

WHAT'S DOING

JUNE
1987

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH PUB



During June, CAMRA branches throughout the country will be celebrating that unique British Institution, the traditional pub, of which the great Bard might have written, "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." Traditional pubs certainly come in a wide variety of styles and sizes, from the

thatched cottage to the market town hotel; from the back street boozer to the Victorian gin palace; from the country inn to the urban roadhouse.

In North Manchester the basic back street boozer may be thought of as typifying the traditional pub in this area and branch members have been looking at the pub stock to select an example worthy of receiving a presentation. Central Manchester has been mucked around too much to leave any likely candidates so its to the suburbs and inner city areas we must look.

Goering, Salford Council and the brewers have succeeded in destroying many of Salford's excellent pubs and tarting up most of the remainder beyond the pale. There are one or two they haven't noticed which are worthy of consideration - the Braziers on Blackfriars Road, which seems to be lodged in a time warp, and the Eagle on nearby Collier Street which has survived the latest attempt at refurbishing more or less intact.

In Swinton only the Farmers would qualify as unspoiled, but there are one or more contenders for the traditional pub. Worsley is something of a wasteland but Eccles has a fair number of gems - from the Edwardian splendour of the Grapes and the Lamb to the simpler delights of the Queens, the Packet House, the White Lion and the Stanley.

The north of the City of Manchester should not be overlooked either. The Old House at Home and the Top Derby in Blackley; the Railway and the Dean Brook Tavern in Newton Heath are all excellent in their own way. Miles Platting, Harpurhey and Collyhurst have lost most of their traditional pubs, but in Ancoats a number of original examples have survived. It was, in fact, from among the Harp & Shamrock, the Smiths Arms and the Cross Keys that the Cross Keys was selected as a prime example of a North Manchester Traditional Pub.

The Cross Keys is on Jersey Street, a little way from the bustle of Great Ancoats Street. There are few houses in the immediate area and the pub is surrounded by old industrial premises. Nevertheless, the Cross Keys enjoys a reasonable trade and the handpumped Tetleys mild and bitter is always in excellent condition. The pub has been included in the 1988 Good Beer Guide. Although alterations have taken place, the pub retains much of its original layout, with a vault and attached games room and a separate lounge with access to the bar via a corridor.

On the evening of 24th June CAMRA North Manchester will be making a traditional pub award to the Cross Keys to which all readers of What's Doing are invited.

CITY DESK

Peter O'Grady



Moorhouses, the Burnley brewers of such delights as prizewinning Premium bitter and the magnificent Pendle Witches Brew, have exciting plans to open a canalside pub at the rear of G-Mex in Manchester. No doubt the City Fathers will welcome this additional investment in a formerly louche area of town, as it seems to fall neatly within the parameters of the much-publicised "Operation Phoenix", which aims to revive a huge swathe of City Centre Manchester.

Good quality pub food and a good standard of comfort, together with excellent beer, can be expected if Moorhouses' first pub - the newly opened GENERAL SCARLETT in Accrington Road, Burnley - is anything to go by. The General Scarlett opened at the end of April in a former book-maker's shop directly opposite the brewery. Both Premium Bitter and Pendle Witches Brew are on sale, together with Thwaites mild, all handpumped.



The pub is named after a local man who led the Heavy Brigade (as opposed to the Light Brigade) into battle and who was held in such high regard that 60,000 townsfolk attended his funeral earlier this century. Burnley Football

Club just about manage to get that sort of crowd over a whole season! Burnley may have a Fourth Division Football Club, but they have a brewery producing First Division beers.

* * * * *

No great signs as yet of breweries or publicans taking advantage of the new afternoon "restaurant" licensing laws. No doubt the reticence is caused by conflicting stories about what is and what is not allowed. I believe that the SPORTSMANS BAR on Market Street, Manchester, recently acquired by John Willie Lees, is experimenting with afternoon dining and drinking. More power to their elbow.

* * * * *

Peter White, licensee of the VINE INN on Kennedy Street, Manchester, has far-reaching plans to restore the outside of this fine old pub to its former glory. Away go the garish plastic blinds and layers of paint which have defaced some fine glazed tilework and marble columns.

The Vine will then look like a real pub from the outside as well as being a real pub inside. The improvements will also be visible on the Vine's "extension", which was formerly known as "Linney's Chambers".

It is worth making the point again that here we have two busy - very busy - neighbouring pubs, the VINE and the CITY ARMS, which are successful because they comfortably provide what customers want at affordable prices, whereas the nearby TOWN HALL TAVERN languishes in expensive isolation with its £1 a pint Bass unsold (and too warm!) When will Bass take the hint and reduce its prices to attract back its former custom?

* * * * *

A plethora of new licensees in the City Centre this month, including those at Nicklebys; the Crown, Blackfriars; the Crown, Booth Street/Fountain Street; the Kings, Oldham Street and the "related" Studio Cafe Bar, Piccadilly.

* * * * *

Boddingtons seem to be taking an awful long time to build their new Deansgate pub next to the former St Matthews Tavern in Tonman Street. When will the first sod be dug?

THE CRESCENT SALFORD!

