

Derby Drinker

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SPRING 2003

FREE

Smithfield is Derby CAMRA Pub of the Year

THE SMITHFIELD is Derby CAMRA Pub of the Year 2003. The Meadow Road inn beat off strong competition but is a popular and well deserved winner as the quality of its ale has been consistently superb. Ockbrook's Royal Oak takes the Branch Country Pub Award.



Beers that feature here regularly are from Outlaw, Leatherbritches, Whim, Oakham

and Phoenix Arizona, only available in nines and often rapidly running out. London Pride and Bass compliment these as mainstays also. The food is tremendous

and Phoenix Arizona, only available in nines and often rapidly running out. London Pride and Bass compliment these as mainstays also. The food is tremendous

There is a cosy back bar with a large mirror, a stone fireplace with wooden settles and some rams horns on the walls. The pub gets very crowded on match days such is its proximity to Pride Park. The large bowed bar is adorned with rare late 1960s colour views of the area, showing how isolated the pub has become since the ring road developments of the 1970s, when the pub was at the heart of both Cattle and Wholesale Markets and the bridge over the Derwent linked it to the Morledge area.

Towards the river is a patio and summer Saturday's see live



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music at the Smithfield. and the annual Guy Fawkes Night bonfire has become a traditional favourite.

All in all congratulations are due to Roger and Penny Myring for the super job they are doing in running one of the best real ale pubs for many a mile.

The 2nd Derby Winter-Fest proved another hit at the Assembly Rooms in February as 3,650 people downed a total of 14,276 pints of quality Real Ale over the four-day event.

Leadmill Brewery Tap opens at Denby

You could almost imagine that you had been transported back in time as you enter the Old Stables Bar in Denby. Old chairs stand near to scrubbed tables and sawdust is liberally scattered on the floors, I lost a handful of loose change that fell from my hand. This is the brewery tap of the Leadmill Brewery, opened just this year in a former stable opposite the brewery.

It is a very atmospheric bar with a high beamed ceiling, old beer signs, notices and coloured lights around the bar. The only aspect of this that makes the bar quite different from its counterparts in the good old days is the beer range. No bar in my memory ever offered 12 of its own beers on handpump all at the affordable price of £1.50 a pint. The beer is efficiently pulled by Richard Creighton and his sister Tracey (see picture), who also brew the amber delights. They only open Friday to Sunday at the moment as this is as much as their dual roles permit.

Richard established the brewery in 1999 in a converted pigsty, relocating to larger premises at Denby in 2001. In keeping with the agricultural theme these premises are a former stables block, if the brewery expands further still perhaps we will see a brewery sited in a former battery hen shed! The Stables has proved popular with both locals and parties of customers and CAMRA beer tasters. Both Richard and Tracey enjoy the social side of running the bar as a change from the



fairly solitary brewing part of their business. The beer range is quite extraordinary, a rotating selection from the Leadmill portfolio. On our visit in March there were 12 beers on handpump ranging from the low gravity, dry, single-hopped **Ingot** 3.6%, **Wild Weasel**, pale and straw coloured 3.9% to **Park Hall Porter** a 6% classic dark ale with

a tart chocolate finish. Some of the beer names have a 1960s Vietnam feeling to them - **Apocalypse Now**, **Saigon**, **B52** and even **Agent Orange**. These reflect Richard's early life in the far east rather than any affiliation to the military might of the USA. He feels that the B52, a fruity 5.2% beer may have to be rested during the current conflict in Iraq as the other B52 is now on active service.

A visit to the Old Stables Bar is an enjoyable experience. It has a unique atmosphere and the vast range of cheap ale. remember presently it is only open weekends, Fri from 5pm and all day Sat/Sun from noon. It feels way out in the countryside but in fact is only a short drive or bus ride from Derby. It might be an appropriate venue for the first CAMRA nativity play at Xmas, and there would be plenty of wise men to choose from!

Les Baynton

Festival fun in Amber Valley

The festive season may be behind us now but, in Amber Valley at least, the festival season is just about to start, with several pub beer festivals to look forward to in the next few months.

First up are the Midland Hotel, Nottingham Road, Ripley and the Wheel, Chapel Street, Holbrook, who are both staging festivals at Easter, April 18-21. The one at the **Midland**, recently reopened under that name after many years of masquerading under other names, will feature 12 beers with a special from Leadmill Brewery and will be held in the upstairs function room at the pub. Food and entertainment will be on offer along with a commemorative festival glass and the opening hours will be 11am-midnight. This is the first pub festival in Ripley for a few years, apart from the Wetherspoons ones, so it is well worth supporting.

