

Derby Drinker

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ISSUE NUMBER 107

WINTER 2005

FREE

Start the New Year with a bang - Derby Winter-Fest number five: January 6th/7th

The new year of 2006 will see a very early celebration of real ale in Derby city centre. The 5th Derby CAMRA Winter-Fest takes place at the Assembly Rooms, in the Darwin Suite on Friday/Saturday 6th/7th January. Yes it is soon after Christmas but get the year going in style with some of the 50 cask ales on sale at the event!

As the Festive season draws to a close on Twelfth Night so the Festival Season begins as the Derby CAMRA Winter Beer Festival bursts into life to mark the dawning of a New Year.

Earlier than normal due to the none availability of our usual dates it will run from Friday 6th to Saturday 7th January 2006 again in the Darwin Suite of the Assembly Rooms on Derby Market Place.

Featuring an amazing array of beers and bands, the Festival that

Rocks' is set once more to brighten up your winter and blow away those festive blues once and for all.

Now in it's fifth great year, it will showcase over 50 beers from all over the country and abroad. These will include every style imaginable from Bitter & Lager to Mild, Porter & Stout to Cider & Perry to Foreign Bottled Beers & Fruit Wines. We have also commissioned a unique Festival Ale; 'Feste' to commemorate the spirit of Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' brewed by award winning Derby

microbrewery, Falstaff.

And as usual we have an exceptional line-up

of entertainment that should appeal to all tastes and age groups including the return of Derby favourites, the

Midnight Pumpkin Trucks and top tribute band, U2UK who went down such a storm last year.

The whole thing gets under way at 11am on the Friday morning and runs right through to 11pm on the Saturday night. But remember to come early, as it does get busy in the evenings.

So, why not leave those New Year resolutions firmly behind, wash away the memory of all



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that lazing about and visiting relatives you don't see all year and get yourselves down to the Winter-Fest for one of the highlights of the year in the Derby social calendar. You won't be disappointed.

Further details of the Festival can be found on the inside pages or check out the website www.derbycamra.org.uk or e-mail winterbeerfest@derbycamra.org.uk

Glass Sponsors

This year's Festival Glasses with the 'Janus Ram' logo will be kindly sponsored by local Derbyshire microbrewery, Leadmill of Denby who will have some of their beers available in the main Darwin Bar. Many thanks to them for their continuing support.

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The Spirit of Twelfth Night

The Shakespearean character, Feste, is the fool or jester in Twelfth Night, a merry comedy about the new year's festivities, first performed before the Queen in 1599.

Shakespeare's 'fools' are not really foolish at all, but only pretending to be in order to show up the folly of those around them.

In the play Feste represents the Spirit of Festivity abroad on Twelfth Night. It is he, with his two carousing companions, Sir

Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Arguecheek, who provide most of the mirth. Being told to curb their merriment by Malvolio, the Steward, Sir Toby says,

"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

But there is, of course, ale - a plenty - especially on Twelfth Night!

And the Festival Special Ale this year for

Derby's Winterfest, which falls on Twelfth Night, is to be called Feste, representing the Spirit of Festivity.



Provisional Festival brewery list

As we go to press the beer list for the Winter-Fest has not been set in stone and could change completely. As a guide, however here are some of the breweries very likely to be represented at the event:

Brunswick
City of Cambridge
Danelaw
Darwin
Derby Brewing Co
E&S Elland

Edale
Falstaff
Garton
Grainstore
John Thompson
Leadmill
Leatherbritches
Mauldons
Newby Wyke
Old Bear
Red Squirrel
Rooster's
TigerTops

Advanced Bookings

If you wish to guarantee entry to the Derby Winter Beer Festival, then we are offering an advanced bookings service.

This is available to groups of four or more and offers the advantages of queue-jumping, guaranteed admission (before a cut-off time), glass, programme & beer tokens etc all in a handy pack.

You must pay in advance & in return you will be sent a letter to enable you to gain admission & receive your packs on entry.

Please contact Janette on 01332 347601 or email:- winterbookings@derbycamra.org.uk for further details.

Musicians Wanted

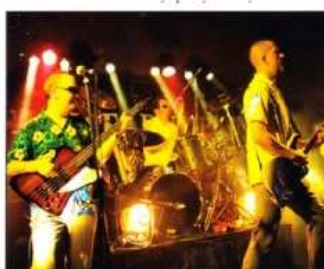
The Saturday afternoon session of the Derby Winter Beer Festival will be an open-mic session and musicians are invited to come along and do a song or two for some free beer and free entry to the Festival. This has proved very popular in the last few years and the standards have been high.

