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FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

# FOLKLORE FRONTIERS

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FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly urban belief tales, ancient and modern traditions and lore plus contemporary culture. It is edited and published by PAUL SCREETON. Address is: 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, TS25 2AT. Subscription for three issues is £6, payable to Paul Screeton (NOT Folklore Frontiers). USA \$20 in dollar bills only. If paying sterling throu Euro add £2. If your subscription expires with this issue an "X" will appear on the line below.

## THE DIARY .... THE DIARY .... THE DIARY

THE BULK of this issue is devoted to alcohol -- boozers themselves, pubs, breweries, hangovers, and so on. The inspiration was not alcohol-fuelled, but while discarding filed material for an aborted urban legends book for Fortean Tomes or anyone else following that imprint's demise (Pan almost took the bait), I thought the bucolic cuttings worthy of retention and use here

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IN a previous incarnation, I was a major player in the nascent earth mysteries movement. It is heartening to know that alcohol played a civilising role in prehistory, for the upward march of mankind as we know it is a result of beer. This fact, patently obvious to many of us for decades, has now been given scientific credence by Dr Solomon Katz, of the University of Pennsylvania, reported What's Brewing (May 1987). According to Katz, the ability of some Sumerian nomads to brew good ale around 10,000BC led to the need to form communitis close to the brewer, and to grow grain for him in nearby fields. Katz claimed that primitive brews transformed man from hunter-gatherers into crop raisers, and that fine ales developed the species into literate city dwellers. Presumably the final stage is when Newcastle Brown Ale and absinthe turn us all back into violent, incontinent cavemen again.

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OUR COVER depicts Tanya Robinson (21), of Richmond, North Yorkshire, crowned the hottest new glamour model in the U.K. when she beat more than 6,000 competitors to win FHM magazine's "High Street Honeys" contest. Consequently, the landlord of her local, The Fleece, decided to rename the pub The Tanya's Charms, and the sign outside shows her fab boobs and bum. Pub manager Sam Collet (28), said; "We tried to think of ways of commemorating the occasion and then the idea came up about renaming the pub. The locals are over the moon." (D. Sport, 4/2/03)

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JOHN BILLINGSLEY kindly reviewed my latest book, The Man Who Ate A Domino, in his Northern Earth magazine. The pithy opinion went as follows: "Ex-journalist (and Ley Hunter editor) Screeton jumps back into print with a selection of oddities encountered over his years on the Hartlepool Mail and a regular diet of seedy national tabloids -- always the best source of modern legendry and nonsense, as Screeton continues to demonstrate in his magazine Folklore Frontiers. Being Hartlepool-based, expect monkeys and avocado mousse with the hoaxes and misfortunes." But "an selection"? Is this the reviewer who is touting himself as a professional copy editor to those incapable of the task? Surely not! Nor am I an "ex"-journalist. Cripes!



# A regular sad kinda guy

Jack Shamash

**R**EGULARS. You can see them in any pub; sitting at the bar, conversing loudly and greeting customers as they come in. To some they are known as "regulars", to the more perceptive they are chronic alcoholics.

It is a mark of pride that every pub has its regulars. Landlords will tell you that they help set the tone of the place. In fact, beneath the bluff and hearty veneer, they are an unhappy bunch of people who are only tolerated because of the indecent amount of money they put in the landlord's pocket.

They are thought of as "characters", because of their propensity for shouting inanities such as "Top of the morning to you, my old china!", at every possible juncture.

They will also perform party tricks such as doing rude things with matchsticks, flipping beer-mats, making personal comments about the barmaids and falling off stools. Such behaviour will elicit the response: "Good old Bert. What a character!" from their intimates, who are almost as sad as they are. Once

firmly in their cups, regulars will noisily offer drinks and get upset if anyone refuses -- refusal is seen as implied criticism of their excessive drinking.

Through such displays of bonhomie, regulars attain a sort of status within the pub. They will be able to call bar staff by their first names, they may be able to buy drinks on credit, get a drink after hours, get their own place to sit ("you can't sit there, it's Bert's seat") and they may even be able to borrow large sums of money from the pub -- although you have to drink an awful lot of bottles of Pils before they'll let you do that.

These privileges are jealously guarded and carefully noted by other regulars who, lacking any other purpose in life, centre their lives around their local.

For most regulars, the pub is the only place where anyone is likely to miss their presence. If, for any reason, a regular is absent for a while, they will be greeted like long-lost comrades. And they'll probably be stood a couple of drinks as a sort of welcome home gesture. But it's an odd sort of camaraderie. Few

regulars will meet outside of the pub; they won't invite each other home or see each other socially in any other setting. For them, the pub is a hermetically sealed world, a sort of parallel universe in which their everyday problems don't exist.

Most regulars are men. It is less socially acceptable for women to get drunk regularly. And for a married woman, being seen regularly in the pub after work would be almost an admission of marital failure.

**T**OWARDS the end of the evening regulars become excessively friendly. Staggering towards you, breathing out a noxious mixture of alcohol fumes and pork scratchings, they put their arms around you and ardently declare: "I fucking love you, mate." Or even: "You and me against the fucking world, eh?" "You know," they'll say, putting on a silly drunken smile, and defying the world to contradict them, "you're my best fucking friend." The sad thing is that it's probably true.

Regulars will usually have bad homes. Some lack all human company and are intensely lonely. The saddest are the old men who can be found in pubs collecting glasses, not because they're paid but because they like to feel useful.

After a few pints most regulars will get quite sentimental about the joys of married life, but if truth be known, regulars generally hate their wives.

After drinking-up time bar staff will call out to customers, "Haven't you got a home to go to?" For most regulars the truthful answer would be: "Not if I can help it."

(Guardian Weekend, 3/4/93)

He stumbles eagerly, like the parched alcoholic between one drink and the next, from a hallucinatory extract from Lowry's "Under the Volcano" to three "Dream Song" stanzas and on to this hangover from Kingsley Amis's "Lucky Jim": "Consciousness was upon him before he could get out of the way... A dusty thudding in his head made the scene before him beat like a pulse. His mouth had been used as a latrine by some small creature of the night, and then as its mausoleum. During the night, too, he'd somehow been on a cross-country run and then been expertly beaten up by secret police. He felt bad."



"Then for your party piece, you started throwing your wig for Rover to fetch."

# TAKING THE PISS-TACHIOS

By PAUL SCREETON

"TO STOP CRAVINGS for food or alcohol, drink a glass of fresh urine - it really works." So wrote Jennifer Sead, a social historian specialising in food, in *Here's Health* magazine. She believes urine can boost the immune system, cure migraines and stave off colds.

HOWEVER, Oliver Wrong, professor of medicine at University College Hospital, doesn't mince words when asked why some people drink their own urine: "Because they're soft in the head. It's an excretion product which the body is getting rid of, so to drink it is absurd." John Wiseman, author of the *SAS Survival Guide*, takes this caution a step further. He puts "urine and seawater" in a danger-alert pink box next to an illustration of a skull and crossbones. The text reads: "Never drink either -- never." (*Independent on Sunday*, 6/8/95)

THE LATEST beer craze hitting the United States is a brew called Corona Extra, imported from Mexico. Corona grew in popularity without the aid of any marketing gimmicks or mass-media advertising. Barton Beers, the Chicago-based company importing it, were astounded by its success, as were their main rivals. Then an equally impressive word-of-mouth campaign spread throughout the trading area. Suddenly "everyone knew" that the unique flavour of Corona was the result of urine being included in the mash. Sales started to fall until Barton Beers found evidence that the wee story had been started by rival companies. In what must be a "first", even for American law, Luce & Son Inc., purveyors of Heineken to the good folks of Nevada, were required to publish a statement about Corona beer to the effect that it "contains no contaminants." Barton intended to mount a national campaign to stamp out all offensive references to its pee-free product. (What's Brewing, October 1987)

YOU KNOW that when the location of a pub raid is only given as "the South of England" the tale's dodgy. Allegedly health inspectors seized bowls of peanuts and pistachios and tests revealed 17 different samples of urine. A spokesman for the inspectors said: "Even we were shocked at the findings. But you can imagine, different people were dipping into the nuts after going to the loo. There was definitely a health hazard." (*Sunday Sport*, 6/8/95)

THE GUARDIAN (18/9/96) reported health officials found 12 different types of urine among free peanuts in a bowl placed on a bar at a Bedford pub. They came from customers not washing their hands after using the lavatory.

