

Derby Drinker

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Campaign CAMRA for Real Ale

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT YOUR BEER

ISSUE No 14

SPRING '86

FREE

LAGER CON!



How drinkers are being ripped off — by David George

Lager, virtually unheard of in Britain in the fifties, could soon be outselling all other beers as a result of one of the biggest long-term con-tricks ever played on British consumers. The con has been perpetrated on four fronts: price, strength, origin and your waistline.

Con 1: Lager costs more because it is more expensive to brew. Not true. Most lager is cheaper to produce than bitter but will set you back on average 15 pence a pint more. The brewers say this is because of the additional refrigeration and more expensive hops. However, because of its weaker strength lager is not taxed as highly. City stockbrokers Nessel & Co estimated in their annual survey of the brewing industry that brewers make 24 per cent profit on lager and only 20 per cent on premium bitter.

Con 2: Lager is stronger than bitter. Not true. Original Gravity is a guide to the strength of beer, and most lagers don't bear comparison. Heineken is a watery 1033, Hofmeister just 1036, Skol 1037, and Fosters is only 1035 but the weakest of the lot is Carlsberg, which at 1030 takes the can as Britain's most insipid lager. Compare these with locally available bitters - Bass (1044), Burton Bridge Bitter (1042), Everards Old Original (1050), Everards Tiger (1041), Home Bitter (1039), Kimberley Bitter (1038), Mansfield Four XXXX (1045), Marston's Pedigree (1043), Draught Burton Ale (1047) and Ind Coope Bitter (1037).

Con 3: Lagers are from the continent and Australia. Not true. Kronenbourg, though at 1046 slightly stronger than those mentioned above, is still a thumping 14 degrees weaker than the original version brewed in Alsace-Lorraine. Over here it is brewed at Guinness' Park Royal Brewery in London. Heineken, which in Holland is 1048, is brewed at Whitbread in South Wales. Carlsberg is brewed at Northampton and Skol at Wrexham. Hofmeister - a totally British invention unheard of in Bavaria - hails from teutonic Reading. Fosters in Australia has an o.g. of 1045, but our version is brewed by Watneys in South London. Real Aussies wouldn't give a XXXX for Wrexham brewed Castlemaine!

Con 4: Lager is less fattening than bitter. Not true. Phrases like "low carbohydrate", "diet" and "pils" don't indicate a potential reduction in waistline. Despite "all the sugar being turned into alcohol", lager is just as fattening as beer of the same strength. They might be low carbohydrate because the sugar has been converted to alcohol, but they are just as high in calories.

So why do the gullible British public fall for it? Perhaps it is connected with the £20 million spent on promoting just five lagers in 1984 compared with the £12 million on eleven popular beers. You have been conned!

Part of the Unions

Bass are knocking down their redundant Burton Union rooms where they used to brew Draught Bass and Worthington White Shield. Brewery guides are apparently asked not to mention this vital part of Bass heritage to their visitors.

Meanwhile, down the road at Marston's, the word is that only 20% of Pedigree is now being brewed on the Marston Union system; it seems that the final pint is a blend of Union and non-Union ale. I bet the TUC wouldn't approve - and neither do we.

BAR FACTS

By Phil McCarrykeg

Room Rumours

Two Derby pubs are due for a short period of closure to enable them to be extended and refurbished. The Buck-in-the-Park on Curzon Street is to incorporate an adjacent empty shop, and Trinian's on London Road is to have alterations completed by July which will include the provision of a quiet room relatively free from electronic distractions. This latter is a welcome move from Mansfield Brewery in its first real ale pub in the area.

More Brews to Choose

The Fleet Tavern, Fleet Street, Derby, formerly a keg-only free house, now has Marston's Pedigree available. The Duke of York on Burton Road, Derby now has Ind Coope Bitter in addition to the Burton Ale. The King William IV, on the A6 at Milford, has Marston's Merrie Monk in addition to the Pedigree.

All Change

A warm welcome to the new licensees in the area: Frank and Linda Todd (from the popular Star & Garter in Burton) at the Mitre Hotel, Allenton; Peter and Chris Creswick at the Yew Tree, Ednaston; John Crooks at the Boar's Head, Sudbury; and the new licensees at the Alexandra, Buck-in-the-Park, Crompton Tavern and Melbourne Bar, all in Derby.

Free as a Vaux?

