

WHAT'S DOING



The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

VOL.
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A.G.M. EDITION

CHANGING HANDS

It now seems likely that the demolition of the 'big Derby' on Derby Street in Ordsall will not mean a loss to the Salford 84. Landlord Gordon Watson was told before he left the Derby that there was a possibility of transferring the hand-pumps to his new pub, the Angel on Chapel Street. This has now been confirmed by Bruce Cunningham from Wilsons brewery at a CAMRA branch meeting on Thursday, 10th March.



Mr Watson, pictured above outside the Angel, is at present selling pressurised beer, but is quite willing to go back to fined beer. He has been in the pub trade for many years, having served cask-conditioned ale in all his previous tenancies,

continued on inside back cover

BODDINGTONS STRIKE

According to unsubstantiated rumours, the brewery was affected by a strike on Monday, 28th February. It is not clear when the strike finished but the plant seemed to be working on Friday. Apparently the strike concerned working conditions in the older part of the brewery. If the rumours are true, this will be the first strike in the company's 200 year history.

SALFORD 84

The St. James Hotel, whilst not yet demolished (March 3), is derelict and so the Salford Hundred falls again.

Meanwhile on the other side of Salford on Lower Broughton Road two public houses are being converted into one. The Beehive and the Poet's Corner, which were like book ends at either end of a terrace, are in the process of unification by Greenalls. Naturally, unique features of the old pubs like curved etched glass in the unusual turreted towers have disappeared, and the new pub (Apis Housman?) - think about it - promises to be one of the worst conversions ever perpetrated.

THREE LEGS OF MAN

Robinsons have apparently improved the heating in the Three Legs of Man following a number of requests from the landlord and a letter from the branch after its January meeting.

CLOGS AND ALE

The branch is to help in running a bar selling real ale at Castle Irwell on April 22nd/23rd for a convention of Morris Dancers. It is expected that about 15 kilderkins of beer will be provided, including Boddingtons, Robinsons, Thwaites, Hydes, Burtonwood, Timothy Taylors, Pollards, Greenalls and Lees.

THE PAPERMAKERS ARMS

A new landlord has moved into the Papermakers Arms on Back Roman Road. This is Barry Winstanley's first pub, but he has connections with the licensed trade through his brother, Brian, landlord of the Smithfield Vaults on Swan St. Salford Centurions will remember that the pub used to serve as good a pint of Greenall Whitley's as you could get in the area, and Barry seems to be maintaining the standard. The pub is threatened with demolition, but there might be interest in a campaign to save it if the legal processes have not gone too far.

SELF-ABUSE

The ubiquitous Mr Fitzgerald of Boddingtons was asked at the last Bolton meeting what he thought of the transformation of his local, The Three Arrows. "I think we made a mess of The Three Arrows", "The Three Arrows, I think, has gone wrong," were amongst his responses. Let us hope that the brewery will learn from this mistake and treat future conversions with more sensitivity towards the character of the pub.

BLACKPOOL A.G.M.

North Manchester's formal motions are not on the printed list in this month's 'What's Brewing'. However, motions from other branches do overlap with some of our own and we hope that others will fall for consideration on the day. A verbal report on the A.G.M. will be presented to the branch meeting in March.

WHAT MANCHESTER THINKS TODAY..

"What's Doing" - that's the title of the revamped Branch Diary page of "What's Brewing". Where have I heard that before?

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The second year of the existence of the North Manchester branch in its own right has been a full one despite the disappointingly small number of people actively taking part. However, we regularly have 25 to 30 people attending branch meetings and a hard core of a dozen who are really committed to the campaign in the area.

We moved from regular meetings in the Lord Nelson, Ringley, when Percy and Mary retired. Branch meetings have been held in a number of different pubs, notably the Lamb in Eccles, the White Swan in Swinton and the Castle in Manchester. We have had speakers at more than half of the meetings including brewery representatives (Bass Charrington, Thwaites, Greenall Whitley and Robinsons), an official from the L.V.A. and a member of the CAMRA N.E. Four well-attended trips were organised to the Black Country, Ulverston, Doncaster and the Blackpool Beer Exhibition, and this year's Christmas social entertained a good crowd at the White Swan in Swinton.

Pub crawls became a regular feature. The Salford 100 crawls were an outstanding success which drew the attention of the media to the existence of traditional pubs in Salford and gained the branch a regular spot on Radio Manchester. They gave us a sound knowledge of Salford real ale pubs, provided the basis for later campaigns and the background for a local guide which we hope to write. We then extended the crawls to Blackley, Newton Heath, Collyhurst and Cheetwood, so that a definitive list of real ale pubs in the North Manchester area can soon be published.

In November we were pleased to see the formation of the Bolton branch which took from us the responsibility for Bolton, Farnworth, Kearsley and points north. The branch is now firmly established. Les Kilsby, formerly our events organiser, became its secretary and was replaced by Robin Bence, who has proved a most welcome member of the committee.