MINI BEER FESTIVAL

STARTING 4TH OF JUNE
STARTING 4TH OF JUNE
STARTING 4TH OF JUNE

LOTS OF FAMOUS NAMES!

HOLTS FULLER'S GREENE-KING TAYLOR'S OAK
THEAKSTON'S SAIR-INN MARSTONS BATEMANS!
HOLTS FULLER'S GREENE-KING TAYLOR'S OAK
THEAKSTON'S SAIR-INN MARSTONS BATEMANS!
BEST-BITTER ESB LONDON-PRIDE ABBOTT-ALE
OLD-PECULIER LEADBOILER ENGLISH-GUINEAS
DOUBLE-DAGGER PORTER BARNSLEY-BITTER!
PEDIGREE MILD-ALE TO NAME BUT A FEW!
BEST-BITTER ESB LONDON-PRIDE ABBOTT-ALE
OLD-PECULIER LEADBOILER ENGLISH-GUINEAS
DOUBLE-DAGGER PORTER BARNSLEY-BITTER!
PEDIGREE MILD-ALE TO NAME BUT A FEW!

KING'S ALE

Leo King

STOCKPORT'S LOSS

The George, Wellington Road South, one of Stockport's largest pubs, reopened on 29th April. This former Higsons house has been transformed in a manner which does not do the old pub credit in any way. A not so severe alteration would have been enough for the once beautiful and traditional interior. Gone is a lot of the fine wood panelling and the decoration on the "George" theme - St George, King George, etc - no longer exists. In its place is a cream-coloured wall. The exterior has lost the Higsons livery and trade marks and now Boddington's name stands out in very large lettering. No Higsons beers were on sale on my three visits, despite there being a number of requests for it. Boddingtons bitter sells at 76p a pint, which is quite expensive, adding insult to injury.

Across the road and a little further along from the George is Ups and Downs (Burtonwood), a young persons' pub with entrances in Wellington Road South (Up) and Mersey Square (Down). This pub was formerly the Wellington (Wilsons). It has never appeared in a real ale guide. On previous visits I have been served powerful fizz, but recently I encountered a beer without (or so it seemed) gas. The illuminated bar pump read "Traditionally Brewed Beer", but that's another matter - it's the way it is dispensed that matters. Ups and Downs must surely rate as central Stockport's dearest pub - 43p for half of bitter.

SALFORD BEER FESTIVAL

Bury, Manchester, Oldham and, most recently, Stockport, have had beer festivals, so why not Salford? It is not being held in some large building, institute or university, but in the Crescent Inn on the Crescent. It is designated a "mini beer festival", starts on Thursday 4th June and finishes when all the beer runs out. (A list of the various beers which will be on offer appears in the advertisement elsewhere in this issue.)



One of those listed, Barnsley Bitter, is brewed at the Rockside Brewery, one of the many new small breweries (some fail, others succeed). If my memory and taste buds serve me right, this beer is similar in flavour to the once famous Barnsley Bitter. It is brewed in the same Yorkshire town and I believe this new small company caused some concern at John Smiths (who killed off the local

brew) over trade name rights. Smiths lost their case - if they were so concerned, they should not have got rid of the old Barnsley Bitter in the first place. The new Barnsley Bitter is distinctive and malty and has at least a 95% taste of the old Barnsley. Try it!

HIGH PRICES

Holts bitter at Yates's Grapes on Oldham Street/Great Ancoats Street, Manchester, has shot up to 80p a pint!

TIMPERLEY TRENDS

Both the Old Hall (Chesters traditional bitter) at Timperley Golf Course, Stockport Road, and the Gardeners Arms (Boddingtons mild and bitter), Deansgate Lane, Timperley, have recently reopened after refurbishment. The wishing well and bridge have thankfully gone from the Old Hall and it has been completely redecorated and refurnished without any silly gimmicks. The extension at the Gardeners has greatly increased the drinking area by creating a large, well-upholstered lounge. The "vault" has now moved across to the other side of the bar into what used to be the lounge, so there is now much more room for doms, cards and darts.

MOORHOUSE'S

BREWERS OF REAL ALE



PREMIER BITTER (O.G. 1036°)
Silver Medal Award Winner, Brewex 83



PENDLE WITCHES BREW (O.G. 1050°)
Believed Strongest Bitter Brewed in the North-West

Both delivered weekly direct from brewery to cellar. Contact Max Taylor to place your order.

Tel: BURNLEY (0282) 22864

BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

The Anchor Inn, Union Buildings, off Bradshawgate, Bolton, has reopened after rebuilding. Bass have done a good job in extending the building and incorporating the tiny lounge into the rest of the pub. The semi-circular bar has been replaced by a straight bar along one side and real ale has returned in the form of Bass 4X mild and draught Bass. It's well worth a visit.

* * * * *

Marstons Pedigree is back on sale in Bolton. Whitbread's Blue Boar on Deansgate is selling the beer alongside Boddingtons bitter (Castle Eden has gone). So the pub now sells two cask beers from outside the Whitbread empire, together with a range of keg Whitbread products.