If you think you may be interested then please contact David George on 01773 821349 or alternatively e-mail davidgeorge@belperde56.fsnet.co.uk for further details.

A Rocking Good Winter Beer Festival

The Derby CAMRA Winter-Fest has a reputation of bringing you the best live music around and this year is to be no exception. From the Festival that brought you Coldplay, Darkness, REM, Stereophonics and U2 tributes in the past sees yet another strong line-up for our 5th anniversary birthday bash.

The Friday afternoon entertainment is still being finalised but the 'Festival that Rocks' really kicks off on the Friday night with the return of local group, the Midnight Pumpkin Trucks (below) whose energetic live performances have been a festival highlight before and are sure to get the Festival rocking again this time with their tribute to the cream of British Rock & Pop. Songs from Oasis, Blur, The Small Faces, The Who, The Darkness, Robbie Williams, David Bowie and many more are all dispatched with skill, energy and a little tongue in cheek humour which have made the 'Pumpkins' the darlings of the Derbyshire pub music scene for many years now. Packing audiences in where ever they play, they are sure



to do the same at the Fest, so remember to come early to avoid disappointment. www.midnightpumpkintrucks.co.uk

Saturday afternoon sees the return of our popular open-mic session with musicians invited to come along and perform a few numbers for a free pint or two.

Then, Saturday evening will witness probably the mostly eagerly



awaited performance of the whole Festival and a tribute to one of the biggest bands in the world over the past two decades - U2. A recent chart topping album, singles and a major triumphant world tour, which you may have caught around the UK, have put them firmly back at the top of the current music scene. So what better time to have one of their tribute bands than this and U2UK (above) are certainly one of the Country's top tributes to the Irish rockers.

Local lads, the members of U2UK pride themselves on being devoted U2 fans that authentically re-create the unmistakable 'LIVE' U2 sound, look and feel that has been described by some as 'like being at a real U2 show'. Performing songs spanning U2's entire career from 'Pride (in the name of love)' to 'With or Without You' to 'Elevation' and 'Vertigo' the U2UK show has been amazing audiences throughout the UK and we are delighted to have them on again at the Fest this year after such a brilliant show stealing performance last time around. www.u2ukshow.com

So there you have it, another cracking line-up of entertainment and one that's sure to get you rocking long into the night. See you all there.

For further information and updates on the Festival entertainment check out the Website www.derbycamra.org.uk or e-mail us at winterentertainment@derbycamra.org.uk

Staff Needed

The Winter-Fest is staffed by an army of volunteers who give up their spare time to make sure the Festival runs smoothly but as always we need more help particularly on the busy evening sessions.

If you are able to offer this then a downloadable Staffing Form is available on the Website www.derbycamra.org.uk or contact the Staffing Manager, Janette on 01332 347601 or email:- winterstaffing@derbycamra.org.uk As a reward you will be given beer tokens to spend at the Fest.

Winter-Festival Glossary

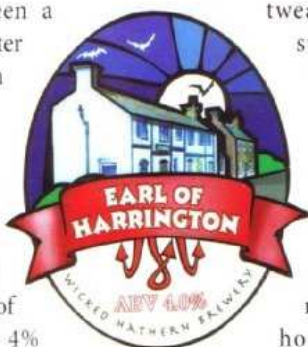
For those who may not know this, the month of January is named after the old Roman god, **Janus**, who stands at the gate of the years. He is usually depicted with two faces (or in our case, two heads), looking back at the year that's gone out and forwards to the year that's come in. **Twelfth Night** is, of course the Twelfth and last night of Christmas. It is traditionally celebrated with spiced wassailing ale, or in the south, spiced cider, accompanied by wassail cake. Being the last night of celebrations, it was formerly an occasion of much merry-making, meant to awaken apple-trees from their winter slumber and stir cattle into fertility.

Waes Hael is Old English for 'Good Health'.

R.N

Wicked House beer at Harrington

The Harrington Arms at Thulston has been a long-time supporter of beer from Wicked Hathern Brewery. Now Sean, Jon and co have brewed a house ale for landlord Richard Scarf. Called Earl of Harrington, the 4% beer quickly sold out.



The recipe has been tweaked slightly for subsequent brews and will be a regular feature at this oasis for local microbreweries. The pumpclip features a drawing of the Harrington in the house style of the Hathern brewery.

