

WHAT'S DOING

JULY
1989



THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE



THREAT TO OLD BOLTON PUB

The Boars Head, one of Bolton's oldest pubs, will be pulled down if Greenalls have their way. This Churchgate pub and the adjoining cafe and fish and chip shop are the subjects of a planning application by the brewery, who want to demolish them and build a five-storey block which would include a new Boars Head. This has angered the local CAMRA branch and Bolton's influential Civic Trust. All three buildings are in a Conservation Area and this, says Bill Brown of the Civic Trust, could be the key to victory as a high court judge recently ruled that Conservation property can only be demolished "if it enhances the existing character of the area". According to Greenalls, the adjoining cafe is unsafe and the Boars Head and the chippy are in "poor condition".

MORE NEWS FROM BOLTON....

The Park Hotel on Bridgeman Street now boasts handpulled Tetley dark mild, mild and bitter. This now completes a trio of real ale pubs within 50 yards of each other: the Park, Lees' Lodge Bank Tavern directly opposite and the Victoria (Greenalls) a little further down the street.

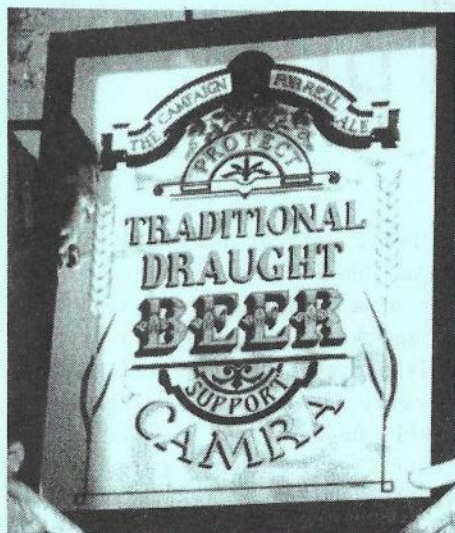
Two real ale pubs with late night licences face a battle with Bolton's licensing magistrates. The pubs, Maxims on Bradshawgate and the Crown & Cushion on Mealhouse Lane, are facing objections from the police on the grounds that food was not available on occasions when the local constabulary visited them. Already, one of Bolton's oldest night clubs, Maxwells Plum, has fallen foul of this rule and is closing down. The Trotters (also keg) on Bradshawgate was fighting its case in the magistrates' courts as we went to press.

Thwaites best mild and bitter are now served through handpumps at Yates' Wine Lodge on Bradshawgate. Meanwhile, plans to turn Yates' into an upmarket wine bar appear to have been shelved.

Des Nogalski

CAMRA

PRODUCTS & PUBLICATIONS



CAMRA North West Region now has a full range of products and publications available locally. Including all the "Boozer's Bookshelf" titles as advertised in "What's Brewing". CAMRA Traditional Mirror (left, £16), S-Shirts, T-Shirts, CAMRA ties, V-neck sweaters, CAMRA knitting patterns, pens, key fobs, tea-towels, bottle openers, CAMRA balloons, lapel badges and even CAMRA teddy bears!! Also, most local guides, including Manchester, Bolton, Cumbria, Cheshire, Wigan and a few 1989 Good Beer Guides to clear. For more details and price list please contact Glenn Worth 798 7639

OFF THE RAILS

Vigorous campaigning by CAMRA activists, particularly Peter Wadsworth, Peter Barnes and Roger Bullock, has resulted in a stay of execution for the two central Manchester pubs threatened with demolition to make way for the new rail link. Council leader Graham Stringer has pledged

to ensure that everything is done to save the historic buildings. An effort has been made to list both buildings. The Coach & Horses would seem to meet the criteria but the Castle & Falcon, which is a hotch-potch of styles from different eras, would not. Yet, paradoxically, the building at the rear over the cellar might well qualify.

The campaign has certainly attracted much media attention, yet, sadly, press reports are often less than accurate. The conventional wisdom is that the Castle & Falcon dates back to before 1753, yet as late as 1773 Bradshaw Street was not in existence. A building on the site of the C&F appears on both Green's map (surveyed 1787, published 1794) and on Lewis's 1788 map which accompanied their directory. The pub was first licensed in 1792 when Ralph Broadbent was the alehousekeeper. Suggestions that the building was once a gaol and that the stained glass windows are from the gaol chapel must be taken with a pinch of salt. There seems to be little evidence to support either of



Reprieved, the Castle and Falcon

Pubs to get more time

TWO HISTORIC pubs threatened by the bulldozers have won a reprieve.

Transport chiefs in Manchester agreed earlier this month that the 200-year-old Coach and Horses in Piccadilly and the Castle and Falcon in Shudehill should be demolished for the city's new tram system.

But after protests they have pledged that nothing will happen until consultations over the future of the buildings are exhausted.

The promise was given at a meeting of the city council's transport strategy sub-committee.

Council leader Graham Stringer said: "We are doing all we can to ensure that these historic



Reprieved, the Coach and Horses

was important to establish that demolition was necessary, especially at

these claims. Nevertheless, the C&F is certainly a pub of character, and gaol or no gaol, the demise is both unnecessary and undesirable.