The new licensee at the Crompton Tavern, Crompton, Street, Derby has taken out the Marston's Pedigree and the three real ales now available (Ward's Mild, Darley's Bitter and Vaux Samson) all come from the Vaux group of breweries.

Licensees: why not place an advert in Derby Drinker? It doesn't cost the earth - phone Dave George on Derby 32762 for details or see your distributor.

JUST THE JOB

According to the Brewers' Society about 25,000 new jobs would be created if pubs in England and Wales were permitted to have the more flexible opening hours already permitted in Scotland.

MUSEUM EXPANDS

Following on the plans to develop the former Everards brewery in Burton into a museum of brewing, the nearby Bass Museum has announced its intention to expand by incorporating some adjacent 19th century engineers' workshops into the complex. These will be converted into exhibition galleries, which will virtually double the space available for displaying historic brewery equipment and artefacts.

With all this talk about new technology, we thought we ought to tell you we were there first. Derby Drinker has always been printed on off-set machinery and typeset by paste-up artists. (We said paste!)

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P***ED AS A MUTE

We understand that sighted over London during last autumn was a very large Skyship 500 advertising airship bearing the very large motto: 'SWAN LAGER' and its accompanying Black Swan emblem.

What a load of dirigi-bull, you might think - but there is a connection...

Both are full of gas!!!

The
WHITE HORSE
The MORLEDGE, DERBY
THE MOST TALKED-TO BEERS IN TOWN

IND COOPE BITTER, BURTON ALE
ANGEL'S MILD

Hot Lunches - Mon to Sat

PRICES

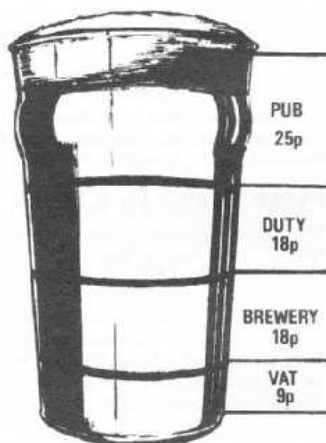
How far off is the day when the price of a pint in your local will leave you no change at all from one of those chocolate-money £1 coins? Not this year maybe, or even next (though by then the £1 pint will be commonplace in the south-east of the country) but after that I wouldn't like to bet on it.

I was reminded recently that this year is the tenth anniversary of the introduction of that splendid beer, Draught Burton Ale. Do you realise, though, that this beer now costs almost three times what it did in 1976? A sobering thought - so search your pockets for the price of another pint, then read this...

HOW MANY PINTS? - By Nick Meakin

| 1976 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 312 | 298 | 307 | 287 | 283 | 275 | 255 |

The table above shows how many pints of bitter an average weekly wage in Britain could buy over the last decade. As you can see, the figure is heading in just one direction; down! A decline of approximately 25% in the pint power of your pay packet, in fact.



The main reason for this has been duty, which has risen by a whopping 140% over this period, as against only 50% on Scotch for example. After last year's Budget, the typical 70p pint carried 18p in duty and 9p in VAT.

The last study into costs and materials, made by L. Messel, showed that malt and hops account for a mere five-pennyworth of your hard-earned pint. Few other industries have such low raw material costs as the brewing industry and fewer still have been able to return ever-rising profits during a slump in sales.

Surprisingly, the Chancellor didn't increase his "take" in the recent budget so perhaps the brewers will also take note of the growing customer resistance to rising beer prices and concentrate on consolidating the market rather than continually striving for increased profits.

CITY DESK

By E. Con O'Mist

Last year, brewers spent over 750 million pounds on pub refurbishment, in addition to normal routine redecorations, etc., according to the Chairman of the Brewers' Society, Edward Guinness, deputy Chairman of a certain Hibernian stout manufacturers. According to Mr. G., this proves the brewers' commitment to pubs as outlets for their products.

Less good news is the relentless growth of heavily-promoted lagers, which increased their sales to just over 40 per cent of the total beer

market in 1985. The brewers look to be equally committed to these too.

One ray of sunshine in the statistics, however, was the fact that take-home trade remained roughly static at 15 per cent of a slightly reduced total market of 38.1 million barrels. It would seem that the pubs are stemming the flow of trade to the big supermarkets and off-licences and more people are making the effort to walk round to their local, instead of sitting glued to the telly with a can of fizz in their hand.



The good, the bad and the expensive

A lightning survey of the Derby area conducted in March by our ace team of boozers, sorry researchers, reveals some interesting differences in prices charged for the same beer. (In one case, three differences in the same pub on the same night, but we put that down to an over-tired and emotional researcher!)

