



# Solihull BORO BANTER



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'Camelot Restaurant'

## THE NAG'S HEAD

Stratford Road  
Hockley Heath  
Solihull, West Midlands

Telephone: Lapworth 2095

George & Connie Powell

### 1984 GOOD BEER GUIDE

Hot off the press is the eleventh edition of Britains best Beer book. Others may have pub guides but the Good Beer Guide concerns itself with virtually guaranteeing its readers excellent "Traditional Ale" wherever they go. 5000 plus pubs are described with details of opening times, facilities i.e. gardens and childrens rooms, and of course the range of beers and how they are dispensed. Each pub is painstakingly surveyed, not just once but several times during the year to ensure accuracy, though sometimes due to change of landlord certain details may be inaccurate but such occurrences are rare. Every county in the U.K. is listed including Ireland and accurate maps are provided. Detailed information about every Brewery, big and small, is included, making this the only pub guide you will ever want (until next years GBG appears of course.) Britains original and best beer book is available from your bookseller early February, or today from the Branch. Dont be without yours. Contact David Queenborough on 744 3113.

### CAMPAIGN CORNER - ITS FROTHY MAN

The continuing saga of whether the head should be included in the measure or not - goes on. The West Midlands County Council has recently introduced a beer mat with a "dipstick" to put alongside your glass reading something like "do you need a top up" or "do you need a trading standards officer". One could argue for hours on the subject, but lets look at the implications should the law demand a full pint of liquid and the head above.

Firstly, most pubs use actual pint-sized glasses. These would have to go, as it is impossible to put a good head with a full pint of beer. Over-sized glasses would have to be used - thus your beer would have to go up in price to pay for the new glasses. Secondly, most houses have either free-flow or handpull dispensers. Breweries would insist on using metered pumps to dispense the beer into over-size glasses other wise too much beer will be served. The demise of the handpull would be sad, the expense of the conversion would again pass on to us, the consumer. The alternative is to use diaphragm dispensers as used by Banks and Robinsons, which meter out  $\frac{1}{2}$  pints through a visible glass cylinder on the bar. But still they cost money. Surely, the only solution is to just ask for a top-up. A short measure isn't usually deliberate and no landlord worth his salt would refuse a top-up. If in the unlikely event he did, well, then consult a trading standards officer.

**THINK OF A PUB** with a choice of 19 beers on draught

**THINK OF A STORE** with a selection of 150-plus bottle and canned beers

**THINK OF AN OFF-LICENCE** that sells spirits, sherry, port and cider on draught

**THINK OF AN OUTDOOR** that stocks 120 varieties of wine.

**YOU CAN'T ? ? ? ?**

# BERNIES

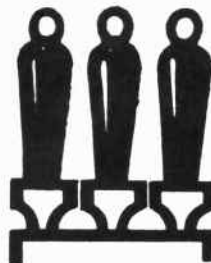
BIRMINGHAM'S No. 1

## Real Ale Off Licence

*We have got the lot, all to enjoy in the comfort of your own home  
Containers supplied from pints to gallons.*

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HARBORNE TEL: 021-427 5796

266, CRANMORE BOULEVARD,  
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39p PER PINT**

Woods Old  
Aston Manor  
Bathams Bitter  
Pendlewitch.  
Bridge Bitter

## Bluebell Inn

Colin & Ann  
Squires

93 HIGH STREET HENLEY IN ARDEN  
WARWICKSHIRE

Telephone 05642-2646



### BLACKPOOL BOOZE-UP

This was one weekend social when everything went exactly to plan. It was a shame only a few could make the trip, we really did have a great time. The first pub crawl was on the Saturday lunchtime, around Lancaster. This is quite a privileged town with 2 excellent breweries, both firmly committed to real ale. Mitchels Mild, Bitter and Special were sampled by us all and next came Yates and Jacksons Mild and Bitter. These are both dry, hoppy and tasty beers and we preferred them slightly to the Mitchels. Before leaving the town, we visited the Wagon and Horses, the only Hartleys pub in town. It was reasonable beer but not the same Hartleys I used to drink a few years ago. Apparently Robinsons of Stockport, the new owners,

