

## Do you remember...

### ...the Fair Rosamund?

This was a pub built in the late Fifties about which surprisingly little is remembered, unless I've just been talking to the wrong people. As you can see from Jim Chatting's photograph, it's a pleasant, fairly unremarkable building, erected by Marston's Brewery on the plot reserved for it when the Elms Rise Estate was first planned. Still, it was comfortable and spacious, with bar billiards and darts board – and therefore, billiards and darts teams competing in the leagues. At one time it was felt in need of a refurb, and a lot of money was spent on doing it up. This was not to everyone's advantage, though – certainly not to the local football team's, who were banned because they were too dirty!

In the late Nineties, just forty years later, the Brewery decided they could make more money by selling the land for housing, claiming that the pub wasn't used enough to be worth keeping. This was around the time of the campaign to keep Botley Library open, and the committee held its meetings in the pub, in a vain attempt to show that it was valued in the neighbourhood. John Kemp, a Parish Councillor at the time, spearheaded a furious campaign to keep the pub open (incidentally falling foul of PC rules, which, he was told, required a dignified stance on the sidelines from council members). In the end the campaign did not succeed – although the locals, the Parish, the District Council, the County Council and our MP (Evan Harris at the time) were united in their opposition to the developers' plans, an independent Planning Inspector had the final word. He decreed that we didn't really need the pub, and gave the developers the go-ahead. And that was the end of it.

As a postscript on the Carpenters Arms, Doreen Barker has got in touch to say that the Parker family who owned the pub from 1781, and still had it in the middle of the 19th Century, continued to live in Botley until their last descendant, Stanley Parker, died in 2007. The family lived in 'Arcadia', at 30 North Hinksey Lane, built in the 1920s when idyllic countryside stretched behind the house clear up to the Hurst, and cows would look in the windows! The family took a close interest in local affairs. Walter Owen Parker, Stanley's father, who died in May 1970, was a long-serving Parish Councillor. His wife Alice, according to Doreen, was a founder of Elms Road Nursery and of the Welfare Clinic in the W.I. hall. She stored the baby milk, cod liver oil and orange juice that were supplied to the nation's children before the war and after, and lived on in Arcadia until March 1984. Stanley had no children, and so Doreen 'as a close family friend... was lucky enough to inherit Arcadia, but not The Carpenters!'

**Ag MacKeith**