

WHAT'S DOING

5p

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The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

Dec 76

WHITBREAD SELLS PUBS

Six Whitbread pubs in Greater Manchester are being sold to other breweries. Five go in a 'package deal' to Burtonwood and one to Sam Smiths.

The Bulls Head on Oldham Road, straddling the Newton Heath/Failsworth boundary has been bought by Sam Smiths, and although firm decisions have not yet been made, it is likely that the pub will sell cask conditioned beer through beer engines. All the Burtonwood pubs will be selling traditional beer through beer engines. The first to open were The Rawsons Arms, Peel Street, Farnworth, and the Golden Lion, Middle Hillgate, Stockport, last week. In January Burtonwoods take over the Crown Inn, Tarporley, and in February The Royal Oak in High Lane, Hazel Grove. A date for the Borough in Encombe Place, near Salford Royal Hospital, has yet to be fixed.

In view of Whitbreads inflexible commitment to non-traditional beer, all we can do is hope they sell a few more!

SALFORD PUBS

Boddingtons have assured us that they intend to continue their policy of trying to retain every outlet that they have. They have not, however, given any specific assurances about the structural condition of three pubs in Salford about which we are concerned - The Duke of York, The Priory and The Railway. Given Boddingtons previous history of conversions and new pubs, one wonders whether they are interested in keeping pubs or merely licences.

RAIL ALE (2)

Three more traditional beers have appeared at Manchester Victoria Station Bar. Robinsons best mild and best bitter (selling at 26p and 28p) are served through handpumps, and Old Tom (44p) from the barrel. Old Tom was not available for some days after arrival as someone forgot to get a tap for it! Meanwhile Bass is still going for 30p and Boddingtons is down from 30p to 28p.

GROSVENOR

The Grosvenor has, for a long time, stood alone on the empty land off Oldham Road. New houses are now being built around the pub and the architects from J W Lees have been along to consider extensions and renovation. It is only right that the Grosvenor, which always serves an excellent pint and which still maintains an active social side, should once again be as busy as it was when it was surrounded with terraced houses some five years ago. It would be regrettable if alterations to the pub were to affect the traditional character, and particularly the handpumped beer.

GUIDES

After 18 months the Greater Manchester Beer Guide is at last on sale. As the guide is based on entries submitted some 12 months ago, it does not necessarily reflect the entries we would put in today for North Manchester. Our trips round the Salford 100 and the less salubrious parts of Manchester have unearthed many pubs which are worthy of inclusion. The following pubs are equally deserving of being in the guide as those already there.

Salford Papermakers Arms, Railway (Boddingtons), Albion, Punch Bowl, Broadway, Duke of York (Holts), Winston, Gas Tavern, Greyhound, Grove (GW), Palatine, St James, Star (GW), Bridge Inn, Church (Wilsons), Falcon, Feathers, Grapes, Oxford.

Manchester Dean Brook Inn, New Crown Inn, Newton House, Robin Hood Inn, Cloggers Arms (Bass), Copenhagen, Prince of Wales, Swan, Victoria, White Hart, Apollo, Moulders Arms, Cross Keys, Half Moon, Fire Brigade, Nelson, Mechanics Arms, Vine, Egerton, Cheetwood Arms.

Swinton Lord Nelson, Windmill, Newmarket.

Eccles Old Bulls Head, Golden Lion, Crown & Volunteer, Red Lion, Kings Head, Dutton Arms, Brown Cow.

Now that a Bolton branch has been established, a full list of all the real ale pubs in our area should soon be possible. It is hoped to publish a complete list of all pubs selling traditional ale in Salford, Eccles, Swinton, Irlam, Worsley and North Manchester early in the new year. The list will cover about 250 pubs and will be a fore-runner to the Salford Guide which will cover all the real ale pubs of the City with drawings, photographs, descriptions and histories of each.

