

# WHAT'S DOING

AUG  
1987



THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE



## HONEY QUEENS

The Queens Arms, which was once a traditional Tetley pub, was closed for a considerable time before reopening briefly as a keg S&N house. At the end of July it reopened once again as a traditional public house. Dave and Jo Glass are the licensees and Theakstons the beers. Dave intends to serve the full range of Theakstons beers on handpump; best bitter, XB and Old Peculier, as well as Matthew Brown mild. The pub is on Honey Street, Red Bank, about 200 yards from the Derby Brewery Arms and half a mile from Victoria.

The curries and chillis for which the Crown & Anchor was renowned are available at lunchtime and the Queens also boasts a beer garden. What could be more pleasant on a balmy summer's afternoon than to sit in the garden, eating a vindaloo, supping half a dozen pints of Old Peculier and gazing across Collyhurst railway sidings and the vista of the Irk Valley to Gould Street Gasworks and the Marble Arch? What's Doing welcomes a new free house near the city centre. It's particularly pleasing that Theakstons beers are being sold and we wish the Glasses well in their new venture.



## THE END OF BRITISH BEER?

**LAGER.** That's the subject of this month's Big Seven Campaign. CAMRA has long recognised the threat of lager but has had little success in stemming its inexorable progress. In 1960 lager was 1% of total beer sales; it now commands 43% of the market. CAMRA has certainly been successful in ensuring the wider availability of real ale, but in doing so it may well have assisted the Big Seven to create two premium products (ones with big profits) - Lager and Real Ale.

Some of the old arguments about lager are no longer valid. Lagers are increasingly more likely to be authentic rather than ersatz, using traditional processes and ingredients, but they still offer poor value for money compared with traditional British beers. Lagers from local

independents are better value for money than those from the Big Seven and it's from the Big Seven that the biggest threat will come. Although lager averages 43% of beer sales, there are vast differences between brewers. Bass is already through the 50% mark and the rest of the Big Seven are not far behind. Local brewers, in contrast, have lager sales nearer 25% than 50%.



In the last few years foreign brewers have turned their attentions to this country. I'm not referring to the importation of Continental beers but to the activities of Elders, Anheuser

Busch and others. Elders IXL have already taken over Courage and the concentration of brewing in a few hands makes other groups liable for takeover in the near future. Fosters and Castlemaine XXXX have made inroads, although their market shares are only 4.5% and 3.1% respectively of lager sales. Budweiser has begun to sell on a national scale and it can only be a matter of time before other major groups like Kirin of Japan (the world's second largest brewer) move in on the market. It's a sobering thought that Anheuser Busch is six times the size of Bass.

The threat of lager is certainly serious and should not be underestimated. Our traditional British beer is under siege and the prospect of five or six brands dominating the entire market is not unthinkable. It is not mere xenophobia to fight against the growth of lager sales; the expansion of choice is one of CAMRA's avowed aims. In the long term, however, the growth of sales on the back of high advertising spends to an indiscriminating public will lead to a

diminution of choice as more and more breweries are swallowed up and closed down.

What, then, can be done to promote traditional beer and prevent the further growth of lager...

1 An emphasis on the quality of real ale. The food lobby is now extremely powerful. The launch of the 1987 Beer Guide, with its emphasis on adjuncts and additives, got up the brewers' noses more than anything that CAMRA's done for ages. Lagers brewed in this country are rarely "lagered" for any appreciable time and are usually pasteurised and highly carbonated. Real ale is a natural, living, wholefood drink.

2 Lobby for a ban on media advertising of alcohol. Lager gets the lion's share of advertising - 70% of the total spend. The brewers have been allowed to get away with selling a low cost product at a high price because of the trendy Jack-the-lad advertising which has allowed manipulation of the market. Lager is portrayed as young, slim, new, exciting; beer as old, fat, traditional, boring - Is there any reason why beer should not be "unspoilt by progress", mature, wholesome, sophisticated?

3 Promote local brewers who may have jumped on the lager bandwagon but still, nevertheless, are proud of their own traditional brews. Competition may help to prevent the takeovers and mergers which have resulted in places like Canada, where a mere handful of brewers control the entire market and can determine what is sold and drunk nationwide.

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### CASTLE & FALCON

The licensee of the Castle & Falcon, Bradshaw Street, Manchester, wishes it to be made clear that the comments about Burtonwood Brewery in the July issue were not his. It is regretted if the article made it appear otherwise.

### NEW YEAST?

Our unsubstantiated rumour department reports that Holts have changed their yeast. Can't say we've noticed.

### THE SALFORD SCENE

The Jollies on Oldfield Road (Lees) has reopened under a new tenant after being closed for several weeks. On Regent Road, the beautifully tiled Bridge has finally been demolished. Dorbieres, who also run the Brahms & Liszt in Manchester, are hoping to open the upmarket Kings Arms (opposite Bloom Street doss house) during August.



