

MILD & BITTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DERBY BRANCH OF CAMRA

ISSUE 9

JULY 1976

THE LAST MONTH

The Mitre Hotel, Allenton, was the setting for a lively June branch meeting, which was lubricated with some excellent Marston's Pedigree and BB. The turnout was a good one, and it well filled the comfortable room. One of those attending was Stuart Argyle, whose imminent retirement from the post of Area Organiser was reported in last month's M&B.

The main subjects discussed at the meeting were the change in the average age of members attending branch meetings over the past few months, and the future CAMRA strategy. The discussion on age was particularly relevant as two of the elder, and longest standing, members of the branch, Bertie and Joyce Budd, were present. Three important points were raised in the discussion on future CAMRA strategy.

(i) The quality of beer - It was felt that CAMRA should be concerned about how the quality of beer is affected on its journey from brewery to mouth. The training of landlords was mentioned as one method of improving quality, although customer reaction is always the best method of getting a landlord to improve his beer. (NOTE - It was felt that it was the responsibility of all members to congratulate a landlord on the quality of his beer, but to take their custom elsewhere rather than to cause bad feeling against CAMRA by complaining.

(ii) Contacting non-members who frequent keg pubs - Ideas for spreading the word to people we would not normally meet included selling What's Brewing in keg pubs, a darts team, and real ale tents at carnivals and shows.

(iii) Freedom of choice - It was suggested that Camra members keep in mind that, to some people, a monopoly of real ale is as bad as a monopoly of keg beer is to us. The aim of CAMRA must always be freedom of choice.

Two visitors at the branch meeting, Pete Sergeant and John Webb, had particularly come along to see how CAMRA operates at branch level. They are doing a Diploma in Management Studies at Derby Tech, and as part of this course, were, with six others, involved in a three week project on the brewing industry. The project covered all aspects of the industry, including pressure groups such as ourselves. Apart from the meeting they were given a full run down on CAMRA, over a few pints of Home Ales, a few days later. They stressed that they had to keep a strictly neutral position on CAMRA, but seemed quite impressed by what they had seen and read. They were pleased to have had a much better reception than other members of the group had got from some of the major brewers.

The Beer Exhibition Sub-Committee (John Griffiths, Ron Cresser, Phil Knight, and Mike Butler) met for the first time on 27 June at the Alexandra. The ultimate aim of the committee is to stage a full stage beer exhibition. But this year they are hoping to gain some experience in running a beer tent at an event sometime in August or September.

The East Midlands Allied Campaign is still hibernating, but a printed handout for licensees should be available shortly. Still no volunteers from members though.

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Communications this month included: a letter to the Derby Borough Council Planning and Technical Services Committee supporting their decision to lease the Siffin site to Marstons not Allied, and pointing out the imbalance between the brewers owning pubs in Derby; a letter to Hardys and Hansens Ltd. in support of the Rutland Arms re-opening on handpumps, with arguments in favour of the latter; a letter to the Derby Evening Telegraph correcting the impression they gave that handpumps are nearly extinct in Derby; and a letter giving the branch's suggestions on the CAMRA plan of strategy to Anthony Gibson, who is preparing proposals for same.

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As an experiment, a special discussion meeting was held on Monday 28th July for all Branch Officers (eg What's Brewing Sales Organizer etc). The topics ranged widely from the problems experienced by the officers in their jobs for the branch, to the problems of CAMRA nationally. A number of interesting and useful ideas came out, and these are to be followed up when possible, after discussion by the committee or branch as appropriate. It was generally considered that a committee/branch officers meeting was a good idea, so it is likely to become a regular event.

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Amongst other points raised at the Branch Officers' meeting was that, despite published requests for articles for Mild & Bitter, no member had actually come forward with one. We do need variety in our newsletter - so how about having a go.

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This has been only a three week 'month' and regrettably the time available has meant that not all the news items available can be published.