We have not lost sight of the campaigning side of our activities. The campaign to save the Welcome has been our most successful to date; the earlier attempt to save the Derby was abandoned when it was realised that the Council's plans were too advanced to be altered. Elsewhere, some pubs have been lost to demolition or closures (the Pickwick, the Windsor Castle) or to bright beers (the Wellington and the Diamond XX in Eccles). However, real ale was reintroduced by Sam Smiths to the Windmill in Swinton and a selection of cask-conditioned beer is now available at Victoria Station. Whitbread have remained intransigent, but five of their pubs bought by Burtonwood seem likely to increase the choice of real ale. Bass Charrington's experiment with cask SB lasted only a few weeks. On the other hand, Pollards was

available in Eccles for a time and David Pollard is shortly to open a pub in Manchester. Most of the Wilsons houses serving bright beer in the summer have now reverted to real ale. On a less cheerful note, our recent support for extended licensing hours proved fruitless when the application was withdrawn by its sponsors before being seriously considered.

Our relations with CAMRA centrally have been rather uneven and there has been a feeling in the branch that the campaign was losing sight of its original objectives and becoming unnecessarily bureaucratic. Letters to N.E. members and headquarters remained unanswered, whilst the tone of the branch bulletin became more autocratic. We expressed concern at the financial handling of the campaign and made our points in person at a number of meetings, particularly with members of the N.E. at York. However, our relations with other CAMRA branches in the region remained good and bore fruit in the Greater Manchester Good Beer Guide, which was unfortunately out of date even before it was published.

We have had a number of useful meetings with local brewers and councillors this year. Apart from the contacts made with speakers at branch meetings, we met representatives from Lanchester Taverns (Wilson's) and from Lees concerning the demolition of pubs. We also had meetings with the Salford Metropolitan Council to discuss their overall plans for pubs in Salford. Such contacts have proved valuable and should be extended if action is to be taken in time to prevent disastrous changes to our pubs and the beer that they serve.

'What's Doing' has been one of the successes of the year. In February 1976 it ran to four sides of A5 and almost half of that was about pubs in Oxfordshire! The latest issue contained almost 20 pages of news, articles and, for the first time, a paid advertisement. It now appears monthly and sells for 5p. The demand is clearly greater than the supply and it is likely that some four or five hundred could be sold regularly, especially since members have now been selling it around their local pubs. 'What's Doing' is posted monthly to local newspapers, radio and television stations and we hope that it will become more widely available in the coming year.

Looking to the future, we should aim to double the number of those taking part in the branch - those, that is, who attend branch meetings and contribute actively in what we do. To do this we need to improve our publicity through increased poster advertising and by selling 'What's Doing' regularly through about 20 pubs scattered throughout the area with whose landlords we already have good relations. We should maintain and extend our contacts with brewers and councils, with the press, television and radio. Lastly, we should aim to publish this coming year the Salford Guide and a complete list of the real ale pubs in North Manchester.

Thanks are due to many but especially to Roger, Neil, Paul, Pete, Mike, Robin, Ken, Duncan, Jim, Stewart, Sue and Bill.

Jem Callaghan

WHITBREAD CAMPAIGN

On 1st March, representatives of six local branches met in the Castle, Oldham Street, to discuss among other matters local action in the Whitbread campaign. At an earlier meeting, suggestions that the local campaign should be basically destructive and anti-Whitbread had been soundly defeated in favour of a constructive effort with a practical chance of success.

Representatives from the Cook Street brewery have been quoted recently as saying that if CAMRA can persuade a certain number of Whitbread licensees supplied from Salford to sell cask-conditioned ale, then the brewery will supply it. A target of 50 such pubs has been mentioned. However, taken with the fact that Cook Street supplies only 270 tied houses - according to the 'Morning Advertiser' - and that the overwhelming majority of these are on tank beer and managed rather than tenanted, the commitment would appear to be rather shallow.

As a first step, the local branches have agreed to compile a list of perhaps half a dozen Whitbread (Salford) pubs which have the cellar capacity for casks on stillage and licensees with the ability and will to serve cask-conditioned beer. This may prove simpler than it sounds as many Threlfall's houses had a trading agreement whereby they sold draught Bass, and in a number of cases vestiges of those days still remain. Any information concerning Whitbread pubs which still have handpumps in situ, such as the Seven Oaks Hotel off Moseley Street, will be gladly received by Robin Bence (tel. Work: 236-4571 or Home: 794-6461), who is co-ordinating the campaign in the area. The immediate intention is that if a number of such pubs can be found, attempts will be made to persuade Whitbread to sell traditional ale brewed either at another subsidiary brewery - Castle Eden is the obvious candidate - or by a company under the Colonel's umbrella: I'm told that Strangeways Brewery is not far from Cook Street.

Ultimately of course we would like to see Chester's mild and the rest back where they belong, but it must be accepted that not only would this require an enormous change in thinking in both Cook Street and Chiswell Street, but a substantial investment in casks, drays, cleaning equipment and the rest. The likelihood of resistance from pub managers cannot be overlooked either. Not an easy task to set ourselves, but this is exactly why the Campaign exists. For the possible gain, it's surely worth knocking back a couple of bottles of Guinness over the next few weeks.

CAMRA IN GREATER MANCHESTER

As regular North Manchester members will be aware, there are several other CAMRA branches operating in and around the Greater Manchester area. Indeed the areas now covered by the Rochdale, Oldham and Bury branch as well as the new Bolton branch were once looked after with difficulty by North Manchester itself. Similarly, South Manchester has hived off sections of its original area to the High Peak and East Cheshire branch, Macclesfield branch and a small part to the Warrington branch.

