

# WHAT'S DOING



MAY  
1988

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## Cock Hotel plan is turned down

**JUBILANT** regulars at the Cock Hotel, Worsley, were celebrating victory with a drink on Tuesday, after hearing that plans to transform their favourite local had been turned down.

The Cockfighters had formed to protest at a Boddington's scheme to build a 90-seater restaurant and a motel at the pub.

But Salford planners rejected the application after hearing strong objections from the Cockfighters and residents.

A full meeting of Sal-



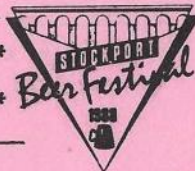
**Saved:** The Cock Hotel where regulars have been fighting a brewery plan to build a restaurant and motel

The Advertiser, 7 April 1988

Boddingtons' application to convert the Cock in Worsley into a motel-cum-restaurant has been turned down by Salford's planning committee. Instead of accepting defeat philosophically, Boddies have become a bit peevish. Ronnie, the landlord, has gone to the Railway in Newton Heath



\* STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL \*  
\* \* COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE \* \*



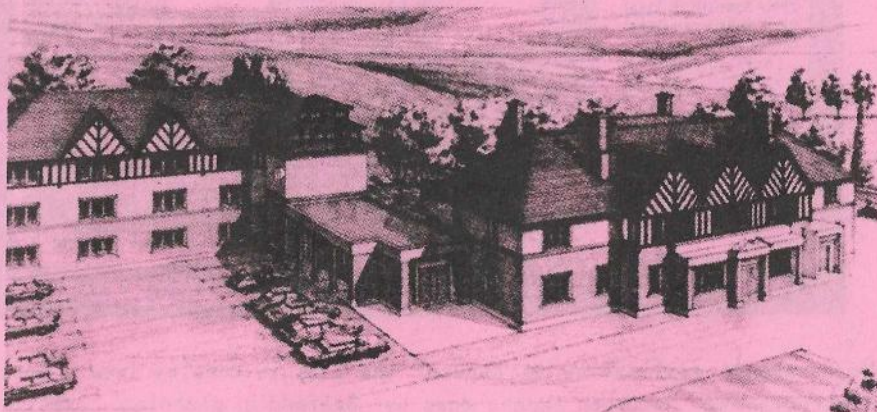


and the new licensee was formerly at the Bridgewater and more recently at the Stamford Arms in Altrincham - not the most inspiring CV to those who cherish decent pubs. All the notices have been removed from the vault noticeboard and part-time workers threatened with disciplinary action if they continue to be involved with the Cock-fighters campaign to save the pub and their livelihoods. Boddingtons will not talk to Alan Stewart, the Chairman of the Save the Cock Campaign, because they think he is a member of CAMRA. Alan is not and never has been a member, but perhaps he'll now join.



It remains to be seen whether Boddies will appeal to the Secretary of State, but it's doubtful whether parading their mercenary tendencies at a public inquiry would do them a lot of good. They could always make a new application for something less appalling or, perish the thought, consult the locals and regulars and create the kind of pub that people really do want. What's Doing's application for the Henbury Open Prison for the Criminally Insane has been mothballed for the time being.

Below - the failed plan.



### CHESTERS MILD IN OLDHAM

The Kirk Stile Inn (which was the Church pre-1986), Huddersfield Road, Oldham, now has cask Chesters bitter and mild. Chesters beers, especially mild, are rare in Oldham. Live music entertainment on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Licensee Jerry Blakey will make you welcome.

# CITY DESK

Peter O'Grady

## GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS

**DANIEL'S CAFE BAR**, Chapel Walks, off Cross Street, opened in early April selling traditional Thwaites bitter in the basement bar. Bad news...£1 per pint. Good news...strong representations are being made to the brewery to reconsider their pricing strategy - we are ever hopeful! The beer was on good form during the first week of operation.