Also at Easter the **Wheel**, Holbrook is holding a festival again running from the 18th-21st. Along with the 20+ beers, which will be on sale at £1 half/£2 pint and will feature breweries from the length and breadth of Britain, there will be entertainment laid on as well as food, including outdoor barbecue. The **Wheel** is a *Good Beer Guide* regular known for quality beer so this is another event worthy of support.

Next up are the **Queens Head**, Belper, who are holding another of their regular themed beer festivals from the 6th-8th of June.

Dunkirk spirit returning

Down in King Alfred Street, Derby the **Dunkirk Tavern** is a real ale gain. Pedigree has been restored with a guest beer, initially mainstream also on the bar. More adventurous choices could follow, but, as with other recent examples, it could be a case of support it or lose it.

There will be at least 15 beers and the theme will be religion so perhaps we can see it as a holy duty to visit the GBG regular for spirit(ual) refreshment. Once again entertainment as well as top quality beer is on the menu. The week after the **Queens Head**, the **Cross Keys** is holding its first festival on June 13-15 with 20 beers from around Britain plus cider, and entertainment every evening. This is another event well worth attending at a pub that, having been boarded up and closed just a couple of years ago, has been refurbished and revitalised since being bought by Bateman's, whose beers will feature at the festival.

So, with at least 4 beer festivals coming soon, real ale fans in Amber Valley have much to look forward to. If there are any other festivals not mentioned in my article, my apologies - I wish you every success. Cheers!

Trevor Spencer

Dead Poets latest Everards signing

Following on from the acquisition of the Brunswick, Everards have further strengthened their squad locally by purchasing the **Dead Poets Inn** at Holbrook, built up into one of our best free houses over the last half decade by Dave Brown and his team. The pub was floundering as the Cross Keys before its transformation and it is a past winner of the Branch Pub of the Year award. Everards have gone on record as saying they do not intend any drastic changes and will be happy to maintain its current and very successful style.

A Derby Drinker reader looks back on the halcyon days of buying your round

When I look back on my formative years and my introduction to pub drinking, it is not the quality of the ale or the seemingly random availability of good Guinness that I fondly compare with today. Nor is it the memories of local pubs with pot-bellied landlords and apron clad landladies that, immediately strikes my nostalgia button. It is the cast iron, handed down tradition of "paying yer way".

Before I had even set foot in a pub I can remember hearing my Dad and his drinking pals talking about men they knew from their local, saying things like "He's never done a days work in his life but he always stands his round" or "He did get out of National Service but he is always first to that bar". It became ingrained in my soul as if it were the only sure way to heaven.

Later when I started to visit pubs with my older brothers and their friends I would stand amazed, as fights would almost break out between them, fivers were thrust forward to the cry "I'll get these"

I remember once having just enough money on me to buy myself a couple of pints as I was passing by my brother's local. He went mad, I received the severest of reprimands off him for not adhering to family tradition. In fact he still mentions it today and that was twenty-four years ago. The idea of women buying rounds was non-existent and even to this day I feel awkward when a lady opens up the bag, produces the purse and pays for the beer, even though she probably earns more than I do and can drink me under the table. Mind you they still seem to have a problem fetching it from the bar.

Now it seems the sad and yet acceptable case is that when you ask somebody if they want a pint, instead of "No I'll get these" we are too often responded to with, "Yes but I can't buy you one back" or my favourite which is, "It's up to you, I haven't got any money". I often wonder as I walk up to the bar to buy his drink if anybody has ever said, "Oh right, I'll not get you one then".

Martyn Hallam

Top Beer town claim Levelled at Derby

The recent visit of the Levellers to the Assembly Rooms saw a vote of confidence for the city as a beer haven as the band went on a real ale pub crawl of Derby. Lead singer Mark Chadwick was supping in the Flower Pot as little as an hour before taking to the stage. Introducing the boozy lament Just The One he said "This is dedicated to Derby. What I love about this place is that it's a top drinking town with loads of great real ale!" Guitarist Simon Friend, who lived in Derby said in a recent interview "I first started hanging around the bike pubs of Derby like the Old Silk Mill. There are some great pubs up there - a great scene". Simon also did his bit for the area on the night as he sported an Anti-Pasti T-Shirt. Cheers lads.

Beer Baby

A common beer drinker stereotype is of large man with complimentary beer stomach. On the recent Derby Beer Census 10 groups strode out one snowy Friday night. One contained a small lady about nine months pregnant with an enormous bump. I visualised a possible headline "Baby Born on Beer Survey - possible names Kimberley/Timothy T? Tabetha gamely walked to all but one of the pubs, still thankfully carrying baby before a well-earned rest. She and husband Bernard are regulars at the Rowditch and had their tag and hen parties at the Derby Beer Festival, they feel that baby was already familiar with CAMRA activities before it even popped out!