DARLEYS

Pete Judge, the area organiser for South Yorkshire, says that it is Darley's 'intention to convert all their production of beer to bright beer. Although the complete process may take some years, the Doncaster branch are arranging a meeting of branches in the brewery's distribution area to consider what action is to be taken. It is likely that the Hull brewery will also be discussed. This, you may remember, was the brewery whose non-real beer was given the Camra seal of approval at the 1976 AGM. It is to be hoped that a campaign gets off the ground fairly quickly or we'll be faced with another futile gesture like the Barnsley Bitter march some years ago.

BITTER LOCALS

As reported in the October issue of What's Doing, when Greenall Whitley install electric pumps it is often only a half way house to introducing bright beer. The Wellington on Barton Road, Eccles, had electric pumps installed just over a year ago, and has now gone over to bright beer. The Wellington was generally acknowledged as having one of the finest pints in Eccles. So much for 'The Beer That Really Belongs Here'.

NEW BREW?

The unsubstantiated rumour department reports that Wilsons have reverted to the old original Wilson brewery recipe for beer which is brewed at Newton Heath. If this is true, it doesn't seem to have made a lot of difference, but then nobody noticed when the brewery stopped selling cask conditioned beer earlier in the year.

COBBLERS



A reminder of the past came to light in Salford recently, when Whitbread took down their signboards from the Brown Cow, Oldfield Road. A beautiful black and gold glass Chesters fascia was visible for a short time, until Whitbread deemed a muddy brown stripe was prettier. Chesters brewery was taken over by Threlfalls in 1961, who fell to Whitbread some years later. The new fascia is part of an overall modernisation, at the end of which the Brown Cow will have been transformed into the 'Hobsons Choice'. This is the title of a book by Harold Brighouse about life in Salford at the turn of the century, and the central character, Hobson, had a clogmakers shop in Oldfield Road before he moved up in the world to Chapel Street. Hobsons Choice is also a very apt name for a Whitbread pub.

SALFORD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

Most of our research and reporting on the pubs of Salford has been concerned with the old city rather than with those districts acquired since reorganisation. This has been because of the threat of demolition in the city which has not been present elsewhere. Although Swinton, Eccles, Walkden and Irlam (well, nearly) all have their new precincts and despite the building of the motorway network which affected all four districts, their transition has been slower and less dramatic than Salford itself. There has not been the same need for wholesale clearance of housing and consequently many pubs have remained.

There have, of course, been some pubs knocked down and new ones built as motorway developments, new housing estates and brewery improvements have necessitated changes, but the character of the areas still remains. They appear to be towns which have evolved, which have changed gradually as a result of changing demands, rather than areas designed for the aesthetic pleasure and personal gratification of the planners who built them and not the people who live in them.

The pubs of Irlam and Cadishead, Worsley, Eccles and Swinton and Pendlebury have a diversity of character which is not found in the centre of Salford. There are pubs which may be described in true beer guide style as 'typical working class locals' but there are also those which might be thought of as 'typical middle class locals', such as the Bridgewater, The Cock or the White Horse.

The choice in the area varies from the Edwardian splendour of the Lamb or the Grapes to

new estate pubs like the Bell or the Pied Piper in Walkden; from the solitude of the Stanley Arms or the Golden Cross to the crowded Football or Farmers Arms; from the Red Lion with its beer-only licence to the smartly refurbished Windmill with its brand new handpumps.

There is wide choice of beer in the area, probably greater than Salford itself. Boddingtons, Holts, Robinsons, Tetleys, Greenalls, Sam Smiths, Thwaites, Wilsons and Bass are all available. With the exception of some Holts and Greenalls houses in Eccles and Patricroft, cask conditioned beer is well kept throughout the districts - again more consistent than Salford.

Perhaps the most important thing about the pubs of the Metropolitan District is that they are not threatened with imminent demolition like those of the City. The cynic may be excused for thinking that the process of destruction would continue when Salford took over the surrounding towns but there are no plans for large scale urban renewal, although some individual licensed premises may disappear or be replaced for one reason or another.

