

# PROHIBITING PUFFING IS CAUSING A LOT OF SMOKE

By Peter Sangarini, Clarion Health Correspondent

Making smoking illegal in pubs, private clubs and virtually all public places is the most talked about and fiery subject of present times. Opinions on this issue usually clearly link to whether you are amongst the reducing number of addicts still lighting up... a reformed smoker, or someone who has never been tempted.

Our politicians surprised us all with the vote to ban – but whether this was because of the state of the health of the nation – or a pending general election is debatable – as such decisions are often made by calculating the number of lost or won votes.

We will all soon get used to the idea but not everyone is happy about it. Part prohibition always raises lots of questions. As in Eire, many pubs will lose business and it is claimed that hundreds closed there since the smoking ban two years ago. Or perhaps the many ‘beer at home’ drinkers currently avoiding the irritations of smoke will re-emerge and revitalise the pub industry? We’ll see.

Probably many places will not, when the ban is in place, use their air conditioning and extraction systems to save power – this in itself could cause an unhealthy ambience in confined packed out spaces. The thought of a bird flu pandemic is frightening but always a possibility and unventilated rooms are a prime place to share and spread colds, flu, etc. along with whatever other germs are around.

Lots of pub car parks will become ‘smoking areas’ and drivers of vehicles coming and going will have to use the kind of caution as if on a motorway service station, with children running around. Will ash trays be provided *outside* buildings? If you stub out your ciggi before walking back

into the pub and then breath out the smoke inside, is a crime being committed? Will smoke detectors be fitted in the toilets as with aeroplanes? Apparently, the pub can erect a marquee and as it is outside will be a ‘*smoke if you want zone!*’ – so expect soon, to see considerably more marquees in North Staffs than Thunderbird telephone masts!

Who will enforce the ban and hand out fines? The police might have extra duties especially if someone invents a high-tech fag sensor gadget that determines the presence of smoke *inside* a building- they could point it through the window from a considerable distance - rather like a speed trap gun! Or maybe jobs will be created with hoards of ‘nicotine wardens’ on duty aided by highly trained ‘ah-Condor!’ sniffer dogs.

A group of Hanley entrepreneurs are already pledging the services of a private pub-to-pub car park double decker bus to provide shelter at certain arrival times for smokers - and one chap in Congleton has already bought a fire engine to be converted to a mobile smoke room and will soon be planning its route and timetable.

All a bit bizarre, but from a smoker’s point of view the new legislation is undoubtedly unfair. After all, tobacco is a legal product sold everywhere, just like, for example, chocolate. The Clarion believes that if politicians had any real bottle then they would properly justify their beliefs, go the whole hog in totally *banning and making illegal the sale* of a product that kills – not just fudge the issue. They’d ban chocolate, or curry or even chewing gum if scientists proved that it was the main cause of cancer... but they won’t illegalise tobacco – no way! ... and why not? ... *they need the millions in revenue from it.* This public place restriction law will understandably annoy many who have the right to enjoy a legitimately available product... but surely future historians, when the habit has gone for good, will find it rather odd that governments allowed the sale of a toxic poison, and even had the audacity to raise taxes on it. And what was the tax used for? – to fund hospitals, well-stretched and bursting at the seams, trying to cure many made ill.... through smoking!

It’s a strange world!



Health advice of yesteryear!

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(NON-SMOKERS ONLY!)

The out and about Clarion reporting team came across various opinions...



**Albert Bridgetts, Physiotherapist**

“It will cause havoc! – the best idea began this year in Spain .. bars designated ‘Smoking’ or ‘No Smoking’ ... the customer chooses, simple.”



**Brian Bailes, Solicitor**  
“In general terms, I agree with it!”

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

**1965 – Cigarette & tobacco banned from TV ads**

**1991 – Cigar ads banned**

**1999 – No more ads in shops or newsagents**

**2006 – Last tobacco sponsored World Snooker Championships**

**2007 – Banned in the workplace AND the pub**