

Durham Drinker!



News for Discerning Drinkers in the City and County of Durham

ISSUE No. 2

FREE

OCTOBER, 1978

NICE ONE, WHITBREAD!

CASTLE Eden Ale is now on sale in several local Whitbread pubs to test the demand for real cask beer in the North-East. First reactions from the region's drinkers seem to be very favourable, and 90 gallons were enthusiastically consumed during the two days of the Durham Beer Festival.

Sales of Cask Trophy from Whitbread's Castle Eden Brewery had declined to the point where it was no longer economic to produce, and there was a real threat that only processed beers would be available in the company's pubs in the North-East. The basic problem, argued CAMRA brewery liaison officer Charlie Spedding, was that no attempt was made to differentiate between Cask Trophy and Processed Trophy at the point of sale. Nobody knew for certain how many pubs sold real Trophy, and ordering a pint was very often a gamble. He suggested that Whitbread should introduce a new name for real Trophy and spend some of their money to advertise it.

Months of gentle persuasion along these lines have now resulted in a completely new beer, Castle Eden Ale, sold only in cask form and dispensed by hand pumps. As yet it is only on trial, being sold alongside processed Trophy in selected pubs and at the same price. If this test marketing shows a genuine demand for real ale, it will go on sale in many more pubs, so the onus is on all CAMRA members and supporters to demonstrate the demand and encourage people to ask for Castle Eden Ale in Whitbread pubs.

Mr. Paul Cox, the managing director at Castle Eden Brewery, will be talking to the branch on Wednesday, 25th October in the "Three Tuns" at Coxhoe, and Castle Eden Ale will be on sale at that meeting. Anyone interested will be welcome to attend. Local pubs known to be selling the new beer are as follows—

EASINGTON (Black Diamond)
ESH (Cross Keys)
EVENWOOD (Bay Horse)
HIGH HESLEDON (Ship Inn)
GREAT STAINTON (Kings Arms)
PETERLEE (Royal Arms)
SEATON VILLAGE (Dun Cow Inn)
TANTOBIE (Commercial)
WATERHOUSES (Black Horse)

FANTASTIC SUCCESS FOR BEER FESTIVAL

THE Third Durham Beer Festival proved to be an outstanding success, far beyond that which the organisers had dared hope for. The statistics speak for themselves. In two days about 2,700 people spent £3,700 and drank 10,000 pints of real ale and 500 pints of cider. Surely these are figures which the breweries can no longer ignore. It is not only evident that there is a massive demand for this type of beer, but that the demand is increasing and will continue to do so if the breweries spend more time and effort promoting real ale instead of letting CAMRA do their job for them.

If you enjoyed the beer festival or even if you were unable to attend but still enjoy drinking natural beer instead of gassy, pressurised keg beer, there are several ways in which you can help CAMRA to ensure that outlets for this type of beer increase. First, tell your friends, and more importantly the licensee at your local, just how successful the festival was. (How many people would have attended a keg beer festival?). Secondly, keep asking for cask conditioned beer, particularly in pubs which you know only serve keg beer. The more the landlord hears about real ale, the more

likely he is to think about getting it. All the local breweries have stated that they will put real ale into any suitable pub if the landlord requests it. So to use a rather horrible expression, keep pressurising the licensees.

Thirdly, CAMRA is always short of money. Although the annual beer festival makes a reasonable profit, publications like this and our many other campaigning activities all cost money. You can help by buying a copy of our guide to all pubs in the North-East which sell real ale. This is called "Real Beer in the North-East" and has recently been brought right up to date with an amendment sheet. It costs only 50p and can be obtained from most real ale pubs or by writing to C. Spedding, 10 Main Street, Ferryhill, CO. DURHAM, and enclosing a Cheque/P.O. and S.A.E.

Finally, why not join the campaign itself? CAMRA membership costs only £4 per year and if you join now you get an extra three months FREE membership. Membership entitles you to a copy of the monthly newspaper "What's Brewing," which keeps you up-to-date on everything that is going on in the brewing industry and informs you of all the local beer festivals, etc. In addition, you can obtain many CAMRA publications and other goods at reduced prices. The Durham branch of CAMRA also organise fortnightly social meetings at pubs around the county and other events such as parties, brewery visits and beer festivals. We are always looking for new faces and ideas and you can be assured of a warm welcome at any of our meetings. You might even end up running a beer festival!

