



DOWN THE PUB

AS I SEE IT.....

"I looked into the Volunteer on London Road North the other day to see what had been done to old Cecil's pub, and I didn't like it.

A harsh thing to say, maybe, after the brewery had spent so much time and money on making the pub more "popular", and in the light of the crowds at the bar.

But I couldn't help feeling a little sad at the passing of yet another pub.

When Cecil and Elizabeth Folkard ran it, the Volunteer was like any other decent pub. It wasn't outstanding. It was just comfortable and friendly. I felt as if it were a part of their home, and if felt churlish to leave without personally wishing them good health and goodbye.

The draught beer was keg, and not to my taste, but the bottled beers were well stored, and the atmosphere more than made up for the carbon dioxide in the draught.

The public bar was a symphony in brown and cream. Panelled walls the colour of mild, and nicotine-stained paintwork like the froth on a cream stout.

There was a children's room, also beer-brown, with a pile of decent comics and an ageing, silent piano.

But now the real oak has been ripped out, replaced by fake, stained pine. The pub now has a "theme". The decor is carefully tailored to reflect a military air. The place is the Volunteer, geddit? "Tudor" beams, "Baroque" balustrades, "Edwardian" props and all mod-cons combine to hammer home this unifying theme.

The overall impression is one of a stage set. A two-dimensional facade, clever but superficial. There's no real atmosphere, and the whole place has all the auth-

enticity of a "farm-fresh" label on a battery hen.

A good pub reflects the taste of the couple who run it. Modern pubs reflect the corporate taste of the designers. Objects no longer have a past or a purpose, they are simply there to decorate the set. Everything is carefully arranged to add "atmosphere", but the designer's dreams are as futile as the quest for the philosophers' stone. No way can the sham masquerade as genuine.

But hang on, you say. Don't be so cocky. People like their pubs to be like this. All of this is just the ramblings of someone out of step with the present, misty-eyed with nostalgia for what should have been.

That's what the brewers would say - and the packed bars would seem to bear them out.

But look at the people packing the bars. They're mostly of the same generation, 18 to 30, snappy dressers, and with disposable incomes that seem to have eluded the harsh economics of a town with unemployment well above the national average. They're the punters the brewers are after.

Most new pubs are pitched at them. They're the ones with a taste for sophistication, they're "streetwise" and ready to flex

their newfound financial muscle in the marketplace.

But they're also vulnerable. A generation finding its freedom can't look to established goals and ideals, it has to make its own way and run the risk of being led astray every step of that way.

Are these people getting what they want - or merely what they think they want? The distinction is subtle but important. Like children held captive by the toyshop window, I suspect the younger generation has been dazzled and is now ripe for being led by the purse-strings wherever the whim of the media/marketer/designer takes it.

The youngsters are making the pubs their own, often to the exclusion of those who don't fit their image; but what happens when they grow older? Will the themes constantly change to keep pace, or will they - as I suspect - shift to catch the next generation? Still, who knows, perhaps the vogue in pub design will one day come full circle and, older and maybe wiser, I can again take my favourite seat in the snug....

When to the sessions of sweet
silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things
past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing
I sought
And with old woes new, wail my
dear times' waste."

JOE SOAP



THE 'VOLUNTEER' AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: a far cry from its appearance today. (Photo - TRAC ROSE)

Drink More
ADNAMS

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ADNAMS

Because of the interest shown in last month's article on the old pubs of the 'Beach Village', I have looked out a couple more pictures to follow on:

The first shows the Princess Royal in Nelson Road, shortly before its demolition in the 1960's. This pub closed during the 30's and the landlord Mr. Jones took the licence to the 'Norman' (now the 'Norman Warrior'), in Fir Lane.

jack's LOWESTOFT

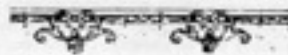


Next is an old print showing when the sea came up to Battery Green, the tall house centre being Row House (the old Canteen Tavern), on the corner of Old Nelson Street, once the main street into Lowestoft.

COR!



Because of the number of pubs in Lowestoft in the 19th, it goes without saying that drunkenness was rife and those convicted could well find themselves on one of these - a treadmill, invented ironically, by Mr. Cubitt of Lowestoft and first installed in the Brixton House of Correction in 1836. In 1899, a Police Commissioner's report said that treadmills were gradually vanishing; of the 68 treadmills and cranks operating in 1895, there were only eighteen remaining and these would be abolished as soon as satisfactory substitutes could be provided.



paying the RENT

Housing is difficult to find, for all groups - single parents, pensioners, families, and so on. And housing is expensive, once you've managed to find it.

But there are certain ways of easing the problems of finance, or if you are unemployed or your income is low.

Supplementary Benefit is mainly for those not in full time work.

Housing Benefit is for house-holders (ie tenants or owner-occupiers).

Both these benefits are 'means-tested' - they depend on your income.

You cannot get Supplementary Benefit if you are in full-time work (working more than 30 hours a week). If you are in full-time work, you may still be OK for rent or rate rebates (Housing Benefits).