Whilst every branch is responsible for the pubs in its own area, and any local issues it wishes to be involved in (such as the Welcome), it is fairly obvious that in a city with eight real ale breweries and another two fizz producers, not to mention outside breweries represented, that what one brewery is doing in one branch area is of concern to other branches. Thus North Manchester is not alone in deprecating Boddingtons' two-room conversion jobs and the wholesale elimination of handpumps. It has happened elsewhere and regrettably will continue to do so. However, it is important that the knowledge gained by one branch is passed on to the other branches.

North Manchester does however have one unique problem - Salford. No other branch has so far seen such a substantial number of its real ale pubs constantly under threat. The fight against the compulsory purchase order on the Welcome is in itself a major step forward for CAMRA not only in North Manchester but in Greater Manchester generally since it is hoped that the experience gained can be used by other branches in the future if they face a similar problem.

Although in the past co-operation and liaison between the various branches has not been as great as perhaps it should have been, the recent area meetings of committee members have served as a useful platform for an exchange of views.

Despite its more obvious errors, and despite what at least one critic thinks, the Manchester Beer Guide has been extremely successful. Out of a total print run of 10,000, nearly 9,000 have been distributed either via branches or to wholesalers and through postal sales, and whilst not all the money has been received yet by any means, the costs of the guide (in the region of £14,000) have been met by the four major participating branches, North and South Manchester, Rochdale, Oldham and Bury and High Peak, without having to ask CAMRA St. Albans for a loan. Apart from the money aspect, it is no mean achievement that nearly 600 landlords have been visited in an area stretching from Horwich to Altrincham and from Rochdale to Alderley Edge. A few landlords have refused to participate but most have taken 10 copies at least, whilst the Whitegates has sold over 200.

So all in all, CAMRA in Manchester is alive and kicking. Despite problems over national organisation, in many ways grassroot campaigning is stronger and better informed than at any other stage in its short history. Let's hope this continues as more ambitious campaigns are about to be unfurled.

Richard Greenhalgh.
Area Organiser.

JUBILEE ISSUE

A limited edition of the 1977 Beer Guide is available hand-printed on vellum and bound in hand-beaten Andes Vicuna hide tooled in gold. This unique book will grace your bookshelves or coffee table. Your friends will envy this priceless possession. Watch their jealous looks as they lurch back from the Queen and Mounted Policeman and rub their greasy paws over it. See the admiring glances from customers in the Borough or the Clowes as you consult this magnificent tome and read aloud some of the more memorable phrases. Pubs are brought to life by the vivid, imaginative descriptions. As you sit alone on Oswaldtwistle station having missed the midnight train, you can almost believe you're in the Burton Arms when you see in print that it was formerly a market pub. You can picture unspoilt working men crowding into the Church on Hilton Street when you read that it's an unspoilt working man's pub just like the Priory Arms.

Please reserve me copies of the collector's edition of the 1977 Good Beer Guide complete with inane remarks, tasteless cover, glossary and vomit proof carrying case at 140 guineas.
Cheque enclosed.

Name.....

Address.....

Weight.....

Most disgusting habit.....

.....

SALFORDS UPS AND DOWNS

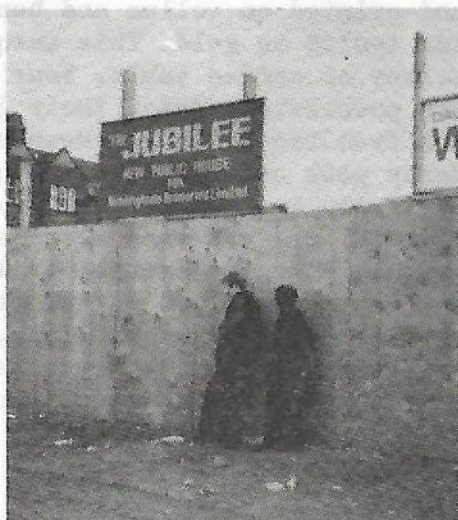
The St James Hotel, Ordsall, derelict and stripped of its signboards waiting for the bulldozers.



Also in Ordsall, a corner off-licence still displaying a Groves signboard.



Latest rumour has it that the Derby is coming down in June.



Salford 85th? The site of a new Boddingtons pub in Ordsall, with its first customers. The name could either refer to E.R.'s 25 years on the throne or Boddingtons' bi-centenary.



The new Poets Corner (see 'Salford 84') on Lower Broughton Road. The bricked-up turret nearest the camera was the Beehive.

THE WELCOME

When the Inquiry reassembled at two o'clock, the solicitor for the Council called Mrs Sally Knight to argue the Council's case. Mrs Knight produced an impressive array of statistics to show the acute housing shortage in Salford, but she talked of "Category Two Dwelling Units", "football playing surfaces" and "child bed spaces" and used phrases like "devoid of residential amenity" and "multiplicity of ownerships". She didn't talk about people, children, communities, social life, friendship, Salfordians or anything else which is important to the people of Ordsall. It was as though the future of Salford were being decided by shuffling models about on a map with a good deal of technical expertise in environmental planning, but with little understanding of people's needs and a lack of feel for the area.