Les Baynton

The Beer Census revealed 110 different real ales from 85 city pubs this year, down 10 on last time but still a pretty good range for a small city.

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THE BAG



ALE

North South East West?

Fellow Derbyshire Beer Drinkers, Lounge Lizards and Barflies,

Over a small aperitif in the New Bridge Inn, Shelton Lock, a question arose during a conversation on the merits of particle physics, as to which pubs are the furthest north, south, east and west plus for good measure highest and lowest above sea level, and with the furthest away from the sea thrown in just to make things difficult!

The criteria being, that they must all be public houses, within the county of Derbyshire. The intention is that these establishments will be visited and their beers sampled, all in the name of charity and the health of our livers of course.

We await the answer as we cannot agree, we haven't a clue really, and therefore would like to throw the question out to your readership.

Steve Gillingham and Mike Hammond
Shelton Lock

Where is the highest pub in Derbyshire? asked Mick. Not the Cat and Fiddle I replied as it is a few yards into Cheshire. So we fired a few suggestions around. Coton-in-the Elms in South Derbyshire is reputed to be England's furthest. village from the sea for that matter.

The southern tip of Derbyshire these days probably leaves us with the Colville Arms at Lullington or the Crickets Inn, Acresford as the deepest south. Years ago however, the county boundary was further south and the Four Counties Inn at No Mans Heath marked the spot where Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire met.

Places such as Appelby Magna, Measham, Edingale, Croxall and Stretton-en-le-Field were all in Derbyshire until about a century ago.

A case for the highest pub in the county has been made for the Barrel Inn at Bretton. Anyway all readers suggestions are welcome here at the Ale Bag.

Anglo-German ale fan at Red Lion

Over in Chellaston a landlord with a colourful past, and a real ale champion, has taken over at the Red Lion. Peter Harker moved in early March and immediately installed Black Sheep Bitter and Speckled Hen alongside Bass and Pedigree in this serious drinkers pub. He hopes to run a beer festival in summer and is staging an all-day St Georges Day celebration (with Bombardier) in April.

Peter has a cask ale track record. He was landlord of the Tom Hoskins in Leicester, the Hoskins brewery tap, in the mid 1980s and co-founder with Chris Freer, of the Tom Hoskins Institute of Suppers and Tasters (ask him about it!).

His uncle owned the Big Lamp brewery near Newcastle Upon Tyne and Peter used to help out with the brewing there. He has led an interesting life to date, born in Berlin, he last saw his father on the night the Wall was being erected when the Stazi knocked at the door and took him away.

His mother subsequently remarried an RAF man and they moved to Scotland where Pete learned to speak English. He's been a para, a copper and joined the Foreign Legion for 5 years as well as running many pubs.

A master of dialect Peter delights in recounting the tale of reprimanding a German customer at his last pub in Syston., for ordering a Guinness and a whisky. In fluent German Peter said "What are you doing, you've come to England and ordered an

Irish pint and a Scottish short, what's wrong with English ale?" The chap spent the rest of the evening supping Tiger Bitter!

NEWS

The Old Oak, Horsley Woodhouse is under threat of demolition if planning permission goes ahead to erect three houses. A new licensee is in place at Lafferty's in Iron Gate. Wetherspoons have purchased Harvey's Cafe Bar in King Alfred Street, Alfreton. The new name for the pub is the Henry Morewood. There is a change of licensee at the Station, Kilburn and planning applications are in for the Buck in the Park, Curzon Street. The latter involves altering the frontage, there is a train of thought which thinks that it cannot get any worse but we will wait and see. Leadmill have a couple of new outlets for their ales, they are the Seven Stars at Belper and the Miners Welfare at Marehay.

Babington plots good value beer from Worcestershire micro



One of Derby's two Wetherspoons pubs has been in fine ale fettle of late. The Babington Arms has a link up the the Wyre Piddle brewery near Pershore, Worcestershire.

The brewery is named after the nearby Wyre Piddle village with the urinary pert derided from the Piddle Brook

which runs through it. Babington landlord Tom Taylor has connections down at the microbrewery and has its beers regularly on at an amazing £1 a pint.

There is Piddle in the Hole 3.9%, Piddle in the Wind 4.8% along with seasonal Piddles, in the Sun and Snow!

There is generally a more interesting range of micro beers on offer here than at most Wetherspoon outlets, on a recent CAMRA social there was Mordue Spring Tyne and Summer-

skill Shamrock Stout and the guest list until 31 May shows a host of independent ales, 59 beers in all.