Pub curio at Melbourne



Much-travelled drinker Julian Tubbs sent me this remarkable piece of work by Mick Usher, which can be found on the wall of the gents in the Roebuck, Potter Street, Melbourne. Is there a finer contemporary in the area? If so let DD know, preferably graphically. Or does your local have any hidden treasures you would like to share?

Microbrewery Corner

Taking a look at what's happening at the independent breweries in and around Derby



FALSTAFF

The brewery won Beer of the Festival for Fistful of Hops at Banbury Beer festival, and continues to supply beer to the Babington Arms.

DANELAW

The Chellaston brewers continue to get their beers into local pubs, and have no new ales to report as yet.

DERBY BREWING CO

Trevor Harris's beers have been featured, amongst other places, the York Tavern and Mr Grundy's recently.

LEATHERBRITCHES

The enlargement is not yet complete, the copper remains to be installed, otherwise everything is in place and production is already considerably expanded by the increase in number and size of fermenting vessels. Bottled trade is increasing, with a new regular outlet in Denmark.

JOHN THOMPSON

The popular Porter has replaced Summer Gold at the John Thompson Inn.

FUNFAIR

Meanwhile Funfair had four beers on at once in the Observatory in Ilkeston. The Wetherspoons pub, which Dave tells me is taking the lead from Tom Taylor's beer policy at the Babington Arms, showcased Brandy Snap, Ghost Train, Waltzer and Roller Ghoster during Ilkeston Fair in late October. Funfair are also brewing a house beer for the Mailhouse, also in Ilkeston - Royal Pale 3.8%. New beers in the pipeline include a Christmas beer called Christmas Cake Walk a 6.5% beer where part of the brewing process will involve putting fruit directly into the fermenters. A second new beer will be called Pop Corn with an ABV in the mid

4% region and will be a lager malt pale bitter.

HAYWOOD

Alan Palmer has obtained a registered Trade Mark for the brewery that from henceforth will be known as "The Haywood Bad Ram Brewery". The brewery will reopen in time for the Easter holiday. Bad Ram has been selling very well.

A new 2500ft building is planned, close to the brewery to house the bottling plant. Completion date is set for summer 2007. An on-site spring fed well, with a history dating back to Georgian times, capable of supplying 9000ltr per day, is to be used for the source of bottled water and it is hoped for the production of the breweries beers.

LEADMILL

The latest beers to appear from Leadmill during October were Mash Tun Bitter 3.6% described as a session bitter and Autumn Goddess 4.2%. Richard has expanded his brewing horizons to Kilburn, but due to one or two unforeseen problems brewing at the Bottlebrook Brewery in Kilburn, which was due to start at the end of October, now looks likely to happen at the end of November. Richard expects the delivery of his bottling plant to arrive before Christmas, with the equipment being supplied by the Leek Brewery.

WHIM

Strong ale Black Christmas to hit the bar for the festive season.

WICKED HATHERN

House brew for their Thulston outlet, the Harrington, see elsewhere in DD. Derby Porter has also been well received at this pub.

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The Derby Dozen showcased in Peterborough

A group of visitors from Derby to Peterborough for the recent beer festival were gratified to find their county prominently represented by the 'Derby Dozen'. This was a special feature, staged on an old sea-going barge now retired and moored in the Nene and skillfully converted into a pub, which is virtually a beer festival in itself.



The Derby Dozen was, in reality, a Derbyshire Dozen since each of the 12 ales came from various microbreweries in the county but Derby Dozen skips more easily off the tongue. Each brewery was also represented at the Peterborough beer festival itself, Britain's second biggest after Olympia.

County brewery numbers rises again as High Peak outfit joins the throng

We reported in DD 106 that Derbyshire had a modern record of thirteen breweries within its bounds. This news was already out of date as a new Glossop brewery was already up and running by then.

Howard Town brewery of Glossop is owned by husband and wife teams Les and Janet Dove, and Tony Hulme and Rowena Curley. Les is a consultant engineer, Tony is an analyst programmer, while Janet and Rowena are both teachers. Both families have lived in Glossop for about eighteen years. Tony now works full time for the Brewery, assisted by Janet, and although Les has kept his day job, he probably puts in more hours than the other three combined!

The brewery is located in the former Bridge End Fulling Mill, later to become part of the Howard Town Mill complex - one of the largest in 19th century England.

