



ISSUE NO. 79

APRIL 2000

FREE

## Millram Ale greets delegates for National AGM

**T**HE commemorative beer for the CAMRA National AGM, which takes place in Derby from April 14-16, is the 4% Millram Ale, a mild, specially brewed for the AGM by Hardy & Hansons brewery.

The beer will be on sale for a few weeks after the AGM and a contribution will be made to the CAMRA fighting fund from sales of the brew. Thirteen pence from every pint drunk. The beer was chosen



The pumpclip for the special ale brewed for the AGM.

carefully following tasting sessions involving Derby CAMRA. The name was chosen as it combines the date of the event neatly with its location.

Alan Shepherd, Hardy & Hansons marketing chief, said "As a real ale producer we are still fighting the cause to keep quality alive and helping keep cask beer alive." Thanks once more to all at Kimberley for their support. Derby CAMRA are also indebted to Derby City Council

for facilitating easy use of the Assembly Rooms at a discounted price. Trevor Harris at the Brunswick also has brewed two special beers to mark the AGM, Conference Bitter (3.9%) and Jewel in the Town. The event could be a record breaker attendance-wise as the national AGM comes to the East Midlands for the first time since 1980.

## Abbey habit is a bargain

Derby's cheapest regular ale, the Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter, at the Abbey Inn, Darley Abbey is also a remarkable inflation beater. In 1990 the beer sold at 98p a pint and now ten years on it is only £1.25. A real bargain in any terms.

## NEWS

### Pit Stop at Melbourne

The Railway Inn at Melbourne has changed its name to the Paddock Hotel, reflecting its position as the nearest pub (one mile) to Donington Racetrack. Several worthy attempts to bring trade to this outpost have failed and one would think it unlikely that ditching the old name will fare any better. Pedigree would appear to be the regular fayre, along with the former Draught Burton Ale.



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## Sun sets as Drury rides out

Colourful and often controversial local character John Drury, landlord of the Sun Inn, Middleton Street in Normanton, retired in March. The keeper of good Kimberley ales is to run a club at Skegness. Despite him labelling this editor a football hooligan, we wish him well!

## Brewery bears first fruit

**T**HE LATEST DERBY microbrewery is at last in production. The Falstaff, on Silverhill Road, Normanton had its first brew on sale at the bar in February, after much delay. The beer was called Trial And Error and the follow-up Hit And Miss.

A five-barrel stillage has been built in the lounge and, in readiness for the National CAMRA AGM and conference there should be three new beers to try. These are Summer Ale, at 3.6% extremely light for the Falstaff, Hop-It, a double-hopped goldings ale and Oh Mister Porter. Hit And Miss has also been available in the Crompton Tavern, Crompton Street, the first free trade venue to take Falstaff Brewery beers.

Congratulations are due to Peter and Adrian Parkes, brewer Mike Williams who has put in hours of toil, and to all connected with the Falstaff for adding to the county's list of micros and for their all-round bold approach in fostering Normanton's first genuine free house when all around pubs play safe and are all the blander for it.

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## A touch of Suffolk in the city on offbeat crawl

THE cask ale drinkers of Derby can sometimes be a little polarised in their choice of watering holes these days. One downside of people flocking to the Flowerpots and Brunswicks of the City is the lack of support for some of the lesser-known gems of Derby - the

backstreet locals. A great little crawl can be done in the Ashbourne Road/Friar Gate area of town and here is one such suggestion kicking off at the **Travellers Rest** on Ashbourne Road. A decade or so ago this was just a stop on the 'Mile', the well-known birthday/stag night run



St Mary's Gate - destined to remain pub-free?

## No Blaise of glory for St Mary's Gate tavern

THERE WAS a blow for the discerning drinker recently when the application to turn the former 19th century Probate House in St Mary's Gate into a pub for more seasoned drinkers was turned down following a public enquiry.

Local businesses were the main objectors to the pub, to be called the Bishop Blaise (after a former inn on roughly the same site).

The project for this Grade II-listed building seems to have suffered a backlash from earlier decisions made granting permis-

sion for retail outlets in nearby Iron Gate becoming pubs or restaurants.

