



KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT YOUR BEER

ISSUE No. 28

WINTER '89

FREE

ALL FLAMIN' GO AT BRUCE'S FIRKIN PUB

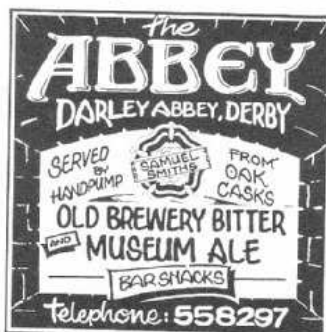


The First Flamingo

Derby's is not the first **Flamingo & Firkin**. The last Firkin pub opened by David Bruce before he sold up had the same name. This was in Kingston-upon-Thames in 1987.

However, Grand Metropolitan refused to assign the lease of the pub to Midsummer Leisure. Instead they took it back under their wing, so to speak, and gave it to their subsidiary, Clifton Inns.

'They want it back for themselves now that it is a success' said David at the time. 'Perhaps this is their ultimate revenge for my transforming four of their failures into Firkin successes. Grand Metropolitan can flamin-go stuff themselves!'



The home-brew pub returned to Derby after almost twenty years when the **Flamingo & Firkin** opened its doors on 16th December, in premises on Becket Street formerly known as **Liberty's**. Naturally your reporter was on the spot for a working lunch (hah!), as indeed was David Bruce himself, founder and former owner of the famous chain of "Firkin" pubs.

The opening ceremony itself was almost inaudible due to the bad P.A., but we learned that this was the thirteenth "Firkin" pub — a lucky number for the new owners, we trust — and only the second outside London. (The other is the **Fleece & Firkin** in Bristol.)

The house beers — **Flamin' Ale** (original gravity 1038) and **Dogholter** (1060) are brewed on the premises, as in almost all Bruce's Brewery pubs, and the brewing

operation can be observed through a window at the rear of the pub, which permits a view into the brewhouse.

They are "full mash" beers, that is, the brewing sugars are derived from malted barley rather than the malt extract which some micro-breweries use for convenience. Almost all of the Bruce's pubs which started with malt extract have since converted to full mash, which means more work but a tastier end product.

Once brewed, the beers are transferred to cellar tanks for serving rather than the more usual casks. They're stored under a low 'blanket pressure' of carbon dioxide to extend the life of the beer; unfortunately this means that they're not 'real ale' according to the strict definition of the term.

Banks's Mild and Marston's Pedigree were also on sale, and we understand that guest beers and home-brewed 'specials' will also be available from time to time.

The pub itself, with its large, high-ceilinged open area, wooden floors and upturned barrels, is somewhat reminiscent of a beer hall; there's even a piano to aid the atmosphere. Live music is planned to be a feature of the pub, and a small stage area is provided for the purpose.

Derby CAMRA sees the **Flamingo & Firkin** as a welcome further development of the already excellent real ale scene locally; we hope you agree. Times have changed a lot for the beer-drinker since the **Exeter Arms** stopped brewing its own beer in 1969. We'd like to hear from readers who remember those days.

Bruce's: The Full Firkin Story

David Bruce brought home-brew pubs back to the Capital with his **Goose & Firkin** in 1979. A dozen similar hosteleries followed, most of them also in London, some of them in former Watney's pubs abandoned and boarded up by Grand Metropolitan as unviable. One, the **Phoenix and Firkin**, occupied part of the fire-damaged former Denmark Hill railway station, an unlikely location where the bitter was, inevitably, known as **Rail Ale**!

His recipe was simple: plain, even basic pubs, home-brewed ale (albeit with funny names) and good food. It was so successful that last year he was able to sell his little empire to Midsummer Leisure for £6.5 million.

Midsummer took over CAMRA Investment's pub chain a few years ago, and own several other properties in Derby, including **Rollerworld** and **Berlin's**, next door to the **Flamingo**.

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TRADITIONAL HOME-MADE LUNCHES WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE

BAR FACTS

By Phil McCarryKeg

Real Ale Gains

Two new outlets for Mansfield Riding Bitter are the **Miners Arms**, Alfreton and the **Boot & Slipper**, Swanwick. The **Coach House**, Milton has Ward's Bitter and Vaux Samson, and provides some real ale competition for the **Swan**. Finally, and closer to home, the **Durham Ox** on Burton Road, Derby has returned to real ale, selling Ind Coope Burton Ale.

Coming on Strong

Ward's new beer, **Kirby Strong Ale**, is increasingly available in the area. You can now sample it at the **Every Arms**, Egginton, **Fletcher's Way**, Nether Heage, the **Bartlewood Lodge**, Ockbrook and the **Seven Stars**, Riddings.