IN HER DIARY, Anne Robinson showed folkloric caution on this topic: "Enjoying a summer drink in our local last weekend, a guest refused the offer of peanuts from a bowl on the bar because she said she'd been told a plate of peanuts from a cocktail bar had recently been analysed by environmental health officers and was found to have a total of 25 different samples of male urine caused by men using the gents and failing to wash their hands before plunging them forward for a mouthful. I have no idea whether this is a modern myth or reliable fact, but I pass it on because the information has stopped me ever again eating shared bar snacks." (*Times Magazine*, 2/7/94)

BRUSSELS bureaucrats have banned Bombay duck from every Indian restaurant in Britain, so reporter Jim White set out to find the dish. It was crossed off one menu where had been a "traditional dish of dried fish, described by gourmets as being like 'fishy poppadums', and by the less discerning as tasting like 'fishermen's crusty underpants'." During Jim's search he was told in Southall that if anyone knew where to get hold of the dish, it would be Darsha Singh in the Dokl Cash & Carry. A heaving, thriving store, with all sorts of wonderful, perfumed products jostling for shelf-room, the Dokl looked the part. Mr Singh had bad news: "It's banned. Illegal. What happened I think was the health inspector went out to India where they were drying the Bombay duck on the river banks and saw a dog cocking its leg and peeing all over it. He thought maybe it was not the



most hygienic of foods." Another contact thought he wanted Bombay mix (as a bar snack in Seaton Carew's Station Hotel, a hard bit broke one of my teeth, putting me off it for life -- not because of the next comment). Jim White wrote: "Sadly this tangy jumble of savouries and nuts would not suffice. Especially as, according to urban myth, bowls of Bombay mix laid out in Indian restaurants have been found to contain traces of dozens of different urine samples, left by diners who have visited the lavatories and not bothered to wash their hands before tucking into the dish." (*Night & Day*, Mail on Sunday, 19/4/98)

BOOZERS using the toilet at The Half Moon, Rugby, Warwickshire, have been splashing out as they wee. Instead of dropping loose change in the taproom's collection boxes, they have left them in the trough. Landlady Jane Varnish (45), has to pull on her rubber gloves twice a week to empty the haul for fear of her toilets flooding. "It's worth it though, said Jane. "The money is pouring in. Strangers can't believe their eyes when they unzip their flies and stare down at the pile of coins. No one in their right mind would stuff their hand in and grab the money." Bashful drinkers haven't revealed what they wish for as they relieve themselves of their cash. But hundreds of coppers, 10p pieces and even the odd pound coin have been scooped out. Jane explained: "The money is going to the Guide Dogs for the Blind -- after a good scrub in a bucket of disinfectant." (*D. Sport*, 5/7/93)

NOTHING to do with alcohol or pubs, but amusing nevertheless is the tale of the Seven Kings public lavatories in Ilford, Essex, where Redbridge council was trying to recruit attendants. According to a council bulletin, they would am £3.43 an hour -- which was a bit mean considering what was expected of them on top of all their norman duties. "It is essential," the bulletin told courageous candidates, "that you have the ability to handle members of the public." (*Weekend Telegraph*, 14/9/96)

A NEW SERIES on BBC2 takes scenes from movies and sees if they work in real life. Such as that scene at the beginning of "Waterworld" where Kevin Costner urinates into a container and then pumps it through a filter, then drinks the crystal-clear stuff that comes out the other end. In that challenge it was funny because you got to watch presenters Robert Llewelyn and John Hare drinking their own wee while hitting the viewer with various piss-related facts, such as "300,000 Japanese regularly drink a glass of their own urine every morning." (*D. Sport*, 11/4/03)



NOW four facts about urine you never knew:  
 1) Your wee will glow fluorescent under a UV light because it contains phosphorus. In fact, men's widdle was the only source of phosphorus until 1775  
 2) Urine was an ingredient in toothpastes until well into the 18th century.  
 3) Fresh supplies of your liquid gold are so sterile that you can use them to clean wounds.  
 4) Try pouring urine on your plants. It's an excellent fertiliser because of its high nitrogen content. (*Front*, April, 2003)



# Latest pub crazes

By PAUL SCREETON

THERE'S nothing like a moral panic to get me and an article going. An electric chair that gives shocks to revellers at a student ball has outraged human rights campaigners. The seat -- dubbed the Death Row Shocker -- is a replica of ones used to kill convicts in the U.S.A. Organisers of Exeter University's Safer Sex Ball were hoping it would help things go with a bang. Around 200 students dressed in fetish gear were expected to jump at the chance of a go in the chair, which sends the equivalent of 2,000 volts through the body. Ben Parker, of the university's rag comm-itee, said: "We want to highlight themes linked to sex and the thought of pain so we've elaborated on that with the chair." But Piers Bannister, of Amnesty International, said: "The idea of turning the taking of a life into a game is in bad taste." (The Sport, 24/11/97)

ANOTHER machine of dubious provenance is the charmingly named Fucking Bronco. Alan Pope invented a four-poster bed, powered by hydraulics, that jumps about while punters try to get a leg over with a plastic dummy. The trick is to stay in the saddle before it dumps 'em on the deck. The Kent-based businessman has been flooded with requests to wheel out his bucking bed at stag nights for £400. There has been a lot of interest from women, looking for a quick jump at hen parties. Alan said: "I'm confident it will take off in pubs all over the country. Who needs darts when you can get a bonk for the price of a pint? Most people in pubs talk about sex and how good they are. So why not give 'em a chance to practise what they preach?" He got his idea from mechanical bucking broncos that are popular in American bars. Customers lie on top of nude, fibreglass models as the mattress heaves up and down and moves from side to side. Said Alan: "Most stick it out for about 15 seconds." (D. Sport, 8/4/94)

ALLEGEDLY real sex actually occurred during a foam on the dance floor disco craze. Several people were caught having blow jobs and bonking in a sea of foam pumped out by special machines. Disco bosses would hire the machines to produce nearly 40,000 gallons of bubbles to liven up the dance floor. A spokesman for Yorkshire firm Big Fun, which promoted the rumpy pumpu pumps, said: "The bubbles have a dramatic effect on the clubbers. They claim it makes them feel really sexy. One club owner in Blackpool caught a couple bonking in the bubbles, and we've heard of similar experiences from other parts of the country." (D. Sport, 15/8/94)

JELLY WRESTLING left customers of The Broadway, Worthing, Sussex, feeling wobbly. Strawberry jelly -- gelatine crystals with fruit essence -- was poured into a 12-foot ring for the wrestling introduced by Whitbread Solent Inns. Regulars took their turn challenging friends, staff and even pub manager Rob Compton to test their strength. Each competitor got a clean T-shirt to wear home. (Morning Advertiser, 27/8/93)

MORAL PANIC alert again. A pub gave drinkers frozen chickens to use as balls in its bowl-ing alley. With the slogan "Naked Chicks: We Pluck 'Em, You Bowl 'Em", owner Shayne Armstrong handed out supermarket birds to be hurled down the 50-foot alley, saying: "You need to be a bit of a muscleman to do well, but our game has become a craze." Winners get a round of drinks on the house for them and their pals. However, animal lovers were not amused. Anti-cruelty spokesman Ro Williams said: "This isn't cruelty. That's long gone because the chickens are dead. But even three-year-olds are taught not to throw food around." (D. Sport, 3/8/96)

MORE tut-tutting here, as nightclub romeros were using handcuffs to trap girls in a bizarre new craze where men would lock one cuff to their wrist, then slap the other on a girl and drag her away for a dance. But fire chiefs warned the joke could backfire. One man unlocked his cuff but left a woman in her thirties still shackled in JJ's Club, Scunthorpe, Humberside. She had to be cut free by firemen. A spokesman said: "It may seem innocent fun, but it could have safety implications if revellers leave in a hurry." (Sun, 2/7/94)



"Well, it's not my idea of a room divider."



