

# MILD & BITTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DERBY BRANCH OF CAMRA

ISSUE 8

JUNE 1976

## THE LAST MONTH

For the May branch meeting we were back in the Liversage after an absence of seven months. This gap was in part due to the chimney stack falling through the roof during the winter gales. The room had as a result been completely redecorated, and was able to comfortably accommodate the 40 people present. The beer was deemed excellent by many, and Andy was well pleased by the 27 gallons consumed.

Spyke Golding, the Nottingham Branch chairman, was a welcome visitor, and he was able to take back a list of volunteers to help at the Nottingham Festival Beer Exhibition. Spyke later complained to his own meeting that (at that stage) he had more volunteers from Derby than from Nottingham. Well done us!

The meeting was again a lively one, with plenty of discussion and ideas coming forward from members. A major topic was what to do about pubs that serve real ale badly. Some thought we should avoid directing the public toward them, others that bad real ale was still preferable to keg. We shall have to return to this debate when considering our next local beer guide - should it again be a good beer guide, or should it be a real beer guide, perhaps with some grading system.

Traditional beer lovers will find little to be proud of in the newly opened 'Derby Pride'. The beer is Everards and all on pressure, the pub is decorated to match - distinctly 'plastic'.

Sad news is that Stuart Argyle is to retire from the post of Area Organizer. This branch is one of several that 'Stubbs' helped start during his three year stint in the job. We owe a great deal to him for his encouragement, good advice and ability to generally stir things up during the rather tentative early days of the branch's existence. As AO Stuart was a keen advocate of CAMRA making the effort to retain or recruit older members, and he was concerned about the bias developing towards the 'middle class and academics' away from the ordinary working class boozier. Stuart is retiring because the time and expense involved in a CAMRA post is conflicting too much with his family life. Perhaps we can best describe his work for CAMRA in the phrase he coined to describe Shippo's beer - 'Fantastic, fantastic, fantastic, fantastic, fantastic'.

The East Midlands Allied Campaign has temporarily ground to a halt. This is in part due to the period of uncertainty about Allied's intentions with their new beer (see p5) and partly due to committee pre-occupation with other business. The ball is however about to start rolling again with the handout for Allied landlords about to be printed. Incidentally our call for volunteers at the last meeting to help find pubs wanting draught beer back produced a zero return.

(The Last Month - contd.)

Marston's don't appear to agree with Allied's extraordinary statement that there is insufficient demand for real ale in the North and Midlands. They have recently issued a highly attractive set of six 'Real Ale Mats' describing the brewing process, and are rumoured to be about to produce a new beer with an original gravity of 1050. Let's hope they keep their low gravity BB available for the ordinary drinker.

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Our local beer guide is now safely in the hands of the printer, and we expect to have copies at the August branch meeting. It promises to be a first class publication, and with the modest price tag of 25p, should sell well. Sales and promotion plans are now being detailed, and at the July meeting we will be asking for your help. We hope for maximum effort from all - this is after all our main campaigning venture so far this year.

Sixteen plus people have volunteered ample money to help fund the guide - thanks very much. Please will those concerned get their cheques etc to Nick Potter (or Paul Gibson) as soon as possible. We will probably reduce the highest individual contributions, and if anyone who promised a loan has in the meantime fallen on hard times, don't feel embarrassed to ask to be let off the hook.

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Meanwhile ..... it will soon be National Beer Guide compilation time again. The job of selecting perhaps 40 pubs from the 800 is a difficult one, and all members should help. On your travels check out the 1976 entries (a pleasant enough task) - are there any errors, could a better description have been written, is the beer up to the highest standard? On the other hand, what pubs should have been put in? Please write down your comments and give to Reg Newcombe (or another c'tee member. The Beer Guide Sub-Committee will be re-formed shortly - details at the July meeting.

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The New Inn at Wyaston is going to be on keg beer only for the next three months - but for all the best reasons. The new owner is extending and deepening the cellar, a sure sign of good times to come.