Busy BBB

Marston's relaunched **Burton Best Bitter**, once the poor relation of Pedigree in terms of availability, is a little easier to find these days. New outlets include the **Fisherman's Rest**, Broadholme near Belper (recently refurbished), the **Coach & Horses**, Horsley and the **Rising Sun**, Willington.

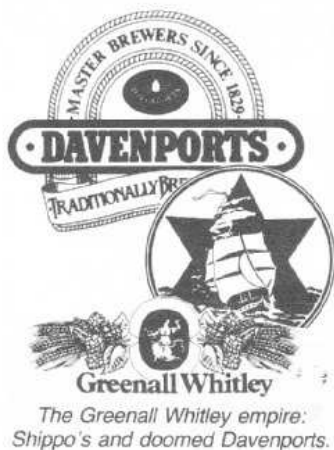
Right Direction

The **Gate Inn**, Swanwick, which regularly features in our *Famous Fives* spot, has added the legendary **Courage Director's Bitter** to its range; this premium gravity beer should go perfectly alongside the lighter **John Smith's Bitter** already available.

Welcome...

... to the new licensees at the **Bull's Head** and the **Nag's Head**, Belper; the **Canal Inn**, Bull Bridge; the **Broadway**, the **Coach & Horses** and the **Olde Spa**, Derby; the **Spread Eagle**, Etwell; the **Jolly Colliers**, Horsley Woodhouse and the **Harrington Arms**, Thulston.





Pub Crawl Champ Quits

World Record holder, Stan House, who has sunk pints in more than 3,000 pubs to earn himself a place in the Guinness Book of Records has called it a day. Stan, 72, has drunk his way around Britain during his holidays for the last fifteen years and once travelled 2,000 miles in a week tackling pints of 'heavy' in the inns of Scotland.

But Stan, of Bristol, can no longer stomach today's pubs — "They're not what I call real pubs any more — they're little more than amusement arcades full of plastic and pop music — not for the likes of me any more. Pubs should be nice, comfortable, homely places with a bit of character," said Stan.

Stan, who reckons his hobby cost him £5,000 has now found a new pastime — collecting the labels off soup tins!

OPEN ALL HOURS — UPDATE

Our latest information on pub opening hours suggests there are at least a dozen pubs locally where you can drink at your leisure six days a week. In Derby the **Dolphin**, Queen Street, the **Brunswick**, Railway Terrace and the newly

GREENALL'S AXE FALLS AGAIN

After the closure of their Wem Brewery last year Warlington brewers, Greenall Whitley, have announced that their Davenport's Brewery in Birmingham is to close with the loss of 100 jobs.

After Wem Brewery's shutdown, production of Wem Best and Special Bitters was transferred to Birmingham and these, along with Davenport's Mild and Bitter are now to be brewed at Shipstone's Star Brewery in Basford, Nottingham.

Greenall Whitley, one of the big seven brewers are left with just two breweries: the Wilderspool Brewery in Warrington with 1,050 pubs and Shipstones brewing for Davenport's 124 houses, Wem's 200 and their own 270 pubs.

CAMRA branches in the West Midlands have formed an Action

NON! To Brewers Droop

A French brewery (where else?), Strasbourg-based Brasserie Fischer, claims to have developed an aphrodisiac beer. The special formula, known only to two of the brewery's directors, is said to include a rare vegetable extract from Tunisia.

The older of **Derby Drinker's** two editors looks forward eagerly to trying it out, and will report on the results next issue. (*Oh no you won't! — the younger editor*).

Group to oppose the closure. Davenport's local outlets are the Navigation at Shardlow and the Knotted Snake in the Cornmarket, Derby (closed for refurbishment as we go to press).

TOUGH GLASS ACTION

In a bid to stem the rising number of glass attack injuries, Derby pubs and clubs are to switch to new toughened glasses.

Police have been worried about the increasing regularity of 'glassing' attacks during violence at weekends in the city centre.

Now the majority of licensees, breweries and club managers have agreed to help reduce the problem by replacing glasses with the toughened ones, which are more difficult to break.

The scheme is just part of a massive clean-up of the city's drinking spots launched after meetings between top police officers and licensing representatives.

One of the first licensees to introduce strengthened glasses at his pub was the chairman of Derby LVA, Mike Brundle, of the Victoria Hotel, Cowley Street. He said they were an excellent idea and apart from reducing the nasty injuries, the toughened glasses also reduced breakages.

It would take some time for everyone to change over completely but it wouldn't be long before everyone in Derby was drinking out of the new glasses, he added.