## CHOP'N'CHANGE

**MR THOMAS'S CHOP HOUSE**, Cross Street, has replaced cask Chesters mild with Marstons Pedigree. Mild sales were very low, so it's now keg-only. The full range of traditional beers on sale is Thwaites bitter, Marstons Pedigree and cask Trophy, all on handpump. A good value breakfast is now served from 7.45am.

## WILDE'S?

The former **OSCARS** building on Cooper Street, off Princess Street, is due for a massive and expensive refit by Grand Met now that the nasty asbestos has all been cleared out. Pub and night club facilities are expected to be provided in the former Masonic building by early 1989.

## OXFORD BLUES

A new luxury hotel is to be built on the site of the former **OXFORD HOTEL** and St Mary's Hospital on Oxford Street and Whitworth Street. However, they will never be able to reproduce the Oxford's former glory, as witnessed by the entry in the original "Manchester Pub Guide", published in 1975...



The Oxford is situated in a well-pubbed area of the city, but it stands out as a Victorian pub of exceptional interest. It has a very fine exterior, one of the best in Manchester, featuring much ornate stonework, and a tower on one corner of the roof. The bowed windows on the ground floor complete the effect, which is not too spoiled by the modern red and white pub sign.

Inside, the pub retains much of its traditional decor in the four areas around the bar. Notable features include the glass topped wooden partition, with door, dividing off one small room, and mirrors above the wall seats in one area. The rooms provide a range of comfort, and include a vault, a modernised back room used by lunchtime diners, and a large comfortable lounge. The clientele is also varied, including working men, businessmen (especially at lunchtime), students, and couples of all ages. The juke box can be very loud.

Both the draught bitter and mild, served by hand pumps, are well kept, providing proof that big breweries can still produce good traditional beer. Watneys Red, Carlsberg lager and draught Guinness are available from kegs, as is Dry Blackthorn cider, 'Pub Grub' of the usual high standard is sold at lunchtime (LV's accepted) and pies and sandwiches are sometimes available in the evening.

The Oxford still retains the atmosphere of a traditional town pub, providing real beer in a friendly unspoilt environment.



## WEARY WAGGON

Why, oh why haven't Grand Met capitalised on what was their City Centre lead? Not so long ago, the WAGGON & HORSES, off Bridge Street, had a very good range of out-of-town beers - including Everards, etc. How sad to see the tired old Websters, Ruddles and Wilsons range being portrayed as "special beers", when virtually everyone knows they are all brewed by the same company.

Meanwhile, Whitbread and various other fringe free houses have forged ahead, giving drinkers a good choice.

## GEE-ED UP

Nothing has changed at Hydes' GREY HORSE on Portland Street, but several recent lunchtimes spent there have re-emphasised what a nice place it is to spend an hour or so. No hype, no hassle, just good beer in good company. Licensee Jean Goldie is to be congratulated on the good beer and good house she keeps.

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## YUPPIE JOE?

What's Doing has heard that Holts want to knock down the Junction in Cheadle Hulme and build a new one with a restaurant attached. Please tell us it's not true! Who'd fight that one?

## THEY SHOOT HORSES DON'T THEY?

Coalite, who own half the Falklands, sponsored an event at the Prince of Wales in Salford on 12th April, when ex-servicemen from Broughton House were fed and entertained by landlord Dave. It was hoped that a traditional cart pulled by four heavy horses would be present, but apparently two of the horses developed a virus which made them unfit for work. Can it possibly be true that they were not put out to grass, but were shot for the insurance money? Can't believe it.

# MOORHOUSE'S

## BREWERS OF REAL ALE

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## FALLEN ARCHES

(NOT THE STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL)

When Plod arrived on the Friday to check the licence, the Stockport and South Manchester branch of CAMRA discovered that they didn't have one, so all the punters had to go home and a lot of the beer was poured down the drain. Cost: circa 2 grand.