The Coach & Horses, despite its name, is a former beerhouse dating from the early 1830s, although the building is much older. Indeed, the Feathers at the other end of the block was first licensed in 1786 and there were dining rooms between (where the Piccadilly Restaurant is now). Until 1800 London Road was known as Shooters Brow, but the first reference to licensed premises on the site of the Coach & Horses is an

entry in an 1834 directory for 1 Upton Street (at the side of the building). George Copstick, formerly a victualler at the Fox on Lombard Street until 1829, was the beer retailer. Despite suggestions that the licence dates from 1820, its beerhouse origins mean that the C&H was not licensed before October 1830.

NURSING HOME NEWS

BREWERS DROOP

Times are hard for Boddingtons. The brewing company recently acquired a large share in the nursing care firm Country House Retirement Homes Ltd. But profits aren't as high as they might be, and at a recent annual general meeting a disgruntled shareholder was heard to make a particularly tactless, and ageist, remark. What on earth were Boddingtons doing, he demanded, venturing into the "geriatric grasslands of the South?" Oops. Seems like Boddies are in trouble already.

ALL POINTS

A company by the name of Compass has added eight private hospitals to its collection of nursing homes and residential centres. This happened following the management buy-out from Grand Metropolitan in July 1987. So Boddies were not the first.

NOR THE LAST

Vaux have recently acquired three companies which operate nine nursing homes in the North of England, the most local being Worsley Grange. The homes will be managed by St Andrew's Homes, the "Care Division" of Swallow Hotels, and will put the group into the top five care providers.

It would appear that beer production is directly linked with the need to retire. Perhaps this is an indication of the way to go for the Big Six, following the MMC Brewing Report. One can only hope that the care offered is more individual than the beer.

H Nightingale

HEATON PARK TETLEYS

The Commercial Inn, opposite Heaton Park, Prestwich, has been smartened up. The vault has been enlarged by the removal of a chimney breast, and nicely decorated. The snug has also been tastefully re-decorated. New carpets throughout the pub (even in the ladies) add the finishing touch. Reasonably-priced meals and snacks are served between 12.00 and 2.30pm 7 days a week. Tetley handpulled bitter is 85p a pint, mild 83p a pint.

DAFT ABOUT LAGER

There are three reasons for not drinking lager: (1) It is not real ale. (2) Because British-brewed lager is an overpriced, inferior imitation of the proper Continental beer style, and (3) because, regardless of the quality or value-for-money of the product, on principle it is not right to encourage, in any way, an invasion of a foreign beer culture when our own is under threat because of brewery closures, rationalisation of brands, use of inferior ingredients, etc, etc. But now that CAMRA's stand on the danger to our brewing heritage has been endorsed by the MMC Report (we expect with appropriate anti-monopoly action to follow), perhaps we can relax our attitude to lager a little.

DAFT ABOUT LAGER is a recently published paperback by Rohan Daft (Sphere, £3.50), which describes itself as "the definitive no-nonsense guide to lager" and "probably the best book on lager in the world". Mr Daft reckons that the British are becoming more "lager literate", more discriminating about what they drink, but that the vast majority of lager drinkers are still seduced by the £65m advertising expenditure on poor quality brands.

The book reviews 305 different lagers, including 62 from Germany, 17 from France, 1 from Iceland, 1 from Israel and 93 from the UK! Even then, not all UK lagers are included. There is not much point when, as Mr Daft says, there is often little difference in taste between them. The author points out that his descriptions are based on his own personal (but well informed) views. Here are some examples...

Carlsberg Pilsner - 'thin, weak and ghastly'. "I share the opinion of CAMRA who describe it as 'probably the worst lager in the world'." **Heineken (Whitbread)** - "quite simply awful", "thin, over-carbonated, tasteless sugarwater".

Carling Black Label (Bass) - "a better drink than your Carlsbergs and Heinekens".

Skol (Allied) - "I agree with CAMRA's description ('One of the three worst drinks in the world')", "I wouldn't be seen dead with a can".

Miller Lite (Courage) - "flimsy, weak-tasting lager of little character".

Stella Artois (Whitbread) - "a good strong draught lager"

Kaltenberg Braumeister (Boddingtons) - "Only available in the North West, Kaltenberg Braumeister must be the envy of many lager lovers throughout the nation. Well worth sampling - if you get the chance"

Budweiser Budvar (the Czechoslovakian variety, not the American one) - "probably the best lager in the world".

Furstenberg Export (West Germany) - "It is exceptionally good and I heartily recommend that you try it".

Fosters receives faint praise - "not a bad tipple by British standards"

In addition to Stella Artois and Kaltenberg Braumeister, a few more British-brewed lagers are favourably received, including Ayingerbrau (Samuel Smith), Faust (Brains), K2 (Fullers) and Youngs Premium Lager.

In general, the book tends to confirm what many people have suspected about the mass-advertised lagers - that they are designed to appeal to those people who want a sort of macho lemonade - but it also shows that British lagers are no longer all bad; there are one or two which are beginning to match up to European standard. With greater lager literacy being engendered by books like this, British lager may eventually develop into a quality product (and may even be marketed at a sensible price).

Then there will only be two reasons for not drinking it.

