

WHAT'S DOING



MARCH
1987

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

BIG SEVEN IN '87



SAMUEL WEBSTER AND W



CAMRA has launched a major campaign against the seven brewers who, between them, dominate the British brewing industry. After the enthusiasm of its early years, CAMRA seems to have become somewhat moribund, degenerating into a drinking society. Certainly, some campaigning has been done, but usually on an ad hoc basis and usually without much success. Resolutions made at Annual General Meetings are seldom brought to fruition. It is, therefore, encouraging to see an orchestrated, national campaign against the very brewers whose activities affect every drinker in the UK.

Since their emergence in the 1950s and 1960s through a series of brewery takeovers and closures, the seven brewery groups have been guilty of:

- ◆Wholesale closure of breweries
- ◆Promoting keg beer and lager
- ◆Developing and maintaining local monopolies
- ◆High prices
- ◆Promoting national brands at the expense of local brews
- ◆A blinkered view of the traditional pub
- ◆Buying up the free trade
- ◆Producing increasingly bland beer
- ◆Using adjuncts and additives

CAMRA's campaign will run for the rest of 1987 and will be emphasising a different aspect each month, starting with takeovers and conning the consumer in March and moving on through prices, mild, the traditional British pub, local independent breweries, lager and additives, to a round up of the campaign at the end of the year. It is hoped that the combined effect of local and national campaigning will have such a formidable effect as to make the Big Seven change their policies.

WHO ARE THE BIG SEVEN?

1. **Allied Breweries** - Britain's biggest drinks group, formed in 1961 through the merger of Ind Coope, Ansells and Tetley Walker. 6,900 pubs. Tetley Walker have 877 pubs in the North West, of which only 361 serve real ale. All 84 Peter Walker pubs sell cask beer.



- 2 **Bass** - Britain's biggest brewers, with 7,400 pubs and 13 breweries. About 50% of Bass North West pubs serve real ale



3. **Courage** - Now owned by Australian brewers Elders IXL. 5,000 pubs. Represented in the North West by John Smiths of Tadcaster. Almost half of the 1,120 John Smiths pubs now serve cask bitter.



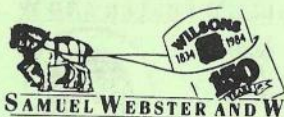
4. **Greenalls** - The latest member of the club since its acquisition of Wem, Shipstones, Davenport and Simpkins. 1,700 pubs, 1,000 of which are under the Greenalls banner. Half of these serve real ale.



5. **Scottish & Newcastle** - Smallest of the club - 1,500 pubs mostly in Scotland and the North East. Anxious to increase its market share through acquisitions.



6. **Watney Mann and Truman** - 6,200 pubs, including those managed by the Host Group. Represented in the North West by Samuel Webster and Wilsons, who closed the Newton Heath brewery in 1986. Almost all the pubs on this side of the Pennines serve traditional beer.



7. **Whitbread** - 6,800 pubs and eight breweries. Whitbread Investments have significant holdings in other breweries. Represented in the North West by Chesters, whose real ales are available in about half their outlets.

TAKEOVERS

The takeovers and mergers of the post-war years led to the existence of the Big Seven and created the climate from which CAMRA emerged.

Takeovers allow brewers to gain from economies of scale and "rationalisation". They do, however, act against the interests of the consumer in the following ways:-

Loss of choice - even in Manchester dozens of local brews have disappeared

Local monopolies - less competition, higher prices

Emphasis on keg beers, lagers and national brands

In Manchester the takeover trail led to the disappearance of such once-famous names as Threlfalls, Groves & Whitnall, Swales, Walker & Homfray, Magee Marshall, Taylors, Rothwells, Cornbrook and Clarkes. More recent takeover activity has not yet led to the disappearance of beers to any significant extent, but brewery mergers have not been confined to the Big Seven. Smaller breweries have made defensive acquisitions in an attempt to fend off predators. Boddingtons have acquired both Oldham Brewery and Higsons and there must be some concern over the future of Oldham Brewery. Robinsons have taken over Hartleys of Ulverston, whose brewery is threatened. Matthew Brown, who fought off a takeover bid from Scottish & Newcastle, have themselves taken over Theakstons and closed the Carlisle Brewery. Thwaites of Blackburn took over Yates & Jacksons in 1984 and closed the brewery.