* * * * *

Maxims on Bradshawgate is still awaiting its massive refurbishment. The pub was due to be gutted earlier this year, at an estimated cost of £400,000, and turned into a Victorian-style "Vaux free house" serving eight cask beers, four of which would be from outside the Vaux group.

Meanwhile the guest beer policy continues at Maxims, where the new Vaux bitter is now on sale. Recent attractions have included beers from Moorhouses, Oak, Mitchells, Malton and Butcombe, and forthcoming guest beers include Woods Parish Bitter from Shropshire and Strathalbyn Original from Glasgow. The beers are supplied through the Legendary Yorkshire Heroes wholesalers and the "guest beer" scheme has now been introduced in about twenty Camerons pubs in the North East.

Such a scheme brings a much greater choice to a town like Bolton, where about half the pubs are owned by either Tetleys or Greenalls, and where practically all "free houses" are tied to just one or possibly two brewers, with no chance of a guest beer from outside. The only exception to this appears to be the Brinsop Arms on Chorley Road (A6), Westhoughton. (Hydes dark mild and bitter recently joined the range here.)

WHAT'S DOING is edited by Neil Richardson, 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY. News, articles, letters, moans, etc, must arrive by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Send cheque/PO for £1.90, together with your name and address, to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester, for 6 issues. Cheques made out to "What's Doing".

BACK NUMBERS: 10p per copy. Send stamped, addressed envelope to Roger Hall, address above.

To Join CAMRA send £9 to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW.

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Enquiries to the editor, address above. Full page £25, $\frac{3}{4}$ page £20, $\frac{1}{2}$ page £15, $\frac{1}{4}$ page £7.50. Discount on bookings for 6 months or longer.

ASIAN CORNER EXTRA

TRAIN 9 DOWN - THE MADRAS MAIL

Duncan Roberts

Bombay Victoria Terminus, 2315hrs, and the barely perceptible smooth drag of the heavy train moving off marked the start of a journey that was to last some 31 hours. Whilst

we slept, the electric locomotive up front battled friction and gravity to get the train over the Western Ghats to Pune, where diesel traction took over.

There was a knock on the compartment door at 0700 and the steward took orders for breakfast. Flasks of hot coffee appeared shortly, at a minor station, then at Solapur breakfast proper arrived. This was remarkably European; an omelette sandwich with salt and ketchup. Only the slight sweetness of the bread and the odd onion and chilli lurking in the omelette gave the game away. On the platform men wielded frying pans amongst the piles of eggs to feed our train (some 17 coaches long and well loaded). Others tended deep-fat friers and sold samosas and onion bhajis. Our meal cost Rs 2/75 (say 2/9d, or 14p).

By mid-morning the steward returned and took orders for lunch. This meal was brought aboard at Wadi as I returned from the shower, following a drenching in blue dye associated with the Hindu celebration of Holi. (Pretty effective when your skin is as pale as mine!) The thali was excellent, comprising goodly portions of rice, dhal, beans, cabbage and many puris. Each dish was subtly and individually spiced; none was fiery. This full meal cost us Rs 5/25 each.

Tea, coffee and cold drinks could readily be purchased at almost every station we called at. Hot, sweet tea is remarkably refreshing in the dusty heat of a Deccan afternoon.

Gunkathal non-vegetarian Refreshment Room produced a good chicken biriani for our dinners. The dish was served, as is often the case in Britain, with a sauce of mixed vegetables. The meat was on the bone, as it is almost invariably served in India. A splendidly pungent lime pickle accompanied the meal. The price of Rs 10/-, very modest to a Briton, should not be compared too unfavourably with our lunchtime vegetarian



meal when it is remembered that the majority of Indians eat no meat at all.

In the Eastern Ghats diesel power handed over to electric traction once more. The passengers slept. Train 9 Down arrived at Madras Central at 0610, on schedule. Time for breakfast.

TOLL GATE OPENS FOR BANKS'S

The best news in Trafford for a long time was the opening on May 14th of Banks's Toll Gate on Seymour Grove, opposite Old Trafford Station. The traditional beers are Banks's mild (73p), bitter (77p) and Hansons Black Country Bitter (74p). Full lunches are available 12.00-2.00 Mondays to Saturdays, with rolls at other times, though manager Paddy Hannon is prepared to meet whatever demands customers might make. So if you work in the area, let your wishes be known.

Architecturally, the pub is interesting and imaginative, with an unusual collection of Victoriana and a focal point of a stage-coach and cart within what was originally designed to be a bell tower. The Toll Gate provides full access for the disabled and there are no silly rules about wearing denims or trainers.

WOODCOURT BECOMES BERNI INN

The Woodcourt Hotel, former home of the Kilvert (lard) family, on Brooklands Road, Brooklands, has reopened after several weeks of refurbishment and conversion. The bar area has been divided into two bars and the ceilings have been lowered so that the magnificent balcony is no longer visible. The upstairs section is now a Berni Inn.

In the early evening only one bar is open, with only one member of staff, who is equipped with wonderful new tills that do not have prices but only show names of drinks. On the day our inspector called the till ceased to function, meaning that no-one could be served. After several minutes a master key was obtained to open the till but, as it still would not function, all future sales had to be added up mentally (tricky when you don't know the prices) and, to ensure the stock was correct, every drink had to be written down, which slowed things down even more. Still, at 84p for Yorkshire Bitter and 82p for Wilsons bitter (the mild having gone keg), there wasn't too great a rush!