"His wife doesn't let him out very often"



"Guess who's got his picture in the papers this morning?"



"If I were you, I wouldn't expect many in tonight."



"Well, it's the first time he's seen you sober."



"Do you realise you came home drunk last night?"



"That's another plus -- the friendly neighbours!"



"She told me it was either her or The Swan."

TOTALLY harmless is the wacky sport of vibrator racing, where boozing sessions were going with a real buzz at the Leckhampton Inn, Cheltenham, Glos. The £4 battery-powered sex toys race along a metre-long table-top course. Landord Andy Hobbs (38), said: "We had a vibrator machine installed in the toilets and two guys bought one each and set them off on the bar for a laugh. One of them said 'I bet mine's faster than yours' and it all took off from there. It makes a change from crib and pool." Trainers are banned from using super-charged Duracell batteries to powerup their charges, but some punters claim race-fixing has already reared its ugly head. Pete Brown, whose favourite Shakin' Stevens pulled up just inches into the race, said: "Someone dunked mine in his pint when I popped out to the gents -- and it's shorted out the batteries." The vending machine was installed by Racing Snakes Ltd. Managing director Martin Purnell said: "It's starting to get popular. At the Club Cuba, in Brighton, they race them along a bar. People paint little numbers on them and everyone has a flutter." (The Sport, 29/4/97)

MORE APPROBATION! Whizkids in the financial arena, where boozing is frowned upon, have found a way to get high without drinking alcohol. The result is the crazy fad where they get a teaspoon of vodka and sniff it up their noses. They report a feeling of euphoria and dizziness, but warn of brain-busting hangovers. A visitor to one posh bash in London told of watching his host snort a spoonful of the strong Russian spirit then start coughing, spluttering and choking. Ten minutes later he was drunk on the floor. Advertising executive Nicholas (26), confessed: "The first few times you have this incredible burning sensation in your nose, but you get used to that. You feel light-headed and perky very quickly. Dr Alex Paton, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, said: "By inhaling it up the nose, the vodka would be absorbed straight through the membranes into the bloodstream just like cocaine. It's not something to be encouraged." According to the Daily Sport: "Vodka snorting isn't the only strange booze craze reported to medics. Some patients have been injecting Newcastle Brown Ale!" Oh, yeah? (17/11/98)

MORE injecting, more official indignation. Allegedly teenagers are injecting themselves with alcohol as they experiment with new ways to get high. A drug action group has warned of the dangers after a Home Office study discovered that whisky and vodka are being injected as part of the deadly new craze in Driffield, East Yorkshire. (The Sport, 9/10/97)

BACK with the City traders and dealers, they have been downing a new explosive combination of champagne and Red Bull, the energy drink gulped by all-night ravers to stay awake. The mixture of bubbly and the caffeine-packed fizzy drink -- advertised on TV as giving drinkers wings -- delivers a rapid hit of alcohol that is reckoned to be a faster high than cocaine. Now drinkers seeing a quick legal fix are downing the powerful cocktail, which has been dubbed Shambles because of its devastating after-effects. Police in the City are stepping up patrols to deal with the growing trouble on the streets caused by drunks fuelled up on the £5-a-shot mix. (See next page for TEN BULLISH COCKTAILS) (D. Sport, 12/4/99)

BACK at the nanny state mentality, it was reported that the Government was ready to ban imports of absinthe amid fears that drinking the hallucinogenic green concoction is becoming a dangerous new craze. George Howarth, the Home Office minister, said that the reappearance of absinthe in Britain's fashionable bars and nightclubs after 80 years was "a cause for deep concern." He was considering referring the issue to the Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. Absinthe is being imported from the Czech Republic by a company called Green Bohemian, which is backed by Tom Hodgkinson, founder of Idler magazine, and John Moore, a former guitarist in the Jesus and Mary Chain. They discovered that it had never been formally banned in Britain -- despite being illegal in most parts of Europe since the First World War. Absinthe has a potency twice that of other spirits and contains a narcotic called taugeone that is similar in effect to cannabis. The spirit has been blamed for causing blindness, kidney failure and insanity. Vincent Van Gogh cut of his ear while under its influence. With a price tag of £40 a bottle, bars such as the Groucho Club are promoting absinthe-based cocktails. When I did a Pub Spy mission to Hartlepool's Sports Bar I spotted a bottle but chickened out. (The Sunday Telegraph, 27/12/98)



**BREW-HOO:** Firkin barmaid Melanie



"I had no idea my husband drank until he came home sober."

## 10 BULLISH COCKTAILS

**SHAMBLES:** Red Bull and champagne.

**FRIDAY FLATTENER:** With vodka.

**CRIPPLE'S JISM:** Mixed with Bailey's.

**MEXICAN CLOTH TOUCHER:** With Tequila.

**JOCKS' TRAP:** With whisky.

**SATURDAY SORE BUM:** With Campari.

**LONG SLOW VOMIT AGAINST A WALL:** With Creme de Menthe, raw egg and sherry.

**RUSTY RINGPIECE:** With Bacardi and chocolate sauce.

**BLIND PISSED:** With absinthe.

**CARIBBEAN CHU MUCK:** With Malibu, vodka and coconut milk.

**BOSES** of a saucy pub have dropped the naughty name of one of their beers because women boozers objected to the name **SLAPPER**.

Male regulars at Sheffield's Floozy and Firkin pub enjoy ordering a pint of "Slapper" but women couldn't swallow the name and said it was offensive. Now the pub's owners have re-named the popular brew "Can-Can".

A spokesman said: "It was meant

in good humour. The pub has a light-hearted theme and the 'Firkin' theme is intended to be a bit quirky.

"Slapper" was meant in that spirit but obviously some people have been offended so we decided to change it."

The pub is one of a string of oddly-named pubs run by the Firkin Brewery. At its opening six months ago brewery bosses challenged busty girls to balance a pint on their boobs for a £100 prize.

TALKING of expensive booze, there's a £5 cocktail on the Costa de Sol containing a live tropical fish. Drinkers down the blue vodka-and-fish in one and get a certificate saying they are in the "Spanish Sushi Club." One reveller at Crazy Daisy's in Fuengirola said: "You can feel the fish thrashing about as it goes down." Predictably, the R.S.P.C.A. responded: "It is cruel." (Sun, 2/8/96)

EQUALLY bizarre, a craze was sweeping California in which motorists "baptise" their new cars by pouring booze over them. The idea is said to stem from African immigrants who also said a prayer in the belief they would be protected from road accidents. (D. Sport, 15/12/98)

THIS next tradition has a more serious protective note to it. In Keswick, Cumbria, just off the market square, is the Dog and Gun, whose chimney breast has clusters of pennies jammed into the cracks between the stonework. This stems from a tradition started by climbers looking for an omen before risking life and limb on the mountains. If they pushed a penny into the chimney breast and it stayed there it was a sign their luck -- and balance -- would hold. If it fell out it was time to order another pint, pull up a chair and stay put. (Sunday Sun, 6/11/94)

