

WHAT'S DOING

Number 11, September 1976

The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

AT LAST

The Greater Manchester Good Beer Guide is at the printers and if all goes well it will be 'launched' at the end of October.

The Guide contains about 500 pubs, from almost 2,000 in the Greater Manchester area; over 50 different beers, including 5 strong ales and over 20 milds. It will sell at 45p.

This sudden burst of activity from those involved in the production of the guide means that our Salford guide will be held over until the dust settles. (Probably around Christmas time)

BOLTON BASS

The Swan Hotel, a Bass Charrington pub on Bradshawgate, Bolton, is opening a Real Ale Bar. Whether this is real ale as Camra or as Bass Charrington define it remains to be seen. 'Real' beers available will be Toby Light, Worthington Best Bitter, Bass, and a mild. According to the Bolton Evening News, the ale is free on the opening night - Wednesday 15th September - from 7.00pm until 8.30pm, which is just about the time when this issue of What's Doing hits the streets, so by now you've missed it.

BRIGHTENING UP

Wilsons have, as many will have noticed, pressed ahead with their degrotrnification of pubs. According to the Manchester Evening News the brewery has been brightening its beer as well. According to the newspaper, filtered beer was sold in casks, dispensed by traditional means and nobody noticed. It is to be hoped that this was caused by temporary production difficulties and that the lack of public response will not encourage Wilsons to sell more brewery conditioned beer to publicans who have difficulty in maintaining the quality of cask conditioned beer.

STATION CLOSED

The Station Hotel on Cross Lane, one of the more dubious of Salford's real ale pubs, was due to be checked out on the last crawl. The pub was, however, closed. Whether this was because of fear of invasion by either Manchester United fans or Camra members or for some other reason is not known. Information on whether this Greenall Whitley pub sells real ale or not would be gratefully received.

WHITE GATES BARRED?

According to their Chairman, Rod Oliver, High Peak and North East Cheshire branch have been discussing whether or not the White Gates (Camrails pub in Hyde) should be included in the 1977 Good Beer Guide. No doubt any decision to exclude the pub would be overruled, even though many other pubs in the area may deserve inclusion in preference to a pub which has been trendily renovated at great expense and which sells beers from out of the area. It is, however, likely that inclusion of the White Gates may prove expedient to the branch even if it is not the best choice.

BRANCHING OUT

A meeting to test support is to be held in Bolton in October. Bolton is an area which has received less than its fair share of attention from the North Manchester branch in the past, partly because of the lack of interest shown there. Although there is less real ale available in Bolton than in other parts of the area, there are nevertheless several excellent pubs selling Walkers, Wilsons, Burtonwood, Greenall Whitley and Thwaites. There is also a lot of work to do in completing the survey of pubs in Bolton. It is hoped that members of all the local branches will come along and give their support to Chris Molyneux and John Slater who are enthusiastic about the meeting which is to be held at...

The Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street, Bolton, at 8.00pm on Tuesday 19th October.

Further details from Chris Molyneux, Bolton 57356.

If a branch is set up in Bolton, it is envisaged that it would be responsible for Metropolitan Bolton, including Farnworth, Westhoughton, Little Lever, Horwich and Blackrod, which would leave North Manchester with the more manageable area of Metropolitan Salford and Metropolitan Manchester north of Deansgate and Market Street and west of the Medlock.

MEETING PLACE

Following Percy's retirement, members felt that the character of the Lord Nelson may alter and that a change of venue would be appropriate. It was decided that the next three meetings would be:-

October	The Lamb Hotel	Eccles
November	Three Crowns	Little Lever
December	White Swan	Swinton

1977 GOOD BEER GUIDE

At the August Branch meeting it was decided that the following pubs which appeared in the 1976 Guide should be excluded from the 1977 Guide, either because the pub no longer sold real ale or because the quality of the beer was not consistently of the highest order in the opinion of branch members:

Stags Head	31 Junction Road, Bolton
Black Boy	Liverpool Road, Patricroft
Wellington	Barton Road, Patricroft
Welcome	136 Ordsall Lane, Salford

It was further decided that these four pubs should be replaced in the guide with pubs in the same localities, in order that the geographical coverage and density should not be disturbed. John Slater agreed to submit a return for the Sportsman in Bolton; Jim Davies said he would fill in forms for the Crown and Volunteer and the Egerton in Eccles and Neil Richardson promised to give details about the Greyhound in Salford.