LOCAL GUIDE SALES DRIVE

Our local guide 'Good Beer in and Around Derby' is still on schedule for publication by the August branch meeting. The price has been fixed at 25p, and it's worth more than that for the illustrations and reading matter alone. Loans to pay the printer are now urgently required, and will those who promised them, please see Nick Potter, or Reg Newcombe. Cheques to CAMRA (Derby) No 2 Account.

All the hard work in producing the guide will be to no avail unless we sell it in large quantities. Much thought has gone into the means of achieving maximum sales, and a detailed scheme has been drawn up. One particular area in which members can help is in sales to pubs. Here the intention is to circularize all listed pubs in advance of publication, with a letter telling them they are in the guide, a circular describing it, and details of how to order. Apart from being a means of letting the pubs get copies before other retailers, it will be the first time that many of them will have had official contact with CAMRA.

To follow up this initial contact we need a team of fifteen volunteers. Each will have sole responsibility for sales to about ten pubs, all within a particular area. The first job will be to deliver the guides ordered as a result of the circular and to collect the money. We expect perhaps one or two of the ten pubs to order in advance, and guides must be delivered to them within ten days from publication. Within twenty days of publication the remaining pubs are to be visited to show them a copy and solicit more sales. Having delivered these extra sales (within ten days of order) our super salespeople will continue to have responsibility for their pubs for a total period of three months. Each pub selling guides (perhaps five out of the ten) is to be visited at least every fortnight to monitor sales progress, to obtain repeat orders, collect money, and (but we hope not) collect any sale or return copies. A report of sales progress is to be made to Paul Gibson on a fortnightly basis so that the reprint situation can be assessed.

There is quite a bit of work involved, and it may seem complicated, but don't be deterred from volunteering if you don't rate your selling ability. We are not looking for a hard sell approach, but just to ensure that if a pub wants to sell guides and can sell guides, there will be someone there to provide them. Experience has shown that most landlords should be very receptive to the idea of selling, and the discounts we are offering on bulk orders should enable him to make a very tidy profit. The target for each group of pubs is only 50 copies in total sold with four pubs selling them. A list will be available at the meeting for volunteers to sign.

CAMRAWAY TO GLOSSOP AND HYDE (Sat 12th June)

Will the bus turn up? Will everyone be on time?

When we've had a few pints will we lose anyone miles from home?

These are some of the worries of a social secretary on Camraway outings. But it's not surprising that after fourteen pints most of these fears spirit themselves away.

Ironically our first call on this mammoth pub crawl was the Fool's Neek on the A523 just short of Macclesfield, where a pint and a half of Higgins bitter was an excellent start to the day (breakfast for some I believe). All aboard for Cheshire and the Star, High Street, for a taste of Hydes (a bit salty) and a revolving door designed to pitch the unwary customer into the busy road. Next a pint of Helts at the Griffin, Heaton. It was an excellent pub for the traditionalist with an Edwardian (?) centre bar of dark solid wood floor to ceiling with engraved glass panels. Dave Johnson says that many Helt's pubs are in this style. 'It's three o'clock closing chaps' so we fitted in the Travellers Call, Bradbury, for Lees on electric pump.

After getting us to the 'Glossop Playday' our driver nipped off for a well earned meal. Our objective was the real ale tent.

"Ah, there it is, what would you like - a pint of Marstons, Lees, Pollards Brickwoods, or Beddingtons?"

"Er, yes please"

At 6.15 we were (by prior appointment) banging on the side door of the White Gates, Hyde (a CAMRA Investments Ltd pub). A thumbs up from an upstairs window and soon we were trying pints of Hartleys XB and Thwaites mild (to name but two). The pub still retains a traditional style with small rooms, plenty of wooden panelling, and old tiles. There is a huge CAMRA mirror, subtly lit, in an alcove. We stayed for about an hour and a half, some of us made a few remarks in the visitor's book, and the landlady came out to wave us off and invite us back again sometime.

