

WHAT'S DOING

Number 10 August 1976

The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

THE DERBY

Four members of the Branch had a meeting last Tuesday with representatives from Lanchester Taverns (the part of the Grand Metropolitan Group responsible for Wilson's tenanted houses) about the future of the Derby Hotel. Lanchester Taverns have given us an undertaking that should Salford Corporation be persuaded to leave the pub standing they are prepared to renovate the building to a satisfactory standard without ruining its present character. Although a Compulsory Purchase Order has been served on the pub, the brewery has not yet been compensated and we hope that a letter to the Council, especially in the present financial climate, may be enough to ensure that the Derby is kept standing in the forthcoming Ordsall Lane development.

200 YEARS

Boddingtons will be celebrating its bicentenary in 1978 and a bicentenary ale is planned to commemorate the occasion.

PINT OF MIXED

This month's What's Brewing mentions the widespread inefficiency of Breweries during the recent hot spell, one effect of which manifested itself in a novel way in downtown Eccles. Roving reporter Paul Roberts tells us that in a certain Wilsons pub he was served two-thirds of a pint of the draught bitter, and had his glass topped up with chilled liquid from a keg dispenser.

RAIL ALE

British Rail's real ale revival Tartan at 30p, although even has spread to Manchester. Boddingtons bitter and Bass are now available in the buffet at Victoria Station.

Purely in the interests of research, and for the sole benefit of 'What's Doing' readers, I spent an hour or so investigating and this is what I found.

Both beers are kept and served in very good condition. Hand-pumps are used for dispense, although in the case of the Bass an attempt has been made to disguise the handpump as a pressure pump, which at least is a change from the other way round.

Of course, as with the rest of BR's operations, one has to pay for one's pleasures and a pint of Bass will set you back 28p whilst Boddingtons is a staggering 29p. Both real ales are however cheaper than Keg

at this price it seems to sell as much if not more than both the others combined. In fact any complacent CAMRA members who think that the real ale battle has been won would do well to sup a pint or two at this bar and see how many people asking for 'a pint of bitter' choose Tartan even when offered a choice by the barman.

The introduction of real ale to any new outlet is welcome and at Victoria it will be very useful for railway freaks, expense-account CAMRA executives and travellers arriving just before closing time, anyone else would do better to walk a hundred yards or so in any direction from the station and drink his real ale in a real pub at real prices.

Jim Davies

PUB OF THE MONTH

THE HOWCROFT Pool Street Bolton

The Howcroft is in a terraced street, St Georges Road, not far from the centre of Bolton. The pub is one of the few remaining pubs in or near a city centre still to retain a bowling green. Most greens have been tarmacadamed for a number of years but bowls is still played on Summer evenings. Walkers bitter and Tetleys mild are served from handpumps in the central bar. Besides the not inconsiderable drinking area round the bar, there are three rooms, a large vault opposite the bar, a small games-cum-television room served through a hatch and a large room which is not always in use. The pub has not been spoilt in any way by modernisation and is well worth visiting.

Roger Hall

THE BLUE RESOLUTION

Swinton Conservative Club is to install Boddington's mild and bitter, following problems of continuity of supplies from one of their previous suppliers. The tank Tetleys will still be sold alongside the electric pumped Boddingtons.

BELT UP WITH BODDIES

In addition to tee-shirts, Boddingtons belts and, would you believe, sew-on patches are now going on sale in Manchester pubs. Unfortunately the income from these sales does not go towards keeping the price of ale down - the business is run by a private firm in Blackpool, all Boddingtons get out of it is the free advertising.

SALFORD 88 CLUB

The next two crawls are as follows, starting at 7.00pm

SALFORD 3 - Wednesday 25 August

Hyde Park Corner	Silk Street	Tetley
Druids Home	Silk Street	Wilsons
Kings Arms	Bloom Street	Greenall
Lord Nelson	Chapel Street	Wilsons
Punch Bowl	Chapel Street	Tetley

CROSS LANE - Wednesday 1 September

Falcon Inn	Cross Lane	Wilsons
Station Hotel	Cross Lane	Greenall
Red Cow	Albion Street	Boddingtons
Corporation	Cross Lane	Wilsons
Windsor Castle	Windsor	Wilsons
Paddock	Cross Lane	Boddingtons

AN EYEFUL OF NELSON

In the course of 'Wilson-ification' - the removing of the Watney image from ex-Wilsons pubs - the Nelson Hotel in Stockport has fallen foul of the law of the land. As part of a very tasteful facelift 'Wilsons Prize Ales' was painted onto the brickwork on the first floor wall of the pub, and this contravenes advertising regulations. A

complaint was lodged by Stockport Council (the Town Hall is opposite the pub) and it was upheld by the Department of the Environment as being 'detrimental to visual amenity'.

It is ironic that the complaint should come from the Town Hall, an unpleasant piece of architecture which has been described as 'a Gothic wedding cake gone wrong'.

'CAMRAIL' NEWS

Hartleys XB is being withdrawn from the White Gates, to be replaced by those other fine old Manchester brews, Theakstons bitter and Old Peculier. This shuffle is due to 'economic reasons and shortage of cellar space'.

