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BORO BANTER

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DAVENPORTS THE LAST CHAPTER ?

The next time you go into a Davenports pub take a good look at the Brewery name on the outside of the pub. Does it still say Davenports? Well, keep your eyes on it for it is my belief that the pubs will soon be sporting a new logo and the name of Davenports will be erased and replaced with the name GREENALL ALES.

Who are Greenall? For those of you who have missed the last two issues of the Banter here is the story so far.

They are the regional Brewery that bought Davenports, Wem and Simkiss Breweries together with their pubs. The Simkiss Brewery was closed within a week, the Wem Brewery was also closed and brewing of Wem beers took place at Davenports. As you know Davenports is now closed so both Wem and Davenports beer are now brewed at Greenall Whitley 'Shipstone' Brewery in Nottingham.

This renaming of pubs to create a single Corporate image threatens the very existence of 'brand' names like Davenports and Wem. After all, if the pub is a Greenall Ales pub what else would you expect to find in it but their own named Shipstone beers?

The time is fast approaching when Davenports Bitter will be offered as a 'guest beer' and like any other 'foriegn' beer be taken out should Greenall decide to and in the space of a couple of years Davenports will be a name of the past. Davenports, people will say, Oh yes!, I used to remember drinking Davenports in Greenall Ales pubs.

and...

GOODBYE TO WEM.

The demise of Wem beers seems almost inevitable with the news that the Boat at Catherine De Barnes no longer sells Wem Special. Greenall Whitley closed Wem Brewery some two years ago followed by Davenports earlier this year. One wonders how much longer Davenports beers will be available for before being dropped. There seems a distinct lack of Davenports Traditional Mild around just lately..

GOOD BEER GUIDE FIX ??

I received a letter through my letter box a week or two ago which read as follows.

I buy the Good Beer Guide and usually find it most useful but some of the pubs mentioned carried none of the beers I had been led to expect would be there, did someone really check up on this pub?

Well! first of all let me assure you that every pub in the GBG has been visited by local CAMRA members to ensure the consistency of quality of the beers sold in that pub.

There are some things that unfortunately we have no control over. The Landlord may leave for another pub. The Brewery may be taken over and closed. Or the Brewery may be 'rationalising' its range of Beers.

This can happen some months or even a week after the guide has been published. If such a thing happens then we can only apologise and mourn the loss.

The GBG is the only independent guide to real ale in Britain. Unlike other so called 'guides' no individual or Brewery can buy a place within its pages. It is merit alone that justifies an inclusion.

The Editor.



"SOLITHULL ROUND-UP"

PUNCHBOWL, LAPWORTH.

The Punchbowl, Lapworth went under the hammer in December for some £400,000, and is at present boarded up. Its future unknown but possibilities that it may become a motel or nightclub has been heard but not confirmed.

COCK HORSE, ROWINGTON.

A change of management has occurred at the Cock Horse in Rowington, a popular Whitbread house.



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- *Ansell's Mild & Bitter
- *Burton Ale
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- *Real fires on cold evenings



BURTON ALE

Ansell's

1990 GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED

SPOTLIGHT ON KNOWLE & DORRIDGE

These two villages are served by six pubs all of which serve real ale and two of them can offer accommodation.

If we take the A41 (Warwick Road) from Solihull and pass over the motorway we will come to the village of Knowle. The Wilsons Arms[1] is our first port of call, it is on the left at the junction with the Hampton Road. This M&B pub refurbished a year or so ago with restaurant extension is a 'Toby Inn' with the emphasis on the food but has still managed to retain its cask conditioned beers though served on electric pumps. Alas the mild is keg.

A stone throw separates us from the Greswolde Arms[2] this Hotel was formerly known as the Mermaid. An Ansell's Golden Oak Inn it offers good value basic pub meals and serves it traditional Ansell's Bitter and Burton ale on handpulls. It is often used on Sundays to hold antique fairs.

