

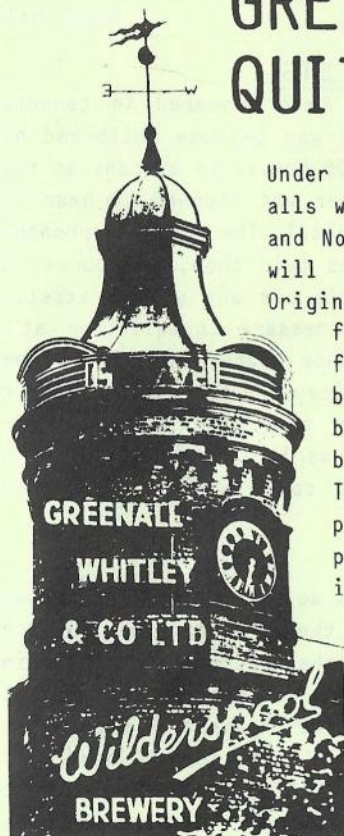
WHAT'S DOING

OCT
1990



THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

GREENALLS QUIT BREWING



Under a deal struck with Allied Breweries, Greenalls will have ceased brewing in both Warrington and Nottingham by early next year. Tetley Walker will be brewing Greenalls mild, bitter and Original at Warrington using Greenalls' original formulae. Allied have bought Greenalls' free trade business, which will be supplied by Tetley Walker and Ansells. Some Allied beer will be available in Greenalls pubs, but this will be largely restricted to cask Tetley bitter. It is expected that Greenalls pubs will also sell Stones bitter. It is possible that Greenalls Original will appear in some Tetley pubs.

Tetley's Warrington brewery will be running flat out, seven days a week. By Tetley's reckoning it will be the biggest real ale brewery in the world. Five cask conditioned milds will be produced. Little consumer resistance is expected in the North West, but the

closure of Shipstones may cause some difficulties. The Nottingham production is being shifted to Burton. The remaining Wem beer and Grünhülle will be casualties of the deal. Labatts will continue in production, again at Burton.

In addition to brewing Greenalls, Tetley Walker will continue to supply guest beers to their own tenants. The beers currently on offer are Jennings, Mitchells, Robinsons, Hydes, Hartleys, Boddingtons and Burtonwood. So far only 35 out of 500 tenants have taken advantage of this facility, with a further half-dozen or so making their own arrangements to instal such exotic brews as Holts. Tetley Walker claim not to penalise their tenants for taking guest beers or using their equipment to dispense it.

Logically, if CAMRA is boycotting Higsons because the brewery is closed and Whitbread because they closed it, then they should also boycott all Greenalls and Allied products as well. Somehow I can't see that happening.

Roger Hall

UNINVITED GUESTS

Ever wondered why very few guest beers have appeared in tenanted Whitbread pubs? You probably imagined it was because Whitbread had such a wide range of traditional ales - 26 brewed in as many as four locations. What's Doing's intrepid reporter was stunned to hear one tenant's account, which surely can't be typical. The tenant approached his Area Manager about guest beers and was told that, of course, he could have guest beers. Oh, but he couldn't use any of the existing dispensers and Whitbread would do the necessary installation at a nominal cost of £500 and a small maintenance charge of only £25 per month. If he thought this was a little pricey and got someone else to do it, then they'd stick his rent up a little bit. How very reasonable. The tenant must remain anonymous in case he is locked up for telling massive porkies. I mean, who could believe that about such a lovely brewery as Whitbreads?

PRICES

Once again the results of the price surveys we carried out in February have come hurtling back from CAMRA HQ at the speed of light. Greater Manchester is still the cheapest place in the country for beer, being 10p a pint cheaper than the national average for most gravity ranges. In the 1030-35 gravity band Holts mild was the cheapest at 68p, whilst Wadworth bitter was the dearest at £1.40. In the 1035-40 band Holts bitter was 73p, Youngs £1.38. Only in the 1055+ band did the North West fare badly, with Robinsons Old Tom at £1.56. Mind you, the original gravity is 1080, so perhaps the comparison is unfair. We were hoping to argue that the Independents are the best value for money, but with Youngs, Wadworth and Brakspear appearing among the most expensive beers in the country, perhaps its got more to do with Northern thrift and Southern rip-off merchants.