CAMRA Real Ale Investments

will open at the end of August. Beer on sale will be Sam Smiths mild and bitter, Batemans bitter, Theakstons Old Peculier and Taylors Best Bitter. The Eagle has eight bedrooms, so it has the dubious distinction of being CAMRAILs first hotel.

CAMRA, the real ale people's organisation, is to lose its first London landlord after only seven months, because the beer buffs are becoming as bad as the wine snobs.

Bill Rotch, who runs the Camra-owned Nag's Head in Hampstead, has tendered his resignation.

Yesterday Christopher Hutt, a director of Camra Investments Ltd., told me: "Bill has resigned for his own reasons which I have discussed with him. I don't propose to discuss it with you."

Those close to the Nag's Head tell me that Bill Rotch—who is on holiday and unavailable for comment—is leaving because he is fed up with complaints and criticisms from the beer snobs who flock to the pub.

Apparently the self-appointed beer experts have been wingeing about everything from the condition of the brews to the decor.

This is hardly in keeping with the latest Camra code of ethics which urges members to eschew "Beer snobbery or trying to tell publicans how to do their job."



Daily Mirror 4th August

THE GREAT



internal correspondence

from: Andrew Cunningham	to: The Editor, What's Doing.
date: 8. 8. 76.	copies: Editor, What's Brewing.

Dear Sir,

I am surprised to find a normally responsible and valuable publication like 'What's Doing' wasting space on such ~~a~~ pointless and misinterpreted rubbish as the article on the 1977 Good Beer Guide in No. 9. Perhaps not all branches are peopled by such brilliant people as North Manchester but many branches have asked repeatedly for such help.

On "guidelines", the circular clearly states that they only apply when other things are equal, i.e. beer quality is paramount. Only three of the criteria are quoted, and out of context at that. It is also explicitly said that the emphasis will vary from one part of the country to another. Similarly, the "suggested comments" are obviously samples only - to avoid the irrelevant & useless "landlord a CAMRA member" or "excellent ale" type of comment appearing yet again. They merely give you an idea of what to expect when selecting a pub from the Guide. No one expects any pub to fit the exact comments or that the same standards apply to diverse types of establishment, let alone that branches should choose "the nearest fit from a list of clichés."

If the Editor really wishes to drink his ale out of a dirty glass in a hostile atmosphere or arrange to meet for a nice quiet pint in a juke-box-ridden gin palace because the guide didn't warn him, then the general public and I don't. If he gets kag because the landlord needs to be asked for what the good man knows as "from the band," it serves him right. "Seriously, what a load of brye" - You can do better than this.

Yours sincerely,

A. A. Cunningham

DEBATE

Branch Bulletin, which last month brought us those wonderful tips and trite remarks to be used in the description of pubs, has followed this up with another article of equal merit. The piece is headed 'Publicity Guidelines' but is a list of edicts rather than suggestions.

The author, who, to judge by his style and knowledge of propaganda, must have been apprenticed to Goebbels and Stalin, draws our attention to matters which would normally escape the attention of even the most observant branch.

'The branch press officer must be relatively intelligent, articulate and literate'. We must seriously reconsider our decision to appoint a sub-normal dyslexic who stammers.

'Issue press releases, whenever you have something to say or whenever something has happened in your area or which affects your area, on which you feel bound to express an opinion'. It has, in the past, been our custom to issue press releases something like this:-

Last week nothing at all happened in North Manchester. When asked to what he attributed this colossal lack of activity, the leader of the North Manchester Branch of Camra Obergruppenführer Callaghan remarked 'Dunno.'

We are evidently going to have to remodel our thinking to bring it into line with the thoughts of Chairman Bru-Ton and lackey Toni-Gib-Son.'

'Don't knock your own organisation in public' Whyever not? Is Camra so insecure that it must stamp out internal discussion and dissent? Smuggled from the Pennine salt mines is the following list of grievances:-

- 1 Camra is becoming more bureaucratic and dictatorial.*
- 2 Camra is undemocratic in its selection of Area and Regional Organisers.*
- 3 Camra makes a prune of itself by trying to define real cider, accepting brewery conditioned beer as real ale and by selling tee shirts, cufflinks and other paraphernalia which attract berks of all descriptions to the movement.*

- 4 The National Beer Guide is a fatuous publication. It's too expensive, full of duff information, contains incane descriptions of beer and pubs and divides towns up into ridiculously small areas which waste space. (If M Hardman knew that Salford consisted of Irlams o'th'Height, Pendleton, Charlestown, Lower Broughton, Higher Broughton, Lower Kersal, Kersal, Dale, Bridleheath, Little Bolton, Weaste, Seedley, Wallness, Ordsall, Trinity, Greengate and Hightown as well as Salford itself, he'd divide it up accordingly)
- 5 Page 3 of What's Brewing is not as good as 'The Sun'.

'Press releases usually take the form of a statement' Oh, in our ignorance we'd been sending questions like "Is it hoppy" and "Do you find that Drabs smooth, full flavoured, malty Kamikaze bitter is less bland than Brobdignags well balanced inobtrusive mild?" No wonder we got nowhere.

