

# Derby Drinker

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Campaign CAMRA for Real Ale

## KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT YOUR BEER

ISSUE No. 18

WINTER/SPRING '87

FREE

### ALFRETON ALE - FANS PUT THIRST FIRST!

A beer festival at a new venue is always a gamble and a challenge, even for the most experienced organisers. So when we opened the doors of the Alfreton Leisure Centre at 11am on Saturday 6th December it was with bated breath and crossed fingers (not an easy thing to do, I can tell you).

Lunchtime was quiet - the influence of Christmas shopping, perhaps - but those who were there enjoyed a good session from Culpepper and some excellent ale. I was assured by one enthusiast that Sam Smith's Museum Ale made the perfect partner to the Real Farmhouse Cheddar from Terry Millner's Gallery Cheese Shop stall.

The evening session was a lot more lively, to everyone's relief, and new CAMRA members signed up included local MP Phillip Oppenheim (see picture).

The verdict? This first Alfreton Beer Festival was a success. "There's a lot of enthusiasm to do it again, but better, and with the experience gained this time I'm sure we can do just that" said Festival Chairman Rob Griffiths afterwards.

### M.P. SIGNS UP



Amber valley MP Phillip Oppenheim joins the ranks under the watchful eye of Membership Secretary Lesley Williams.

### BAR FACTS

By Phil McCarrykeg

#### Sam's In Town

Sam Smith of Tadcaster, that is, who have purchased the Abbey, the Darley Abbey free house which has been on the market for some time. New licensees are Ken and Barbara Miller, who are offering Old Brewery Bitter and the new Museum Ale, a stronger dark brew with a distinctive flavour.

#### Vaux Pubuli

That contrived headline was the bad news. The good news is that Boater's Restaurant and Bar on Friargate has added Vaux Bitter to its cask ales, and also that the Babington Tea Rooms was successful with its licence application and is now selling draught Ward's Bitter. Out of town, the Seven Stars at Riddings, another Vaux group pub, has Darley Thorne Dark Mild.

#### Jugged Hair of the Dog

It's not all bad news on the Bass front (see story on page 2). The New Flower Pot on King Street, Derby is a new outlet for Draught Bass which, at the time of writing was being juggled up from the cellar. This is down to the enthusiasm of new licensee Martin, former barman at the Exeter.

#### This Wheel's Gone Out

The Wheel Inn, Chapel Street, Holbrook, a free house selling a range of real ales, has now closed and seems unlikely to reopen under the same ownership.

#### Border Edges In

Further to our story (see left) The Grampian on Grampian Way, Sinfen now has Border Mild (H).

### HOURS BILL - Time for Reform

At the time of going to press, the private member's bill introduced by Scottish MP, Allan Stewart, is about to get its second reading in the House of Commons.

The bill, which seeks to liberalise pub opening hours in England and Wales, allowing licensing magistrates to grant specific hours between 10.30am and 11.30pm with a maximum of 12 hours open in one day, already has support from the Brewers' Society and the NULV, the licensees' Association, and has received a tacit nod of approval from the Government. The NAHLM, however, representing salaried managers of brewery-run pubs, has indicated that it will resist any change on the lines of the system already operating in Scotland.

Assuming the bill survives its second reading, we hope that Mrs. Thatcher doesn't kipper its chances of becoming law by going for a snap early election. CAMRA feels strongly that it is about time our antiquated licensing laws fell more into line with the rest of Europe and, indeed, Scotland, where relaxed hours have brought reduced incidence of drunkenness, improved turnover in pubs and, above all, the end of that ridiculous scramble for "last orders".



### FOOD (& DRINK) FOR THOUGHT

The team who produce the BBC2 consumer programme FOOD & DRINK, which normally concentrates on matters of quality, made an interesting exception in a recent edition when they looked at the regional variation in the price of a pub pint.

Not surprisingly, they reached the same conclusion that CAMRA reached years ago - that the high prices charged in the South cannot be accounted for by higher costs - of production, transport, rates etc. - and hence must be the result of profiteering.

In any other industry, they concluded, it simply wouldn't be allowed to happen. We say that it shouldn't be allowed to happen anyway.

### BORDER ALES GO NATIONAL

Marston's have launched their Border Mild and Bitter nationally. The beers will now be available to all their 872 tied pubs from Cumbria to Southampton as well as to free trade customers.