## CLEARING BANKS

Work has now stopped on the proposed Banks's pub at the bottom of Moorside Road, Swinton. The original plans, which were passed by the Council, envisaged the retention of the eighteenth century farmhouse on the site. It wasn't too worrying when the roof was removed, but a couple of days later the site was flat, with footings in situ for the new pub. At this Salford got proper angry and said that work would have to stop until new planning permission had been obtained. Wonder if they'll get it or whether they'll have to reinstate the farmhouse? In any case, it'll be a long while before you can drink Banks's in Swinton!

## BANKS BOUGHT

Just as last month's WD hit the streets, it was announced that the Heron Group had sold 61 of its pubs purchased from Grand Met. This means that the nine Oldham pubs mentioned in last month's edition will soon be selling Banks's and not Tetleys ales. But let's hope there aren't any eighteenth century farmhouses among them.

## LEISURE EXPERIENCES

Boddingtons have teamed up with an outfit called Cafe Inns and formed Leisure Taverns (North West). The idea is that the brewery will provide the licensed premises and the boys in the smart suits will "provide development expertise" to "boost profits through innovative design and by aiming new developments at the young adult in the high value-added end of the market". Their first project, the Whitesmiths in Wigan, will open in July.



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To the Editor:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

# LETTERS



## BODDY LANGUAGE

Sir - I offer my condolences to the Man of Kent whose pint of Boddingtons tasted as if it were brewed from "stewed toffee papers" (WD last month). I can imagine his chagrin since I recently ventured into Shepherd Neame country with great expectations, only to suffer a similar disappointment. Doubtless I was just unlucky - my experience was certainly not newsworthy - but now when the beer in question is Boddingtons, the case it seems is altered. Poor old Boddies. Judging from recent issues of What's Doing they can do nothing right these days: over-priced beer, brewery closures, public house vandalism and - horror of horrors - suspected introduction of "additives" into their brewings!

It is, of course, entirely appropriate that CAMRA in Manchester should defend vigorously the consumer's right to a choice of good beer served at a reasonable price in congenial surroundings, but the tone of your recent criticisms of Boddingtons' misdemeanours is not exactly subtle. In fact, it is about as fair-minded as was the "Sun" in its treatment of Argentina during the Falklands War! Great Stuff for rousing the party faithful, but not the best way to win (keep?) friends and influence people.

Boddingtons are a public company whose management must secure a return on assets equal to that which could be achieved by others: any firm which is not protected by family ownership must do this, otherwise it will simply not survive. In the brewing world, the lesson was first taught by Charles Clore in his bid for Watneys nearly thirty years ago, and it was learnt by Boddingtons in their escape from Allied. Perhaps CAMRA is still living in the world as it would like it to be, rather than the world as it is. The reality is that CAMRA represents only a small segment of the market and therefore even a brewer which shares our values is restricted in the extent to which it can meet our demands. Certainly, there is scope for the supply of good "real" beer in a "traditional" environment, but only within a basically competitive marketing strategy. And whilst a brewer might choose to do this, it is by no means a necessary policy. Whether it does so depends on whether it judges that the effort is worthwhile in terms of the firm's character and image, pride in tradition, etc. It is CAMRA's role to encourage appreciation of these characteristics among

producers and not just consumers. So let's admit (at least privately) that Oldham Brewery did not supply the most sought after beers in the region, that the Cock at Worsley is not the most memorable pub, that Boddingtons are a commercial enterprise rather than a charitable trust devoted to the preservation of some mythical "beer drinker's heritage". Let's admit, too, that Boddingtons beer remains, generally, delightfully potable. With balance and understanding, our criticism may be heard by those in a position to respond. Without these qualities, why should Boddingtons give even a toffee paper for our views? Surely "Boddy Odour" is a little below the belt.

Malcolm Bee

Mancunian, CAMRA member, Boddingtons (and Holts)  
shareholder, Economist

### HOLTS NEWS

The brewery chimney (WD last month) has been taken down. We are glad to report that the world did not come to an end.