There was again strong feeling in the branch about the waste of space in the Guide caused by two factors:-

The subdivision of areas into tiny villages which are probably meaningless to outsiders, and which causes needless repetition of opening times.

The inclusion of facile remarks about pubs.

The thought was expressed and endorsed by the meeting that if the following guidelines were followed we might be able to include another dozen pubs in North Manchester:

Greater Manchester consists of ten metropolitan districts which are readily identifiable and which are used as the basis of most planning in the area.

A map showing the metropolitan districts and their constituent parts could be printed in the guide with an explanation. This would be more useful to the visitor than the present map on which all the towns and cities and villages are marked if they contain a beer guide pub,

resulting in a confused and somewhat inaccurate picture of Greater Manchester.

3 Pubs could be listed under the Metropolitan District in which they are, with possible subdivision in the constituent parts of the District. This would have the advantage of concentrating the pubs in an area onto one page of the Guide. For example, the entry for Salford in the 1977 Guide could be as follows:-

SALFORD

11-3; 5.30-10.00 (11 F,S)

Eccles

Crown and Volunteer

171 Church Street, Eccles
061-789 4809
Holt ● o E

Egerton Arms

Worsley Road, Winton
Boddington ● o H ■ G

Lamb Hotel

33 Regent Street, Eccles
061-789 3882
Holt ● o E

Queens Arms

Green Lane, Patricroft
(near station) 061-789 2019
Boddington ● o H

Irlam and Cadishead

Boathouse

Ferry Road, Irlam

....This would be followed by the pubs of Salford itself, Swinton and Pendlebury and Worsley.

This arrangement has the advantage of consistency over the present categories which are conspicuously inconsistent. For example; North Manchester is divided into Cheetham Hill, Blackley, Higher Blackley and Newton Heath in the 1976 Guide, whereas the pubs in Salford appear under Salford whether they are in Ordsall, Broughton, Pendleton or Blackfriars. The Black Boy, Patricroft, is listed under

Eccles, whilst the Queens Arms, Patricroft, is listed under Patricroft.

4 If the full address of each pub is given and reference is made to the A-Z in the introduction, the visitor to Greater Manchester should have no difficulty in locating pubs in a particular area. At the moment, even residents of Eccles would find it difficult to mark the boundaries of Winton, Monton, Peel Green, Patricroft and Barton with confidence.

5 With the notable exceptions of Rochdale, Oldham and Atherton, opening times are consistent throughout the area. The constant repetition could be avoided by inserting a paragraph at the beginning and noting any exceptions under the pub or town concerned.

6 Some pubs do require comments but all the following could be erased with no loss of information to the reader:-

Good drinking atmosphere; An 80 year old local; Modern lounge and lively vault; About 300 years old; Friendly town pub; Extended and renovated; Busy pub with ornate fascia; A large pub; Small, working class pub; A busy pub; A friendly local; Pleasant low ceiling lounge; A comfortable local; A modern pub with 4 rooms; Caters for older people; etc, etc..

This would allow inclusion of perhaps 30% more pubs in Greater Manchester.