Greenalls have been particularly acquisitive in the last few years as they made the transition from Regional to National Brewer. The Simpkins brewery was closed after takeover. Many drinkers feel it might be an improvement if Greenalls closed down their Warrington brewery and concentrated production at Wem, Shipstones and Davenports.



Watneys closed Wilsons in 1986 and this year sold Drybrough to Allied, who closed the brewery. As yet, the only casualty of the Wilsons closure in terms of beers has been Websters cask mild, but we have had Websters Yorkshire bitter foisted on us with unrelenting razzamatazz. This bland, ubiquitous Europint is not something the local drinker wants, and it is in danger of killing off Wilsons mild, which is becoming increasingly rare. It is only a matter of time before Watneys axe some of the beers brewed at Halifax.

What can be done to prevent further takeovers and mergers?

If there is sufficient public support, Parliament may introduce legislation to ban takeovers. MPs should be acquainted with views of their constituents on takeovers. Publicity about monopolies may prevent further predatory action by the Big Seven. They can be shown other ways of increasing income without destroying competition. These include:

Selling or swapping pubs

Reintroducing local brews - Threlfalls? Groves & Whitnall?

Decentralising and setting up quality independent operations

Introducing guest beers like Walkers

Takeovers can and should be avoided.

CONNING THE CONSUMER

Takeovers have led to the present situation where a small number of brewers dominate the market, determine trends and exploit the drinker. Among the most blatant examples of misleading information are:

1. Foreign names for ersatz lagers which are as Germanic as Warrington - Grünhalle, Hofmeister, etc.
2. Foreign lagers being brewed and sold in this country which bear no similarity in terms of strength to the original.
3. Badge brewing - The same beer being sold under different names.
4. Confusing displays at the point of sale - Greenalls' traditional beer, Wilsons "traditionally brewed".
5. Fake handpumps and keg beer served through handpumps.
6. Rip off prices in refurbished pubs.

Examples of these and other disreputable practices have been publicised for a long time in What's Doing and we're always on the look out for information concerning misleading advertising material.

Roger Hall

CASHING IN ON G-MEX

A further application has been made to convert premises at 9 Whitworth Street, Manchester, into a public house and carvery.

CAMRA WINS EXTRA TIME

Successful applications by CAMRA North Manchester to the Eccles and the Salford Brewster Sessions means that from 2nd March all pubs in Salford, Eccles, Swinton, Worsley and Irlam will be allowed to serve until 11pm from Monday to Saturday.

Chairman Peter Cash presented the case for the extension, arguing the need for uniformity in Greater Manchester. Boundary hopping to obtain an extra half hour would be a thing of the past. Branch surveys had shown massive consumer demand and better late buses would make it easier to get home.

Experience elsewhere had shown the change to be popular and successful; behaviour at closing time was more civilised, with people leaving in a leisurely manner. Shift workers and theatre-goers would welcome the move.

Supporting the applications were Pauline Wadsworth (CAMRA) and Mr George Fildes (LVA Chairman) of the White Swan, Swinton. Other LVA speakers were Mr J Kain (Albert Park), Mr T Wall (Station, Pendlebury) and Mr W Jolly (Carlton Inn). Thanks also to John and Moira Edington of the Drop Inn who were on "standby" in Eccles but not called.

FOOTNOTES

1 CAMRA's application at Trafford, now the last division in the county to close at 10.30pm, was postponed until 25th February.

2 After a year of 5.30pm opening, Bury licensing district has won back the traditional 5.00pm opening time.

CHANGES AT THE TOP HOUSE

Boddingtons have submitted plans to build a car park and beer garden at the Queens Arms in Patricroft. This 150-year-old pub, wedged between the railway and the Royal Ordnance Factory, has been plagued by poor access for years. It is perhaps this poor access which has ensured its continuation as a four-roomed traditional pub. Let's hope that the improvements don't attract bunches of hoorays so that Boddies are encouraged to gentrify and ruin one of the few remaining authentic pubs in their tied estate.



CITY DESK

Peter O'Grady



Last month's piece concerning cafe bars in Manchester received much wider publicity in the Manchester Evening News on Thursday February 12th. Many extra names have since been added to the petition to be presented to Bass at the end of February appealing for a reduction in the price of beer at the once-popular Town Hall Tavern, Tib Lane. Let's hope it is successful.