GET TO KNOW THE REAL ALE PUBS

IN the first issue of "The Durham Drinker" we featured the pubs in Durham City which sell real ale. In future issues we intend to look at other pubs around the county which are equally fortunate. This month we look at a few of the pubs around the outskirts of the city.

Three miles out from Durham on the A691 towards Consett lies the "Glendenning Arms" at Witton Gilbert. Here cask-conditioning Samson totally outsells keg Lorimers Scotch, and it is not difficult to see why. Many people believe that the landlord keeps one of the best pints of Samson in the county, and at 29p a pint it is sensibly priced. The Glendenning has a friendly public bar with plenty of bar games in evidence, and a comfortable and spotlessly clean lounge.

A few hundred yards along the road is the turn-off for Langley Park and the exclusive "Centurion." Samson is again sold here and although it is expensively priced at 36p a pint, the pub is well worth a visit as you don't find many pubs like this in the county. There is only one bar (or cocktail lounge) in which you can also obtain a variety of weird and wonderful cocktails served in an ancient Roman setting.

If you don't spend all your money on "Mark Anthony Specials," then a trip up the bank through Langley Park, followed by a right turn at the top, will take you to "The Cross Keys" at Esh. This is a new acquisition to the ranks of real ale pubs and Gordon, the landlord, has obviously learnt how to look after cask-conditioned beers very quickly. His Castle Eden Ale is always kept in outstanding condition, and this friendly village local also serves evening meals. Not yet having sampled them, I cannot testify to the quality, but the restaurant area is always crowded, the menu is extensive, and the prices seem reasonable. Well worth a visit.

The following day, why not follow the A167 (the old A1) out of Durham towards "The Coach and Horses" at Butcher Race. The landlord here is a CAMRA enthusiast and you can therefore be assured of an excellent pint of either Lorimer's Scotch or Vaux Samson (or preferably both) served in a very friendly and pleasant old pub. A few hundred yards up the road is a roundabout; turn left and the road eventually takes you to West Cornforth. There are two pubs here selling the real stuff; "The Slake Terrace Inn" which keeps excellent pints of Camerons Best Bitter and Strongarm, and "The Square and Compass" on the village green where Draught Bass and Extra Light Bitter are sold via electric pumps. Both landlords are keen CAMRA supporters and Ray at the Square and Compass has taken the wise decision to join CAMRA. You can therefore be assured of a good pint and a warm welcome in both pubs. This spell of imbibing can be brought to a close by popping along the road to Coxhoe where Bob, at "The Black Horse," serves an excellent pint of Camerons Best Bitter or Strongarm, and "The Commercial" in the High Street serves Lorimers Scotch.

A third evening's entertainment takes you east of the city. Pop into "The Lord Seaham" at Gilesgate Moor for an excellent pint of Strongarm. This pub is well known for its variety of musical entertainment, offering both Folk and Jazz nights. Nip back on to the Sherburn Road for a quick pint of Bass Extra Light at "The George and Dragon," and then proceed into Sherburn Village where three pubs serve a good choice in real ale; "The Grey Horse" has Bass Extra Light, "The Lambton Arms" dispenses Lorimers Scotch, and "The Cross Keys" sells Camerons Strongarm and Best Bitter.

Further up the road in Sherburn Hill lies another "Lambton Arms." This is a delightful, old fashioned pub which also dispenses Lorimers Scotch, although unlike its namesake in the village, it has hand pumps. Finally, round the evening off by a visit to "The Plough" at Shadforth, an excellent village local which serves a pleasant pint of Bass Extra Light.

In future articles we shall be describing other real ale trails around the county. If you have any ideas, write to the editor who is always ready to print any articles or suggestions.

TARGET 150

THE immediate aim of the branch is to increase the number of real ale outlets to 150. Since "Durham Drinker No. 1" was published, Castle Eden Ale has been put on sale in the pubs already mentioned, and the following changes have also taken place—

Additional Outlets

BLACKHILL, "The Highgate." Vaux Samson (H).
 DURHAM, "The Victoria." McEwans 80/- (H).
 SHILDON, "The King William." Cameron Strongarm and Best Bitter (H).
 SHERBURN, "The Cross Keys." Cameron Strongarm and Best Bitter (E).
 NEASHAM, "The Fox and Hounds." Vaux Samson (H).