# CITY DESK

Peter O'Grady



Jennings, the Cumbrian brewers, are planning a major promotion of their bitter in the few remaining outlets in Manchester. Preview promotions have taken place in the CITY ARMS, Kennedy Street, and the WHEATSHEAF, Oak Street in the city centre. The latter of these took place on July 23rd and involved pints at 50p and prizes of T-shirts and commemorative glasses for correct answers to a quiz with a Lakeland theme. I hope the promotional efforts succeed, as it would be a great shame to lose this distinctive beer from our area.

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On good authority, I learn that the Crown on Booth Street is to reopen as the CROWN CONTINENTAL after the complete refurbishment. Despite the brewery's proud (and laudable) boast in its 1986 Company Review - "Company philosophy: To provide a high standard of product and service to our customers AT FAIR PRICES" - I confidently expect Town Hall Tavern - type rip-off prices and would be pleasantly surprised to find Draught Bass, Stones, etc, on handpumps upon reopening.

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The SPORTSMANS BAR, Market Street, has been closed for a few days for much needed decoration. John Willie Lees' latest acquisition is a forerunner of "all afternoon" opening - with meals.

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## BEER FESTIVAL

Saturday 15th August will see the Tenth Beer Festival at Newton-le-Willows Town Show. The beer tent, at Selwyn Jones Lower School, Crow Lane, Newton, will be open 11.30am to 6.00pm. There will be eleven different beers (including Wood, Titanic, Butcombe, Golden Hill, Landlord, Pendle Witch and Moonraker) and also cider and perry.

Other attractions include a Half Marathon (just the thing to work up a thirst), a Carnival, a Horse Show and all the fun of the fair.

The School is on the 39 bus route or can be reached by train to Newton or Earlestown stations.

## HANDPUMPS

The Carters Arms, Northenden Road, Sale Moor, has recently had hand-pumps installed to dispense the Marstons Pedigree, Burton Bitter and Mercian Mild.



# TAKEOVERS

## BROLLY BLOW FOR BRODIAN

Welsh brewers Buckleys, with the help of Whitbread's 27.6% holding, has successfully fought off a takeover bid from Brodian.

Brodian is a nominee company representing private interests of Messrs Cramer & Clowes, who themselves are Chief Executive and Chairman of James Ferguson, the financial services group. Entrepreneur Tony Cole had built up a 27% stake in Buckleys and after his demand for a seat on the Board was refused, he sold his holding to Brodian.

The successful defence of Buckleys' independence is another victory for the Whitbread "umbrella". This was set up in the late 1950s and has preserved the independence of Boddingtons, Devenish, Marstons and, most recently, Matthew Brown.

After his defeat, Mr Cramer said he could not understand the Board's refusal to accept his cash offer of £1.75 per share (considered in the City to be unbelievably generous). He gave an undertaking that he would not close the brewery or shed any jobs for at least two years. (Where have we heard that before?)



\* \* \* \* \*

All dedicated Drabs fans who panicked on reading of a successful takeover bid for Holts can now relax. The Holts in question is the car care specialist whose brands include Turtle Wax. (I always knew Holts reminded me of something!)

Paul Roberts

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## BODDINGTONS NEWS

Prices have recently gone up in two Boddies managed houses - 2p on the bitter, 4p on the mild! The pubs in question are the Henry Boddington and the Bridgewater in Worsley, which just happen to be two of their highest turnover pubs. Can this just be a coincidence, or do Boddies need some quick cash? Shurely we should be told!

## NEW DISEASE IN ECCLES

The former Swinging Sporrán now rejoices in the name of Addisons, which our dictionary says is a disease characterised by progressive anaemia and brown discoloration of the skin. How imaginative to name disastrous pubs after diseases. What next? AIDS Tavern? The Non Specific Urethritis and Scoutmasters Arms? Pox's? The Claphouse? Should make a change.

*Beer Drinkers' Paradise*

# *The Drop Inn*

*Monton's premier Free House  
now sells*

**LOCAL BEER,  
BREWED FOR LOCAL TASTE**

**69p  
pint**



**69p  
pint**

*A hand-pulled, full-flavoured Bitter, OG 1036  
brewed locally for the Drop Inn*

*Other hand-pulled beers:*

**HOLTS MILD, HOLTS BITTER 63p pint  
BODDINGTONS 69p pint**

*4 Lagers, Murphy's Irish Stout, Guinness, Cider*

**LUNCH TIME BAR SNACKS**



# WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

The Orwell, Wallgate, Wigan, is becoming a surprisingly good place for a beer or two. Handpumped Ind Coope Burton Ale joins the Tetley bitter and Jennings bitter already on sale. Burton Ale has been tried in recent years at the Raven and the Charles Dickens Hotel, but failed to click in the town centre. Let's hope the Orwell has better luck.

