



“BORO BANTER”



ISSUE No. 31

MARCH 1986

TAKEOVERS

It's takeover time in the brewing industry again. We thought that the end had come to this state of affairs after the takeovers of the late 60's and early 70's but no, they are with us again.

Lets start with the good news. Matthew Brown is saved from the clutches of Scottish and Newcastle after a fine fight put up by the brewery itself, the customers and CAMRA.

But now, bad news. Elders are still pursuing their bid for Allied, (Ansell's to us). If they win this Australian company will probably subject us to Australian lager. Allied are not CAMRA'S favourite brewers but they have improved recently.

Bad news. Greenhall Whitley have removed Simpkins from the face of the earth.

Bad news. Batemans are up for sale and rumour has it that Home are favourites.

Debatable bad news. Hanson Trust are pursuing financial dealings which would give them the ownership of Courage.

Very bad news. Davenports have merged with Greenhall Whitley, a brewery that has systematically been buying up other breweries, i.e. Simpkins in 1985. Time will tell if it is to be a merger or a takeover with the subsequent loss of Davenports beers.

So 1 good news : 5 bad news. What does all this mean to you and I the average beer drinker? Well, less choice due to product domination which in turn usually leads to higher prices as there is no competition. The brewers will dictate to us what we will have. This is horrific when you consider that the beers we are talking about are Ansell's Bitter and Mild, Burton Ale, Davenports Bitter, Mild and their recently introduced Top Brew De Luxe. I'd hate to lose these beers wouldn't you?

TWO LOST LOCALS

The Engine in Hampton-in-Arden has almost become a "lost local". This M&B pub which was previously rather ordinary but with a keen landlord interested in real ale has become a plush pizza bar. Predictably it is now all keg.

A similar fate is about to befall The Old Royal Oak in Hockley Heath. After months of closure it now looks as though it will become some sort of "Greek" restaurant.

The new Lodge

Yardley Wood Road,
Solihull Lodge.



Ansell's

ENJOY TRADITIONAL
BEER AT IT'S BEST.

BURTON ALE

Wide range of Bar Meals
Mon. — Sat. 12.00 — 2.00

WARWICKSHIRE GONE

Our local small, independent brewery closed just before Christmas after only about one year of trading. The Warwickshire Brewery which was actually in Tamworth, Staffordshire has stopped trading after a number of problems. Initially the two former Ind Coope workers couldn't find suitable premises. When they finally started brewing, outlets were almost impossible to find due to a lack of free houses in the area. The final straw came when the actual brewer decided to leave. Thus, the 3 traditional beers Mild, Bitter and Kingmaker are no longer available. It is always rather sad to see such a concern cease trading, but unfortunately they are not alone. This is mainly because the Big Six have so many pubs tied up.

BERNIES

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A WIDE SELECTION OF
TRADITIONAL BEER ON DRAUGHT
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Everards, Hoskins, Moorhouse's
Burton Bridge, Wadworths 6X
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ALSO ON DRAUGHT
Whisky, Brandy, Gin, Sherry, Port, Wine
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BEERS, WINES & SPIRITS IN
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SEE YOU THERE

Elders IXL**BIG SIX TAKEOVER TURMOIL**

The Australian company Elders IXL are pressing ahead with their £1.8 billion takeover bid for Allied Lyons but the result will not be known for some time yet. This is because it has been referred to The Monopolies Commission and investigations are likely to take several months. They might be concerned with the unusual financing, with Elders being about a quarter of the size of Allied although CAMRA can't rely on them too much after the recent fiasco regarding Scottish and Newcastle and Matthew Brown.

CAMRA remain firmly against the bid and fear their could be severe repercussions should the Aussies win. Allied Breweries probably produce better beers than any of the other big six and their ideas regarding decentralisation and pub refurbishment are also often on a par with CAMRA's. We don't want to lose all this. Allied themselves are determined to see off the challenge. They just realised record half year profits (£123m) and are using these healthy figures to try and persuade shareholders not to sell.

**COURAGE**

A few months ago we thought the big six breweries were almost indestructible. First there was the Elders saga and now Hanson Trust have made a £1.8 billion bid for The Imperial Group who own Courage. Imperial are also adamant that they are not for sale. They say the offer is inadequate and are urging shareholders not to sell. Like Allied Breweries they are also showing good profits. £235 million last year, a rise of over £15m from 1984.

ENJOY THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE

ORANGE TREE INN**CHADWICK END Lapworth 2458**

Your Hosts Bob & Ann Coppack

FOR TRADITIONAL FOOD FROM THE

Inn~Kitchen**Attractive Garden****GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED****THE NAVIGATION INN
LAPWORTH**

Andrew & Gerd Kimber



fine traditional ales.