A NEW gargoye at Christ Church, Oxford, carries the face of Alec Clarke, who retired after 61 years as a college servant. Undergraduates long compared their sharper tutors to gargoyles, but Clarke (75), earned the honour for his early morning cheerfulness. He belonged to the age when "scouts" woke their undergraduates every morning for chapel. Cries of "morning, morning, eight o'clock, dank and dreadful" would assail fragile heads, as Brideshead ran smack into the cold reality of a Class I hangover. (Peterborough column, D. Telegraph, 6/8/93)

MEANWHILE, sculptor Tarran Rhuddlan (35), used the landlord and landladies of 16 local pubs as models for a chess set in Newton Abbot, Devon. (Sun, 3/8/93)

MORAL panic move. A boozy new way to play chess was blasted by anti-alcohol campaigners because the winner would end up pissed. "Shot Glass Chess" is played with glasses of booze instead of chess-pieces. When a player captures a glass, he has to knock back the drink. Alcohol Concern said the game was "stupid and irresponsible." (D. Sport, 7/12/98)



A VILE after-exams tradition led three teenagers to be ordered to work for free in an animal hospital after bashing to death ten quokkas. The protected marsupials -- which resemble a larger, furry squirrel with a rat's tail and are unique to Rottnest island off Western Australia -- died of multiple trauma injuries, a court heard. Rottnest has struggled for years to control alcohol-fuelled students who descend on the island, near Perth, after their exams and kick the docile animals in a cruel sport dubbed "quokka soccer". (Metro, 25/4/03)

A deadly new craze associated with alcohol consumption claimed the life of Ryan Timless (18), as safety experts condemned thrill-seekers bouncing off giant toughened plate-glass windows. Ryan and his pals had been drinking in pubs in Stevenage, Herts., when they began bouncing off windows in a shopping centre as they walked to get a pizza, but a shard of glass pierced Ryan's heart after he tried to bounce off a pane of an empty shop which shattered and glass sliced into his body. He suffered an inch-wide cut to his heart. (D. Sport, 21/4/03)

BECAUSE the barmaid in the Glittering Star, Darlington, Co. Durham, was wearing short shorts and skimpy top (in October), I almost missed my last train home. So it was no surprise to find brewers Samuel Smith called time on a contest here which handed out diplomas for heavy drinking. Boozers had to down eight pints or doubles in 2½ hours before 8pm. Those who succeeded had their names recorded on a framed scroll beside their photos in the bar. They also won the right to sport the black and white T-shirt of the Glit Eight Before Eight Club. Among 80 customers who qualified were a number of women, but when councillors heard of the contest they refused the pub a singing and dancing licence. Sam Smith's stepped in to disband the club. (Sun, 22/7/87)

# OLDIES BUT GOODIES

AS will be seen, this is a real repeater in various guises. Firstly, one passenger in a day-trip coach had certainly enjoyed himself to the full. Hewas out cold all the way bck from Brighton to London and it was obvious he wouldn't make it to his door without help. Then suddenly his drinking chums realised they did not know his address. What's more they did not remember him being with them on the outward trip. Searching him, they found he lived in Lewisham and delivered him home. However, the woman who answered the door sobered them up: "He liveshere all right, but he's supposed to be on holiday in Brighton, at my mother's."

This seaside outing tale from the Seven Archers Tavem, Brentwood, Essex, won a top prize in a pub story competition run by brewers Truman's. (Sunday Mirror, 13/5/79)

A version originated from Germany, where bridegroom Klaus Lang was set for a night of passion, but he failed to rise to the ocasion on his wedding night -- so he nipped out to drown his sorrows. Having had a few too many, he fell asleep in a bus shelter. Then along came a gang of his mates on a boozzy outing 100 miles from home. They assumed Klaus was in their party and bundled the snoring bridegroom into their coach. They took him back to his flat, undressed him and put him to bed. Back at the honeymoon hotel, bride Rita (24), was going frantic. She called out police to hunt for her missing hubby and they prepared to drag the river. The first Klaus knew of it was when he woke up next day. The hungover car salesman from Bonn, West Germany, said: "I couldn't believe it. Iopened my eyes onmy honeymoon morning and found myself back home -- alonr. I thought she'd divorce me for sure. Not only did I let her down in bed, I leave her alone on the wedding night. Trembling, he rang Rita at the honeymoon resort of Cochem, but his big-hearted bride forgave him. Happily the whole sorry story meant the couple were so pleased to see wach other, Klaus finally got it right on the night. (D. STAR, 14/7/80)



"I'm going to take part in Mastermind. My specialist subject--beer prices over the last 50 years."

A STORY from the Frankfurt Book Fair concerned a Dutch published who indulged liberally in the hospitality offered by rival publishing houses throughout the evenings. He boasted: "Even though I don't speak much German I never have any trouble getting back to my hotel. I just point to the hotel card which I keep in my top pocket and the taxi drivers take me there." One night, as usual, he crawled into a taxi, pointed to his card and slumped on to the seat in an lcoholic stupor. He was somewhat surprised to wake up a few hours later outside his office in Amsterdam. Wrong card! (London Day by Day column, D. Telegraph, 14/10/85)



"I've stopped drinking. I can't bear to see two of you any more."

THE Drunken Duck oub, in the hamlet of Bangate, Hawkshead, in the Lake District, is renowned as one of Cumbria's great watering holes. It is reputed to have earned its name after a previous landlady's pet ducks got intoxicated with a spillage of beer into their pond and, presuming they were dad, prepared them for the table. One by one they kicked back to life. Knittedwoolly jackets to protect them until their featers grew back in were thoughtfully provided. (Northern Echo, 7/3/96)

HERE'S a very early tale of falling penguins from the Falklands conflict(Peter Tory diary, Star, 25/8/87) "Unable tofly by themselves, they wereastonished, it is said, by the extraordinary aerodynamic capabilities ofthese manmade devices. As the Harriers went overhead the penguins,sometimes dozens of them at a time, would crane their heads upwards and in leaning back, fall over. Having very small wings, they were then unable tostand up again. And it was only with the help of concerned British squaddiesthat they were restored to their proper upright position. It has to be said that we have much the same problem in the bustling garden of The Contented Parson, when the F-111s from Upper Heyford fly over the rooftops. Still, there is always a powerful tattooed arm or two to haul one back to the unsteady vertical."(See FF40,p8)



AS will be seen, this is a real repeater in various guises. Firstly, one passenger in a day-trip coach had certainly enjoyed himself to the full. Hewas out cold all the way bck from Brighton to London and it was obvious he wouldn't make it to his door without help. Then suddenly his drinking chums realised they did not know his address. What's more they did not remember him being with them on the outward trip. Searching him, they found he lived in Lewisham and delivered him home. However, the woman who answered the door sobered them up: "He liveshere all right, but he's supposed to be on holiday in Brighton, at my mother's."

This seaside outing tale from the Seven Archers Tavem, Brentwood, Essex, won a top prize in a pub story competition run by brewers Truman's. (Sunday Mirror, 13/5/79)

A version originated from Germany, where bridegroom Klaus Lang was set for a night of passion, but he failed to rise to the ocasion on his wedding night -- so he nipped out to drown his sorrows. Having had a few too many, he fell asleep in a bus shelter. Then along came a gang of his mates on a boozzy outing 100 miles from home. They assumed Klaus was in their party and bundled the snoring bridegroom into their coach. They took him back to his flat, undressed him and put him to bed. Back at the honeymoon hotel, bride Rita (24), was going frantic. She called out police to hunt for her missing hubby and they prepared to drag the river. The first Klaus knew of it was when he woke up next day. The hungover car salesman from Bonn, West Germany, said: "I couldn't believe it. Iopened my eyes onmy honeymoon morning and found myself back home -- alonr. I thought she'd divorce me for sure. Not only did I let her down in bed, I leave her alone on the wedding night. Trembling, he rang Rita at the honeymoon resort of Cochem, but his big-hearted bride forgave him. Happily the whole sorry story meant the couple were so pleased to see wach other, Klaus finally got it right on the night. (D. STAR, 14/7/80)



"Sorry I'm late, but I decided to walk rather than risk the breathalyser!"