Amendments

BARNARD CASTLE, "The White Swan." Add Theakston BB and OP (H).
 ROMALDKIRK, "The Rose and Crown." Delete Cameron BB.
 LANGLEY PARK, "The Ram's Head." Delete Draught Bass.
 CONSETT, "The Park." Delete Cameron Strongarm.
 SEATON VILLAGE, "The Dun Cow Inn." Delete Whitbread Trophy.

Deletions

*BOWBURN, "The Hare and Greyhound."
 CASTLESIDE, "The Horse and Groom."
 *CONSETT, "The Mount Pleasant."
 DARLINGTON, "The Pheasant Inn."
 *DURHAM, "The Buffalo Head."
 EVENWOOD GATE, "The Brown Jug."
 *FERRYHILL STATION, "The Commercial."
 HIGH FLATTS, "The Plough Inn."
 LEAMSIDE, "The Leamside Hotel."
 SHOTLEY BRIDGE, "The Kings Head."
 SPENNYMOOR, "The Travellers Rest" (closed).
 *SOUTH HETTON, "The Grey Horse Inn."
 *TRIMDON, "The Bird in Hand."

N.B.—Pubs marked (*) have lost their real ale because cask Whitbread Trophy is discontinued. It is to be hoped they will get Castle Eden Ale eventually—keep asking the landlords.

The total number of pubs known to be selling real ale in the county is now 139. Further supplies of McEwans 80/- and Castle Eden Ale could soon cause this total to rise. Vaux have announced a policy of serving cask beer via hand pumps, and it is to be hoped this may herald an increase in the number of outlets.

Newsdesk

The North-East now has its first beer agency. The Northern Real Agency (NORA for short) is now operating from 9 Forth Street, Newcastle, opposite Federation Brewery. The agency is run by Dick Attley, a member of the Tyneside branch of CAMRA, and he will supply real ale in any quantity and deliver the beer to your own home. At present NORA is only open for one hour each evening and on Saturday afternoons. However, you can place an order at any hour (day or night) by ringing Newcastle 816393. Dick plans to sell not only a wide number of local beers, but also several which are not normally available in the area. So if you are having a party why not give NORA a ring. The prices are very competitive.

VAUX have taken full control of W. M. Darley of Thorne, in South Yorkshire, who own a brewery and have 88 tied houses, 60 of which serve real ale. Hopefully little will change at Darley's, except that we may be able to get some of their beer for next year's Durham Festival. (They refused to supply any this year).

CAMRA have bought a pub in Newcastle, "The Duke of Wellington" in High Bridge. It will reopen in November, serving a range of real cask beers not usually available in Newcastle and will hopefully encourage the breweries to make their real ale more widely available in the area.

PETER KELLY of Balmoral Road, Darlington, is fighting for permission to convert stables in Neasham Road into a small private brewery. We wish him every success and look forward to including Kell's Golden Bitter in our beer guides—providing, of course, that he doesn't do anything silly like processing his beer.

Insult added to Injury

One of our complaints against S & N Breweries has always been that supplies of Youngers cask beers pass through the region en route to North Yorkshire and points South, but none is sold in the North East. To add insult to injury, some S & N pubs now have bar price lists which include "Youngers IPA" and "Youngers XXPS" with prices per pint. Hopes are dashed when you try to order these drinks and are referred to the small print which explains that not all the drinks listed are available in all bars. Rather an understatement!

Talking Points

The latest TV advert for Newcastle Exhibition is even less logical than many of its predecessors, ending as it does with the statement "it certainly isn't lager." The implication seems to be that Newcastle Brewery do not know themselves what it is. So let's hear your suggestions (printable one please).

Future Meeting

Wednesday, 25th Oct., Three Tuns, Coxhoe. Mr. Paul Cox, Managing Director of Whitbread, Castle Eden, is giving a talk on his reasons for introducing "Castle Eden Ale." All meetings are open to anyone interested in Real Ale without any obligation to CAMRA, but we do hope that you will want to join the Campaign and give us your support. Further details are available at meetings or by sending the form below to the Branch Chairman.

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 City.