The decision was greeted with a celebratory fanfare by the *Derby Evening Telegraph* in its comment column, even though the target market for the Bishop Blaise was the more mature drinker. The *Telegraph* intimated that St Mary's Gate would be a better place remaining pub free. Incidentally there have been at least TEN pubs on the street. These were the Bishop Blaze (by 1749-1822), Buck In The Park (1761), Bunkers Hill (by 1775-1880), Duke of Marlborough's Head (1762-1912), Crown (1874-1898), Kings Arms (by 1822-1934), Miners Arms (1780), Roebuck (1746), Star & Garter (1822-1940) and the Old White Hart (1660-1799).

Now owner Tony Williams (of the Blessington Carriage) has only one resort, the High Court, if he wishes to pursue his project and we wish him well. Derby may have a clutch of fine pubs but it can always do with another one.

into town, but now is a thriving local with Pedigree from the jug.

A few yards townwards is the **Waggon & Horses**, representing one of Burtonwoods' better efforts hereabouts. Top Hat and bitter are on offer with a guest (often Caledonian Deuchars IPA). The recent refurb has enhanced the pub and Rams memorabilia adorn the walls.

**Mr Grundys** (Kimberley ales), part of the Georgian House Hotel, and the **Thirsty Scholar** (Burtonwood plus the odd guest) are worth a quick call before a trip round the back of Friar Gate to the **York Tavern** on the street of the same name. This pub was built up into a terrific free trade boozer under the previous landlord and Neil and Noreen McCready have succeeded in retaining its unique atmosphere during their three years here. The number and range of guest beers may have fallen but the Pedigree is usually on form.

Back on Friar Gate the **Greyhound** looks attractive and has Bass on offer. Opposite runs Bridge Street and four more backstreet pubs lie in its environs.

The **Maypole** on Brook Street has a loyal band of regulars and Theakstons beers, but to get there you have to pass the Woodlark and **Ram**, next door to each other.

Not everyone took to the wild west makeover the exterior of the Ram had some years back, but the pub thrives and has a rotating guest beer policy. Next door the



**Woodlark** (pictured above) also saw some changes recently but the pub is still a pleasant oasis and Adnams Broadside has been a regular and permanent guest beer for months. It is a refreshing change to see pub groups such as Enterprise Inns and (in the next case) Avelbury investing in small pubs and if we don't call in to try

the guest beers then we cannot bemoan their unavailability.



Much the same applies at our final port of call, the **Captain Blake** (above) on Agard Street. On emerging from the Woodlark, turn left down Little Brook Street to Brook Walk. Cross the Markeaton Brook on the recently-renewed footbridge into Searle Street and the Blake stands at its corner. Formerly the Golden Eagle, and after many years of decline the pub was renamed after a local character and has Adnams Bitter on permanently alongside Bass and Pedigree. Bringing a touch of Southwold to our city.

These licensees are striving to do a great job under tremendous pressure, so why not give some of these pubs a try? You might be pleasantly surprised at some of the beers you will see, as well as encouraging more widespread availability of different cask ales.

## Happy Pint

The Derby CAMRA unique campaign involving licensees replacing any unsatisfactory pint received a boost with two Wirksworth pubs joining in. The George and the Hope & Anchor are the new participants.

## Easter Beer Festival

For the second year running the diagonally-opposing Dolphin Inn and Old Silk Mill are staging a combined Easter Beer Festival. The event begins on the Thursday 20th April and runs through Good Friday to Sunday 23rd. It is anticipated that approximately 40 beers will be available, along with scrumpy, cider and perry.

## The Sixth Annual Peak Beer Festival

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## New hope for old stars?

The battle to save the historic Seven Stars on King Street has taken a more positive turn. The results of the consultation process have now been announced for various road schemes in Derby.

The scheme involving the demolition of the Seven Stars got 20% and the scheme to make a bus priority lane got 43%. Presumably this means the remainder of the vote was for the third option which is to do nothing. Derby CAMRA raised a petition to keep the pub and the result looks very promising indeed.

There will not be an official announcement of the Council dropping their thirty-year old

plans to demolish the pub until June and there will be exhibitions of the new proposals on view to the public in September.



