

DURHAM DRINKER!

News for the Discerning Drinkers in the City and County of Durham



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Three Cheers for Belhaven!

INDEPENDENT SCOTTISH BREWERY WIDENS THE CHOICE FOR COUNTY DURHAM DRINKERS

The number of Real Ales regularly available in the County has recently increased to fifteen, with the addition of Belhaven 60/- Light, 70/- Heavy, and 80/- Export Ale from Dunbar. All are now on sale at the "Bird" in Tantobie, and may be joined in due course by Belhaven Strong Ale. Landlord, Chris Wright, is justly proud of the choice he offers — usually he has at least five or six cask beers on tap — and estimates that he had 23 different beers on sale at some time during 1978.

Another beer is expected to go on sale at the Bird soon, but Chris is not saying what it is until it arrives — watch this column for news. He also intends to continue selling different "Guest Beers", and at the time of writing is offering Robinson's "OLD TOM" from Stockport which is considerably stronger than even Theakston's "OLD PECULIAR". Remembering that three other pubs in the area offer Real Ale (the "OAK TREE" and "COMMERCIAL" at Tantobie and the "FLINT HILL" at Dipton) a week's holiday in Tantobie is becoming more and more attractive.

Know your Real Ales

Do you drink Cask Beer regularly? Does your local serve Cask Beer? We suspect many people aren't sure of the answers to these questions, and we hope the notes that follow may help to solve the problem.

Scottish and Newcastle:

Pubs in the region with Cask Beer all serve it with traditional handpumps bearing clips advertising "McEwans Cask Conditioned Ale". Ask for "CASK" or "80/-".

Whitbread:

"Castle Eden Ale" is the only Cask Whitbread in the North-East, and is always Cask-Conditioned and served via hand-pumps. Ask for "CASTLE EDEN".

Vaux:

"Samson", "Sunderland Draught Bitter", and "Lorimers Scotch" are all available in a number of pubs in Cask form, often served by handpumps, but sometimes by electric pump with nothing to suggest that Real Ale is available. If in doubt, ask the landlord if he has Cask-Conditioned beer — if he hasn't, repeated requests may result in a change for the better. Company policy is now to install handpumps in pubs changing to Real Ale.

Camerons:

"Strongarm" and "Best Bitter" are widely available in Cask form from handpumps and electric pumps, but often nothing to indicate that Cask is being offered. Some Real Ale pubs now have window stickers advertising "Traditional Ale", but often the only answer is to ask the Landlord.

Bass:

Cask-Conditioned "Bass" and "Extra Light Bitter" are on sale in an increasing number of pubs, more often by handpump than electric, but rarely, if ever, advertised as such when electrically pumped.

Samuel Smith:

"Old Brewery Bitter" is the only Cask beer, and is served by handpump at all four outlets in the County.

Theakston:

"Best Bitter" and "Old Peculiar" are almost always served by handpump when Cask-Conditioned, or direct from a tap in the Cask. The only known exception in County Durham is the Newbus Arms in Neasham, which serves Theakston's Cask beers by electric pump.

John Smiths, Tetleys, Drybrough and Websters sell no Real Ale in the County.

If you want more information about the pubs in the region selling Cask beer, buy the CAMRA booklet "Real Ale in the North East" which costs 50p from many pubs and bookshops in the region or by post (enclose a 9" x 5" S.A.E.) from 10 Main Street, Ferryhill Co. Durham.

1978 - A year of steady progress

The year just passed saw the opening of the first CAMRA - run pub in the North East, the "Duke of Wellington" in High Bridge, just off Newcastle's Bigg Market. This brought the first Real Camerons beer to Newcastle, together with two newcomers to the region, Belhaven from Dunbar and Jennings from Cockermouth (in Cumbria). As already mentioned, Belhaven has since spread to County Durham, and we can only hope that Jennings will follow.

Newcastle also gained the first Real Ale Agency in the region. Dick Attley, a long-standing member of CAMRA, is in business in Forth Street (Tel. Newcastle 816393) to supply you with Cask beer for your party or just for your own enjoyment.