A STORY from the Frankfurt Book Fair concerned a Dutch publisher who indulged liberally in the hospitality offered by rival publishing houses throughout the evenings. He boasted: "Even though I don't speak much German I never have any trouble getting back to my hotel. I just point to the hotel card which I keep in my top pocket and the taxi drivers take me there." One night, as usual, he crawled into a taxi, pointed to his card and slumped on to the seat in an lcoholic stupor. He was somewhat surprised to wake up a few hours later outside his office in Amsterdam. Wrong card! (London Day by Day column, D. Telegraph, 14/10/85)



"It's not his drinking I object to--it's that he enjoys it so much."

THE Drunken Duck pub, in the hamlet of Bangate, Hawkshead, in the Lake District, is renowned as one of Cumbria's great watering holes. It is reputed to have earned its name after a previous landlady's pet ducks got intoxicated with a spillage of beer into their pond and, presuming they were dad, prepared them for the table. One by one they kicked back to life. Knittedwoolly jackets to protect them until their featers grew back in were thoughtfully provided. (Northern Echo, 7/3/96)

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# (OLD) NEWSLINES

**PUB BORE** Nigel May's stories about India didn't curry favour in the Three Tuns, Silverton, Devon. Finally they had a whipround to buy a one-way ticket to Delhi, saying "It's for vidaloo-hoo!" The last anyone heard of Nigel (41), he had tried to get a job in a leper colony -- but even they wouldn't have him. Long-suffering regular John Poustie sad: "The ticket cost over £400, but it was worth every penny. The man was a megaboore. Nobody was safe from him. After the lepers turned him down he phoned a few people in the village asking if they will stand his fare back, but not surprisingly there have been no takers." Blonde Marion Bond said: "He should have been transported years ago. The man was a pest. He was always telling women how good he was in bed." Landlord Carl Breeze admitted: "Nigel did get on people's nerves, but he was a good-hearted soul. It'll be some time before we see him in here again. They're thinking of building a wall around the village to keep him out."

**TRADE** leaders hit back at suggestions that many pubs could be holding social security benefit books belonging to customers who have run up debts. Investigators claimed some licenses have taken benefit books because customers who have run up debts through having drinks on "tick" cannot afford to pay up. A voluntary organisation investigating debt says one pub in Cardiff could be holding as many as 30 books -- but as the information was confidential, it would not name the pub. Trade organisations and the Licensed Victuallers' Association say it is unlikely that the practice -- which is doubly illegal -- is widespread. The claim came from one of the 50 organisations which come under the umbrella of South Glamorgan Intervol, whose community development officer, Gerald Powell, said he understood that the pubs in Cardiff alleged to be involved held on to security books until debts for drinks "on the slate" were cleared.

**TWO** party games popular on the yuppie circuit. One: The Beer Hunter. Get a six-pack, shake one can and put it back so nobody knows which can is loaded. Funsters pick a can and open the ring-pull top beside their ear. Safe for normal people, but yuppies risk blowing out brains. Two: Russian Omelette. Similar but with eggs. Hard boil five, then put them in a carton with one unboiled egg. Yuppies smash them on their heads, loser gets wet. (Monitor Nigel Pennick had heard this oldie circa 1980 told of bikers) (Today, 2/7/87)

**BOOZED-UP** Bob Grierson tried to beat a drink-driving rap by swallowing a copper. He'd been told the 1p coin would absorb the alcohol. But Grierson got no change out of magistrates at Blackpool, where he was found to be twice over the limit. Grierson (29), gulped down the penny and the next 24 hours were "unpleasant" for him, said his solicitor. Grierson was bailed for sentence.

**ONE** of Cambridge's most famous attractions was to close for two years. The Eagle pub in Bene't Street, a near rival in popularity to King's College Cambridge, but with the advantage of a licence, was to close while Corpus Christi College renovated adjacent properties. During the 1939-45 War, the 17th century coach house was a rendezvous for American servicemen, whose autographing of the ceiling -- tolerated then -- is a feature now. But The Eagle's more profound claim to fame lies in it being the daily haunt of scientists Francis Crick and James Watson who, having first savoured the joys of Greene King IPA, went on to discover success with the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA - first noted by Friedrich Meischer), the double helix, then Nobel Prizes all around. "Francis winged into The Eagle to tell everyone within hearing distance that we had found the secret of life," Watson recalled later. (Peterborough column, D. Telegraph, 17/7/87)

**MORE** than 300 tipplers entered a competition to find Britain's best drunken poet. Organiser Colm O'Rourke offered £1,000 and a barrel of beer for the champion Dead Drunk Poet. All entrants had to sign a form saying they drank at least three pints of bitter before they wrote their poem. Colm, from Bewdley, Worcs., said: "The quality is very high." (D. Sport, 23/3/93)

**A MONUMENT** in the shape of a human liver was unveiled at Ferrol, Spain. The mayor said the hard-drinking townspeople ill-treated their livers so badly, the organ deserved a shrine in its honour. (D. Star, 11/5/87)

**HAIRY MEN** can stand more booze than smoothies, a survey revealed. German Prof. Karl Miederer claimed hirsute drinkers' strong hormones protect their livers, enabling them to drink more than the safe average. (D. Star, 9/7/93)



**A BOTTLE** of Newcastle Brown Ale came seventh out of nine candidates in Southampton University's student presiden elections. (13/2/93)

**AFTER** getting fed up with thieves breaking into his house, shoemaker Flavio Tocchetto (52), set up a double-barrel shotgun device that went off when the door was opened. But after a night's drinking, he forgot about it and was shot in his privates. Police in Milan charged Flavio with making an illegal and dangerous machine. (D. Sport, 17/2/93)

**COP** Sinisa Micic decided to celebrate his luck when he won £40,000 in a lottery. He walked into his local bar in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and ordered drinks all round. Sinisa satyed boozing with pals until the early hours. Then he staggered drunkenly out of the bar and into the street -- where he was knocked down and killed by a passing car. (D. Star, 4/5/92)

**WOLFGANG FRANKE'S** death in front of his TV caused police a problem when they went to his Munich flat. Their way was barred by 2,000 empty lager cans which blocked the door, submerged the furniture and formed a pile several feet high. Franke(55), turned into a couch potato after his wife left him two years previously and he lost his job. Neighbours only saw him once a day as he walked to a local petrol station where he bought his daily supply of beer. The manager was the only person to notice his demise -- he alerted police when Franke didn't turn up for his usual 15 cans. (D. Express, D. Mirror, 26/7/96)

**GEORGE GALLUP**, son of the founder of the polling organisation which was celebrating its 50th anniversary, told a Commons dinner party of the early days of research. A survey sent to factories asked: "Please list number of employees, broken down by sex." One reply read: "None known to be broken down by sex but alcohol is a problem." (Peterborough column, D. Telegraph, 22/6/87)

**THE REAL** Rovers Return was destroyed by arsonists. The pub which inspired the Coronation Street "Rovers" was the third in Salford, Manchester, to be burnt to the ground. Locals said it was jinxed by the name of the road it stood in -- Guy Fawkes Street. (Sun, 8/7/93)

**A ROGUE** one-armed bandit is giving Scots and Welsh coins the elbow. The fruit machine will only accept English £1 coins and spits out anything with a leek or thistle on it. Bill Eastwood, of the Chain and Gate pub at Eaton, Cheshire, said: "I might get reported to the Race Relations Board (Star, 12/10/87)

**FOUR PALS** about to become fathers say it's thanks to a new beer. The fertility boom came after the friends switched to John Smith's Extra Smooth. Dad-to-be Shaun Dryhurst, landlord of The Half-Moon, Tiverton, Devon, said: "The ale's super for keeping your pecker up." (D. Star, 28/9/85)