Discounting disco's, posers' palaces etc., where you're paying extra for the bouncers wages, the range of prices charged is disconcertingly large, up to 10p per pint in some cases.

The most expensive pint we found was Theakston's Old Peculier at £1 a go, but this is hardly a common beer in the area. The Notts. brewers still come out cheaper on average than the Burton bunch, with Home Bitter as low as 67p in the Amber Valley.

The overall average for bitter in the Derby area is a touch over 77p, with stronger bitters into the 80's. We thought Draught Burton Ale at 90p was getting a little too strong, though, at 6p above the average.

For the statistically-minded here are the figures:

| Beer | High | Low | Ave. |
|-----------|------|-----|------|
| Bass | 82 | 76 | 80 |
| Ind Coope | 82 | 75 | 78 |
| D.B.A. | 90 | 82 | 84 |
| Pedigree | 80 | 74 | 78 |
| Home | 76 | 67 | 72 |
| Shipstone | 76 | 72 | 74 |
| Kimberley | 77 | 70 | 74 |

Can You Believe Your Pies? By Roland Butter

According to the new Routiers Good Value Guide, just published (£4.95), there has been a marked increase in the quality and value of pub catering in the last couple of years, as publicans respond to the challenge of attracting families back into pubs in a time of falling beer sales.

However, say the Routiers, far too many pubs persist in using the term "home-made" to describe food which is not in fact, prepared on the premises. In many cases, commercially-made dishes, such as pies, are served with home-cooked vegetables and the resulting meal described as "home-made". Tut, tut.

In my experience, such cases are fairly rare. The Derby area is particularly well endowed with pubs offering superb, genuinely home-made cuisine. So why not make the most of them?

DRINKER Comment

What Price Information?

A recent national survey of free houses revealed that a staggering 26 per cent of pubs surveyed were failing to display a price list and of those with a list, 23 per cent were thought not to be legible to the customer at the bar.

Although the law demands a list, Trading Standards Officers generally accept prices displayed on individual pumps and optics as being a "list" in the spirit (or ale? - Ed.) of the law. This was pointed out to us by several licensees after the note in DD13 on the subject.

In February and March, we surveyed 53 pubs locally and found that almost a quarter (23 per cent) displayed no list, although two of these displayed prices at the point of dispense. Of those who displayed a list, 85 per cent were thought to be legible. So the local picture appears to be better than the national average but there are still far too many pubs where the law is flouted.

If you go into a pub for a pint, it is your legal right to be able to read the price of that pint before you decide to purchase. That is what the law says and that is why we have Trading Standards Officers. The local office of the Trading Standards Authority is at 23 St. Mary's Gate, Derby. (Tel. 41032).

He's gut what it takes

The Queensland Beer Belly Championships have been won by Greg McNulty, 25 stones of pure flab. Derby CAMRA have denied rumours that they are planning a block entry in next year's contest.

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ST EDMUNDS CLOSE
ALLESTREE
DRAUGHT
Bass
HOT LUNCHES MON-FRI

DEWing fairly well - May 10th

The fifth Derby Environmental Week (not the fourth as we wrongly stated last issue) runs from 10th - 17th May, and as ever the most important aspect of it from the drinker's point of view is Derby CAMRA's "real ale bar" which, Licensing Justices permitting, will operate throughout the country-style "Dewfair" on Saturday 10th May.

Five or six different brews will be on offer, dispensed straight from the cask, and including old favourites from Marston's (Pedigree and maybe Merrie Monk) and Burton Bridge (Bitter and Festival). In addition we hope to make available one or two beers not available in this area.

The bar will not operate from the Victorian Kitchen at Elvaston Castle, as in previous years, as this room is undergoing renovation. Instead the beer will be available from another room just across the courtyard, handily placed for you to pop in for a pint in between the various activities

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Your correspondent, Mr. Turvey, may no longer go to the Spa as it is not quiet enough but to my mind the background taped music there is unobtrusive and in one part of the pub is barely audible. Before the present landlord came the Spa was indeed quiet - deathly quiet without much sign of life. The hubbub of lively chatter emanating from the middle of Abbey Street nowadays very often drowns the taped music and gives every indication of the pub being one of the most popular in Derby.

Just as there is a difference between background music and a blaring juke box there is a difference between a dead pub and one which is vibrant and thriving. Give me the new Olde Spa any day.