Article from December issue of 'Licensee'.

CAMRA ready to join Big Six

What? Roger Protz, editor of CAMRA's newspaper **What's Brewing**, appeared to be close to heresy when he spoke at a lunch in Burton to announce the Grand Master Burton Ale stockist of the year.

Much to our relief, it appears that Roger was proposing that CAMRA and all brewers, including the big boys, have a common interest in ensuring that British beer stays that way.

"We produce great cask conditioned ales and we should all ensure that they are preserved", he said, and urged that "we need to be custodians of quality, proud of our traditions".

Well said, Roger. We'll drink to that.

DRINKER! Comment

Editors Under Pressure

This may be our last issue. The Branch Committee might sack us, the purists may want to form a lynch mob! Our crime? We're quite impressed with the beer brewed at Bruce's Flamingo and Firkin and can't honestly say that the blanket of Carbon Dioxide pressure used to assist the passage of beer from cellar tank to point of dispense makes any impact on our taste buds!

The beer, brewed on the premises, is fed direct to cellar tanks which have a much larger capacity than a 36 gallon barrel. Of course they also take longer to empty and if vented in the normal manner would result in the beer going off if not served quickly enough.

Beer in any form of storage needs to be replaced when served (otherwise a vacuum is formed and the beer won't come out). The Flamingo and Firkin are replacing theirs with Carbon Dioxide rather than air which would eventually contaminate the beer.

Of course, living beers which have not been filtered or pasteurised produce their own CO₂ and so the amount of extraneous CO₂ required for Flamin' Ale and Dog Bolter should be less than the 3lb per square inch used by Hardys and Hansons where they use blanket pressure.

The final proof of the pudding, so they say, is in the eating and if, unlike Kimberley Bitter under blanket pressure, Flamin' Ale doesn't taste dead and fizzy, who are we to split hairs?

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opened **Flamingo & Firkin** on Becket Street are open for business from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. The **White Swan** and the **Moon** are Spondon's contribution to relaxed drinking whilst the **Tiger**, Turnditch is open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (11 p.m. Wednesday to Saturday).

Those mentioned last time are the **Shakespeare** and the **White Horse** in Derby, the **New Bridge** at Shelton Lock, the **Corner Pin**, Shellaston and the **Nags Head** and the **Three Horse Shoes**, Ripley.

Two Alvaston pubs have corrected our earlier info: the **Silver Ghost** is sticking to its old hours and the **Needles** evening opening is 6 p.m.

We'll let you have more information as we get it so keep us informed by 'phoning Mike Meara on Derby 663332.

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Derby Drinker

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 J. M. Tatler & Son Ltd., Abbey Street Works, Derby.

Edited by David George, 40 Weston Park Gardens, Shelton Lock, Derby DE2 9EU (Tel: Derby 701554), and Mike Meara. Artwork by Rob Gilvary, 130 Green Lane, Derby (Tel: Derby 43497).

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Further information on all aspects of Derby CAMRA can be had from any of the following contacts: Chairman — Phil James, 1 Hill Brow, Derby (Tel: Derby 385933), Mild and Bitter Editor — Mike Meara, 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon (Tel: Derby 663332).

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Real Ale can Save the World!

Keg beer and lager are partly responsible for the erosion of the ozone layer and its consequent 'Greenhouse Effect' says ecologist Martin Moore who runs a Brewery Services Company in Greenford, Middlesex.

Britain's 100,000 pubs are adding to the 'Greenhouse Effect' by letting half the Carbon Dioxide they use to pump their keg beers and lagers escape to the atmosphere. Their contribution amounts to 65,000 tonnes a year.

Mr. Moore surveyed 600 pubs and found that over 500 had constant gas leaks. "The conclusion is inescapable: 50 per cent of all the CO₂ used in public houses is released to the atmosphere."

The other 50 per cent is belched I presume — Ed.

LETTERS

Choice Matters

Peter White of Holbrook has a point to make about choice:

Although I've total sympathy with CAMRA's aim of promoting real ale, I'm concerned that the ale is tending to get forgotten of late, as CAMRA becomes increasingly preoccupied with knocking any other kind of pub apart from the traditional "darts and dummies" boozer.

One of the reasons behind CAMRA's formation was to retain choice at a time when the choice of beer was under threat. At that time the choice of pub was very poor, with widespread negative attitudes to women and children, plus diabolical or non-existent food.

The fact is that the choice of pub is now growing, women and children are being welcomed and food is becoming more acceptable. Everybody, including CAMRA, should welcome this increase in choice.