Mrs Knight was questioned by Lees' solicitor. He was particularly concerned about Mrs Knight's opinion of the structural condition of the Welcome compared with the Albion and the Bricklayers, and with her assertion that the adventure playground which the plans showed on the Welcome site could not be sited elsewhere.

When Lees presented their case, Alan Johnson proved an articulate witness, giving well-argued reasons for why the pub should remain and standing up well to cross-examination from the Council. Christopher Lees-Jones explained that the Welcome had been the only Lees house in Salford for the last 60 years and submitted plans showing how the brewery intended to improve the pub without destroying its essential character. The petition with something like a thousand names on it was also presented.

After Ken Birch had submitted the "Save the Welcome" pamphlet as his evidence and Roger Hall had expressed CAMRA's viewpoint, both sides summed up. The inspector said he would visit the site the following morning, and the Inquiry closed. The result of the inspector's deliberations will not be known for at least six months.

Roger Hall



THE WELCOME

Salford Corporation's case for the confirmation of the C.P.O. in the Ordsall area was presented in a document prepared by Mrs Sally Knight, a Planning Assistant in the City Technical Services Department, which was both handed out and read out at the inquiry. The document gives an insight into the schematised thinking of planners and their isolation from the everyday lives of the people for whom the planning is done.

Nowadays people live not in houses or homes, but in dwelling units; children (dwellers under ten years old) chase footballs not on pitches or parks but on football playing surfaces, and when they are tired they're tucked up in bed spaces. We leave our cars on parking areas, walk past landscaped areas and when we have nothing more pressing to do take our ease on amenity areas. We do, it seems, still go to shops and Public Houses, but only if the latter have capital first letters. The use of such jargon distances the planners, the councillors and ultimately the public from the realities facing those who lose their homes, their pubs or even their streets. And it is intended in a calculated and clinical way to do just that.

It is hard to be sympathetic to proposals when they are couched in such terms, but the document makes a number of convincing points. The City of Salford does have "one of the severest housing problems in the country" and almost four and a half thousand houses more than can be provided will be needed in 1980. The amount of suitable building land is small - probably only 110 acres in the City planned for housing remain to be developed. The Council's case was that full use of all suitable land should be made as speedily as possible, and it included the site of the Welcome Inn on its list.

The facts of the housing shortage were not in question, however - just the way of solving them. The Council maintained that "the comprehensive redevelopment of this area can best be served by the acquisition of all the land" and that "the exclusion of any properties would severely hamper the proper redevelopment of the area" - in other words, knock everything down and start again from scratch. But this is to beg the question. Successful communities don't just happen overnight, they evolve. They are successful because of their links with the past, because people at the simplest level feel at home with the street corners, parks, pubs and shops that they've always known. Suddenly to create a new environment, modelled on a planner's board, results in the hostile, windy wastes of Hulme or Washington New Town. In Ordsall this need not happen. The adventure playground could be resited nearby and the links with the past retained. Mrs Knight objected that "children are very territorially minded. Those from the Regent area would be reluctant to go to the other area," but she is happy elsewhere to see people crossing Ordsall to go to pubs on its perimeter. Are adults then less territorially minded than children? Incidentally, no mention is made of the fact that the playground is planned for the perimeter of the area - against a main road from the docks to Manchester surely requiring fences many feet high to keep the children and the traffic apart.

Other comments made in the Report are worthy of notice. "The Council decided that the needs of the area could best be met by the retention of the Bricklayers Arms and the Albion rather than by the provision of a new public house on the site of the former Pickwick Inn." How did the Council so decide? Did it ask the people who would use the pubs? Did it have any experience as to what makes a good pub and whether the Bricklayers and the Albion do? They probably do, but one is prompted to ask on what basis the Council made up its mind.

Mrs Knight said that she was a Planning Assistant of the City and that she held the degree of M.A. in Environmental Planning. Her case was academic and detached and failed to come to terms with the practical needs of the people who will live in the area. Perhaps the best comment of the whole proceedings was made by Alan Johnson, the landlord of the Welcome. "The pub has got the character; the character attracts the customers, and they want the pub."

THE WELCOME

Since the start of the Salford 100 in 1976, the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA has expressed deep concern about the extent of pub demolition in the old City of Salford. Branch members have shown a desire to prevent the wilful destruction and loss of choice which the Council envisaged. In many cases, the legal processes were too far advanced - we were dealing with Compulsory Purchase Orders which had been confirmed between two and twenty years ago and against which appeals could not be considered. In other cases, we were faced with breweries who were not particularly worried about the loss of one pub out of many or with pubs which were structurally unsound or where the licensee and customers were not fully committed to preventing demolition.

The Welcome was the first pub for which all the conditions were right. The C.P.O. had not been confirmed; the brewery were determined not to lose their only Salford pub and wished to retain its traditional character. Alan Johnson was a highly motivated landlord, unwilling meekly to accept the disappearance of his pub, and the Welcome's customers were more loyal and committed than most. The branch was therefore pleased to be involved in the campaign to save the Welcome.