* * * * *

A further visit to the CHURCHILL on Chorlton Street has confirmed that the handpumped Greenalls Local bitter is being kept in fine form. Good value lunches are also available at this nicely refurbished city centre hostelry.

* * * * *

The new licensee of the VINE on Kennedy Street (next to the world-famous City Arms) is Peter White. The handpumped John Smiths bitter is now in good condition and a wide selection of reasonably priced food is available at lunchtime. Mr White is compiling a history of the Vine, and would like to hear from readers who can tell him anything of the pub's past. To start things off, we asked Frank Pritchard, author of "My Manchester", who knew the pub in the 1930s: "It had a snug with waiter service, there was sawdust on the vault floor and you'd hear customers asking for 'a pint of cock-up'! This was half of bitter and a bottle of brown ale - the Vine was the only pub in Manchester where I ever heard the expression."

Kennedy Street is definitely the place to visit at lunchtime as both the Vine and the City Arms serve good food and a two-pub "crawl" could yield the following traditional beers: John Smiths bitter, Tetley mild and bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale, Walkers best bitter and Jennings bitter. Try walking in a straight line after a pint of each of these!

* * * * *

Older readers will, perhaps, be pleased to learn that the KING RICHARD III on Edge Street (which has been closed for about 100 years) is to reopen in May as the MARKET RESTAURANT.

* * * * *

HAPPINESS AT THE HAMLET?

An application has been made to alter and extend the Hamlet on Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton.

GREAT NORTH WESTERN BEER FESTIVAL

Crouch Vale Willie Warmer, Marston Moor Brewers Droop and Ringwood Old Thumper are just three of the beers it is hoped to have on sale during the Great North Western Beer Festival at the Bolton Sports Centre, Silverwell Street, Bolton, 2nd - 5th April. There will be around 60 beers from 40 countrywide brewers, including Belhaven, Felinfoel, Ruddles, Federation, Bateman, Palmer, King & Barnes, Wadworths, Brains and Mitchells, to name but a few.



Opening times are: 5.30-11.00pm Thursday 2nd April. 11.00am-3.00pm and 5.30pm-11.00pm Friday 3rd & Saturday 4th April. 12.00 noon - 2.00pm Sunday 5th April (drinking-up session, if required)

Food and entertainment will be provided at all sessions. Entrance to the Beer Festival costs £1.50, which includes a souvenir glass and programme. (CAMRA members 75p) Entrance fee with souvenir glass and programme is 35p.

DRABS NEWS

Holts' Millhouse, Cinnamon Brow, Warrington New Town, opened last month. It's a big, two-roomed pub (large vault, L-shaped lounge) in the middle of a fairly posh housing estate. The landlord is Jim Etchells, formerly of the Friendship, Prestwich, and his mild and bitter are 61p and 64p respectively - not bad when 80p a pint seems to be the going rate in the area! Initially, the natives seem to be drinking inordinate amounts of lager (34% of sales to date), but mild is going down well, so there is some hope for them. Warrington New Town is a separate set-up from Warrington itself, with its Tetley-Greenalls stranglehold, and other outside breweries (Boddingtons, Wilsons) have opened pubs in the area.

Holts are spending some £70,000 on the Waggon & Horses in Gorton and almost twice as much on the Junction in Cheadle Hulme. With the completion of the Millhouse, we hear that Pat and Mick are on their way to Levenshulme to start building Holts' next new pub.

A BIASED VIEW

John Willie Lees have applied to change Ashton under Lyne Bowling Club on Knowle Avenue into a public house.

CADISHEAD GEORGE

A trip to Cadishead revealed a real ale gain at the George. The beers on sale are Chesters mild (72p) and bitter (74p), plus Trophy (74p) - all handpumped.

The pub has changed over from a managed house to a tenancy and landlord Bill Smith eventually persuaded a reluctant brewery to go over to real ale at the end of last year.



Under Bill's direction the pub has been sensibly refurbished. The long lounge has two dividing walls, with a "music" area and two relatively quiet rooms. The vault has a good atmosphere, with ample space for both the pool table and the dart board lanes.

This means that three out of the four Cadishead pubs are now on real ale. The odd one out is the Railway (Greenalls).

RAIL AIL? ALE? (456)

An application has been made to change the use and extend Broadbottom Railway Station to form a pub, wine bar and restaurant.