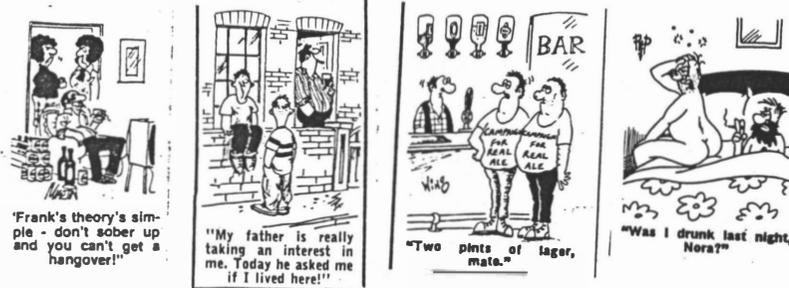


CLOTH EARS Keith Stanger was cursing his luck after being left stranded and broke on a drunken stag trip to Majorca. His troubles started when an airline girl announced that there were only 17 sets on the plane home for the party of 18 lads from Bamsley, Yorks. She asked: "Who's staying?" and squiffy Keith shot his hand up, thinking she had said: "Who's Stanger?" To the jeers of his mates, glum-faced Keith (28), settled down to wait. But it was two days before a seat could be found on a plane bound for Britain. Keith said: "It was a nightmare. I'll be demanding compensation." (Sun, 8/9/87)

I'LL let the What's Brewing scribe tell it like it is: American English has different nuances to our mother tongue. One beer I can predict will not be on sale this side of the pond is Wanker, brewed by Fred van Urk. In American Brewer, Wanker is described as a "light-bodied wheat ale." Van Urk has hired a bevy of beauties to promote it who are known as (are you ahead of me?) "the Wanker Girls." Will a cask version be handpulled? (February 1996) The Sunday Sport then claimed an exclusive: Brit boozers may soon be exercising their right arms drinking a beer called Wanker Light. The saucy low-calorie ale is made by the Pittsburgh Brewing Company in Newport Beach, California, U.S.A., and has six top L.A. models on the label. (17/3/96) Followed by the Guardian diary: A new beer is being advertised in the U.S.A. Made by the Pittsburgh Brewing Company (brewers since 1881), and featuring "six top L.A. models, the low-calorie ale goes by the name of Wanker Light. According to a newspaper advert, those desiring more information can write to Wanker Beer Inc at PO Box 8894, Newport Beach, CA92658. There is no detail on initial sales figures yet, but rumour suggests that the beer is making money hand over fist. (12/3/96)



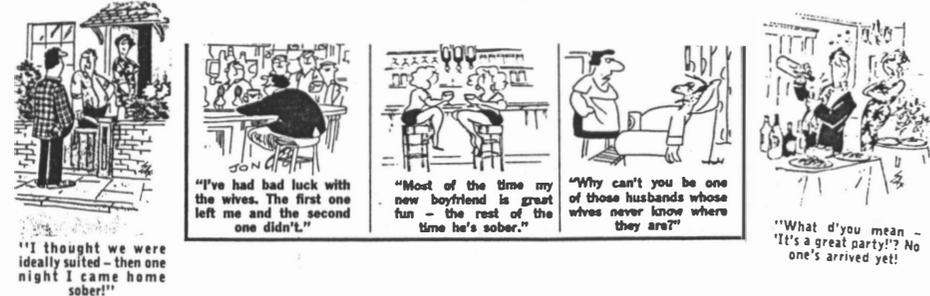
HERE verbatim is: MORE news from Parish Pump's man with the pork scratchings and foaming pint of Moorhouse Bitter in the bar of the Station Hotel, Clitheroe: this time it concerns the thirsty Mr Dave Speak. Sometimes, especially if there is a Monday in the week, Mr Speak can be found sitting on a stool at the bar nursing a pint of Thwaites and resting his feet on the convenient footrail. That was until the unfortunate recent incident in which for some reason Mr Speak fell clean off his stool. "Unfortunately for Dave, at the time his right foot was on the wrong side of the footrail. Result: one broken ankle," writes our spy. "Fortunately for Dave, the broken ankle didn't prove to be a handicap on his drinking habits. His father volunteered to run him up to the Station Hotel in his car each day." The drink-and-ride system worked well until the day Mr Speak's father was late and a thirsty Dave decided to set out for the pub by himself, hobbling pathetically. It was then he noticed his father's Mini approaching. "Dave's dad isn't as young as he used to be and his eyesight isn't special either," says our informant. "Realising this, Dave hopped into the road to attract his dad's attention." Oh dear. From a beer-drinking point of view, this was a mistake. "Dave either hopped too far or too late. His dad ran over him in the car, breaking his already-broken leg in three more places." As any serious drinker will tell you, you can't hitch a lift to a pun in a Mini when you are plastered -- up to the hip, that is, as Mr Speak was -- which is why he had to become temporarily teetotal. (Weekend Telegraph, 6/1/96) CORRECTON: Francis Duffy writes from Wadebridge, Cornwall, to say that, contrary to my report on January 6, one can hitch a lift to the pub in a Mini while comprehensively plastered. Duffy, who broke his right leg and right arm in November, did precisely that for six weeks that he was homo regidus. "Travel was made possible by the simple removal of the front passenger seat and my sitting in the back," he says proudly. uch ingenuity in the quest for company and liquid refreshment was not strictly necessary, as Duffy confesses: "I'm not a serious drinker; I only drink on days that end in the letter 'y.'" (Weekend Telegraph, 3/2/96)



A REGULAR of The Crown at Fordingbridge, Hants., called me (Peterborough column, D. Telegraph, 17/8/88) to report that, as a result of a directive from the European Community, the traditional cotton drip mats to be found on thousands of bars across the land are to be outlawed, and replaced by plastic ones on health grounds. It came as news to the trade's newspaper, the Morning Advertiser, and was also a surprise to the National Licensed Victuallers' Association. But at The Crown, barman Roger Alvis told me that the pub had managed to acquire three of the new mats. "The rep brought these into us but said that they were all he could spare. Apparently they're very hard to come by," he said. "They say the new rule will become law in September 189. It won't be the same, but then the cotton cloths get used for so many different things." Diet Pepsi, whose name is on The Crown's plastic ones, were not aware of their involvement and on trade insider believes the so-called legislation to be a hoax.

GOOD NEWS. Drinking doesn't make you forget, claim university researchers. Alcohol actually make you remember, say boffins in North Dakota. (D. Sport, 1/10/92)

SMUGGLERS brewed up a cunning scheme to ship cheap vodka to boozers in Finland -- a 300-mile pipeline. The two-man gang tunneled from a garden shed in Estonia under the border to make a black-market killing. But Customs arrested the gang. (D. Star, 14/3/97)



UNEMPLOYED archaeologist Gary Richards (37), who drank 25 pints of beer on a soccer day out to Cowes, Isle of Wight, from Salisbury, Dorset, was fined £200 plus £60 costs for urinating in public on the town quay. Perhaps his boozing contributed to his joblessness and I wonder if he appreciated the headline "Out of his skull"? (D. Star, 1/11/95)

FORMER barmaid Rowan Pelling, 33, is proprietor of the Erotic Review monthly magazine which she has edited for five years, and says: "I got half my education at school; the other half was from living in a pub and working behind the bar. It has coloured my view of things. Asan editor, I'm still a barmaid." Not intimidated by male forwardness, she says: "What barmaid hasn't had her breasts fondled many a time? Any barmaid worth her salt can negotiate that kind of situation." (Sunday Telegraph, 18/11/01)

GEORDIE baker Ian Thompson (40), was supplying 107 Waitrose branches with bread flavoured with Newcastle Brown Ale. Another baker, Mohan Dhariwal (35), of Hayes, Middlesex, claimed he was a human brewery. He was jailed for six months and banned for seven years after being found guilty of six drink driving offences between May 1987 and January 1988. Magistrates at Feltham, Middlesex, failed to swallow his excuse that a rare Eastern disease meant that his body manufactured its own alcohol. (The Sun, 18/3/88)

PARK KEEPERS were guarding a swans' nest at Cheltenham's Pittville Lake after an egg was stolen and replaced with a bear can. Full or empty? (D. Star, 29/4/88)



RITUAL is a folkloric cornerstone, and Siobhan Fahey gave the real explanation behind her bruises. "It's a strange old Bananarama ritual. Whenever Keren, Sarah and I are frustrated, we have a good drink and we start punching and kicking each other, then compare bruises. (Sunday, 22/11/87).