COULD BE WORSE

Regal Knight Hotels have applied for planning permission to convert the now-deserted Angel, Chapel Street, Salford, into an hotel.

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

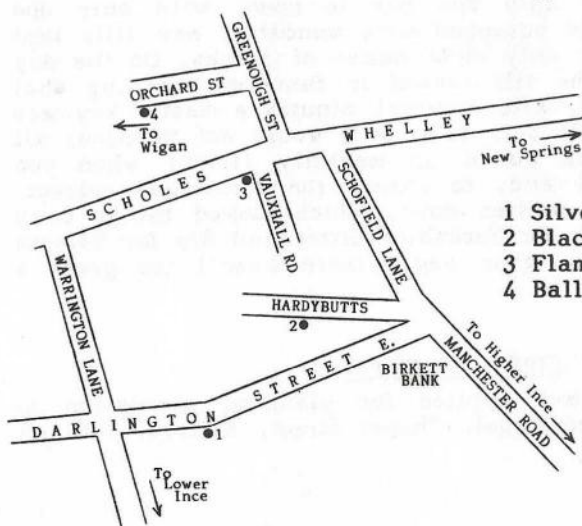
I'm fast becoming the most despised man in Wigan. My comments on Gem's free house last month didn't go down too well, and now there's a Hit Squad from Platt Bridge after my head. But write nice things about a pub, and one is accused of toadying. Can a hack win?

I hope that readers don't find this month's article too provocative. A couple of years ago I submitted an article to What's Doing about a Springfield Park Pub Crawl. There are several good pubs on this side of town to delight the football fan. The average rugby supporter, alas, isn't half so lucky; the Scholes/Whelley part of Wigan hasn't got too much going for it, pub-wise.

To begin with, there's the Foundry in Warrington Lane, a pub with the most confusing livery in town. This Whitbread house hasn't seen a lick of paint since the swap with Tetley in 1981, and the old Allied orange-and-white design can still be seen, if you peer through the graffiti. The old handpumps remain unused on the bar; Whitbread suggested a trial period on real ale six years ago. You can guess the rest.

A bit further up is the Silverwell Hotel, Darlington Street East, a Peter Walker house. This pub was a regular in the GBG at one time, but the ale is variable in quality nowadays. A better bet is the Black Bull, Hardybutts, perhaps the best pub in the area. The Black Bull sells Tetley mild and bitter on electric pumps and the atmosphere in the vault is unique.

The Crispin Arms at Birkett Bank used to sell prehistoric bottles of White Shield... but that was part of the pub's charm, as the Greenalls beers are keg. Recently, a new land-



- 1 Silverwell: Walker M,BB(H)
- 2 Black Bull: Tetley M,B(E)
- 3 Flamingo: GW M,B(E)
- 4 Ball & Boot: Tetley M,B(H)

lord took over and threw the bottles out. Too bad the draught beer didn't follow suit.

In Scholes proper, we have the Flamingo, a large estate pub selling very reliable Greenalls mild and bitter. Across the road, however, is the Balcarres Arms, and this Greenalls pub hasn't sold real ale for years.

Wend your way through the flats, avoiding the Waterwheel, a Tetley keg emporium. Soon you will arrive at the Ball & Boot, Orchard Street. As the name implies, the pub is near Central Park, and cask Tetley mild and bitter are on sale here. The Ball & Boot is one of the most uninspiring pubs anywhere in Wigan, though I daresay it gets packed on Sunday lunchtimes.

Whelley is drier than the Arizona Desert, with just two pubs - the Alexandra (GW) and the White Lion & Railway (Tetley), both selling fizzy beer. The one consolation prize is that the Whelley road takes you to New Springs, and all four pubs here sell traditional ale.

My advice to rigger fans, then, is that the Black Bull and the Flamingo are worth a visit. Otherwise, grab a beer in the town centre before the match.

* * * * *

Other news briefly now. The Ben Jonson, Warrington Road, Marus Bridge, went over to cask Tetleys just before Christmas. Now, faster than a man can say "Matthew Brown", the hand-pumps have been taken out and the push-button fizz is back in! Marus Bridge/Poolstock/Worsley Mesnes is another district with more than its share of keg pubs.

Still with Tetleys, the Oddfellows Arms, Manchester Road, Higher Ince, has been demolished. The pub had been closed for some time.

Ind Coope Burton Ale still seems to be holding its own in the General Elliot, Heath Lane, Croft, despite the presence of keg Tetley beers. However, ICBA has been withdrawn from the Turf & Feather, Locking Stumps, where again the other draught beers were all processed.

Lastly, rumours are abounding that the Whitesmiths Arms, Standishgate, Wigan, is to reopen in the foreseeable future. Let's hope so, as this Boddies pub was great in its heyday. Oh dear, there I go toadying again...

* * * * *

DEATH OF A HERO?

