DERBY Drinker

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT **YOUR** BEER

No. 1 **EARLY SPRING 1983** **FREE**

NEW! AND LOCAL

WELCOME to the first issue of a brand new FREE newsletter keeping you up to date with the local pubs and pints scene.

Derby Drinker is being produced by the Derby branch of the Campaign for Real Ale - but will do far more than just trumpet loudly about handpumped beer, or just moan about lager.

The idea is to keep local drinkers - whatever they drink - up to date with what's going on the hostelries in Derby and District - be they pubs, hotels, clubs, wine bars, restaurants. In fact anywhere there's a bar!

For that we need your help - as our correspondents can't get around 50 bars a night (every night!) much as they might like to.

What's happening in your local? We're interested in publicising it. Are you signing a petition to save your pub? Or has it won an award? Has the beer changed recently - for better or worse. Or is your pub doing something special for charity?

If you think there's something we ought to know, and report, simply drop a line to the Editor, Derby Drinker, 1 Lower Eley St., Derby.

Look forward to hearing from you!

Battling on!

Plenty of beer - but plenty for CAMRA to do!

THE battle for a better deal for Britain's beer drinkers is far from over. That was the clear New Year message from the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

Though many more pubs than ever before are now serving at least one traditional cask-contained beer - as well as keg and bottled beers and lagers - there remains much to fight for, confirmed Ivor Clissold, a leading member and past chairman of the Derby branch.

Said Ivor: "Though CAMRA has won many battles in its eleven years, and there are few Derby pubs where you can't get a pint of real ale, there remain many things that give cause for concern."

Among the subjects concerning CAMRA are:

- Prices - some "trendy" pubs had "discovered" real ale, but were trying to "get rich quick" with outrageous prices, said Ivor. In some cases breweries too had jumped on the bandwagon.

- Closures - the recession has bitten hard into the drinks trade, with many pub closures inevitable, but so often, claim CAMRA it's less profitable community pubs which bite the dust: very often pubs which are the hub of their particular community.

- Decor - breweries spending thousands of pounds on upmarket redecorations risk alienating the people who really keep a pub going: the regulars, who prefer their comfy pubs left as they are.

- Public bars - are disappearing fast as many pubs are knocked through into one large room, often at the expense of traditional games like darts and dominoes. Once again, the customers are the last people consulted about these changes - it's a case of liking it or lumping it.

- Standards - thankfully there there are very few pubs in Derby in which real ale is installed, and then not given the necessary care and attention to keep it in top class condition until the point of serving. But every barrel has a bad apple.

Ivor Clissol concluded: "Of course CAMRA's chief aim has always been choice, and we cannot consider our battle won as long as there are ANY pubs not offering the drinker the chance to try traditional ale - as well as keg beers and lagers.

"We're happy to accept that some people only want to drink keg beer or lager - but that's already available in virtually all licensed premises."

PASS IT ON TO YOUR FRIENDS

TWO BREWERIES LOOK AT DERBY CHANCE

TETLEY'S and Wolverhampton and Dudley, two breweries without any pubs in Derby, have made positive moves to gain a foothold in the city.

Joshua Tetley, of Leeds, part of the Allied Breweries combine chiefly represented by Ind Coope (East Midlands) in the area have successfully applied for permission to turn the former Kennings car showroom, Queen Street, Derby, into a licensed restaurant.

The site is a prime one, opposite Derby Cathedral and close to the so-called "Olde Derby" shopping area and an ambitious development would certainly have other pubs and eateries in the vicinity looking to their laurels.

Meanwhile, Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries are further from making their mark in the city.

They are interested in a site previously set aside for industrial use at the junction of Nottingham Road and Chequers Lane, Derby - but the city council has failed, over 18 months, to sell it for that purpose.

A city council "yes" to the idea will lead to other breweries being asked if they are interested ...

NEW GUIDE NOT JUST FOR BEER

APPEARING in pubs and bookshops all over the county since the New Year is Derbyshire's first ever complete guide to public houses serving real ale - traditional cask-conditioned beer.

It's called Derbyshire Ale, but the sub-title (The CAMRA Guide to Derbyshire) and the prominent appearance of the East Midlands Tourist Board logo on the front cover hint at the fact that it is far more than just a beer guide.

Tourist Board director Jeff Hamblin, in his foreword, says: "Derbyshire Ale is as much about Derbyshire as it is about ale," and he's right.

Everywhere there's a pub to describe, the hamlet, village town, or even field, is described too - with sufficient historical and natural detail to make the guide ideal for the visitor to our lovely county who also happens to like a drink.

Of course, it is of equal use to the drinker determined to have a pint at every good pub in the county!

In all over 700 pubs in 272 places are described. Some 73 beers from 33 breweries are available in the county.

