



ISSUE No. 17

# Solihull BORO BANTER



APRIL 1984

## The new Lodge

Yardley Wood Road,  
Solihull Lodge.



ENJOY TRADITIONAL  
BEER AT IT'S BEST,



Wide range of Bar Meals available:  
Mon. — Sat. 12.00 — 2.00 p.m.

### MORE FLOWERS IN THE AREA



During the middle of March selected Davenports houses started selling Flowers Original Bitter on handpump. Several are in our area such as The Black Swan, Henley, The Boat in Catherine de Barnes and The Drawbridge in Majors Green which is where I first tried it. It seemed to be very well kept (Like all the beers there) and sold for 76p which is similar to what it costs in Whitbread pubs.

This move is directly related to the fact that Whitbread Investments hold shares in Davenports, which they acquired to hold off Banks's takeover bid last year. This extra choice of beers is welcome in Solihull, but let's hope the two breweries don't get too close to each other. We don't want to see Davenports get swallowed by Whitbread and subsequently closed.

NOTE:- The Drawbridge and Boat have recently started selling Weston's Cider on handpump along side Flowers and Davenports Mild and Bitter, giving traditional drinkers quite a wide range of drinks, especially for the Solihull area!

### THE WHARF

We had a very enjoyable committee meeting at the Wharf in Hockley Heath on March 5th. The Manns Bitter and Bulmers Cider were in good condition and towards the end of the evening we had a cellar trip, laid on by the manager Peter Lucas. All the branch members found the tour interesting and informative and would like to thank Peter for his kind hospitality. There may be changes at this pub in the near future, including the range of beers so watch out for more details in future Boro Banters.

### BERNIES OFF LICENCE

Bernies Off Licence in Shirley is the only place for miles around where you can find a really good selection of traditional beers. Not only are the beers many and varied, they are also well kept and reasonably priced.

Bernie also sells such a wide range of wines, spirits, ciders, cans, keg beers and bottled beers that other pubs and off licences are put to shame. New and unusual bottled beers will be added to the range during Easter. They include KIRIN from Japan (1047), FISCHER from France (1050) and HENRY WEINHARD'S SPECIAL RESERVE from the U.S.A. (1050)

An even better reason for visiting Bernie's during Easter will be some special low-price draught beers.

For example:

Aston Manor Bitter	50p
Banks's Bitter	54p
Everards Tiger	59p
Wadworths 6X	62p

Apart from free beer, what more could you ask for!!

**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

### The 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.*

EARLSCOURT ROAD,  
HARBORNE TEL: 021-427 5796

266, CRANMORE BOULEVARD,  
SHIRLEY, TEL: 021-744 2827



**SCRUMPY** from  
39p PER PINT

Severn Bore  
Aston Manor  
Bathams Bitter  
Pendlewitch.  
Bridge Bitter

## Bluebell Inn

Colin & Ann  
Squires

93 HIGH STREET HENLEY IN ARDEN  
WARWICKSHIRE

Telephone 05642-2646



ANOTHER REVIVAL

OF AN

OLD BREWING NAME



Allied Breweries have just announced their latest idea of decentralisation. The old company of Holt, Plant and Deakin has been set up in the Black Country and in theory it sounds excellent news for CAMRA and pub goers in general. Holt own eight pubs at the moment but this number could rise to around forty by the end of this year. All the houses were formally Ansell's pubs but they have been redesigned considerably along "traditional" lines according to Allied, but having visited two of them I was a little disappointed. All the advertise-

ments say Holt's pubs are reminiscent of true Black Country locals of ages past but I would have thought places such as Bathams Bull and Bladder or The Bottle and Glass in the Black Country Museum came nearer to this description. Holt's pubs are not like those two pubs, they seem to be more gimmiky. The walls are adorned with bric-a-brac and plastic plants, features I associate with fun pubs. One of the pubs, The Fountain in Tipton, did have a bar with a good atmosphere and some good features such as etched windows and mirrors, plus a Victorian fire place but another pub I visited, The Mount Pleasant, was less impressive. It just seemed like an old local that had been recently modernised. Here artificial plants climbed trellis in a passageway and the new style

"straight glasses" did not improve the pubs claim to be authentic. Holt's pubs are supposed to be free of "electronic distractions", but The Mount Pleasant had a fruit machine. I found myself wondering if CAMRA were being conned by Allied in some way!