Peter Barnes

MCLEISURE

The long-closed former Wilsons establishment, the Devonshire at Ardwick, now looks set to become a drive-through McDonalds, according to the latest sign to appear there. Midsummer Leisure have been advertising their claim to this former fun pub for some months now, and their sign is still up. Perhaps it's a joint venture to open as a drive-in hamburger disco. The irony is that Grand Met, the previous owners, own McDonalds' main competitor in the food stakes - Burger King.

HOLTS CORNER

It was noticed on a recent visit to the Derby Brewery Arms that the ABV of beers on sale has been added to the price list (to comply with the law). Holts bitter is listed at 70p and 4.0%, mild at 67p and 3.2%. Guinness is 4.1% and 28p per pint more expensive than the bitter!

Work is now under way at the Cart & Horses at Astley and should be completed in the next few months. The Junction (Cheadle Hulme) should be open by September, all being well.

Craig Fraser has taken on the Kings Arms in Oldfield Road, Salford. He is a former cellarman at the Grafton, C-on-M, and is hoping for a large local clientele to ensure the Kings' success.

KING'S ALE

Leo King

Walk along Chapel Street, Salford, turn off into Bloom Street and you could be in a different city. A rather old and large building called the Kings Arms, impressive inside and out, has all the appearances of a Liverpool Higsons pub. (It was formerly a Groves & Whitnall, then a Greenalls house.) Inside, the Liverpoolian real ales are advertised on beer mats, bar towels and pump clips. Excellent mild and bitter (both 80p) are dispensed from handpumps. It is nice to see yet another Salford pub fighting back. (The Three Legs of Man (Robinsons) on Greengate got out of the rut some time ago.)



Keep real ale alive in Salford and visit a nice pub - experience a tiny bit of Liverpool without taking the train ride!

I was under the impression that the Adelphi Riverside pub/restaurant was solely a Boddingtons outlet. Wrong. It is supposed to be a free house - one of those 'free houses' that sell one company's beers, in this case Allied-Lyons. The Tetley bitter sells for 90p a pint - a tiddler of an improvement from Boddingtons at 95p.

For a real groan, go over to the Bell Tower (Websters) for a pint of Yorkshire Bitter at 98p! This place is a far cry from the Jollies, less than a minute's walk away via Wroe Street. A pint of John Willie's bitter at this Oldfield Road pub will set you back 74p (mild 71p).

The dearest pint in Salford City Centre is in the Brown Bull (Marstons). A pint of Pedigree is just £1. Why Pedigree is so expensive, I'll never know. At 1043og it is over medium gravity, but there is Draught Bass (1044), and Robinsons Best Bitter (1042) is far cheaper. However, in this part of Salford there is always Holts' smallest outlet, the Eagle, selling bitter at 73p a pint (tenanted house).

On the subject of prices, I read of a mini beer festival at the Lattice House pub (a 'Midsummer Inn') in Kings Lynn, Norfolk. Now get these exorbitant prices: Fullers ESB (1055) £1.80, Wadworths 6X (1040) £1.60 and Reepham Granary (1038) £1.35!

LEEDS LIBATIONS

The Queens Arms is running a coach trip to the Great British Beer Festival at Leeds on Saturday 5th August. It is an all-day trip and will cost approximately £7, including entry to the GBBF.

All interested should contact Dave at the Queens, Honey Street, Red Bank, with a deposit of £3.50 as soon as possible.

WATERING DOWN

The proposals of the MMC report into brewing met with strong opposition from both national and regional brewers. Their campaign has met with some success. Francis Maude has announced that the requirement to allow tenants to choose a cask conditioned guest beer and the abolition of the tie on low alcohol and non-alcoholic beers, ciders, wines, spirits and soft drinks will apply only to the Big Six. Big sigh of relief from Peter Robinson, et al. There are also machinations in train to alter the 2,000 pub rule and the loan tie requirements. How much bite will it actually have when it hits the statute book?

ECCLES UPDATE

The Royal Oak and Crown & Volunteer would appear to be safe from road schemes, at least for the time being. If and when Church Street is pedestrianised from the Broadway to Peel Street, the existing roads will be used to bypass the town centre, although the market will go.

Tetleys dark mild is now on sale at the Top House on Church Street - close your eyes and you can't tell the difference.

HENRY'S HAMMER (64)

Sadly CAMRA activists have been unable to generate any support from locals to save the Butley Ash at Prestbury from sharing the same fate as the Cock in Worsley. It seems that the locals aren't interested in fighting but have, instead, voted with their feet and left. Herein, perhaps, lies hope. Can economics win where protest fails to sway? We might lose a few pubs before the message permeates the corporate brain, but let's hope so.

By no stretch of the imagination can the Cock be described as a success story. It would certainly have been much more successful if Boddingtons had spent a quarter of the money on redecoration and kicked the food bit into touch. Perhaps they'll think twice before embarking on the destruction of the Wilton - there seems to be little else standing in their way. However, flawed strategies have a strange impetus which keeps them going long after their inadequacies have been exposed, so we might hope in vain.

