



BORO BANTER



ISSUE No. 38

APRIL 1988

The new Lodge

**Yardley Wood Road,
Solihull Lodge.**



Ansell's

**ENJOY TRADITIONAL
BEER AT IT'S BEST.**



**BREWERY CLOSURES
GATHER MOMENTUM**

Boddingtons of Manchester are the latest brewery to wield the axe with the recently announced news that their subsidiary Oldham Brewery will shut for good in April. Oldham was taken over in 1982 and even though Boddingtons gave an assurance they would keep them open for at least five years, CAMRA warned that closure would come eventually. Unfortunately we have been proved right again. The two traditional Oldham beers, Mild and Bitter, will now be brewed at Boddingtons Strangeways Brewery, although whether they will taste the same or will last for long remains to be seen.

Northern branches of CAMRA in particular are very upset at the way Boddingtons have behaved. They have given the brewery good support in recent years especially when predators such as national breweries have been on the warpath. Yet until recently, Boddies were even threatening CAMRA members with libel action who said Oldham was due to close. Bearing this in mind, plus their takeovers (Oldham and Higsons), introduction of keg beer, high prices and diversification into hotels and restaurants the "Body Snatchers" seem to be acting like the national brewers themselves.



**BACKING BRITAIN'S
INDEPENDENTS**

CAMRA's Big Seven in 1987 campaign was a concerted co-ordinated year-long attack on Britain's national breweries. It high-lighted their grip and domination of pubs and brewing in the U.K. such as large tied estates, pub closures, brewery takeovers and swamping us with lager.

1988 will be the year of the independent breweries and CAMRA branches up and down the country will be trying to encourage and promote the best of the smaller and regional companies. Obviously they have got to be viable businesses but they usually look after the interests of their customers more than any national would. Their beers tend to be distinctive in accordance with local tastes, in marked contrast to the bland, standardised national beers such as Websters Yorkshire Bitter.

Without the comfort and security of large tied pub estates small breweries HAVE to provide better beers and service just to survive. Many are not given a fair chance to do so, however, as true free houses are disappearing at an alarming rate. The "big boys" are either buying them up for enormous sums of money or offering free house owners low interest or even non-repayable loans in return to being tied to their beers. Many excellent new breweries have gone bankrupt as a result of these practices, many wonderful beers lost for ever. Our campaign to Back Britain's Independents hopes to slow down or reverse this trend.



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Oyez Oyez...



SMALL BREWERY GOES
FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



This being CAMRA's year of the Independent Breweries, Hoskin and Oldfield is an ideal brewery to look at to see just how good the smaller, local companies are, and also what there is worth saving! Two brothers helped set up this Leicester based firm after their original brewery was sold up a few years ago.

Their outlets are expanding across the country now, from London to Newcastle, as more agencies are stocking their ales. This expansion is not because of any great promotional gimmick or advertising campaign of the type required to sell lager. It is because of their excellent varied range of superb beers sold at reasonable prices. HOB is a clean tasting and refreshing best bitter, while Little Matty is a darker version. EXS is a strong, full bodied bitter (og 1050) with a much hoppier bite than many sweet strong ales. Much heavier and darker is Old Navigation (1071) and at Christmas a very strong winter ale called Christmas Noggin is produced.

However, the most unusual and possibly the most distinctive beer is the recently launched Tom Kelly's Stout (1043). Almost black in colour, this superior ale has a lovely thick rich, smooth body but it leaves you with a delicious well hopped bite! Beer connoisseurs mourning the sad loss of Strathalbyn Beardmore stout ought to seek this one out, it is almost as good! With a Mild in the pipeline, it is a pity the beers of all breweries are not as worthwhile seeking out, as those from Hoskin and Oldfield are!

"Why not advertise in
the Boro Banter?"

Circulation 500 copies
Distributed free throughout the
local pubs in the Solihull area.

