



Hint Taken



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHAMPTON BRANCH OF CAMRA

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) was formed in 1971 to preserve real ale and real pubs. Since then it has persuaded many brewers and thousands of pubs to return to supplying traditionally brewed, cask-conditioned milds and bitters, served by traditional methods.

Campaign News .. MORE NEW PUBS FOR NORTHAMPTON

Mitchells & Butlers have bought a closed-down pub from Manns and have promised to re-open it soon. Watneys (as they then were) closed the Red Earl in Kings Heath, Northampton in 1977 because they couldn't make it pay. M & B will do it up as the Bass House (draught Bass, we hope). M & B said "the residents deserve a good local and they'll get it!"

We look forward to the day when Manns sell the Chequers at Wellingborough (closed for over 18 months now) and any other pubs they don't want to those other companies who are willing to re-open them and provide the service to the public which Manns obviously can't be bothered with. If this company had less of a monopoly in the area they might be more keen to keep their pubs in business. In the last 12 years, 28 pubs in the Northampton district have been permanently closed - 27 were Watneys/Manns pubs. This does not include pubs closed indefinitely at the company's convenience (like the Chequers) and those all too rare pubs which are closed and sold but re-open later as free houses.

M & B will also be opening the next new pub in Northampton Development Scheme. It is in the Bellinge district (near Little Billing) and is provisionally named the Bellringer. We have reason to hope it will sell real ale.

Another new pub may open in Northampton centre next year at the premises in St. George's Street (off Regent Square) at present occupied by the Irish Club. The Club is moving to new premises later this year and the old building has been bought by Camra Real Ale Investments Ltd., a Cambridge-based company which owns a small chain of pubs spread throughout the country. CAMRAIL is a publicly quoted company and NOT a subsidiary of the Campaign for Real Ale, which has taken legal advice on the similarity between the names after recent bad publicity about CAMRAIL's pub in London; the press have a habit of confusing the two names. CAMRAIL intend to apply for a change in licence before starting work refurbishing the old Club premises later this year, re-opening with a range of real ales, probably late in 1980.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SHIPPO'S - STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Many real ale drinkers have been alarmed by reports that Shipstone's beers are being changed as a result of that company's takeover by Grenall Whitley. It was said that the excellent mild and bitter had been made sweeter to meet some pre-conceived notion of Greenalls regarding the ideal taste for all their beers. This was an affront to all those regular drinkers who have come to hold Shipstones in high regard for the great character and consistency of their beers - most of their production is real ale.

We heard that the Brewery admitted there had been a small change a few months ago when some brews were prepared entirely from malt because the brewery was short of sugar due to the lorry drivers' strike, but all was soon back to normal. We have little chance in this area of trying a wide variety of Shipstones' outlets, but in Leicester where Shipstones are strong, you can get quite a few unusual pints before striking the old reliable Shippo's that we used to take for granted.

We reproduce here part of a letter sent to CAMRA by the Group Marketing Manager of Greenall Whitley at Warrington in answer to a question about Shipstones in May: -
 "You also raised a number of points about Shipstones, and as I explained to you, it is our intention to develop Shipstones on the lines of an independent company, but nevertheless to increase the sales of Shipstones beers in the Free Trade. It is not our intention to alter the palate of the beer, as it is very good already, and we refute without prejudice the rather stupid comments which have appeared recently about our intentions in Nottingham. J.M.S. Lane."

MANNS FAKE HANDPUMPS - LANDLORDS WANT THE REAL THING

Manns are now fitting a modification to their DCL air pressure pumps serving Stag Fined Bitter and Manns IPA. It is a small gold coloured fitting stuck to the bar top under the swan neck of the pump handle, so that when the handle is in the upright position this new piece appears to join it. This makes it appear to be a genuine old-style beer engine handle until the DCL handle is pulled back, revealing the deception!

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