

15p

WHAT'S DOING



MAY
1989

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

HARD LINES



Manchester's new rapid transit system will toll the death knell not only for the Castle & Falcon but also for the Coach & Horses on London Road. The tragedy is that the demolition of both buildings is unnecessary. The proposed line passes over the cellar of the Castle &

Falcon but misses the pub itself and is some 30 yards from the Coach & Horses. Both pubs are ancient buildings. The Castle & Falcon was first licensed in 1792 in a building which was erected some 10 years earlier. The layout of the cellar and the height and fenestration of the rear room have fuelled speculation that the pub was a former prison with its own chapel. Certainly John Bradshaw, who lived next door in the mid eighteenth century, was a magistrate and high sheriff of Manchester. Whatever the truth of the speculation, the Castle & Falcon is certainly a pub of character and its loss would be irreparable.

The Coach & Horses is an even older building although, as a beerhouse, it was not licensed until after 1830. The Georgian terrace in which it is situated is in need of repair but, if the money paid in compensation were to be spent on renovation, this characterful pub would become an asset to the city. Progress is essential, but a genuine effort should be made to preserve a sense of history lest we lose a little more of the quality of life.

HENRY'S HAMMER

Two more Boddingtons pubs threatened with the dreaded Henry's Tabling have regulars who are incensed by the proposals. At the Butley Ash in Prestbury a vigorous campaign to halt the plans has begun with all the overtones of the Cock campaign. It remains to be seen whether the local CAMRA branch will be involved in a campaign to save the Wilton at Rhodes, Middleton. Boddingtons must be made to realise that these proposals offend a loyal customer base and will ultimately undermine the company itself. Local brewers have a role to play and it's not one of imitating the Big Seven.

BOLTON BRIEFLY

The Pilkington Arms, Derby Street, Bolton, now has cask Tetley mild, bitter and dark mild on handpump. The pub had been on keg beer for at least 15 years. On a recent visit the dark mild was somewhat difficult to pull, but when the barmaid was advised to remove the plastic sparkler all was well. The sparkler was found to be a blank! So much for Tetley Cellarmanship! The Pilkington Arms is a welcome gain for the area as the Morris Dancers has lost its Davenports bitter due to lack of demand (no advertising and only one handpump in the corner of the bar).

The Oddfellows (St Helens Road) is selling good Greenalls mild and bitter all day and the Farmers Arms (Derby Street) has Trophy bitter (ask for cask).

THE MONOPOLIES COMMISSION REPORT

The Monopolies Commission Report into the Supply of Beer found that beer prices had risen faster than inflation; prices in many areas of the country are far too high, and that lager costs the same as beer to produce but is priced much higher.

It is all damning evidence that the big brewers have used their monopolies to exploit the consumer. The Commission said that the industry does not offer the consumer enough choice of pubs or drinks, and unless action was taken, there would be fewer breweries and less choice. They made a series of radical proposals, which the Government is presently considering.

THE GOOD NEWS

The proposals will safeguard the independent breweries, which are essential for the future of real beer and real pubs. Many of these have already welcomed the package as an opportunity to increase competition and improve things for the customer. The only long-term protection of good quality is a variety of producers and a variety of pub owners, which the report sets out to achieve. However, to save us from bland beer and plastic pubs, the Government will have to look again at some areas only touched on by the Commission.

PUBS

The most newsworthy item in the report was the decision that no brewer can own more than 2,000 pubs. There are plenty of smaller brewers, pub-owning groups and individuals lining up to buy those set free from Whitbread, Bass, Tetley and the like, and this will certainly increase the choice available. On the other hand, there is a danger that some non-profitable pubs may close. CAMRA's point of view is that all pubs released by the brewers should be offered first to the sitting tenant, and that the brewers offer the pubs for sale for a year before closing them. As the smaller brewers are often able to make a go of the smallest pubs, then mass closures are very unlikely.

MORE CHOICE IN THE TIED HOUSE

The Commission intends to give each tenant the right to stock an outside beer or lager, if he feels his present range doesn't suit the customer. This should mean more variety and will encourage brewers to widen their stocks, perhaps offering guest beers automatically as part of their range.

REAL FREE HOUSES

The Commission found that over half of the "free houses" are in fact controlled by the brewers through cheap loans to the publican. (CAMRA

surveys suggest an even higher degree of control.) These "loan ties" prevent smaller brewers from being able to sell their beers in the free trade. They may deceive the public, who think of free houses as free to sell beer from any source. The Commission wants to ban the "loan tie" and so provide more genuine free houses, free to serve products from any brewery.

It is worth noting that the brewers' cheap loans (5% interest) are not cheap for the customer, who pays for them in higher prices.