WHAT'S DOING is edited by Neil Richardson, 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY. News, articles, letters, moans, etc, must arrive by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

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BACK NUMBERS: 10p per copy. Send stamped, addressed envelope to Roger Hall, address above.

To Join CAMRA send £9 to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW.

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Enquiries to the editor, address above. Full page £25, $\frac{3}{4}$ page £20, $\frac{1}{2}$ page £15, $\frac{1}{4}$ page £7.50. Discount on bookings for 6 months or longer.

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

Tetley-Walker are planning big things with Let's Wine Bar, off Millgate, Wigan. This characterless dump used to sell keg Bass products at exorbitant prices, but has been closed for some time. It will be interesting to see what Tetleys have in store - a tasteful refurbishment with real ale, like the Mountain Dew? (see below) - or a keg Mecca like Victoria's, Clarence's and other tasteless Tetley conversions in the centre of Wigan? I suspect the latter.

Still in Wigan, the Raven Hotel, Wallgate, no longer sells Addlestones cider. At 88p a pint, this is hardly surprising. However, the Walker mild and best bitter in this GBG pub are at more down-to-earth prices.

In Hindley, the Worthington Hotel, Market Street, has dropped JBA bitter. The landlord would have been happier trying to sell two nines instead of an eighteen gallon barrel, but Burtonwood would not comply. A good pint of JBA is to be had at the Alexandra, Swan Lane, Hindley Green, which is not too far away.

The new-look Mountain Dew, Market Street, Atherton, is now selling Tetley mild and bitter (Jennings came and went). A year or two back I mistakenly reported that the Mountain Dew had closed for good. This was never the case and its nice to see the old pub flourishing. Elsewhere in Atherton, alas, the Red Lion on Church Street has lost its cask Walker best bitter. Pubs with a youthful clientele and real ale are slowly dying out in Wigan Metro. Why?

Other cask beer losses are Jennings from the Black Horse, Elliott Street, Tyldesley, and mild from the White Swan, Ormskirk Road, Pemberton.

The Red Lion in Gerrard Street, Ashton-in-Makerfield, is to be converted into a hotel, complete with rooms and a restaurant. I understand that real ale will remain (Greenalls) - but a hotel? In Ashton-in-Makerfield? An ambitious plan, indeed. A Jobcentre and a Funeral Parlour do not make the little town much of a tourist attraction!

RED HOUSE ROT

During recent alterations at the Farmers Arms, Swinton, dry rot was discovered. It is to be hoped that the problem can be eradicated without Boddies using it as an excuse to knock all the walls down and transform the 200-year-old cottage property into a 1980s lookalike.

SUPPLEMENTARY SYMBOLISM



FAKE
HAND PUMPS



SHORT
MEASURE

The Brewers' Society is introducing a scheme to inform customers of facilities on offer in pubs. It is being pioneered in Cheshire and the aim is to attract more visitors and tourists to pubs by the use of symbols outside the buildings giving at-a-glance information on the availability of food, accommodation, facilities for the disabled, etc. The Society is investing thousands of pounds in marketing to ensure the series of symbols is recognised by the public.

The public would do far better to arm themselves with a copy of the Good Beer Guide, which supplies information on all of this and the quality of the beer as well. However, the scheme does have some possibilities. What about some additional symbols to warn the unwary, such as those reproduced here?



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NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No. 14

FLEECE

288 Manchester St
Werneth,
Oldham



At the Oldham licensing sessions in August 1867 Edward Hardman applied for a full licence for his beerhouse on the corner of Pass Street, which he proposed to call the Werneth Inn. The premises had a vault opening on to Pass Street and another drinking room. (Pass Street was named after Joseph Pass, owner of the Railway & Commercial public house which stood at the bottom of the street facing Werneth Station entrance.) Mr Hardman didn't get his licence and was succeeded by John Wheelhouse in 1869. He expanded the beerhouse into what was then 250 Manchester Street and when he applied for his full licence there were four drinking rooms and stabling for 18 horses. The licence was again refused.

Joshua Fisher took over in 1879 and the name was changed to the Fleece and five years later the beerhouse was described as being in good condition, with two stables and no separate back yard. Two licensees later, in 1893, Gartside's Brewery were in control and their tenant

was Jacob Mills. The Fleece was still in good repair, but the licensing magistrates were told that it was "constructed in such a manner as not to admit of adequate police supervision". Also, the customers' WC and urinal were on a wooden stage, which was bad for drainage, and the nightsoil had to be carried out through the house!