On a happier note all the pubs sell handpumped Holt's Mild and Bitter, with no keg beers except lager. This should not be confused with a certain brew from Cheetham Hill, Manchester. Holt's were a Birmingham Brewery taken over by Ansell's in the 1930's when the Ansell's squirrel was taken from Holt's own logo. The beer is brewed by Tetleys (Warrington) and I found it very drinkable. The mild was not as dark as Ansell's and it seemed less full-bodied, but in fairness I didn't drink enough of it to get the full taste. The bitter did impress me, however. It has an O.G. of 1036.5 (like the mild) but was full-bodied for its strength and had a distinctive bitter taste. They had obviously put hops in it, take note M and B. The hoppiness of the beer reminded me of Manchester bitters, the fact that it is brewed in Warrington may account for this. Other beers available in the Black Country seem to be sweeter than Holt's, I hope the locals like the slightly different taste.

Something I am looking forward to is the opening of a small Holt's Brewery in Oldbury, at the new headquarters. This will produce a stronger bitter in the spring to compliment the present range. It is also hoped winter ales and celebration beers will be brewed here.

Apart from my personal criticisms, what concerns CAMRA in general is the fact that although many Holt's pubs are planned they are all confined to one area. If only we could have JUST ONE in the Solihull area or even Birmingham. Somewhere like The George and Dragon in Shirley would have been a good site and it would have bought a much needed choice of ales into our area. Instead we are getting another Beagles fun pub!

## 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.***

It is obvious that Allied think the Black Country offers much in the way of good pubs and beers from other breweries so they want to try and tempt people into old Ansell's pubs. They probably think the lack of competition in other areas means there is no need for pubs to go Holt's. Looking around, maybe they are right, unfortunately!

#### THE ROYAL OAK



The Royal Oak in Hockley Heath appears to be an Ansell's house but in fact that brewery only lease it from Whitbread. The lease ends this summer and on July 1st, Whitbread will take the pub back. Whether or not this is good news or not remains very uncertain for the time being. One would imagine many changes will take place to the pub as well as the beer. At the moment Ansell's Mild and Bitter are on sale plus Wiltshire and Tetley, all on handpump. Hopefully Whitbread will supply some traditional beer, but this is by no means certain.

If only they could open a small home brew house on the site. Whitbread have ten home brew pubs at the moment covering many parts of the country such as the South East, Sheffield, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester and Southampton. The nearest to the Solihull area is probably Cheltenham but there is still a large area around Birmingham without one. The Royal Oak is a large pub in a good position on a main road and it would appear to be a good site for a home brew pub. If Whitbread are keen to keep up with current "themes" the place could have a trendy room, discos or whatever but with their own unusual beers, the pub would attract a wider range of customers.

The brewery would probably use malt extract but it would still widen the choice of ales available in the Solihull area and at the same time be a welcome change from Whitbread's current bland, boring range.

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  
RESERVATIONS AVAILABLE

FOR PRIVATE PARTIES

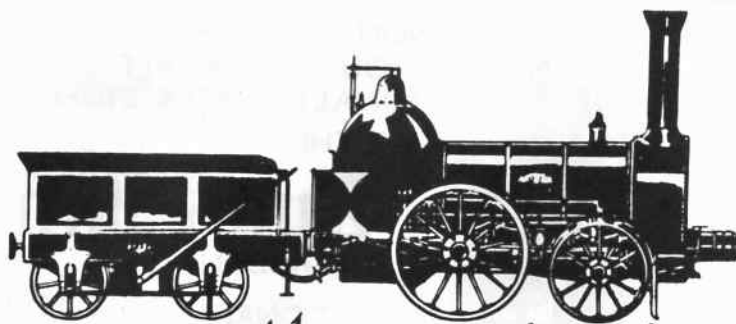
#### REAL PROGRESS IN SHIRLEY

On a recent keg campaigning pub crawl a few branch members visited the Saracens Head in Shirley to find out if there was any chance of the pub selling real ale in the near future. Imagine our delight when on walking in we saw handpumps in the course of construction. The beer had already been delivered but there were some technical problems with the installation of the handpumps. However, these were overcome and the pub now sells Ansell's Mild and Bitter plus Tetley's Bitter, making this pub a very welcome conversion to the real thing. Soon the Red Lion could be Shirley Centre's only Keg pub because the George and Dragon may be selling real ale by the Autumn, when it is changed into a fun pub by the owners of Beagles in Acocks Green. It will then become Captain begles. Although fun pubs have been criticized elsewhere in this newsletter, the local branch feel that the present Keg pub is so ordinary that a real ale fun pub has got to be a slight improvement. As I stated in the "Destruction of British Pubs" article, choosing future fun pubs SELECTIVELY can benefit all parties concerned.