THE BACKGROUND

The Welcome is on Ordsall Lane in North East Ordsall. The original plans for the development of Ordsall involved the demolition of the Welcome, the Albion and the Bricklayers on Ordsall Lane and the two Derbys on Derby Street. It was intended that the three pubs on the Manchester side of Ordsall Lane, the Brunswick (GW), the Greyhound (GW) and the Ordsall (Wilsons) would be retained, along with the Chequerboard (Wilsons) and the Pickwick (GW).

Unfortunately, the Pickwick, which was on Oldfield Road and would have been extended and modified, was seriously damaged by vandals and had to be demolished. Perhaps as a result of this, the Albion and the Bricklayers were subsequently withdrawn from the C.P.O.

The C.P.O. was made on 22nd April, 1976. J.W. Lees, however, did not receive formal notification of this and it was only as a result of a late objection that a Public Local Inquiry was held.



THE WELCOME
ACTION GROUP

As a result of J.W. Lees' objection to the C.P.O., a meeting was held at the Welcome on 22nd February to consider what action could be taken to make Salford Council change its mind. Those present included Ken Birch, a regular patron of the Welcome and a member of CAMRA, Michael Moores from J.W. Lees, Alan Johnson, the landlord, pub regulars and CAMRA members.

Two things were considered to be of paramount importance - first to publicise the plight of the Welcome as much as possible and secondly to co-ordinate our efforts for the public inquiry. A well-drafted press release was thought essential, but it was necessary that this should focus on something which would attract press and tele-

THE WELCOME

vision. After much discussion about drink-ins, marches, presenting petitions and so on, Pete Cash suggested that the beer should be sold at 1927 prices to publicise the threat of demolition. This idea was immediately accepted because it contained the necessary balance of intrigue and uniqueness which we felt would appeal to the media.

Whilst the press release was being drafted, a list of people to be contacted was drawn up. This included BBC TV (Look North), Granada TV (Granada Reports), BBC Radio Manchester, Radio Piccadilly, The Manchester Evening News, The Salford City Reporter, local councillors, the M.P. for the area, local history societies, CAMRA Headquarters, the L.V.A. and The Morning Advertiser.

Michael Moores agreed to have posters printed advertising the beer at 2p and 2½p a pint and, more importantly, to supply the beer free of charge for the venture. Neil Richardson volunteered to print and despatch the press releases the following day and Ken Birch said he would write and record a protest song and arrange for a film to be made to publicise the event.

In order that maximum impact could be obtained from the sale of beer at 1927 prices, it was decided that the protest should take place the day before the Public Inquiry and at lunchtime to catch the evening TV programmes on local news and attract the press. This meant that everything had to be organised in less than a week.



A TANNER A PINT

Prior coverage of the event was good. It was mentioned on local radio and an article appeared with a photograph in Friday's Manchester Evening News. Consequently at 12 o'clock on Monday, 28th February, a huge queue had formed outside the Welcome and the pub was soon heaving with thirsty drinkers. Media response on the day was astounding. There was live coverage by both Radio Piccadilly and Radio Manchester and recorded interviews and filming by ITV which appeared in both Granada Reports and the main ITN news. Leaflets distributed in the pub explained the threat of demolition to those who were more interested in a cheap drink than the problems of the Welcome and encouraged them to sign the petition which had already collected a thousand names.

The Welcome Action Group had attracted more publicity than anyone would have imagined possible and awaited the Public Inquiry with some confidence.

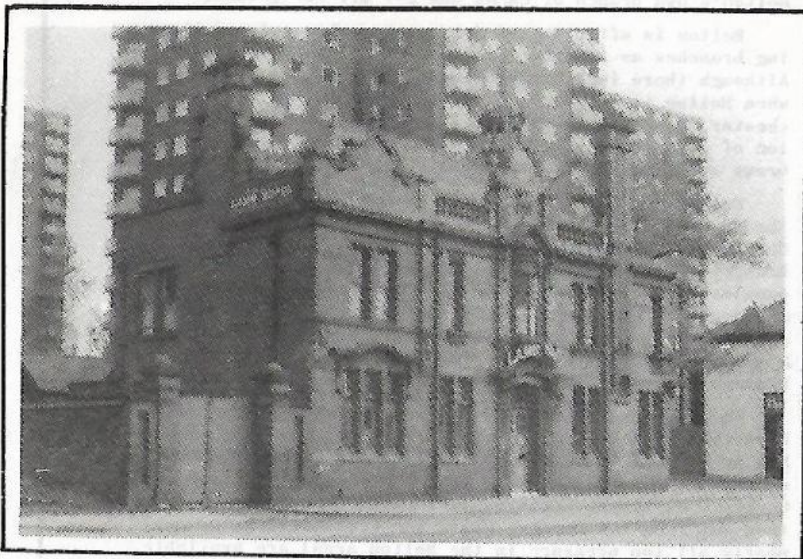


THE PUBLIC
LOCAL INQUIRY

The inquiry was to start at 10 o'clock. J.W. Lees had instructed a solicitor to represent them and interested parties met at 9.30 to discuss tactics. The solicitor was going to call Alan Johnson and Christopher Lees-Jones as witnesses and thought it would be better if Ken Birch representing the Welcome Action Group and Roger Hall representing CAMRA gave evidence separately from the brewery.

After the legal formalities had been completed, the Department of the Environment Inspector agreed to hear the objection in respect of the Welcome later in the day after an inquiry into a Camp Street C.P.O.