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Those on the June 10th Derby social were pleased to be refused draught Bass in the Exeter Arms. Pleased because Barbara, the landlady, had sent six barrels back, as not up to scratch, rather than sell them. Too many pubs just wouldn't bother. A glass of White Shield made a nice change as well.

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It's been an excellent month for volunteers. Phil Rees and John Broadbent are both keen to get a handpump service going, and it is hoped to form a small group of repairers, available to help any pub with problems. It is hoped also to acquire and renovate pumps for re-use in pubs. Anyone else with help or ideas, please step forward. Jill Burgess has volunteered to assemble a collection of CAMRA press cuttings, which will then be available to flash at on-the-fence landlords etc. Jill would like to borrow your cuttings, past and future, particularly from the rarer publications. Tim Burgess and Mick Chambers have been keeping the memberless 'Alfreton Triangle' region under observation, and are making plans to start a new Area Sub-Committee there. Mike Butler has stepped in to help with Mild & Bitter editing. Many thanks all. Many thanks also to Eric Rodgers for getting us a good plug in the DE Telegraph's Saturday Page.

## THE SOCIAL SCENE

### Camraway to the Black Country (Sat 8th May)

Our coach with 28 very dry mouths aboard arrived at the Park Inn, Woodsetton (adjacent to the Holdens Brewery) for a quick pint of mild or bitter. Holdens brew a strong ale which was also well favoured.

All aboard for Netherton! A cheer went up as we drew up at the Old Swan followed by a stampede off the bus to see who would be the first to sample Doris Pardoe's home brew (someone beat me to it!). There was also time to try the Banks beer across the road.

Next stop (a Dave Johnson diversion extra) to the Wagon and Horses at Quarry Bank. "Just 10 minutes folks" for a pint of handpumped Hansons.

By this time our members realized this was no trip for a slow drinker. Ten minutes later we were enjoying a pint of Simpkiss ale at the Foley Arms at Brierley Hill (also near the brewery).

The coach tyres were still warm as we pulled out from the Vine Inn ("cannot do with a coach party" said the landlord - although he was notified in advance). Some quick work by Dave Johnson (that master of maps) and Mike, our driver still gave us time to sample Bathams beers at the Lamp Tavern (bitter: 1043 - distinctive and full bodied according to National GBG).

"Hectic, but very enjoyable." and "the beer was excellent" were a couple of the comments about the trip.

(Terry Morton)

### Shardlow Morris and Ale Evening (Weds 19th May)

A call in the chilly evening air by Julian Eyre brought the Derby Morris Men to order and perform a series of Cotswold dances outside the New Inn.

It was at the Navigation where most of the crowd caught up with the evening. Members joined us from Belper, Loughborough, and Nottingham to witness the second performance and to sample the excellent Davenports bitter.

Next the Shakespeare where some amusing mumming added variety to the Morris men's programme.

By this time it was growing dark so we retired to the next venue, the Dog and Duck, where the Tudor room had been booked for the Morris Men to dance in. However because of some mix-up in the booking the landlord would not open the door to the room. The Morris Men did not hang around, they were off to the Old Crown Inn. Those who followed enjoyed joining in with Lester Simpson who, accompanying himself on the melodeon, sang a few drinking songs.

The evening was an interesting and enjoyable variation on the normal pub crawl.

(Terry Morton)

### Other Events

A good handfull of members and their friends enjoyed a very gentle pub crawl in Loughborough on the 15th May with the Loughboro' Branch. A feature was a chance to try, in the Greyhound, two of the three Marston's No 3 milds produced. The 9.30pm social at the Sir Robert Peel (26th May), and the Little Eaton (22 May) and Derby (10th June) crawls were also well supported.

## MORTON GOSSIP

A chance visit to the Stanhope Arms, Stanton by Dale, on Thursday 3rd June found bags of sandwiches and half price Shippe's until 10pm. It was the first evening for the young new landlord, Hedley Horsefield, who assured me that he was very keen to retain the handpumps.