Selection of light bar snacks available

Attractive Canalside Garden

GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED**SCOTTISH AND NEWCASTLE****FAIL AGAIN!**

At last some really good news on the takeover front. S&N have failed at the 11th hour in their £124 million takeover bid for Matthew Brown of Blackburn (who also own Theakstons remember). Browns shareholders had to accept the offer by 3.30p.m. on 11th December and at that time the Tartan fiends owned 47%. The deadline was extended until 5.00p.m. and by then owned 50.3% and claimed victory. However, the next day saw Browns financial advisors complain about this extra 90 minutes and the offer lapsed with S&N's holding dropping back to 29.9%.

The workers and board of Matthew Brown were delighted. They had opposed the deal from the start and praised CAMRA highly for our part in the battle. It is being hailed as our finest single victory in years. CAMRA also paid tribute to the determined Brown board and loyal shareholders.

All this is bitter news for Scottish and Newcastle and they reacted angrily towards CAMRA by saying we should "keep our mouths

shut" and stop interfering. They think we are a real pain but at least the feeling is mutual! Camerons just managed to avoid S&N's clutches in 1984 and CAMRA played an important role in that victory too.

It will be interesting to see where they go from here. It was rumoured they might go for Boddingtons but this could be just speculation. The Scottish Press estimated this recent abortive bid for Browns could have cost them £13m. Add to that the bad publicity they have received and inevitable low morale and the possibility of them being taken over themselves cannot be ruled out. Distillers considered it as a way of escaping from the Argyll Group or an overseas company such as Alan Bond's Castlemaine Tooheys might come forward with a bid.

**DAVENPORTS MERGE WITH****GREENALL**

In a £38.3m deal Davenports have merged with Greenall Whitley. This has thwarted Banks's attempts to buy out the brewery. Success would have meant Banks's beers being more readily available throughout the Birmingham area.

One can never be sure with Greenall Whitley as to whether the long term future of Davenports is secure. Last year they took over Simpkins and closed it down overnight. With Shipstones they have allowed it to continue brewing as if it were an independent company.

The future of Davenports is something to be watched carefully over the next few years. Greenall want to get into The West Midlands. Lets hope the merger is not a takeover thinly disguised.

It is to be wondered where Banks's will go from here.



GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL
1986

The Great British Beer Festival will be held at the same venue as last year, The Brighton Metropole Hotel.

Opening times for the public are from the evening session on Tuesday 5th August to Saturday 9th August inclusive.

The Banter will issue more information on this, not to be missed, event as and when it is received.



BASS, M&B - WHATS THE FUTURE?

A survey of the Solihull area shows that M&B own some 35% of the pubs. Allied (Ansell's to most of us) have some 30%. So it can be seen that any actions these breweries take will significantly affect the Solihull drinker. Thankfully, Ansell's seem to be reacting to "consumer demand" more cautiously at present. But what of M&B?

The Engine, Hampton-in-Arden could never be said to have been a characterful pub but under Martin McKewan's management there were traditional ales available in good condition. This has now gone. Replaced by a pizza pub with all keg. It is doubtful whether M&B discussed with the locals their ideas before substantially altering the pub and considering they own both pubs in the village you would have thought the local licensing magistrates would have demanded some consultation, but no, M&B did what they wanted. To be sure The Engine must be only one of many that M&B have radically changed at their own whim.

If this is the policy concerning pubs, i.e. emphasizing the food angle what about the beers. We all know keg is produced because it lasts a long time (2 to 3 months) and you need no brains to connect a gas pipe. Even a pizza pub gaffer can do that. However, traditional beer needs care and attention, something it would appear M&B are not too bothered about. The winter of 1985 saw the announcement that Highgate Old would no longer be brewed, which further compounded the belief in CAMRA circles that The Highgate Brewery in Walsall has only some 18 months to go before closure. Likewise Springfield is a bitter enjoyed by many, usually in keg form, but is also available in cask. This is brewed in Wolverhampton. Ominous rumblings suggest

that this breweries future is anything other than certain.

So what could we be left with? M&B Brew X1 and M&B Mild all brewed at Cape Hill, at best a bland bitter and what can be a good mild but all too often ordinary. Bass, M&B are run by accountants and marketing men and sales people who, I feel, don't believe in their product otherwise they'd realise how mediocre their beers

generally are. They rely on one thing, that is the monopoly of pubs they own. This is an atrocious state of affairs for the consumer because it is they who come off worst. If the tied house system were abandoned, Bass, M&B would drastically have to alter their direction, which, I suspect would be a great deal closer to what the general drinker wants rather than the accountants and marketing men want.