The old photo shows James Cole, his wife and children outside the Fleece during their tenancy (1905-1909).

Frank Johnson succeeded the Coles and in 1916 the police recommended closure as the beerhouse was not "adapting to trade". The owners appealed, but the Fleece closed on 28th December 1917. The building on the corner of Pass Street was later a bank, and today it is a Post Office.

TROUBLED TIMES

Even "The Times" has cottoned on to the fact that beer is not what it used to be. Columnist Miles Kington has been writing about his family connections with Border Brewery of Wrexham (acquired by Marstons three years ago) and its associated wine and spirits division. He never managed to develop a palate for wine but he says he can certainly tell good beer from bad beer. "I tried a pint of something made by Whitbread called Welsh Bitter the other day when I was feeling very thirsty in Chepstow, and it was so sublimely tasteless and boring that my thirst magically vanished after the first gulp." He goes on to heap extravagant praise upon Adnams beer of Southwold and how it has drawn him back to Southwold for a holiday every year for the past twenty. Someone should send him a firkin of Drabs.

MOORHOUSE'S

BREWERS OF REAL ALE



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To the Editor:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

LETTERS



HAPPY HOURS

Sir - The idea of the "Happy Hour" has been around for some time, but surprisingly it doesn't seem to have caught on that well in the centre of Manchester. Excepting the Hooray bars and the keg emporia, the following real ales are on offer: Boddingtons bitter, John Smiths bitter at the Grand, Aytoun Street - 60p 5.30-7.00pm. Wilsons and Websters bitters at the Mitre, Cathedral Yard, same times same price. Two pints of Wilsons (only) for 95p at the Brahms & Liszt, Brown Street, 5.30-6.30pm. Anybody know of any others?

Happy Horace

KING'S CASTLE

Sir In "King's Ale" last month you reported that the price of the bitter in the Castle, Oldham Street, Manchester, had gone up to 76p a pint. It hasn't. The beer is 74p a pint, which for Robinsons in a city centre pub is not bad at all.

Old Tom



RED HOT POKERS

Sir - My informant at the Brewers' Society tells me that the use of the poker (WD last month) is merely another way of warming beer, as against heating it over the fire in a pan or vessel. No special properties are attributed to the poker - it would hardly make the beer stronger since some of the alcoholic content would surely evaporate.

In the "Curiosities of Ale and Beer" by John Bickerdyke (1889), I can find only one reference to use of a poker:

"There is a tale told of a Frenchman, who, stopping at an inn, asked for Jacob.

'There's no such person here,' said the landlord.

'Tis not a person I want, sare, but de beer warmed with de poker.'

'Well,' said mine host, 'that is flip.'

'Ah! yes,' exclaimed the Frenchman, 'you have right; I mean Philip.'"

JRA Daglish

INCE PUB CRAWL

Dave White

The little town of Ince, near Wigan, has lost more pubs than most in recent years. The 1978 local guide boasted no fewer than sixteen entries; now only a handful remain. Nevertheless, Ince still makes for an attractive, reasonable-sized crawl - and still knocks spots off nearby Hindley, where keg Matthew Brown pubs prevail; or Platt Bridge, with its urban crime.

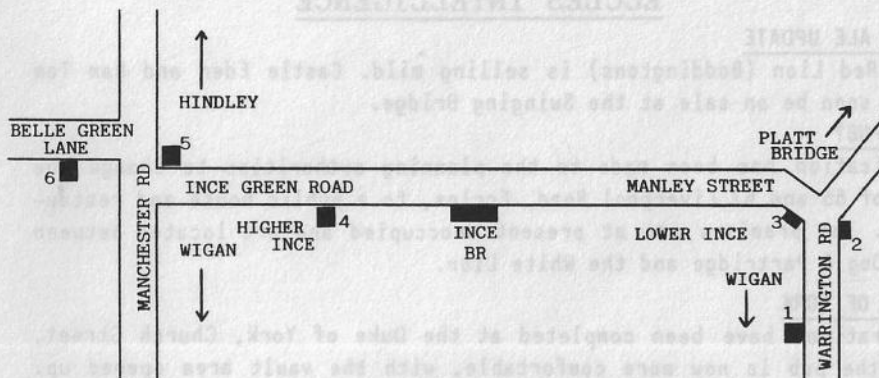
A good place to start is the Rock Ferry (1), Warrington Road, Lower Ince. Known as the "Little Rock", this cosy local sells a good pint of Youngers Scotch Bitter on handpump. The Rock Ferry is not to be confused with that monstrosity, the Rock Rock Cafe across the road (keg Brown).