How the supplementary benefit scheme works

If you apply for supplementary benefit your 'requirements' will be assessed. These 'requirements' are in three categories:

- a weekly scale-rate;
- additional requirements;
- certain limited housing costs (but not rent or rates).

If your "resources" are insufficient to meet the three categories of "requirements" listed above, your benefit should be enough to make up the difference and in addition, if you are a householder, you should be entitled to have your rent and rates met in full under the Housing Benefit Scheme (or met in part if you have non-dependants in your household).

But if you are sure that your "resources" are more than enough to meet the "requirements" listed, though not enough to meet your rent and/or rates, you should apply direct for help under the Housing Benefit Scheme administered by your local authority. If, however, your "resources" are only marginally above the "requirements" listed, you should apply for Supplementary Benefit as you could be entitled to a "Housing Benefit Supplement" - ie a little more than you would get from the Housing Benefit scheme direct.

Below we explain briefly how "requirements" and "resources" are worked out.

Requirements

The weekly scale rate	November 1983-84
Householders	
Single pensioner living alone (or other long term) ¹	£34.10
Married pensioners (or other long term) ¹	£54.55
Person living alone (ordinary scale)	£26.80
Married couple (ordinary scale)	£43.50
For non-householders*	
Aged 60 or over	£27.25
Long term scale for persons aged 18 or over	£27.25
Ordinary scale for persons age 18 or over	£21.45
Long term scale for persons aged 16-17	£20.90
Ordinary scale for persons age 16-17	£16.50
Children aged 11-15	£13.70
Children under 11	£9.15

¹ The long term rate applies to everyone aged 60 or over and to those who have been on supplementary benefit for over a year because of sickness or who have been receiving invalidity or disability pension for a year.
* But see below for boarders.

There are a number of other things which you can claim, if you fit the category. These are Heating, Special Diet, Blindness, and Hire Purchase.

Relating to Housing, other possibilities exist:

Housing requirements

If you are not a householder but living in someone else's household (for example, living with your parents, and the latter are responsible for rent and/or rates) you will be entitled to a housing addition of £3.10 provided you are over 18. From April 1984 you have to be over 20 to get this. But see below for boarders.

If you are a householder your main housing costs will be the responsibility of the Housing Benefit Scheme (see below). But certain limited housing expenses can count in calculating your supplementary benefit "requirements". The main ones are as follows:

- (1) **Water charges** If you are responsible for payment of water and sewerage charges either as an owner-occupier or as a tenant, these should be included in your "requirements".
- (2) **Mortgage interest payments** if you are an owner-occupier. Note that housing requirements cannot include capital repayment. You should ask your building society how much of the current mortgage payment is interest and how much capital and at the same time ask them to agree that only interest payments be made for a temporary period. To find out the weekly equivalent of your monthly mortgage interest payment you should multiply the figure by 3 and divide it by 13.
- (3) **Ground rent** if you are an owner-occupier, a d £1.70 a week for repairs and insurance.

How housing costs are met

If you are a householder and entitled to Supplementary Benefit your housing costs will be met in the following way:

- If you are a council tenant the DHSS will give you a certificate authorising the local council to meet your rent and rates in full unless there are "non-dependants" in your household, in which case you will be expected to pay the appropriate amount shown in the table below:

Non-dependants' rent and rates liability before April 1984

	Rent	Rates	Total
Son or daughter aged 16 to 17	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pensioners, or SB recipient	£2.20	£0.90	£3.10
Other aged 18-20	£3.95	£1.60	£5.55
Other aged 21+	£4.70	£1.85	£6.55

Non-dependants' rent and rates liability from April 1984

	Rent	Rates	Total
Son or daughter aged 16 to 17 on SB or Youth Training Scheme	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pensioners, or others on SB	£2.20	£0.90	£3.10
16-17 year olds in work etc	£2.20	£0.90	£3.10
18-20 year olds in work etc	£6.15	£2.05	£8.20
Aged 21 to pension age, in work etc	£6.15	£2.05	£8.20

- If you are renting from a private landlord the DHSS will give you a certificate instructing your local council to give you a rate rebate amounting to the total rates payable, and to pay you an allowance to cover your rent (and your rates if you normally pay these through your landlord). But if you have any non-dependants living in your household your rent allowance - and rate rebate - will be reduced by the amounts shown in the table above.

- If you are an owner-occupier the DHSS will give you a certificate instructing the local council to meet the cost of your rates in full, unless you have non-dependants in which case the amounts shown for rates in the table above will be payable. For the rest your Supplementary Benefit will continue to allow for your other housing requirements (as described above), including water rates, repairs allowance, mortgage interest etc. These housing requirements will be scaled down for any non-dependants as shown in the tables above.

Remember that if you fail to get Supplementary Benefit because your 'resources' are greater than your so-called 'requirements' you may still be entitled to Assistance under the Housing Benefit Scheme.