The Timperley branch of Legendary Lancashire Heroes appears to have closed. This branch was a franchise and had been struggling to achieve a decent turnover for some time. It is not known whether the shop will reopen.

To the Editor:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

LETTERS



BODDY BLUES

Sir - Having failed miserably in my takeover bid for the CAMRA BLO mantle, I went to see how Ewart succeeds at Boddington's 98th AGM. I decided against breakfast, knowing that I could expect a large lunch washed down with several pints of Boddingtons, Higsons or Oldham best bitters. After all, this was to be a select gathering. If, in the process, I could also obtain some inside information, then it would indeed be a profitable afternoon.

The Chairman's report included the following snippets:

- 1) Net profit for the group was £14.423 million, an increase of 27% over 1985, resulting mainly from Higsons takeover.
- 2) Boddingtons have acquired majority shareholdings for Thornham Construction Ltd and Village Leisure Hotels. The Chairman said that interest in the area of leisure would be expanding. Squash and sauna followed by Kaltenberg?
- 3) Pride was shown in the great success of Kaltenberg Braumeister being brewed at the Higsons plant, with a special emphasis on purity. With the kegging of Stella Artois at Oldham it would appear that more than a little loyalty to the traditional British pint has been lost.
- 4) Ralph Warwick retired as Head Brewer on May 1st, a position he had held since 1972.
- 5) Ogden Wade have taken over the Higsons wine and spirit business and are now controlled by Boddingtons.
- 6) Whynot Wine Warehouses experience some difficulties but with a new trendy outlet in Chester, business has picked up, and Boddingtons' objective is to expand the retailing of wines in pubs and clubs.

Following the speech and much mutual back slapping, we were at last let loose on the food and drink - two tubs of peanuts (less than the amount in Waddy's left pocket) and at least a thousand cans of Boddingtons bitter. (Needless to say, I retired to a local hostelry for my refreshment.)

A short question time was allowed. Someone asked if the purity of the lager was also passed on to the bitter or if any of the various additives were used, such as turnip tops. Ewart quickly replied that turnip tops were not used and that as Mr John Willie Lees was sitting in the front row, he could say no more.

Another valiant chap asked about the food (or lack of it), to be told that the shareholders were receiving more than peanuts, in the bank. He also hinted that at the centenary there may be more. Crisps as well, perhaps?

P A Wadsworth

NOTHING DOING

Sir - Whilst on a pub crawl in Manchester I and some fellow toppers wound up in the Marble Arch. One of the reasons that we always went here in the past was to buy "What's Doing" and any other local mags, such as "Beer lines". Upon enquiring after these, the barmaid told me that they didn't stock "rubbish like What's Doing and Beerlines any-more," and that it was all "propaganda". I then overheard her expounding upon this theory to another customer and in the course of the tirade the name Rupert Periwinkle came up.

Dear, dear. Has someone been goading the licensee by pointing out a shortcoming or two? Perhaps you should devote your mag to praising these saintly folk and overlook high prices, poor quality beer, insanitary conditions, etc. I see that I shall be forced to take out a subscription to your scurrilous rag, as it will soon be impossible to find it anywhere!

A Whitley, Leeds.

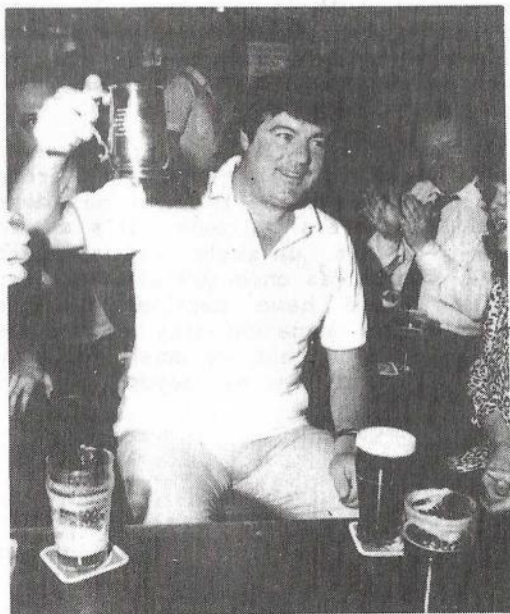
MOVING ON

Dave and Jo Glass left the Crown & Anchor, Hilton Street, Manchester, on 10th May. A Whitbread-appointed manager took over on the 11th.

During Dave's tenure trade at the pub had increased dramatically despite the fact that the place was for most of the time only partly decorated.

By way of a tribute, members of local CAMRA branches attended the pub on the evening of May 8th to witness Dave being presented with a suitably engraved tankard.

The trade has not heard the last of Dave and Jo. See future editions of WD for details.