Planning permission will soon be sought with Wigan Council so that the Cart & Horses, Astley, can be done up.

Barry and Sue are leaving the Grafton Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock, for the Melville, Stretford.

A planning application has been made to build a new pub in Ramsbottom. Nice place, Ramsbottom.

It is believed that Holts own the derelict Hyde Park Corner (ex-Tetley) on Adelphi Street. What do they plan to do with it, we wonder.

*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.*

*SUBSCRIPTIONS: Send cheque/PO for £1.90, together with your name and address, to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester, for 6 issues. Cheques made out to "What's Doing".*

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# WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

The BEARS PAW, High Street, Standish, reopened recently. Formerly known as the WHITE DUCK, all the walls have been knocked in and the pub has been transformed into a bland, sanitised local. Handpumped Stones bitter is the only cask beer on sale, and to get into the Bears Paw you have to be over 21. The pub was previously a Burtonwood house.

Two other pubs in the district that are undergoing structural changes are the THREE CROWNS, Chapel Street, Leigh, and the PACK HORSE, Church Street, Culcheth. The former is a Boddies house and the latter Greenall Whitley.

In the centre of Wigan, the choice of beers in some of the free houses has been expanding. The CHARLES DICKENS, Upper Dicconson Street, had the full Theakstons range on recently, while across the road at GEM'S, there has been Tetley bitter, Whitbread Trophy and Oak best bitter. Meanwhile, the SWAN & RAILWAY on Wallgate was selling Taylors Landlord not so long ago. I was informed by a usually reliable source that this beer came to the Swan from a Beer Festival elsewhere in the county that had to close in a hurry because it was unlicensed!

The BALL & BOOT, Orchard Street, Wigan, will be revamped in the summer. The days when the B&B sold keg beer through the Skol tap are thankfully over and the Tetley beers have greatly improved in quality since Jim Powell took over as landlord. As well as some structural changes, the Ball & Boot will be getting a new name. Any ideas?

Wigan CAMRA branch's Pub of the Year award went to the SEVEN STARS HOTEL, Wallgate, Wigan. Landlord Frank Derbyshire keeps his Thwaites beers in excellent condition, and they were certainly so on Monday 11th April, the night of the presentation. This is the second time in three years that a Thwaites house has scooped the award.

Other news in brief. The FARMERS ARMS, Chorley Road, Bispham Green, has gone over to handpumps and now sells Burtonwood mild as well as bitter. In Astley, the MANCHESTER ROAD HOTEL is now selling traditional Tetleys. Ind Coope Burton Ale has been revived at the otherwise-keg TURF & FEATHER, Locking Stumps, near Warrington. Cask Greenalls mild is back on sale at the GOLDEN BALL, Wigan Road, Bryn, whilst two all-keg Greenalls houses could be converted back to cask beer in the near future. These are the STAR INN, Brow Bank, Roby Mill, and the OWL, School Lane, Upholland. Still in Upholland, the PLOUGH & HARROW, Ormskirk Road, is selling Higsons mild alongside Boddies bitter. A sign of things to come?

Lastly, Wigan CAMRA branch would like to say a belated "Thank you" to all the thirsty punters who made our first beer festival such a success. Thanks also to the members of other CAMRA branches who came to the rescue when we were short-staffed. Here's to next year!

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### SALFORD ROUND-UP

Plans to alter four Salford pubs, the Albert Vaults, the Champion, the Irwell Castle and the Beehive, have been approved by the licensing magistrates. All the pubs will retain their vaults.

In Pendleton the Flemish Weaver is still keg and Sports has dropped its cask beer (surprise, surprise). Wilsons mild has disappeared from the Woolpack but still remains at the Ship, alongside both Wilsons and Websters bitters.