The meeting discussed which pubs could be put in the guide as additions, if our suggestions were met. The selected pubs are listed below together with the persons who promised to submit returns:-

The Windmill	Bolton Road, Pendlebury	Pete Cash
The Royal Oak*	" " "	" "
Packet House	Liverpool Road, Patricroft	Jim Davies
Stanley Arms	Chorley Old Rd., Bolton	John Slater
Howcroft Arms	Pool Street, Bolton	" "
Bowling Green	Bury Road, Bolton	" "
The Beehive	Holland Street, Salford 6	Neil Richardson
The Feathers	Laundry Street, Salford 6	" "
Flying Horse	Greengate, Salford 3	" "
White Horse	Liverpool Road, Irlam	Paul Roberts
King William**	Commonside Road, Boothstown	Stewart Revell
Old Bulls Head	Church Street, Eccles	Jim Davies

*Although the Royal Oak serves cask conditioned beer there is some suspicion that very light blanket CO2 pressure may be used in accordance with Bass-Charrington's stated policy. Although this may not noticeably affect the taste of the beer for many people, no pub serving beer under CO2 pressure of any sort may be included in the Good Beer Guide. Pete Cash has promised to investigate this thoroughly before filling in a return.

**The King William is in fact in the Metropolitan District of Wigan. Boothstown was one of the places which was the victim of arbitrary boundaries and probably has closer ties with Worsley than with Tyldesley. Jeff Wilson of South Lincs branch has agreed that we can include the King Billy if there is room. It is hoped that room can be found for an excellent pub which is probably the nearest Walkers outlet to the centre of Manchester.