Still with Burton Ale, this sweetish brew is on sale for 93p a pint at the Bulls Head, Southworth Street, Newton-le-Willows. This has got to be the most expensive pint in Wigan Metro. Tetley bitter sells for 80p a pint, which is still too high.

In Ince, the Manley Hotel, Ince Green Lane, is now selling keg Vaux products. However, there is a chance of real ale in the future. Vaux, like Higsons, only have a few pubs in this district, all on keg beer, so the real stuff is something to look forward to. Bass bought and sold the Manley Hotel in a short space of time.

North Manchester news now. (Only joking, Ray!) As forecast in this column (Nov 1986), the Manor Arms, Wigan Road, Hindsford, near Tyldesley, is now selling traditional Peter Walker beers. The Manor had been on keg Tetleys since 1979, the year that it made it into the Good Beer Guide.

Flanagans, formerly the Golden Ball, on Wigan Road, Bryn, has reverted to its old name. Apart from the plastic plants being chucked out, the pub hasn't changed much at all. Handpumped Greenalls bitter is still available. Mild is keg.

Another Greenalls mild loss is the Montrose, Montrose Avenue, Marsh Green. Cask bitter (E) remains.

A couple of points from the July Leigh survey... The Three Crowns, Chapel Street (Boddingtons), has gone over to handpumps. Further down the road, the Standard Mower has gone back to selling Bass Special Bitter, as quality problems were experienced with the cask Stones. Traditional 4X mild is also available. The Eagle & Child, Railway Road, is selling draught Bass and Stones bitter for the first time in donkeys' years.

Burtonwood are planning to do things with the Halfway House, a rather run-down pub on Ormskirk Road, Pemberton. The "House" could certainly do with a brush-up of some sort. Will cask ale remain?

A new pub has opened up in Birchwood, near Warrington. The Poacher, Gorse Covert, is reportedly selling handpumped Tetley mild and bitter

(I haven't been in yet). The Poacher opened on 14th July and should provide some healthy competition in an area awash with keg beer pubs.

Finally this month, a quick plug for Gem's Free House, Wigan town centre's newest pub and only Holts outlet. Did you know that Holts bitter is stronger than Boddingtons? Or that it is 3p cheaper (74p to 77p)? Then TRY IT, for God's sake, before it disappears for ever!

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### HOLLINWOOD LOSSES

A recent tour around the doomed pubs of Hollinwood (courtesy M66) revealed that two pubs previously selling cask beers are now keg only. The licensees of the Hat & Feathers (Marstons) and the Filho (Wilsons), whose pubs stand in the way of "progress", have jumped the gun by a couple of years and destroyed their beers. That's progress?

### CROWN & ANCHOR

Malcolm and Esther Bennett are the new managers of the Crown & Anchor, Hilton Street, Manchester. The Crown is their first pub. Taylors Landlord and Porter and Chesters mild and bitter are currently available. Castle Eden may appear in the near future.

# MOORHOUSE'S

## BREWERS OF REAL ALE



**PREMIER  
DRAUGHT BITTER**

*The Prize-Winning Pint!*

**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



To the Editor:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27

# LETTERS



## TRIPE STRIPES (2)

Sir - Mr Boggs may only just have spotted the similarity (WD July), but I've been using "Opening Times" for some time. Since, in fact, a "What's Doing" staple caused an embarrassing injury. I find "Opening Times" excellent in view of the fact that it's free, but must admit that the Andrex 4-pack is a better read.

R Swiper

## BRANCH BOTHER

Sir - In "Takeover Bid Fails" (WD July) you state that the Macclesfield branch have blocked distribution of What's Doing in Knutsford. This is certainly not so. At no time during the inter-branch meeting was distribution of WD discussed. We are perfectly happy for Trafford & Hulme branch to distribute WD in Knutsford, Macclesfield or anywhere else for that matter. I would suggest that Trafford & Hulme's interest in the area is partly due to the fact that a couple of their people live in Knutsford. If the branch have no decent pubs worth drinking in or campaigning for in their own area, then we have absolutely no objection to them drinking and campaigning in ours.

Paul Wreglesworth, Macclesfield Branch

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## LACK OF PEDIGREE

Chesters Pie and Ale House, Cateaton Street, Manchester, one of Whitbread's more successful conversions, has chucked out Marston's premium beer in favour of their own Castle Eden. Meanwhile the Crown & Anchor, which lost Dave Glass a couple of months ago, has been promoting Castle Eden at 50p a pint. The Crown & Anchor is also being transformed into a pub once again.

## PENDLEBURY GAIN

The former Jennings handpump at the Britannia is now being used to dispense cask Tetley bitter.