Cross over Warrington Road for the White Swan (2), a spacious pub selling Greenalls bitter on electric pumps. Alas, Original Bitter was unsuccessful here, but the "Local" bitter is recommended. The mild is keg. Likewise with the Black Diamond (3) on the corner of Warrington Road. Punters may be confused by the etched windows here, which relate to the Ince Hall Hotel. This was the pub's original name, but the "Black Diamond" had been the nickname for donkey's years (there were coal mines here, once), and the name stuck.

Turn left into Manley Street and on past the railway station and the three keg pubs along the way - the Conquering Hero (Matthew Brown), the Manley (Bass) and the Bird in Hand (Burtonwood). The dry run ends after a 5-10 minute walk at the Anderton Arms (4), Ince Green Road, which sells excellent Thwaites bitter and best mild on handpumps. This pub, a swap with Greenalls, has long been known as "The Long Neck". The story goes that a suicidal landlord hanged himself here (before the days of the Greenalls Appreciation Society, presumably).

Onward now, to the traffic lights at Ince Bar and into the Squirrel Inn (5), a Burtonwood pub. JBA was dropped here, but the mild and bitter are in excellent nick.



- 1 ROCK FERRY, Youngers SB (H)
- 2 WHITE SWAN, Greenalls B (E)
- 3 BLACK DIAMOND, Greenalls B(E)

- 4 ANDERTON ARMS, Thwaites B,BM (H)
- 5 SQUIRREL INN, Burtonwood B,M (H)
- 6 ENGINEERS ARMS, Tetley B,M (H)

The best pub is the last. Cross over Manchester Road and into Belle Green Lane. The Engineers Arms (6) has been in the Good Beer Guide for some years and serves superb Tetley mild and bitter on handpumps.

You can also get to the Oak Tree further up Belle Green Lane, but it's a tidy walk. All in all, then, Ince offers a decent pub crawl for all tastes, and buses from Wigan are frequent (on paper, anyway!) if you don't want to walk it.



ROPING THEM IN

The Moorings at Canal Basin, Sowerby Bridge, is holding a series of "World of Beer" evenings on 10th, 11th and 12th March. In addition to the usual range of cask beers (McEwan 80/-, Youngers XXPS, No.3 and Clarks) there are indeed beers from all over the globe, with a special emphasis on bottle conditioned Belgian beers. Cosmopolitan grub will also be available.

ECCLES INTELLIGENCE

REAL ALE UPDATE

The Red Lion (Boddingtons) is selling mild. Castle Eden and Ram Tam will soon be on sale at the Swinging Bridge.

NEW PUB?

Application has been made to the planning authorities to change the use of 65 and 67 Liverpool Road, Eccles, to a public house and restaurant. The premises are at present unoccupied and are located between the Dog & Partridge and the White Lion.

DUKE OF YORK

Alterations have been completed at the Duke of York, Church Street, and the pub is now more comfortable, with the vault area opened up. Thwaites beers have gone and the range is now Taylors Best Bitter, Landlord, Ram Tam, Chesters mild and bitter and Marstons Pedigree. There will also be a fortnightly guest beer.

ART FOLLOWING NATURE?

The new pictorial signs outside the Duke of York have apparently given rise to some hilarity on Church Street since the visage of the venerable duke bears a passing resemblance to someone not unassociated with the pub.

BLOBS?

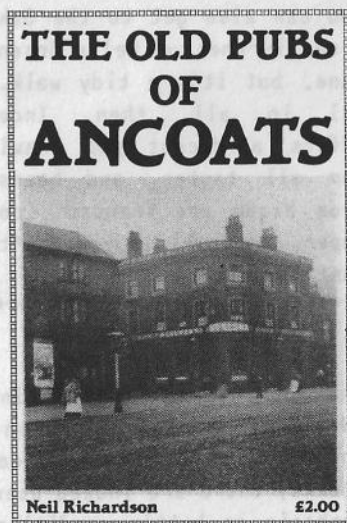
Rumour has it that Yates Brothers have acquired the Swinging Sporan ((keg S&N) and intend to turn it into a wine bar.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Today there are 41 pubs in Ancoats. In 1920 there were 165 and fifty years before that there were nearly 300. This book records the development and decline of each locality of old Ancoats through its pubs - from street-corner home-brew beershops to the long-established public houses.