None had much brewing experience before they started, and assistance was provided by Nick and Jon at the Millstone Brewery, and Dave Porter, who supplied and installed the equipment.

The brewery motto is "Ales in Peak Condition" and they intend to brew five regular beers: Bleaklow 3.8%, Wren's Nest 4.2%, Dinting Arches 4.5%, Howard Town Bitter 4.7% and Glott's Hop 5.0%.

Increased choice at the York

The range of guest beers has widened at the York Tavern on York Street, Derby. Dennis and Mel are participating in the Enterprise Inns

Direct Delivery scheme, whereby the pubco will let pubs stock locally-brewed cask ales and SIBA members beers.

The pub has had a range of Oakham ales on as well as Derby Brewing Co Business As Usual, Osset Pale Gold, Oldershaws Mowbray, Castle Rock Harvest Pale, Kelham Island Easy Rider and Harviestoun Schiehallion to name but a few. The best time to sample the guests is probably from Thursdays through the weekend and the York is definitely well worth checking out.

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Xmas Beer festival dates at Horsley Woodhouse's Oak

The Old Oak at Horsley Woodhouse is now open from 12:00 EVERY DAY - a wide range of Leadmill Ales and Guest Beers are always available, together with the full range of Gales Fruit Wines, plus freshly filled cobs and pork pies.

The third Christmas Beer Festival takes place from Thursday 15th December to Sunday 18th December - 25 Guest Beers will be available from the rear courtyard area, together with a traditional cider AND perry, plus a wide range of Leadmill Ales and the full range of Gales Fruit Wines from the main bar. Live entertainment will be in the evenings.

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Beer City still a popular draw

Saturday 19th November saw hordes of CAMRA members descend on Derby for different events around the City.

Up at the Falstaff Brew Pub in Normanton, the North Oxfordshire Branch of CAMRA presented licensees Jim and Steph with a 'Beer of the Festival' Award for their 'Fistful of Hops' at the Banbury Beer Festival. Afterwards a crawl of Derby's Good Beer Guide pubs followed.

Meanwhile, The Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood were visiting the Derby Brewing Company on Nottingham Road followed again by a crawl of the City's best real ale hosteleries.

Also on a separate crawl members of Stoke CAMRA where enjoying the delights of Derby's pubs too.

All in all then everyone seemed to enjoy their day out, proving once again that 'Beer City' is still a popular draw for Real Ale enthusiasts from all over the Country.

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Working at the Big One

The statistics blow your mind when you think about The Great British Beer Festival. 45,000 visitors, 1,000 workers and enough beer to fill 1,250 domestic baths and 200,000 pint glasses. How big is that? There's a Press Office with cuttings from most of the daily press about the festival, a huge Staffing Office and staff bar - The Volunteers Arms - like a beer festival itself.

The scale of this is not surprising however as the GBBF with over 450 real ales from 200 different breweries, claims to be the largest volunteer-run beer festival in the world! There's a lot more beside, a breweriana auction that raises over £1000 pounds in one hour, a huge range of food from real Cornish pasties to Norwegian pancakes, to top-line entertainment ranging from a string quartet to Chas and Dave 'Rockney' music.

We must not forget the beer however and the Champion Beer Awards create great excitement and fame for one special beer, well done Crouch Vale this year for the delicious 'Brewers Gold'.

I had been to the GBBF as a customer many times but this year I decided to become one of those 1,000 workers. It's hard work at first as you arrive at your designated bar with about 20

handpumps to become familiar with. If it's a busy session this is very hectic as you gradually find out where it all is. Each bar has its own bar manager and cellar team and is able to workout the days/nights consumption very quickly. After your session with your staff badge and workers tee-shirt on you can proceed upstairs to party on in the Volunteers Arms'.

There are people here who have worked here every year for as long as they can remember and also a surprising number of young female staff. They all obviously get a lot out of working at the biggest beer festival in the country. In the end it's enormous fun in a huge enterprise and The Festival Organiser Marc Holmes is a huge, but slightly slimmer personality this year-well done Marc. (*Big Marc is also a southern Derby County supporter incidentally -Ed*)

I found working here exciting, a little impersonal, but very rewarding. You have to work here to appreciate the vast scale of everything compared to one's own fest. Why not give it a try in 2006, when it moves from Olympia to Earls Court?