TENANTS' RIGHTS

The Commission wants to give more security for the tenant and the opportunity to stop breweries charging exorbitant rents. There is no doubt that these proposals will be excellent for the tenants already in place. What concerns CAMRA is that brewers will dump long-standing tenants before they are covered by legal protection - a shabby way to treat loyal staff. And instead they may bring in managers, who have to run the pub as the brewery wants it.

PRICES

CAMRA has always found it is competition from the independent brewers that keeps prices down, and expects to see the enormous difference in prices across the country reduced. The Commission wants the brewers to print their wholesale price lists which will make interesting reading in some areas!

In some tied estates the prices of soft drinks, wines, spirits, ciders and low-alcohol drinks are even more extraordinary than the prices of the beers. The Commission wants to free tenants to buy these drinks from sources other than their brewery. This should mean a better deal on prices.

PROBLEMS

There is one enormous problem. The 2,000 pub limit does not apply to companies which don't own breweries. This is a ridiculous loophole, because it means that some of the big brewers will sell their breweries and hang on to all their pubs. They could then buy all the pubs sold by the other breweries.

What's wrong with that? Well, if the Big Six brewers can force up prices and limit choice, a future with, say, three enormous pub-owners would be worse. Across the country, pubs owned by the chains would come from a common mould, like supermarkets - and people don't go to supermarkets for the atmosphere. These vast companies might make spectacular profits by trimming their range down to a handful of bland, nationally advertised products and by-passing the local

producers. The Government wants to expand choice and value-for-money, but if they let enormous pub-owners emerge from the Big Six it will be a massive leap backwards.

Common sense and the interests of the consumer demand that the Government puts the same 2,000 pub limit on pub-owners too. That way we will get a real choice over who owns our pub and whose beer it serves.

CAMRA

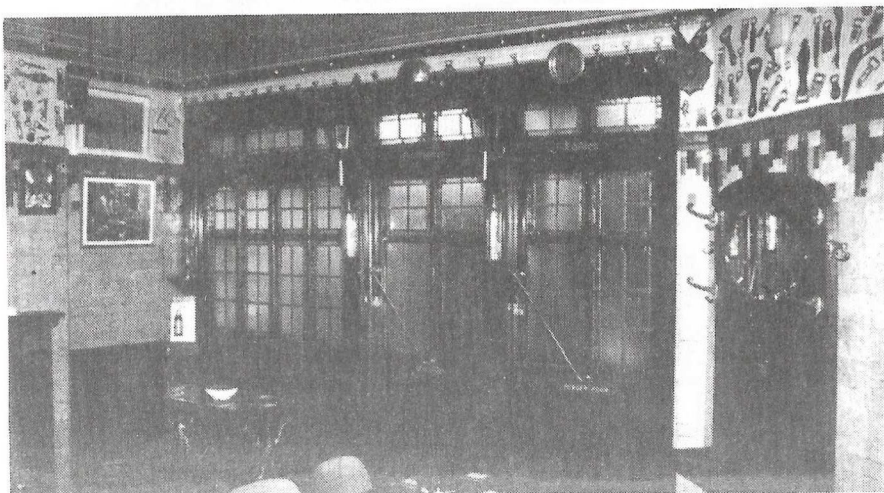
CAMRA is delighted to see that the Commission has accepted many of its arguments. Now we have to press to see that the good points in the report are implemented and the bad points altered. The threat to independent breweries from takeover has not been dealt with. While the Commission blocked the takeover of Scottish & Newcastle by Elders, they have not offered smaller brewers any clear protection.

LOST MISSION

Holts' Apollo in deepest Cheetwood still remains closed. Entrepreneurs nosing about seem to have been thin on the ground. If Holts can't keep a pub open, who can?

BUCK & HAWTHORN

CAMRA, the licensee and regulars at the Buck & Hawthorn, Ashton, are fighting to retain a glazed screen at the pub (photo below). Robinsons Brewery have plans to 'improve the toilets' which, for some reason, entails removal of the screen. Chris Tucker of High Peak Branch has written a polite letter to Robinsons, asking them to reconsider. Robinsons have replied and things are looking hopeful.



KING'S ALE

Leo King

Didsbury must surely now be regarded as the real ale capital of Manchester, as all ten pubs serve traditional beers. Once only a Boddingtons pub and a Hydes pub sold traditional beer, but now, after the long-awaited conversion of the Dog & Partridge to real ale, there is a 100% record. The Dog & Partridge (Greenalls) on Wilmslow Road (central Didsbury) has been completely altered and the outcome is a tasteful, smart and sensible (no gimmicks) pub. Cloth seat coverings add to the comfort. It's nice to see that, in many cases, newly-decorated pubs replace that slippery, sweaty and squeaky PVC seat covering with the real stuff. Handpumps have been installed to dispense Greenalls bitter, Original and Davenports bitter.