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COACH & HORSES

The Coach & Horses, London Road, Manchester, is shut. Its life as a pub has been ebbing away over the last few weeks and at the end it opened at irregular times, only one beer was available, the outside signs were removed and there were often no lights in the windows. It is not known what has happened to licensees Bill and Jean O'Reilly. They obviously hung on for as long as they could but there has to be a limit in a building which has not been maintained for a couple of decades.

Meanwhile, CAMRA's initiative to have an architectural scheme which will demonstrate how the building can be integrated into its environment is gathering pace. The other sadly neglected building in that locality, the Joshua Hoyle Building, is to be refurbished as a Centre for Europe in Manchester to coincide with 1992 and all that. The Central Manchester Development Corporation is obviously taking that "Gateway" part of Manchester very seriously.

Peter Barnes

HOLTS CORNER

This month sees some licensee changes. Bruce Davenport, who has run the Grafton for two-and-a-half years, is taking over the Griffin at Heaton Mersey. Moving into the Grafton will be Peter Abel from the Rosehill Tavern at Westhoughton.

Work has started at the White Swan, Swinton. Let's hope that CAMRA members' worst fears are not realised. Many believe this great pub may be ruined. The work at the Seven Stars, Ashton Old Road, should be completed by November, when the South Manchester branch of CAMRA will find out if their suspicions about the alterations are correct.

The new pub at Ashley Street, Weaste, is coming along nicely and ought to be open by Christmas. The Salford Reporter is running a "Name that Pub" competition, so write in with your suggestion of a name for this new outlet. One suggestion is the Chimney Pot, as it is near Chimney Pot Park.

Next month sees the annual increase in the price of Holts beers. Will bitter reach the dizzy heights of 80p a pint and mild rocket to 75p a pint? Still, there's comfort in the fact that other brewers' beers are £1 or more for bland or even mediocre pints.

Happy birthday to the Dukes Gate at Little Hulton. It opened in October 1986. Margaret and Phil, with the help of John the cellarman, keep an excellent pint; the pub is well worth a visit.

It's nice to see a new sign outside the Morning Star at Wardley - must have cost a fortune.

Stewart Revell

WHAT TRADITION IS THAT, THEN?

On the evening of 18th September a number of privileged CAMRA members braved the Merseyside picket and attended "Continuing the Tradition", a PR event held by Whitbread at Boddingtons Brewery. Whitbread, so we were told, now have the largest portfolio of cask ales of any brewer - 26 in all. This, we are to believe, is their strength. Sadly, this, in all probability, is their weakness. It would be all very well and good having 26 cask ales if they were truly local brews - if, say, Higsons mild was only available in Liverpool, Oldham mild in Oldham and Boddies mild in Manchester. However, with all three milds plus Chesters available throughout the region, I can't see more than two of them lasting very long.

The same argument can be applied to other beers - Chesters Bitter, Boddies bitter, Castle Eden, Bentleys, Trophy, OB and Higsons. How many of those will see 1992? Ironically the reaction from free trade licensees was not delight at the 12 beers available in the North West, but disappointment that they couldn't get Pompey Royal, Brakspears, Brains and Fullers Chiswick bitter. If they do get their way, then the portfolio of 26 will quickly dwindle to fewer than a dozen.

Miles Templeman, Managing Director of the Whitbread Beer Company, was confident about the future of both Strangeways and Castle Eden (aren't they always?) and didn't see Boddies as a national brand like Websters or Bass. It's hard to share his enthusiasm given Whitbread's appalling track record. I'm certain we'll see brand losses and brewery closures sooner rather than later. The independence of those brewers selling to Whitbread may also be in jeopardy as the popularity of their beers increases. Never mind, our "thirty pieces of silver", a limited edition quasi-Lowry print of Strangeways Brewery, may increase in value if Boddingtons is closed.

Roger Hall

WHAT'S DOING contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 9ET. News, articles, letters, etc, must arrive by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Send cheque/PO for £2.40, together with your name and address, to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 2PW, for 6 issues. Cheques made out to "What's Doing".