**Les Baynton
Derby Festival Publicity**

PUB NEWS

A few changes down in Melbourne where Alan Ellis and James Cripps have taken over at the **Alma** whilst Chris and Karen Tolley are new licensees at the Shardlow tap, the **Blue Bell**. No change in brewery ownership though. The **Melbourne Hotel** has reopened with real ale. The **Bulls Head** in Repton remains closed and shrouded in mystery, a serious cask ale loss at the moment. New licensees at the **Junction Tavern** in the street of the same name in Derby. Adam has replaced Nina and Clive (he of the individual jukebox!). Down in Kings Newton the **Packhorse** has been closed for refurbishment. It reopened on 1st October. In Derby the **Crescent** on Wild Street has closed and the nearby **Swan & Salmon** (Ashbourne Road) has been sold to Hardy & Hanson. I am sure they will do well with this corner local but it is a shame to see a regular outlet for Archers beers gone. The **Bell**, **Smalley** and **Three Horseshoes**, Morley Smithy have been awarded Cask Marque status.

The Marston's Triangle - Do You Know Where It Was?

Asks Brett Lewis of the **Liversage**. The **Liversage Arms** on Nottingham Road, now having been open for just over four months has decided to take a look back into the past to relive some of those fond memories.

In (recent) years past the area from Mansfield Road, Derwent Street and Nottingham Road was known for its run of Marstons Pedigree houses. Known as the "Marstons Triangle" when they owned the Exeter, the Peacock and

the **Liversage**. Marstons later decided not to renew their hold over the **Liversage Arms** due to the Peacock being barely a hundred yards away. This was the end of the Marstons Triangle.

Over the years and with changes in licensees, this traditional ale triangle slowly crept away to be a memory. But memory no more as the **Liversage Arms** has revived history and once again restore Marstons Pedigree back to its pumps as a regular beer. Now

for the first time in years the "Pedigree Triangle" once more lives on.

Do you have any fond memories of the Marston's Triangle? It only existed from 1980 when the Exeter became a Marston's house (from Bass), but in the 1980s, in the simpler, less beer choice firmament of the city's drinkscape, many a good pub crawl celebration took in these three pubs (Owd Rodger and Merrie Monk used to be on the menu too then) -Ed.

Visit the Derby CAMRA Website on www.derbycamra.org.uk

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CIDER WITH RALF-EE

Following on from Ralf-ee's last column, members of Derby CAMRA recently embarked upon a quest to search for cider within the city. Here is what we found. First call the Brunswick, a regular outlet for **Westons Old Rosie** for many years, a smooth golden cider - medium / dry. After this a short walk to the Alexandra Hotel found **Biddenden Bushels** which was very light in colour and flavour. Babington Arms we found **Westons Old Rosie** and **Westons Organic Vintage Cider**, the Old Rosie was colder and mouth coating in comparison to the Brunswick, the Organic Vintage tasted like real apple juice, cloudy and tart as well as being packed with flavour. Next onto the Falstaff (cider or perry only normally available Friday, Saturday and Sunday) we sampled **Saxon Agostini** a yellow coloured Perry (cider made from pears) the taste of which dominated by the unmistakable flavour of sweet pear drops. Wandering on, the Olde Spa and Bishop Blaise were real cider free, the Olde Spa only stocks it in summer, whereas the Blaise didn't have any available on the night, but we were assured that's it's normally available. So moving swiftly (almost) onto the Flowerpot we found **Saxon Greensleaves**, which surprisingly was indeed a rather lurid green colour, it was fairly apply with a moderate bitterness and sweetness.

Real Cider is made almost entirely from British cider apples, and served naturally carbonated and unpasteurised whereas the common keg counterpart is artificially carbonated, pasteurised, served under gas pressure. We only found 5 real ciders within Derby city so if anyone has seen any others do let me know.

Ralf Edge

Beyond the Pale - Derby stands up well for choice and variety

The editor went on a jaunt around Cornwall in August. He accompanied cask ale-drinking Rowditch ally Win in a short blitz (if that's not an oxymoron) of the southernmost tip of our nation. Now I have never been a fan of the report-your-holiday feature in these sort of publications but I hope the reader will forgive my self-indulgence here as I try to compare the real ale scene in differing areas.

The county of Cornwall is a wonderful place and has some fantastic pubs and a great quality of life but drinking the Cornish real ale made us appreciate the choice we have in and around Derby, and the Midlands in general.