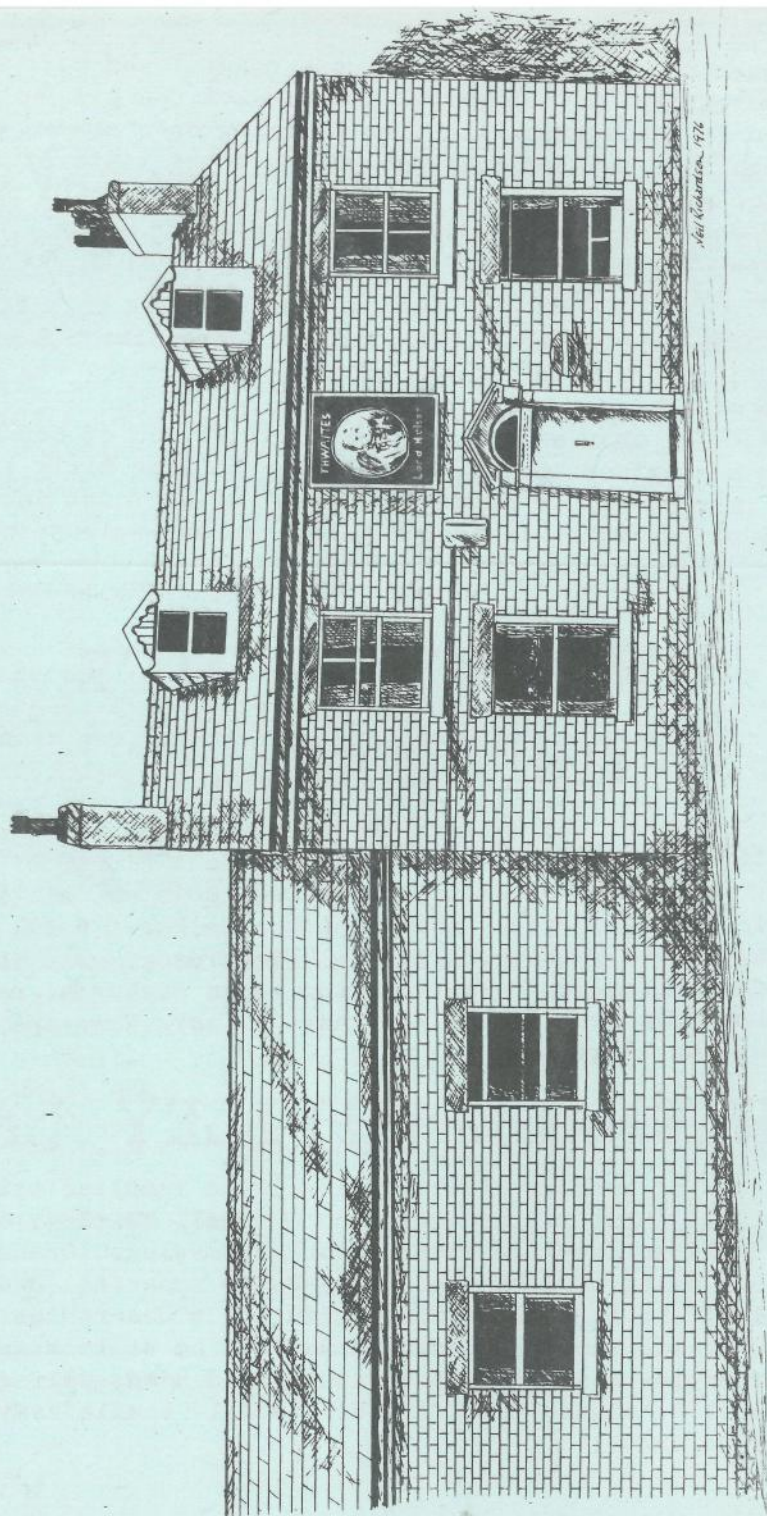
Roger Hall

THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR....

The close of the Salford 89 (or was it 88? We're still not sure) Season coincides with the end of John Richards' 'This Evening' programme on Radio Manchester. However, all is not lost if you missed those shows which made Roger Hall, Jem Callaghan, Mike Wolstencroft, Neil Richardson, etc., household names from Wilmslow to Westhoughton. John Richards' new programme 'The Week Ahead' will have a Camra News spot, starring the original cast.

GREENALL WHITLEY LAND

Devotees of brewery advertising will be familiar with the spate of 'Local Bitter' ads from Greenall Whitley, or Greenalls as they now like to call themselves. One such episode being used on Piccadilly Radio concerns 'Owd Charlie' who is going to Australia for a Desert Rat Reunion, and the only drawback is that he will 'miss his Local Bitter in the Salisbury, Oldfield Road, Salford'. And well he might, the Salisbury is half a mile away in Trafford Road.



The drawing of the Lord Nelson opposite is a scaled-down copy of the one etched onto a steel plate and presented to Percy and Mary Booth on behalf of the branch. Mike Wolstencroft reports....

AUGUST 31st - EXIT MARY AND PERCY

Lord Nelson, 9.30pm, Tuesday August 31st. Mary had announced on previous nights that she would provide a few sandwiches on their last night - sure enough the whole of Stoneclough turned out. By the time I arrived the Nelson was all merry confusion with Percy looking flushed. Mary was still in supreme command as ever. At Rogers behest we presented our plaque, all gleaming stainless steel and varnished wood. Silence. Percy stopped blinking and Mary was reduced to silent disbelief. We said many thanks for their hospitality to the branch and wished them well in Suffolk. And that was it. Uproar resumed almost immediately. Maybe the week after as they unpacked they saw it for the first time and remembered. All the best Mary and Perce.

THE BOATHOUSE



Renovations have at last begun at the Boathouse in Irlam. The whole job is expected to take about 15 months but, although a considerable amount of rebuilding is involved, some of the original character of the pub will be retained. Ground plans of the pub 'before' and 'after' are displayed in the bar. The bar will be moved to a more central position and there will be a snug of a similar size to the present one as well as a lounge and a large vault-cum-games room.

The facade of the building facing the river will be retained but the back of the pub, where the main entrance is and will be, and which is an ugly collection of toilets outhouses and lean-to's will be given a new Georgian facade.

The present 'cellar' of the pub is above ground and holds only 9 barrels on the stillage. This gives rise to problems in both keeping the beer and in delivering it via beer engines because of air locks. The new layout will incorporate a cooled, below ground cellar which should ensure a quality pint in the hottest weather. Ironically the handpumps which would be more suitable for this kind of cellar are likely to be removed and replaced with electric pumps.