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BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

As Greenalls plan to style themselves as "the world's biggest free house chain", offering all sorts of guest beers, there comes news that they might be short of one pub. The Black Swan at Harwood Precinct closed down in the middle of September after Greenalls apparently decided not to renew the lease. The whole situation seems to be in keeping with the rest of the precinct, which appears to be dying a death as one-by-one local traders move out and are not replaced. The precinct's owners, Metrolands, are allegedly planning to redevelop the site as a supermarket. However, rumour has it that the pub is soon to reopen.

Speaking of Greenalls, Bolton's drinkers aren't exactly weeping into their beer at the news of the Wilderspool brewery's impending demise. The brewery has had an image problem ever since it closed Bolton's last brewery, Magee Marshall, in 1970, something a member of the company surprisingly admitted to in an interview with a local newspaper a couple of years ago.

Burtonwood have revised their planning application for the Swan Hotel. The new plans involve retention of the Bradshawgate facia as well as the Churchgate side, but still include destruction of the hotel's interior.

Guest beers spotted in Bolton recently include Clark's Hammerhead at the Bromilow Arms in Lostock and Hydes bitter at the Sweet Green Tavern on Crook Street. The ubiquitous Boddingtons bitter is now on sale at the Man & Scythe on Churchgate, but further down, the Boars Head has lost its cask Greenalls mild. This pub is currently the subject of a long-awaited planning application which will see the existing building demolished and replaced by a five-storey office block and a new Boars Head on the ground floor. Anybody who wonders whether an office block in an eighteenth century conservation area will enhance its character need look no further than the monstrosity taking shape just a few doors up from the Boars Head on the former ABC cinema site.

WD IN PRESTWICH

The White Horse (Holts), Prestwich village, is now stocking What's Doing. Other Prestwich and Whitefield outlets are the Red Lion, Coach & Horses, Welcome Inn, Commercial, Parkside, Ostrich, Royal Oak, Eagle & Child, Goats Gate, Bay Horse and Beehive. In Radcliffe: Wellington, Papermakers and Masons.

A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE?

The ever-increasing trend towards pub alterations resulting in open-plan layouts and the loss of vaults is worrying, not only because it eliminates a feature which contributes to the uniqueness of the English public house - a multiplicity of rooms - but also because nobody knows what is happening. Brewers will tell you that it's the police and the magistrates who insist on vaults being knocked down. The police claim that they've never insisted on open-plan layouts, agreeing with CAMRA that multi-roomed layouts are less conducive to disorderly behaviour. Magistrates may claim that they never make

LET'S have a proper pub in Leigh town centre is a plea from both sides of the bar.

Now that The Woolpack has been demolished for the town centre re-development, they're crying into their glasses about the way big business has ruined most of what's left of the town centre pubs.

Now they're hoping Tetley Walker will go somehow towards making amends with something for everyone when the new Spinning Jenny is completed.

Leigh Licensed Victuallers' spokesman Bernard Addi pulls no punches: "The Globe's just a disco joint, the Eagle and Child seems to be catering to the young. The George and Dragon used to be the meeting place in Leigh, and it's managed by a very nice bloke, but there's low level lighting, no tap room and it's been taken over by kids.

"Tropics is an absolute abomination. It used to be a fine public house. My hope is it might one day return to the image of its old days as the White Horse.

"There is a need for a traditional type of pub in the town centre with proper restaurant facilities. There is a

big change in town and I think it's a change for the worse. The big brewers are to blame, they're the ones who're dictating policy," said the Fir Tree Inn landlord who next month goes into semi-retirement.

"They should at least designate one decent pub without flashing lights and disco in the town centre where ordinary people can come down and have a good night without being jostled, upset or subjected to obscene language.

"I think this has resulted in a drift away from the town centre. At one time nobody would have dreamed of coming up Plank Lane for a night out, but the situation is changing rapidly."

Fellow landlord Derek Robins isn't too pleased about the town centre scene either.