THE LAMB



The Lamb is an impressive and well-maintained Holt's pub in Eccles. Like many of the brewery's pubs, it was built at the turn of the century and retains much of its original character in its sound construction and quality of materials and workmanship.

A solid frame of polished wood with etched glass panels surrounds the central bar which serves two large and comfortable lounges, a vault and a tiled lobby. An unusual feature is a well-patronised billiard room with a full-sized table. The Grapes, another Holts pub in Eccles, also has one but it is rarely used. Although quite large, the two lounges have a blend of comfortable furniture and pleasing decoration which gives them a cosy atmosphere.

The pub has a good local trade, catering mainly for customers of the older generation. The beer, served through electric pumps, is consistently good because of the care taken by Barry, the landlord. We hope to be able to have branch meetings here in future, the previous ones having been much enjoyed.

BOLTON BRANCH

At last, after many months of planning and organising, Bolton's own branch of CAMRA has got off the ground.

Bolton is often regarded by some members of neighbouring branches as somewhat of a desert for real ale drinkers. Although there is a certain amount of truth in this idea when Bolton is compared to some other areas of Greater Manchester, it has, nevertheless, not only got a high proportion of pubs selling real ale but also has a large number of brews available in the town centre and surrounding area.

Bolton no longer has any of its own working breweries, the last ones to brew in the town being Magee Marshall and Company (whose Crown Brewery still stands) and Howcroft's Brewery, both of which closed in 1970. Many remnants of once popular Boltonian brews can still be seen in the form of monograms on buildings and frosted glass windows. These include such names as John Hamers Voluntary Brewery, Joseph Sharman's Merchall Brewery, William Tong and Sons Diamond Brewery and the Rose and Crown Brewery.

The fact that the town once had a number of its own breweries reflects in the choice the real ale drinker now has in Bolton. The brews available in or around the town centre include Boddingtons, Bass Charringtons, Wilsons, Greenall Witleys, Telleys, Burtonwoods and Thwaites. Farther out from the centre, Holts and Lion Ales (sadly now nearly all top pressure in the Bolton area) are available. Bolton comes close to also having a Hydes pub in its area. This arises from the fact that the border between Bolton and Bury at one point runs down the old Roman road of Watling Street. The Pack Horse Hotel (an excellent Hydes pub) stands on one side - the Bury side - whilst the 'unofficial' car park stands on the other, Bolton, side. Incidentally, the 'unofficial' car park is owned by a local farmer who, no matter what the weather, takes care of your car for a fee of 1½p per evening. Inflation must strike all, as originally this fee was, I'm told, only ½p.

A meeting to test support for the formation of a Bolton branch of CAMRA was held in October in the Sweet Green Tavern. A room set aside for the meeting, capable of holding perhaps a dozen or so people, was seen to be completely insufficient when 30 or 40 people turned up.

A second meeting was quickly arranged for the following month at a larger venue in the Gypsy's Tent on Deansgate. On this occasion it coincided with a re-arranged midweek match at Burnden Park and consequently the meeting suffered quite heavily from this. It looked as if nothing could go wrong for the inaugural but three weeks before the meeting Tetley Walker (in one of whose houses the inaugural was to be held) went on strike! Fortunately, thanks to Harry, the landlord of the Gypsy's Tent, the meeting was blessed with Jennings beer from Cockermouth and everything went well. It could be pointed out that during the period of the strike the number of brews in Bolton could have put even the best areas of Greater Manchester to shame: such exotic brews as Jennings, Hartleys of Ulverston and Theakstons were available as well as Robinsons, Camerons and Scottish and Newcastle.

The branch has now been active for about four months and good relationships have been built up with a number of landlords in the area. The recent takeover by Burtonwoods of the Rawson Arms in Farnworth provided a good opportunity to meet officials from the brewery and to talk about Burtonwoods!

policy in this pub and others in the Bolton area. A visit to Burtonwood's Brewery has also been arranged for the future. The attendance at monthly meetings has fluctuated but on average about 30 people per meeting have turned up to hear talks by John Parr of Burtonwoods and Maurice Fitzgerald of Boddingtons.

Finally, it is hoped that any future beer guide publications containing the Bolton area will reflect a more realistic situation than current guides and that more people will think twice about by-passing Bolton.

Eric Petela
Chairman, Bolton Branch.

Future Attractions

The following events have been arranged during the next few weeks.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Thursday 24 March: | Monthly branch meeting, Gypsy's Tent, Deansgate, Bolton. It is hoped to have a speaker from Thwaites. (8 pm) |
| Thursday 14 April: | Social, Duke of Wellington, St. John's Road, Lostock, near Bolton. (8 pm) |
| Thursday 21 April: | Monthly branch meeting, Gypsy's Tent. (8 pm) |
| Sunday 24 April: | Pub crawl of Wigan town centre (joint with S. Lancs branch), Park Hotel. (7.30 pm) |
| Thursday 19 May: | Trip to Thwaites' brewery. Details at April branch meeting. |
| Tuesday 24 May: | Pub crawl of Bolton (return fixture with S. Lancs branch), Sweet Green Tavern. (7.30 pm) |

Bolton Beer Guide

A publication entitled 'A Guide to Good Beer in Bolton' has recently appeared in and around Bolton. It purports to list 100 pubs which in the words of the author are 'good Northern pubs' selling 'decent beer'. It is not a CAMRA publication, although the author is sympathetic to the aims of CAMRA and devotes a page to encouraging beer drinkers to join the campaign and to giving details of local branches.