There was still time to try a few brews at five pubs on the way home. Greenall Whitley, Wilsons, and Burtenwoods were on the menu, but we passed Sam Smiths house, and Dave Johnson (navigator) agreed to take an eye test. Last stop was the Packhorse at Chapel on le Frith, where the glasses of Robinsons were raised to some very weary looking faces. It had been a very long day, but a good one for beer mat collectors, and it's estimated that real ale sales were boosted by 36 gallons.

(Terry Merton)

NOTTINGHAM BEER EXHIBITION (17 to 20 June)

Anyone who went will know that this was a very well organized event, and it was encouraging to see a number of Derby members helping out. There were over 20 brews available, but as usual most made a bee-line for the stranger rarer brews like Old Peculier and Fullers ESB, which as a result had to be rationed. The Camra shop offered a range of products, and there was a souvenir glass to add to the collection. By Saturday evening a rash of DD 1s K9P badges had appeared, but these were not a Camra product and seemed to be being sold by dirty postcard methods. They did cause a certain amount of mirth in pubs and fish and chip shops on the way home.

(Terry Merton)

PUBCRAWL WITH BURTON (Thurs 24th June)

At 8.45 there were fifteen members of the branch in the Alexandra quenching their thirsts with pints of Flo's bitter or mild. "Where's this Burton let?" was the question. But just then Stan Ashton, sporting a yellow CAMRA tee-shirt appeared around the door. Due to some mix-up they'd been in the Victoria trying the Bass mild. Stu Argyle (AO) and Nick Hawkins (RO) arrived with the chairman and secretary of the Hastings Branch, followed shortly by the rest of Burton. It began to get a bit crowded.

Burton had asked to try the Nottingham brews, so it was a long traverse of the town centre to get to some Hardys and Hansens. But the heat of the Furnace proved too great, and most enjoyed drinking and chatting outside. Finally it was a short walk to the St Helens inn, where Burton reckoned they had enjoyed the evening and a chance to try something (for them) different. We will be seeing them again at Denisthorpe on the 14th July.

(Terry Merton)

THE VERY BEST ALE

Last year we had an excellent Beer Guide Sub-Committee, who put in many hundreds of pub-hours to compile the local guide. This sub-committee is to be re-formed & will meet first at 8 pm on Wednesday 21st July at the Alexandra Hotel, Siddals Road.

The first task of the BGS-C will be to select entries for the 1977 National Good Beer Guide. This year we have much more extensive experience of the pubs available, but members of the group will need to do a considerable amount of checking and comparing pubs to ensure that the visitor to our area gets really top quality ale. We will have to choose perhaps 40 pubs from the 400 approx. real ale houses in our area.

Next the group will need to deal with the second edition of our own local guide. There are a number of questions to be considered; how should the compilation be handled; what sort of guide should it be; how should it be presented; - to name but a few. However, the bulk of the work will be in visiting the pubs and tasting the beer.

All members are invited to volunteer to join the sub-committee, but please do not do so unless you are prepared to attend at least 80% of the monthly sub-committee meeting, and to do the work in between. Will those interested please see Reg Newcombe, who will be the S-C chairman.

MEMBERS' VOTES RULE - OK

There was a time last year when we began to wonder whether most of our members had ever visited a pub other than at branch meetings because, with some honourable exceptions, we get a pretty disappointing response to repeated pleas for these not on the BGS-C to report on the beer in the pubs they used.

This year, particularly in view of all the newer members who have come along, it's worth pointing out that even if you are not on the BGS-C you still have a most important part to play in compiling the guides. The BGS-C cannot do the whole job by itself, and further it's a wide range of opinion; over a period of time that matters.

All members are therefore asked to give their views on as many National Guide pubs as possible on the form which will be available each month. There are one or two points: if it's a first visit and the beer does not seem too good, don't give the pub the benefit of the doubt - report it, but if there are any mitigating circumstances (eg hot weather) report this also; if you visit the pub frequently, however, report on how it rates on average (if applicable rate it in comparison with another nearby pub).

Apart from the beer quality in existing entries, we are looking for errors and improved descriptions. For the latter it may be only you who knows some interesting snippet of information about the place. Apart from checking existing entries, we need your candidates for new entries.