The Corporation on Cross Lane is possibly the most improved pub in the history of the world. There is a single room layout but with three distinct drinking areas - darts, TV and a lounge with buttoned leather seats, traditional tables and stools and pictures of the old Cross Lane pubs on the wall. The tiled exterior has been restored to its former excellence.

Across the road, the Paddock is no longer serving Higsons, but whether this is a post-strike hiccup remains to be seen. Down Broughton Road the Unicorn and the Maypole serve bitter only in cask (Greenalls and Bass), whilst at the Railway the former landlord of the Queens Arms, Patricroft, Barrie Garner, is now the licensee.

### RAILWAY DISASTER

The Railway at Mobberley has recently been altered at the hand of Greenalls, and what a disaster! This former cosy pub now has a gigantic bar which completely dominates the back room, destroying all the character that the place had. The only redeeming feature is that the new handpumps appear to be real. The tenant, who was originally in favour of the alterations, was so impressed by the way they have turned out that he left to buy a free house near Holywell.

### MORE LICENSING PROBLEMS

Not only beer festivals have their licensing problems. A change of manager at the Plough & Flail at Paddock Hill, near Wilmslow, coincided with the renewal of the licence and the latter was overlooked. The police took a dim view of the matter and the pub was closed for a week whilst it was sorted out.



the Crown & Anchor in Manchester. The claustrophobic, dark, cave-like pubs may well be a thing of the past. On my travels I came across the recently refurbished Albion Inn on Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw. A comfortable, semi-luxurious interior and spruced-up exterior give this pub a lot of appeal. The handpumped Chesters mild and bitter (76p and 77p) were excellent. Chesters bitter has recently had a pleasant, distinctive taste - pity the brewery has to close!

On the subject of Openshaw (central and Higher), this East Manchester district has an abundance of real ale outlets, stretching from just before the canal bridge on Ashton Old Road (which, incidentally, is the highest point in Manchester) to the Audenshaw boundary.

Practically every pub sells real ale. Seven different breweries give you plenty of choice: Banks's (Gransmoor); Boddingtons (Concert, Crown, Locomotive, Oddfellows, Wrexham); Greenalls (Pack Horse); Holts (Railway); Chesters (Albion, Half Way House); Robinsons (Foresters); Wilsons (Grove, Lord Raglan, Royal Oak). I could have mentioned another brew - Websters - but the licensee at the Grove can only offer Wilsons, as he has little call for the Yorkshire bitter. Then again, what is Wilsons?

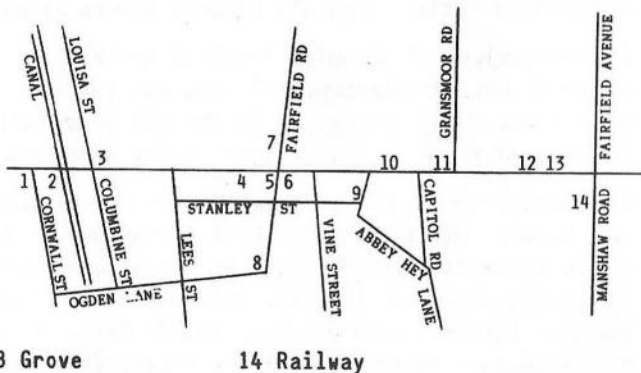
At the lower end of the road, going towards the city centre, there are a few pubs. The three that are grouped together are ideal for a nice leisurely walk. Start at the Metropole as a warm-up. Disregard the



Seven Stars temporarily and try a couple of pints at the Old House at Home. Then really settle down for the excellent Holts at the Seven Stars. If you start early, then try the Star on Pottery Lane.