Scottish and Newcastle breweries finally decided to accept CAMRA as a responsible and influential organisation, and have steadily increased the number of outlets for their excellent McEwans 80/-. Whitbread introduced their new Cask beer, "Castle Eden Ale", albeit only on a test marketing basis. Bass slowly but surely increased the availability of their Real Draught beer. Vaux, on the other hand, continue to deny that there is a good demand for their excellent beers in Cask-Conditioned form - "except possibly in intellectual areas like Durham City" - and the total number of outlets for Cask Vaux beers nationally has actually declined. They are apparently dissatisfied that none of their beers are sold in the CAMRA pub in Newcastle, but if they really want to see their Cask beers more widely available in the region, the solution lies within their own control.

1979 - A year of promise and opportunity

This year is the 800th Anniversary of the granting of a Charter to the City of Durham. A Committee of local councillors has been set up to organise a variety of events throughout the summer, including a Mediaeval Fayre in the Market Place, a Tournament on the Old Racecourse, Mediaeval Banquets. CAMRA have been invited to supply Real Ale at several of these events, and the annual Durham Beer Festival is also to be linked with these celebrations. The Festival will again be held at Dunelm House, on Friday August 31st and Saturday September 1st, and promises to be even bigger than previous Festivals. More extensive accommodation will enable us to offer an even wider range of beers together with many other attractions. Note the dates in your diary now and be sure not to miss this great event. Beer Festivals are also being organised by the Tyneside Branch in Newcastle Guildhall (May 3rd - 5th) and the Cleveland Branch in the Coatham Bowl, Redcar (April 20th - 21st).

1979 may see a substantial increase in the number of Real Ale pubs in the County, if Whitbread follow the successful test marketing of "Castle Eden Ale" by making it much more widely available. Already it has reached Durham City, where it can be sampled at the Dun Cow in New Elvet, and is likely to be on sale in several other new outlets in the County. Make a point of asking for Castle Eden Ale in Whitbread pubs, and your persistence will probably pay dividends.

Scottish and Newcastle breweries certainly seem to have decided that Cask Beer is in demand. To quote their "Report to Employees 1978", they "have not always had the goods which customers wanted". Since the same newsletter highlights "New Cask Racking Line being built in Newcastle" the prospects for more Cask beer seem bright. Perhaps Cask-Conditioned "Exhibition" may no longer be a pipedream.

If you like Cask beer, keep asking for it even in pubs which obviously haven't any on offer, and you may bring about a change for the better. If you are not a regular Real Ale drinker, why not try a few pints? We don't think you will be disappointed.

The Durham Dozen

No fewer than twelve Cask-Conditioned beers are now regularly on sale within a two mile radius of Durham Market Place:

VAUX SAMSON : Elm Tree, Crossgate

SUNDERLAND DRAUGHT BITTER : Pot and Glass, Crossgate Moor

LORIMERS SCOTCH : Elm Tree, Crossgate. Lambton Hounds, Pity Me.

CAMERONS STRONGARM : Queens Head, Framwellgate Moor. Victoria Bridge, Framwellgate Moor.
Lord Seaham, Gilesgate Moor.

BEST BITTER : Queens Head, Framwellgate Moor. Victoria Bridge, Framwellgate Moor.

BASS - DRAUGHT BASS : Half Moon, New Elvet. Hare and Hounds, Gilesgate Moor. Happy Wanderer,
Framwellgate Moor.

EXTRA LIGHT BITTER : Half Moon, New Elvet. New Inn, Church Street Head.

THEAKSTON - OLD PECULIAR and BEST BITTER : Big Jug, Claypath.

SAM SMITHS — OLD BREWERY BITTER : Colpitts, Sutton Street. Marquis of Granby, Framwellgate Moor.

McEWANS 80/- SPECIAL : Shakespeare, Saddler Street. Victoria, Hallgarth Street. Big Jug, Claypath.
General Gordon, Claypath.

WHITBREAD — CASTLE EDEN ALE : Dun Cow, New Elvet.

DARLINGTON, in contrast, offers only Camerons Strongarm (from eight pubs) and Draught Bass (one outlet only). We would like to hear from anyone interested in starting a branch in Darlington. Please write to the CAMRA Area Organiser, Mr. C. Spedding, at 10 Main Street, Ferryhill, every assistance will be given to help you to transform this Real Ale desert into a town worth a visit by discerning drinkers.