## BASS IN BOLTON

With a change of licensee a month or two ago (Eddie, formerly of Winstons), Churchills on Manchester Road is once again selling draught Bass. The handpumped 4X mild is also back alongside the Boddies bitter and cask Stones may well replace the fizzy stuff soon. All the traditional beers are well looked after and the pub is worth a try.

### ALL CHANGE IN POSHLEY

Malcolm and Carol Cormack have left the Axe & Cleaver at Dunham for a rest; we hope to see them return as tenants in the future and wish them well. In the meantime, new landlord Mike Farrou, previously of the Roundhouse at Stockport, is continuing the good work by maintaining the present choice and quality of five cask beers. However, the future of mild is in danger if sales drop below the present level of only 1 kil per week.

Ye Olde No.3, on the main A6 to Lymm, has reopened after refurbishment. This comfortable old canal-side pub (reputedly haunted!) has at last gained traditional ale in the form of John Smiths bitter. Just round the corner at the Swan with Two Nicks, Little Bollington, at the back of Dunham Park, cask Trophy has been replaced by Castle Eden after a long spell of disappointing sales. Cask Chesters mild and bitter are still available.

Rumour has it that the Griffin at Bowdon, the well known poseurs palace for the Cheshire set, will soon have a new licensee. Whoever takes on this pub will be getting a gold mine - wet stock sales have a potential of up to £500,000 a year and food sales could bring in a further £250,000. With those figures, the Griffin is a managed house, of course.

### THE LONGEST HOUR

Rico's Bar, under Amigo's Restaurant on Deansgate, Manchester, is still selling Websters Choice at 66p a pint in the longest "Happy Hour" in Manchester - all the time! Not surprisingly, at that price turnover is high and the ale is normally in fine condition. Lunchtime is particularly good value, with low priced Mexican meals available as well.

### NICE DROP

A new beer appeared in Monton last month. The Drop Inn, an enterprising free house on Monton Road, now features its own "Drop Inn Bitter", brewed locally to a gravity of 1036.

The hand-pulled beer sells at 69p, the same price as the Boddingtons bitter, and in the opinion of at least one customer, is better value. It has slightly more body and hop bitterness, yet retains a clean palate.

Whether it will cause Holts drinkers (63p) to defect is a different matter. Landlord John Edington will not reveal who is brewing for him; it is a "trade secret". However, WD has installed an observer with binoculars in one of the premises opposite to monitor his deliveries.



## JEWEL IN THE CROWN

Oldham Brewery's recent sale of part of its tied estate has given the town a new beer. The Crown, Huddersfield Road, a former GBG entry, is now a free house backed mainly by Tetley. In addition to Tetley mild and bitter, a third handpump dispenses Clarks traditional bitter from Wakefield. The beer was unfortunately not available at the time of our inspector's visit but should be by the time you read this.

## BEST PINT IN BRITAIN

This was the title of an article in the News of the World in June. Whilst we may doubt the credentials of the tasting panel (massive knockers and a part in a soap opera), the conclusions were nonetheless illuminating. The winner was Tanglefoot from Dorset with Thwaites second. The Big Seven didn't really get a look in and the results bear out CAMRA's claim that the local independents offer better value than the giants.

<b>NORTH WEST</b>			
Holt's Bitter	Griffin Hotel, Stockport	63	Full flavour, frothy. Highly recommended
Timothy Taylor's Landford	Crown and Anchor, Manchester	81	Strong, distinctive, possibly acquired taste
Hyde's Anvil	Jolly Angler, Manchester	72	Malty, very refreshing
Higson's Bitter	Elephant, Walton, Liverpool	74	Full-bodied, cool head
Greenall Whitley Bitter	Heath Hotel, Allerton, Liverpool	78	Clean, sharp
Thwaites' Best	Bonny Inn, Blackburn	75	Excellent, tangy, good head
Whitbread Bitter	Red Pump, Clitheroe	78	Average flavour
Moorhouses Bitter	Inn at Whitwell, Pendle, Lancs	86	Good pint
Hartley's Best	Hops & Anchor, Ulverston, Cumbria	78	Splendid
Thakston's	Howard Arms, Carlisle	74	Sweetish, pleasant, clear

### **CHEAPEST**

HOLT'S of Manchester came out the winner at 63p. It has an original gravity of 10.39 and the brewery proudly boasts: "We keep the price down because our transport and admin costs are low."



### **DEAREST**

THE dearest was also the best—Tanglefoot at The Jolly Farmer, Worplesdon, Surrey. At £1.30 a pint it was way above average. In general Ruddies County was the dearest at up to £1.26p a pint.



### **BEST VALUE**

BANKS'S Bitter from the Wolverhampton and Dudley Brewery is tops. Our tasters noted: "Excellent—and a bargain at 69p." In the Red Lion, Machynlleth, Mid-Wales, it still rated value at 77p a pint.