Both beers, brewed by Marston's at Burton since they took over and closed the Border brewery in Wrexham in 1984, will be made available in both cask-conditioned and keg forms.

But the move to spread Border Mild looks like bringing about some cuts in Marston's range of four cask milds. Said Marketing Manager Rex Neame: "We believe that Border Mild, now we've got it right, is fundamentally the best that we produce. That and Merrie Monk are the milds we'd like to persuade people to take."

Already, the keg-only Albion Mild is being phased out and Mercian, the dark 1032 O.G. brew, now looks most at risk. "We will be looking at it", said Rex Neame. "But it will not be withdrawn for the present".

Exhibition, the third Border brew made by Marston's, will continue, though it will not become a national brand like the other two.

### CHANGING TIMES FOR THE CLOCK

The historic Clock Warehouse, in the heart of Shardlow's conservation area, has been bought by Hoskins, the small Leicester based brewery.

Local conservationists had expressed fears that structural alterations to the building, one of the last of its type left in the country, could be made if it became a pub. Hoskins estates director, Mr. Robert Hoar, was reassuring: "The building will not change from the outside" he said.

The new owners planned to close the property after Christmas for a £150,000 refurbishment including the conversion of the ground-floor shop into a pub - the brewery's sixth tied house.

This will further improve the range of cask ales available in the village.

Maybe the brewery will revive the old practice of delivering the beer by barge?

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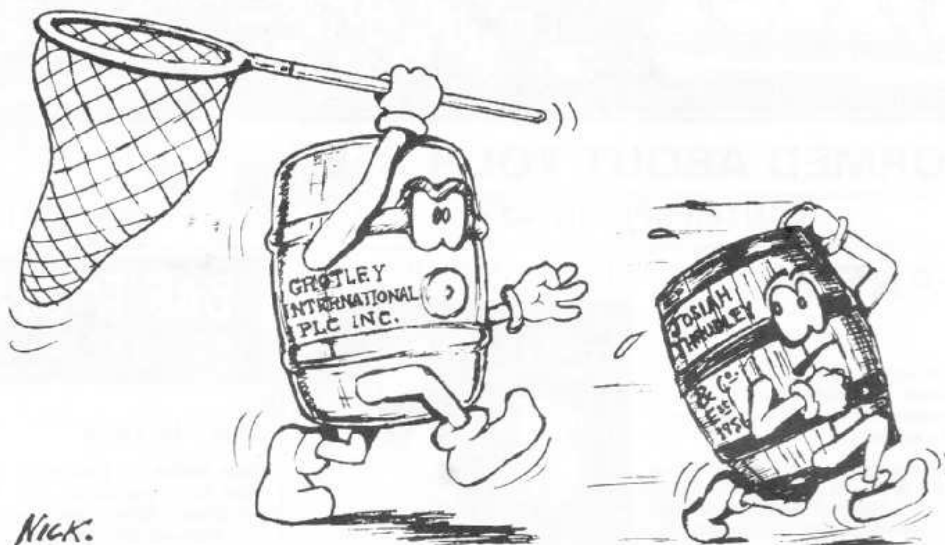
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# TAKEOVERS UPDATE

By Nick Meakin



The takeovers bandwagon rolls on apace, with no sign that the big seven breweries have any limits on their desire to maximise their stake in the industry. Latest company to change hands is Dryboroughs of Edinburgh, formerly owned by Grand Metropolitan Watneys, which has passed to Allied Breweries for 48.5 million pounds cash.

As usual with such things these days, takeovers means closures and indications are that brewing at Dryboroughs Craigmillar plant will cease, with the loss of 29 jobs, though the site will still be used for keg filling and distribution.

The move of production to Allied's Alloa brewery could threaten Dryborough's '80' real ale, production of Pentland 70/- having ceased last year. The deal brings Allied's total of pubs in Scotland to around 250.

Grand Met cited "rationalisation" as the reason for selling, having disposed of Mecca Leisure and

Liggett Tobacco in the USA recently and acquired Ruddies Brewery in Rutland.

## LOCAL PRICE RISE

Meanwhile, closer to home, or should we say Home, prices of Home Brewery beers rose by 4p a pint for bitter and 6p for lager recently, following their takeover by Scottish and Newcastle. The brewery claim this rise was planned anyway but CAMRA's liaison officer with Home, Chris Watkinson, says that this merely confirms his fears that, with Nottingham now dominated by two Big Seven-owned breweries (Shipstones is part of Greenall Whitley), prices were

bound to creep up. Scottish and Newcastle bottled beers are already appearing in Home pubs. How long before they begin to oust Home brands, with draught beers following? asks Chris.