The bad news from CAMRA's point of view is that real ale is vanishing along with this increase

in choice. CAMRA should concentrate its attention on trying to ensure that real ale is on offer in this wider choice of pubs and pub/restaurants.

To concentrate on a negative campaign of trying to retain as many old boozers as possible, apart from being doomed to failure, will brand CAMRA members as a bunch of Luddites and put the organisation and its membership levels on a downward spiral.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) will degenerate into the Campaign for the Retention of Archaic Pubs — the new acronym is not an attractive prospect.

A well-argued point of view, Peter, and one which is shared by many CAMRA members. If we give the impression that we're against all change in our pubs, that is unfortunate, because we're not.

However, we're not alone in thinking that some trends are bad news. Elsewhere in this issue you'll find stories about Stan House packing in his pub crawl because of plastic decor and loud music, and Wolverhampton & Dudley, who've set up a jukebox blacklist because of customer complaints.

CAMRA is interested in quality as well as choice, and we're concerned that the quality of real ale, and of the pubs in which it can be drunk, often leave a lot to be desired these days.

JUKE BOX BREWERY

Bros. Yazz, Boy George and Brother Beyond have all been blacklisted by Wolverhampton and Dudley Brewery (*Banks's to you and me*). Their crime was to assault customers' ears and encourage under-age drinking. The blacklist, drawn up by a special brewery committee, will go out to more than 300 of the company's managed pubs throughout Britain.

Commercial Director, Roddy Walker said, "A lot of customers complained about the juke box music. We felt we had to draw the line at computer 'junk' music which we believe pollutes the pub environment."

Overheard . . .

A drinker of our acquaintance, who does, admittedly, have a slight Scottish accent, related how he walked into a pub recently, hankering after a wee dram of the auld electric soup. He asked the barmaid for a "Bell's and water" and stood amazed as she proceeded to pour out a Pils and then solemnly top it up with water from a jug! Accent aside, did she really believe anyone would drink such a concoction?

Even a lager drinker?

Poetry Corner

Inn-Provements

We're going to refurbish your local. You're in for a lovely surprise. At the moment it's cosy but scruffy. And we know we can double its size.

First we'll knock out that inglenook fireplace. Then get rid of those old Tudor beams.

Yes, we know people like to admire them. But they don't quite fit in with our Schemes.

For we're going to create a new image With a theme that has proved quite a hit.

We've already done fifty just like it; Not one of them varies a bit.

The design was worked out by computer.

No creation of fallible Man, And when your pub's like all those others.

To do fifty more is our plan.

The decor will astound and delight you.

With old implements once used on farms.

Art Deco, and Victoriana.

A few books, and those nice plastic palms.

Then we'll put in a new Aussie lager. And American beer served ice-cold. They come fresh from our brewery near Scunthorpe.

But who's going to know if not told?

Yes, you may hear a voice raised in protest:

Change to some is a thing they deplore.

But we feel that we know their best interests:

Don't forget, we've done all this before.

Leon de Blanc

Did you realise . . .

. . . that SEE I'M FROTH is an anagram of HOFMEISTER? Or that CASTLEMAINE XXXX can also be spelt EXLAX/SEX CAN'T MIX? Any more lager anagrams out there?

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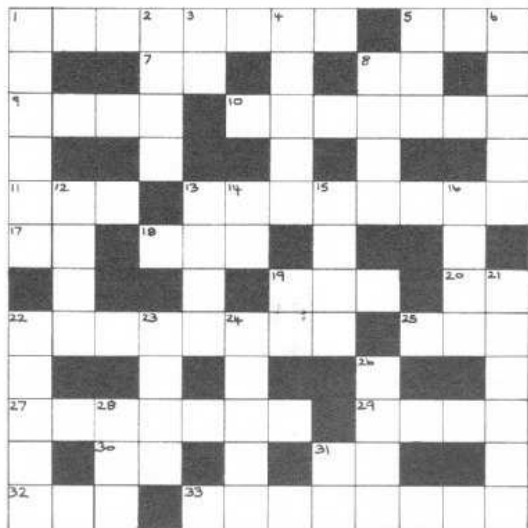
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ACROSS

1. New bird on Becket Street (8)
5. Old Witch (3)
7. See 31 across (2)
8. In the duration of (2)
9. The best kind of ale (4)
10. Italian town famed for Spaghetti Westerns? (7)
11. Fashionable sounding hostelry (3)
13. Lager Len mixed up in Warrington (8)
17. The only possible answer to keg beer (2)
18. If he is then you... (3)
19. Wiltshire brewery bringing back Wem? (3)
20. Liberated lady's manuscript (2)
22. The ultimate month (8)
25. Tax on beer container (3)