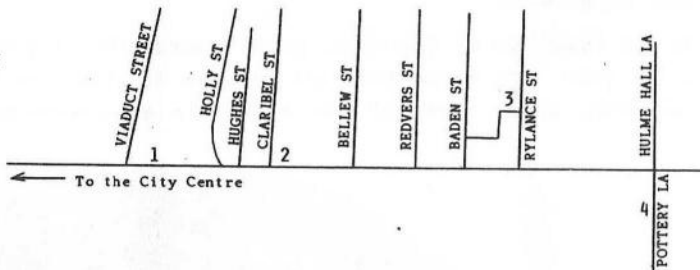
The map shows the fourteen real ale pubs in Lower to Higher Openshaw

- 1 Locomotive
- 2 Wrexham Inn
- 3 Pack Horse
- 4 Foresters Arms
- 5 Lord Raglan
- 6 Half Way House
- 7 Concert Inn
- 8 Royal Oak
- 9 Oddfellows
- 10 Albion
- 11 Gransmoor
- 12 Crown
- 13 Grove
- 14 Railway



At the Beswick end of Ashton Old Road:

- 1 Old House at Home
- 2 Seven Stars
- 3 Metropole
- 4 Star



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## HOW TO RUN A BEER FESTIVAL

1. Get a hall, beer and glasses and advertise it.
2. Get a licence.
3. Er, that's it.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Other contributors to this issue: Keith Egerton, Stewart Revell, Roger Hall  
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# BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

Whitbread Blackburn have reintroduced their guest beer scheme into 53 North West pubs. Flowers IPA is the first of the guests and will be available until the end of May. Flowers will be followed by Hartleys XB in June and July, Wethereds SPA in August and September, Flowers Original in October and November, and Winter Royal in December and January.

Among the 53 pubs are the **HOUSE WITHOUT A NAME**, Harwood; **SCANDALS**, Crook Street, Bolton (previously keg-only); **BRIDGE INN**, Westhoughton; **ROSE & CROWN**, Edgworth; **MASONS**, **BLACK BULL** and **PEEL**, Bury; **DUKE WILLIAM**, Ainsworth; **JOLLY CARTERS**, Little Lever; **BRIDGE**, Radcliffe; **CLARENCE**, Ramsbottom, and **WELLINGTON**, Farnworth.

The **WELLINGTON** is expected to reopen during the next few weeks after a four-month closure. The pub was damaged by fire in January but Whitbread have taken the opportunity to refurbish the pub and will install at least two real ales.

With the re-sale of 24 ex-Wilsons pubs by the Heron Corporation to Banks's, Bolton now has its first Banks's pub, the **ROCK HOUSE**, Duke Street. Landlord John Heyes is reported to be delighted.

The **DAISY HILL HOTEL** in Daisy Hill has sprouted handpumps following its recent refurbishment.

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Samuel Webster

## WATNEYS EXPAND IN HALIFAX

Samuel Webster and Wilsons have announced plans for a £10m investment at Halifax. Apart from new fermenting vessels and renovation of the maltings, they are also going to locate their main administrative offices in Yorkshire. So what's the future for Wilsons' Monsall site? How long will it be before the Manchester presence disappears entirely?

## RINGING THE CHANGES

Remember the Blue Bell at Monton Green? A few years ago it reopened with much

hoo-ha and banning of persons not dressed properly as the Monton Green. Well, it's the Blue Bell again. Makes you wonder why they bother, really.

# KING'S ALE

Leo King

First a word or two on the Boddingtons acquisition of Oldham Brewery and the closure of that brewery. One of the nicest pints of Oldham beer could once be had at a pub in Hollinwood called the Old Post Office. This pub for long remained a real ale house, complete with handpumps (as opposed to the all-keg White Swan, opposite), and always sold excellent beer. Only 25% of the OB tied estate sold real ale - which probably contributed to the company's downfall and eventual takeover by Boddingtons.



I visited the Old Post Office recently and both Boddingtons and Oldham beers were on sale. I ordered a pint of Oldham bitter (now brewed at Strangeways) and was not impressed, to say the least. There was no comparison with the original Oldham bitter as I knew it.