MILD IN MANCHESTER

CAMRA North Manchester's survey of all the city centre pubs confirmed what many of us had feared for a long time - traditional mild is disappearing. In the area bounded by Deansgate, Whitworth Street, Store Street, Great Ancoats Street and Miller Street, there are 91 pubs. 21 of these pubs sell no mild at all and of the remainder less than half serve cask mild. Only 33 pubs serve the real stuff:

Bass - Town Hall, Unicorn

Burtonwood - New Union

Chesters - Abercrombie, Chesters, Crown & Anchor, Land o' Cakes, Seven Oaks

Greenalls - Nags Head

Holts - White House

Hydes - Grey Horse, Jolly Angler

Lees - Gullivers, John Willie Lees, Rembrandt

Robinsons - Castle

Tetleys - City Arms, Hare & Hounds, King, Smithfields, Square Albert, Wheatsheaf

Websters - Brannigans, Ducie Bridge, Imperial, Royal George

Wilsons - Britannia, Crown, Crown & Kettle, Millstone, Peveril of the Peak, Swan, Salisbury

To their credit, both Hydes and Lees sell real mild in all their city centre outlets, but another local brewer, Boddingtons, has not seen fit to introduce the brew into the tarted up and overpriced Cox's Bar (Grand Central Hotel). Lest the reader should imagine that Watneys are highly wonderful with a total of 11 pubs selling the real stuff, it should be pointed out that there are another 15 outlets on keg and two selling no mild at all.

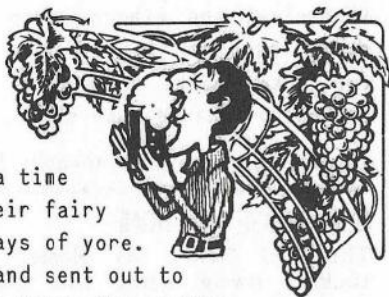


The only pub we can approve of selling no mild at all is the Circus Tavern, because (A) it never has done and (B) there's no room. It's a sad story that a uniquely British beer style which was once 40% of total beer sales should have declined to this extent. The situation may not be as

bad in the suburbs and satellite towns, but we must seriously doubt the ability of cask mild to survive at all beyond the end of the century.

Other contributors to this issue: Stewart Revell, Duncan Busman, Mick Rottenbury, Keith Egerton, Bill Collier.

RUPERT'S PAGE



It's fairy tale time again. Once upon a time all the elves were very sad because their fairy cakes were no longer as they were in days of yore. Most cakes were made in big factories and sent out to the shops who didn't make their own any more. One or two cake shops still made home-made fairy cakes and the elves went to these in droves. They formed a club - the Cake Retailers Appreciation Society - and drew up lists of cake shops that still produced real cakes all over the country.

As the years went by, CRAS grew in confidence if not in competence. The big confectioners sat up and took notice and even produced token pretend-real cakes from time to time. CRAS formed many branches and the elves busied themselves running cake exhibitions, producing newsletters and distributing cake shop guides. Trouble was, the elves in charge of the coffers kept disappearing and running off with fairies so nobody knew where all the money had gone.

Some CRAS groups took lots of newsletters and cake guides and didn't pay for them. Then they got fed up with the newsletter they hadn't paid for and started a new one which they didn't pay for either. Before they'd paid for one cake guide they sent out a new one and didn't pay for that as well.

The elves, who were once united in their cause, began to squabble and fall out amongst themselves. Elves in one branch of CRAS would criticise another branch of CRAS for the cake shops they'd chosen for the Cake Retailers Universal Directory. Lots and lots of CRAS elves used to go to Mrs Tiggywinkle's cake shop, which was famous throughout the length and breadth of the land, and they thought this was the finest cake shop ever to have been in the history of the world. They would spend so much time in Mrs Tiggywinkle's, chatting with Mrs Tiggywinkle and other like-minded discriminating elves, that they hadn't much time to go to other cake shops in the locality.

When the local elves who, to be fair, bought cakes from every shop in their forest, were bold enough to exclude Mrs Tiggywinkle's from CRUD, there was an uproar. Questions were asked in the elfin parliament and CRUD was likened unto a crummy sham for daring to omit this doyenne of cake shops. Some CRAS branches wanted to annexe Mrs Tiggywinkle's for

themselves and others wanted the naughty elves who'd done the foul deed banned for life from CRAS. Some people think that CRAS couldn't run a tea party in a cake factory, let alone look after the purse strings or choose cake shops.

It would be nice if everybody lived happily ever after, but they didn't.

NEW HOUSE AT HOME

The Old House at Home, a GBG pub tucked away amid the waste of what was ICI, Blackley, is to be refurbished by Hartley and Linda Downs, who have been tenants for the last fifteen years. The work will not involve any major structural alterations, apart from putting arches in the vault, between the darts area and the pool room. A new catering kitchen is to be installed, so that food will be available at all times, but most of the money will be spent on carpeting, upholstering and redecoration. A new fireplace is to be installed, so that the Old House will look more like the picture on the sign outside. Hartley and Linda know what their customers want and the renovation work will reflect this. At its peak, the Old House was turning over 17 barrels a week. The disappearance of some 7,000 jobs from ICI has reduced that considerably, but now that the pub has its own car park and with an improvement in comfort and facilities, we would hope that once again the Old House will become as busy and popular as ever.

HOLTS CHANGES

Holts' Morning Star at Wardley (between Swinton and Worsley) has become a managed house. Mr & Mrs Blackburn have retired after long service with Holts. (The Morning Star had been tenanted by Blackburns for over 100 years.) The new licensee is Patrick O'Connor from the Goats Gate, Whitefield. Holts are soon to start work on refurbishing the pub.