Scottish and Newcastle have so far not renewed their bid for Blackburn based Matthew Brown, which was finally cleared by the Monopolies Commission recently.

CAMRA has compiled a list of breweries at risk from takeovers and the pattern seems depressingly familiar; small to medium-sized family-controlled companies are an obvious target for huge concerns, where the lure of a cash carrot may be too much for ageing major shareholders to resist. How long before the middle ground is cut out of British beerage, leaving just tiny local mini-breweries to slog it out with the giants?

## DRINKER Comment

### BEST CELLARS

Have you ever wondered why even the taste of a good pint of your favourite beer can sometimes vary from pub to pub? Some of this may be due to slight changes in the beer which leaves the brewery, but some is also undoubtedly due to the length of time for which the beer is allowed to mature in the pub's cellar.

Almost all beers can benefit from an extra couple of days' storage before serving - to allow any dry-hopping aroma to develop, for example - but it is often difficult for the licensee to achieve this. A high-turnover pub with a small cellar - and some pub cellars are tiny - simply won't have the space to allow it. Also, a large stock in the cellar represents a large investment apparently doing nothing - a practice which any accountant will tell you is undesirable.

As with so many things, therefore it's a matter of compromise. Think about it next time you have a really fine pint.

### RAISING STONES, DROPPING BRICKS

The Bass empire seems to be suffering a severe attack of swings and roundabouts. Up in the North-West, Bass North are sticking hundreds of handpumps into their managed pubs, replacing keg Stones Bitter with the real stuff and even putting in some cask mild instead of keg. Wonderful news!

Round here, however, things aren't so good, as alleged "low turnover" pubs lose their Draught Bass and have to take keg Bass Special instead. The James Wyatt on Keldholme Lane and the Hanging Gate at Shottlegate are just two recent examples we've heard about.

Our view of the brewery's marketing policy on Draught Bass is that it is inflexible to say the least. How Bass can reconcile these two entirely different attitudes in trading areas not a hundred miles apart is beyond us.



## Ye Olde Spa Inne

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## BAGS MORE BUZZ FOR THIS BUNCH

Many who qualified for a Burton Bunch tankard in Ind Coope's recent promotion of Draught Burton Ale will probably have thought that that was the end of it. However, all these folk will have recently received a follow-up package of material including a newspaper, THE CELLARMAN, containing several snippets of local interest.

First and foremost from our point of view is an excellent and substantial article on CAMRA's origins, aims and ideology by Ivor Clissold, CAMRA's Liaison Officer for Ind Coope Burton Brewery.

In it, Ivor warns of the dangers in the real ale revival, reminding us that the appearance of keg beer in the 1950s was not a plot by the breweries, but a response to demand from a public fed up with the often unreliable quality of traditional draught beer at that time. Ivor suggests that CAMRA has been so successful in getting real ale back

into pubs that things have almost turned full circle, with drinkers once again being put off by poorly-kept cask beer in too many pubs. The difference this time around is the existence of publications such as CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, to point the drinker in the right direction, plus brewery schemes such as Ind Coope's Guild of Master Cellarmen, designed to educate the trade about the skills required in looking after cask-conditioned beer.

Elsewhere in the pages there's a picture of Phil Ashley and his wife, of the Wardwick Tavern, who were among the 41 finalists for Cellarman of the Year 1986, and a list of top-selling Burton Ale outlets which includes no less than three Derby pubs: the Olde Spa, Abbey Street (5th); the White Swan, Littleover (37th) and the Broadway, Duffield Road (50th). Well done, lads - but remember that quality counts too!





## EDITOR MATCHED AND DESPATCHED

Derby Drinker's erstwhile editor, David George, has been transported to Australia - no, not for some heinous crime, though he did forget to include our customary reference to grannies in the last issue (which is pretty heinous), but because he finally got married. Dave and his bride, Pat Thistlewood, tied the knot on December 13th, and are currently honeymooning in Tasmania, where Dave has relatives.

The other day, a first class jumbuck turned up at the editorial offices of Derby Drinker with this despatch from "Crocodile D.G." on drinking Down Under:

The first difference between British and Australian drinking habits (writes Dave) is that most drinking is done at home and it doesn't take long to find out why; a 375ml. "stubby" bottle of Cascades Bitter will set you back one dollar (just under 50p), whereas a 10oz. glass of beer from the tap in a pub will cost a \$1.20 (60p) - more in the lounge.