Charges - 4 1/2 x 4 1/2 £12-00 per issue
4 1/2 x 2 1/2 £6-00 per issue
Contact - B. Queenborough on
021-744 3113

TRouble AT CHEQUERS



The building of the new M & B pub on the Monkspath estate, close to Solihull town centre, is bringing about complaints from various quarters. Local residents are worried about noise and disturbance and possible drunken behaviour. They tried to block planning permission but failed after Mitchells & Butlers appealed to the Secretary of State for the Environment. When work began on the site, there were running battles between developers and residents. There was more trouble when the Mayor of Solihull was invited to attend an official ceremony at the pub site. He accepted the invitation but Shirley councillors said he should not go as this would be an insult to the local residents. The Solihull branch of CAMRA are not against the principle of more pubs but would prefer it, if this was not yet another M & B one. We would like to see other breweries allowed into areas where choice is desperately limited. We know a certain amount of wheeling and dealing goes on, for example a man who gave evidence in favour of granting the pub licence was found out to be a director of the company building the pub!

CAMRA NATIONAL AGM, 1988

Annual General Meetings can be dull and boring. True maybe but not in the case of CAMRA. There is nothing like discussion on beer to get people debating!

This year's AGM will take place at Birmingham University over the weekend of April 16-17 and promises to be a lively forum of debate over the future direction of CAMRA to the forefront of which will be mergers, takeovers and the Good Beer Guide format..... and after a hard day's debating what better than to attend the on site Beer Festival featuring the best of West Midland beers and a few surprises! The Festival is open on Friday evening, Saturday lunch and evening and Sunday lunch.

Only CAMRA members can attend the Beer Festival and vote at the AGM so if you plan to go take your membership card with you, and if you wish to participate join CAMRA NOW

For further information on the AGM phone CAMRA H.Q.
0107 67201/1

NEW G B G EDITOR



The Good Beer Guide was in the national news recently when a new editor was appointed. Andrea Gillies becomes the first lady in charge, replacing Neil Hanson after his four year stint. She is a professional writer with a great interest in promoting real ale and halting the decline of our traditional brewing heritage. Jill Adams remains deputy editor so between them they hope to cancel a few sexist views and show the way for feminine beer drinkers!

The Bulls Head

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Colin & Michelle Marlow welcome you to

- *A friendly country pub atmosphere
- *Home cooked pub meals
- *Outside garden area
- *Real fires on cold evenings
- *Traditional cask conditioned ales
- *Ansells Mild & Bitter
- *Burton Ale
- *Traditional Coates Cider



BURTON ALE

BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT

Last month's social was an excellent pub crawl of The Black Country. A mini-bus was laid on so no one had to worry about drinking and driving when we visited three interesting and varied hostelrys. First port of call was Holt's Brewery Inn near Oldbury. Behind this comfortable pub (and visible through an observation window) is the brewery of Holt, Plant and Deakin. The superb, tasty Holts Entire was enjoyed in the pub along with Warrington (Tetley Walker) brewed Holts Mild and Bitter. Our second pub was even better, The Beacon at Sedgley, home of the Sarah Hughes Brewery. This cosy traditional pub has been lovingly restored to its former glory and in addition to two M & B beers and several guest beers, is their own Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild. This superior strong ale (og 1058) is a revival of a one hundred year old recipe and it is brewed in a renovated old brewery at the back of the pub. We were treated to an impromptu tour of this and thanks must be extended to John Hughes, the owner, for his kind invitation. Our final destination was the Pie Factory in Tipton. This is a recent addition to the chain owned by the Little Pub Company, famed for their Desperate Dan Cow pies. They are semi-tied to Allied

Drawbridge Inn

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ALAN & JANET



A VARIED MENU IS AVAILABLE — MONDAY TO SATURDAY

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COLD TABLE EVERY WEEKDAY LUNCHTIMES

CHEFS SPECIAL AVAILABLE DAILY

Patio overlooking Birmingham - Stratford Canal.

GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED

Breweries through loans so the beers are the usual products such as Tetley and Burton Ale plus Lumphamer. This is specially brewed at Burton on Trent only for The Little Pub Company. Entertainment was provided in the form of a popular local jazz band, The Artesian Hall Stompers. They went down very well and ensured everyone went home well satisfied with the evening's activities.