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

They've done it at last! Matthew Brown have opened the STRANGWAYS HOTEL, Liverpool Road, Hindley, not long ago. The disappearance of real ale from the pub means that Matty Brown have gone over to 100% fizz in Wigan Metro. Oh well, even cynics can be right, some of the time...

Hindley is becoming a pretty dry place these days and it's ironic that Whitbread should be providing some much-needed choice in the town. Marstons Pedigree, previously unavailable in Wigan, is now on sale at the DERBY ARMS, Castle Hill Road, alongside Chesters bitter and Whitbread Trophy. Let's not go overboard on the praise, however, as the SIR ROBERT PEEL on Manchester Road is still on keg beer, despite the good colonel's fine words on the pub exterior.

By the time you read this, the BULLS HEAD, Warrington Road, Goose Green, will have reopened, following a facelift. This Tetley pub went over to processed ale about five years ago, leaving only the NEW INN (Greenalls) with traditional ale in the area. Still, 'Tets' seem to be in favour of cask conversions these days, so there are grounds for optimism.

I wish I could be as hopeful about the ROCK FERRY, Warrington Road, Lower Ince. The whisper is that this S&N house will shortly be converted into NORMA JEAN'S. What with MADISON'S (keg Brown) and the SHEPHERDS ARMS (keg Tetley) further down the road, Lower Ince is looking decidedly barren these days.

The PLOUGH & HARROW, Preston Road, Coppull Moor, is a jolly little Thwaites pub that made it into the 1989 Good Beer Guide, even though it was closed for most of 1988. The 1990 entry forms were scarcely in the post when the P&H closed again! Watch this space...

News in brief: The HONEYSUCKLE, Swan Meadow Road, Poolstock, is now selling Flowers IPA on handpump...the WELCOME TRAVELLER, Elliot Street, Tyldesley, is hawking Ruddles Blue and County alongside the Websters/Wilsons beers.

Finally this month, here is a price list of premium strength beers (og 1040-50) in the centre of Wigan. I believe the prices were correct in mid-June but, ever the diplomat, I refuse to comment on which pubs sell the best (or worst) value beer, or on the drinkability of said beers. You be the judge.

<u>PUB</u>	<u>BEER</u>	<u>O.G.</u>	<u>PER PINT</u>
BOWLING GREEN	Ind Coope	1047.5	£1.06
Wigan Lane	Burton Ale		
CHARLES DICKENS	Theakston	1044	97p
Upper Dicconson St	XB		
GEMS	Whitbread	1040	98p
Upper Dicconson St	Castle Eden Ale		
MARKET TAVERN	Youngers	1042	94p
Mesnes Street	IPA		
ORWELL	Ind Coope	1047.5	£1.15
Wallgate	Burton Ale		
STANLEY'S	Taylor's	1042	92p
Powell Street	Landlord		
SWAN & RAILWAY	Draught Bass	1044	86p
Wallgate	Courage Directors	1046	90p
TUDOR HOUSE HOTEL	Draught Bass	1044	90p
New Market St	Old Oak Ale	1044	90p
	Moorhouses Pendle Witch	1050	90p

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Magistrates in the West Midlands, Northamptonshire and Sussex have opposed plans to alter pubs which involved the elimination of the public bar. Magistrates in Worcestershire

threw out plans to convert a village local into a Beefeater Steak House. In each of these cases the result might have been different had local people not come to court to oppose the schemes.

How to take advantage of the planning system.

The first consideration is whether the pub is listed as a building of special architectural or historical merit. Most local authority planning departments have a Conservation Officer who can advise you whether a pub is listed or not. Generally speaking, the older the building and the less it has been altered, the greater the chances that it will be listed, but historical associations, architectural qualities and unique features are also of importance. Once listed, a building cannot be demolished or altered in any way which significantly affects its character without first obtaining consent from the local planning authority.

Apart from the listing procedure, the planning system offers little succour to pub campaigners. There is always a presumption in favour of allowing applications for development. Apart from inappropriate development in a Green Belt, a planning

application is not required to prove the case for development; rather it is for the local planning authority to demonstrate why it cannot be permitted.

Environmental factors may be the best line of attack: the scale of the development relative to the site and neighbourhood; adequacy of car parking, congestion and nuisance from traffic and noise and disturbance to residents.

Contacting the planning officer concerned with the project, visiting the Town Hall and looking at the plans and talking to the planners about possible objections is often useful in helping to formulate a case. The Town Hall can also supply lists of local councillors together with those on the planning committee. Whilst it should be remembered that magistrates must never be lobbied, councillors can be, and early contact can help to establish how the land lies.

How to get other people on your side.

Publicity is important. It bolsters the spirits of those who are already committed to the campaign and it also raises awareness and helps to involve other people. In addition to the Press and the local media, other useful contacts are councillors, planners, the clerk to the licensing magistrates, the local MP, the Licensed Victuallers Association, local civic or amenity bodies, residents associations and school governors.

Information about the history of the pub, previous licensees, the history of the village or town and other pubs with similar alterations in other districts is useful to enable you to present a cogent case and to keep the media fed with new information. Also, what other pubs and restaurants are

there in the district? Do they have a public bar? How do people get to the pub? Is it on a bus route? What alternatives are there, and how would people get there? What beers are on sale in other outlets and at what price are they sold? With information like this at your fingertips you are in a much better position both with the press and at court and committee meetings.