ANOTHER RITUAL had landlords being asked to help to save Alfred the Great from lager louts. Police planned to cool off a Christmas custom of revellers to hurl glasses of beer at the Saxon king's statue in Wantage market square, Oxfordshire. They wanted pubs to use plastic mugs -- and warned that anyone who didn't co-operate might not get an extension. (News of the World, 18/12/88)

MEMORY AGAIN as mice were found better drunk than sober at avoiding cage areas giving electric shocks, proving that alcohol enhances memory, claimed scientists in Ohio. (Sun, 29/6/92)

POLICE in Wyoming, U.S.A., are paying people £25 and as much free booze as they can drink to show new recruits how to handle drunks." (D. Star, 19/1/93)

TRAGIC parents Patrick and Susan Bradshaw have cemented a lager bottle into their garden as a bizarre memorial to son Michael who hanged himself. Mr Bradshaw (39), of Abbey Wood, South London, said jobless Michael (19), loved lager, and "it seemed fitting." (Sun, 27/7/87)

NEW NEWSLINES

SAME DAY / SAME RAG. A man who brought five stun guns into Britain for a "fun night out" was cleared of knowingly importing prohibited goods. David Jones (34), of Blackwood, South Wales, had bought them in Bangkok so he and his mates could play pranks in bars. EQUALLY bizarre was how bachelor John Martyn (31), from Boscoppa, Cornwall, was found choked to death on a pickled onion at a friend's house; three times over the drink-drive limit and with eight pickled onions in his body. His mother told the coroner he had been eating pickled onions since he was three. (D. Mirror, 4/4/03)

ORGANISERS at Barrow Hill, Derbys., rail preservation centre and storage facility hope to have based a rake of mainline-certified coaches for use on "beer and curry" trains. (The Railway Magazine, May, 2003)



MY late father, who fought in WWII had utter contempt for the American forces and claimed all you needed to get a Purple Heart was to swim one length in the baths. A similar view was shared by a correspondent to The Sunday Telegraph: "Your correspondence concerning the Purple Heart medal reminded me that those of us who served during the Second World War were amused that the Purple Heart was awarded to GIs for being cut by flying glass while drinking in London pubs during bombing raids. -- Richard Johnson, Cliviger, Lancashire. (0/4/03). Maybe both are contemporary legends.

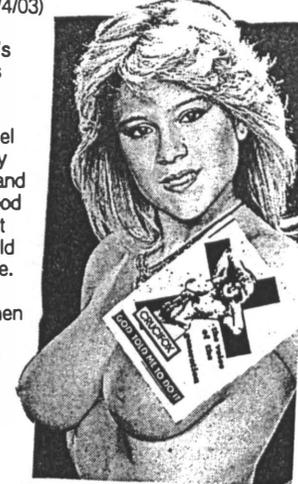
SAME DAY / SAME NON-RAG. A TOPLESS restaurant in New York got around a bare boobs ban by allowing the girls to dance bottomless. The girls trebled their weekly tips (D. Sport, 22/4/03) ALBERT SQUARE'S Queen Vic was voted the pub most soap fans would like to have as a local, with 71% of voters. Only 16% preferred the Rovers Return and 13% The Woolpack in a What's On TV survey. Editor Colin Tough said: "The Queen Vic has always been a central focus in EastEnders. It is the venue for most birthday parties, wedding receptions and celebrations, so it is no surprise it did so well. I am surprised, that The Vic beat The Rovers so dramatically." (D. Sport, 22/4/03) Personally I'd rather drink in Royston Vasey.



A MAN who had not worn shoes for almost 40 years was banned from his local pub. Hippie Peter McKenzie, a 57-year-old grandfather from Birmingham, was barred from boozing in The Elizabeth of York pub in Moseley unless he put shoes and socks on. Known as Pete the Feet, pub group JD Wetherspoon quoted health and safety concerns. He said shoes made his feet sweat too much, adding: "I'm not going to do it now so that I can get into a pub. (Metro, D. Sport, 7/4/03)

COPS in the Sichuan province of China arrested eight girls from a "Pretty Woman" gang who prowled bars and discos, picking up men, drugging their drinks and stealing their money when they passed out. (D. Sport, 8/4/03)

AFTER running a bar in ITV1's The Club for six weeks it was reckoned Sam Fox could do with some health and safety lessons. Former topless model Sam had been up against ugly ex-Eastender Dean Gaffney and humourless Richard Blackwood to see who could run the most successful bar. But Sam would not have got very far in real life. An insider revealed a secret about her hygiene habits: "When she uses the toilet she goes straight back without washing her hands. It's disgusting." (D. Mirror, 19/4/03)



"Yes, it so happens we do have a Miss Samantha Fox on our books--she's sitting beside me now."



A PARTYGOER who slapped a kissogram on the buttocks as she gyrated topless in front of him was fined £200. Billy Palmer (21), who pleaded guilty to common assault, became "swept up in excitement" as the girl stripped to a tiny thong and began slapping his mate with a belt. Portsmouth Magistrates' Court heard that the stripper caused a "great stir" when she arrived to entertain guests at a 21st party for Palmer's pal, Anthony Preston. When she opened a tube of baby oil and started to massage it over herself and Mr Preston, Palmer joined in with friends, giving her what he said was a playful smack on the bottom. But the kissogram, who was in her twenties, claimed he had been "over-enthusiastic" in his slapping. After developing painful welts on her buttocks, she complained to police. Megan Topliss (not Topless!) defending, said: "Palmer had drunk seven pints before the stripper turned up and became swept up in the excitement of the occasion. At some stage she bent over and was slapped by Palmer, but he wasn't the first or last partygoer to get involved." (D. Sport, D. Mirror, 11/4/03)



# Best bar none

Jeffrey Bernard takes to the water-holes

**J**UST WHAT is it that makes a good bar? Is it the landlord, is it the customers, the service or the ambience? Some say the landlord dictates the quality of the custom but that is an egg and chicken debate on the question of which came first. Speaking as one who lives half his working life in bars I must say that there are few specifics but many generalisations on the matter.

One thing is certain. No good bar has machines of any kind in it. There are plenty of amusement arcades for people who want to play silly games. Bars are for drinking and conversation, and good barman have to be aware of the fact that there can sometimes be a sense of urgency about drinking. Teetotallers make bad barmen. The best are American or Irish.

Tenants make better landlords than managers and the best of them are not given to shock or surprise when someone gets a little tipsy after having spent £20 at the bar. And the best of them don't bar people for life when they have misbehaved a little. They send them home and welcome them back the next day.

Any bar that has just been renovated by the brewers is a disaster. Renovated in this context means covered in Formica, given a hideous carpet, silly little wooden candelabra and a new young

manager who wears a blazer and Hush Puppies and who thinks he is vastly superior to his customers. His jargon is awful, too. He has his car, but the wife. Good landlords are also pawn-brokers, bank managers, agony aunts—and they and their good staff do not butt into your private conversations. They are there to serve you drink and not pontificate on the weather, the Government or matters of sport unless they happen to be friends.