The guide is the voluntary work of the Derbyshire branches of the Campaign for Real Ale - but most particularly of Reg Newcombe, public relations officer of the Derby branch, for whom it has been a three year labour of love.

It is Mr Newcombe who is responsible for the bulk of the text in Derbyshire Ale, and he is clearly a man in love with his county as well as his ale!

Throughout, a spade has been called a spade: thus we are told Chellaston is "now submerged in Derby's sprawl" and under Cotmanhay we are told: "Shipley County Park is but a short walk away and Disneyland is still in America." (a reference to the proposals for a like development in the area). They are descriptions that will rankle with some - but they're true and they'll also meet with widespread approval.

Pictures in the guide have been thoughtfully finished in sepia tone and the excellent cover is simple yet striking.

In short, Derbyshire Ale is a delight: £1.75 seems on the face of it a steep price, but it's a chunky book, and an excellent, value-for-money read even if you're teetotal!

Colston Crawford

Point of view

Stopping with the hops . . ?

WHAT'S the difference between a pint of Bass and a dead frog? The answer of course is that there are more hops in the late leaper! But, alas, that joke (and it is!) could be applied to all too many beers these days.

Locally, Bass, Ind Coope, Kimberley and Shipstones are all producing "bitters" which a few years ago would have been regarded as light milds.

The picture is no rosier nationally, either. Some of the country's notable bitters have become quite insipid over the last couple of years.

Boddington's used to be so hoppy it could be smelled from across the bar as it was being pulled. Arkell's was once so distinctive it divided it's home town into addicts and detesters - there was no undecidedness about so sizzling a palate.

Hops are believed to have been introduced to Britain in the 14th century, though a wild variety has always been around for picking. Cultivation started in 1554 as immigrant Flemish planters settled in Kent. Hops quickly superceded other ale additives because they score on four counts: an antiseptic quality preserves the beer; the aromatic oil (resin) gives a pleasant bouquet and the stamen of the flower acts as a clarifying agent during brewing. Finally, the bitter taste, which makes beer so refreshing a drink.

No one variety of hop produces all four characteristics equally, and this is just one of the reasons why no beer exactly resembles another.

English hop varieties are numerous but the best known to laymen are Fuggles and Goldings. Roughly, Goldings give a grainy, coarse bitter taste, while Fuggles is more favoured for its subtle bouquet and is much used for adding to beer just before it leaves the brewery (dry hopping).

Unfortunately many traditional hopfields have disappeared of late, or have been replanted with disease resistant or heavy-cropping varieties which do not have the character of the old types. Some are welcome, though. Styrians are a continental variety which help Timothy Taylor's produce their beautifully characterful beers.

After hops are boiled with the wort, the cone leaves settle at the bottom of the vessel. Traditionally the wort is drained from the vessel using the leaves as a filter. Much modern equipment, however, uses a centrifuge system for this purpose and this has allowed the introduction of pelletised hops.

These are cones that have been dried and processed and they have the advantage of taking up a fraction of the space required for natural hops. They also have a more consistent bittering effect - one needs increasing amounts of natural hops as the year wears on.

Chemists "prove" that pelletised hops contain the same amounts of alpha and beta oils as fresh hops, but I suspect this is not all the story.

There are more oils and flavourings than have been isolated and analysed, and pelletised hops will always fall short in comparison to the real thing.

While variety and processing may explain some of the blandness of today's beers, more is due to the marketing men who believe that the less characterful a product is the less antipathy it creates. This theory ignores the fact that tasty beers form followings whose brand loyalty is unshakeable.

No amount of advertising can produce this sort of market and hops should come back into fashion as people rediscover their taste buds following the great lagerade boom!

• IVOR Clissold is a past chairman of the Derby branch of CAMRA and has previously been active in several other branches, notably in Yorkshire. He retains an active interest in local issues affecting drinkers.

FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT SOMETHING? WE'LL PRINT IT IN "POINT OF VIEW" IF YOU'LL PUT YOUR NAME TO IT. WRITE TO: POINT OF VIEW, DERBY DRINKER, 1 LOWER ELEY STREET, DERBY.

White Hart Hotel
CHURCH STREET, ASHBOURNE.
"A Marston's HOUSE"

TRY OUR:—
MEALS, hot or cold, Served between 12 - 2p.m. in our Bar or Dining Room.
If you are limited for time pre-book your meal
MORNING COFFEE
BUSINESS OR PRIVATE FUNCTIONS CATERED FOR
TRADITIONAL SUNDAY LUNCH, SET 3 COURSE MEAL. BOOKINGS ONLY
MARSTON'S FINEST CASK ALES
Including No. 5 Draught Mild
Telephone your hosts,
Michael & Maureen Bould for details, Ashbourne 44711

DERBY Drinker

No. 1 EARLY SPRING 1983

TRY AN ADVERT

LICENSEES - an advertisement in Derby Derby Drinker can boost your takings. This first edition is just an example of what's to come - we expect Derby Drinker to take a firm hold as a bright, snappy, informative FREE read for pubgoers in and around Derby.