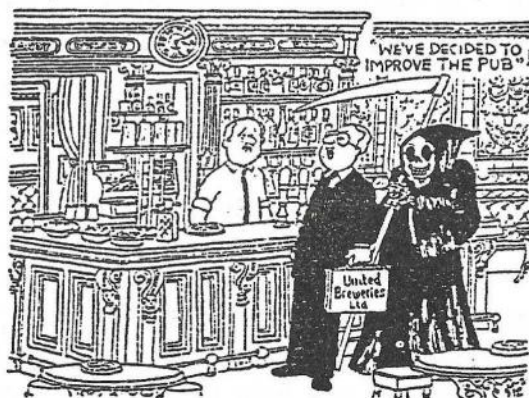
These notes provide a brief outline of how you can protect your pub. If you need further information on any of this or if you would like to be put in touch with your local CAMRA Pub Preservation Officer and others who have had experience of fighting a pub campaign, then please contact:

*Roger Hall, Pub Preservation
Officer for Greater Manchester*
061 736 3065 (daytime)

*Sean Murphy, Chairman of the
CAMRA Pub Preservation Group*
051 238 8674 (daytime)

Much of the above is drawn from
"Pubs In Peril"

soon to be published by the
CAMRA Pub Preservation Group
and from unpublished work by
Roger Hall





CAMRA believes that the pub is a unique and precious part of the British heritage and way of life. Like many of our best traditions, however, it faces an uncertain future. Whether threatened by closure or by 'improvement', our public houses deserve the serious attention of all with a commitment to conservation.

PROTECT YOUR PUB

What would you do to improve your favourite pub? Perhaps nothing? Perhaps a lick of paint, or a new floor covering? Install a juke box maybe, or get rid of one? Whatever your plans, they are not likely to envisage wholesale changes which radically affect the pub's character - otherwise it would not be your favourite. Of course, you will never have *carte blanche* to carry out your proposals. What is much more likely is that one of these days the pub will be given "the treatment" by a team from the brewery who have no feeling for the place, no connections with the locals and no respect for our pub heritage. What you will end up

with is a refurbished pub created by a committee of market researchers, merchandisers and interior design consultants.

Sometimes, if you are lucky, the result might not be so bad; if the owner is a small, independent brewery which has some pride in its estate. Also the influence of a long-serving tenant can help to counterbalance the crass schemes of the big brewers.

If you feel that our pub heritage has already been irretrievably damaged, that we should draw the line here, take on the breweries and resist their awful schemes then the following notes on pub campaigning may be of some help when they come sniffing round your favourite pub.

How to influence events at the Magistrates Court.

Most alterations and extensions to pubs require to be approved by the Licensing Bench of the local Magistrates Court, and anyone is entitled to make "representations" to the bench about any such proposal. Magistrates usually welcome informed and relevant comment from members of the public about pubs, particularly comment from

people who can show themselves to be representative of the people who use them. The Clerk to the Justices will be able to advise you on whether an application for alterations has been submitted, the dates of the licensing sessions and on matters of procedure. If you decide to register an objection to an application you should write at least two weeks in advance to make known your objections.

CALIFORNIAN CRUSADERS

PART II - BAY AREA

Until recently the Anchor Brewing Company was the only real ale brewery in the USA (see WD June). An old Federal law, dating back to the days of Prohibition, forbade the brewing and serving of beer in the same premises. This law was amended in 1982 and since then over 50 home-brew pubs have appeared around California, with a collection of over a dozen in the San Francisco Bay area.



In Downtown San Francisco is the San Francisco Brewing Company at 155 Columbus Avenue, near the junction with Broadway and a couple of blocks away from the infamous Chinatown. The brewer, Alan Paul, is usually on hand to give impromptu tours and to stress the finer points of the brews available. My first visit coincided with the local TV channel filming in this magnificent building as part of their coverage of the growing interest in real ale in California. The beers available were Albatross lager, Emperor Norton (a deep-amber-coloured beer), Serpent stout and a lovely refreshing wheat beer called Andromeda. (All unfiltered and with a yeasty haze.) As with most of the other home-brew pubs, the range of beer on sale varies to include guest brews. The pub is a wonderful reminder of old San Francisco, with lots of polished wood, huge mirrors and some very novel roof fans.

A block uphill from the San Francisco Brewing Company is the somewhat eccentric Vesuvio, which serves excellent Anchor Steam Beer.

The other home-brew pub in San Francisco is Klaus Lang's Seacliffe Cafe & Vest-pocket Brewing Company. Unfortunately I never quite managed to reach this amber nectar emporium, which closes at 2130 during the week and 2000 on Sundays. It can be reached by 38 bus, destination Geary from Downtown. According to Klaus Lang's modest advertising, 'The beer is elevated to wine status, meat and potatoes are king and the brew kettle is in the kitchen' - sounds worth a visit.

The Edinburgh Castle at 950 Geary Street is one of the many 'English Free Houses' dotted around the USA. A traditional Fullers sign adorns the frontage and the range of beers includes London Pride, ESB, Draught Bass, Double Diamond (more like our Burton Ale than the keg DD which used to be served here) and the long defunct Watneys Red Barrel.