During Recent M & B Beer Delivery strike: Solihull pub

1st Lad "Two pints of Carling please".....

Barmaid "Sorry, got no lager, only Mild and Bitter".....

2nd Lad "I don't like Mild".....

Barmaid "Well lads?".....

1st Lad "I don't like Bitter either".....

Barmaid "Make your mind up please, I've other customers to serve. Mild, or Bitter; its only beer after all. Or can't you handle the proper stuff?"

Landlord (passes glass of beer to customer) "Looks like rain"

Customer (Tastes beer, pulls a face) "Aye, tastes like it too!"

Customer to barmaid in Davenports Pub.....

"A pint of your Continental Lager please, good lager this, better than most - you can't beat the good foreign stuff"..... (and imported all the way from Holloway Head Brewery in Brum!).

Red Lion Hotel

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* WEDDING RECEPTIONS
* PRIVATE FUNCTIONS

★ GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED ★

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SOLIHULL CAMRA'S PUB OF THE YEAR 1987

END OF AN ERA IN WEM



Despite avigorous, well organised campaign, Greenall Whitley went ahead last month with their planned shut-down of The Wem Brewery in Shropshire. It has been in operation for 200 years and many local residents including councillors and the Mayor joined CAMRA in condemning Greenall's heartless act of butchery. Apart from being a major employer in the area, the availability of the beer across much of the Midlands effectively put the town of Wem on the map. The brewery was successful and profitable which makes its closure even more hard to bear. Greenalls had little respect for the wishes of the local community. Months of campaigning against them was like banging your head against

a brick wall. They wouldn't listen, They wouldn't even talk. Just before the planned final brew, on February 10th, there was an impressive demonstration through the streets of Wem by over 300 people. They were local residents and beer drinkers from points as far apart as Newcastle and Southampton. The marchers were addressed by local town councillors who attacked Greenall Whitley. The Deputy Mayor even said that it might be beneficial if the Board of Directors contained people like Mickey Mouse, Goofy and Donald Duck! The only good thing to come out of all this was the support and friends CAMRA won during our battle. Many Wem drinkers joined up and membership in Shropshire increased by over 30%. All Wem Ales now come from Davenport, another Greenall subsidiary.



CAMRA BACK AT CARNIVAL

Solihull Carnival has had to move site this year and will be held in the grounds of Solihull Technical College, Blossomfield Road on Saturday 4th June. As usual there will be a CAMRA stall from which we hope to sell or give away a wide range of beer-related products and publications. Come and meet us, CAMRA member or not!

BRANCH DIARY

WEDNESDAY 13th APRIL

Branch meeting at THE CASE IS ALTERED, Five Ways, just off the A41 south of Chadwick End. Marvelous unspoilt, traditional pub serving Ansells Mild and Bitter, plus Flowers Original.

TUESDAY 10th MAY Branch Meeting at THE BLACK HORSE, Warwick. A rare foray out of our normal region testing a few unusual beers. This is a free house selling a reasonable, varying range of traditional beers not available in Solihull pubs.

THURSDAY 19th MAY Evening coach trip from Solihull to local brewery. Places limited but see contact for details.

TUESDAY 14th JUNE Branch Meeting at THE SARACENS HEAD, BALSALL COMMON, Nr Kenilworth. This is just over Solihull CAMRA's boundary but is a pleasant old pub, well worth a visit and selling a reasonable range of Allied Breweries beers. Meetings start around 8.30 pm, anyone and everyone welcome!



CONTACTS

If you want any information regarding CAMRA nationally or locally contact Steve Dyson at 79 Walsgrave Drive, Damson Wood, Solihull (021 705 1168) or David Queenborough at 11 Upton Close, Shirley, Solihull. (021 744 3113)

The views expressed in the Boro Banter are intended to inform the general public, in and around Solihull of changes, or happenings, with the ever changing Real Ale and pub scene. They may not necessarily reflect the views of CAMRA nationally.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join the Campaign. Take up the fight. Only £9 a year. Send cheque or P.O. to Campaign for Real Ale Limited, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, AL1 3BW. Marked Membership. Name

Address



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