With a single advert on the front and back pages and no more than two to a page inside there's bound to be a big demand. You can discuss details with Keith Normington, 4 Nearwood Drive, Oakwood, Derby (tel: Derby 832392).

A history of Bass on the way

THE first ever full length history of major brewing combine Bass is to be written by two Burton historians, 75-year-old retired Bass employee Mr Ben Ward and 51-year-old technical college lecturer Dr Colin Owen.

The pair are ideally qualified for the job. Mr Ward has rescued much Bass memorabilia and some important documents over the years and has had a project like this in mind for some time. Dr Owen has previously published a history of Burton industry which included two chapters on the breweries, a fact which begs the question: just how many other chapters could there be?!

Mr Ward is blessed with an excellent memory and a tremendous enthusiasm for the task, while Dr Owen looks forward to delving into old title deeds and other records after completing a project on South Derbyshire and Leicestershire coalfields for Moorland Publishing of Ashbourne.

Bass history snippets and films on show at the excellent museum in Horninglow Street, Burton are less than expansive on the subject of the succession of takeovers in the latter part of this century which have made Bass the biggest brewing company in Britain today, and this is an area in which the two historians may be able to elaborate.

HOURS IDEA IS NOT 'LICENCE TO GET DRUNK'

REAL ale campaigners are concerned that many people are misunderstanding the current battle for more flexible licensing hours.

The three month national campaign launched recently by CAMRA aims to get the government to act on an issue which has always been quietly pushed to one side before.

The campaign is for more flexible hours -to suit the licensees. It isn't a campaign for pubs to be open every hour that God sends, CAMRA emphasises!

For instance, a relaxation of the laws governing opening times could allow a pub adjacent to a large factory to open to suit workers finishing their shifts. It could enable town centre pubs near office blocks to open for folks leaving work at 4.30 to have a refresher after a hard day.

Proof that this would not lead to excessive drunkeness is widespread. Drinking in Scotland, since the 1976 Licensing Act north of the border relaxed the laws, is what has been described as "a civilised pleasure."

And in England exceptions made for market days, allowing pubs to stay open longer, have not led to widespread outbreaks of alcoholism.

The idiots who want to get really drunk will manage to do so whatever the licensing laws, CAMRA argues.

CAMRA branches in England and Wales are busily collecting signatures for a mass petition in favour of relaxing the licensing laws to present to the government.

The Derby branch took to the streets with their petition forms just before Christmas.

Branch PRO Reg Newcombe summed up the fight: "It is not a case of us being greedy for more drinking time. We just want to see flexibility in opening hours so licensees can choose when they open or close their pubs."

Local Licensed Victuallers Association chairman Mr Keith Apthorpe of the Bridge Inn, Duffield, said he was wary about the issue, but the national body of licensees, the NULV, has stated that it will be canvassing MPs with a view to a private members' Bill being introduced for more flexible hours in the House of Commons.

David's protest was pre-CAMRA

THE Campaign for Real Ale has been fighting for a better deal for the beer drinker for eleven years - but the first rumblings of discontent were to be heard before the Campaign got off the ground in 1971.

Allenton man Mr David Pratt was, along with a number of like-minded friends, among the first people to officially challenge the restrictive policies of the big brewers. He wrote a letter to Scottish and Newcastle as long ago as 1969.

David's letter asked the brewery (who produce Younger's Tartan, one of the most reviled brews in CAMRA's eyes) why they wouldn't supply traditional cask-conditioned beer to the Seven Stars pub, King Street, Derby.

The brewery wrote back within a couple of days: "We are unable to obtain supplies as our Leicester depot has now adopted keg delivery in place of cask.

We are however introducing a further quality of keg beer which we hope ... will prove popular and induce you to continue your patronage."

David and his friends didn't continue their patronage - yet over ten years later they got their wish!

When real ale once again became popular with the breweries as well as the drinkers, Scottish and Newcastle began promising to return their cask beers to the Seven Stars.

Finally the promises turned to reality and the pub now serves what many discerning drinkers consider are good examples of S & N's range - handpumped Younger's, IPA and McEwan's 70/- ales.

"Better late than never," says David!

AS FAR as we know David Pratt's 1969 request for draught beer at the Seven Stars is the earliest sign of active revolt against keg beer. Do any readers know better? Let us know!

Derby Drinker is distributed free to pubs in and around the city, published by the Derby branch of the Campaign for Real Ale and printed by G & B Offset. Editor: Col Crawford, 1 Lower Eley Street, Derby. **C Derby CAMRA 1983.**