Derek lost The Wool-

pack in the King Street bus station redevelopment. Flattened - even before it had a chance to be 'properly' vandalised - it's demise led to a petition from regulars for a reprieve.

"It highlights big brother brewery's lack of concern about customers' particular drinking habits. Most of the town centre places aren't cater for the 25-40 and upwards age-groups. They have nowhere to go and the teenagers who they're attracting now won't want disco music in another 10 years. Where will they go then? I don't want a disco banging in my earhole and they won't in time.

"I know the Woolpack had been under threat for a while but I object to the manner in which it came down after Tetley's asked me to withdraw my objection to it. I was told I was virtually certain to keep The Woolpack although I agree some alterations would have been necessary," said Mr Robins.

He, his wife, Barbara and son Paul between them run The Railway in Twist Lane and The Ellesmere in St Helens Road.

changes to plans which result in the loss of rooms, but that the brewers' plans incorporate those features.

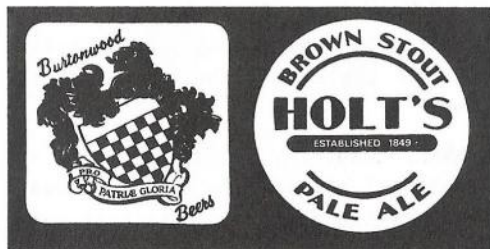
So who's to blame? Brewers, mindful of the importance of supervision and in particular of not carrying out an alteration which "conceals from observation such a part of the premises used for drinking" have tended to play it safe by submitting plans which ensure that every part of the premises can be observed from the bar. Sadly, these plans seldom generate objections and, as they comply with the Licensing Acts, are invariably granted by Licensing Committees. It is doubtful, however, whether this is strictly necessary. Alterations which merely retain the present arrangement of rooms would not conceal parts of the premises from observation. Supervision can be exercised by means other than direct observation, so that the fears of the police that premises may be used for drug trafficking, prostitution and the handling of stolen goods can be allayed. A good licensee will control premises within the law whether they are multi-roomed or not; a bad licensee will not control illegal behaviour, irrespective of the layout of the premises.

Is it beyond the wit of the brewers' highly-paid architects and designers to devise schemes which retain the integrity of a pub's design within the law? Can the police and the magistrates not allow more imaginative schemes which retain traditional features? It is certain that the changes which we have seen in the last twenty years have done little to alleviate the perceived problems which they were designed to eliminate. At the same time they have brought about drastic changes in layout which are both undesirable and irreversible.

Roger Hall

BEERMAT GATHERING

There will be a meeting of the British Beermat Collectors' Society at the Kings Arms, Helmsore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock, on Saturday 1st December from 11.00am onwards.



A brewery trip has been arranged, and there will be swapping of beermats, a sale of new issues, a raffle, auction of older mats, etc.

Following the meeting, there will be a tour of the Old Steam Brewery, a visit to

the new Bruce's pub; the Lass o'Gowrie, and then across town for the all-day opening free houses.

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

Further to last month's article, **TRADITIONALS** on Woodhouse Lane, Wigan, has opened at last. The beers on offer are Tetley dark mild and bitter, Boddingtons, Holts and Hydes bitter and Robinsons and Walkers best bitter. The pub belies its name - TV and video screens are facing you at every turn - and it tends to get noisy (a barmaid who served me almost confused "Robinsons" with "orange juice") - but on the whole **TRADITIONALS** is a vast improvement on the former **CLOWN'S BAR** and the beer has been in very good condition. There is an entertainments licence, which means that the place serves until midnight from Monday to Saturday. Give it a try.

Still in Wigan, the **BIRD I'TH'HAND**, Gidlow Lane, is being enlarged. The "Hen Hole" is a gem of a pub, but has always been too small. However, the rear end of the building is being extended and work should be completed by the time you read this. The exterior of the pub has also been cleaned up and despite the classy Walkers mosaic over the entrances, the Bird sells an excellent pint of Tetley bitter and both milds. The extension meant that the lounge of the pub has been closed to the public, but you could still get served in the vault.

