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DURHAM DRINKER



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www.geocities.com/camradurham

A FESTIVE MESSAGE

The Editor and all at Durham CAMRA wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. A big thanks goes to all our volunteers, sponsors, advertisers, readers, cask ale drinkers and all who have supported Durham CAMRA in the past year. And this also applies to long suffering family members!

Campaign

A LOOK BACK AT 2004

2004 has been another interesting year for cask ale.

On the negative side we've seen some well known names depart the brewing scene. These include The Rat and Ratchet, Huddersfield (which was represented at Durham CAMRA's 2003 beer festival) and Oakhill, brewers of the wonderful Mendip Gold. Of course Scottish & Newcastle signalled their intent to be known simply as "&" with the announcement of closure of both their Edinburgh and Newcastle breweries! Of course this involves the brewing of Brown Ale at the newly acquired Federation Brewery in Dunston. And of course as the year draws to a close the axe hovers over

Interbrew's (sorry Inbev...their new name which in Belgium means something very naughty!) Strangeways Brewery, the producer of Manchester's most famous cask ale, Boddingtons. It just goes to show that nothing stands still in the brewing world and the big brewers don't consider anything as sacred!

On the positive side the explosion of new breweries continues including Fieldhouse (Empire) from Huddersfield and Font Valley from Northumberland. Some may be very short lived but some will gain in stature. Copper Dragon, Skipton which was a newcomer last year is now very much a regional brewer and its stunning beers are now found extensively in West Yorkshire. In the North East, Hill

Island has celebrated its 2nd anniversary; Durham Brewery its 10th anniversary. The latter is very much in evidence and continues to grow in popularity proven by the successful beer festivals held promoting their ales this year.

And of course Darwin, Mordue and Jarrow keep going strong. Jarrow's McConnell's Irish Stout is definitely its best beer to date. But our best wishes go to Paul and Ros Conroy at The Grey Horse, Consett. As well as running a gem of a pub they have managed to keep the Derwent Rose Brewery going whilst incapacitated! And of course managed another sellout beer festival.

On the pub front there have been many changes in licensees and of course we will keep an eye on all of these as the Pub Of The Year competition gets tougher. Congratulations of course went to The Beamish Mary, winner of Durham CAMRA's award and also The Ship, Middlestone which won the North East award. And Durham CAMRA boasted an unusual venue for its Club of The Year award, Pelaw Grange Greyhound Stadium.

On the beer festival front Durham CAMRA held its 24th beer festival which proved a massive hit! Having sold out early plans are in hand to keep it going to the end next year! The

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Durham  pub of the year 2003



Paula wishes you all a
Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.



Peter says *****s!

Durham CAMRA's
Pub of The Year 2002

THE WOODMAN INN

"Friendly local" close to the city centre

Six ales
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23 GILESGATE, DURHAM CITY
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Woodman held its biggest festival ever with a successful 47 beer festival in October. The Daleside Arms, Croxdale began a series of very successful minifests including its strong ale Octoberfest! The Titanic Wreckage went down well. The Half Moon celebrated The Drapers' stint there with a festival of Durham beers including a special brew, The Dark Side. And of course The Square and Compass, West Cornforth held its first festival!

2005 I am sure will prove just as interesting!



SMOKING AND PUB DESIGN

The debate on smoking in pubs took another turn in November when the Government signalled its intent to ban smoking in restaurants and pubs serving food by 2006. Pubs which do not serve food will still be able to permit smoking.

Many issues have been highlighted and 'have shown this to be a very emotive topic. Your editor is a non smoker and as such enjoys fresh air. But I also enjoy a pint. And I accept that there are occasions when I am going to have to endure a smoky atmosphere. I also have friends and colleagues who enjoy a smoke with their drink. Unfortunately in many places there is no way of being able to cater for the rights of both sets of customers.