Ruddles bitter is now on sale at the Nelson on Barlow Moor Road (near the corner of Wilmslow Road) at 90p a pint. The range here is Ruddles, Websters bitter and Choice. Outside, the pub advertises "Wilsons". Oh, well! So much for progress.

The Station (Marstons) received a CAMRA Pub of the Month award in March. This is Didsbury's smallest outlet and serves great beers. The choice of beer in Didsbury now comprises: Boddingtons, Chesters, Davenports, Greenalls, Hydes, Marstons, Ruddles and Websters.



Not far from the Dog & Partridge a Bass restaurant/pub is about to open. Could we see handpumps dispensing Stones or Bass light or dark mild? Or maybe just one electric pump serving draught Bass (even at over £1 a pint)? If not, Didsbury, for a short time, held the record as a 100% real ale district. There are several Manchester districts which are close runners-up in the real ale table - Withington, Newton Heath, Rusholme, Levenshulme, Openshaw, Cheetham Hill, Northenden and Moston to name some. Then again, Blackley and Crumpsall could actually be hundred-percenters.

BASS NEWS

The Old Wellington, Shambles Square, reopened at Easter after closing for a few weeks for essential building work to be carried out. The closure was also used as an opportunity to undertake a complete re-furbishment. This has been done in the best taste, with the pub retaining its unique character.

The Wellington is now classed as a Toby Pantry, having lost its previous status as a Toby Carvery. This subtle re-classification means that the Wellington is now regarded by Bass as a pub rather than as a restaurant and the range of meals are more top-of-the-range bar food rather than Berni Inn affairs.

Handpumped Stones and draught Bass have been retained, with no price increase - are Bass beginning to learn at last? The draught Bass has been excellent since the reopening and at 95p a pint it is very good value compared with the £1.02 charged at the Crown, Fountain Street, and the Town Hall, Tib Lane. Best value for Bass in the North West must be at the Burton Arms on Swan Street, where a pint of the nectar costs only 86p!

MONOPOLY MATTERS

Wilsons and Burtonwood breweries have issued their tenants with notices to quit so that new agreements can be made. Apparently the brewers are going to bang up the rents of all their tenanted pubs so that the loot will continue to roll in at the same rate when they have to relax their ties and allow tenants to buy in other beer.

TH'IMP

The Imperial, Piccadilly, Manchester, is now a Websters-only emporium.

BURY BOLOGNESE

The Rayners Vaults, the only Whitbread pub in Bury town centre that the brewery haven't knocked about, will close next month. The place is to be turned into a Pizza Hut.

To the Editor:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

LETTERS



Bass Mitchells & Butlers Limited

Cape Hill Brewery
P.O. Box 27
Birmingham B16 0PQ

Dear Sirs,

You will by now be aware of the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission following the publication of its report on the supply of beer. Bass totally refutes the findings of this report and is doing everything possible to oppose its introduction.

The uncertainty about the future of our tenanted estate caused by the publication of this report means that at present:

- (a) we can only spend capital on safeguarding the property
- (b) no new major developments of any of our tenanted properties can at present proceed
- (c) until the position is further clarified we cannot confirm the appointment of any new tenants

This is the minimum action that the company has been forced to take at this juncture. The company retains the belief that the existing tenant/company partnership remains the best long term benefit for tenants, their customers and our contractors.

Can I ask for your support in helping to fight these proposals. The effect on our local economy could be quite serious and I would ask you to lend your support to our campaign by contacting your M.P., local councillors and opinion formers to point out the overall effect that implementation would have.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R.E. Wilkins'.

R.E. Wilkins
Managing Director

(No doubt Mr Wilkins will be overwhelmed with letters of support from What's Doing readers. Or not, as the case may be.)

FESTIVAL VALUE

Sir - Kelvin Bland's doubts about the usefulness of the effort involved in beer festivals are ill-founded. They are of enormous campaigning value. Over 6,000 people came to the Great North West Beer Festival in Bolton and were able to see exactly what CAMRA is about - real ale, real pubs and vigorous campaigning. Festivals are high

profile events which attract a great deal of media attention and keep CAMRA's image before the public. I would like to congratulate all those involved for their hard work and dedication to the cause. Keep up the good work!

Wayne Foster

ANOTHER ONE

Sir - What's all this about beer festivals being a time-wasting distraction from proper campaigning? (Kelvin Bland - who?, WD April). I cannot speak for the other festivals at Stockport, Oldham, Wigan and Bury, but the recent Great North Western Beer Festival at Bolton was a notable campaigning event and a success on many fronts.