A few miles north east across the Bay lies Berkeley, which boasts three home-brew pubs. The Bison Brewery is one of the smallest I have encountered; the Golden Gate Brewery Restaurant I had to miss out on, but the Triple Rock Alehouse at 1920 Shattuck was a real gem - quite modern on the outside, but inside full of breweriana, including an old Hammonds (of Yorkshire) sign. The three beers available were all excellent.

'The California Celebrator', a CAMRA-style newspaper produced by local real ale enthusiasts and distributed free, is a must for any beer enthusiast in this part of the world. The many brewtiques and the best free houses are listed. In the Bay area, the following are worthy of note...

In the very heart of Downtown San Jose is a very upmarket brew pub, Biers Brasserie at 33 East San Fernando. Nice beers with a yeast haze in plush surroundings. The Tied House Restaurant and Brewery is due to open this summer at South 1st Street, San Jose. Its cousin, the Tied House Cafe & Brewery at Mountain View, had a range of five beers when



I visited. A delightful break from the routine of light ales, amber ales, pilsners, stouts and porters was the guest brew. This was a fruit beer in a similar style to the Belgian Cherry, Peach, etc, but made with passion fruit - a really refreshing little number.

Another nice change from the usual styles was to be found at the Gordon Biersch Brewing Company at 640 Emerson Street, Palo Alto. This German designed and engineered brewery produces a range of German style beers and complements them with a German food menu. The Export is a medium hopped Pilsner. The Märzen is a heavily hopped beer of Bock style and strength. The Dunkles is a dark and malty unfiltered yeast beer, brewed in the old Bavarian tradition. All the beers at Gordon Biersch are served in half litre glasses.

One cannot write about the Bay Area without mentioning Judy Ashworth's Lyon Brewery at Dublin. No longer producing beer herself, Judy concentrates on selling a fantastic range of draught and bottled beers from around the world. On my visit 32 ales were available on draught - including four Paulanerbräu from Munich, Spaten (also Munich), the complete Anchor range and Youngs and Fullers. Also available are beers from many of the micro-breweries.

All pubs in the Bay Area can be visited using the 'Bart' transport system, at incredibly low prices - about £1 for up to 40 miles - phone 788 Bart.

This feature will be concluded in a later issue when I will show that getting over to California is probably a lot cheaper than many readers imagine.

Paul Roberts

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

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NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.39

CROSS KEYS INN

Running Hill Gate
Saddleworth

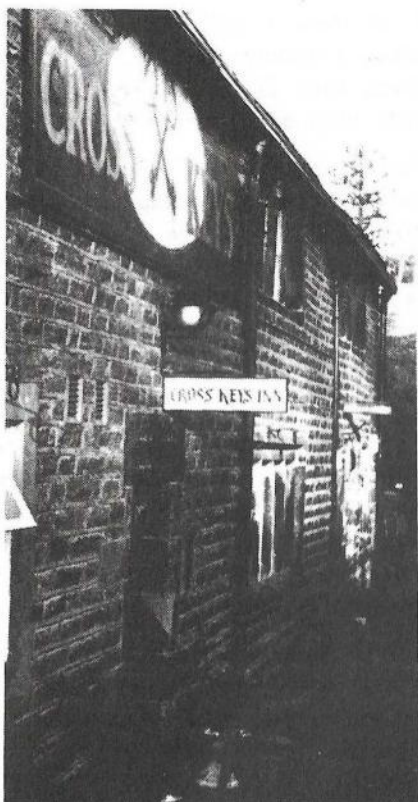
The Cross Keys was built high on the hillside near Saddleworth Church in 1745. The man who built it was also the first licensee, Michael Bottomley. He named his alehouse the Gravediggers Inn and lived there until his death in 1783.

The nearby church had some colourful curates in that century. There was John Higginbottom, who was told that Saddleworth people were turbulent and unmannerly - he played his fiddle in the church and often brandished his fists. Richard Podmore was very nervous and was mobbed at his first service. He fled, went mad and left the parish. Charles Zouche was appointed in 1792 and he virtually lived in the Gravediggers Inn. He was mentally infirm but his relatives kept him in the job by putting pressure on the Bishop.

One evening in the Gravediggers, the Rev Zouche started muttering, "Where are they?" and then thrust his walking stick, which he had been poking in the glowing embers of the log fire, into Mrs Bottomley's eye, blinding her. The reverend gentleman lost his job after that.

The Gravediggers was renamed the Cross Keys by John Bottomley, who took over in 1801. It was owned and run by the Buckley family from 1870 until 1951 and JW Lees bought the property in 1957. It is a Grade II listed building and the present tenant is Philip Kay, who arrived in 1978.

Other contributors to this issue: Glenn Worth, Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, Duncan Busman.



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375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

LETTERS



PITH

Sir - So Steve Lawton had a bad pint of OB (WD June). Well, I've had bad pints of all kinds of beer but that does not mean that it is bad when it leaves the brewery. One of the problems of the real ale houses is the fact that little-used pumps will give a poor and often warm pint. This also applies to pubs with a small turnover.

