

DERBY Drinker

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT YOUR BEER



No. 5

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1983

FREE

Banks's come to Derbyshire — with a whisper

THE celebrated Black Country brewers, Bank's, arrived in Derby for the first time at the end of October - not with a bang, but with a whisper.

They have taken over the Grandstand, the large public house adjacent to Derbyshire County Cricket Club's headquarters off Nottingham Road, Derby.

The arrival was announced with a single large press advertisement - but it appears a bigger splash may follow when the building has been done up.

Bank's traditional ales were introduced immediately - which must have come as a surprise to customers who had been drinking keg-only John Smith's for years. But their reaction on the first night the pub sold the new product was favourable.

Bank's are particularly well-known for their Mild, which outsells their Bitter by as much as ten pints to one in some pubs in the Black Country.

The Black Country is, however, a depressed area and that fact is understood to be behind the brewery's decision to seek more widespread outlets. They are expected to open a new pub in Alvaston, near the new Shardlow Road estate, in the future.

Bank's motto, Unspoilt by Progress, bodes well for the future of the Grandstand, at the moment a grand building which, particularly inside, has seen better days.

But before the renovations start local drinkers can sample Bank's bitter and mild already. By today's standards the 58p (bitter) and 55p (mild) tariffs in the lounge represent rare value for money in a pint.

Straight pint?

DEMA Glass of Chesterfield, who produce the souvenir glass for Derby beer festivals, have introduced a new look pint glass - pictured here.

It's called the Crown Viking and is said to be more comfortable to hold than the conventional "straight glass".

Dema Glass also say it's easier to stack and clean and shows up the head on the beer.



A Meeting with Bass...

THE policies of Bass Ltd., the brewing giants have caused much controversy over the last couple of years - and it is fair to say that claims and counter-claims have tended to confuse issues over a period of time.

Derby CAMRA public relations officer Reg Newcombe was part of a CAMRA delegation which met senior Bass Brewing officials for clear the air talks in Burton on Trent recently.

As a result, the brewery have undoubtedly made their position clearer perhaps than ever before. Mr Newcombe's fascinating report of the meeting appears on page two.

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A meeting with Bass...

REG NEWCOMBE, public relations officer for Derby CAMRA, was among those who met Bass Brewing managing director Bob Ricketts, brewing director Derek Hobson, brewer in charge Tom Dawson and Bass PRO Maurice Lovett at the brewery recently. His revealing and candid report of the meeting deals with many of the major criticisms of Bass in turn.

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ON DRAUGHT BASS:

CAMRA's main contention - that the quality of Draught Beer is not as good as it used to be and the final abandonment of the Union System has completed the change for the worse - is flatly refuted by the brewery, who insist that their own researches have enabled them to reproduce the same characteristics outside the Union Room, and that this was confirmed by the success of numerous taste trials in which the great majority of participants failed to tell the difference between the old Bass and the new.

They also state that without any marketing push sales of Draught Bass have risen since the changeover - while beer sales generally are declining.

Derek Hobson admits production problems do occur - but not only within Bass: "This year for example we have had trouble with inferior quality malt, but that is due to poor growing conditions and has affected other breweries no less than it has affected Bass Brewing."

Bass simply do not accept that anything needs to be done either to the brewing formula or the method. There's room for minor adjustments - but they now think they have the basic method and formula "exactly right."

The brewery wants Draught Bass to succeed and they're confident that it will - but they will always respond to volume of sales, not propaganda from pressure groups. Says Bob Ricketts: "We cannot aim to please differing minorities at the expense of the generality of our customers."

THE BURTON UNION ROOM

Bob Ricketts, managing director: "That is now a part of brewing history. One section of it (on Duke Street) will be preserved as a building of historical importance but there is absolutely no question of reverting to the Burton Union system as a method of production. To have continued to use it as a production facility would have been sheer economic madness, costing £1-million in excess of the present production cost - or an additional £5 a barrel.

"From a brewery specification point of view, Draught Bass is more consistent now than ever before and certainly more so than when produced in the Burton Union Room, when it was subject to considerable variation."

LACK OF CHOICE

This has been CAMRA's biggest complaint, apart from about Draught Bass itself, but Bass do not accept they are restricting consumer choice by offering only one cask conditioned beer in most of their houses.

Bob Ricketts again: "Most of our tied houses are not managed but tenanted, and the brewery does not dictate to tenants what beer they should put on offer. They can all see what's available from the price list and anyone who has Draught Bass could also have Springfield bitter if he wanted it, just as he could have had Worthington bitter, but most don't. We really did try to market Worthington more widely - with disappointing results.