A Spa Regular



taking place during the day. A tasty pint and something from the Real Cheese stall to go with it make the perfect outdoor lunch!

Opening hours applied for are 11am to 6pm. Free programmes with details of the Fair and the entire week's activities are now available; if you can't find one then Phil Holmes (Derby 551858) will be able to put you right.

Historic Plaiçe?

A chip shop in Ruddington, Nottinghamshire, which closed when its owner was called up in the last war and never re-opened, is being "excavated" by local historians. "Finds" included original chip bags and newspapers from 1941, a vinegar bottle and ... hold on to your breakfast ... the original chip fat!

Something smelts a bit fishy, guv?

Apparently the latest trend in organised crime is stealing aluminium beer-kegs and melting them down into ingots for resale. The figure involved could be as much as £20 million a year and large gangs with sophisticated smelting equipment are so far keeping one "hop" ahead of efforts by the police and breweries to "curt-ale" their activities.

IS HENRY DERBY'S OLDEST DRINKER?

In the last issue of Derby Drinker, we said that Nottingham CAMRA had discovered a 94 year old drinker and challenged you to do better; needless to say you did!

Hardly had DD13 hit the streets, when John, landlord of the Forester's Borrowwash, was on the blower to the editorial bunker with the news that Henry Fells, a sprightly 95 years young, walks the half mile from his home to the pub every lunchtime for a glass of Home Bitter. Henry was born in a pub - the Crown Inn at Clowne which then sold Worksop and Retford Ales and he went on to work in six public houses for his parents.

We think this makes Henry, seen here enjoying his regular tippie, Derby's oldest Drinker ... unless, of course, you know different!

UMPAH SATURDAY NIGHT

As the Ninth Derby Beer Festival draws nearer some of the details are emerging from the regular meetings being held in various Derby pubs. Karl Braun's Umpah Band take the stage for the Saturday night sing-song, and the Ripley Wayfarers are back to their Wednesday night slot. Bob Kerr's Whoopie Band who were very popular last year, have been re-booked as the Thursday night headliners.

On the beer front there will be a guest beer stand with a different beer being featured each session. There is a possibility that a couple of beers from the Isle of Man may be featured (so you can get three-legged? - Ed.). Other areas being considered for a beer collection "run" by our hit-squad of drivers from the Derbyshire Fire Service are Lancashire and Oxfordshire.

The Beer Festival starts on Wednesday July 9th and runs through to Saturday 15th.

Festivals around the Country

Beer Festivals coming up around the country are at Swansea (April 18-20), Farnham (April 24-26), Bath (April 25-26), Barnsley (May 2-3), Saddleworth near Oldham (May 2-4) and Kirklees, Huddersfield (May 7-10).

Most of these have free or half price admission to CAMRA members, but should you not be a member, details of these events are available from Dave George on Derby 32762.

COME AND JOIN US - ONLY £7.00

CAMRA membership is steadily increasing in spite of the fact that many people feel that the campaign is won. There are two good reasons for joining. First CAMRA really can be fun. Derby Branch meetings and socials are lively and unstuffy. Second, there are still jobs to be done and campaigns to be fought. Would you like to help us run the Beer Festival? Do you care about the way certain beers have changed? Are you concerned about takeovers, prices or traditional pubs?

If so please join us - find out more at one of the socials and meetings shown on the back page.

The Sir Francis Burrell Inn
Derby Road, Melbourne.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited.
I/We agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

Full/Husband & Wife Membership for one year£7.00*
or
Full/H & W overseas membership for one year£10.00*
* Delete as appropriate.

Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Ltd) with this completed Application Form to: Tim Williams, 39 Breedon Hill Road, Derby.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Winner of the "Pints of Character" competition in DD No. 12, was Chris Harrington, 7 Sidney House, Church Street, Littleover, who picked up his DERBY DRINKER at the White Swan, Littleover. Chris wins £5.

At the time of writing, entries are still coming in thick and fast for the crossword in DD13. It seems you like crosswords, so as soon as I can concoct another one, we'll put it in. Meanwhile, here are the answers to the last one. Winner to be announced next issue.

WIN A FIVER!

For this issue's competition, let me introduce you to the absurdly simple BOOZAGRAM: how many words of four or more letters can you get out of the following well known phrase or saying?