Ind Coope Burton Ale might be the Beer of the Year, but that doesn't cut much ice in Platt Bridge. The **VICTORIA**, a Walkers pub on Liverpool Road, has stopped selling the stuff owing to poor sales. Further up the road, however, the **RAILWAY** has reopened, selling real Tetley dark mild and bitter for the first time years. Keg rivals also adorn the bar, but you are given a choice when ordering.

Traditional beer has reappeared in two Hindley pubs that were never renowned for selling it in the first place. Ruddles Blue is on the comeback trail at the **GOLDEN LION**, Atherton Road, Hindley Green. The rest of the Websters/Wilsons range is fizzy, though, so "let the buyer beware", as they say. At the other side of town, **BANNERS** (formerly the **HAND & BANNER**), Chapel Green, has a lone handpump allegedly dispensing John Smiths Magnet at the far end of the bar, almost as an after-thought. Long-term prospects not good.

Finally, a word on the **EDINGTON ARMS**, Hindley's new free house (see Sept WD). Mr E is keeping the identity of his mystery "Savage's Head" to himself for now, but local CAMRA greybeards seem to think it could be Oak best bitter. Any other suggestions?

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LETTERS



PRESERVING PUBS

Sir - "Use it all you can and then throw it away." This is an eminently sensible principle when applied to a baby's nappy. It is efficient, if less ecologically sound, when applied in sealed units in cars or washing machines. It is immoral to apply it to human beings. And it is dangerous to apply it to pubs - which are, after all, among the places where stressed-out executives, teachers, NHS workers and the rest of us try to relax.

Legislation exists to force people to maintain their cars properly. Yet there seems to be no effective law to make people maintain buildings. Perhaps it is because the dangers of failing to do so are less obvious. Yes, all right, a ceiling does make someone's hair prematurely white now and then, and a loose coping stone might flatten a passer-by. But more importantly, buildings are a part of our tradition, and therefore part of what keeps us sane. For some reason, using a building for the same purpose as our fathers and grandfathers has a calming effect and makes us feel secure, and this is particularly true of buildings like pubs, theatres, halls and churches, where we spend non-working time. If we knock it all down, then realise we were wrong, the result is "conservatories", fake pillars and the like, which don't have the same effect at all. Rising costs of material and labour mean that we can't recreate what we have allowed to decay. And we are the poorer for it, psychologically.

Pubs and clubs are blamed for a lot of social evils, but where are the troublesome places? Often where "target marketing" has crowded together large numbers of foolish, energetic, aggressive youths with no leaven and inadequate supervision. (The Sweet Green Tavern in Bolton operates perfectly satisfactorily just across the road from "Mr D's", "Bolton's No.1 Nite Spot" (once the Painters Arms). Mr D's - last seen surrounded by police and handcuffed, bleeding ex-customers - is currently shut.) Or where surroundings are so scruffy that they don't encourage customers to behave themselves.

In fact, a clean, well-maintained pub with a good cross section of customers can encourage sensible drinking and harmonious social relations. It's common sense. A lad who's had too much will be a nuisance when encouraged to show off by a mass of his mates in a similar condition. The same lad is less likely to make an ass of him-

self in a good local where his parents or their friends might be watching. And pugnacious fathers can sometimes be calmed down by their sons, too.

On a more serious level, there will always be villains, drunkards and thugs - and not only in inner city areas. Take the pubs away and you drive them on to the streets, or behind closed doors. Leave the pubs alone, and at least you know where they are. Better still, get the right man or woman to run the pub, and they're under some kind of control.

Past breweries have been guilty of failing to maintain their pubs, and it is not surprising that present owners, under financial pressure, should be reluctant to pick up the tab. They are not encouraged to do so by current land values, business rates or planning policies. But for all our sakes, it's important that the decay stops. Perhaps we should be campaigning for redevelopment grants or flexible rating systems which are biased against change of use in given areas - then it might not be cheaper to sell off the Crescent for offices, or let the Coach & Horses decay.

This is not to say that things shouldn't change. They will, inevitably, but let's slow the process down, think about what we're doing, give ourselves time to get used to it. Demolishing our pubs, or neglecting them to the point where they are no longer viable, is a bit like neglecting to change the baby's nappy. The effect may not be immediately apparent, but sooner or later the shit will stick to our hands.

