

# WHAT'S DOING

The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

Number 1. November 1975.

The North Manchester Branch plans within the next year to publish a Greater Manchester Beer Guide and also to stage a Beer Exhibition in conjunction with other branches. In addition the branch has to keep up with its usual work of monitoring entries for the National Guide, maintaining contact with breweries, protecting real ale pubs and keeping alive the traditions which it believes to be of value. All of this, it is clear, needs the active involvement and cooperation of a large number of branch members.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible for members to come to every branch meeting. Inevitably, therefore, they lose contact with branch affairs and may find that they have missed activities in which they would have liked to participate. I hope that this news letter will fill that gap and

will enable members to keep in touch with the progress of the branch whether or not they can regularly attend branch meetings. I should also like it to provide a focus for ideas and suggestions, for complaints and criticisms, and in fact for any relevant views you may wish to express.

We hope eventually to publish the news letter at least six times a year and to make it available for sale at branch meetings as well as to post it to subscribers.

Jem Callaghan, who never gets any letters anyway, will be delighted to render your tortured sentences into matchless prose. Contributions to him at 30, Stafford Road, Ellesmere Park, Eccles, Manchester, M30 9HW (no hawkers or callers) Works tel. no. 061-736-5843 ext. 7364.

Roger Hall  
Chairman.



## THE MIDLANDS REAL BEER FESTIVAL.

The Midlands Real Beer Festival was held in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, on October 31 and November 1. Three North Manchester members went along on the Friday night and Saturday lunchtime, to see what lessons could be learnt for our own festival as well as to sample the ale.

The following Midland brewers were represented at the Festival: Ansell's, Banks's, Bass Worthington, Davenport's, Donnington, Everards, Holdens, Home, Hook Norton, Hoskins, Mrs Lewis's, Marston, Thompson & Evershed, M & B, Morland, Morrells, Mrs Pardoe's, Ruddle, Simpkins, South Wales & Monmouthshire United Clubs' Brewery and Wadworth, as well as Bulmers, who provided traditional draught cider. In all, some 5 different milds, 20 ordinary bitters, 2 home brewed beers, 3 strong bitters and 4 strong ales or barley wines were on sale. Prices ranged from 10p per half pint glass for the milds and bitters to 15p for the strong bitters and 20p for the strong ales and barley wines. Nearly all the beers were served by gravity in a temperature that was just right for the ale but a little cold for the people drinking it. Not surprisingly, Mrs Lewis's, one of the home brews, was the first to run out, with others due for sale on the Friday following throughout the evening.

All the beer was served by CAMRA helpers from local branches. A CAMRA stall was also set up selling national and local beer guides, CAMRA t-shirts and so forth. Apart from selling out of t-shirts and getting rid of a lot of local guides, sales went fairly slowly and the number of new members joining was also disappointing.

When we arrived on Friday night, queues were already beginning to form, but since we were helping out on the inside we avoided these. Those who weren't so lucky, after being checked by a security guard, queued for half pint glasses which could be obtained for 30p, and admission programmes at 20p. Beer was paid for with tickets so that no money changed hands over the bars, the tickets being bought on admission in 5p multiples. There were no really long queues at any point and the whole system seemed to work well. The only minor problem occurred when a box of used tickets found its way to the public side of the bar and some rather chewed tickets started appearing at the refund counter. Refunded tickets were however carefully checked and the offending box was soon removed to the office under the eye of the Securicor guards who were there to collect the takings.



The organisers of the Festival were at great pains to avoid losing the kind of sums that had been lost at Covent Garden. At frequent intervals one of them would collect from about 5 cash points accompanied by two or more Securicor men. The money was then counted, double checked and locked in a brief case before being whisked away by Securicor at the end of the evening.

Friday's proved to be the most successful session as far as takings were concerned, about £4000 changing hands. Saturday afternoon and evening were disappointing. Since the Festival had to clear £12000 to make a profit, at least £8000 had to be taken on the Saturday but receipts fell short of this. Although the final figures are not known to us, the Festival does seem to have made a loss, and a fairly hefty loss at that.

Bingley Hall might be a very good place for holding an Ideal Home Exhibition, but it was not the best atmosphere for a beer festival. This was more apparent on the Saturday afternoon when numbers were low and the roof started to leak than on the Friday when it was very full. The atmosphere on Friday was lively and people seemed to enjoy themselves. The only incident was a rather inefficient scuffle, soon broken up by the police on

on duty. As people left at 10pm on Friday (so that the place could be cleared by closing time) many were making appreciative comments about the beers they had tasted, many for the first time since Birmingham is notoriously bad for the choice if not the availability of real beer. There were, interestingly, a number of publicans there, mainly from Ansells houses, who were in real difficulties in obtaining beer and were looking for other suppliers, but sadly without success.