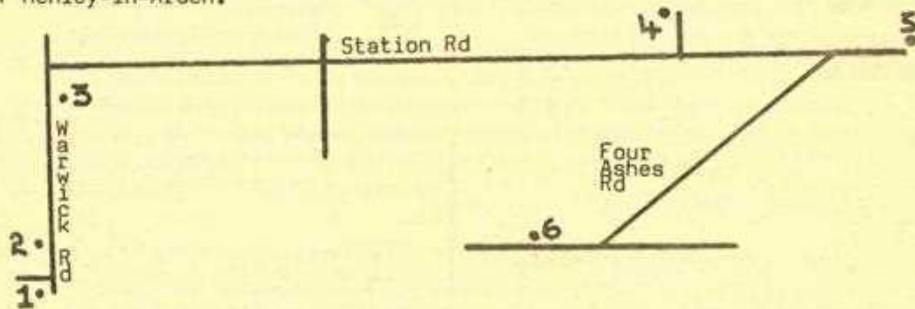
At the far end of the village and opposite the church is the Red Lion[3] with its famous wrought iron sign. Pub meals are prepared behind the lounge bar. Ansell's Bitter together with Tetley and Burton, all real ales are available on handpulls. The bar thankfully retains much of its old character. Still no sign of real Mild!

We now take the A4023 (Station Road) to Dorridge. The Forest Hotel[4] is set opposite the railway station. It has a lounge and bar and offers M&B Brew X1 together with a 'guest beer' from the Whitbread stables. Non-residents can book for Sunday meals.

Follow the A4023 out of Dorridge some half mile and the Railway Inn[5] will be on your left. This basic two roomed pub has been in the same family for 30 years. The mild (a real mild at last!) the Brew X1 and Bass are all served on handpumps a rare sight in M&B pubs nowadays.

Doubling back upon ourselves take the first left (Four Ashes Road) then turn right towards Solihull at the junction and the Drum & Monkey[6] a Davenport's pub will be on the right. Offering a reasonable selection of pub meals but due to Greenhall Whitley's policy can only offer for the time being the Davenport's bitter as a real ale.

The 3rd spotlight in the Summer 'Carnival' issue will be covering the pubs of Henley-in-Arden.



THE NAVIGATION INN

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Lapworth.
Tel: 528 3337

Proprietor Andrew Kimber

  
fine traditional ales.



Selection of homecooked bar snacks available

Attractive Canalside Garden

GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED

1987 PUB OF THE YEAR

CHEAP BUT PROFITABLE.

This journal often praises Holts Brewery of Cheetham, Manchester for not only the quality of the beer but also that it is the cheapest beer around. Yet another accolade goes to the company who on the results of profit on turnover up to 30.6.89 have topped the league amongst the independent brewers.

If you would like to invest in Holts shares they will cost about £13.50 if you can find any for sale!

GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL 1990.

This years Great British Beer Festival returns to the Brighton Metropole after 2 years in Leeds. Dates for your diary are August 7-11.

BEER STRENGTH UP.

According to The Brewers Society 'Beer facts 1989' there has been an increase in the average strength of beer. This is probably due to the breweries revival in interest in the premium ale market which typically have an OG of 1042-5. Most standard bitters are around 1037.

SAY NO MORE!

Seen lately in the trade magazine 'Publican':

Scottish and Newcastle have test marketed draught Urquell in Yorkshire however there seems to be a greater demand for the bottled version, according to Urquell product manager Cathy Smith. It seems likely that S&N will go national with the bottled version. Has the draught test launch been a flop? Cathy Smith says because of the product's taste, in between that of ale and lager, it would take longer to educate consumer's palates.

Yet again we must ask ourselves are we in a consumer led market or as many believe an industry led rip off.

WHITBREAD BOYCOTT.

CAMRA has asked the drinking public to boycott Whitbread pubs. Having recently purchased Boddingtons brewery they have closed its sister company Higsons of Liverpool and not believing in doing things in halves they have also closed Fremlins. This company is no friend to the real ale drinker and one can almost predict that Marstons will soon fall under the wing of this voracious giant. Please if you enjoy real, distinctive beers think again before visiting a Whitbread pub.

"WEST MIDLANDS NEWS"

MARSTON'S GEAR UP FOR GUEST BEER PUSH.

Marston's the only remaining brewery using the unique Union system of brewing is set to expand the Burton Union system to facilitate extra capacity with the forthcoming introduction of guest beers into tenanted houses owned by the big brewers.