At the Durham Ox, Ilkeston, on Saturday 5th June, cricket fan and real bitter drinker West Indian Bill Clements became Nottingham branch's first coloured member. Camra is for all, so do any of our members know of anyone of immigrant origin keen to support that great British custom of drinking good Beer?

The first pub in our area to display a Camra mirror is the Chequers, Ticknall. On reflection, do you know of a real ale pub who would like one? See What' Brewing for details.

(Terry Morton)

## A PUB TO VISIT

The Sitwell Arms, Wall Street, Ripley. This small friendly back-street local is a three minute walk from the market place in Ripley. To find the pub you turn right from the market place (going away from Derby) and then first left past the church. Though it's not far from the centre, you will probably find that it's not very busy. Both mild and bitter are on handpumps. The bitter is particularly good, and it's worth noting that the draught beers are very reasonably priced. Other attractions are two dartboards and a juke-box.

(Paul Gibson)

## BAPTISM BY ALE

The bar in our canteen at work operates only for the occasional social function, and then serves Sam Smith's keg, and a brand of lager, whose name fortunately escapes me. So I was naturally delighted when one of my colleagues, who was in the group (Axiom) playing at a recent dance there, and generally helping to organize things, decided he wanted real ale. The bad news was, that with no more knowledge than the article in What's Brewing, November 1975, I was to look after it.

The beer, a kilderkin (18 galls) of SS's Old Brewery Bitter, was ordered, through the company account, on the Monday and arrived two days later. It was followed closely by a Sam Smith's man, who had taken the trouble to drive down from Tadcaster to bring their special barrel mounted handpump. He brought plenty of advice and good cheer, and thanked Camra for reviving the real beer market, but had alas never tapped a barrel himself. So that's how I got covered with beer (well only a little really).

The cask was then vented (there was some controversy about the right sequence) and spiled with a soft peg scrounged from the White Swan, Spondon. There followed a nail biting 48 hours (we had left only the bare minimum time for the beer to condition and clear) with much sampling and peering through murky pints. The room was far too warm, but wet towels draped over the barrel did help slightly to keep the temperature down.

(Baptism by Ale - Contd.)

Fortunately for the public image, all went well. The cask was hard pegged after working overnight, had more or less cleared after 24 hours, and had an excellent appearance on the night. It sold extremely well, and they were still asking for more when it ran out towards the end of the evening. As for quality - well it wasn't up to local guide standard (too warm for a start) but it was quite adequate, and it did at least prove that even a rank amateur can produce an acceptable pint under adverse circumstances without too much trouble. I would guess, though, that OBB is a fairly tolerant beer.

(Tim Williams)

### BITTERMEN SMILE AGAIN

All credit to Allied for the new Ind Coope 'Draught Burton Ale'. After all, 600 pubs is about the same as the number of tied houses owned by the 20 smallest brewing companies. It's sad, however, that while Allied are now catering for the 'trendy' southern drinker, who is prepared to pay high prices, but presumerably drinks little at a session, they continue to ignore the potential of the 'ordinary' Ind Coope bitter. The latter can be an extremely nice pint, and with its lower gravity, much more likely to appeal to the ordinary drinker. It's sad also that Allied are not making the new beer available in our branch area. Their statement that there is insufficient demand for real ale in the Midlands and North brings little consolation as you fight your way to the bar for a pint of Pedigree.

The Allied attitude to this area shows that we are not doing our job properly, and provides an extra spur to the East Midland Allied Campaign.

Meanwhile for Camra members, and their fellow-travelling friends, a taste of the new beer will be worth a trip out. It can be found (only, as far as we know, in this area) at the Roebuck in Burton. The pub is opposite the Allied brewery, which, in turn, is more or less opposite the railway station. The price is a staggering 32p, but the beer itself is pleasant and has 'drinkability'. Some of our impromptu panel of tasters found it a little too sweet and thick to suit their tastes. You might find it a bit difficult to spot the handpump amid the plastic dispensers.