Kernow, as Cornwall is known is awash with mid-brown beer from Sharps, Skinners and St Austell and even the micros brew in the same style. Golden ales, or Pales which have become increasingly popular in our area, are unheard of in the South-West - strangely for a coastal haven, indeed Skinners have just proudly launched Cornish Storm - a new keg lager that has 'sales going through the roof' rather than brew a gold beer in the style of Hartington IPA or Oakham JHB or Bishops. We enjoyed a free brewery tour in Truro courtesy of the irrepressible Steve Skinner (Cheers Steve) and a few free pints of what is the tastiest beer of the area so it would be churlish to moan too much!

On a non-ale front the area is possibly without comparison in England and we visited some cracking pubs - the Blue Peter at Polperro after a coast path walk from Polruan (it wasn't all beer), the thatched Pandora Inn at Restronguet Creek (it has its own brown sign on the roads), the inventory-listed Seven Stars in Falmouth, which hasn't seen a coat of paint in many a decade and is run by a priest. We met up with Cornishman and former Crompton Tavern drinker Chesh here and he took us on a tour of Falmouth, which I confess included a



non-cask club at the end of the evening.

We moved about daily to various campsites and the Blue Hills near St Agnes was handy for a great pub I could recommend, indeed I had visited it before in my previous incarnation. The Driftwood Spars at Trevaunance Cove (pictured) has its own microbrewery and brews Cuckoo Ale. We sampled five or six on the Saturday afternoon. The beer is 4.5% on the pumpclip but the barman came over to tell us that it often tests at 5.9%! The area here is known as Cuckooland because residents believed that if cuckoos never left the locality it would remain eternally spring and built a wall to keep them in!

This place runs a free bus home for customers and we were told that the driver - known as Jesus - would pick us up and take us back to the campsite for a small tip. The Driftwood had a midnight license already but a phone call came through saying that Jesus was ill and couldn't do the bus that night. We had to make do with another pint in a great location where the cliffs meet the sea and a walk back over the clifftops in darkness. St Agnes village has a few pubs and we found the only Cornish pale in the Miners and Mechanics Institute where Cornish Blonde from Skinners was on. The licensee seemed reluctant to admit the militant wing of Real CAMRA but on thorough checking of my card he allowed us to join the only other customer he had for an enjoyable half-hour. We also met a roadie for Jah Wobble in the St Agnes Hotel whilst sipping Tribute (the Pedigree of the South-West).

We utilised a lot of public transport including bus, train, ferry (car and foot) and boat taxi

and I must say the prices on these compare favourably to Derby. If you are looking to visit the better pubs you do need to do some homework and work out the best options for ferries and trains but it can be done and is most rewarding. However on the Sunday lunch in the Old Albion at Crantock, Win and I were really looking forward to a pint of something pale back at the Rowditch that evening. We joked that if Steve Birkin had no light beer on we would get an immediate cab to the Smithfield. Guess what: he had Hoskins & Oldfield Hob bitter and something even darker! Ever mischievous Steve laughed all evening in the 'Is it Pale' capital of Derby.

To sum up though we have a range of style and choice around here. We can find a bitter, a mild, a golden pale and a real stout any time we want to wander through the city. Many places do not have this choice and we are favoured to have the range of beers in front of us, perhaps we take it for granted but we certainly should not. **P.S.**

Drinker

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Good things in the trolley - the Tesco beer challenge 2005

Overcoming my aversion to supermarket shopping with all its attendant horrors of huge check-out queues, whining children, and now even 'trolley-rage', I agreed to help judge the preliminary round of this year's Tesco Brewing Awards. This is now in its tenth year and was originally started by Barry Pepper, Richard Morrice and various tasters from the world of beer. They worked out how it would operate and that first Beer Challenge selected one Autumn bottled beer. It has grown considerably over the years and now has seven categories of bottled beers. The winners in each of these are listed below.

I arrived at the Tesco Test Kitchens in Cheshunt early in September for the preliminary round of The Challenge. I was taken to a room filled with tables loaded with numbered bottles of beer and around twenty-five other judges. We were briefed on our task and each given a score sheet with sections to score for: taste, appearance, flavour, and a total score. My particular category was 'Spring and Summer Ales 2006' and the main characteristic was spelt out for us - 'A radical summer ale that

refreshes the palate on a warm day, whilst also providing a great accompaniment to a light summer meal or picnic-not exceeding 5% ABV.'