### **NORTHERN CHAMP**

THWAITES'S of Blackburn, Lancs, was the top Northern tipple, at prices ranging from 75p. Said taster Peter Dean of EastEnders: "A good lunchtime drink. You could have a few and be OK."



### **SOUTHERN CHAMP**

TANGLEFOOT from Blandford, Dorset, was the winner. Varying in price from 108p, it took the Cask-Conditioned Championship Trophy at the brewing industry awards in Burton-upon-Trent earlier this month.



## NO MILD

The Unicorn on Church Street, central Manchester, is undergoing what we hope will be a tasteful refurbishment. Dark mild, which has not been selling well recently, has been discontinued.

## CHOICE MATTERS

CAMRA members will be pleased to learn that Websters Choice will soon be on sale at the Crown & Kettle, Great Ancoats Street.

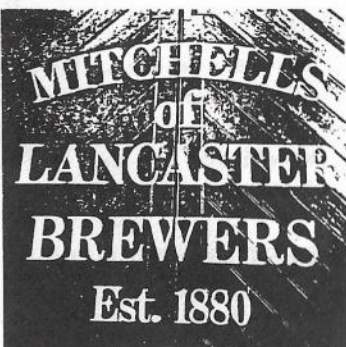
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Other contributors to this issue: Duncan Busman, Steve Lawton, Stewart Revell, Paul Roberts, Mike Goode, Pete Cash, Keith Egerton, Mick Rottenbury, Brian Gleave

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## MITCHELLS BREWERY TRIP

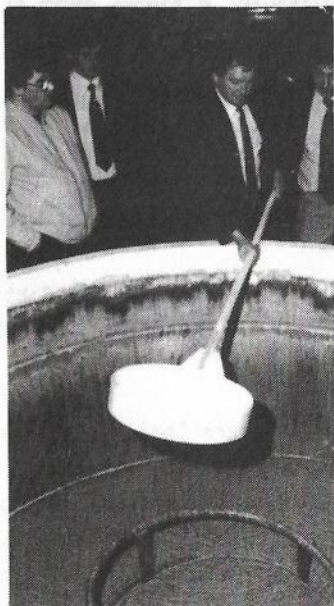
The Mitchell family have been brewing beer in historic Lancaster for over a century, and about two years ago (after the demise of Yates & Jackson, the only other local brewer) they bought the Y&J brewery from its new owners, Thwaites. It was this brewery that CAMRA North Manchester visited on 10th June.



On arrival we were welcomed by the deputy foreman, who gave us a comprehensive talk about the Mitchell family and their achievements relating to their tied estate, which presently stands at 50 public houses stretching from the Fylde coast in the south to Cumbria in the north.

Mitchells Brewery is a fine example of traditional methods and machinery. The old stone building houses an old belt-driven grist mill and (a rarity these days) a large, flat, open-topped wort cooler and open wort refrigerator to aerate the wort and produce a vigorous fermentation. The all-too-common computer control panel is absent here and the beer is very definitely hand reared.

Mitchells use best quality English malt with a small quantity of wheat in their mash, which is boiled with a little sugar and whole English hops and then fermented out with their own strain of yeast. Water comes from their own well. The beer is racked mainly into traditional oak casks.



After the tour, we were taken to the nearest Mitchells hostelry for "one on the house". Mitchells produce three cask conditioned beers - average strength mild and bitter and a powerful ESB, all of which were considered smooth and well balanced. Mitchells is a stoically independent family business and long may it remain so!

Kieran Hall

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The former Regional Organiser collects his carry-out



# NOW & THEN

No.19

by Rob Magee

## OLD GREY MARE

331 Oldham Road, Royton

The pub now known as the Old Grey Mare began life around 1820 as the Dog & Partridge (also recorded as the Dog & Grouse), with John Butterworth as licensee. At times



during the nineteenth century the pub and its landlords appear to have had problems! In 1836 someone made off with the entire stock of spirits and in the following year the landlords of the Bulls Head, Sandy Lane, the Coach & Horses, Edge Lane, and the Unicorn & Park Inn (later Railway Hotel), were summonsed for harassing and ill-treating John Butterworth. Apparently they had taken exception to John's refusal to contribute towards a "footing".

In 1859, when William Fielding was in charge, a trickster was caught passing "base coin" at the pub. In the next year, soon after the name was changed to the Grey Mare, a man was found dead in the gutter outside. He had been drinking heavily at the Engine pub at Dry Clough and was on his way to the Grey Mare when he expired. As was the custom in those days, the body was taken into the Grey Mare's cellar to await identification. Despite this cautionary incident, William Fielding was later fined for serving after time.