are starting to interfere with Hartleys pubs and beers which is a great shame. During Saturday afternoon, we drove to Blackpool and found a convenient and central B&B house. After a good meal we felt ready for a quick walk along the prom. The first pub of the night was on the sea front and served excellent Thwaites Mild and Bitter. Next came Sam Smiths at the Bispham Hotel and this was where we met some of the Blackpool branch members. The rest of their lads were several miles away in a Tetley pub and getting there was a unique experience. Eight of us squeezed into an old Ford van and it was so cramped and uncomfortable that we didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Before arriving the aerial was almost torn off going under a low obstacle and then we went over a massive boulder that almost tore the

heart out of the van. Finally, we arrived in one piece and tried some disappointingly tasteless Tetley Bitter. The beer improved at the next pub (Castle Eden, Hartley and Traditional Trophy) but unfortunately it was a fun pub. After fighting our way past the bouncer and posers we found a quiet part of the pub to sit down, and decided it wasn't too bad, as long as we were only going to be there about 5 minutes. The next pub on our guided pub crawl was a cracker. Higsons Mild and Bitter, plus draught Bass in a characterful, unmodernized multi-roomed pub. There were 2 more pubs to visit and time was getting on so we had to rush off quicker than we would have liked. Mathew Brown Mild and Bitter were sampled in a fairly smart pub and the bitter was much the tastier. The last pub in our "inter-branch hostelry evaluation evening" was the Empress (Thwaites) and this Victorian multi-roomed hotel seemed to be an excellent way to finish a really good night out.

On Sunday morning the settled weather came to an abrupt end, as we had a ride on a tram and had a quick walk around the pleasure beach, the sky was heavy with cloud and the wind raged in from the sea. - Typical Blackpool weather. A comfortable shelter was provided by a local football social club in Fleetwood. We were invited there by Steve Crane, who is the branch secretary, because of an unusual Mild on sale. It was called Blackpool Best Mild and is brewed at Tadcaster. It was a dark and very tasty beer but unfortunately it is only available in 4 clubs in the Blackpool area. Bass refuse to make it more widely available and don't even give it any publicity in the clubs where it is sold. There wasn't even a pump clip on the handpull! I suppose they have to put more ingredients into it, making it more expensive to brew than its main competitor, Bass 4X mild. Steve said his wife might like to meet us so we left the club and moved down to the Fleetwood Arms. This dockside Higsons pub sold superb beer and positively oozed character from every pore. In here Steve's wife invited us all back for lunch and this typified the friendliness of all the Blackpool branch. They really were a great bunch of people.

## Drawbridge Inn

MAJORS GREEN SHIRLEY  
TEL: 021-474 5904



**A VARIED MENU IS AVAILABLE — MONDAY TO SATURDAY**

**12.00-2.00 p.m. AND 6.00-8.15 p.m.**

**COLD TABLE EVERY WEEKDAY LUNCHTIMES**

**CHEFS SPECIAL AVAILABLE DAILY**

*Patio overlooking Birmingham — Stratford Canal.*

After a quick soaking on the storm lashed front (it was quite exhilarating really) we headed for home, but not without a brief detour to Eccles on the edge of Manchester. This town is a true mecca for beer drinkers with its many unspoilt, traditional pubs and 20-plus beers available in a half mile walk. We popped into the Duke of York, an excellent Whitbread pub that sells real cider, Pedigree, Thwaites, Timothy Taylors Golden Best Landlord and Porter, plus Whitbread Chesters beers, all in perfect condition. However, the real highlight of the holiday was the other pub we visited in Eccles, the Lamb. This sells wonderful Holts beers and is an awe-inspiring unchanged Victorian gem. Beautiful etched glass doors and windows greet you every where, as does the superbly carved mahogany door and window frames. The island bar is surrounded by lounges, snugs, bars, a snooker room and these are connected by a semi-circular hall, which is almost a room in itself. Most of these are lavishly decorated with glazed tiles which weave lovely patterns everywhere. No pub exists like this in Solihull - more's the pity, because they used to. The big brewers will certainly have a lot to answer for, come the day of judgement.