Often overlooked is what I think to be

the main barrier to introducing designated smoking zones or substantial smoke free areas. And this is the interior design of many pubs. Since the 1960's many pubs have been built or rebuilt as open plan. Thus the separate rooms that made up older premises have been removed to create larger spaces. Pubs which still have several rooms have had little problem in providing smoke free environments. But open plan pubs have often paid lip service, if any, to providing smoke free areas. Or have had to make do as best they can. Ironically a visit to Sheffield found that The Cask & Cutler, The Fat Cat, The Gardener's Rest and The Kelham Island Tavern, all quite close together, provided between them substantial no smoking areas. In fact with the exception of the latter they all had no smoking rooms made easier by the fact that they are multi-roomed pubs. And the Kelham Island Tavern has added an extension which is smoke free. And all these rooms were pretty packed!

Many people favour an outright ban, perhaps backed by the fact that 70% of people in the UK don't smoke whereas just less than 1 % of pubs are non smoking. But I think the answer lies very much in the design of pubs and even with the efficient ventilation systems which exist today (but not always used to full effect), the only way to ensure that both sets of customers are catered for is to move away from the open plan design.

At least this way, it would mean that not all smokers would be forced out of the door.

Admittedly other issues do come into the equation and this is purely a look at the debate from another angle. Let's face it, who would have thought that the pub planners from the 1960's onwards could have unwittingly helped to fuel the flames on this issue. One to keep tabs on as they say!!



BEER GOES TO THE DOGS

Pelaw Grange Greyhound Stadium held its first beer festival in November. The festival ran until 21st and featured a number of brews with a canine theme. These included Elgoods Greyhound and Cameron's Mick The Miller Stout. Beers also featured from Durham and Spinning Dog. No doubt some folk felt a bit ruff the next morning but then there was always "Hair Of The Dog".

Congratulations go to all involved in the venture and it's worth remembering that cask is permanently available here. Other clubs which serve cask include Durham City Rugby Club and Ceddesfield Hall, Sedgfield.



CARLSBERG FACES DISRUPTION

Production workers at Carlsberg's Northampton brewery are to take industrial action. The news came as this issue was being prepared and centres on pay. 16 days of strike action are planned with the first scheduled for 1st December. Further action in the New

Year has not been ruled out.

And workers at Inbev's Strangeways brewery in Manchester took strike action in November as part of a campaign to protect their jobs and the brewery. The site is due to be closed in February and the production of Boddingtons, "The Cream Of Manchester" moved elsewhere.

Drinkers face the prospect of drinking yet more beers brewed away from their home of origin.



FUTURE FESTIVALS

If anyone intends holding a beer festival then please let us know. As well as possibly giving it a mention in Durham Drinker details can be circulated on our web site. This is accessed by CAMRA members nationwide. Of course we would be happy to consider advertising and fees can be negotiated for special events.



WETHERSPOONS

Congratulations go to Wetherspoons for an excellent festival which was held in its pubs throughout October. Most venues ensured that the full list of beers advertised featured at sometime, my favourite being the Herald Schwarzbier from The Czech Republic. Unfortunately the lack of consistency experienced choice wise in their outlets has been apparent since then.

CAMRA DIARY DATES

- > 14th December 2004, 7.30pm - beer tasting tuition with Keith Thomas, Tap & Spile, Framwellgate Moor.
- > 13th January 2005 - brewery visit/social, Big lamp, contact branch for details.
- > 19th January 2005, 8.00pm - branch meeting, Colpitts, Durham City.
- > 26th January 2005, mini pub crawl, Durham City, commence Woodman Inn at 7.30pm.
- > 23rd February 2005, 8.00pm - branch meeting, Butchers Arms, Chester-le-Street.

YOUR EDITOR'S CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

(not necessarily in the right order!!)

1. All cask ale pubs to be allowed to sell what the customer wants.
2. Good availability of local brews.
3. Mistletoe and Wine by Cliff Richard to be banned.
4. Footpaths to be kept clear of motor vehicles to allow easy access to the pub.
5. A decent and reliable bus service to get you to and from the pub. Bring back the evening 720 to the Beamish Mary.
6. Any pub licensee caught playing Mistletoe and Wine by Cliff Richard to be given a public flogging.
7. Bateman's Rosey Nosey to be taken off sale by February.
8. Breweries to be honest about a beer's origins when it is contract brewed. And to state its origin clearly.
9. The drinking of Durham Brewery beers to be made compulsory.
10. Mistletoe and Wine to be rerecorded by Cliff Richard after downing several pints of Rosey Nosey.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year everyone.