Eccles and Swinton in particular and Irlam and Worsley to a lesser extent have succeeded in maintaining their identity through a period of change. They have retained rather than eradicated their links with the past and it is not wishful thinking to believe that the preservation of public houses, some of which date back 400 years, may have been instrumental in keeping alive that sense of tradition and community which is about to die in the City of Salford.

THE NEXT BRANCH MEETING
WILL BE IN THE THREE
LEGS OF MAN, GREENGATE,
SALFORD, STARTING AT
8.00pm ON WEDNESDAY
19th JANUARY 1977

THE DEATH OF THE CANAL SIDE PUB

L T C Rolt's book, 'Narrow Boat', has stood on my bookshelf now for several years, and though it has been read many times it never fails to stimulate and please.

Rolt was one of the pioneers of Canal Cruising and in his book he makes several references to Canal-side pubs he visited, and some he avoided. Were he still cruising today, I think he might avoid a few more.

The Canal pub has, like most other pubs, seen much change, and some have changed more than others. It can be argued that true Canal Pubs are those built specifically for the canal trade, such as those found at junctions or near flights of locks, however many waterside village and town pubs are canal pubs by adoption and serve both townsfolk and boatmen alike. A large number of canal pubs were remote and relied heavily on the water-bourne travel for their livelihood. Extensive stables for boat horses are evidence to this. The coming of powered boats however enabled the boatman to work longer hours and travel further in the working day, which hit the trade of many pubs. Frequently all that remains is a rusty bracket on the wall which once carried an inn-sign; a mute testimony to a buisier past.

Canal pubs in villages and urban areas were less affected by this fall off in canal trade and were more able to turn to other trade. Only the name (possibly) giving any clue to their former main source of income. 'The Big Lock', 'The Two Boats'

and 'The Grand Junction' being fairly typical. The advent of the widespread use of waterways for amenity purposes has undoubtedly had the greatest and generally adverse effect on canal side pubs. The story is very familiar, Brewers' Tudor and Stuffy Mock Victorianisms replacing simple quiet houses, thick pile carpet and piped musak replacing stone flags and home made entertainment. Simple pleasures sacrificed to the chromium-plated bad taste of the noddy-boating fraternity (The waterways version of the gin and Jaguar set). Any canal man would feel totally alienated.

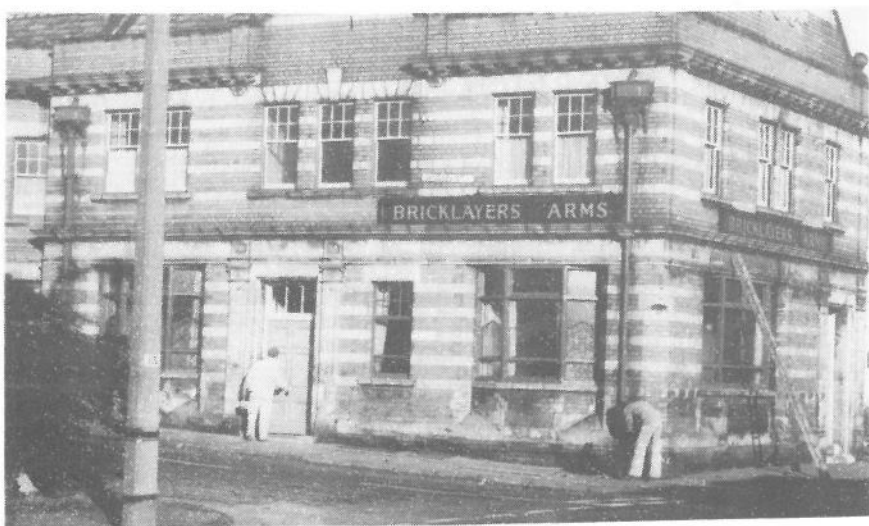
I can think immediately of two pubs within ten miles on the Grand Union Canal which have had the treatment within the last six years. Their transformation making Boddification look like a minor repainting job. In their former states they were cosy and welcoming and obviously canal pubs by the folk they attracted. Now, stuffed with cheap and trashy 'Canalia' they are remote from the waterway they claim to serve and the Canal is the poorer for the loss. This saddens me as I can see no reversing of this trend, and what few genuine pubs now remain will be submerged by the boring and self-opinionated hangers-on that any group of enthusiasts (Canal or Beer) attracts. It would seem therefore increasingly likely that when I tie up by a pub I shall be walking up the road to the next one.