**A Superb Evening Entertainment
with The Great Pub Band**

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- LINE UP -

Wendy Lowry - Lead Vocals, Mandolin, Harmonica, Keyboards
John Lowry - Lead Guitar, Keyboards, Backing Vocals
Paul Mc Mullen - Lead Vocals, Acoustic Guitar
Paul Hayes - Lead Vocals, Bass Guitar
Simon Fitzgerald - Drums, Backing Vocals

**For further details & bookings
contact:-**

John Lowry on Earlswood 2305

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HOT FOOD ★ **Now available between**
7 pm-10 pm daily

★ **GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED** ★



Oyez

Oyez...



BRANCH DIARY

MONDAY 10TH MARCH - OPEN MEETING
at The Case is Altered, Five Ways
(just off A41 between Knowle and
Warwick). Near perfect old fashi-
oned country pub selling beers
from Ansells and Whitbread. Any
nominations for the 1987 GOOD BEER
GUIDE should be submitted at (or
before) this meeting.

THURSDAY 27TH MARCH - SOCIAL.
Pub crawl of the Digbeth area of
Birmingham. We will start at The
Lamp Tavern in Barford Street at
around 8.00. This new free house
sells Fullers ESB, Pedigree and
Sam Smiths, a great range of beers
for the area. Other ports of call
will be The Woodman, Albert Street
(Ansells Victorian gem) and The Old
Wharf, Oxford Street. Another new
development this, it sells three
draught beers from Banks's.

MONDAY 7TH APRIL - BRANCH MEETING
at The Golden Lion in Solihull
(Courage). We will be voting
here for the pubs to go into 1987
GOOD BEER GUIDE. All Solihull
CAMRA members are welcome to vote
here but please bring CAMRA mem-
bership cards.



The Bulls Head

Ray & Jane Franklin

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ANSALLS MILD AND BITTER, BURTON ALE.
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HOUSE SPECIALITY
BAKED POTATOES
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★ **OTHER FRIDAY** ★

"Why not advertise in the Boro Banter?"

Circulation 500 copies
Distributed free throughout the
local pubs in the Solihull area.
Charges - 4½ x 4½ £12-00 per issue
4½ x 2½ £6-00 per issue
Contact- B. Queenborough on
021-744 3113

CONTACTS

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

More up to date publicity material
is planned in an attempt to cap-
ture the general public's attention
and to encourage them to drink
Milds or even low gravity bitters.
These have been ignored by the MMB
in the past but this has changed
to widen its area of activity and
increase its publicity. In large
parts of the country, mild is
virtually unavailable and its
place is taken by such things as
60 shilling in Scotland or "Boys"
(ordinary) bitters in the south.
Some of these beers have O.G. of
about 1030 but it does not mean
they are not worth drinking. I
know beers that are skillfully
brewed with an original gravity
of 1033 that have more taste than
ones of 1050. They are also cheap
and don't get you so drunk, an
important consideration if you are
driving.

I wish to become a member of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited. I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

I enclose £7 (£10 overseas) for full membership for a year. ☐

Any additional amount will be welcomed as a donation ☐

FULL NAME (Block capitals)

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS (Block capitals)

SIGNATURE

DATE

Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real Ale Limited, 34 Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts.



CAMRA NOT SO MILD MANNERED

Sales of mild in Britain have
been dwindling for many years now
and things are getting worse,
especially with all the "hysteria"
type promotion of lager and other
light coloured beers. The image
of dark beers is portrayed as
something very undesirable and old
fashioned. No self respecting
poser would be seen within a hun-
dred miles of a pint of mild.
To combat this unfortunate state
of affairs, CAMRA's MILD MARKETING
BOARD has been modified slightly.
Regular meetings will now take
place all over the country and
all interested people are welcome.

In the Midlands we are particularly
lucky with superb milds like High-
gate, Ansells and Banks's. There
is also some improved M&B Mild
about. Not to mention others from
Wem, Holdens, Bathams, Marstons,
Hook Norton, Holts, Hansons and
Davenport's. With that sort of
choice you've got no excuse not to
at least try it!

CAMRA ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

CAMRA is about to publish a new
guide book which will list good
pubs from all over the country
where real ale and cheap but
adequate Bed and Breakfast type
accommodation is available. It
is a new venture for CAMRA but
we hope it will be a big pub-
licity earner as well as bring-
ing in much needed extra funds.
I have spent many holidays
walking and touring through
Britain and one of the best
places to spend a night must be
a pub with well kept beer where
all you have to do after the
evening session is stagger up
stairs to bed! I think this
guide will be a good investment.



has been published
by Solihull CAMRA branch
and printed by

Paper & Print

PHOTOCOPYING
PLANPRINTING-INSTANT PRINT

387, STRATFORD ROAD, SHIRLEY, SOLIHULL
021-745 3214.