SHOME MISHTAKE

Sir - I am seriously considering submitting the September issue of WD to Private Eye's "Pseud's Corner".

"A local with true Bavarian humour"?

"A major flagship on a gateway site"?

May, lad.

C Sense.

RESTORATION COMEDY

Some time ago the Top House (former Railway), Church Street, Eccles, had its frontage replaced in a particularly crass manner. Tetleys acknowledged their mistake and promised to restore the pub. Well, the frontage has been "restored" by sticking some cheap plastic pillars and mouldings on the wall in the style of that Golden Age in the annals of Eccles - Mid-Sixties Watneys.

THE PUBS OF BARNES GREEN

Roger Hall

Two hundred years ago the road from Manchester to Middleton followed the Irk valley from Long Millgate to Collyhurst Brook, climbed to Harpurhey and passed through the hamlet of Three Lane Ends before dropping down via Old Road and Lion Street into Blackley village. From Blackley the road continued via Chapel Lane or Hill Lane to Heaton or Rhodes. In 1804 a new turnpike was built, running from the top of Shudehill through Collyhurst, Harpurhey and Blackley to Middleton, Castleton and Rochdale, and in due course the scattered hamlets through which it passed grew in size and new public houses opened to serve them.

Among the earliest was the Printers Arms, opened in 1822 and the first public house in the hamlet of Three Lane Ends. By the 1840s the owner and licensee, John Barnes, had given his name to the district - Barnes Green - though the pub was then in the hands of the Kay family and known variously as the Farmyard, the Halfway House or simply Kay's. In 1829 the Farmyard was joined by a second public house, the New Inn, and following the Beerhouse Act of 1830 by four beerhouses - the Derby, the Staff of Life, the Alliance and the Golden Tavern.

The Staff of Life was delicensed in 1864, following problems with a mortgage, but otherwise the pubs grew with the district. Although Barnes Green itself had no large-scale industry, its proximity to the factories in the Irk valley ensured its continued growth, and by the



end of the nineteenth century much of the land east of Rochdale Road between Moston Lane and Boggart Hole Clough had houses on it.

The Derby Inn was rebuilt in 1860 and acquired a beer and wine licence; the Farmyard was rebuilt in 1896 shortly after Threlfalls Brewery bought the original terraced property. The Golden Tavern was rebuilt in 1937 and the Derby substantially altered about the same time; both were then owned by Walker & Homfray.

Then the public houses began to suffer. Their traditional passing trade from carters declined with the rise of the motor vehicle, and the area's population was now static. The pubs' comparatively large size made it difficult to compete with the beerhouses as community locals, and the demolition of housing in the 1970s led to the closure of the New Inn in 1978. Custom also dwindled at the Farmyard and the response of the owners, Whitbread, was to turn it into a "fun pub". Walls were pulled down and the result, described in one contemporary account as a "licensed junkyard", was a gimmicky transformation which was initially successful. However, the novelty soon wore off, leaving custom as poor as before the change - the alterations made it unsuitable for the community as a whole, yet it no longer attracted youngsters from outside the area.

The Alliance was also demolished in 1978 but was replaced by a new pub on the same site - this and the New Inn had been the only two houses to retain their mid-nineteenth-century layout intact. Today there are four pubs in Barnes Green - the Alliance, the Farmyard, the Top Derby and the Golden Tavern. They all serve real ale and still cater for the differing needs of the neighbourhood, as they have done for 150 years.

The Farmyard seems to have found a role for itself as a true community pub catering for the older section of the population. Over the last year the new tenant has removed the pool tables, the juke box and all but one of the fruit machines and although the walls have not been replaced, the pub has regained some of its traditional atmosphere. There are men's and women's darts teams; the lounge is used for traditional pub games, entertainments and singalongs at weekends - to the music of the grand piano which dominates the rear of the room. The Farmyard is by no means always crowded and the vault is little used, but the piped background music and quieter atmosphere have changed its fortunes and made it popular with older customers.