Duncan Roberts

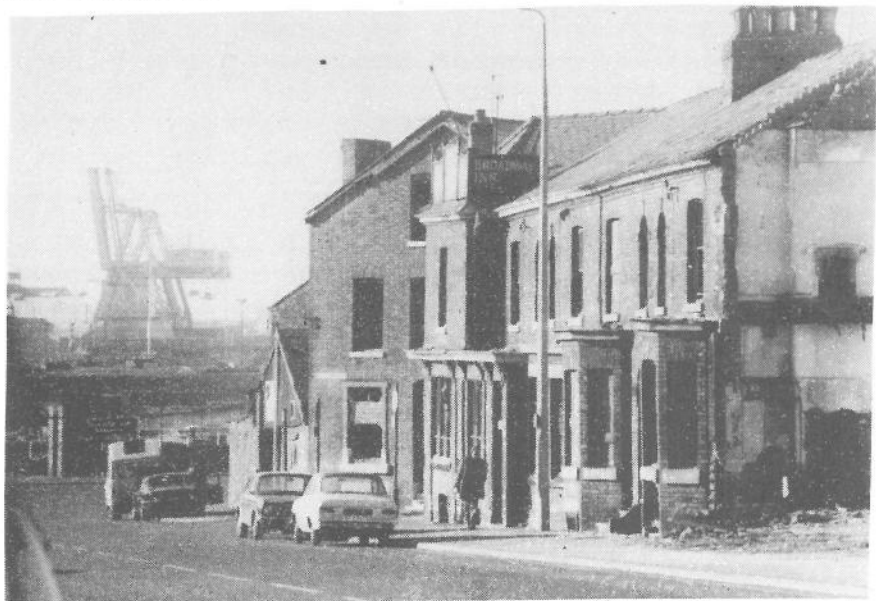
POLLARDS

The premises for which David Pollard has applied for a licence is a former Barclay's Bank building on Princess Street, near the Town Hall. An excellent location, as this is an area of Manchester completely devoid of real ale.

HOLTS HOPE



As reported last month, the Bricklayers and the Broadway, two Holts houses in Salford, may not be demolished after all. The photos show outside maintenance at the Bricklayers, Ordsall Lane (very encouraging), and a view down Broadway to the docks. The Broadway Inn is one of the few buildings still occupied.



DONCASTER TRIP

This may be a distorted version of the visit to Thorne and Doncaster by eight branch members on Friday 19th November. If anyone remembers it differently, please make allowances for the fact that I was sober at the time.

Undaunted by the fact that Paul Roberts had lost the receipt for the van somewhere in the vicinity of Strangeways prison and that when the vehicle arrived the safety belts didn't work and the glove compartment was sheltering a bag full of someone's stale curry, we set off for Swinton Car Park. It was an unwise venue, as we discovered on arrival that the entrance sign was somewhat shorter than the van, but since most of the party were in the Weavers Arms anyway, it didn't really matter.

A straight run across the M62 got us to Thorne about an hour earlier than expected, so while some people tested the fish cakes at the local chippy, the more dedicated entered the Red Bear to sample their pint of Darleys bitter. The uninitiated will probably gain the best idea of the appearance, if not the taste, of this brew from the fact that there was a protracted discussion as to whether or not it was like Sam Smiths. (The result was a draw). The next stop was the Rising Sun, a brisk walk across the canal, which displayed the unfortunate legend 'Bright to the Last Drop' outside it. What came out of the pumps was very palatable though. It's amazing how much you can tell from just one sip. We then retraced our steps, past the brewery, to the North Eastern, where we had arranged to meet a member of the Doncaster branch. Like the other pubs in Thorne (all Darleys), this had been tastefully renovated so that the lounge was broken up into

smaller sections by partitions. It was enlivened by two ladies with red bloomers and Mexican hats collecting for Thorne town kids - or should it be muchachos?