The Cart & Horses, Astley, is also to be modernised. The new tenant here is Peter O'Toole, formerly of the Hare & Hounds, Outwood.

Lovebirds put some froth on the beer

THE kissin' and cuddlin' CAMRA couple sneaked into a ladies' loo for a passionate clinch and ended up peeling off their clothes.

Their noisy love-making was overheard by a stewardess at the beer festival in Stockport.

She hammered on the cubicle and shouted at them to stop but in the end, security men were called in.

John Clarke, one of the organisers of the festival at the town's College of Technology, said: "Things did get a bit frothy. I suppose it proves real ale does refresh parts other beers don't reach..."

The couple, who have not been named, had such a good time that they went back for more the next night.

But this time, they were told to confine their affection to the beer.

THE PEOPLE, May 3

BUGS, BEER AND BIRYANI

Last month Environmental Health Officer Stewart Philbrock spoke to the North Manchester branch of CAMRA on health hazards encountered in pubs and eating places.

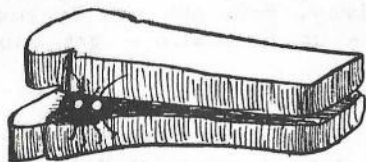
So what can you catch in your favourite amber nectar emporium? The answer is, most things - salmonella, polio, typhoid, you name it - if the beer and food isn't kept right.

Some pubs still don't have proper glass washing procedures. A cabinet-type washer is best, and the minimum requirement is two sinks - one for washing and one for rinsing/sterilizing. The use of Autovacs and returning beer to the barrel is OK - provided it is done properly and beer isn't left standing around in buckets.

In the cellar, mould is a big problem, caused by rising damp and condensation from coolers. All pubs should be "proofed" against rats and mice, but infestations of these and also cockroaches regularly occur in Manchester. (The brown rat is more often found in Manchester, rather than the smaller, scruffier, black rat, which seems to prefer Liverpool.)

Another hazard which occasionally occurs in the city's pub cellars is flooding. After heavy rain the sewers can back up, resulting in raw sewage flooding around the stillages.

There are regular prosecutions brought under the Food Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act. A Manchester pub was recently fined £4,500 and another prosecution is imminent. We were shown photographs of the cellar of a Manchester free house which revealed some pretty vile habits!



Food preparation and serving is, of course, the biggest killer. Those bar-top pie warmers can be excellent bug incubators. Microwaving your pie will kill the bugs, but that doesn't get rid of the toxins which some bugs produce (spiteful little sods).

Beware the chicken! Most of these unfortunates are bred in broiler sheds and if one has salmonella, they all get it. Freezing just puts the bugs in suspended animation, so correct cooking procedures are essential. "Something from the sweet trolley, sir?" Forget it. Bugs breed very well in that custard, kept at a cosy 25°C - their numbers doubling every twenty minutes!

Fancy a curry? Chinese? Turkish? Some of those shops are Butlins for bugs. The method of preparation and serving of doner kebabs in particular can be very suspect. And don't think that by going vegetarian you will avoid the worst - there's always good old bacillus cereus in the rice. This can survive cooking, like botulism, and when the rice is left, sometimes overnight, and then fried up the following day, cereus will have multiplied. If well dosed, cereus will have you throwing up within a couple of hours; salmonella gets you after 24 hours and other forms of food poisoning can take effect after three days.

So what is relatively safe to eat when one is feeling peckish after a night on the Drabs? Hot fat kills bugs, so the humble chip shop is the safest bet.

IRLAM NEWS

Thumbs up to Chesters for introducing handpumped Chesters bitter to complement the mild at the Nags Head. The Trophy is still keg. It's a bit of a thumbs down on the new design of the Nag, however. There is now an extremely large, plush lounge (replacing the "house of horrors" theme) and a small "vault spot" replaces the separate vault.

As vault regulars crowded into their little corner on opening night, certain comments such as "pathetic" and "disgraceful" could be heard.

Now that Chesters have introduced real ale at the George and the Nags Head, eight out of eleven Irlam and Cadishead pubs are on real ale - three Boddingtons, two Tetley, two Chesters and one Pennine Joke.

Pennine Joke are exhibiting somewhat schizoid behaviour. They've introduced real ale at the Tiger Moth and kicked it out of Sports. Apart from Sports, the other two pubs on keg beer are the Ship and the Cadishead Railway. Both are run by that well known Warrington brewery. Come on Greenalls - get your fingers out!

PLANNING NEWS

Bass plan to extend their all-keg Temple on Cheetham Hill Road into adjacent derelict property and to refurbish the pub. Let's hope that the new pub sells real ale and that Bass spare us the astronomic prices which followed the doing-up of the Town Hall Tavern in Manchester.

Bass also propose to convert numbers 2-10 St Mary's Street, Deansgate, into a public house, whilst Whitbread have in mind a shop at 137 Stamford Street, Ashton under Lyne, for transformation into a pub.