George Richards was next and his weakness was gambling. His second court appearance was reported in full in the local press. George was playing cards for 6d when a man dressed like a tramp, with a face blackened with grime, stepped forward and introduced himself as a policeman. George told him to go away, but the tramp pulled out a pair of handcuffs and said, "My name is PC Twiss." George offered him 2/6d to go away, but PC Twiss was an honest man. A police inspector explained to the magistrates that gambling had been going on for some time at the Grey Mare and the only way to catch them at it was to disguise PC Twiss as "a mechanic". As George was fined 10/-, he glared across the courtroom at PC Twiss and muttered, "He favoured a tramp!"

In 1890 the police described the Old Grey Mare as "dilapidated, dirty and not fit for travellers". Nevertheless, the same report stated that

the pub offered three bedrooms, stabling and catering for up to ten people!

Fletcher & Travis's brewery bought the Old Grey Mare in the 1890s, only to sell it a few years later to Oldham Brewery. The pub was extended into an adjoining cottage in 1966 and earlier this year it had a major refurbishment. Today the pub is a very different place from the one besieged by John Butterworth's harassing neighbours!

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### SOUTHERN COMFORT?

The Southern Hotel, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, is due for Boddification. The plans include the conversion of the Smoke Room into new, improved conveniences. The large glass tank containing terrapins has already been removed and the terrapins evicted (sad). On weekdays the Smoke Room was normally closed, although private groups could make use of it. These groups have now been told to find other premises from the end of August, when the alterations begin. No doubt the beer prices will increase on completion.

Boddies prices at the Stamford, Altrincham, increased by about 12% after alterations.

### JOHN SMITHS

John Smiths has disappeared from the Prince of Wales on Oldfield Road, Salford, but it's emerged in the most unlikely place. The Novotel in Worsley, where you'd expect draught Beaujolais, has a lone handpump on the sumptuous bar. Mind you, it's 95p a pint, so you're probably better off going to the Bridgewater, assuming you're appropriately attired, of course.

*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.

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## BOOZING IN BELGIUM

(or FLOUNDERING AROUND FLANDERS)

Paul Roberts

Many people think of Belgium as a flat, boring obstacle between the Channel and the Fatherland. Passing through by train or motorway, the sight of an odd Stella or Jupiler logo does nothing to change that impression. However, a look into the average pub gives a much different picture.

Belgium boasts more beer styles than any other European country and many are available in the average Belgian bar or cafe. On entering a typical bar, the first sight will probably be the familiar Euro-fonts dispensing amber liquids such as Stella, Kronenbourg or Jupiler. These are true lagers and can be quite drinkable as thirst quenchers. A look at the beer menu offers a far greater choice and I'll now try to describe some of the varieties on offer.

WITBIER A "white" beer like a German Weiss or Weizenbier, made with a large wheat content and usually served with a slice of lemon. Can quite often be hazy, like a German Hefeweizen, caused by the lack of filtration. Most common brand is Dentergems.

LAMBIC or GEUZE A blond-amber beer, usually clear of yeast, with a sweet-sour taste and a pronounced bitter aftertaste. Many producers, including Belle Vue, Boon & Mort Subite.

KRIEK As the name implies, a cherry beer. Has the colour of a claret and is a very refreshing drink. Kriek Lambic is a cherry version of the Geuze, a true sweet/sour beer.

RODENBACH Refers usually to the more famous product of Alexander Rodenbach. A fruity beer ripened in oak casks to give it its unique taste. At first taste it is a bit like a mild which is a month past its peak! Acquire the taste and you've found a pleasant drink, quite weak by Belgian standards (only 5% alcohol) and available in almost every bar.

TRAPPIST This covers a very wide range of beers produced by the Trappist monastery breweries. Usually in two categories:

DUBBEL and TRIPEL As the names imply, walking can be quite hazardous after a few! Tripel is normally in the 8%-9% alcohol range. Dubbel is a dark, heavy brew, whilst Tripel is deceptively light and quaffable. Bottle fermented - look for the warning on the label: "Hergist in de fles - refermentee en bouteille". So unless, like me, you throw caution to the wind, pour carefully! Chimay is one of the more famous Trappist breweries, with its red, white and blue labels (7,8 and 9%



alcohol). In the far south of Walloon Belgium lies Orval, which produces just one unique amber Trappist with a distinctive sour taste. Other famous Trappist beers include Grimbergen and Westmalle. Other abbey beers include Hoegaarden, Leffe and Cuvée de l'Ermitage.

**SCOTCH** No, not the whisky, but Scotch ale. A dark and full tasting beer usually about 7½%-8% alcohol. Campbells is the most famous and is brewed by Whitbread in Belgium. It's a shame it's not available in Whitbread houses here.