The transformation has been helped by a change of policy and licensee at the Derby, until recently considered "more respectable" than the Golden Tavern across the road and always better decorated and furnished. The Derby has retained its traditional layout but the licensee seems to have aimed deliberately for a younger clientele. A

green neon "Carlsberg" sign in the transom window over the door is matched by a similar sign inside reading "Donna's Bar". The central hall of the pub is dominated by two fruit machines and a large old-fashioned juke box playing modern music continuously and loudly. In the room on the right there is a blue baize pool table and a video games machine. The vault - busy when the pub catered for a wider cross-section of customers - is now frequently deserted. The rear lounge is not always in use and the teenage customers tend to congregate around the bar and in the pool room. Although Holts bitter at 80p is reputedly the best seller, lager, particularly Tennents extra strong, seems to be the favourite tipple of many of the customers, both male and female.

The changes at the Derby have also helped the Golden Tavern, just across Factory Lane. The size of the lounge, which was formerly three rooms, can make the pub feel empty, but in fact the Golden Tavern attracts a cross-section of customers of both sexes and all ages. The lounge is comfortable, if somewhat shabby, and the bulging trophy cabinet bears witness to a lively tradition of pub games. Although only ten yards from the Derby, the Golden Tavern seems to have a life of its own, independent of the other three pubs.

Of the four pubs in Barnes Green, the Alliance is without doubt the most interesting. The "old Ally", a terraced pub on two levels dating back to the 1850s, was disreputable, but a place of character. Long



after all the other pubs had shut, you could peer into the recesses of the old Ally from the top deck of an all-night bus and see people still drinking. Enshrined in local folklore are characters like the Bear, a man of average height, weighing perhaps twenty stones, who carried his friend Henry around in a bag. Henry was an axe! The old Ally was a true local which also attracted people from far and wide because of the atmosphere and the quality of the beer.

Almost everyone who is old enough regrets the loss of the old Alliance and is critical of its successor, a typical two-roomed pub of the 1970s. Yet the new Alliance enjoys a popularity which must be the envy of other pubs in the area. The vault is thriving, in stark contrast to the vaults of the other three pubs. A pool table stands in the centre of the room, but is by no means the only activity. The landlord, although critical of some of his clientele, nevertheless spends much time in the vault with his customers. There is a cosy familiarity between tenant and customers which creates a comfortable atmosphere in the pub.

Only at the Alliance are the two rooms really separate - the tiny vault at the Golden Tavern is relatively unused, and the upper portions of walls at the Derby have been removed, allowing music to permeate the pub and making it difficult to pursue quiet games or conversation. At the Alliance the vault can be seen from the bar, but its activities do not intrude on the lounge. The cheap beer policy and the involvement of the tenants also make it popular.

Indeed, long-standing licensees, particularly tenants, seem to be the most important influence on pubs' culture generally. They create a stable environment, build up loyal support, and the tenant is able to respond quickly to any changes in customers' requirements. Those who get it wrong do not last long, and breweries like Whitbread who attempt to do things at arm's length will also lose money. Yet even their mistakes can be rectified by a good licensee, as at the Farmyard. With this pub to cater for the older customer who wants quiet and the Derby to accommodate the noisier youth, customers of all ages can mix harmoniously in the other two pubs: Barnes Green has something to offer everyone.

PRESTWICH PRICES

There has been yet another Prestwich price increase since the July survey published in the August WD. At the Turf Tavern, Heaton Park, Boddingtons and Thwaites bitters have gone up 6p to £1 a pint.

RUPERT'S PAGE



It's who's been sleeping in my porridge, Red Hooding Ride time again. Once upon a time there was a big cake company who made lots of cakes and sold them in their cake shops throughout the Land of Cakes. Trouble was, they hadn't quite got the hang of cake-making and their cakes were pretty horrid, although their cake shops were rather nice. One day the elfin king got out of bed on the wrong side and made a new law which said that nobody could make cakes and sell them as well. The Duff Cake Company were pretty miffed about this and shut their cake factory and sacked all their elves. "Hooray!" shouted all the people in the Land of Cakes, "no more horrid cakes". All the customers had visions of the Duff cake shops being stacked with succulent wares and exotic pastries from all around the globe. The world was their market and surely they'd replace their horrid cakes with lovely ones. People who'd not eaten cakes for years would be tempted back into the shops.