SALISBURY HOTEL

60 Mumps

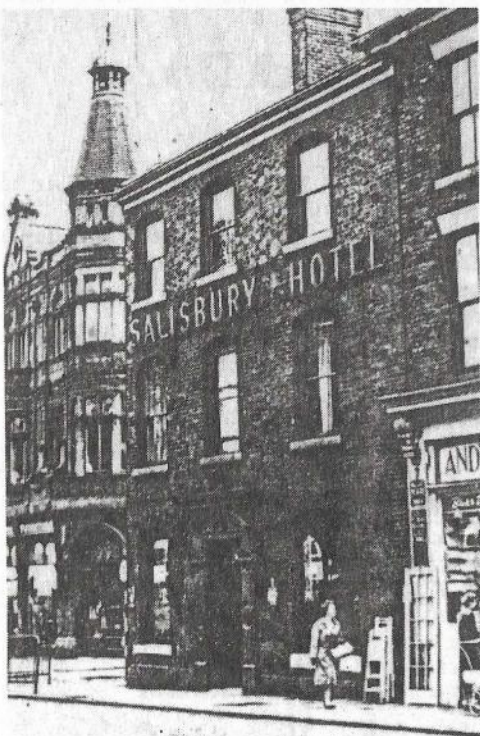
In 1861, when the railway was being extended from Mumps Station to Rochdale via Royton, William Hilton decided to move from the New Inn, Greenacres Road, which he had kept for eight years, to the Railway Hotel, 2 Victoria Street. This was a custom-built beerhouse and Mr Hilton applied to the licensing magistrates for a full licence. He argued that the premises were rated at £30; there were seven drinking rooms, five bedrooms and stabling for two horses. The magistrates were not impressed, and they accused him of selling "horse tickets" at the New Inn.

Undeterred, Mr Hilton applied again the following year and this time was successful in obtaining his full licence. He renamed his pub the "Railway & Commercial Inn"; the address at this time was 60 Mumps. Hilton was succeeded by John Chadwick in 1862, and John Stopford from around 1868 until his death in 1871. Abraham Whitehead took over from Ann Stopford in 1880.

In 1900 Mr Whitehead was followed by Nanny Houlgrave, who renamed the pub the Salisbury Hôtel. The new name may have been in honour of the Prime Minister of the day, although I remember one side of the entrance passage having a tiled mural depicting Stonehenge. The owner of the pub in 1885 was William Roberts of the Crown Brewery, Greenheys, Manchester. (Later Hardy's Crown Brewery.) The Salisbury was latterly a Robinsons house.

The Salisbury Hotel apparently came to a dramatic end, when landlord John Carrie (1964-67) walked out, declaring his customers were barbarians. In three months he had seen seven fights, two broken windows and two stabbings!

So the doors closed for good on 14th January 1967 and the licence was put in suspension. Later, local residents were



frightened by what they thought was a ghost which was haunting the former pub. This turned out to be a woman squatter! The building was demolished shortly afterwards to make way for the Oldham By-pass.



Branch Diary

BOLTON

Sat 30 May. Trip to Vintage Car and Steam Traction Rally at Hark to Bounty, Slaidburn, near Clitheroe.

Sun 7 June. Social, 12 noon Bridge Inn, Wigan Rd, Westhoughton: 1.00pm Hart Common (Theakstons)

Tues 9 June 8.30pm Branch Meeting, Maxims (Vaux & guest), Bradshawgate, Bolton

Wed 17 June Joint Social with East Lancs branch. Strawberry Duck, Entwistle. 1925 train from Bolton; 2236 return train from Entwistle.

Sun 21 June, 12 noon. Social, Brinsop Arms, Westhoughton
Contact Dave Fleming, Farnworth 75111 x207 (w)
Bolton 389918 (h)

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thurs 4th June, 8pm. Committee Meeting, King William IV, Manchester Road, Partington

Sat 13th June. Tyldesley Crawl. Miners Arms, Astley, 12.00 noon

Thurs 18 June 8pm Branch Meeting. Details from Branch Contact

Thurs 2 July 8pm. Committee Meeting. Details from Branch Contact.

Contact: David Shelton, 061 795 2113 (h) 061 224 7341 x27 (w)

NORTH MANCHESTER

Weds 3 June. Blackley/Moston/Harpurhey. Top Derby, Rochdale Road, 7pm and 8.30pm

Weds 10 June. Trip to Mitchells Brewery.

Wed 17 June White Swan, Swinton, 8pm

Wed 24 June. Traditional Pub Award and Social. Cross Keys, Jersey Street, Ancoats

Weds 1 July. Kersal, 8pm

Sat 4 July Independent Brewers' Crawl.

Wed 8 July. Tyldesley Crawl. Gatehouse, 7pm. Union 8pm

Wed 15 July. Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford 8pm

Wed 22 July. Lager survey of Irlam. Nags Head 7pm. Railway 8.30pm

Contact Roger Hall 740 7937

WIGAN

Wed 10 June, 8.30pm. Branch Meeting, Walmesley Arms, Warrington Road, Lower Ince.

Wed 17 June 8.30pm. Beer Festival Meeting, Swan & Railway, Wallgate, Wigan

Contact Dave White Wigan 37389 (h): Warrington 826515 x306 (w)