#### WEATHEROAK WANDERINGS

On Sunday 18th March, the branch had an excellent social around Weatheroak Hill. It started off with a short walk around the lanes and canal in the vicinity. In spite of the cold and snow showers it was a good walk, although towards the end, we were getting slightly agitated because we had hoped to arrive at the Coach and Horses for 12.00. Unfortunately part of the tow-path on the Worcester canal was in poor condition and you almost needed rock-climbing experience to pass along it safely. This slowed us up considerably and it was approaching 12.30 by the time we all arrived at the pub. As usual the pub was busy and had a wide range of beers. Sometimes they are inconsistent, but fortunately, most of the ale sampled was in fairly good condition although you do have to dig deep into your pockets to afford it. Burton Bridge Festival Ale (1055) was my favourite, but weaker brews such as:- Holdens Special, Everards Old Original, Sam Smiths, Aston Manor Bitter and Banks's Mild were all available, which ensured we all had a most enjoyable lunchtime social.





## the engine inn

High Street, Hampton-in-Arden, Nr. Solihull, West Midlands  
Good Food and Accommodation  
A stones throw away from the National Exhibition Centre  
Martin and Lyn McKeown Telephone Hampton-in-Arden 2611

**Come along and try our  
fine traditional ales.**

**Live entertainment in the evenings**  
**Rock and Roll on Thursdays**  
**Folk music on Sundays**

*Wide range of Bar Meals available:*

**Mon. — Sat. 12.00 — 2.00 p.m.**

**Tues. — Sat. 7.30 p.m. — 9.30 p.m.**

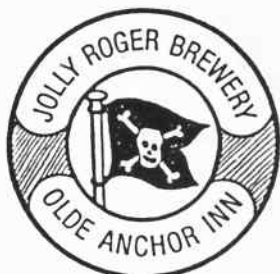
### SOLIHULL PUB HISTORY

Pubs were first licensed in the Solihull area in 1837, at that time the figure stood at 35, today's figure stands at 58 (although this does not include the newer additions of Meriden, Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst). Most of these mid-nineteenth century hostalries still exist today, although some have been demolished or rebuilt.

Original buildings include The George Hotel, Masons Arms and The Malt Shovel (now better known as The Snooty Fox).

Pubs in the Victorian era were usually owned by individuals, perhaps the clergy or local charities, it was not until 1885 when breweries started to take over the tied trade.

Records show that now-extinct breweries and some forerunners of today's major companies were operating in the Solihull area during that time. The Royal Oak which was situated in the High Street was owned by the Holt Brewery Company in Aston. The Masons Arms was under the ownership of another famous Birmingham Brewer "Holders", (taken over by M and B in 1919) and The Red Lion in Shirley was a William Butler's pub. Butler's brewery still stands in Wolverhampton but today is more famous for M and B "Springfield". CAMRA Solihull are very interested in local pub history and would welcome any information on the subject. Please contact John Salmon, 42, Barn Lane, Solihull. or telephone 706 7514.



**Excellent meals:**  
**UPTON 2146**  
**SEVERN BORE SPECIAL**  
FREQUENTLY AVAILABLE AT  
**BERNIES off Licence**

## *Ye Olde Anchor Inn* *Upton-on-Severn*

*Fine Ales Brewed on the premises*  
**JOLLY ROGER BITTER o.g. 1035**  
**SEVERN BORE SPECIAL o.g. 1045**  
**OLD ANCHOR ALE o.g. 1060**



### SOLIHULL CARNIVAL

The Solihull Carnival will be held on Saturday 9th June in Tudor Grange Park and I am pleased to say that the Solihull branch of CAMRA will have a stall there.

Unfortunately we are not allowed to sell beer but we will be selling and giving away many items and publications connected with CAMRA, and the brewing industry in general. Badges, ties, bar towels, T shirts and beer mats for example. Also local and national beer guides, CAMRA newsletters, beer festival information plus much more.

Many of the local branch members will be around the stand. Why not come along and have a chat with us. We would be delighted to see you!

THE WHITE LION in Hampton in Arden has joined the RED LION, Earlswood as the only pubs in Solihull selling cask Springfield. The Red Lion sells it alongside Mild and Brew XI, while at the White Lion, Brew XI and Bass are also on sale.

The Springfield was rather expensive in Hampton, but having said that it was very well kept, possibly the tastiest I have had anywhere.



### BRANCH DIARY

**TUESDAY 1st MAY** Committee Meeting at the Saracens Head in Shirley. This pub has only just started selling real ale and Ansells Mild and Bitter plus Tetley Bitter are on sale.

**SUNDAY 20th MAY.** Lunchtime social walk and drink around Upton-on-Severn. We will start from Severn Stoke and walk along the Severn to Upton. The main port of call will inevitably be the "Old Anchor Inn", home of the Jolly Roger Brewery.

**MONDAY 4th JUNE** Committee Meeting at The Three Tuns in Henley in Arden.