



SS Solihull & South Bham BORO BANTER



NO 9 MARCH 1983

THE DEMISE OF DAVENPORTS?

As announced early in March, Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries (Banks's & Hansons) have made a £21 million bid for Davenports Brewery.

The implications of this are serious. Davenports is Birmingham's only remaining brewery. They have recently expanded the business, particularly in supermarkets with the introduction of plastic litre bottles, which are selling well. The bottling plant is amongst the most modern in Britain today. Davenports traditional beers are held in high esteem, winning many awards, even for their keg lager. Davenports also have a good trade in clubs with Drum.

Recently W and D have opened two pubs in Shard End and have just taken over the Punch Bowl on the Hagley Road, Edgbaston from Watney's. They make no secret of their desire to move into Birmingham and their latest attempt to build a pub failed.

Bank's and Hanson's beers are welcome in Birmingham but not at the expense of Davenports.

W & D have made the usual assurances of no brewery closure or job losses, but we have heard that tale many times before.

W & D badly need existing pubs to make in-roads in Birmingham, Davenports pubs would give them this.

W & D would like Davenports bottling and canning plant, to further expand into the free trade.

Banks's Keg Lion Mild and Bitter have not made as big an impact on the free trade as liked and Davenports Drum is very successful here.

W & D could dispense with Bath Row Brewery and most of the jobs, as the Park Brewery in Wolverhampton has been recently expanded, and of course, no brewery is running to full capacity these days.

W & D planned takeover would restrict choice. CAMRA is all about choice, and CAMRA will do all it can to prevent this takeover.

DID YOU KNOW?

Davenports Brewery took over Dare's company in the early 60's and shortly after (as follows most takeovers) closed the original brewery down then sited in Belgrave Road, Balsall Heath.

In 1968 ambitious Davvies expanded further by taking over most of the 80 pubs then owned by the Thornley-Kelsey brewery of Leamington who had decided to cease brewing to concentrate on their wine merchants business, so yet another brewery slid into the annals of brewing history. In fact a quiet Ansells back street pub, The Malt Shovel, Coventry St, Digbeth was one of the T-K 'originals' and still has the name KELSEYS embossed in black and white tiling on the floor inside the front door.

The Dares takeover unfortunately killed off what was once deemed a legendary bitter which elder, surviving City drinkers still swear by. MEANWHILE Davvies did inherit Dares recipe for an obnoxious fully kegged beer that became known as ... Drum Bitter!

THE DEMISE OF COURAGE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN/STOUT

This acquired, tasty brew was a thick, rich and very potent drink (OG:1101.8) and conditioned in the bottle which was so unique that it took up to 7 years to mature before it could be bottled. When the West Midlands (Courage) operation was set up recently they stocked up with enough Imperial Stout to carry the division over for the next 42 YEARS on estimated sales.

However, the local clientele (mostly Colonials!) of the Ivy House pub on the Soho Road in Handsworth suddenly 'discovered' it, and it actually replaced their favourite Barley Wine as the 'In-Drink', with the result that the whole of the areas 42 year stock was sold and drunk within TWO YEARS!

Unfortunately, due to the costly and complex brewing of this fine beverage a reliable source of information at

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Courage's informs us that it will never be brewed again, however, some stocks still remain down the Southern areas so if you see some on a shelf somewhere buy it while you can.

THE THREE TUNS, HENLEY-IN-ARDEN

The famous THREE TUNS in Henley changes hands at the end of this month after many years of tennancy by Senor Ramon Cortes.

As Anells Brewery, to which Ramon was a tennant, has raised the yearly rent beyond economic justification, Ramon will be vacating the pub at the end of this month and the old half-timbered pub will become a managed house, probably.

The pub in Henley's pretty High Street has been in the Good Beer Guide for 8 out of 10 years of publication. The beer sold was usually of a high standard and Burton Ale was a recent addition.

The Three Tuns was notable for its food. Upstairs was the busy Restaurant Espanol, serving excellent Spanish food whilst the bar food was arguably the best for miles.

But what of the future?

As a managed house there is no living accommodation - this used to be where the restaurant now is. Regulars fear for a change of character to the pub and maybe a drop in quality of beer or worse still keg. Only time will tell.

Ramon still owns one pub in Henley however, the Golden Cross in the High Street. Good beer and food will continue there. The Cross now sells Burton Ale incidentally, in addition to Anells Mild and Bitter. We wish Senor Cortes good luck for the future.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Campaign as a whole.

PUB NEWS

THE BOAT, CATHERINE DE BARNES

This popular Davenports canalside pub is to have some further alterations to the back room lounge which will become a disco music room, complete with DJ but for listening only and not for dancing. (Shades of the Clock, Bickenhill perhaps?)

However, more important is the fact that REAL mild is to be sold there shortly joining the bitter on the handpump and the front lounge bar is to remain unaltered.

BRANCH DIARY

30 MARCH - 10 Year GBG Presentation and Social Railway, Dorridge.

13 APRIL - Branch Meeting, Red Lion, Knowle.

20 APRIL - Darts/Social, Maid of the Mill, Atherstone against Sutton Branch.

Transport available - phone as below

26 APRIL - Open Committee meeting, Brewer and Baker, Camp Hill, Birmingham.

WHY NOT COME AND JOIN US AT ONE OF THE SOCIALS OR MEETINGS. NON MEMBERS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME - FOR ANY DETAILS CONTACT MALCOLM GLASS ON 705-8613.

* * * STOP PRESS * * *

The Directors of Davenports have just thrown out W and D's takeover bid. Davenports Directors wish to keep the Company independent and say they have many plans for the future. This is not to say W and D will not try again.

BERNIES

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