#### CAMPAIGN CORNER

##### THE BRITISH "BOOZER" UNDER THREAT

The Host Group - Watney's new-look "managed house sector" has drawn up controversial plans to change the identity of its houses. Thankfully, Watneys - once known as Gromey's - CAMRA's public enemy No. 1 because of its old Red theme, don't own any pubs in our area so their plans will not directly affect us. However, it is likely other brewers will follow in the destruction of the British pub, the envy of the world. Basically the Pub as we now know it, is a social centre designed to attract virtually every one - pub games, food good ale and conversation. The Host Group plans are to develop each pub to a specific theme i.e. "The Ethnic Theme Pub", "The Pub Shop" - to hit back at off-licences, "Slots of Fun" - entertainment all day,


VERNON CLEAVER  
INVITES YOU TO SAMPLE  
FINE TRADITIONAL BEERS & CIDERS  
AT THE

# Three Tuns Inn

HENLEY IN ARDEN

TRADITIONAL

MILD



BITTER

ALSO

## TETLEY BITTER

## IND COOPE BURTON ALE

DRAUGHT CIDER  
FROM

## GAYMER'S & BULMER'S

LARGE SELECTION OF BAR SNACKS—HOT & COLD

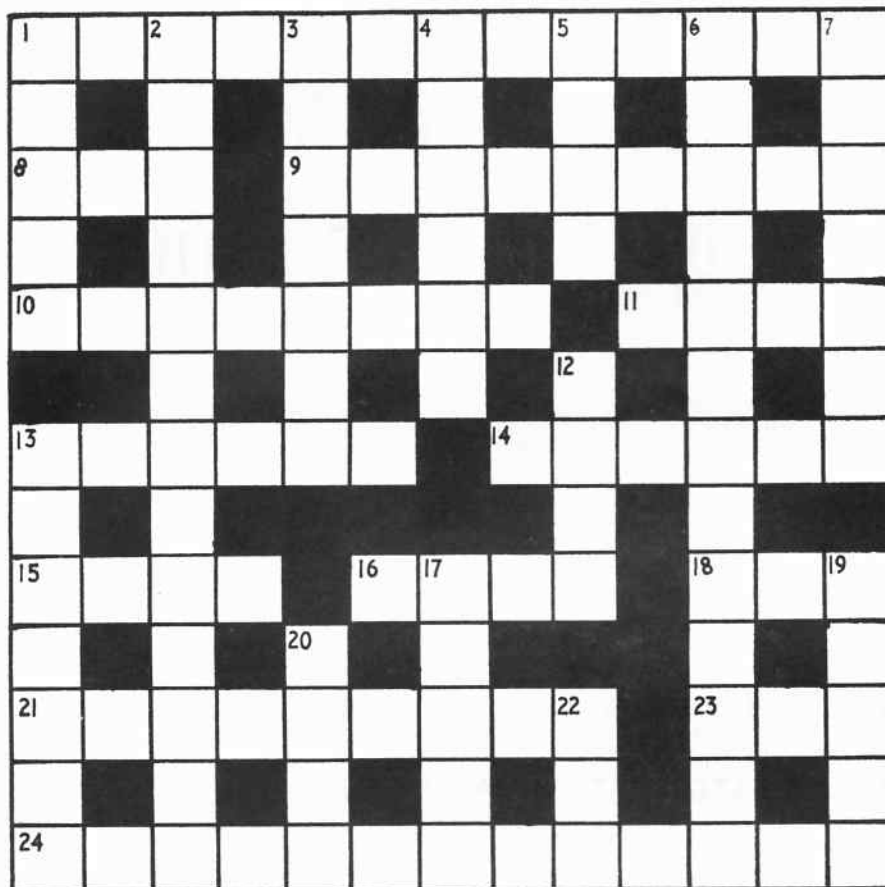
PRIVATE PARTIES CATERED FOR IN OUR  
DELIGHTFUL UPSTAIRS ROOM

and "Drive Inns" - fast food for the motorist etc. Each of these themes has been developed with a particular customer in mind, and the changes to the pubs will be the most radical in history. A press release from the Host Group explained how they see hundreds of pubs changing in the next few years - "Packed with kids entranced by computerised puppets, or full of young people enjoying the exuberance of Manhattan life-style." With our pubs now being treated purely as profit centres, instead of social centres, these plans raise grave doubts about the future of the public house. It is open to doubt whether following "fads" will bring regular custom. The pseudo-American themes are odd, for the trend in America is toward the traditional pub we treasure in Britain. Some Open House centres will be open all day, which is sure to show up the stupidity of our licensing laws, when afternoon revellers will be told "please stay on, but no more drinks allowed." A £100m investment is being channelled directly into the pubs and not going into advertising. If the traditional pub had received such direct investment in the past, then it is doubtful there would be the current tail-off in pub going - or the need for such gimmickry.