Like most beer guides nowadays, this one includes a potted history of brewing in the area and a description of the breweries which currently have outlets there. The guide covers the whole of the metropolitan borough, which it divides into smaller areas. The pubs are listed with the minimum of subjective comment - the ubiquitous 'working man's local' and 'clean but basic' do not feature. There is no indication of whether a pub sells real beer; the guide simply lists the types of beers sold and the methods of dispensing. The presentation of the guide leaves a lot to be desired, but at 20p + stamped addressed envelope it might be useful to someone who doesn't know the district very well or who wants to go on a series of mammoth pub crawls. It can be obtained from John Stott, 8 Brazley Avenue, Great Lever, Bolton.

Les Kilsby

THE OBSERVERS BOOK OF RETIRING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Great-tailed Secretary Bird (Stroppius Maximus)

Plumage: Knitted jumpers. Home made bicycle clips in season.

Call: 'Oh, what a jolly jape!' after feeding.

Food: Tetley's mild when available.

Gait: Rapid and energetic. Often to be observed leading flock.

Habitat: Nests in Blackley but is often found in the Football or the Meghna.

The Great-crested Chairman (Commiteus Negativus)

Plumage: Profuse growth on head and upper bill. Moults occasionally.

Call: 'Come on, drink up,' repeated at frequent intervals.

Food: Shows a preference for Holts bitter and mild but will drink anything.

Gait: Long stride, weaving slightly late at night. Often seen on all fours looking for contact lenses.

Habitat: The Black Horse in daylight. Variable at night, but often in the Park Hotel or the Lamb.

The Great Northern Publications Editor (Optus Outus)

Plumage: Before preening, often stained with printing ink.

Call: 'Bugger it, we'll have another,' repeated just before the last bus.

Food: Tetley's bitter. Shows an aversion for Holts.

Gait: Zigzag after feeding. Often bounces off walls.

Habitat: Nests in Farnworth but can also be seen in the Black Horse, the Football, the Windmill, the Meghna or solicitors' offices.

The Press Officer Warbler (*Expensibus Maximis*)

Plumage: Blue mac, often discarded late at night.

Call: 'Aren't we going to the...?' repeated with many variations.

Food: Will drink anything but shows distaste for Holts and Wilsons. Feeds constantly.

Gait: Brisk and direct in early morning, later becoming increasingly erratic. Occasionally dormant.

Habitat: Nests in Swinton but is a migrant by nature.

The Bar-tailed Treasurer (*Fannus Derbii*)

Plumage: Roll-necked pullovers and glasses. Often carries chalk.

Call: Low measured tones; uses long words towards closing time.

Food: Shows a liking for Holts bitter.

Gait: Erratic. Likes to explore all the rooms in its feeding ground.

Habitat: Nests in Urmston but will fly elsewhere in response to the calls of other birds.

The Bearded Social Secretary Bird (*Member Musicalis*)

Plumage: Profuse, light-coloured feathers around the lower bill. Guitar in season.

Call: 'I think we should be more democratic,' more frequently repeated towards closing time.

Food: Shows a liking for Holts bitter.

Gait: Changes little, but the wings can be seen to flap more often late at night.

Habitat: The White Swan, the Boathouse, et al.

The Brown-capped Speaker Organiser (*Rutor Transportii*)

Plumage: Often seen carrying beer guides or 'The Morning Advertiser'.

Call: 'Would you like to sell...?' repeated often with variations to publicans.

Food: Robinsons bitter. Wary of Holts.

Gait: Rapid between pubs, rolling later.

Habitat: Often found in the Castle in daylight. Nests in Worsley but migrates at night.

A NIGHT IN FEBRUARY

Some months ago, B said, "Make a note of February 24th.; I have organised a pub crawl along R's usual Friday night route in Stockport and Romiley." I promptly noted March 24th but realised my mistake some weeks later.

The original plan was that B, R and F would meet J and I (that's me) in B and R's works club at 5.30 pm to start on Robinson's best bitter, but J and I thought this was too early to reach the other side of Manchester. B was therefore to telephone me at 7.15 to say how far along the route they had progressed. In fact he 'phoned at 7.30 to say they were still in the club but would see us in the Midway, Stockport, at 8.15 (GMBG, p 36).

After some trouble with the one-way system we found B, R and F suitably mellowed on five pints of Robinson's/ Boddington's/ Younger's. We sampled a pint each of Pollards, in very good condition and much improved balance to my taste - more bitter and less treacly than when I first tried it. The pub itself was too brightly lit and a little trendy.

Next stop was the Spread Eagle, Hatherlow (GMBG, p 35). The beer was Boddington's - slightly too cold but delivered via brand new porcelain handpumps which have apparently replaced the former electric pumps. Is this unique for Boddington's?