On to Doncaster, and the first stop was the Three Horseshoes, a smart and busy Wards pub. Next was a Sam Smiths pub with unusual name of the Corporation Brewery Tap, where the local branch of CAMRA were holding their AGM. We were pleasantly surprised to find that an excellent buffet was laid on. Though this was not purely for our benefit, we were well entertained so fortified by food, a pint (and in some cases two) and takings from sales of the Greater Manchester Beer Guide, we proceeded in sedate fashion to the St. Leger. This Shipstones pub, appropriately decorated with innumerable pictures of horses, provided an excellent pint and a suitable venue for a surprisingly coherent discussion of how to breed horses. The beer was so good, in fact, that we stayed until closing time. On the journey back we were well entertained as usual by Pete Cash, accompanied by some remarkably tuneful singing.

TETLEY THWAITESMEN

The strike at Tetleys brewery is causing problems for licensees, but our itinerant boozers are having a field day. Beers such as Thwaites, Robinsons and Hartleys have been sold in parts of Manchester well away from their usual outlets. In Farnworth The Clock Face has had Thwaites mild and bitter; the Market and the Saddle have had Robinsons bitter. In Bolton Hartleys best bitter was available in the Gardeners Arms (alongside bright Chesters, served through handpumps) Bright Theakstons, Higstons, Vaux and Ansell have been selling in non-real ale Tetley pubs. In Manchester Robinsons bitter and Boddingtons mild were in the Britons Protection, and the Hare and Hounds on Shudehill had Wilsons mild and Robinsons mild.

NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Conference will be held in The Maclagen Hall, St. Williams College, York, on Saturday 15th January 1977 from 10.00am to 6.00pm. Three delegates are invited from each branch.

Subjects for discussion are to be submitted as soon as possible. Suggestions are welcome; so far we have the following.

- 1.Appointing assistant area organisers (AAOs), deputy brewery liaison officers and area advertising standards monitoring sub groups to improve communications.
- 2.Encouraging Camra Investments to buy as many semi-derelict pubs as possible, preferably in trendy areas already well supplied with real ale. The pubs should cost at least £100,000 and need £40-50,000 spending on immediate repairs.
- 3.To press for the inclusion of more non-beer products in the Good Beer Guide. Advocaat, pickled eggs and dog food are the first things after cider and Hull beer to spring to mind.
- 4.Increasing the variety of knick-knacks on sale through Whats Brewing. Light-up garters, diamante woggles, embossed gaiters, solid amber gear lever knobs and revolving cummerbunds have not yet realised their full potential.
- 5.Publishing a book on etiquette and drinking phraseology so that newcomers to the campaign may learn how to hold a half pint glass up to the light and quickly grasp the meaning of remarks such as 'hoppy', 'bland', 'nectar' and 'gnats piss'.
- 6.Abolishing dissent. Stropmy members of the campaign should learn that at this moment in time the ongoing situation requires that they should not rock the boat but must pull together. Hopefully this will obviate criticism which after all only stimulates interest and discussion and may, arguably, prevent the campaign from burying itself in a welter of bureaucracy and affectation which basically are its self evident aims.

MATCHING TIE & CUFFLINKS

If you complain about paying the now astronomical price of 22 pence for a pint of Boddingtons bitter, then spare a thought for the poor inhabitants of Southend-on-sea, situated in the Stockbroker Belt of South East Essex. Paul Roberts reports...