The outside of the pub is also to be revamped. A new carpark for 50 cars will be built behind the houses near the present garden and a new beer-garden will be opened at the side of the pub.

Albert Valentine, the new landlord, has had some problems already - In his first two weeks 16 dozen glasses went missing and he was accosted by one local Camra member who told him how to keep his beer. No doubt the next two years will bring more problems but perhaps the Boathouse may mark a turning point in Boddingtons' policy of converting pubs.

RECRUITMENT DRIVE

CAMRA is launching a nationwide recruitment and promotion drive to attract both new and lapsed members and to promote the Campaign's aims and achievements as never before.

The drive will coincide with the issue of revised membership forms and posters following CAMRA's inauguration as a limited company. The branches must be the mainstay of the operation.

The National Executive believes that the stage has been reached where an increase in membership is essential for the financial well-being of the Campaign and for our continued effectiveness in the face of even larger and more complex issues. The Executive is also equally sure that the St Albans headquarters can now properly handle a large membership drive. This drive was, in fact, postponed until we could say this with confidence.

CAMRA's membership reached a peak of around 30,000 in mid-1975, but since then the figure has dropped and levelled off at about 27,000.

The Campaign has made remarkable achievements and has been described by the chairman of the National Consumer Council, Michael Young, as "the most successful consumer organisation in Western Europe". That is no mean accolade but we can not afford to rest on our laurels and we must continue striving to live up to such a pat on the back.

It is worth briefly reviewing what we have achieved since our ridiculed beginning in 1971.

Traditional draught beer has returned to more than 1,000 pubs the length and breadth of Britain; countless more have retained real ale where, without CAMRA's existence, it would have disappeared. New brews have been produced by some of the now-thriving small independent breweries which without CAMRA, would quite likely have gone to the wall with a disastrous effect on consumer choice. Even the Big Six have been forced to take notice and make some small concessions to real ale drinkers in the wake of the Campaign's sabre-rattling. But are these merely sops to keep us quiet?

In the long term, CAMRA will be judged by its ability to remain strong, vocal and ever ready and capable of challenging and resisting. Here are just some of the major issues we must tackle over the next year:

- convince Watneys, Allied and Courage that London and the South-east are not the only areas where real ale is in demand and persuade them to bring back real ale to the beer deserts of East Anglia, the Midlands and parts of the North;

- force Scottish and Newcastle and the other brewers in the North-east to do something about the Geordie beer desert;
- break up, by action under the monopolies legislation, the strangleholds which the major brewers have obtained, through takeovers, on pubs in certain areas;
- insist that Courage brew real ale at their new mega-brewery at Reading;
- secure Government legislation on beer definitions — to outlaw the description of keg and lager as draught — and minimum quality standards, and obtain a legal requirement for the strength and ingredients of beers to be printed on all bottles and dispense equipment;
- arrest the trend of rural pub closures;
- extend the network of CAMRA branches to cover the whole country — only where a branch exists can the Campaign be really successful;
- attack the promotion of "bastard" lager at inflated prices;
- fight for fair prices for all real draught beer;
- continue to resist centralisation, standardisation, pasteurisation and pressurisation at every opportunity;
- fight the wishy-washy proposals of the EEC's latest scheme for Eurobeer.

To do all this we must maintain a large and active membership. We must maintain the aggressive fervour of the early campaigners. We must wipe away the cobwebs of complacency, over-confidence and even cynical disillusionment which has crept into some corners of the organisation.

CAMRA is financed essentially by subscription, plus whatever can be collected by fund-raising efforts locally and nationally. There is a direct relationship between the number of members we have and our effectiveness as a campaign. The more members we have the more subscription income there is available to pay for the mechanics of campaigning. At branch level, the more active members there are the easier it is to sustain the ever-increasing workload which branches are being asked to shoulder as CAMRA widens its horizons.