But no! Do you know what happened? The Chief Masterbaker from the Duff Cake Company took the secret recipes out of the safe, where they'd been since Ezekiel Duff started the Company 250 years ago, and took them down the road to the rival Bland Cake Company. "Can you make cakes to these recipes?" he asked Mr Bland. "Of course," said Mr Bland, trying not to laugh. And so it was to be. Duff's cake shops still sold Duff cakes. And do you know, nobody was very upset about it at all. When the Scouse Hut closed, all the fat goblins in Scousely had made a terrible fuss and marched all round the Land of Cakes, singing songs and carrying banners, saying what nasty persons the new owners were, but when all the elves were sacked from Duffs and their shops still sold horrid cakes, nobody said a dicky bird. Isn't that strange?

Over the years Duffs had bought lots of little cake factories which had made lovely country cakes and sold them in their own shops. But Duff's factory was big and could make lots of cakes, so they shut all the country cake factories and sold their own horrid cakes in the country cake shops. All the rural folk were hopping mad, so when Duffs shut I suppose they all felt glad. But they didn't feel glad for long because they never got their own cakes back, just more old horrid Duffs, baked somewhere else.

I hope that nobody else will do what Duffs have done, or nobody'll live happily ever after.



Branch Diary

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 3 Oct, Eccles. White Horse 7pm, Old Bulls Head posh side 8pm

Wed 10 Oct, Regional Meeting, Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, 8pm. NOTE
DATE CHANGE

Wed 17 Oct, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford, 8pm

Wed 24 Oct. Little Hulton; White Lion 7pm, Bell (now Vaux) 8pm

Wed 31 Oct, Trip to Blackburn Beer Festival (Halloween dress welcome)

Wed 31 Oct - Sat 3 Nov: Help wanted at Blackburn Beer Festival

Wed 7 Nov, Chapel Street Crawl. Peel Park 7pm, Albert Vaults 8pm.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

BOLTON

Thurs 4 Oct 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, George, Great Moor Street

Sun 14 Oct, Lunchtime at the Strawbury Duck, Entwistle

Thur 8 Nov, Branch AGM, York Hotel, Newport Street

Thur 22 Nov, Social, 8.30pm, Alma, Bradshawgate

Contact: B Kerks, Bolton 658458 (h), Bolton 22494 x2221 (w)

WIGAN

Mon 15 Oct: Trip to Clark's Brewery, Wakefield. Leave Stanley's 5.35

Contact: Brian Gleave, Atherton 876200 (w), 840658 (h)

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Sun 30 Sept 12.00. Lunchtime Social, Rose & Crown, Manchester Old Rd,
Bury. All welcome

Tues 2 Oct 8.30pm. Branch Meeting, The Healey, Shawclough Rd, Rochdale

Tues 16 Oct 8.30pm. Committee Meeting, Brown's No.1, Bridge Street,
Heywood

Sun 21st Oct, 10.30am. Tandle Hill Trot. Start at Tandle Hill Tavern,
Thornham Lane, Tandle Hill Country Park, Rochdale. Jog, walk, cycle or
stagger round short course. Followed by lunchtime social. Food avail-
able.

Tues 6th Nov 8.30pm. Branch Meeting, The Welcome, Bury Old Road,
Whitefield

Contact: B Lee 0706 824407

OCTOBER ALES

It's October so it's beer festival time again at the Crescent (see advertisement) and the Marble Arch, two of the areas premier free houses. This year the Marble Arch promises over 102 real ales and a variety of traditional Northern dishes.

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bottled beers also available

*** * OPENING HOURS * ***

Sun: 12.00-3.00. 7.00-10.30

Mon: 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

Tues: 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

Weds: 12.00-4.00 6.00-11.00

Thur: 12.00-4.00 6.00-11.00

Fri: 12.00-11.00

Sat 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

A selection of hot & cold
food at lunchtime and
early evening, including
chilli and curry.

We're in the Good Beer Guide
and CAMRA's Good Food Guide

Your hosts,
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