Remember!! Don't drink and drive.

And in Durham, The Jug and The Gala Theatre have had the cask ale removed. The Gala's limited bar opening hours and lack of cask knowledge did little to promote quality or turnover. Congratulations go to The Daleside Arms, Croxdale for picking up a Britain In Bloom, Best Pub Category Award for 2004. One place guaranteed to keep the "flowers" in good nick!

version of the 6.0% Christmas Ale bottled for export. Meanwhile Northumberland have produced Santa's Secret and Winter Warmer. No doubt other festive brews will be doing the rounds. Of course down in Wainfleet, Batemans have been producing the popular Rosey Nosey. By the time you read this it should be spreading around the region like a fart on a windy day!

Many of the guest ales advertised have failed to appear in The Waterhouse in Durham although if you like Darwin beers you are fine. Not that there is anything wrong with Darwin, just that one brewery shouldn't be hogging a guest list! Especially as other beers are advertised and then don't appear!

proves that the genuine stuff on handpull is in a class of its own.

And The Daleside, Croxdale mixed music with ale on a couple of occasions with the strong ale fest in late October being particularly ambitious! Well done Mike! For those of you who didn't attend you could have sampled amongst others Titanic Wreckage 7%, Harviestoun Old Engine Oil 6%, (a particularly rare outing for this beer normally found in bottled form.)



GOOD BEER GUIDE 2005

A reminder to anyone who has not yet purchased a Good Beer Guide. They are still available from the branch at the price of £10 for members and £11 for non members. This gives a good saving on shop prices.



GOOD BOTTLED BEER GUIDE 2005

In addition to the Good Beer Guide, copies of the Good Bottled Beer Guide can be ordered through Durham CAMRA. Priced at £6 to CAMRA members and £7 to non members this is cheaper than the normal retail price of £9.99. It contains much useful information about bottle conditioned beers and the breweries that produce them.

But you will find The Union Rooms, Newcastle hard to beat. Their choice during the festival was magnificent. Well done! However on Tuesday 26th October I wandered into the pub to find every single handpump devoid of pumpclips. Even "Sorry Not Available" wasn't on sale. No cask ale meant one thing, no custom! Unfortunately no one from Wetherspoons was available for comment.



HILL ISLAND NEWS

Recent brews have featured 2nd Anniversary Special, congratulations Michael! And his beers have continued to feature region-wide and further afield. One regular outlet lost is The Gala who no longer serve cask. Also The Shakespeare, Durham is now tied to the Scotco list so all guest ales must be sourced through them. This just illustrates how tough it is for microbreweries. But the Fitzgerald chain which includes Fitzgeralds, Sunderland, The Briardene, Whitley Bay and The Bridge Hotel, Newcastle continues to be a good outlet for the beers.



MORE NEWS AND BREWS

The Penny Ghyll, Spennymoor reopened recently and now has 2 cask ales on sale. Another Spennymoor establishment back on the scene is the Frog and Ferret. You wait ages for a cask pub and two come along at once! Still, excellent news for Spennymoor. Meanwhile down the road at The Duke of Wellington, on the A689 outside of Durham, should have Hardy & Hanson's Rocking Rudolph on sale for the festive period. It is the seasonal guest in Embers Inns pubs. Meanwhile, some festive offerings will be on sale in the region from some of our local micros. These include Headmaster's Christmas Sermon from Mordue and Christmas Ale from Camerons. The latter is a 4.3%



VALS

Seen some great y in recent weeks. ham, held a week ig 17 Durham beers e the North East. on a purpose built mbitious festival. and attendance on sale was of good quantity. ingredients were Tryst Carronade IPA from Larbert and Greenfield's Firecracker. Empire's Strikesback was a newcomer from Fieldhouse, Huddersfield. The Greenfield was an ideal brew for bonfire night with burnt toffee notes blending with the hops. Durham's Scimitar, a true cask lager was superb. Don't be put off by cask lager as this



LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

WOODMAN BECOMES DURHAM BREWERY TAP

Such has been the popularity of Durham Brewery's beer at The Woodman it has now been designated as their Brewery Tap. Two of the handpumps were replaced with dedicated Durham handpumps which will be used exclusively for Durham Brewery beers. The initiative recognises both the quality and popularity of Durham's beer and the fact that it is served in excellent condition. Of course the remaining four pumps will continue to serve a selection of guest ales from a wide range of breweries.