The above are the most common styles. Each is normally available in bottles in any Belgian bar, but can quite often be found on draught in Flemish bars in such drinking centres as Antwerpen, Brugge and Gent. One other widely available beer is Bass Pale Ale (5.2%). Again it's a pity it's not available in Bass houses here. Watneys and Whitbread also supply pale and brown ales of much higher standard and quality than those available in the UK. Even Belgian Guinness is 8% alcohol.

There are also specialist bottled beers and amongst those available from the 250 bottled beers in one Gent bar are Kwak (served in a mini yard of ale), Brigand (9% alcohol; made with wild honey). Jesus, Judas, Lucifer, Satan and Poperings Hommel (heaven!) beer.

All these beers are available in the hypermarkets and it's very worthwhile to take the car across for a long weekend - remember the duty free allowance is 50 litres per person. That includes all beers, even the Belgian specials like Bush at 10% alcohol! In all Flemish towns English is widely spoken, so there's no good reason not to go!



# RUPERT'S PAGE



We'd left the Rat & Handbag somewhat early as a result of a potentially horrendous Jimmy moving situation. We were well aware that the OAPs went a little over the top on Saturday nights but we felt that bent Zimmer frames and burst colostomy bags was stretching our patience too far. Thus it was that we found ourselves in the Bumbumer III Indian restaurant before the witty drunks arrived. ("Alsatian Madras in diarrhoea please, you black bastard"). The conversation ranged over numerous topics; the adventures of Stan Craap, the proceedings of the Red Max Appreciation Society and the Noble's behaviour vis a vis the de Veres, until a strident falsetto staccato exclamation from Tish stopped all other utterances. "Don't tell me old Moth Wallet's getting hitched; I don't believe it!" was what she said.

We had touched briefly on nuptials Favourites in the betting were the Noble Robin, who'd been spotted with his inamorata on more than one occasion, and the Silly Celt who, as far as we knew, was still courting the delectable Emily Woodpecker. Beinlos was written off with the Teutonic expression "Beinlos, kein BeinUber", which I don't pretend to comprehend. Other putative, aging wedding fodder were similarly written off - Billy Cosh, Mr Bulldog, Ben Chestnut and Charlie Bass were all considered past it. Could it possibly be true that Grotley's answer to the Mahatma - the Karahi Kid - was plighting his troth at the early age of only 35? Indeed it was. Mr Busman's curt reply was a dead give away: "Why don't you \*\*\*\* off you \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*".

Despite Mr Busman's shyness, we all wish him well and hope that the union will prove fruitful with lots of little busedpersons running around. After the customary huff leaving, the conversation reverted to Red Max. Apparently everybody had received a missive from the Scousely Snoot branch proclaiming the wonderfulness of Red Max with regard to Broddingnags. We were not in a position to judge as we'd hardly ever seen the lovely chappie, but as Hattie Nightingale tucked into the remains of Duncan's Camel Karahi we toasted her in Kingfisher lager as Max's ultimate successor.

Throughout the meal Stan Craap had remained at a separate table eating peanuts. Apparently he'd fallen out with the rest of his branch so the partition of Piddlesley might not have been as premature as first thought. Billy Cosh had decided to share the spoils with the Friggin lads, who'd been so clever as to get shut of Stan, Kevin Roolager and boring old Percy Chambers in one fell swoop and deserved a reward.

# BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

The Bowling Green on Bury Road, Bolton, stages its third annual Beer Festival this month. The festival will be held in a tent in the pub's large garden and licensee Richard James hopes to have around 20 real ales (including Taylors, Theakstons, Lees, Clarks and Ruddles) on sale over a two week period.

The festival starts on Saturday 15th August and runs through to Bank Holiday Monday 31st August, with an all-day session on Saturday 29th. There will also be a barbecue, stalls and kiddies' playground.

The Bowling Green has the distinction of being one of a dwindling number of pubs serving cask conditioned Wilsons mild. Almost every other Wilsons house in Bolton dropped cask mild in favour of the keg version when the brewery closed, giving poor sales as the reason.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Royal Oak on Bradshaw Brow is one of six Greenalls pubs now selling Davenports bitter, as the brewery gets in on the guest beer act. The pub has just been completely revamped and Greenalls have replaced the handpumps with electric pumps operated by fake handpumps.

Greenalls have given us another meaning of the word "traditional" in an advertisement for the Spread Eagle at Bromley Cross. Apparently this pub, with "a reputation for its fine ales", serves "Greenalls traditional keg beers"!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Bolton branch of CAMRA hope to stage a Bowling Competition at the Howcroft Inn, off Vernon Street, Bolton, on Sunday 9th August. All CAMRA members are welcome but are advised to phone the branch contact beforehand (see Diary).