7,500 people were reminded of our wonderful variety of distinctive British beers (and ciders); 6,000 free programmes were distributed and these contained some good campaigning articles, including three pages on the festival theme, "Protect Your Pub". A few dozen new members were recruited and (incidentally) CAMRA made a tidy profit which will be used to fund other campaigning events.

In addition, petition signatures were collected for the "Castle & Falcon" and "Coach & Horses" and "Hands Off Davenports" campaigns; 1,000 summaries of what CAMRA has achieved with the Monopolies & Mergers Commission were distributed and 500 copies of the Pub Preservation Manifesto were also handed out. We also gained some goodwill by enabling the festival charity, the Bolton Hospice, to raise £1,000.

Peter Barnes, Festival Publicity Officer

OLD FART

Sir - Your correspondent Kelvin Bland raises a valid point about beer festivals. Originally, beer festivals were intended as a reminder to the licensed trade of what could be achieved with a bit of commitment. This can still work - within days of this year's Stockport Beer Festival ending, the Railway on Pottery Lane, Ashburys, was selling Robinwood Old Fart from Todmorden as a direct result of the licensee and customers having enjoyed the beer at Stockport.

Beer festivals are NOT just CAMRA jollies - used properly, they are a vital part of the fight for good beer.

Rhys P Jones, Organiser, Stockport Beer Festival

STANDARDS

Sir - A survey carried out by South Glamorgan trading standards officers has revealed that one in four bar staff do not know the difference between non-alcoholic and low-alcoholic drinks.

The inspectors visited over 50 pubs and in some 25% of them they were served a low-alcoholic drink when the order was for a non-alcoholic

one, which is tough for the driver who thinks he is capable of driving home afterwards.

Perhaps the Manchester trading standards officers could be persuaded to carry out a similar survey, as the lack of knowledge among bar staff is nothing new to CAMRA in Manchester.

A request for "A pint of bitter, please," all too often sends the server to the nearest pump, be it handpull or keg box, with no word to the customer of the choice available. Many a good real ale has been withdrawn from pubs simply because staff have not informed the customers of the choice of beers for sale.

Of course, one other reason for such an attitude towards the customer is a deliberate ploy by the brewery to get rid of an unwanted or inconvenient product.

Glenn Worth

DRABS DEVOTION

Sir - Paul Roberts (March WD) is a self-confessed Drabs devotee, likes Burton Ale and waxes lyrical about Holts Entire. Fair enough. He obviously doesn't like Peter Walker beers, Tetley Walker beers and HPD mild and bitter. Again, fair enough, but there are plenty, myself included, who do, and everyone knows that CAMRA members are broad-minded, tolerant and support freedom of choice. In short, qualities that are always displayed by WD correspondents!

However, when Paul describes the Warrington brewery as a "chemical plant", I wonder if he knows what he is talking about. He knows something I don't or he's suffering from an excess of Entire.

What I (and anyone else who has been to the brewery) know is that it operates on traditional principles. There is no high gravity brewing, no conical fermentation towers, no continuous fermentation. Open fermentation vats of the Yorkshire Square type are used, together with top fermentation yeasts. Whole hops are used in the coppers.

Perhaps Paul is getting confused with two other large Cheshire breweries which certainly do not fulfil all the criteria CAMRA would deem "traditional".

As far as ingredients are concerned, I have no reason to believe that those used at Warrington are any less "pure" than those used at Drabs, Ind Coope or Holts' Brewery Tap. The sooner that brewers are forced to disclose them the better.

Perhaps Paul has inside information, which he surely must now reveal. We should be told!

Roy Walker, Tetley Walker BLO

HOLTS CORNER

The strength of Holts beers is always a favourite topic of conversation between like-minded drinkers. It has long been known that the original gravity (o.g.) is around 1039 for the bitter and 1033 for the mild, but now the new standard for determining strength is Alcohol by Volume (ABV). For the bitter this is 4.0% and the mild 3.2%.

An outline planning application is with Oldham Council for a new public house site at the rear of the Bridgewater Hotel, Manchester Road, Hollinwood. This is a replacement site, for the Bridgewater is affected by the road widening which starts in 12-18 months' time. Holts have also expressed a desire to replace their other pub on Manchester Road, the Kings Arms, which is affected by the M66 extension. A search for a new site continues, with the assistance of Oldham Council.

Some seven years ago Holts applied to build a pub on a site at the junction of Ashley Street and Liverpool Street, Weaste. The request was turned down. In early March the application was re-submitted to Salford City Council, sufficient time having passed since the first attempt. (Not a lot of pubs in that area.)