27. Mixed pie must provide the driving force (7)
29. Emperor on the fiddle (4)
30. The middle part of a pint (2)
31. See 7 across (2)
32. Not the best kind of ale (3)
33. A celebration of real ale (8)

DOWN

1. Seventy-two pints (6)
2. The Bank's kind at 1 across (4)
3. See 31 down (2)
4. The first Firkin Fowl (5)
5. The male of 28 down (3)
6. Holy relic (5)
8. Place between village and city (4)
12. Smelly organ (4)
13. Sounds like fairy tale, but it's serious (4)
15. Open topped drain still carries water (4)
16. Paddington's home town? (4)
19. Yours truly, number one (2)
21. Leisurely walk (6)
22. Don't do this and drive (5)
23. Not at all odd (4)
24. The firkin funder (5)
26. Opposition from mum's sister? (4)
28. The sow is the female (3)
31. See 3 down (2)

A bumper crop of entries to the last crossword which has been won by Les Singleton of Somercotes whose Drinker was picked up at the Gate Inn, Swanwick — a pub which some of our Northern members are raving about. £5 is on its way (well one day — you know what these treasurers are like!) Send your entries for this one to **Derby Drinker**, 40 Weston Park Gardens, Shelton Lock, Derby DE2 9EU together with your name and address and the pub where you picked up your **Derby Drinker** by March 11th. Don't forget — some of the clues will be easier to solve if you read **Derby Drinker** first. Five pounds goes to the first correct entry out of the hat.

DERBY CAMRA DIARY

Everyone is welcome at Derby CAMRA socials and meetings. For more information about these events phone Social Secretary, Richard Green on Derby 270550.

Tuesday Socials - 9.15 pm

21st February — Sitwell Tavern, Sitwell Street, Derby (Shipstone). **28th February** — Peacock, Old Nottingham Road, Derby (Marston). **7th March** — Brunswick Inn, Railway Terrace, Derby (Free). **14th March** — Crompton Tavern, Crompton Street, Derby (Ward). **21st March** — Victoria, Cowley Street, Derby (Bass). **28th March** — Railway Tavern, Belper (Free). **4th April** — Brunswick Inn, Railway Terrace, Derby (Free). **11th April** — Flamingo & Firkin, Becket Street, Derby (Bruce). **18th April** — Woodlark, Bridge Street, Derby (Bass).

Branch Meetings - 8 pm

Wednesday, 8th March — Dolphin, Queen Street, Derby (Bass). **Thursday, 13th April** — Silk Mill, Full Street, Derby (Whitbread).

Lager Shock!

Three balloonists in an inflated Hofmeister bear escaped unhurt after crashing into a 33,000-volt cable, cutting off hundreds of homes.

SOLUTION No. 27



Famous Fives go down the Pub

A bumper bundle of our best beer awards this time — maybe the new relaxed hours have encouraged our surveyors to get out and about: **WHITE HART** (Aston-on-Trent) — Marston Pedigree; **BELL & CASTLE** (Derby) — Draught Bass; **BRUNSWICK INN** (Derby) — Bridge XL, Holden Stout and Hook Norton Old Hookey; **FLAMINGO & FIRKIN** (Derby) — Banks's Mild; **FURNACE** (Derby) — Hardys & Hansons Mild; **STRUTTS** (Derby)

— Mansfield Riding Bitter and Old Bailey; **VINE** (Whitaker Street, Derby) — Draught Bass and M & B Mild; **TRAVELLERS REST** (Draycott) — Marston Pedigree; **SPOTTED COW** (Holbrook) — Ind Coope Burton Ale; **HOLLYBUSH** (Makeney) — Marston Pedigree; **ROYAL OAK** (Ockbrook) — Draught Bass; **RAILWAY** (Shottle) — Ind Coope Burton Ale; **GATE INN** (Swanwick) — Courage Directors and John Smith Bitter.

Sexy Barmaids on the Way Out

This has nothing to do with a romantic farewell from the lass behind the bar. It's not a fantasy, it's a finding.

According to a survey carried out by Gloucestershire students, it seems that the days of the buxom barmaid may be numbered.

Youngsters studying to be pub licensees at the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology have found that clean toilets are in

and busty barmaids are out after asking pub regulars what they looked for in their local.

What's wrong with having both? We can only assume that the good Gloucesterians must have misunderstood the question.

A MATTER OF TASTE

CAMRA is setting up regional tasting panels, with the aim of improving the quality of beer descriptions in the National Good Beer Guide and enhancing the image of quality beer.



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REV

BY ROB