What lessons can be learned? The most important is that, despite Covent Garden, size is no guarantee of success. Although publicity was good, overall attendance was disappointing and costs were not covered. It might be worth asking if Saturday is a good day, especially in a big, non-residential city centre which has other attractions to offer. Secondly, the glasses were stamped souvenir glasses which could be returned and the deposit refunded. The organisers hadn't bargained for so many coming back, and although they closed the refund counter on Saturday night they were left with a lot. With no sale or return agreement and with the stamp these costly items will be hard to get rid of. Finally, the hall itself was too large and gloomy. More congenial surroundings might have encouraged people to stay longer. So now let's see what we can do!



## GREATER MANCHESTER

### BEER GUIDE

The following areas have been surveyed in full but news and comments about changes are still welcomed: Eccles, Irlam & Cadishead, Swinton & Pendlebury, Worsley & Walkden, Salford, Blackley, H arpurhey, Collyhurst and Central Manchester.

Information is still required for Bolton, Westhoughton, Little Lever, Farnworth, Horwich, Turton, Newton Heath, Moston, Ancoats, Miles Platting, Bradford, Cheetham Hill, Crumpsall and Strangeways.

Details of pubs which are to be recommended are urgently required.

### BODDINGTONS

A letter has been sent asking for a statement of official policy on

- Handpumps
- Rebuilding

### WILSONS

A letter has been sent asking for clarification about whether Olympic Bitter is to be marketed in 'fined' form.

### MEMBERSHIP

An official letter of protest has been sent to headquarters concerning delays in processing membership applications.

## THE BOATHOUSE

Paul Roberts is investigating the possibility of the Boathouse being registered as a listed building. Information concerning other pubs which may deserve listing would be welcomed.

### BRANCH COMMITTEE

Chairman: Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, M9 2PW  
740 7937

Secretary: Paul Roberts, 50 Silver Street, Irlam.  
775 3890

Treasurer: David Dodd, 5 Half Edge Lane, Eccles.  
789 1121

Members: Pete Cash, 225 East Lancashire Road, Swinton  
Dave Smith  
738 2628  
Jem Callaghan  
(Newsletter Editor) 30, Stafford Road, Ellesmere Park, Eccles.

736 5843 x7364 (work)

### FUTURE EVENTS

There will be a social evening in the Boathouse, Ferryhill Road, Irlam, on Saturday 13th December, starting at 8.00 p.m. Pete Cash has promised live entertainment and another rendering of that old favourite, 'The L.U.T. Blues'!

### 1976 GOOD BEER GUIDE

North Manchester's allocation of pubs has been increased to 42, which is a step in the right direction even if it does not give complete coverage to real ale outlets. Three pubs have been deleted from the 1975 guide: The Unicorn on Church St., Manchester, and the Wellington and the Kersal in Salford. The following pubs have been submitted for inclusion in the 1976 Guide:

Ainsworth Arms	Tetley-Walker	Bolton
Stag's Head	Burtonwood	Deane, Bolton
Toll Bar	Thwaites	Horwich
Gipsys Tent	Tetley-Walker	Bolton
Queen Anne	Thwaites	Little Lever
White Lion	Boddingtons	Little Hulton
Farmers Arms	Boddingtons	Swinton
Football	Tetleys	Swinton
Boathouse	Boddingtons	Irlam
Black Boy	Wilsons	Eccles
Wellington	Greenall Whitley	Patricroft
Lamb Hotel	Holts	Eccles
Braziers Arms	Boddingtons	Salford
Union Tavern	Holts	Salford
Prince of Wales	Tetleys	Salford
King William IV	Marstons	Salford
Harp & Shamrock	Marstons	Manchester 4
Jolly Angler	Hydes	Manchester 1
Grosvenor Arms	Lees	Newton Heath
Old House		
at Home	Wilsons	Blackley
Pheasant	Robinsons	Blackley
Mile House	Boddingtons	Cheetham



CAMRA Ltd

The branch via the branch committee has felt it necessary to protest strongly to the National Executive against the proposed formalisation of the organisation via CAMRA Ltd.

The Chairman has written to Mr G Massey summarising the branch's views along the following lines:

- 1- that CAMRA Ltd is unnecessary
- 2- that it would result in a reduction of the autonomy of branches and would diminish spontaneity and speed of response to local problems.
- 3- that since the existence of CAMRA Ltd. is to be decided at an Extraordinary General Meeting in London where votes are individual rather than by branch, its inception seems to be out of the hands of those who stand to lose most by it.