\* \* \* \* \*

Rochdale firm Carlow Catering have secured a pub in Bolton at the third attempt. They are to take over the White Hart on Deane Road from Tetleys and turn it into a "cabaret showbar", presumably still selling keg Tetleys. If previous attempts at acquiring licensed premises in Bolton are anything to go by, the "showbar" will be called "Carringtons".

Last year Carlow attempted to buy a supermarket on Churchgate with the intention of turning part of it into an all-day coffee/wine bar named "Colbys" and the rest into a nightclub named "Carringtons". Local pubs and traders objected and eventually the premises were sold to Kwik Save. Their second attempt came shortly afterwards when Bolton Central Labour Club went bust and Carlow tried to buy the premises to turn them into a "cabaret showbar" named "Carringtons". At the hearing for



the club's drinks licence application Carlow director Eddie Grindrod came out with the quote of the year. He stated that Carringtons would only serve "nice people who don't mind paying 40p more for a pint of lager". The application failed.

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## Branch Diary

### WIGAN

Wed 12 Aug Wigan town centre pub crawl with Southport & District branch. Raven, Wallgate, 8.30pm

Sat 15th Aug Beer Tent at Newton Town Show - see article.

Wed 26th Aug Branch Meeting, Silverwell Hotel, Darlington Street East, Wigan 8.30pm

Sat 5th Sept Bowls Match/Social with Merseyside branch. Crown, Worthington, near Standish. Kick-off 12 noon.

Contact Brian Gleave Atherton 892965 (h) Atherton 876200 (w)

### BOLTON

Sun 9 Aug Bowling Competition, Howcroft. Phone contact for details

Tues 11 Aug 8.30pm Branch Meeting, Lodge Bank Tavern, Bridgeman Street

Sun 16th Aug 12 noon, Social, Bowling Green Beer Festival, Bury Road

Tues 8 Sept 8.30pm Branch Meeting, York Hotel, Newport Street

Sun 13 Sept, 12 noon, Social, Horse & Jockey, Edenfield

Sun 27 Sept, Social, Canary, Glynne Street, Farnworth. 1pm Church, George Street, New Bury

Contact Dave Fleming Farnworth 75111 ext207 (w) Bolton 389918 (h)

### ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 4 Aug 8pm, Branch Meeting, Healey Hotel, Shawclough, Rochdale

Tues 18 Aug, 8pm, Committee Meeting, Gardners, Dunham Street, "Mill Bottom", Waterhead, Oldham

Tues 1 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting, Queens, Manchester Street, Oldham

Tues 15 Sept 8pm, "Hidden" Committee Meeting, Tandle Hill Tavern, Thornham Old Road, Slattsacks, nr Middleton. (Bet you can't find it!)

Contact John Burns 653 8361 (h)

### TRAFFORD & HULME

Thurs 6 Aug 8pm, Committee/Social, White Lion, Liverpool Road, Manchester

Thurs 13 Aug 8.30, Knutsford Outing. Meet Builders Arms, Mobberley Road

Thurs 20 Aug 8pm, Branch Meeting, Village Inn, Pickmere

Thurs 3 Sept 8pm, Committee/Social, Railway, Mobberley

Thurs 10 Sept 8pm, Hulme Expedition. Meet Toll Gate, near Trafford Station. Grants Arms, Royce Road 9pm.

Contact David Shelton 061 795 2113 (h)

### NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 5 Aug. Oldham Expedition. Spinners Tavern, Lees Road 7.30. Bath, Union St, 8.30

Wed 12 Aug 8pm. Regional Meeting, Three Legs of Man, Greengate, Salford

Wed 19 Aug 8pm Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton

Wed 20 Aug Altrincham Expedition. Malt Shovel, Stamford Street 7.30. Orange Tree, Market Place 8.30

Wed 2 Sept. Millgate Crawl, Stockport. 7.30 Blossoms, 9.00 Red Bull

Wed 9 Sept Buxton Trip. Cheshire Cheese 8pm

Wed 16 Sept Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford 8pm

Wed 23 Sept 7pm, Derby Brewery Arms. Mile House 8pm

Contact Roger Hall 740 7937

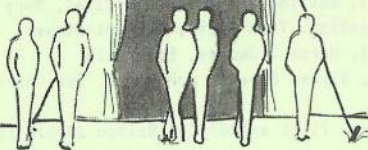
SIDE  
SHOWS

JAZZ  
BANDS

LYMM

# BEER FESTIVAL

Competitions



Presented by

**Lymm Rugby Club**

STOP PRESS: CORRECTION

Lymm Beer Festival is now 25-27 September

At Crouchley Lane, Lymm

*Lymm Rugby Club and CAMRA have joined forces to bring you the first Lymm Beer Festival. It promises to be an excellent event. Various real ales, from breweries throughout the Northern Counties will be available on each of the three days and there will be plenty of other things going on:*

L.R.F.C. Will be making a  
Donation to the  
MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSO.