

Derby Drinker

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CAMRA

ISSUE No. 78

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FREE

HAPPY DRINKING IN THIRST FOR QUALITY

DERBY CAMRA have launched the biggest single campaign in its history, in association with the licensed trade, to ensure that drinkers obtain a good pint and try to improve overall ale quality in the area. It is thought to be the first such initiative in the country and the idea is that any drinker who is dissatisfied with his pint in any way whatsoever can return to the bar and be guaranteed a fresh pint in participating pubs.

Spokesperson Nigel Barker said "Unfortunately there is some poor quality real ale being served in certain pubs which gives real ale a bad name. Some people even avoid it as a result.

"We are trying to support licensees who are proud of the fact that they serve good quality real ale.

"With real ale being a living thing, it does vary in quality and occasionally, there can be a drink which is not up to standard.

"Rather than put people off a drink or a pub, we want to encourage people to think they can approach the bar without worry."

Pubs involved will display the Smiling Pint Glass posters reproduced here, with the words 'good pint guarantee'.

Trevor Harris of the Brunswick, who has operated



a similar policy for over 12 years, said "This initiative should guarantee good quality real ale throughout Derby."

Steve Birkin, landlord of the Rowditch was also in accord "Sometimes, particularly with a guest beer people do not like the flavour, but if there's a problem I'll change it." How many people in the Derby area stick to Pedigree or do not drink cask beer because they have had a guest ale sometime that did not suit their tastebuds?

The following list of pubs are all participating in the

Happy Pint Campaign: Old Silk Mill, Flowerpot, Durham Ox, Exeter Arms, Friargate, Smithfield, Brunswick, Rowditch, Dolphin, Station (Midland Road), Alexandra, Furnace, Peacock, Falstaff, Ram, Drill Hall Vaults, Bell & Castle, Masons (Mickleover), the Dead Poets and the Wheel (Holbrook) and the Black Horse (Hulland Ward).

Any other pubs wishing to join in the thirst for quality should contact Nigel Barker at the Old Silk Mill, Full Street, Derby on (01332) 729128.

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NEWS

RED LION ROARS AGAIN

The Red Lion at Chellaston, for so long the poor relation of the villages inns, has seen a welcome upturn in fortunes since the arrival of Steve and Jackie Hughes, formerly long-standing hosts at the Buck in the Park in Curzon Street. Since Steve took over in October he has added Pedigree alongside the Bass and seen cask trade increase tenfold, as well as breathing life back into a pub that had suffered from continued mismanagement. A guest ale is to come online very shortly.

ROOM AT THE INN

In the last issue we reviewed *Room at the Inn* and forgot to tell you that the only listed pub in Derby offering pub accommodation is the Good Beer Guide listed Alexandra on Siddals Road. Book early for the AGM.

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Derby Drinker

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WICKED NEW LOCAL BREWERY IN BIBLE-BURNING BELT

The latest local micro-brewery to open its doors is the Wicked Hathern Brewery in the village of Hathern, just past Kegworth on the road to Loughborough. The brewery is owned and operated by four men, John Bagley, his son Marc, John Worsfold and his son-in-law, Sean O'Neill. Jon Pilling, of Loughborough CAMRA, is acting as consultant and trial brewing began in December.

The name is inspired by comments made by Revd Edward Thomas March Phillips, rector of Hathern from 1808 for 51 years. Fed up with the cock fighting and drunken brawls in the graveyard, he referred to Hathern as "a barbaric place and a cage for every unclean beast". Some locals responded by burning their bibles!

The brewery launched its beers in January in the skittle alley at the Three Crowns, Wide Lane, Hathern.

Initially three beers will be offered: Hawthorn Gold (the name of the village derives from the Saxon word for the hawthorn which was prevalent in the village): 3.5% ABV, a light golden beer,

Changes ring, but not too loudly at The Bell

The popular licensees of the Bell Inn at Smalley, Colin and Carol Burrows retired shortly before Christmas. They had built up a great atmosphere at the village pub with the rare but hugely popular blend of good value food and a set range of various real ales, championing Whim Hartington Bitter and Magic Mushroom Mild as well as London Pride and Mallards beers from Nottinghamshire alongside more standard offerings.

The former hosts are not going far retiring to their house behind the inn and keeping a friendly, watchful eye on their successors Vince and Sarah Fletcher, who have thankfully promised to retain the eclectic beer range for which they deserve commendation. Vince has added Hartington IPA to the regular beers as well as slightly increasing Sunday opening hours.



Colin and Carol Burrows departing hosts at The Bell Inn, Smalley, receive a floral gift from Derby CAMRA.