If Steve Lawton is in fact taking a dig at Boddingtons, who brew OB, then he is out of order. Both the mild and bitter are excellent at the moment and no better example can be set than by the Rose of Lancaster (Werneth) and the Druids Arms (Ashton Road), where the price is quite reasonable as well. However, I recently had a pint of OB bitter at the Bath Hotel (Union Street) which tasted more like the Steve Lawton description, certainly not like the present OB.

It amazes me that the former Oldham Brewery is now looked on so favourably by the local CAMRA fraternity. I seem to remember that in the 70s they came in for quite a bit of criticism for their chilled and filtered beer policy. Nearly all the main pubs had bright beer, with only a few dingy pubs selling real ale. Also, when it came to selling pubs, CAMRA was once again ignored. For example, three town centre pubs on prime sites were sold to be converted into shops or building societies - Dr Syntax, Albion and the Market Hotel.

Boddingtons have re-introduced real ale in nearly all the OB pubs and, what is more, they have tastefully rebuilt or modernised some of them.

The beer is excellent (at the moment) and if Steve Lawton had a pint that tasted like cat piss, it appears he has some strange drinking habits to know the similarity.

D Mason

NEW SKIPPER FOR ROYAL OAK

From 4th July Dave Swindell will be running the Royal Oak at Boothstown. It's his first pub, although he has acted as relief manager in several Salford pubs during the last few years. Some improvements are planned at the Royal Oak, but nothing too drastic. There will be an emphasis on lunchtime food and Ruddles bitter is already on sale (4p more than Wilsons).

FAILSWORTH NEWS

The Cloggers Arms (Greenalls) is on Oldham Road near Broadway. The pub has a morbid claim to fame in that Albert Pierpoint, Britain's former hangman, lived in the street opposite and used the pub regularly. It is remembered locally that in his absence no-one ever sat in 'his' chair.

That was some time ago and there is certainly nothing morbid about the Cloggers these days. New licensees Andy and Maureen are putting a lot of effort into building up trade. Beer sales are already up by three barrels per week and they have started serving meals at lunchtimes. The new Thomas Greenall premium bitter is expected any day now; unfortunately the mild is keg, but most of the locals are bitter drinkers. The bitter is well kept and sells at 85p a pint in this friendly pub. Andy is a dedicated real ale man and deserves every success in his new venture.

PRESTWICH HOLTS

The Coach & Horses, Bury Old Road, has had the vault, lounge and bar area redecorated. Further redecoration, mainly behind the bar, has been held up pending repairs to the floor. This may necessitate the removal of the famous sloping bottle shelves (if they don't collapse by then). Work is due to start soon but it is understood that the Coach will remain open.

CROWN & ANCHOR

Following Malcolm and Esther Bennett's departure, the Crown & Anchor, Hilton Street, Manchester, was managed temporarily by Denis Kelly. Chris and Adele Calaz took over on June 15th. Both had worked previously at the Lass o'Gowrie; indeed, Chris had been involved with the brewing. There are no plans to alter significantly the range of beers. Taylors' products have been retained, although Ram Tam is being taken in preference to Porter.

BELHAVEN

The Railway, a former Wilsons pub in Tyldesley, is currently serving Tetley mild and bitter. Belhaven is promised in August, but for some reason it seems this will be keg. The Lower Turks Head on Shudehill in Manchester is now serving keg Tetleys, but real Belhaven is promised later in the year. That makes sense. Keg Belhaven makes about as much sense as selling cans of alcohol-free Holts mild in Mecca.

RUPERT'S PAGE



Well it's all dead men's shoes and musical chairs in the Campaign at the moment. Last week I was watching Tish's TV debut as a comedienne on a Channel 4 talent show. She was telling her current favourite jest which concerns a blind parachutist being interviewed by Terry Wogan. "How on earth do you know when you're about to hit the ground?" asked Terry. As Tish delivered the punch-line - "Easy, the lead goes slack," all hell broke loose. My own canine, a pit bull terrier/Italian mastiff cross called Florence was understandably upset by the slur and barked ferociously. As she had earlier swallowed the channel changer, the TV whizzed through dozens of satellite stations until it finally settled on an interview with our own local bossperson, Mr Barreler, who was making his TV debut immediately prior to his handing over the reins to the delectable Nora Tackler. "The overtaill giving way to the overfed," Fiona suggested somewhat unkindly.

"At least she won't have time to launch any more daft magazines," Buntly chipped in whilst eyeing his parole officer. This led to a general discussion as to whether Wristy had been the least disastrous local boss person we'd ever had or not. Tish, who'd just finished videoing her clapometer-breaking performance, delivered the electric news somewhat enigmatically that every black eye has a silver lining. After further probing it emerged that Gerald Nodding, having failed to become a Campaign boss person, because of reports of unbecoming conduct in this organ, set his heart on progressing in a proletarian pressure group of which he was a member. Having succeeded in this endeavour, he has now left a vacancy in the Campaign. Prime contender for this position is, of course, the charismatic Stan Craap, non-pie-eater and committed lobby gobbler.