Holts are in the process of taking over the Bolton Castle (formerly the Castle) on Tonge Moor Road, Bolton, from Tetleys.

The designers/architects of the Sidings, Broom Lane, Levenshulme, have received a commendation from CAMRA's Pub Preservation Group. The Sidings is one of four recently-built Holts pubs by the same design team; the other three are the Grafton, the Mill House and the Dukes Gate.

Now if Holts wished to show their appreciation for CAMRA (have they ever?), they could start by replacing the ornate old lamp that hung over the doorway of the Railway on Manshaw Road, Higher Openshaw. It disappeared during recent 'improvements'.

The Royal Oak on Barton Lane, Eccles, is again under threat of demolition for road improvements in the centre of Eccles. It may have only another two years before it comes down.

Stewart Revell

HIGGIES

The Kings Arms on Bloom Street, Salford, had an official reopening on Thursday 20th April. It is now designated a Higsons pub and sells handpumped Higsons bitter and mild, Boddingtons bitter and keg Boddies mild.

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

The ink wasn't dry on last month's article when rumours abounded that the SPRINGFIELD HOTEL, Springfield Road, is to be turned into some kind of eaterie. In view of the howler I produced about the RAVEN HOTEL, Wallgate, a few months back (Feb WD), I don't want to say too much about the Springfield at this point. Nevertheless, the local CAMRA branch decided not to put the pub forward for the 1990 Good Beer Guide, so there must be something in it. The word is out that Walkers (for it is they) are turning the Springfield into a managed house; maybe someone thinks that the pub will attract a better type of clientele when Wigan Athletic are in Division Four?

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, minor changes are afoot at the SEVEN STARS HOTEL, Wallgate. Nothing too drastic: Thwaites have removed the wall and doorway near the bar (on the left as you walk through the main door) and alterations should be complete by the time you read this. Let's hope that not too much of the Seven Stars' "quintessential pubness" gets chucked out with the rubble.

The BRICKLAYERS ARMS, Hallgate, has finally dropped its Walkers ordinary bitter in favour of Tetley bitter. I know that Walker bitter isn't exactly the grooviest beer in the world, but you can't find it anywhere else in the centre of Wigan. The place is awash with Tetleys, cask and keg. Sad.

The slumbering giant that is Wigan's free trade has finally come to life. Russ Johnson of the TUDOR HOUSE HOTEL, New Market Street, has been slow in replacing his Bass beers with S&N (I'm not complaining!), but he has been dabbling with guest ales lately. Oak Old Oak Ale sold like fury, and Moorhouses Pendle Witch was expected around copy date.

Back at STANLEY'S, on the corner of Hilton Street and Greenough Street, Tetley dark mild has replaced the ordinary mild, while Moorhouses Premium bitter has given way to Batemans mild (in my view, the best mild ale brewed anywhere). Other beers on sale are Tetley bitter, Walker best and Taylors Landlord. Mine host Chris Docherty has more beer changes in store. But what? You'll have to see for yourself...

Out-of-town now, and the PARK HOTEL, Manchester Road, Higher Ince, has reverted to traditional Wilsons mild and bitter. This pub was a GBG regular about ten years ago. On the other side of Ince, the ROCK FERRY (aka Little Rock) remains closed and boarded up. This Youngers pub is on Warrington Road.

An unimpeachable source of information (or 'JB' to his mates) tells me that the CROWN HOTEL, Platt Lane, Worthington, is to become a residential hotel, with fifteen rooms. Though ostensibly a free house, Theakstons ales have dominated the bar of the Crown for some time now, with the odd guest beer. Incidentally, the other pubs in the village, the BRADLEY HALL (Whitbread) and the WHITE CROW (Greenalls), both sell real ale.

Wigan CAMRA Branch's Pub of the Year was the COLLIERS ARMS, Wigan Road, New Springs. At the presentation on March 22nd the Burtonwood beers were good and cheap and the buffet consisted of hotpot and crumpets toasted over a real fire. Loud-mouthed CAMRA yahoos were slapped down by an old dear who wanted to listen to the live act. Far out, man, as they say.

STRANGE WAYS

Last month they bought some nursing homes, a chain of restaurants and a drinks wholesaling business. Now Boddingtons announce they are "moving into the residential accommodation market". Hotels are to be built on to Boddingtons pubs, many of which "are in locations entirely appropriate to this area," according to the company's marketing controller. Ah, yes, of course, they did try it on at the Cock in Worsley, didn't they? But the planners put a stop to it.

The first Boddies b&b will be at a pub on the Wirral, which is far enough away. The brewery is also testing out a new cafe bar in Liverpool.