All beer is drunk extremely cold and "Pommies" who prefer it just chilled are derided for liking "warm beer".

My favourite beer so far has been the Cascades Bitter in bottle - the draught version tastes less hoppy - from the Cascades Brewery near Hobart. Local drinkers moan just as much as back home about the beer not tasting how it used to or that they put more additives in it these days.

Most beers here are stronger than English brews, averaging 1048 og (about the same as Ind Coope Draught Burton Ale), and are consequently served in half pints, or you wouldn't survive a night's drinking! The public bar is very much the preserve of the Aussie male; with females not welcome; not that most ladies would want to go in the average Australian public bar, anyway. The lounge is austere by our standards, with canteen tables and chairs, but families are encouraged. A bar meal for 5 adults and one child came to \$17.50 - around £8!

Licensing hours are 10.00am till 11.00pm (Sundays 12-8) which means you don't have to keep one eye on the clock.

Finally, I discovered that one brewery, at least, maintains its traditions; Cooper's of Leabrook, South Australia brew their Best Extra Stout in the wood and allow it to ferment naturally in the bottles; there may not be a branch of CAMRA down here but there's hope yet!

### ALE TO THE CHIEF?

Could CAMRA be reaching out across the old pond towards our colonial cousins in the good old U.S. of A? A number of small breweries over there already produce naturally-conditioned bottled beers and our friends down at Burton Bridge Brewery export some of their brews there. We recently came into possession of a newsletter from the American Homebrewers Association, a dedicated little bunch with over 5000 members statewide, who are pushing the message that small is beautiful and real ale is best.

Founded in 1978 in Boulder, Colorado by Charlie Papazian and Charlie Matzen, two schoolteachers, the Association produces a quarterly newsletter called Zymurgy (zymurgy: the process of fermentation) which aims to promote knowledge and quality in home brewing. It also organises the Great American Beer Festival, "the largest exposition of American beers under one roof".

Incurable beer festival fans with a large travel budget should write to: GABF, Box 287, Boulder, Colorado, 80306-0287.

More power to their drinking elbows, say we.



Nowt new in that, son, he's been artificially boosting his Guinness prices for years!

### TENTH RATED ALES

Plans for Derby CAMRA's next beer festival in July are already being laid, and Festival Chairman Steve Wigley is naturally keen to make this tenth event a bit special.

He'd like you to cast your mind back over the years and try to recall your favourite ales from previous festivals, so that some of the most requested beers can be featured again.

I know it's often difficult to remember what you enjoyed most even on the morning after, let alone years later, but Steve will be pleased to hear your recollections on Derby 518261.

### WILTING HOPS

The 1986 english hop harvest was down 21 per cent on 1985 and was the lowest since 1976. Growers blamed poor weather and falling demand.

Well, we've always said some brewers have been using the same hop for years ...

### OOARR? OOER!

The recent cold weather caused its share of problems for brewers and drinkers alike. At a Charrington's depot in Seaford, East Sussex, 80 barrels of cider exploded as their seams split in sub-zero temperatures. Many pubs had to eke out their supplies as distribution services struggled with the elements.

### IT'S AN ILL WIND

Did you know that a pint of lager contains as much as 1400ml. of carbon dioxide, whereas real ale seldom contains more than 570ml? No wonder lager gives you such a bloated feeling ... and all that gas has got to go somewhere ...

(Quick, nurse, the screens!)

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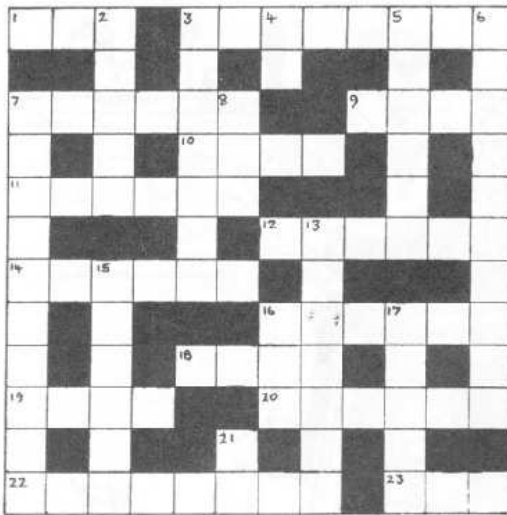
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## PRIZE CROSSWORD - WIN A FIVER