Advice and guidance on publicity would be welcome. Orders and instructions are not, particularly when they are linked to silly truisms.

Roger Hall

GRIZZLY BEER?

It was agreed the Campaigning Committee should add their observations to the Technical Committee's critique of the EEC bear directive to be sent to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Branch Bulletin, August 1976

A PLAY FOR TODAY

When Josiah Drab founded his brewery over 80 years ago he considered advertising to be unnecessary and repugnant. The monumental hostelries he built were, as often as not, hidden in secluded hideaways away from the main highway. Signs announcing Drab's ales and stout were non-existent, beer-mats were not made and bottles were turned so that the label was not visible to the customer. The strength of the old man's personality was such that he continued to exercise control from beyond the grave. Admittedly the odd sign was made and the occasional beer mat could be seen; even one or two of old Josiah's pubs were knocked down and new ones built; but the basic philosophy remained and little concession was made to progressive ideas. Whilst other brewers were engaged in the red revolution, buying beer tankers, building theme pubs, buying up small breweries and building new big ones, Josiah Drab's carried on in much the same way as it had for 80 years.

It was, therefore, with considerable trepidation that Josiah's grandson Ebenezer and his co-directors Lord Prunesdale, Osbert Dowdy and Sir Percy Pigswill decided to embark on a hitherto unheard of advertising campaign and approached the firm of J Walter Pufflogger for advice.

The scene opens with the board of Drab's talking to Peregrine Mediaperson, the account executive and his assistants Phoebe Tripescribbler and Aubrey Gungepeddlar through the office enquiry window of Drab's Crown Brewery...

Prunesdale: (Taking snuff from silver case tucked in left gaiter) Why can't we just say "Drab's is good for you"?

Mediaperson: (Sweating in cheesecloth shirt) Well, it has been done before you know and we might be in trouble with the Trades Descriptions Act. Have you any thoughts launchwise, Aub?

Gungepeddlar: Well, now, yes - er, we - that is Feeb and I have been tossing this around amongst ourselves - we

have come up with some poss. campaigns. We thought that if we threw these out - sort of brainstorming - feedback and all that - we might get something that gets...

Mediaperson: O.K. Fine, fine - shoot if that's O.K. with you Mr Ebenezer.

Drab: Aye, carry on but mind it's got to fit th'image o' th'firm. We don't want no pansified rubbish wrote about us you know.

Gungepeddlar: (*Hiding necklace and kicking handbag under reception desk*) Great, super - er, I, we though we must move up-market, appeal to the ABs and Cls n'est ce pas Feeb?

Tripescribbler: (*Removing Meerschauum from mouth*) Sure Aub - Drab's has a downmarket D,E image, innuendoes of hunger marches, poverty and mundane proletarian socio-economic ethos - the ethnic bias militates against a more broadly based approach at this moment in time, unless it can be eroded.

Mediaperson: Yes, fine, fine, hopefully we can remove this working class situation idea.

Drab: You'll lose all t'customers we've got. No one else is going to drink the stuff.

Pigswill: Come on Drab, have you no confidence in your own brews?

Drab: Well, do you drink it?

Pigswill: Ah, mm, well, er not exactly, it's the psiff-acosis you know.

Drab: Aye, anyhow, go on. 'Ave you got anything else to suggest?

Tripescribbler: We thought in terms of a co-ordinated campaign, updating the image by carpeting the pubs, attracting women, promoting lager and wine, introducing chicken in a basket, steak bars, cocktail lounges, discotheques and theme rooms.

Drab: (*Chokes and foams at the mouth*) Urgghh!

Conversation continues in the same vein

Eventually the following advertisement appears....

From the city which brought you the Halle and the Guardian, Joule and Dalton come the fine beers of Josiah Drab. Brewed in the traditional way from the brewer who makes more beer from the wood than any other brewer, Drab's refreshes the parts that other beers cannot reach. It's Drabsclusive, it's Drabciting, join the Drab bitter men, it's just right, Drab Light; worth passing a few pubs for, Drab bighead, brewed to suit the local taste. Join the Drab revolution. Smile please you're in Drabland. It's the real thing, Drab.

Following the dramatic success of the campaign against cigarette smoking the Government has decided to extend the warnings to beer drinking. All pots will in future have an adhesive label fixed to the bottom. (Pots for Guinness and dark mild will have a captive cork float on a chain) The inscription will read as follows:

ADVICE BY H.M. GOVERNMENT

Drinking can damage your health

IF YOU DO DRINK BEER

Order metric pints

Remove from mouth between drinks

Leave your glass half full

Vomit more frequently

QUIZ

Which Chairman of which brewery wrote the following in his annual report:

'All beer served in our houses is brewed from traditional materials and is real beer. The method by which it is dispensed provides beer at its best and ensures that it is always in first-class condition.'

Answer: Mr Alex Bennett of Whitbread & Co Ltd (I bet you didn't get it)

THE NEXT BRANCH MEETING WILL BE IN THE PAPERMAKERS ARMS,
CLIFDEN PLACE, SALFORD 7, ON WEDNESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER
STARTING AT 8.00pm