:-

- TUESDAY 27th.JUNE —
 SQUARE & COMPASS, WEST CORNFORTH .
 Business at 8-00 p.m.
 WEDNESDAY 12th JULY—
 POT & GLASS, DURHAM—SOCIAL 8-00 p.m.
 TUESDAY 25th JULY—
 PUB CRAWL of TANTOBIE and DIPTON. Meet at the "Oak Tree" at TANTOBIE at 7-30 p.m.
 All meetings are open to anyone interested in real ale without obligation to join CAMRA, but we do hope that you will want to join the campaign and give us your support.

I am interested in joining CAMRA. Please send me an application form and further details.

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to:- Mr. R. Morgan, 40, Western Hill, DURHAM.