The historical detail is combined with the recollections of Ancoats people who knew the pubs in the early part of this century.

On sale at all good bookshops, or £2.25 by post from Neil Richardson, 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY



RUPERT'S PAGE



During February, prominent and famous Campaign members were to be found besporting themselves in public, some in a manner which brought credit both to themselves and the organisation and some who did not; who did, in fact, by means of their lewd antics, demean both.

Billy Cosh, in a single minded and selfless act of enterprise, did appear in a Perry Masonesque role on two occasions and by means of his eloquence, force of argument and the lack of opposition, wow the licensing magistrates, so that now the happy toppers of Grotley and Slumley can drink all night long. The dynamic, thrusting and assertive campaigners in neighbouring Smarmford and Slutch fell asleep and forgot to apply. So if you're stuck in Retchford or Stale - tough.

In contrast to Mr Cosh, Mr Tackler, whose good lady Nora was once editrix of a now demised organ, celebrated his birthday with a similar suit. Having reached the grand old age of 30 without suffering from any of the usual fates of long-standing Campaign members - gibbering alcoholism, cuckoldry or obscurity - Bert arranged the Belchley Beer Festival to coincide with his anniversary. He also organised a strippagram and pretended that someone else had sorted it out, so that when Miss Norma Snockers burst in, clad only in balloons, Bert could feign astonishment and Nora wouldn't be desperately upset. Bert was blindfolded and had to burst the balloons with his teeth. Such was his expertise that several people were heard to remark that he must have been practising, but with whom and when I've no idea. To the cry of "Bite the one with the pink nose on it!" Bert burst the last balloon and the now naked Miss Snockers removed Bert's trousers and he was left wearing only a blindfold and his undies, which fortunately were perfectly laundered.

Not since the days of tiggy-off-the-ground at Leech's or minion-spanking sessions in Slumley Parva have I heard of such disgraceful behaviour. It is to be hoped that such aberrations do not divert the attention of the more serious-minded among us who are intent on kicking Dillons, Kepples and the rest in the goolies and selecting super hostelries for inclusion in the 1993 edition of the toppers' vademecum.

A CUMBRIAN MYSTERY

Cella Field

Once upon a time there was a famous brewery - for the sake of argument we'll call it Jennings - situated in a northern town called Cocker-mouth. An agreement was reached with Tetley-Walker, a regional arm of Allied Breweries, for Jennings beers to be sold in Tetley-Walker pubs. This move was welcomed by many drinkers, especially in and around Manchester.

Unfortunately, after a short while, the quality of the wondrous Jennings deteriorated badly. Many rumours abounded about the reason for this (piss-) poor state of affairs. These ranged from the beer being sent to the pubs out of date, the beer being stored in the yard of Tetley's distribution centre, to a concerted effort to sabotage the popularity of the brew. None of these reasons had an iota of truth in it, however.

Consider this as a possible scenario. In the late summer of 1986, Jennings' brewer left the brewery, a replacement was not found until, say, November, and in the interim period the beer was brewed by whoever fancied having a go. Naturally enough, this affected the quality, taste, appearance and would explain the dramatic colour changes that Jennings underwent in this period.

Equally unfortunately, many pubs stopped selling the beer during this period. Having found his feet, the new brewer has brought the beer back to its former glory and consistency. It is to be hoped that all the disappointed drinkers will now try it again and the beer will once more become widely available in the area. Then we can all live happily ever after.

This is, of course, a fictional tale (truth is sometimes stranger than fiction) and any similarity with any person or persons living is purely co-incidental.

BYE BYE

It's sad to report the retirement of Kevin Buckley, CAMRA's liaison officer with Boddingtons, who has done so much over the years to keep us in close touch with what's going on at Strangeways (the brewery) and maintained harmonious relationships with Boddies during his incumbency.