I had a brief vision of a jolly group of CAMRA members sitting by the river with their blazers, picnics and ravishing girls before we were called to order and asked to begin. So with bottle opener in hand I started on the arduous but extremely pleasurable task. We each had 21 beers to taste and assess and two hours to do it in.

It was a little difficult at first to establish a standard and after tasting five or six beers, I modified some of my earlier marks. It was also difficult not to break the rule of 'no discussing' with other judges particularly if I discovered a really exciting beer. By lunchtime everyone had completed their score sheets and taken them to be listed on the computer. We had reduced the huge number of entries in all categories to a manageable short-list for the final judging and awards in London some three weeks later. Over a splendid lunch we discussed our experiences with our fellow judges, only a little disappointed to find no real-ale in the hotel bar.

We made our way home well satisfied with our tasty work, pleased to discover our leading supermarket supporting an event that celebrates beer quality and innovation and indeed uses it to guide its beer purchasing. Supermarkets are often criticised for promoting cheapness rather than quality but I think The Beer Challenge proves other-



wise. I might possibly be guilty of 'trolley rage' in my anxiety to get to some of these winning beers when they appear on the shelves in the near future, so beware all you dads driving mountainous trolleys full of 'the weekly shop'. The eventual winners of the Tesco Beer Challenge were judged at the final in London on Sept. 29th and are listed below.

BEST INNOVATION

Hambleton Ales Gluten Free Beer

BEST CIDER

Henney's Cider Company

BEST IMPORT

Brasserie du Bocq

BEST SPRING/SUMMER

SMALL BREWER

Ridgeway

LARGE BREWER

Hall and Woodhouse

BEST AUTUMN/WINTER

SMALL BREWER

Broughton Ales

LARGE BREWER

Young's

Happy shopping.... in the beer section of course!

Les Baynton

Guild Of Beer Writers

Ox re-saddled

The Durham Ox on Burton Road recently re-opened after being closed for around 18 months, with the same Licensee (Paddy), and, as before, with Real Ale.

The first few offerings were from Leadmill, and were in quite good nick, particularly the Maple Porter, and were on sale at a competitive £1.80 per pint, and lately Danelaw Danegeld has been the offering, at £1.50 per pint. Paddy tells me that he is going to keep the Danelaw on regularly at the same price, an admirable policy that will hopefully see the pub crowded out with Real Ale drinkers every night.

So far the beer has been generally in good condition, so give it a try, at that price how can you miss it?

Trevor Spencer

The Steampacket



**Derby Road,
Swanwick**

Regular beers from Adnams, Black Sheep, Everards, Young's and Tetley plus a guest & two trad ciders.

50 yards from Swanwick
Red Arrow bus stop

01773 602172

Derby CAMRA Pub of the Year
2003

The Smithfield Meadow Road

on the banks of the Derwent
Quarter mile from Railway Station
Quarter mile from Market Place

The Vic under threat

Derby's premier music venue, the Victoria Inn on Midland Place, is under threat from a proposed development near to Derby railway station. The Eastern Fringes Area Action Plan aims to 'gentrify' the area and in turn demolish the Vic.

Andy Sewell of The Vic only discovered the scheme when a brochure from Cityscape was stuffed through his door some months ago. The scheme (in a conservation area) proposes to build an office block on the site of the pub (plus the Merry Widows, the chip shop and other buildings opposite the station). Within days Andy and Mick Sheehan had rallied a petition and had 2,00 names, by the time of the first con-

sultation meeting this had risen to 8,000. The pub has had huge support from bands and fans countrywide. the next consultation meeting is in June 2006, with the aim of the developers to demolish by end 2007.

The Vic dates from 1875 and is unfortunately not listed, Andy told DD "Hundreds of students choose Derby to study because of the venue, plenty of these stay to live in the city. Also 60% of gig-goers come from outside Derby, making the Vic an attraction for commerce to the city."

Amongst bands to have started at the Vic are Snow Patrol (three times), David Gray (pictured at the Vic in 1999), Futureheads, the Libertines, Kasebean and Funeral for a Friend.

Okeover Arms Mappleton, Near Ashbourne



Excellent food using the very best
local Peak District produce
Range of cask-conditioned beers
and extensive wine list
01335 350305



Young bands also play here nightly, including under-18s at this planet-friendly venue.

The editor enjoys it as a place where old punks can meet for a beer - there is always juggled real ale: Bass with guests such as Summer Lightning.

So if you wish to see this great venue continue get on the Vic website and sign the petition now at www.thevicinn.co.uk