WHB (Wicked Hathern Bitter): 3.8%ABV and Soar Head (the River Soar runs alongside the village): a darker, sweeter beer at 4.8%ABV.

For more information, contact: John Worsfold Tel: (01509) 842585. The brewery is situated at 46 Derby Road, Hathern.

BEER CITY PREPARES FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION

FOR THREE DAYS in April this year Beer City will be the undisputed centre of the Real Ale Universe. Derby will be hosting CAMRA's national Annual General Meeting and conference at the Assembly Rooms

from 14th-16th April 2000. It is the first time Derby has been chosen as hosts and Derby CAMRA are doing all it can to ensure the occasion is successful and a credit to the City.

The AGM is the forum where CAMRA's policies are debated as well as the election of officers and the approval of the accounts. Even if you find all that too dry there will be seminars. One will look at the future of the Good Beer Guide and will be chaired by Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz. If even that doesn't interest you then there's always the Beerex (bar) and some interesting trips out of town.

The Beerex will probably be the

most comprehensive survey of locally produced beers ever seen in Derbyshire. Now that you can't miss. You will have to be a member of CAMRA to get in and we will also ask you to register for the AGM, but attendance is voluntary.

Join CAMRA now using the form here in Derby Drinker. Pre-

register for the AGM by 27 March using the form printed in What's Brewing which CAMRA members receive monthly in the post. You will also be sent an AGM handbook when you pre-register. Last minute details will be featured in the next issue of the Derby Drinker.

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Marston's Bitter set to Vanish? And Ram Premier survival in the Arms Of Exeter?

WHAT ARE the Wolves up to now? Marston's Bitter has already been taken out of the managed houses and is due to disappear altogether in February we are told.

The Bitter has never been successful close to its Burton home. Since its launch it has always lived in the shadow of Pedigree which has had the publicity, the beer mats and the misleading jingle Barrels are meant for brewing, despite the fact that the wooden casks which Marston's use in their Burton Unions are not barrel sized. If you ever wanted to try a time-consuming exercise all you had to do was go into a Marston's pub and ask for a pint of Bitter. Valuable drinking time would be lost while you were offered Smooth Brew, Pedigree before finally, Bitter.

Bitter replaced Best a few years back. Best was indistinguishable from watered-down Pedigree, but at least you got what you asked for. Guess what it has been replaced with in Marston's Houses. Of course it is Banks' Bitter in the real and creamflow versions. It's pleasant enough but it has a completely different character from Marston's



The Exeter Arms, where Marston's went out on a Whim.

and devotees of Marston's simply won't like the change.

W&D's managing director David Thompson has agreed to face the music at a branch meeting of Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA where there has been a big volume demand for this beer. It is popular in Wales and as far away as County Durham. At 3.8% Banks' Bitter is weaker than Marston's (4%) and so it should be cheaper, shouldn't it.

On a local level at the Exeter Arms in Derby they have already

lost their Marston's Bitter and they are threatened with yet another very serious loss: Ram Premier Ale is under notice.

Brewed by the Whim wizard in Hartington, Ram Premier is not only a very refreshing change from Pedigree but celebrates Derby's love affair with beer and football in a distinguished fashion. But it's due to go from the Exeter in the name of 'quality'. Of course a bought-in beer is less profitable than one's own, but all the beer is sold at full price in the

pubs. Why? In order to clear their purchase of Mansfield Brewery and its tied estate they have had to free pubs from tie to comply with the Beer Orders pending the finalisation of the Mansfield purchase and the sale of excess pubs. W&D won't tell us which pubs they've sold and we can't tell you all of the pubs freed from tie. Try the Railway Tavern at Hatton, Smiths Tavern and the Hart at Ashbourne, and the Nag's Head at Borrowash. It's bad for making quality profits Mr Thompson.

Exeter and it must be paying its way. It attracts customers. It keeps customers. The availability of the Whim ale (not to mention the old Head Brewers Choice) made the Exeter that bit more interesting a port of call than usual, putting the pub back on the beer-drinkers map. It's an all-round good thing and it should stay.

If you can't find a guest beer at the Exeter any longer then perhaps you will have seen strange beers in other Marston's

Still Best Choice

A wet Tuesday night in the back end of November saw Derby CAMRA's now annual 'How Many Beers In The City' crawl. Around 40 members visited over 70 pubs between them and noted which beers were on sale.

They also had a beer (or two) so as far as can be ascertained they counted 112 different beers and three traditional ciders. This was four less than in 1998 but the gauntlet remains firmly thrown down and the mantle of Ale Capital is still a worthy claim.

Unless anyone knows differently.