Don't be put off by the thought that someone else may have better tastebuds than yourself - we all have our own preferences, and we all make occasional mistakes. This is at least a most important job for the branch that can be done reasonably painlessly.

DERBY DIARY

Wednesday 14th July SOCIAL EVENING

Social evening with the Burton, Loughborough, and Leicester Branches, at the Engine, Denisthorpe (near, Ashby). Anyone who came to Wyaston won't want to miss this one. COACH from Derby Market Place 7.30 pm. Book now.

Saturday 24th July CAMES. BEER EX.

^{coach}
Full day trip to the Cambridge Beer Exhibition and the CAMRA pub. Leave Derby Market Place 10.30 am, return by 1am Sunday. Deposits required - please book now.

Saturday 31st July MANCHESTER TRIP

The Nottingham Branch are spending the day around Manchester (including the White Gates of course) and invite us to join them. They will pick us up in Derby Market Place at 11am. Book now - no deposit.

Wednesday 4th August INFORMAL SOCIAL

Whatever else you are doing this evening, finish up at the Sun, Middleton St. (near the Cavendish) from 9.30 for a couple of pints of Kimberley. Chris keeps a good pint and is always pleased to see us.

Thursday 12th August BRANCH MEETING IN MATLOCK

SPECIAL COACH will leave from Derby Market Place at 7.45 (prompt), picking up at Belper, King St, at 8.05. Not essential to book, but if you do it will guarantee a place. Come along and help stimulate interest in the Matlock area. Special agenda.

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Monday 23rd August BREWERY VISIT

MEMBERS ONLY visit to Heme Brewery, coach leaving the Alexandra Hotel, Siddals Rd, Derby, 1.45pm. Priority given to those who have not visited a brewery before. A full deposit of £1 is required with the booking. For those who've been to a brewery before, no deposit required for the reserve list for spare places.

JULY 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) Derby 676027; Paul Gibson (Secretary) Brailsford 365; Nick Pether (Treasurer) Derby 511355; Terry Morton (Social Sec) Derby 674026; Dave Johnson (Pub Liason); John Kearney (Publicity Sec) 5 Ormskirk Rise, Spondon; Reg Newcombe (Beer Guide Sec) Derby 45399.

OTHER OFFICERS: Ian Grimshaw (Belper AS-C) Belper 3270; Trevor Peacock (Matlock AS-C) 62, Dale Rd, Matlock; Mick Chambers/Tim Burgess ('Alfreton' AS-C); Chris Gale (Historic Pubs); Keith Norrington (Raffles); Clive Moore (WB Sales); Jeff Fletcher (Camra Sales); John Broadbent/Phil Rees (Handpumps); Mike Butler (M&B Sub Ed); Jill Burgess (Archives); John Griffiths (Beerex S-C).

MILD & BITTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Keep in touch by having Mild & Bitter sent to you when you can't get to Branch Mtgs.

I wish to subscribe to three / ^{*}six issues of Mild & Bitter at a cost of 30p/ 50p

^{*}Delete as appropriate

NAME

ADDRESS

DATE

PUB INFORMATION

Let us know of any changes, rumours of changes, or other pub news.

YOUR NAME & DATE OF INFORMATION	PUB INCLUDING ADDRESS	NEWS	SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Specify any action taken overleaf

NATIONAL GUIDE ENTRIES

A. I recommend that the following pubs be deleted from the next National GBG			
PUB INCLUDING LOCATION	WHEN VISITED	REASON FOR DELETION (If any mitigating circumstances - eg weather- state them)	

^{*} If a regular - say approx how often you visit the pub. ^{*}

B. I recommend that the following pubs be included in the next National GBG			
PUB INCLUDING ADDRESS	BEERS AND HOW SERVED	WHEN VISITED	COMMENTS

NAME (CAPS) SIGNATURE

USE BACK OF FORM FOR NOTIFYING CHANGES TO NAT GBG DESCRIPTIONS, ERRORS, ETC.