### ACROSS

1. Dutch ones come down with it (3)
3. Traditional roof-style a premier consideration (8)
7. Curt is a reformed countryman (6)
9. One of Fido's cures a hangover (4)
10. Small rodent working for the Water Board (4)

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION - DD17



11. Some may regard 10 as a pest (6)
12. He's game for anything (6)
14. Lesser half of comedy duo (6)
16. The body's limpest links (6)
18. Sale arranged for beers (4)
19. Trendy hostellers? (4)
20. Miss Marple's a dead cert to solve this one (6)
22. I hit Nils for his negative political views (8)
23. What a tenant landlord has round his neck (3)

### DOWN

2. Never stands a round, if you know what I mean (5)
3. (+ 13) Insidious disease that is sweeping the country - useless information makes the answer easy (7,7)
4. A roundabout way of saying thank you (3)
5. How Chicago gangsters keep warm in Winter (6)
6. Excuse me, officer, what other beer does this Ward's pub sell? (7,3)
8. Prisoner may trick you with his first 3 letters (3)
13. See 3 down
15. Wartime groove in the ground (6)
16. Shropshire brewery turns catcall around (3)
17. If at first you don't succeed ... (3,2)
21. Hello, colloquially speaking (2)

Winner of the £5 prize for the last crossword was D.R. Smith of 10 New Road, Middleton-by-Wirsworth, who picked up his or her copy of DD in the Duke Of Wellington at Middleton. Send your completed entry, together with your name, address and the pub where you picked up your copy to: Derby Drinker Crossword, 33 Sedgefield Green, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5TH.

### OLD CROAKER

Everyone knows that there are hops in beer. But the Three Horseshoes in Oulton, West Yorkshire, also has some hops in the cellar - in the shape of Fred the Toad, who is so tame that he will appear when his name is called.

### ABSOLUTELY POLLINATED

Following complaints that butterflies drunk on fermented nectar, were flying into visitors at his Friarbourne butterfly farm, Mr John Ellerton, the owner said: "If your life was only 3 weeks long, you'd probably be a heavy drinker, too!"

### STOP PRESS (see front page)

As we feared, the Hours Bill was "talked out" of time by a small number of M.P.'s.

### TRAVEL BROADENS THE WAIST

There are many benefits to be gained from joining CAMRA, as we never tire of telling you. One relatively new one that we haven't mentioned, however, is the CAMRA Travel Club, which currently has over 1000 members.

This group organises a variety of "tasting tours", at home and abroad, and the coming year's programme includes visits to Prague, the Poperinge Festival in Belgium's hop-growing area, and the inevitable Oktoberfest in Munich, as well as more local venues such as the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Eire.

All these trips are exclusive to CAMRA, and offer the best in brewery visits, festivals and local beers at reasonable rates and in convivial company. Yet another reason to join us!

### EVERARDS' OBB

Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter should now be available in all of Everards' 142 houses, as part of an exclusive distribution agreement. The coming of Sam's will not affect Everards' current guest-beer policy, which sees bitters from Cameron's and Adnam's sold in many of their pubs.

## DERBY CAMRA DIARY

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

### TUESDAY SOCIALS - 9.15pm

**17th February** - White Horse, Morledge, Derby (Ind Coope); **24th February** - Sitwell Tavern, Sitwell Street, Derby (Shipstone); **3rd March** - Bridge Inn, Eaton Bank, Duffield (Home); **10th March** - Brackens, Brackens Lane, Derby (Bass); **17th March** - William Caxton, Caxton Street, Derby (Everards); **24th March** - Cross Keys, Green Lane, Ockbrook (Ind Coope); **31st March** - Coliseum, London Road, Derby (S&N); **7th April** - Bulls Head, Openwoodgate (Hardys & Hansons); **21st April** - Peacock, Old Nottingham Road, Derby (Marston).

ALL WELCOME

## GOOD BEER GUIDE 1987

Still wondering what to buy with that book taken your granny gave you for Christmas? Why not spend it on CAMRA's 1987 National Good Beer Guide? At £4.95, it's packed with pubs, descriptions of ales and breweries and is a must for anyone travelling around who likes a good pint wherever they are.

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## REV



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: David George, 40 Weston Park Gardens, Shelton Lock, Derby, DE2 9EU. (Tel: Derby 701554). 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 the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

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