K.G.B. Helps the Real Ale revival

Nothing to do with Soviet Agents — K.G.B. stands for Kelly's Golden Bitter brewed by Peter Kelly in his new mini-brewery near Darlington. The brewery is just 18½ feet square but will brew 90 gallons of genuine Cask beer per week to add some much needed quality and variety to the Real Ale scene in South Durham. Watch this space for further news about where to buy it.

Holiday '79

The wide variety of Cask beers available around the country can make "Ale Tasting" a thoroughly enjoyable part of a holiday in many parts of Britain, although most of Scotland outside the Edinburgh and Glasgow regions should be avoided. The CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1979, to be published in April (price £2.35), will describe more than 6000 pubs around the British Isles chosen for the quality of their Real Ales. More comprehensive details of pubs in particular regions can be found in local Beer Guides published by CAMRA branches, many of which are available from the North Gate bookshop in Durham. You will often find beers from the North of England elsewhere, but Sam Smiths, for example may not taste as good in Stratford -on-Avon as in our own Marquis of Granby in Framwellgate Moor, and sampling the local brews will probably prove much more rewarding. We hope to publish brief reviews of the best beers in various regions in future issues

BOOKS on BEERS and PUBS

CAMRA BEER GUIDES (most areas)

PUB GUIDES

BREWING HISTORIES AND MANUALS

BOOKS ON THE HUMOUR, LITERATURE, MUSIC, ART AND POLITICS OF BEER DRINKING

A wide selection available from:—

North Gate Bookshop

50 SADDLER STREET, DURHAM CITY

Tel. Durham 63309

Situations vacant

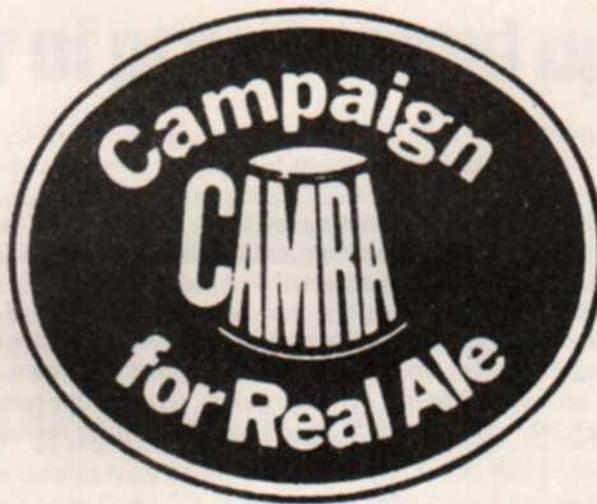
CAMRA – Durham Branch has vacancies for new members. Those willing to play an active part in the campaign will get the best rewards, but all who join can be sure of good company and much enjoyment. Special openings are available for those prepared to devote some time and energy acting as Local Organisers in selected areas, duties will include distribution of "Durham Drinker", publicising meetings and Beer Festivals, and recruiting new members and helpers. Applications should be sent to the Membership Secretary:- Mr. M. Bending, 6 Eden Close, Hurworth Place, Darlington enclosing the completed application form (below) and subscription fee. Further opportunities will occur during the year for those interested in helping to organise and run Beer Festivals and other functions, and early application for membership will ensure that you receive every chance to take part.

Full membership will entitle you to take part in all CAMRA activities, and to receive the monthly CAMRA newspaper "What's Brewing as well as the "Durham Drinker" You will also be able to buy CAMRA publications at special members' prices. All this and more for less than 8p per week. JOIN NOW!

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

Tuesday March 6th; A.G.M., The Lambton Hounds, Pity Me

Thursday March 22nd; Darts and Dominoes against Cleveland Branch, The Talbot, Bishopton.



"Durham Drinker" is published by the Durham County Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited. Opinions expressed are those of our contributors, and not necessarily those of the Branch Committee. All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary:- Mrs. D. Bending, 6 Eden Close, Hurworth Place, Darlington, Co. Durham.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to become a member(s) of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited.

I/We agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

I enclose £4.00 for full membership
or We enclose £5.00 for husband and wife membership

APPLICATION FOR ASSOCIATESHIP

I wish to become an Associate of CAMRA Ltd.

I agree to abide by the aims of the organisation and enclose my fee of £1.00

FULL NAME (Block Capitals).....

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS (Block Capitals).....

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Signature.....Date.....

Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.