Oh dear, it all looks very depressing. Ewart Boddington has acquired his pensioner's bus pass and spends his days sitting in the backyard with his rabbits and dreaming of what might have been. The man now in charge at the Strangeways brewery used to sell frocks at British Home Stores.

OLDHAM NEWS

The Kirkstyle Inn on Huddersfield Road now has handpumped Chesters mild and bitter and Marstons Pedigree. There is a different guest beer every month.

HIPP HOORAY

Holts' latest pub is the Hipp on Lathbury Road, just off Queens Road and a couple of minutes from the Ark Royal, Collyhurst. It is a typical c1970 Chesters building (the Queens nearby is similar). Now a managed Holts house, the beers are electric pumped mild (67p) and bitter (70p) - 2p cheaper in the vault.

NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.37

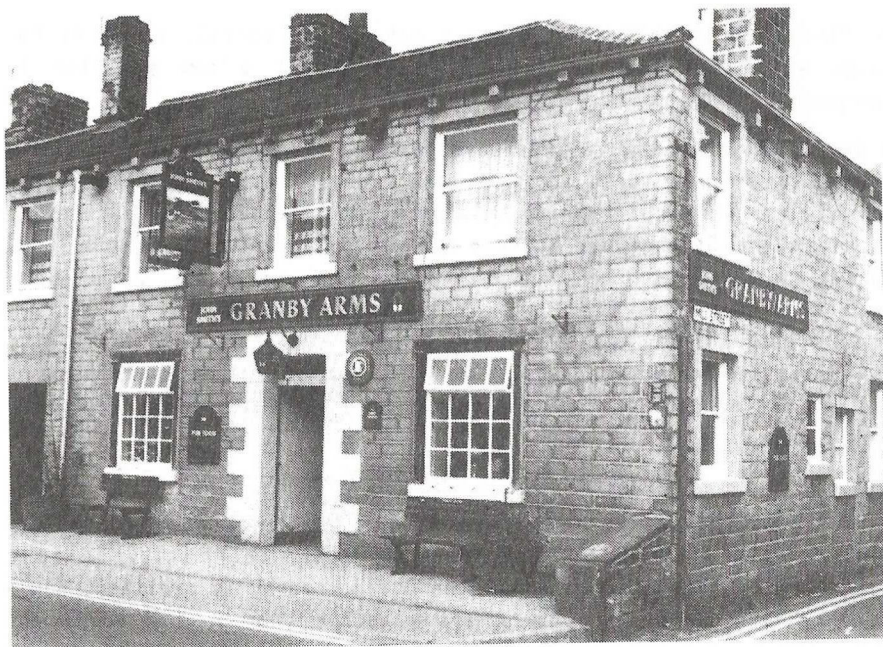
GRANBY ARMS

High Street, Uppermill

In 1831 a wheelwright by the name of Joseph Ashton bought an Excise licence and opened up a beerhouse in Uppermill on one of the main Manchester-Huddersfield routes. It was originally called the Dog & Partridge, but when Joseph obtained a full licence the house was renamed Queen Adelaide, after the Queen Consort of William IV.

Four years later the name was changed again to the Marquis of Granby, after a cavalry officer who distinguished himself at the Battle of Warburg in 1760. He is remembered for a charge against the French, during which he lost his hat and wig, revealing his very bald head. It is said that the phrase, "to go at a thing bald-headed" originated from the incident. The Marquis apparently set up many of his former senior non-commissioned officers, pensioned out through ill health or injury, in the licensing trade; hence the popular inn sign.

By 1850 Charles Frederick Buckley had taken over at the Uppermill pub and he shortened its name to the Granby Arms, which it has been ever since.



In the 1860s, landlady Hannah Buxton employed an itinerant bricklayer called Monsieur Wild to entertain her customers. His feats included running a mile and then pushing a wheelbarrow for another mile; jumping over hurdles, 3ft high and 10ft apart, and at the same time gathering up two dozen eggs at spaced intervals, and picking up 20 bricks, spaced a yard apart, with his teeth! To conclude his performance he would swing a half-hundredweight weight over his head a hundred times. All this he completed in less than an hour!

In 1896 the Granby Arms was purchased by Henry Shaw's Dukinfield brewery. John Smiths took over Shaws in 1939.



The present tenant, John H Holmes, took over in 1972 and he has seen some big changes since then, particularly with the growth of tourism in the area. Mr Holmes is the unofficial Warden of the Ducks, which sometimes take over the lawns opposite the Granby. With this in mind, the inn sign now depicts a mallard duck ascending in flight.

WOODIES

The former Woodlands Hotel is now up to let as a licensed retail opportunity. If Grand Met, Wilsons, Websters, Watneys, Pennine Joke, Clifton Inns, or whatever they're called, can't make a go of it with all their clever chaps in suits, what chance has Joe Punter got?