There was then a long climb up the hills to a most individually styled pub, the Hare and Hounds, Hyde (GMBG, p 39). Again this served Boddington's, very yeasty (cloudy) and with good flavour - could qualify as "glass-conditioned". Pictures of Winston Churchill, the Queen and Prince Charles looked down from every wall and many large, bold notices instructed the patrons on the correct manner of behaviour. (See opposite).

Finally to the Foresters Arms, misspelt in the GMBG (p 35), where it is also called "Pig Muck". This was a low-ceilinged pub serving Boddington's beer (R likes Boddies) which was very good but the bitter kept going off. After

THIS TABLE IS
RESERVED FOR
LANDLORD & LANDLADY

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
DO WIPE THEIR FEET

ARE YOU 18 ?
ARE YOU
QUITE SURE ?

PERSONS SITTING WITH THEIR
ARMS AROUND EACH OTHER OR
MISBEHAVING THEMSELVES WILL BE ASKED
TO LEAVE THE PREMISES

standing up for some time, the five of us became nook-shotten (see Chambers 20th. Century Dictionary), which can easily happen in this pub, but reassembled seated around a corner table for the last two or three pints.

It must have been the effect of the last pint of mild (due to the bitter running out again) which caused B, who had only had ten pints of bitter so far, to answer the landlady's request to drink up with a deafening "NO!" and later to deposit the last three pints, in a manner by far the most precise and efficient I have yet seen, out of the door of J's car and into a gutter somewhere on the way back through Stockport.

In a final mix-up, B thought he had lost his umbrella, which I picked up by mistake, then I thought I had lost mine, but it was found by J in the car several days and searches later, so all ended satisfactorily.

CAMRA



The next meeting of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA will be held in the Black Horse, Crescent, Salford, on Wednesday 20th April.

WHAT'S DOING

5p



The Newsletter of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA

What's Doing is published on the third Wednesday of every month to coincide with the branch meeting. After the meeting it can be obtained from several pubs in North Manchester or by post, £1 for six issues, from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester.

What's Doing is edited by Neil Richardson, 94 Leach Street, Farnworth, Bolton. 061-736 7811

Application for Membership

I wish to become a member of Campaign for Real Ale Limited. I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign, and I enclose £2 (£3 for overseas members) as my annual membership subscription. (Any additional amount will be welcomed as a donation.)

FULL NAME

ADDRESS

SIGNATURE

Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real Ale Limited. Applications should be sent to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts. AL1 3BW.

Allow three weeks for processing your application.

continued from inside front cover

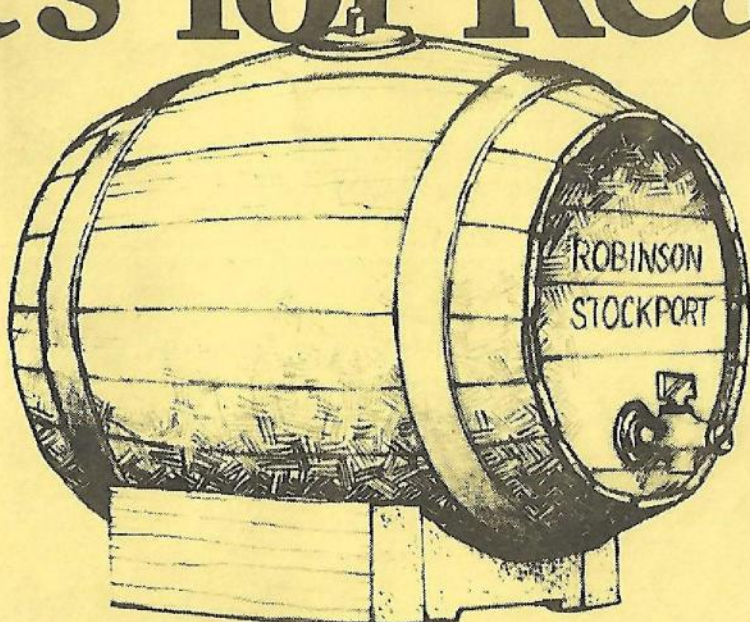
the Bird in Hand on Back Bury Street, the Gardeners arms on Pendleton Street and the Derby itself. The Angel is his first pub not to suffer from planners' blight and is one of Wilsons' better maintained houses in Salford.

When the Derby's customers say their farewells - it is due to come down this summer - they may be consoled by the fact that at least something from the old pub will live on. The handpumps in their new setting will be a reminder that the tradition of serving good beer in Salford is not yet dead, despite the apparent determination of the Council to erase as much of the city's past as it can.



The Angel, above, stands on Chapel Street opposite Salford Royal Hospital. Another Wilsons pub nearby, The Oxford in Bexley Square, has recently lost its handpumps. Win a few, lose a few?

It's for Real



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Now you can have Real Ale at home for parties or just for your own enjoyment. Available in Firkins and Pins*, complete with tap, stillage and detailed instructions. You can order

from any Robinson's On or Off-Licence or Unicorn Wine Shops.

Always available from Unicorn Wine,

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Best Bitter Ale
Bitter Ale*
Best Mild Ale



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There are deposits on the casks, stillages and taps, returnable in full when you bring them back. You can borrow glasses, paying only for those you break or fail to return providing you also make appropriate purchases of items to fill them.

We strongly recommend that you place your order as soon as possible for Christmas or New Year use.

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*Bitter Ale not available in Pins.

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