Branch committees and all other active members should tackle this recruitment drive with renewed vigour and attempt to visit or mail every lapsed member in their branch area and bring them back into the fold.

The message is simple: CAMRA has given good value for money and is still good value for money at £2 a year — but the fight is not over just because the local might now sell real ale. CAMRA needs all the support it can muster to win tomorrow's battles.

Chris Bruton

Reprinted from this months' Branch Bulletin

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

It is important from time to time to assess the objectives of any organisation in order to consider the direction that must be taken in the future. It may be useful to consider the achievements and failures of Camra's stated objectives with particular regard to the North West. Camra has been concerned with the preservation of real ale and the maintenance or expansion of choice. What effect has Camra had on local breweries and other brewers who operate in the North West?

WATNEYS Camra is certainly one of the influences which has had considerable effect on Watneys marketing policy. Whilst cask beer is available in some outlets in which it was not previously sold, there is little evidence that the proportion of real ale sold is greater than it was say 5 years ago. Whilst Watneys have paid token attention to pressure by Wilsonification and building the odd new real ale pub, the basic philosophy has not changed drastically. There are less real ale outlets than there were, most new pubs are architectural disasters and sell no real ale and the quality of real ale in many pubs leaves a great deal to be desired. It is still difficult to recommend more than half a dozen Wilsons pubs in our area where the beer is consistently well kept.

BASS CHARRINGTON Partly because of Camra representations in the North West, Bass Charrington are now labelling the dispense system in their pubs. There is, however, a fundamental difference of opinion as to what constitutes real ale. The brewery believes that all cask conditioned beer is real irrespective of the method of dispense. Most Bass Charrington beer in the area is served under blanket top pressure and the number of outlets where unpressurised beer can be obtained is sadly diminishing.

TETLEY Although Allied Breweries have begun to reintroduce traditional beer to some areas, the story in the North West is one of a declining number of real ale outlets. Cask conditioned beer is well kept in nearly all the Tetleys and

Walkers pubs in the area, yet the tendency to switch to bright beer continues and the phasing out of Walkers bitter seems to be inevitable.

COURAGE There are very few John Smiths outlets in the area and none of them serve real ale. Although the brewery has reintroduced real ale in the South East, there is little likelihood of this being repeated in the North West.

SCOTTISH AND NEWCASTLE There are only two tied outlets in the area and one of these has recently brought back cask conditioned beer on handpumps. The position is worsened by the large number of free trade outlets selling tank and keg beer.

WHITBREAD Among all the brewers represented in the North West, Whitbread must hold the position of the supreme 'bad guy'. Despite the large number of outlets, Whitbread serves no real ale whatsoever. The brewery has pursued a deliberate policy of taking over local breweries and stopping the brewing of real ale. (Chesters, Threlfalls, Duttons). They have also gone further than other breweries in installing cellar tanks and delivering beer in tankers like petrol. Camra has had no influence whatsoever on Whitbread in the North West and the reintroduction of real ale may be impossible because of their irreversible policies.

BODDINGTONS All the beer brewed at Strangeways is cask conditioned and is well kept in virtually all their tied houses. The brewery, however, despite the excellence of its beer, insists on converting pubs in a tasteless manner and replacing handpumps with electric pumps much to the dismay of customers.

HOLTS Holts continues to sell real ale in all its tied houses. In many pubs the quality of the beer is variable and unreliable.

ROBINSONS Robinsons beers are usually well kept but the newer pubs are rather tasteless buildings and the beer considerably more expensive than other local brews, best bitter often costing 26p per pint.

LEES Camra has maintained a good relationship with the

brewery. Sadly, however, the brewery is producing great quantities of bright beer and lager and the standard of real ale in some tied houses does at times leave much to be desired.