##### THE THREE TUNS - HENLEY-IN-ARDEN

Just looking at the smart new hanging sign outside the Tuns should be enough to tempt you back inside this cosy pub which not only has new ownership, but has been tidied up considerably, back to its former glory of a few years ago. Out went all the old kitchen equipment: out went all the beer pipes and the taps at both ends, reconditioned, and out went the Wiltshire Bitter, which in the writers opinion was not worth "importing" from the south of the land. In comes Burton Ale, together with Tetley Bitter from Warrington and Ansell's Mild and Bitter. Real cider is available once again from Bulmers and served straight from the barrel. The upstairs restaurant, once a famous feature of the Tuns, should be in full swing again, at the time of printing, and also a selection of bar snacks. The new licensee, Vernon Cleaver, took the pub over late last year after an absence from the licenced trade of many years, and is keen to give his clientele drinks of a high standard in pleasant surroundings. On many visits to the pub I found the ale to be of that high standard, could this be a candidate for CAMRA'S 1985 Good Beer Guide?





#### BRANCH DIARY

Sunday 15th January - Lunchtime social at the New Lodge and Prince of Wales, both in Solihull Lodge. There should be 7 different draught ales between the two pubs. Be at the Lodge around 12.30

#### CLUES ACROSS

- 1/ Grammatical paper name (4, 2, 7)  
 8/ What beer does to a dry throat (3)  
 9/ John's or Sam's hostelry (6, 3)  
 10/ Reps post (anag) bungs (8)  
 11/ Beer drinkers fixation (4)  
 13/ Who brews at Burton (4, 2)  
 14/ Southwold brewery (6)

- 15/ Morrells Light Ale -  
 ".....but refreshing"(82 GBG)(4)  
 16/ Old or white, ma knows  
 best (4)  
 18/ One is not enough (3)  
 21/ Mels Litch (anag) Lancashire  
 brewers (9)  
 23/ Frenchmans response to offer of  
 a pint (3)  
 24/ Bitter taste from French street  
 in East Anglia (7, 6)

#### DOWN

- 1/ You can't see the brewers for the  
 trees (5)  
 2/ Resurrection beer (7, 6)  
 3/ Keg beer? (7)  
 4/ Pleasant or foul accompaniments  
 to a pint? (6)  
 5/ Sound from the past, in the  
 cellar (4)  
 6/ Russian courage (8, 5)  
 7/ Sounds of a West Yorkshire  
 brewery (7)  
 12/ First castle in Durham (4)  
 13/ Name tab (anag) brewer (7)  
 17/ Debtor brewer (5)  
 19/ Almost in the neck but not down  
 the throat (5)  
 20/ Not much real ale in this land (4)  
 22/ Nail, .... ocean? (3)

#### PUB NEWS

The Black Swan, Henley-In-Arden, no longer sells Davenports Traditional Mild. This is because sales of this pleasant Mild dropped to an uneconomic level and it was thought better to sell a consistent pint of keg Drum Mild than sell sour Cask Mild. Still, if enough people ask for it, no doubt the real thing would come back.

#### BEER AND SKITTLES

A return match against Sutton and Tamworth, and an invitation extended to the Coventry Branch saw a motley crew of about 30 turn up at the Engine, Hampton-in-Arden at the end of November. Unfortunately, Solihull was thrashed again, Coventry taking first place followed by Sutton and Tamworth. Solihull can take some comfort in that local members had to supplement the Coventry team. Congratulations also go to Peter Jackson, in winning the singles skittles match. Thanks must also be given to M&B for arranging the skittle alley for use during the evening, and to Martin McKeown for the kind hospitality.

## The new Lodge

With smart new decor, an enthusiastic new host, a new kitchen to serve up hot and cold food and a whole new range of cocktails (guaranteed to hot up any evening) - you'll hardly recognise the old place!

In fact, we've made so many improvements to The Lodge that we thought it deserved the addition of NEW to the name. Call in and see for yourself. Get a lunchtime taste for our steak, chicken or scampi with fries; cold buffet; and generous sandwiches. (The prices are as appetising as the food.) And help it down with a pint of traditional ale.

On the other hand, make a night of it in our lively lounge - offering atmosphere and entertainment that will be music to your ears! Either way, or both, we're sure you'll soon turn our new Lodge into an old favourite.

*Ansell's*

Yardley Wood Road,  
 Solihull Lodge.