However disturbing reports have been mooted lately that Pedigree has been brewed both using the Burton Union system and the 'normal' system and subsequently mixed. Lets hope this will stop once the new Union rooms come into use as many feel that it is this unique system of brewing that gives Pedigree its distinctive character.

PREMIER / PITFIELD.

Following the merging of brewing operations between Premier and Pitfield towards the end of 1989 they have announced another joint venture. It is intended to open some 15 pubs and 5 Off Licenses. Presumably these will be in the Black Country, however with pub sales being on the cards in Birmingham as a result of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report speculation as to a Birmingham outlet being obtained must be high.

ANOTHER FREE HOUSE FOR BIRMINGHAM?

The Oddfellows Arms, Sherlock Street, Birmingham is available on lease for any prospective publicans. Having two bars and accommodation it is being offered on a 10 year lease at a rental of £5,000 per annum. This appears to be a continuing trend within Birmingham of pub leases or disposals that has occurred in recent years.

NEW BLACK COUNTRY BREWERY.

Holt, Plant and Deakin the Black Country offshoot of Allied has opened its second brewery. Situated in Wolverhampton this follows the original brewery set up in Oldbury. Demand for their flagship beer Entire has meant that an increase in capacity was essential. This demand has also been fuelled by the continued growth of the tied estate. The new brewery has a pub attached thus enabling sampling on site. Sad to say though that the Mild and Bitter is trunked down from Warrington where it is contracted out to Tetley Walker. The new brewery will only brew Entire.

WILTSHIRE BRANCH OUT.

The Wiltshire Brewery who recently purchased Ma Pardoe's have opened an outlet in Mill Lane, Walsall. A recent midday visit (2.05pm.) revealed the pub closed so no report can be made on beers available. It is likely that both Pardoe's and Wiltshire's beers will be on tap. Due to our disappointment we forgot to record the pub's name! If the same fate befalls you we can recommend the Pretty Bricks in John Street an Ansell's house somewhat similar in style to Holt, Plant and Deakin pubs and only 100 yards from the Wiltshire pub.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS POSTCODE

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: U.K. £9
Overseas £12

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:
THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, CAMRA LTD., 34 ALMA ROAD, ST. ALBANS, HERTS. AL1 3BW

OR WHY NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DIRECT DEBIT?

266 Cranmore Boulevard, Shirley, Solihull. Tel. 744 2827

BATHAMS

908 Warwick Road/cnr Stockfield Road, Acocks Green. Tel. 708 1664

PEDIGREE

Earls Court Road, Harborne, B17 9AH. Tel. 427 5796

BATHAM

TITANIC

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HOOK NORTON

6X

TIMOTHY TAYLORS

CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE LISTED

BERNIES

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Beer Party Barrels 18 or 40pts complete with tap!

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— Now try the Best!



The *Unique* Real Ale off Licence

DATES:FOR:THE:DIARY:DATES:FOR
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"CONTACTS"

27 MARCH: Social meeting, Beausale Club. Nr. Honiley. 8-30pm.
10 APRIL: Branch meeting The Durham Ox, Shrewley at 8-30pm.
8 MAY: Branch meeting at the Case-is-Altered, Five Ways at 8-30pm.
24/25/26 MAY: Dudley Beer Festival, Horseley Gardens Dudley.
31 MAY 1/2 JUNE: The Wolverhampton Beer Festival, Civic Hall.
9 JUNE: CAMRA stall at the Solihull Carnival.

BIRMINGHAM: Russell Coles Tel: 021 459 2980[h].
COVENTRY & MID WARWICK: Paul Hamblett Tel: 0203 221634[h].
REDDITCH & BROMSGROVE: Paul Benson Tel: 0386 870467.
SHAKESPEARE: Bob MacVie Tel: 0789 296336[h].
SOLIHULL: Malcolm Field Tel: 021 622 3619[w] & 021 745 8981[h].
TAMWORTH & SUTTON: John Kippax Tel: 021 354 2479[h].

The Boro Banter is the newsletter published by the Solihull Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. Editors : S. Dyson and M. Field. Advertising rates are available from either. The views expressed in the Boro Banter are those of the individual contributor and not necessarily the views of either the Solihull Branch of CAMRA or the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.
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