GREENALL WHITLEY Greenalls have introduced bright beer into many outlets and the quality of real ale in some of their traditional houses has deteriorated over the last few years. This is an irony from a brewery which places such a great emphasis on its traditional brewing methods.

MARSTON Virtually all the Marston houses in the area sell real ale but once again the quality is variable.

BURTONWOOD Burtonwood have advertised real ale extensively since their success in the Sunday Mirror farce. They are, however, converting some pubs to tank beer and tending to neglect the standard of real beer in some others.

HYDES Hydes are not guilty of altering pubs and introducing bright beer but they do share with other breweries the problem of maintaining real ale in excellent condition at all times in all outlets.

Some pertinent questions emerge from looking at the attitudes and performance of all breweries represented in the area. One of the major problems in North Manchester is not the availability of real ale but the quality of it. The local brewers are not always paragons of virtue. They may brew and promote traditional beer but, with notable exceptions, they do not ensure that it's always well kept. It is impossible to persuade members of the public of the merits of real ale if it is frequently sold in a poor condition. Sour or vinegary beer sold from dirty handpumps is not better than beer kept under slight top pressure or bright beer sold from cellar tanks.

If Camra is to have any further impact in the North West, it is essential that action is taken to ensure that all real ale is kept and served well. If this can be achieved by Boddingtons and Tetley, is it too much to ask that other brewers should follow suit? If traditional beer is variable and unreliable then the trend towards bright beer will continue

and justifiably so. If we are to point to the superiority of real ale then it must be superior and our efforts must, I feel, be directed towards achieving this. The task is not an easy one; there will be resistance from both landlords and breweries, but the results are likely to prove more rewarding than griping about Boddingtons' pub conversions or bashing our head against the brick wall of Whitbread.

Roger Hall

NORTH REGIONAL NEWS

BUREACRACY

Dave Easton has been promoted to Assistant Regional Organiser. His post as Area Organiser for Greater Manchester has been taken by Richard Greenhalgh.

WHITBREAD MEETING

The most positive lines of action were thought to be:-

1 Persuading Whitbread that cask beer from other breweries should be available in Whitbread houses (as with Hartleys in Cumbria).

2 Action through the Monopolies Committee (sic)

Information is required on both these suggestions and also facts about former Whitbread houses which are making a success of selling real ale.

YORK TALK

The Northern Regional Conference will be held in York on Saturday 15th January 1977. Suggestions are sought for suitable subjects for discussion.

GET-TOGETHER

Response to the get-together in Leeds on October 23rd from North Manchester members has been less than enthusiastic. In fact, nobody is going.

CALLAGHAN IN RESHUFFLE DRAMA SHOCK

After an all night meeting of the 'drinks' cabinet, Jem (Doc) Callaghan announced dramatic changes amongst senior opposition spokesmen. The Doc himself has taken over the responsibility of shadowing the powerful Minister of Proteolytic Enzymes. The dynamic Paul Roberts has moved from Hoppiness to Fuggles, and a new post of Technical spokesperson on draught meths has been created for Roger Hall, whose job of shadowing the Minister of Trends and Cufflinks has been taken by Mike Wolstencroft. Peter Cash will represent the opposition view on almost real ale, whilst Neil Richardson moves from Chaos and Maladministration to the more senior Fictional Beer Guides spokespersonship, vacated by Les Kilsby, who becomes shadow assistant deputy vice-Regional Organiser (Grade IV)

THE GREAT DEBATE

The last issue of What's Doing (the one in which Roger Hall said rude things about Camra) has caused some bother in high places. This partly stems from something I wrote in the What's Doing before that (the Salford special), saying that that issue was made available to the public and was given a full press mailing. Now, in this issue we are trying very hard to be nice to Organisation Camra, but really, to assume (as one or two otherwise sensible people did) that we would even consider trying to sell the last issue to the public, or waste money on a press mailing is something of an insult. What's Doing will be made available to the public and/or press when the issue merits it.

Neil Richardson