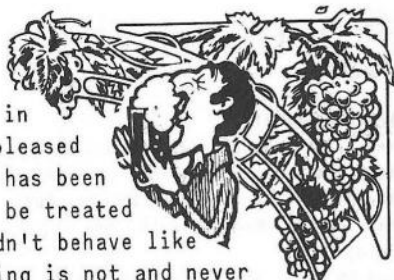
The beers always change after such switches in brewing - it has happened time and again after takeovers up and down the country. In so-called Wilsons pubs you may as well order Websters; the Wilsons beers now have the Halifax taste anyway.

It now appears that Whitbread refurbishments and modernisations have taken a turn for the better, as in the Lass o'Gowrie, the Waldorf and





# RUPERT'S PAGE



I hear that Mr Nodding, having failed in his bid for immortality, is not best pleased with his treatment in these pages. It has been remarked that if people don't want to be treated like shambling drunks then they shouldn't behave like them, but I take the point. What's Doing is not and never has been in the business of reporting on minor peccadilloes and lapses of good sense, so please don't expect to read here about persons of exemplary character who've been found with their hands in the wrong pair of trousers. Nor will we dwell on recent non-beer festivals, for I am certain that our readers have no sense of schaden freude.

As I write, Mr A G Bell's apparatus rings; it is the new bossperson, no less, who requests that I write nothing about anybody which in any way at all could possibly be construed as defamatory in the slightest regard.

Ever eager to obey, I consign my dossiers to the safe, in the hope that they might one day be resurrected. If there is a prohibition on what the ignorant may regard as scurrilous tittle-tattle which does little to further the Campaign, then so be it, but how to fill this space? I know - a quiz...

**Q1** What have the following in common?

(a) a dog. (b) a TV. (c) a heavy goods vehicle. (d) a beer festival

**Q2** Only one of the following is necessary for a beer festival. Which?

- (a) A very loud voice
- (b) Commemorative glasses
- (c) Printed programmes
- (d) a 6'7" solicitor
- (e) A licence



**Q3** Study this picture carefully. What is the Beer Festival Organiser saying to the Beer Manager?

Answers to the editor by 20th May, please. 1st Prize: As much Greenalls as you can drink in a night.





## Branch Diary

### NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 11 May, Punch Bowl, Chapel Street, Salford. Tetley speaker. 8pm

Wed 18 May Branch Meeting, Crescent. 8pm

Wed 25 May Duke of York, Eccles, 8pm

Wed 1 June, Newton Heath. New Cross, Old Church Street, 7.15. Robin Hood, Droylsden Road, 8.15

Wed 15 June, Branch Meeting, White Swan, 8pm

Wed 22 June. Minibus to Wigan and environs. 7pm from Manchester, picking up at Eccles, Swinton, Farnworth.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

### BOLTON

Tues 10 May 8.30. Branch Meeting, George, Great Moor Street (note change of venue)

Sun 15 May, Beer & Steam on East Lancs Railway. Meet Bolton Street Station, Bury, before 12 noon

Tues 14 June, 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street, Bolton

Contact: Dave Fleming, Bolton 389918 (h); Farnworth 75111 x207 (w)

### WIGAN

Wed 11 May 8.30, Branch Meeting, Tudor House Hotel, New Market Street, Wigan

Contact: Brian Gleave Atherton 892965 (h), Atherton 876200 (w)

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## PHONEY FREE HOUSES

CAMRA has asked all branches to write to the local trading standards officer objecting to phoney free houses. This includes pubs which have restrictive loan agreements. Is this really phoney? Surely pubs like the Crescent, the Queens Arms and the Beerhouse deserve some credit, even if they have a partial tie. Once again CAMRA, in trying to make arcane distinctions, is in danger of chucking out the curate's egg with the bathwater. Perhaps we'd be better ignoring the Hull AGM motion and making up our own minds whether a pub is a free house or not, unless we have categories like "50% Free House", "Free House with strings attached" and "Brewery owned but with selection of beers from other brewers".