CADISHEAD RAILWAY

Now called the Plough, this Greenalls pub has been gutted and so has lost its individual character. There's still a separate vault at the front, but the pool table unnecessarily dominates. There's a plush lounge at the back with a good central bar. Handpumped real ale is promised for the near future.

MOORHOUSE'S		 PREMIER DRAUGHT BITTER <i>The Prize-Winning Pint!</i>
BREWERS OF REAL ALE		 Pendle Witches Brew <small>STRONG BURNLEY BITTER</small>
<small>PREMIER BITTER (O.G. 1036°) Silver Medal Award Winner, Brewex 83</small>	<small>PENDLE WITCHES BREW (O.G. 1050°) Believed Strongest Bitter Brewed in the North-West</small>	
<small>Both delivered weekly direct from brewery to cellar. Contact Max Taylor to place your order.</small>		
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RUPERT'S PAGE



Well, all the amber nectar shows are over. What wonderful events they are. Not only are CAMRA grass roots stalwarts afforded an opportunity to allow the hoi polloi to sample delectable brews, but they also benefit from rubbing shoulders with gliterati of the Campaign whom they've hitherto worshipped from afar. This hero worship is not entirely without its misunderstandings, as one might expect. Impecunious or fringe members who couldn't get to Jockley for the AGM do not always recognise famous personages, who, to the rest of us, are as familiar as Beinlos or Perry Drab. I was taken on one side by a former boss person who asked, "Who's that loud fellow over there? He needs a damned good ironing, if you ask me."

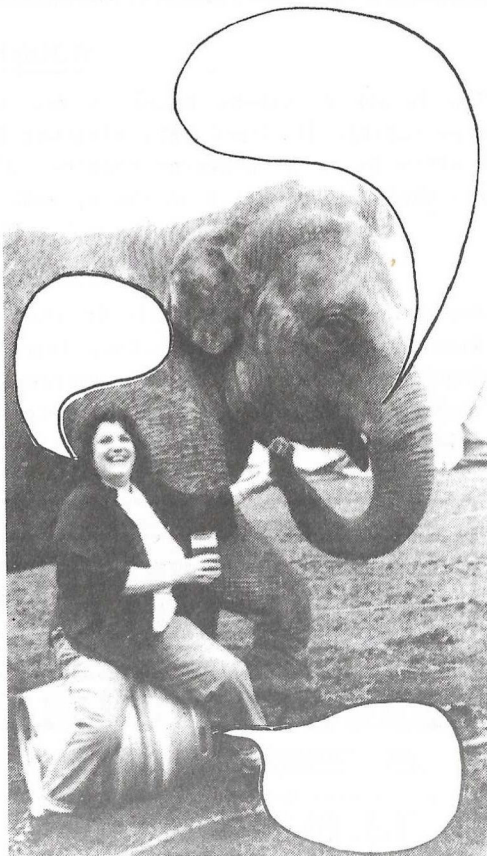
On the same day the televisual divorcé sweetie Bogbrush, who'd come over from Scouseley with Zimbabwe Talbot and Seamus Spud, pointed out one of the, let us say, Junoesque young ladies who were working their naughties off and said, "Is that Mole Whale-body?" He was visibly disappointed when I replied in the negative.

There were few events of moment; no black-eyed would-be boss persons, little loo-bonking and a general lack of spouse swapping and overtiredness unless my informants have been bribed to secrecy. Nobody was arrested for having their hand in the till or a choirboy's trousers, and the only fisticuffs were confined to some off duty tuxedoed heavies from what is laughingly called a

WHAT'S DOING COMPETITION

HATTIE NIGHTINGALE (left) and PACHYDERMIC FRIEND. WHO'S SAYING WHAT?

1st Prize: As much Websters as you can drink in an evening



night spot. Even the bus load of pot smoking transvestites were as good as fairies.

These Campaign jollies certainly create a cameraderie unequalled since Winnie beat the Hun. They promote CAMRA as an elite group of discerning connoisseurs spreading the gospel to a wider public. Unfortunately, as in all these things, other activities lose their priority status. Mind you, compared with the undoubted importance of amber nectar shows such other activities as fighting brewery closures, campaigning for pubs threatened with demolition, desecration or yuppification, monitoring beer standards, producing newsletters and beer guides and even surveying real meths arches and residential real cider taverns with accommodation for disabled non-smoking dogs and unidexter hippopotamuses pale into insignificance.

All those taking part feel reinvigorated, ready once again to venture forth into the real plebeian world of spit and sawdust hovels to spread the gospel among the uninitiated until the next round of jollies comes around.