The Babington is supporting Wetherspoons 'Try before you Buy' initiative with samples always on offer for tasting purposes and full tasting notes available at the pub.

Wetherspoons may not be everyone's jug of beer, but when they get it right, as they have at the Babington, then they are to be warmly acclaimed.

Jan & Steve

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Parched in Patagonia? DD more reliable than telephone or email in South America?

Well it could have been if the timing was right! The editor received an email from Paul Boldison in Rio Gallegos, Argentina with a request to contact his father in one of his Derbyshire haunts. Paul said: "I'm not saying that my old man spends a lot of time in the pubs of Derbyshire, but I thought that this might be a more secure way of contacting him than using the telephone, email or post.

Almost two years ago I moved to Rio Gallegos in Argentinian Patagonia. My father John Boldison, who can usually be found drinking within the Findern-Osmaston-Ripley triangle (*that's a new one on me*), has recently sent me a copy of your publication. I'm unsure of his motives, like most Derbyshire men we're not great ones for speaking one's feelings. Is he trying to tell me something? Could you please find space within your pages to let him know that I'll be returning via Buenos Aires and London on 26th March. If he's in the Brunswick at around 8pm I'll buy him a pint. It will be my first in 724 days (not that I'm counting)."

Unfortunately this edition didn't come out in time to place the advert for John to see but it is most heartening to think that the *Derby Drinker* can, in theory, transcend technology whilst finding its way to the four corners of the globe. Thanks Paul.

Festivals at Clock, Ashby Court

There is a Spring Fest at the **Clock Inn**, South Normanton. It takes place from 16th-18th May. As with Clocktoberfest there will be some great beers and great entertainment. Bryan Mills has been pencilled in for a solo set on the Friday night, Wyld Wood, acoustic covers plus some own material feature Saturday and the Clock Inn All Stars for Sunday lunch time. Meanwhile Shardlow brewery are holding a beer festival at the **Ashby Court Hotel**, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with 40 beers from 19/22 June. More details in the summer issue of *Derby Drinker*.

Queens Head Chesterfield Road Belper

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plus up to five guest ales
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50 not out for Olive

Olive Wilson at the Royal Oak, Ockbrook celebrates 50 years at the pub in April. The Oak has just been voted Derby CAMRA Country Pub of the Year and its landlady is one of the very few these days which has that record of continuity. The pub is all the better for it too. Congratulations Olive on your half century!

Join CAMRA Now

APPLICATION FORM

I/We wish to join the *Campaign for Real Ale Limited* and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association. I enclose a cheque for £..... Rates are Single £16, Joint £19, OAP/Unwaged/Under-26 £9 (£12 joint), Overseas £20 (£23 joint). If Under-26 please add date of birth: ... / ... / ...

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Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Ltd) with this completed application form to: Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW

Derby Drinker



Vanished pubs of Derby

9. Nottingham Castle, St Michael's Lane

One sorry, if not the saddest stories of pub vandalism in the name of urban redevelopment in Derby's much-scarred history in the 1960's. The Nottingham Castle stood on St Michael's Lane with a frontage on



Queen Street, which in its last years were the public bars. Its loss as a pub and also as a building that could have been a tourist attraction in its own right, is a tragedy.

It was described in Maskell & Gregory's *Old Country Inns* (1910) as follows: "There is a very old brew house at Derby at the Nottingham Castle Inn into which any passer-by may step from the street to see twice a week a huge cauldron containing about 120 gallons bubbling and foaming in the corner. This brew house dates from the 16th century and is one of the oldest buildings in the town."

There is documentary evidence dating it from 1550 but latterly the public bars were on the Queen Street frontage, added by the early 18th century. In 1915 the landlord was William Brightwell, who was succeeded by Wm Henry Martin. The inn was kept and owned in later times by a branch of the Groome family. John Groome from 1923-1942 and Harry (1942-61). Alfred was the brewer. It was the headquarters of Derby Sketching Club. The pub, which was an interesting, if run down place at the end, closed on 14 July 1961 and demolished in 1962. The land was used as a car-park for over 20 years.

Civic indifference to its demise would surely never happen today (although you never know) and adjacent to it was the Old Eagle & Child, another characterful home-brew house and the Lamb also nestled in St Alkmund's Church Yard. None survive, victims of the inner ring road like the church and the rest of its square.

Thanks once again are due to Jok Arguile for his painstaking research into the subject.

*From the team that brought you the
Flower Pot*

The Smithfield Meadow Road

on the banks
of the Derwent

DERBY CAMRA PUB OF
THE YEAR 2003

Quarter mile from Railway Station
Quarter mile from Market Place

Drinker

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