As well as The Woodman, chosen by Durham to showcase their beers at their best a quality pint of Durham produced ale can often be found at The Victoria, Hallgarth Street, Durham; The Half Moon, Durham; The Magnesia Bank, North Shields; The Bodega, Newcastle; The Three Judges, Partick (just thought we'd throw that one in for you!) and Fitzgeralds, Sunderland. And of course there are now many others but this gives you a start!

HILL ISLAND IS 2!!

Congratulations go to Michael Griffin and his one man operation, Hill Island Brewery. Having brewed previously for Cameron's and Durham, Michael became the principle brewer at Cathedrals in Durham. This gave him

the opportunity to experiment and produce a varied range of brews. When Cathedrals closed Michael commenced his Hill Island operation situated in Fowlers Yard in October 2002. Building on recipes he brought from Cathedrals he has produced over 80 different beers ranging from Belgian style wheat beers to light hoppy summer ales. And also featured have been exclusive house beers which for a time featured in The Dun Cow, Durham and The Daleside, Croxdale.

His enthusiasm has driven the business and his beers have become popular on both Wearside and Tyneside often featuring in the Fitzgerald chain. Ales such as Griffin's Irish Stout have proved best sellers.

Well done Michael, we may not have many breweries in the heart of County Durham but having two within 3 miles of each other is even more remarkable because of this. Let's hope we can say the same thing in another two years!

DERWENT ROSE

Not to be forgotten, the third brewery in our branch area, Derwent Rose, continues to provide the good people of Consett with excellent beer. Favourites such as C2C and Potts Clock still prove popular. And the fact that another beer festival managed to see off all of Paul Conroy's own brews is testament to his continued commitment and hard work.

The Grey Horse, Sherburn Terrace, Consett is home to the brewery and at least one of the brews features on the bar. However they do sell extremely quickly so be warned!! Having said that a range of guest ales feature and with superb beer quality, cosy surroundings and a warm welcome it is an ideal place to visit on a cold winter's day!

DURHAM BEER FESTIVAL A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Congratulations to all those involved in the success of the 24th Durham Beer Festival.

An estimated 1300 people attended the event over the 3 days and got through approximately 4900 pints of fine ale. Despite a bigger beer order than last year and the provision of extra casks the festival still ran dry.

First beers to go were Durham's The Imp, a 3.9% festival special and Orkney's Red MacGregor. Also popular were Bank Top's Port O'Call, a 5% porter with port added to the brew and Decade, Durham's 10% commemorative barley wine. The latter proved dangerously drinkable and for those of you who missed it is available in bottles.

New breweries featured included Box Steam, Conwy, Downton and Leeming Waters. Downton's Olympic Flame was very reminiscent of Hop Back brews from their earlier days and was amongst your editor's favourites.

Apologies to those of you who arrived late on Saturday to find the venue locked up in darkness. Having been drunk dry and closed by 5.00pm we exceeded all expectations. But no thanks goes to the moron who removed the notice informing people that the festival was closed.

Next year it is intended that the festival will increase in size and that there will be beer available for the Saturday. If you wish to try specific brews then please don't wait until the last minute. But if you do come on Saturday next time there should be some fine beers to enjoy.

Planning has started for next year so if you would like to get involved then please get in touch with one of the branch contacts listed and they will be more than happy to talk to you.

NEWS AND BREWS

The Square And Compass, West Cornforth has changed hands. Jenny and Alan Whitfield have taken over this popular free house. Alan will be well known to cask drinkers as a previous licensee at the Dun Cow, Durham and also as one of the faces of Cameron's. Their commitment to cask ale is never in doubt and we wish them the best of luck.

Meanwhile the tenancies for The Rose Tree, Shincliffe and The Shakespeare, Durham have been advertised recently.