CHARMING

The latest CAMRA price survey got off to a shaky start in Bolton. The first pub on the list was a Bass house, the Nab Gate in Harwood, and when the licensee was asked for the prices of his beers he told the surveyors to drink up and leave the premises! Just why he took this attitude isn't quite clear because 74p for a pint of cask Stones seems pretty reasonable. It's certainly a strange way to react to a customer's reasonable request!



Branch Diary

BOLTON

Tues 10 March 8.30 Branch Meeting, Clifton Arms, Newport Street,
Tues 17 March 8.30 Beer Festival Meeting, George, Great Moor Street
Tues 24 March 8.30 Beer Festival Meeting, York, Newport Street
Wed 1 April All Day. Beer Festival set-up, Bolton Sports Centre, Silverwell Street
Thurs 2 - Sun 5 April, Great North Western Beer Festival (see article)
Tues 14 April 8.30 Branch Meeting, White Lion, Market St, Westhoughton
Contact Dave Fleming 0204 75111 x207 (w) 0204 389918 (h)

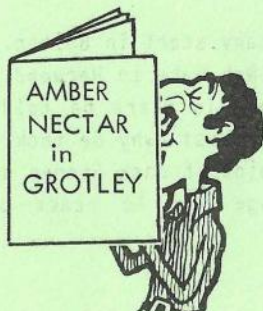
WIGAN

Wed 11 Mar Branch Meeting, Silverwell, Wigan, 8pm
Thurs 19 March. Trip to Boddingtons Brewery. Meet Brewers Arms, 7pm
Mon 30 March Pub of the Year, Swan & Railway, Wigan, 8pm
Wed 1 April GBG Meeting, 8.30pm Millstone, Wigan.
Contact Brian Gleave Atherton 876200 (w) 892965 (h)

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 11 March Bass speaker at the Unicorn, Church St, Manchester 8pm
Wed 18 March Branch AGM, Lamb, Eccles, 8pm prompt
Wed 25 March Regional Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill
Wed 1 April All Fools Crawl. Crown & Anchor, Cateaton St, 7pm. Wheat-sheaf, High Street, 8pm. Ending at Wellington Vaults, Rochdale Road
Wed 8th April GBG GBH. Final beer guide selection - meet at the Royal Oak, Barton Lane, Eccles, 8pm.
Wed 15 April Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton, 8pm
Wed 22 April Mild Survey. Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester, 7pm
Contact Roger Hall 740 7937

Other contributors to this issue: Bill Collier, Paul Roberts, Tony Flynn, Des Nogalski, Peter Barnes



Real Ale Guides

The following publications are available from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester. The guides are updated from time to time so if you know of any changes please contact the relevant CAMRA branch - or write to What's Doing.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH MANCHESTER - Gorton, Clayton, Openshaw, Didsbury, etc. 10p + stamped, addressed envelope.

REAL ALE IN STOCKPORT - Hazel Grove, Cheadle, Heaton Mersey, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN SALFORD - Swinton, Eccles, Irlam, Worsley, etc. 10p+s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN ROCHDALE - Heywood, Littleborough, Middleton, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN ROSSENDALE - Bacup, Haslingden, Helmshore, Rawtenstall, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN TRAFFORD & HULME - Altrincham, Urmston, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN OLDHAM - Failsworth, Royton, Shaw, Chadderton, Saddleworth, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN BURY - Ramsbottom, Radcliffe, Tottington, Whitefield, Prestwich, 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL AND NORTH MANCHESTER - City Centre, Newton Heath, Ancoats, Collyhurst, Moston, Blackley, Cheetham, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL AND NORTH CHESHIRE - Warrington, Widnes, Runcorn, Lymm, Frodsham, Northwich, Middlewich & Winsford 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN GREATER GROTLEY - Slumley, Smarmford & Slutch, Poshton and Pseudley. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN N.W. DERBYSHIRE - Buxton, Glossop, New Mills, Whaley Bridge, Disley, Chapel-en-le-Frith, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN HIGH PEAK & N.E. CHESHIRE (TAMESIDE) - Dukinfield, Ashton, Marple, Hyde, Denton, Stalybridge, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

1984 - THE ROAD TO WIGAN BEER Comprehensive guide to South Lancs CAMRA pubs - Wigan, Leigh, Ashton, Newton, Atherton, Tyldesley, etc. Maps, illustrated. 65p + s.a.e.