Boarders

If you are living in a hostel or lodging house and paying an inclusive charge for board and lodging, your "requirements" should cover the actual amount you pay (provided the DHSS considers this amount 'reasonable') plus an allowance for personal expenses.

Boarders' Personal Expenses

Single pensioner (or other long term)	£9.85
Pensioner couple (or other long term)	£19.70
Single person, ordinary rate	£8.85
Couple, ordinary rate	£17.70
Dependent child aged 18-19	£8.85
Dependent child aged 16-17	£5.30
Dependent child aged 11-15	£4.55
Dependent child aged 0-10	£2.95

The maximum amount considered 'reasonable' for a board and lodging requirement is determined locally, and therefore varies from area to area. The Supplementary Benefit should make up the difference between the claimant's resources and his/her board and lodging "requirements" together with personal expenses. The housing "requirements" of boarders are not met by the housing benefit scheme, if they are on Supplementary Benefit. If you are a 'boarder' not getting SB, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit.

Housing Benefits

If your "resources" come well above the "requirements" listed in the last section on Supplementary Benefit, you should immediately consider whether you are eligible for help with your rent and/or rates through the local Housing Benefit Scheme. If, however, your "resources" are only a little above the SB "requirements" listed, it could be worth your while to apply for Supplementary Benefit first, as you might be entitled to a "Housing Benefit Supplement" — ie more help with your rent and/or rates than the Housing Benefit scheme provides. But remember, to apply for Supplementary Benefit you have to be out of work.

You do not have to be out of work to be entitled to Housing Benefit. To be eligible for this Benefit you have to be responsible for payment of rent and/or rates, whether as a tenant or an owner-occupier. If you are a boarder or a hostel dweller, making regular payments for accommodation but not receiving Supplementary Benefit, you too can be eligible for help under the Housing Benefit Scheme. Whether or not you qualify depends on your resources.

Housing benefits take three forms:

- **Rent rebates** available to council tenants — ie rent reduction.
- **Rent allowances**, available for tenants of private landlords or of housing associations, etc whether the accommodation is furnished or unfurnished. This is a cash allowance paid to the tenant and the landlord is not told about it.
- **Rate rebates** available both to tenants and owner-occupiers.

How Housing benefits are calculated

There is a needs allowance as follows:

Single Person	£43.05
Couple or single parent	£63.50
Each child — until April 1984	£11.90
— from 1 April 1984	£12.90
Addition for one disabled adult	£4.95
Addition for two disabled adults	£7.30
Addition if one or both of a couple are of pensionable age	£0.75

If your gross weekly income is at the level of the needs allowance shown in the table you should be entitled to a rebate or allowance of 60 per cent of the rent and 60 per cent of the rates. If your gross income is below this you get more; if it is above, you will get less but may still be entitled to some allowance or rebate. The broad method of calculation is shown below, but you should be able to get a leaflet with tables in it from your local council.

If your gross income is below the needs allowance your rebate or allowance is increased in the following way:

(a) If you are a pensioner your 60 per cent rent rebate or allowance is increased by half the difference between your income and the needs allowance, and your 60 per cent rate rebate increased by one-fifth of the difference between your income and the needs allowance.

(b) If you are not a pensioner, your rent rebate or allowance is increased by one quarter of the difference between your income and the needs allowance and your rate rebate increased by 8 per cent of the difference.

If your gross weekly income is above the needs allowance your 60 per cent rebate or allowance will be decreased as follows:

Before April 1984 your rent rebate or allowance will be reduced by 21p for every £1 that your income exceeds the needs allowance, and your rate rebate reduced by 7p for every such £1.

From April 1984 your rent rebate or allowance will be reduced by 31p for every £1 that your income exceeds the needs allowance and your rate rebate decreased by 9p for every such £1.

In calculating your gross income, the first £17.45 of your earnings or those of your spouse can be disregarded. If both of you are earning, there is an additional disregard of £5.

If you are paid weekly, the calculation of your gross earnings will normally be based on the five weeks prior to your application. If you are paid monthly it will be based on the two months prior to application.

Possession of capital of more than £3,000 does not debar you from getting benefit, but income from investments will be included in the calculation of your gross earnings.

If there are non-dependants in your household your rebate or allowance will be reduced by the amounts shown in the table.

Who can claim

If you are getting supplementary benefit, your entitlement to housing benefit will be settled via the DHSS office as described.

But if you are not getting supplementary benefit, but are getting any of the other benefits listed in this booklet (eg unemployment benefit, retirement pension, FIS etc) you may still be entitled to housing benefit and should therefore apply for it.

How to claim

The scheme is administered through your local council and therefore the first thing to do is ask for an application form from your local council offices; you should also be able to get a leaflet from them setting out the allowances in detail.

(All figures and information taken from a booklet called STATE BENEFITS 1984 published by the Labour Research Department. It's quite clearly written. It costs 70p, I got mine from Freewheel (bookshop, King Street, Norwich).