### **MYTHS & LEGENDS No.1**

The "Pev" was declared a listed building because of its ornate wood and tile work and stained glass.

It is reputed to be haunted by the ghost of a man trampled to death on the site by a stage-coach horse.

(M.E.N 18.4.88)

**YOU READ IT FIRST IN  
WHAT'S DOING!**

### LION DOWN

A change of licensee has meant a last minute change in the selection of pubs for the Good Beer Guide. The Golden Lion in Blackley has not been included in next year's guide but has been replaced by the Duke of Wellington

in Crab Village. Pity we can't put them both in.

# NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.27

## FRIENDSHIP

24a Mumps, Oldham

Once a well-known Mumps landmark, the Friendship dated back to the mid to late eighteenth century. The date it was first licensed is uncertain, but the diarist Rowbottom recorded that "Samuel Fletcher opened his new ale house in Oldham, near Mumps" in December 1795. It is not known whether this was on the site of an earlier licensed house.

Sam Fletcher died in 1809 and was succeeded by R Fletcher and then by William Knott, who was also a cotton waste dealer. In 1820, one of his employees, a carter by the name of William Taylor, had the misfortune to fall into the Irwell at Manchester. His body was found four days later on a sandbank at Throstle Nest. .

In 1821 the Friendship, together with its brewhouse, was bought by a Mr James Clegg for just £805. After several changes of licensee, the pub became the property of a local brewery, Jowett & Waterhouse, who rebuilt it in the 1870s. The Friendship was also known as the "Hand in Hand" - clasped hands signifying Friendship were painted on the inn sign and could also be seen on the stone pediment above the gutter. This was later replaced by one bearing the word "Friendship".



Robert Winterbottom was the landlord in 1884 and he was followed by his son-in-law Sam Mallalieu in 1902. (Robert's three sons also became publicans). In 1910 Sam decided he didn't want to hold a licence under the then Chief Constable, David Turner. Apparently the police had raided the pub, looking for illegal betting. Sam won his case, all the charges were dropped and he was succeeded at the pub by his brother-in-law, Robert Winterbottom junior.



At this time the Friendship was a popular venue for billiards; the upstairs saloon had three full-size tables. In charge of this was Oldham's Tommy Race, who made world record breaks with his famous anchor-stroke cannons, until they were barred from the game.

In 1920 Jim Parkinson, who was then nearing the end of his career as Oldham FC full back, took over the licence. He reopened the billiard room, which had fallen into disuse at the end of the First World War, and once again it was visited by some of the country's leading players.

The Friendship had a somewhat rough clientele when Jim took over - the public bar was nicknamed "The Dardanelles"! - but he succeeded in cleaning the place up in record time. The pub had three doors opening on to the front street, and Jim used to tell the story of a troublesome drunk he ejected through one of them. The drunk reappeared at the next door and was chucked out again. Then he came through the third door, to be met by Jim yet again. "Blimey!" he said. "Are you the landlord of all these bloody pubs?"

When billiard halls began to take over from pub billiard saloons, Jim converted the room into a music lounge, with piano, cello and violin - the first of its kind in the district. The Friendship became a very popular rendezvous, with waiters in dinner jackets and waitresses in uniform. It was not until the Second World War that women were allowed in the Smoke or Gentlemen's Room, where local businessmen used to meet. The concerts at the Friendship often included turns by variety performers who were between stage engagements, and some were booked up to two years in advance.

Jim Parkinson left in 1940 and subsequently took over the Regent Hotel in the Market Place. Nine managers followed at the Friendship, the last being ex-policeman Harry Miles. The pub closed in 1969, only ten years after being modernised, and was demolished a few years later. A bus station now occupies the site.

Jim Parkinson is still alive and celebrated his 99th birthday last month.

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## 150 ISSUES

April's was the 150th issue of What's Doing, which we forgot about, but which marks 12½ years of getting up people's noses.

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