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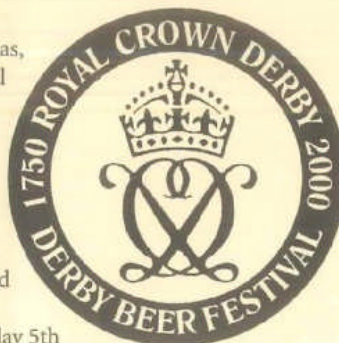
Derby Drinker

Beer Festival will celebrate Royal Crown Derby

The Derby Beer Festival has refused to get on the Y2K bandwagon and has, once again, opted to celebrate a local anniversary. This year sees Royal Crown Derby celebrate 250 years of production, although the 'Royal' and 'Crown' were added later in their history. As well as the Beer Festival connection Derby Museum and Art Gallery will be opening a new gallery devoted to their unique collection.

However, you will still need a glass to drink from as fine bone china doesn't quite have the same resilience when it comes to clinking mugs and saying 'cheers'. A copy of the logo to be used at the festival is reproduced (right) courtesy of Reg Newcombe.

For your diary the dates for this year's Derby Beer Festival are Wednesday 5th to Sunday 9th July.



FLORENCE'S LAMP SHINES AGAIN

The Florence Nightingale on London road has reopened. Pedigree, Bass, Directors and Cape Hill Brewery Mild are on sale. It has refreshingly set out to be a real pub and claims at great length to be a free house (without anyone admitting ownership). At least it still looks like a pub.

NO MORE REGULAR VICTORY OR TALLY HO AT SOLSTICE

The Alexandra on Siddals Road has had a tradition stretching back seven or eight years now of stocking Adnams Tally Ho (7%) on the bar for Midsummers Day. Now Adnams no longer brew it landlord Mark Robins is looking for suggestions to replace it with another strong ale for this June. Contact him on (01332) 293993. Talking of Tynemill matters, Batemans have delisted Victory as a regular brew. It will now only be available as a seasonal and has lost half a percent of its strength at 5.2% (once it was 6%).

Rattlers Split

One of Derby's best loved bands, The Rattlers, who drew big audiences for their Beer Festival appearances over the last five years called it a day with their farewell gig at the Flowerpot, Derby in December. Their stunning set in the Great Hall at the 1998 Festival coincided with the best attended festival session ever and will long be remembered.

So, no Rattlers at this year's Derby Beer Festival but Entertainments Manager Terry Morton is working hard to bring you a classy and varied line-up. There's hope for The Rattlers legion of fans in that they have hinted at doing an occasional reunion. Beer Festival 2001?

Byers attacks local monopolies

Although Trade Secretary Stephen Byers has allowed the Scottish & Newcastle take over of Greenall's 868 pubs and the Punch/Bass carve up of Allied Domecq he has applied the Monopolies Commission rules imposed on brewers 11 years ago AND imposed a tie ceiling of 25 per cent of pubs in any one petty sessional division. S&N are being forced to release their stranglehold on Nottingham where they have the old Home Ales and Shipstones estates.

Duty change is bad news for small brewers

New Customs & Excise rules set to be introduced in the spring will mean brewers being charged duty on the total contents of each cask rather than a notional volume. This means small brewers – big brewers can afford metering equipment – will be paying duty on waste and take duty costs to 45 per cent of their turnover when many are struggling to survive.

Falstaff: Brewing a step closer

As we go to press the Falstaff on Silverhill Road is close to producing its first brew. Sample trial brews have been completed and tasted. More on this item in our next issue.

Landlord of Good Beer Guide-listed pub forced out

Pete Wadsworth, genial host of Abbey Street watering hole the Old Spa left the pub on February 8th. Effectively he was made redundant after being asked to re-apply for his own tenancy. Peter has been in the trade for twenty years with a stint at the Trident, Albion Street (now demolished) and a popular spell at the Jorjacks in its 1980s hey-day when the great Bobby Davison used to call in to celebrate his match-winning goals. He kept fine ale at the Spa, the pub is in the current Good Beer Guide and the inn won a CAMRA refurbishment award in 1985. Peter has been treated most shabbily.

Derby Pubs Exhibition

Derby Museum & Art Gallery are running an exhibition entitled *Raise a Glass To The Year 2000*. This takes a look at the history of Derby's pubs and breweries through the ages and includes some old-time pub games to try in the gallery.

The exhibition runs from 22 January to 5 March and to accompany it there are two evening tours of the City's oldest and more interesting pubs with local historian Maxwell Craven. These take place on Tuesdays 25 January and 29 February departing from the Museum at 7pm. Tours last about two hours and cost £1.

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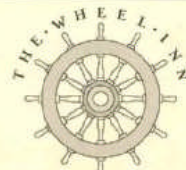
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