## Out spotting Guest beers

Guest beers have been spotted at the Vernon Arms in Spondon. York Brewery Bitter, Dent Rams Bottom Ale, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Brunswick Second Brew have been amongst recent offerings. The Cale beer seems to be a welcome regular in selected Burtonwood pubs of late.

Also worth a call if you are out in the countryside near Kedleston is the Cock Inn at Mugginton where Pedigree is augmented with a changing guest. Beers featured of late include Old Hooky, Jennings Cocker Hoop, Smiles Exhibition and Thwaites Craftsman.

## Volunteers needed for Derby Beer Festival

Ever considered volunteering at the Derby Beer Festival? Many people do and return year after year. Why? Well it certainly isn't for financial gain! Although we do get offered a couple of free pints or so.

Most of the volunteers enjoy the camaraderie, the atmosphere of the festival and supporting the campaign - jobs range from pulling pints to running the tombola, something for everyone from 18-80.

This year's festival runs from Wednesday 5th to Sunday 9th July, help is also required from the weekend beforehand to set up.

Fancy giving it a go for one or two sessions this year? Ring Jane Whitaker on (01332) 342670 for an application form.

## History of The Royal Oak

The book is entitled *Glasses Please*. They do when they are filled with beer from the cellars at the Royal Oak, Ockbrook. Olive Wilson, landlady since 1953 has published a short history of this gem of a pub, sub-titled *Memories of the Royal Oak, Ockbrook*. At 28 pages and with over 25 illustrations this is good value for money at £2, and as the final picture includes David George, a former editor of this newsletter and Derby CAMRA Chairman it would probably sell for more.

The narrative traces the life of the pub under the Peat family for 130 years, being acquired by Offilers in 1898 and the Wilsons arrived in 1953.

The many connections a village pub maintains with the community

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are a strong feature of the story, the relationship with the Dale Abbey Society for the Prosecution of Felons goes back many years, also the Vintage Motor Cycle Club, The Ockbrook and Borrowash Allotment Association, the Harrington Agricultural Discussion Society to name a few. How many latter day publicans think they can get away without being part of the community?

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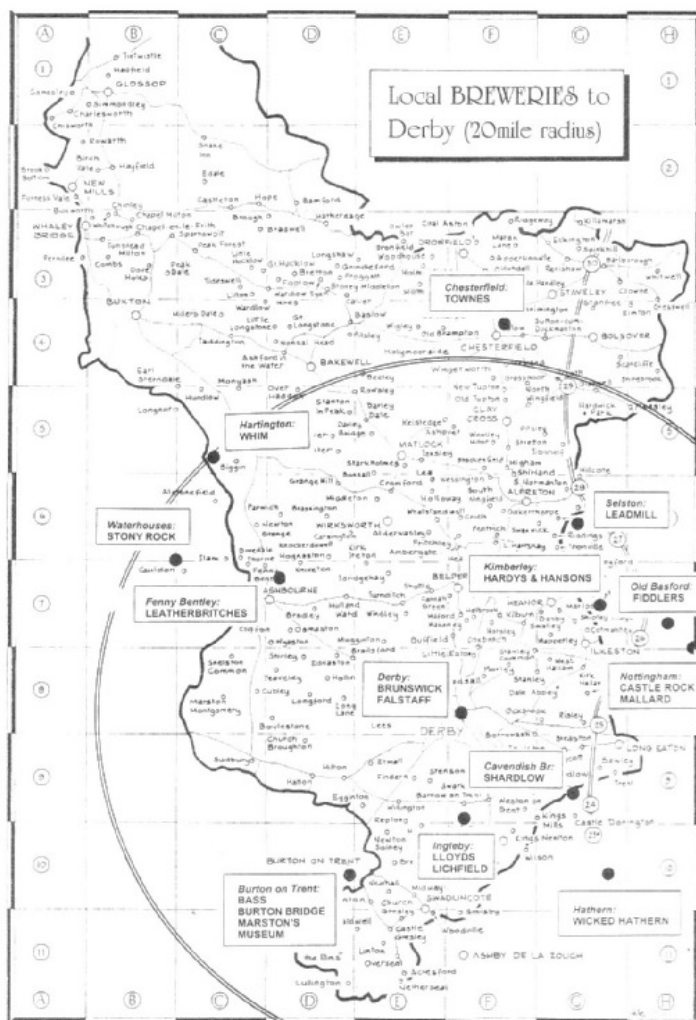
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Derby Drinker





The last decade has seen a flowering of local micro breweries within 20 miles of Derby. Falstaff, Hathers and Leadmill being the most recent.