I must be very careful about what I might say about chuckle-a-minute Stan, as he's threatened to get me. As he metes out punishment by stealth, I must be doubly careful. When he beat up Billy Cosh in a hostelry, it was done with such subtlety that Billy didn't even notice. It reminds me of the boast made by Ruffley Dikheit, who claimed to have bedded one of the Junoesque stalwarts of our local Campaign. "Ruffley," said the good lady, "I've heard rumours that you've been doing naughties with me. If they turn out to be true I shall be very cross." Should Stan follow in Mr Nodding's footsteps, the debate about disastrousness would reach new heights.



Branch Diary

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thurs 13 July 8pm, Social, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford
Thurs 20 July 8pm, Branch Meeting, Railway, Ashley Road, Hale Village
Thurs 27 July 8pm, Tow Path Ramble. Meet Bay Malton, Oldfield Brow, Altrincham. 8.45pm Packet House. 9pm Navigation, Broadheath
Thurs 3 Aug 8pm, Committee Meeting, Carters Arms, Northenden Road, Sale Moor
Contact Pete Forshaw 061 755 2351

NORTH MANCHESTER

Sat 1 July, INDEPENDENTS' DAY. 7pm Old Garratt, 8pm Coach & Horses
Wed 5 July, TYLDESLEY TAKEOVER; Glass Barrel 7pm, Union 8pm
Wed 12 July, CASTLEFIELD TOUR: Crown, Deansgate 6.45pm, White Lion, Liverpool Road, 8pm
Wed 19 July, Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton 8pm
Wed 26 July, STALYBRIDGE BUFFET. Trains 6.45, 7.45 (Picc). Return 9.58
Sat 29 July - Tues 8 August, GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL at the Queens Hall, Leeds. Help wanted: setting up, serving (1st-5th), taking down
Wed 16 August, Branch Meeting, Crescent, 8pm
Wed 23 August, IRLAM CRAWL. Railway 7pm (67 bus, 6.30 Picc, 6.50 Eccles). Boathouse 8.30
Wed 30 August, CITY CENTRE SURVEY, Wheatsheaf, Oak Street, 7.30
Wed 6 September, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford. Police spokesman.
Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

BOLTON

Tues 4 July INDEPENDENTS DAY CRAWL. 8pm Lodge Bank Tavern, 8.30 York, 9pm Ancient Shepherd, 9.30 Prince William, 10pm Maxims, 10.30 Dog & Partridge
Tues 11 July 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Maxims
Sun 23 July 12.00noon, Social, Castle
Sat 5 August, GBBF Trip
Tues 8 Aug 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Sweet Green Tavern
Contact Barbara Kerks, Bolton 658458

WIGAN

Tues 4 July, INDEPENDENTS DAY PUB CRAWL. Start at Old Pear Tree, Frog Lane, Wigan, 7pm
Wed 19 July, Branch Meeting, Swan & Railway, Wallgate, Wigan
Fri 28 July, Mystery minibus to Shropshire. Commence Tudor House Hotel, New Market Street, Wigan, 9.30am
Contact Brian Gleave, Atherton 892965 (h), 876200 (w)

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 4 July 8pm, Branch Meeting and Independents Day promotion, Tap & Spile, Hope Street, Rochdale

Tues 11 July 6pm. Clarks Brewery trip, Wakefield

Tues 18 July 8pm, Committee meeting, Merrie Monk, College Road, Rochdale

Tues 25 July 7.30pm, Treasure Hunt, starting at the Eagle, Collier St, Salford 3

Tues 1st August 8pm, Branch Meeting, Bay Horse, Parr Lane, Unsworth, near Bury

Contact: B Lee 0706 824407

REGIONAL SOCIAL: Saturday 8th July is Cider Night at the Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester. CAMRA's specialist cider sub-group, APPLE, in association with the Beer House, presents a range of traditional ciders and perries - Babycham was never like this!

HARPURHEY

Not so many years ago two Robinsons pubs, the Milan and the Ark Royal, were the only oases in the vast beer desert between Collyhurst and Blackley. The situation is now somewhat improved, although four central pubs are still keg - Bottom Derby, Lord Lovatt (Bass), Foresters (Tetley), Shiredale (Wilsons).

The Golden Lion, North Manchester's only pub with a bowling green, serves Chesters bitter in what, for the area, are fairly upmarket surroundings, at the equally upmarket price of 86p a pint. Chesters is also available at the Queens Arms towards Monsall. Here mild is only 76p.

The most recent real ale gain in the area is, of course, Holts' Hipp. Bitter here is 70p a pint. This has had some effect on the competition. At the Ark Royal down the road, Robinsons best bitter is 81p and mild 76p (compared with 85p and 79p at the Milan). It doesn't, however, seem to have had much impact on the marketing geniuses at Boddingtons. At the Boddingtons 200, only a cockstride away, bitter still sells for 84p. Perhaps the beer quality and the ambience is enough to keep packing them in.

AIN'T WHAT SHE USED TO BE

The exterior of the Grey Mare in Weaste has been poshed up and plans are in hand to revamp the interior and build a car park. Sadly the pub, which was saved from demolition by CAMRA's representations at a public enquiry, now serves only keg mild and bitter from a handpump activated electric pump, and that at 89p per pint.

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