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Send your list (with a total, please) together with your name, address and the pub where you picked up this copy of Derby Drinker, to:

Derby Drinker, 1 Lower Eley St., Derby. (To arrive not later than 16th May, please). The winner will receive a special blue drinking voucher. (A £5 note!)



Barnes' Barrel Banter

We've all heard the song "I talk to the Trees", but John Barnes, landlord of the White Horse on The Morledge, talks to his beer - and that's official! Seen here whispering sweet nothings to a cask in his cellar, John swears that it helps encourage the ale to reach perfect condition and certainly the quality of his beer speaks for itself.

John, who tells us that talking to keg beers and lager does not have the same effect, is curious to know whether the remarkable effect his soothing tones has on real ales is because of the living yeast which carries on working in traditional beer - in keg beer and lager it is killed off at the brewery. Does any scientist out there have a theory - if so we, and John Barnes would like to hear it.

When is a free house not a free house?

What is a "Free House"? The CAMRA Dictionary of Beer defines the term as:-

"A pub supposedly free of any brewery tie, and therefore able to offer a range of beers from different breweries. Term much abused these days."

Many pubs in the Derby area advertise themselves as being "free houses". By the strict terms of the above definition few of them really are. Why is this? Go regularly into any "free house" and you will often notice that some or all of the beers on offer never vary. This may be due to the licensee's preference, but in the large majority of cases it is because one or more breweries have purchased a permanent outlet for their products by means of loans at low interest rates, by

supplying bar fittings, or one of a number of similar such dodges.

This practice is restrictive because the larger breweries are obviously better placed to offer financial inducements in the free trade. No wonder then, that in the "free" trade round here you are far more likely to come across Bass, Ind Coope, Marston's and Ward's than other breweries' beers. The smaller independent brewers are left high and dry; if they can't afford to compete on the same terms, they must rely on the quality of their products to obtain outlets among the small number of true free houses.

What can be done? It is in our interest to have as wide a selection as possible of beers for us to try, because this keeps prices down and

DERBY CAMRA DIARY

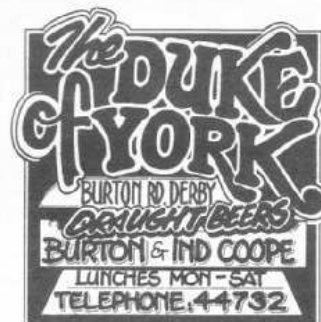
Everyone is welcome at Derby CAMRA socials and meetings. For more information about these events phone Social Secretary Pat Meara on Derby 663332.

Tuesday Socials - 9.15pm

15th April - Vine, Whittaker St., Derby (Bass); 22nd April - King William IV, Milford (Free); 29th April - Shakespeare, Sadlergate, Derby (Ind Coope); 6th May - Navigation, Shardlow (Davenport); 13th May - Mitre, Osmaston Road, Derby (Marston); 20th May - Hurt Arms, Ambergate (Home); 27th May - Brick & Tile, Brick Street, Derby (Ind Coope); 3rd June - The Ragley, Deepdale Lane, Barrow-on-Trent, (Free); 10th June - Furnace, Duke Street, Derby (Hardys & Hansons).

Branch Meetings - 8.00pm

Thursday 8th May - Royal Oak, Ockbrook (Bass); Thursday 12th June - Duke of York, Burton Road, Derby (Ind Coope).



gives the consumer the chance to choose what he/she would like to drink.

CAMRA believes that the term FREE HOUSE should be confined to on-licensed premises which are at liberty to sell the products of any brewery company, and we are campaigning to make it illegal to describe a pub as a "free house" if it is tied by any form of agreement to the products of any particular brewery. Ultimately the only way to ensure that free houses remain so would be to pass legislation preventing any institutions from making loans that are conditional on the recipient stocking any particular range of products.

You might think more on this the next time you are attracted into a pub displaying a sign saying "Free House" and find only one beer on sale.

REV

BY ROB



* NB. BEER FEST JULY 9 - 12 TH 1986

Further information and details on all aspects of Derby CAMRA and the Campaign for Real Ale can be had from any of the following local contacts: Chairman/DERBY DRINKER editor: David George, 1 Lower Eley Street, Derby. (Tel. Derby 32762) MILD & BITTER editor: Mike Meara, 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby. (Tel. Derby 663332). Artwork by Rob Gilvary, 130 Green Lane, Derby (Tel. Derby 43497). Opinions expressed in DERBY DRINKER are not necessarily those of the Editor, nor of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

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