While in Burton you'll find the Cooper's Tavern within easy walking distance of the Roebuck. It's in Cross St and has gravity Bass. The Bridge at Branston (gravity Marston's) is only a couple of miles away.

(Tim Williams)

### BEER EXHIBITIONS

A well run beer tent at a local show or other event could undoubtedly be one of the best methods of getting Camra's message across. It will, however, require a great deal of hard work and months of careful preparation. Other campaign priorities on committee members time has meant that we have made little progress towards doing a tent. It has therefore been decided to set up a sub-committee headed by John Griffiths, who did the assessment of the possibilities of a beer tent at this year's Derbyshire Show, to take over responsibility for our beer tent interests. In particular these include a tent at the next Derbyshire Show, and a smaller ('trial run') event this year.

The sub-committee will consist of three to five people, and we need volunteers now. Those joining it will be expected to attend regular (probably monthly) meetings for several months, and to do a fair amount of (sometimes tedious) work, including telephoning, letter writing, and general foot-slogging, to gather the necessary information.

## DERBY DIARY

Thur 17 to Sun 20 June  
NOTT'M BEER EXHIB.

Twenty-five brews at the Victoria Leisure Centre (near Victoria Centre). Open lunchtimes and evenings (see What's Brewing). Arrangements for branch visit at mtg.

Thursday 24 th June  
PUB CRAWL IN DERBY

Meet at the Alexandra, Siddals Rd, at 8pm. Some of the Burton Branch are coming to town for a pub crawl, so lets show them a variety of ales in pubs that will shortly be listed in our new Derby Guide.

Monday 28th June  
SPECIAL MEETING

Committee meeting with branch officers to discuss any problems with the current organizational set-up, and other branch matters.

Thursday 8th July  
BRANCH MEETING

The Victoria Hotel, Cowley St, (off Kedleston Rd.) 8pm. The landlord is hoping to arrange gravity Bass, try to drag a mate or two along and let them find out what real beer is all about. NOTE - three weeks from June mtg.

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Saturday 24th July  
CAMBRIDGE BEER EX.

Full day coach trip to the exhibition and the Camra pub. Names to Terry Morton now for what should (on last year's experience) be a cracking day out.

Thursday 12th August  
BRANCH MTG IN MATLOCK

This will be the first time that the monthly branch meeting will have been held outside Derby. Please plan to come along and help raise Camra interest in the Matlock area. There will be a coach laid on from Derby leaving 7.45pm.

## JUNE MEETING AGENDA

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.
2. Branch Bulletin
3. Branch News and Matters Arising.
4. Social and Other Notices.
5. Beer Break.
6. Open Discussion and Any Other Business.

## THE DERBY BRANCH OF CAMRA

COMMITTEE: Tim Williams (Chairman, Newsletter) Derby 676027; Paul Gibson (Secretary, M&B Subs) Brailsford 365; Nick Potter (Treasurer, Membership Sec, Pub Info Collator) Derby 511355; Terry Morton (Social Sec) Derby 674025; Dave Johnson (Pub Liason); John Kearney (Publicity Sec) 5 Ormskirk Rise, Spondon; Reg Newcombe (Beer Guide Sec) Derby 45399.

OTHER OFFICERS: Ian Grimshaw (Belper Area Sub-C'tee C'man) Belper 3270; Trevor Peacock (Matlock AS-C C'man) 62 Dale Rd, Matlock; Tim Burgess and Mick Chambers (proposed Alfreton AS-C); Chris Gale (Historic Pubs); Keith Normington (Raffles); Clive Moore (What's Brewing Sales); Jeff Fletcher (Camra Sales); Phil Rees and John Broadbent (Handpump Renovation); Mike Butler (M&B sub editor); Jill Burgess (Press cuttings).