Some licensees simply don't want to be bothered with more than one cask beer; some can't be bothered with even one. CAMRA tends to put all the blame for non availability of cask beers on the breweries, but I put it to you that, in our case at least, it is more likely to be the tenant who is restricting his customer's choice when he could quite well have a couple of cask beers if he chose to. It's his business and he does what he thinks best for him and his customers.

That apart, we have tested the market and reached our conclusions. What sells in our pubs in the East Midlands is cask Bass and keg Worthington bitter and that's it."

CASK STONES

Bass seem highly unlikely to give East Midlands drinkers the chance to try traditional Stones bitter, which is available in its traditional trading area of Sheffield and South Yorkshire. Keg Stones has recently been introduced into quite a few East Midlands pubs, but on the traditional scene Bob Ricketts said: "Draught Bass is our 'ordinary bitter' and we have no need of another. In any case there is no spare capacity at Sheffield. The brewery's full capacity is needed to supply the traditional trading area.

The prospect of a small trade would not induce us to do so and we have no indication that cask Stones would be any more successful than cask Worthington bitter."

TRY AN ADVERT

LICENSEES - an advertisement in Derby Drinker can boost your takings.

We expect Derby Drinker to take a firm hold as a bright, snappy, informative FREE read for pub-goers 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).

Point of view

Condiments of the season...

The pickling season(ing) is upon us and this screed is to 'ware you of the dangers facing our great national drink - malt vinegar.

Derby's only remaining brewery in Kedleston Road - produces vinegar. It is made from malted barley in a high gravity mash and is fermented right out to zero. A 'secondary fermentation' then takes place, wherein the alcohol is oxidised into acetic acid. The end product is consequently extremely sharp, malty and almost non-alcoholic.

It was ever thus and in all

countries of the world there seems to be a similar substance used for preserving and flavouring: the main difference being that it is usually made out of an oxidation of the local popular tippie. 'Vinegar' is strictly a misnomer, the etymology refers to oxidised wine. The more proper term for our oxidised mild is 'alegar'. This has given the simpletons of Brussels much consternation as they cannot understand how people in different countries are allowed to call differing products by the same name. (Just wait till they get on to lager!)

In the '40s the chemical companies thought that this fermentation business was all so much mumbo-jumbo and produced for the delight of the public a liquid known as 'non-brewed vinegar'. The Vinegar Brewer's Federation did not go big licks on this and the famed case of Diment v Kat resulted in the word vinegar being reserved for fermented brews only.

Of course the chemical industry was not deterred and their nastiness is still sold under various euphemisms, the most popular being 'non-brewed condiment'. It is made of a mixture

IVOR CLISSOLD ASKS FOR REAL VINEGAR!

of acetic acid and caramel and is sold wholesale at 80% strength. It is the acrid reek from this horrid stuff which sends me speeding past the chippy on many an evening.

While the Eurocrats are concerned about acid in such concentration being available in food preparation areas, the catering trade seem more than pleased to dilute this muck to the profitability level they require. And with an unlabelled bottle left on the table or fish shop counter uncharged for, no offence is being committed, even though almost everyone thinks that the bottle contains vinegar.

So beware the dreaded 'condiment' - use malt vinegar and eschew the acrid chip and flaccid, anaemic pickled onion!

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.

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REV

BY ROB



DERBY Drinker

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MEET THE GIRLS WHO WANT TO PUT WEIGHT ON

THE barmaids at the Duke of York are putting on weight. Not for them the usual round of slimming clubs and aerobics classes young ladies who might have overindulged attend.

Three of the pub's barmaids will be eating more and exercising less until midnight on Christmas Eve, when they will have a grand weigh-in to see just how many pounds have been added.

They're getting sponsors of course - the more the merrier, though the more they get (and the more they put on) the more worried landlord Ronnie Wilson will get.

For he's been persuaded to LOSE twice as much weight as the three girls put on. He's a solid 14st 2lbs at the moment.

Spokesperson for the intrepid barmaids, Sandie Middleton, aged 31, and 9st 4lbs as we went to press, said: "We're the total opposites to normal barmaids. Let's just say we don't have the normal attributes."

If anyone asks us to have a drink now we ask for six bags of crisps." laughed Sandie. And she vowed that the girls would be careful to expend a little less energy behind the bar.

Local charity will benefit from all this of course, and progress will be charted on the pub wall. Would-be sponsors should call in at the Duke of York, Burton Road, Derby or ring Ronnie on Derby 44732.

DEFINITIVE REAL ALE!

NOW IT'S absolutely official - Real Ale is in the dictionary.

The Oxford English Dictionary's latest supplement accepts that real ale is irrevocably different to keg beers and those served with the aid of gas pressure in pubs.