In all there are 18 breweries in our area, producing a wide range of flavoursome ales, so whether you are visiting the Derby area or a local, why not try the regional brews and support these ventures, many of which are fighting to achieve the market share they deserve.

## Two top local bands head Beer Festival 2000 line-up

Loscoe State Opera make their debut at this year's festival. Local gigs at the Flowerpot and Off the Tracks were the launching pad for bigger events such as Glastonbury and Wimbourne Folk Festival.



Loscoe State Opera - the folk rockers with a medieval flavour.

By way of complete contrast Get Serious are Derby's leading soul/funk outfit. Their show includes classic covers of songs by James Brown, Otis Redding, Marvin Gaye and many more.

Other bands aboard this year's beer wagon include Quicksilver, Drowsy Maggie, Three Wheel Drive, Zephyr Six and many, many more. Full line-up in next issue of *Derby Drinker*.

As usual creche facilities will be available during Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes only, complete with children's entertainer Clivo the Clown.

## The Old Silk Mill

Supporters of AGM 2000

Friday 14-Sun 16 April

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**FOOD SERVED 9AM-11PM**

## Capital City by Gareth Stead

WHEN it comes to real ale, we in Derby like to think of ourselves as the country's capital in terms of the number and choice of different real ales available in the City's many hostilities and for the delegates attending CAMRA's National Conference and Annual General Meeting at the Assembly Rooms, Derby from 14-16th April this will hopefully mean they will have a very fine weekend indeed.

This proud boast is based upon Derby CAMRA's annual survey of different ales available in the City on any one night which took place towards the end of last year and revealed a staggering 112 different real ales found in 70 pubs in and around the City Centre. The total is more remarkable when you consider that the survey took place on a Tuesday night which is perhaps a night of the week when you wouldn't expect many people to be out and consequently less real ales on sale.

The most dominant brand of cask ale in Derby without any shadow of a doubt is Marston's Pedigree which was available in 40 of the pubs visited. This was well over twice as many as its nearest rival, Bass which was found in 17 pubs. The current Champion Beer of Britain, Timothy Taylor's Landlord was found in 5 pubs with perhaps the saddest statistic of all being the demise of the once great brew, Burton Ale now available in only three pubs - drink it while you still can!

The pubs with the most real ales available on the night were the Alexandra, Brunswick and Flowerpot as expected but the increase of pubs with no real ale, ten out of the 70 was alarming.

Of prices recorded the average pint price in Derby was found to be £1.82, an increase of 9p per pint on the previous year with Pedigree's average price being £1.88, an increase of 11p per pint

## Barging into Derby

At least one delegate at the CAMRA National AGM is deploying the canal network to approach Derby. The canny Scotsman wrote to say he was en route to Swarkestone Lock, which at five miles from the city centre was nearer than the recommended East Midlands Airport! If only the Derby Canal still existed he could have moored up close to the Exeter Arms.

on the previous year The cheapest regular beers on sale where found to be: Whitbread Trophy at the Old Silk Mill for £1.20; Theakstons Best at Wetherspoons for £1.25 and Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter at the Abbey for £1.25.

Quality was generally found to be above average particularly in the *Good Beer Guide* pubs although equally some poor beer was found elsewhere.

So there you have it, a few stats to bear in mind while crawling around 'Beer City' drinking one of the many cask ales on offer and whether you live, work or are just visiting Derby we hope you will go home with a favourable impression of the nations 'Real Ale Capital.'

## The Friargate

114 Friar Gate

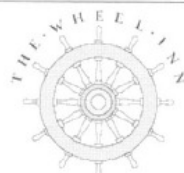
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## Hobgoblin

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