And finally a word for all our Estonian readers:

Stan Craap on piruka sõõja ja üks kord oli purjus, selleparäst ta sõi vāga palju pirukaid.

NOWT DOING

Could the fact that What's Doing is now organa non grata at a certain amber nectar emporium possibly have anything to do with that establishment's non selection for next year's Good Beer Guide? Perish the thought!

PENDLETON PERAMBULATIONS

The Beehive on Holland Street has been done up in a tasteful way. The vault has been retained and handpumped Greenalls mild and bitter are available. Over Cock Robin Bridge, the Feathers is still boarded up. The Duchy (Greenalls) no longer serves real mild and the Church on Ford Lane has now only one draught beer - Websters. The Union on Broughton Road is now entirely keg Greenalls, but traditional Stones is still on sale at the Maypole and Boddies mild and bitter are still sold at the Railway and the Priory Arms. Unless you venture into Fraggie Rock, the only Holts outlet is the Old House at Home on Whit Lane near the Jubilee Bridge.

Other contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Roger Hall, Mike Robinson, Bill Collier, Roger Bullock, Bert Kerks



When I first suggested that our curry-eating group visit the Plaza, I realised that perhaps not everyone would be brave enough to attend. However, as the two of us stood nervously outside this infamous cafe I began to think that perhaps the majority had made the correct decision.

It was my good friend Hee-Haw who once said, "The Plaza is to curry what bonking in a graveyard is to sex," and although I have no experience of the latter, I think I can see what he's getting at!

So what has the Plaza done to achieve such notoriety? And why do drunken idiots in Yorkshire declare, after pub closing time, that they can "hear the Plaza calling," and hurtle across the Pennines in convoys?

Basically, it is because for over a decade the Plaza has conjured up enormous platefuls of (slightly) dubious biryanis accompanied by dangerous incendiary sauces with frightening names. The present menu lists the curry sauces in order of strength:

Mild, Medium, Hot, Suicide, Killer, Charlie's Special (named after the proprietor), Cremation and Goodbye.

If I tell you that the Hot Curry is about the same strength as a normal vindaloo then it starts fitting into place.

The most popular dish is the chicken biryani. For £2.20 you get a



plateful of yellow rice interspersed with pieces of chicken and a bright red sauce (strength of your choice) to pour over the top. For the adventurous, both meat biryani (£2.70) and vegetable curry (£2.10) are also available.

If you do require starters then poppadums are 20p each, with onions and mango chutney as optional extras.

So that's all there is to it. I would recommend that you don't turn up sober; the Plaza doesn't start to liven up until after midnight and is open until 4.00am.

What's that? What was the curry like? Well, it was incredibly hot but definitely addictive. I will return one day.

Keema Nan



Branch Diary

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thurs 11 May 8pm, Whalley Range/Moss Side survey. Meet Whalley Hotel, Upper Chorlton Road

Thurs 18 May 5.45pm. Banks's Brewery Trip. Pick up at Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham. Branch Meeting to be held on coach!

Thurs 25 May 8pm, Survey Night. Meet Tollgate, Old Trafford

Thurs 1 June 8.30pm. Committee Meeting. Meet Chapel House, Mobberley. 9.30 Greyhound, Ashley. (Appreciation of Davenports)

Contact: Peter Forshaw 061 755 2351

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 2 May 8pm, Branch AGM, The Parkside, Bury Old Road, Heaton Park, Prestwich. All welcome

Tues 16 May, Committee Meeting, Royal Oak, Whittaker Lane, Prestwich, 8.30

Tues 6 June, Branch Meeting, Diggle Hotel, Diggle, Saddleworth, 8.30pm

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 10 May, Moorside Farm, Swinton, 8pm

Wed 17 May, White Swan, Swinton, 8pm

Thur 18 May, City Guide Meeting, Castle 8pm

Wed 24 May, Patricroft: Queens Arms 7pm, Black Boy 8pm

Wed 31 May, 15th Anniversary Crawl: Spread Eagle 7pm, Lord Nelson, Ringley, 8pm. Finish Clock Face, Farnworth. All Bolton and ROB members welcome

Wed 7 June, Milan, Rochdale Road, 7pm. Ark Royal 8pm

Wed 21 June Crescent, Salford 8pm

Contact: Roger Hall, 740 7937

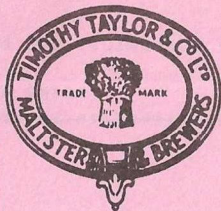
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Tues: 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

Weds: 12.00-4.00 6.00-11.00

Thur: 12.00-4.00 6.00-11.00

Fri: 12.00-11.00

Sat 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

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