This seaside town, home of the Teddy Boy and the former longest pier in the world, is now being overrun by the real ale 'trendies'. Until recently the only real ale in the town was Charringtons IPA and Crown Bitter, available on handpumps in about three or four pubs. However two years ago the Cricketers Arms at Westcliffe reopened after a disastrous fire. This sold Grays bitter and Riddleys Stock Ale and was a quiet smart pub with a mixed clientele. After the closure of Grays brewery, the beer was switched to Greene King Abbot and IPA, in line with the rest of the Grays pubs. Since that switchover the pub has become overrun by Camra members and the former locals have been driven to the neighbouring keg Trumans and Watneys pubs. It is now impossible to actually step into the lounge - it is so crowded - and on approaching the bar from the vault at 10.50pm on a Saturday I was refused a pint, the landlord just referred me to a notice which read: 'Due to the immense popularity of this pub, last orders will be at 10.45pm until further notice'. There must be a logic in that somewhere, but not from an economical point of view. If you are fortunate enough to be served be prepared to pay over thirty pence for your tipple.

A couple of hundred yards down the road in a back street in Southend town centre lies the 'Aristocrats', which is a former keg free house which now sells Youngs Special Bitter (34p a pint) and Theakstons Old Peculier for over 50p per pint. This pub is the haunt of yacht-owners or people discussing trading in their few months old XJ12s for a new Bentley or Lagonda. All are easily recognisable as Camra members by their Camra engraved snuff-boxes, monacles or bright green socks with the new Camra logo. The pub is

to shortly open a real ale bar to sell ales from eleven breweries at a reputed average price of forty pence.

The 'Railway' at Prittlewell is one of the Watneys houses selling Watneys fined bitter. The price in the vault was a mere 36p. This tasted like a mixture of flat Watneys Red and Drabs. Rumours that the Security Forces in Ulster have been forcing internees to drink it have been disproved by the Human Rights Commission after evidence from the Home Office and Watneys.

The Ind Coope pub along the road carries a somewhat unusual notice on both the vault and saloon doors - 'Strictly Regulars Only'. After the present generation of drinkers there passes away, presumably the pub's business will cease unless new regulars are elected.

Ind Coope Burton Bitter is being marketed in a few pubs in the Southend area at 38p (Access/Barclaycard accepted). Handpumped Ind Coope ordinary bitter is available nearby at 24/25 pence.

However there is some consolation for the ordinary drinkers in Essex. Riddleys of Chelmsford, famous for producing the best ale south of Blackburn has outlets spread over most of mid-Essex. Most of their pubs are converted farmhouses selling gravity beer at...19pence for bitter and 17 pence for mild. However some pubs do charge up to 22 pence a pint, which when compared to the Aristocrats or Cricketers does seem to be reasonable value.

ROBINSONS

Robinsons ordinary bitter is in danger of being phased out as a result of Robinsons pushing their best bitter. The only pub in our area which serves both bitters is the Star on Back Hope Street. The Pleasant, The Ark Royal, The Milan Inn, The Castle, The Three Legs of Man, The White Horse, The Brown Cow and The Pied Piper serve only Best Bitter and Best Mild.

PUB CRAWL

WEDNESDAY 5th JANUARY 1977

COLLYHURST & CHEETWOOD

The North Manchester Pub Crawls are open to anybody, irrespective of age, sex, race or drinking capacity, and are an ideal way of getting to know the pubs in our area.

Ark Royal	Carvan Street	Robinsons
Milan Inn	Rochdale Road	Robinsons
Junction	Queens Road	Boddingtons
Vine	Glendower Avenue	Boddingtons
Mile House	North Street	Boddingtons
Queen Anne	North Street	Tetleys
Cheetwood Arms	Derby Street	Holts

The crawl starts at 7.00pm, or 8.00pm in the Junction.

SMEAR GUIDE

An (as yet) unidentified person has been talking to licensees giving the impression that he has some influence on the selection of pubs for the National Beer Guide. He has told one Wilsons tenant that Wilsons brewery is out of favour and that this particular pub will not be in the 1977 Guide, which is untrue. This is yet another example of ill-informed Camra members making gormless remarks which lead members of the public (and landlords especially) to think of the Campaign as a bunch of posturing fools.

FAILSWORTH

The Failsworth British Legion Club now renamed the Failsworth Arms is selling handpumped Sam Smiths beer.