In a new book, "Great Bars of the World," the author,



Ronald Atkin, has unearthed some good ones I know, but I fall out with him on the question of there being a good bar in Fleet Street. I don't know of one. And he does not mention Bradley Cunningham's in New York, which is one of the best bars in the world. But anybody who writes a book such as

this obviously can't mention everybody's favourite bar. As to my own favourite bar, the book is food for thought and I am now wondering just why it is that I prop my elbow on the counter of the Coach and Horses in Soho every day.

Well, it's clean, which is essential. But the landlord, Norman, is incredibly rude, proud of it and even advertises that fact on his matches. Sometimes the service is so slow you think you are going to die of thirst. There is also a ghastly fruit machine. The carpet is like tarmac, but so what? It is an office for me and a home from home. They put up with me. They put up with quite a lot of people. Can you imagine asking them at El Vino if you could pop upstairs for a minute to change a shirt.No? That sounds trivial but it isn't. For a regular customer landlords should be no less hospitable than a benign mother-in-law. They cash cheques and take messages. Not always with grace, but at least I feel safe there. And I say that even though I was arrested there last year for taking bets. They had a whip-round for my fine and raised the money for it in less time than it took the magistrate to sentence me. Perhaps that is why it's my favourite bar. It's friendly and they understand perfectly well that most of the customers are usually wrong. But they treat us right.

*Great Bars of the World,*  
by Ronald Atkin,  
Ravette £5.95

(D. Telegraph, 25/4/87)

**FORTEAN TIMES.** News-stand. £2.70. No. 165. Interesting piece on legendary U.S. radio presenter Long John Nebel and brainwashed wife Candy Jones; novel egg incubation travellers' tales; Edgar Cayce; Italian priest's alleged time machine. No 166. Fascinating F.T. reassessment of "psychic mafia" key figure Ira Einhorn following his life sentence for murder; TV's "Ghostwatch" drama reconsidered ten years on; strange weather; weird West Country psychogeography; Alaskan pterodactyl?; something to crow about (tool-making bird beats chimpanzees for dexterity); yet more stigmatics; bestiality; Thai crested serpent hunt; Elvis -- American tragedy, not trilogy. No. 167. Forty years of alien big cats; Rosslyn Chapel; first rods, now orbs photographed?; somnambulism; disputable Welsh claim to visiting America around 1170 and the desire factor (cont. 168); Immortals. No. 168. Magnificent interview with Daniel Pinchbeck; piece which whets appetite for more on re-examining idiot savants; why did NASA renege on James Oberg's book contract to demythologise the alleged moon landings; more ABCs; angels; monkey business; Bigfoot trickster dies; haunted road; Raelians. No. 169. Eight-foot big hairy monster scare in Northumberland; Utah farm "high strangeness" case; Erich von Daniken; sonic warfare; vampire hysteria; Caspar Hauser; giant squid attack.

**NORTHERN EARTH.** Q. £6.50 for 4. Cheques payable to Northern Earth Mysteries Group. From 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. No. 92. Paul Devereux puts the case for Croft Hill, Leicestershire, as the omphalos of England (at least until recently it had a class 56 locomotive named after it); Wild Hunt and more muddying of straight or crooked spirit paths; strange happenings in Carlisle; hobby-horsing Nigel Pennick on Cambridge University wind carving calamity. No. 93. Odd claims of allegory in "Wuthering Heights"; my old sparring partner Gordon Harris argues earlier origins for Roman roads; archival search for Aberdeenshire turf maze hits possible sites within one mile; parallel ley lines. Regular features being archaeological round-up, book reviews, editor's musings, letters, events.

**TOUCHSTONE.** Irregular newsletter of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to J. Goddard at 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. No. 59. Fascinating field trip in the wake of King John and his Runnymede compearance (wish I'd been along); Derbyshire leys; Jimmy's latest (17th) website, "A Life of Ley Hunting" which outlines in detail how my life has been centred round the ancient alignments since 1961 when, with Philip Heselton, I was enthused with the subject, along with that of flying saucers and communication with them, and drawing forgotten knowledge from past lives; these were all thought of as part of one philosophy then, and were not separated as they have been become, and even rubbished by one well-known individual who had come to have the subject in his care." Oh, Danny boy ... ; some early ley hunting by the editor; book reviews. No. 60. Notes on Sunbury Cross leys lead to a UFO incident, Arizona and Minnesota, then on to global circle line of dubious provenance; a 1980 Yorkshire moot recalled. No. 61. Surrey leys walked; Roman roads speculation; Arizona and Minnesota revisited; ancient dowsing.

**MAGONIA.** Q. £5 p.a. Cheques payable to John Rimmer at John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB. No. 79. Bizarre, relentless search for the truth of whether a man walked out into thin air in 1876 and by spontaneous time travel turned up 74 years later; rambling history of colonial U.S.A. (I get the impression Magonia is extremely short of material worth printing). No. 80. Interesting musings on the trickster archetype; reassessing the Flatwoods Monster case (isn't it amazing how armchair pundits, probably not even born then, can dismiss witness testimony and previous analysis caustically and frivolously?). Regular pieces being back page diary, letters and reviews.





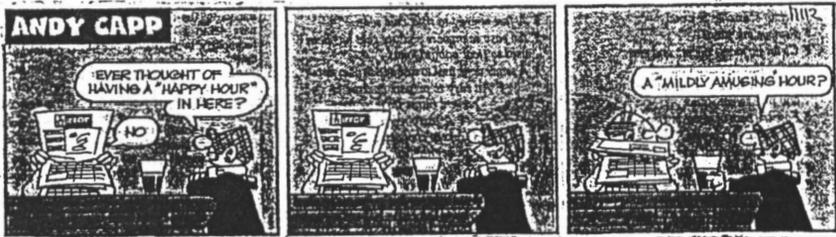
'I'll say he's clever . . . he hasn't paid for one round yet!'



## More Latest Pub crazes

**JULIE Matthews** (17 and 35C-24-35) entertains in and around Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, with a powerful mud-wrestling act. Her partner, **Angela Andrews** (19 and 34-22-34) said: "She's as strong as an ox. She usually beats me as we slip about in the bath and that's what led Mike to challengin' her." Mike being Julie's boyfriend, who had his elbow dislocated in the tussle. G-string grappler Julie then KO'd two Daily Sport readers in the tub on Seaburn beach, takin' them both on at the same time. (D. Sport, 31/8/98)

**STILL** in the North-East, the new £1m Gio nightspot in South Shields was offering a £4,000 boob job to the winner of a Miss Wet T-shirt contest. The Win-a-Bust prize gave girls the chance to enlarge or reduce their breasts if they impressed judges. Scantily-clad babes had to climb into a paddling pool, be dowsed in cold water and ogled by hundreds of male drinkers. Also they had to dance to a song before the decision who would visit the Transform private clinic in Newcastle upon Tyne. "It's not exploitation," said boss Kerrie Spencer. "If you really want something and there's a chance of getting it for free, then who wouldn't?" Protester Doreen Monteiro (70), raged: "It's disgusting and degrading to women." So her tits are obviously not in need of alteration.



...AND LASTLY... Internet jokers have compiled a dictionary using top celebrities' names, for examples: **CHARLIE DIMMOCK**: (n) Water feature such as male urinal. Usage: "Watch my pint, I'm just gonna go and splash the dimmock." **SADDAM**: (adj) Fucked off. Gone. Vamoosed. Usage: "Where's Billy, it's his round. Oh, has he done a Saddam again?" **CHARLOTTE CHURCH**: (n) A place of worship for men. **FERN BRITTON**: (n) A fat shrub. **WESTBROOK**: (n) 1. Celebrity mental home. 2. To put one's nose out of joint. (D. Sport, 16/5/03)