That's one in the eye for any drinkers, licensees and brewery officials who still, naively, claim that "beer is just beer."

For the record the dictionary definition of real ale is: "A name for draught (or bottled) beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fer-

mentation in the container from which it is dispensed and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide; also called 'cask conditioned' and 'naturally conditioned' beer."

IND COOPE East Midlands are advertising their Draught Burton ale on TV for the first time.

The lip-smackin, life-like animated advertisement uses the Industrial revolution to emphasize the importance of traditional brewing in the production of DBA.

Central and London viewers are seeing the Channel Four ad. - assuming their tellys can pick up Channel Four.

LOCAL CAMRA DIARY

TUESDAY SOCIALS:

November 22, Navigation, London Road, Alvaston (Bass); November 29, Malt Shovel, Aston on Trent (Ind Coope); December 6 Duke of York, Burton Road, Derby (Ind Coope); December 13, Grandstand Hotel, Nottingham Road, Derby (Bank's); December 20, Norman Arms, Village Street, Derby (Home). All start around 9.15pm.

BRANCH MEETING

Wednesday December 7, 8pm, Gas Board Social Club, 40 Ashbourne Road, Derby (opposite Slater Avenue) (Marston's).

Dodgy women for 50p

VERY dodgy "women" in fishnet stockings (with real fish), James Bond with a huge beergut protruding from his tee shirt, talking fruit machines - they're all in this year's Derby CAMRA Christmas Show at the Crown, Spondon, on Friday December 23.

Now with almost a decade's tradition behind it, the show is open to anyone prepared to cough up a measly 50p for a ticket - it's got to be worth

that for the bar extension alone.

Featured are the University of Spondon Footlights Club, reflecting the year (and the beer) just passed. You've never seen an evening like it - even if you've seen the previous shows.

Tickets can be bought from CAMRA members at the Tuesday socials or branch meeting, as listed in the Diary section of this issue.

QUALITY CONTROL - FOR DBA

SALES gimmick or genuine attempt to guarantee the quality of their ale?

That's the question being asked about Ind Coope East Midlands' recently launched Guild of Master Cellarmen.

The Guild concerns itself only with the quality of the brewery's Draught Burton Ale and publicity material makes no mention of other Burton-brewed traditional ales like Ind Coope Bitter and Ansell's Mild.

But if the brewery follows its publicity to the letter quality can surely only be improved.

Application forms are being sent to landlords serving DBA and those who might be serving it soon. Those applying will be "looked at" by technical and area managers before being made guild members if the quality of their DBA is declared high enough.

A Guild "licence number" will be given and the landlords undergo a three months "initiation... overseen by Ind Coope Burton Brewery's Head Brewer," says the company.

Landlords accepted as Master Cellar-

men then get a licence disc on a special plaque to hang behind the bar. The disc is valid for a year - and the brewery says it will be withdrawn in any case where standards are not maintained.

Brewery Marketing Manager Diana Tunney is convinced the Guild will benefit licensees and drinkers alike.

"It is vital to our business that our products not only go out of the brewery in proper condition, but that they arrive in the customer's glass in the same good condition," she says.

Few will argue with that - but the brewery must surely realise that thinking drinkers are not going to accept the scheme on face value.

"The Guild of Cellarmen will give the landlord an added incentive to keep and serve traditional ale at its very best and will give our customers the promise of the high quality traditional pint of best bitter they have the right to expect," says Mrs Tunney.

Commendable - perhaps if it succeeds the scheme could be extended to cover the brewery's other traditional ales...

COLIN'S CROSSOVER

COLIN and Shirley Priestley's old customers don't have to go too far to see how the couple are getting on in their new pub.

For the popular pair have moved all of 50 yards - from the Jolly Colliers across the road to the New Inn in Derby Road, Heanor.

It's created something of a dilemma for Jolly Colliers regulars - do they go to their favourite pub, or drop in for a jar with their favourite hosts.

The logical answer of course is to drink in both pubs - as many of the locals used to do anyway.

Colin is the latest licensee to find Ind Coope East Midlands rents just too high for comfort - even though

he had a strong clientele including many Derby County fanatics at the Colliers.

The New Inn's previous landlord, Norman Beer left there because he couldn't make ends meet - but Colin finds the Home Ales pub a much better proposition.

Shirley is hoping to continue to offer good quality lunches which have kept many a local businessman and industrial estate worker going in the Colliers over the last three years.

You can sample Home Bitter and Mild at the New Inn - but whether or not the recently introduced traditional Ansell's Mild will be retained at the Jolly Colliers was not known at the time of going to press.

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