

WHAT'S DOING

NOV
1990

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

ECCLES PUBS THREATENED

In a recently revived scheme to make the centre of Eccles look like anywhere else, two Holts pubs are in danger of being lost. The plan, first published ten or more years ago and revived in July this year, includes a section of new road from Barton Lane to Liverpool Road. The Royal Oak on the corner of Barton Lane and Corporation Road, the band room and all the houses on the west side of Corporation Road and property on or near the corner of Liverpool Road, including the Crown & Volunteer, would be demolished.



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CHEERS

KINGS ARMS

After a multitude of reopenings in recent years, the Kings Arms on Bloom Street, Salford (in the shadow of the former Threlfalls Cook Street Brewery), reopened on 10th October.

The pub is owned by the Boddingtons Pub Company, but it's a novel concept - the Kings Arms doesn't sell any Boddingtons (or even Whitbread) draught beers. Licensees Dave and Sue Price have been given the freedom to select a range of beers from far and wide to attract custom. The first week's offerings included Dobbins mild and bitter, Holts bitter, Theakstons bitter, Taylors Landlord, Bathams bitter and Stocks Old Horizontal. The Bathams proved to be the most popular, with Landlord coming second. The pricing policy did seem a little erratic, with Holts well over its normal price at 92p a pint, whereas £1.05 for Taylors Landlord is excellent value. A good selection of Belgian bottled beers is also on offer.

The unusual shape of the building has meant no drastic alterations to the interior, which has been comfortably refitted, and a collection of breweriana adorns the walls. Full meals are served at lunchtime and sandwiches in the evening.

If this first BodPubCo "free house" is a success, many other Boddingtons pubs could be similarly converted, and that must be good news for local drinkers. What could be better than a Boddingtons pub which doesn't sell Boddingtons? (A Tetley pub which doesn't sell Tetleys - but it's not a perfect world, yet!)

Paul Roberts

STALYBRIDGE STATION BUFFET

The future of the splendid Stalybridge Station Buffet has been causing concern recently, as British Rail are in the process of rationalising the use of their land holdings and properties. The success of this bar is due entirely to its unique character and the efforts of licensee Ken Redfern. It is doubtful whether any changes imposed by BR would be for the better.

POST VINTAGE

In the two years since Vintage Pubs was published, over 10% of the excellent hostelries therein have been radically altered in such a way that they would be unlikely to feature in any future edition. As few of our new pubs or alterations are likely to become vintage with the passage of time, it won't be long before the 150 pubs are down to a handful. It would seem that more people are interested in looking at pictures of real pubs in books than doing anything about saving them.

BIG 5,4,3?

The recommendations of the MMC concerning the proposed deal between Courage and Grand Met are, it would seem, about to be watered down by the Department of Trade & Industry. The proposals were for Courage to acquire Grand Met's breweries, a joint company, Innpreneur, to run almost 5,000 pubs and Grand Met to continue to operate a further 1,700 pubs. The MMC was upset about a ten year supply deal, the slow freeing of pubs from the brewery tie and the disposal of some brands with a high market share.

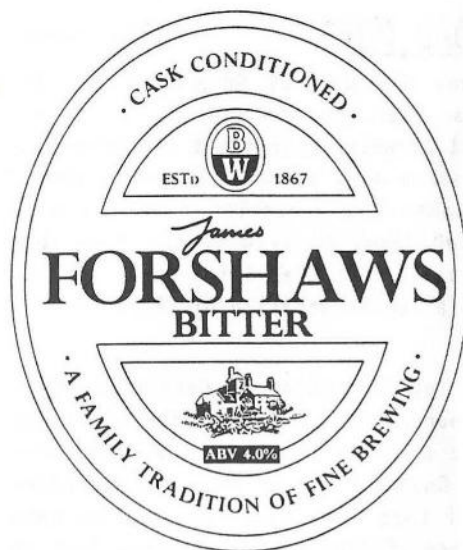
The brewers have been given a further month (until November 16th) to come up with revised proposals which will not be against the public interest. It is expected that the brewers will be able to satisfy the Secretary of State by reducing the supply deal to 5 years and by terminating the Carlsberg licensing deal in 1991. They will also need to negotiate with Sir Gordon Borrie of the MMC over some of the nitty gritty of their plans.

It seems inevitable that a deal will be struck on 16th November and that it will not be in the public interest. It would result in a brewing group with almost 20% of the market share alongside Bass's 22% share. This would put pressure on the remaining three big brewers (Allied, Whitbread and S&N) to increase their own market share. As this can no longer be achieved by acquiring independent breweries, a deal between two or three is on the cards. All three have made a firm commitment to brewing so further arrangements of the Boddingtons or Greenalls type seem unlikely. The Courage/Grand Met deal may well act as a model for an agreement between two of those three. This would result in an industry dominated by three large brewers. The process would lead inevitably to loss of consumer choice and brewery closures. This scenario does not consider the possibility of Allied, Whitbread or S&N being acquired by a foreign brewer as we run up to 1992. For EEC brewers, distribution may be more important than production, but some move from a Japanese or American brewer can be expected soon. A market of 300 million cannot be ignored by an increasingly international industry.

Roger Hall

BLUE BELL

The refit at the Blue Bell on Manchester Road, Sunnybank, Bury, is well under way. A main interior wall has been removed to provide an extra drinking area in addition to the large lounge and vault. The exterior brickwork has also been cleaned up. The work should be finished for Christmas.



NEW BREW

Last month Burtonwood launched a new cask-only beer. James Forshaw's Bitter is a 4% ABV brew named after the man who founded the brewery in 1867.

Unlike Burtonwood's previous attempts at producing a premium cask beer, JFB is brewed independently of the cask bitter and it has been produced after extensive research. It will be well supported by point-of-sale promotional material.

The new beer will be available to any pub that wants to take it, subject to cellar considerations. As most of Burtonwood's estate is tenanted, it is up to the individual landlord to decide whether or not to try the new brew.

Hook Norton Old Hookey will continue to be available to Burtonwood pubs and the brewery hope that the onset of winter will encourage an increase in sales of this famous beer.

MASONS MOVES

Bob and Kath have quit the Masons Arms, an isolated Thwaites pub at the bottom of Sion Street, Radcliffe. For some time they had been battling against the odds to meet increases in rents, higher business rates, poll tax and the recently-imposed VAT on pub rents and they decided that they had had enough. The pub has been in the Good Beer Guide for years. Although the location denies the Masons the normal passing trade, the pub is well worth seeking out. The new mine hosts are Garry and Sofoulla-Ann Shepherd. It is their first pub and a warm welcome awaits all customers old and new.

THEAKSTONS IN PRESTWICH

The Parkside Hotel (Boddingtons) on Bury Old Road, Heaton Park, now has Theakstons Best Bitter alongside the OB and Boddies bitter. This is the first time that Theakstons has been available in Prestwich. It is proving very popular and the brew's arrival brings the number of different bitters on sale in Prestwich to twenty.

HYDE ROAD PUBS

Peter Barnes

The scheme to widen Hyde Road was designed by Greater Manchester Council in the early 1980s and has been "on the shelf" since then. This might have caused some general planning blight but the effect on the public houses has been to preserve many of them as distinctive, multi-roomed, traditional pubs because the breweries have not been inclined to spend money to "improve" them. In view of the time that the scheme has been on the shelf it was felt that there was scope for a review of the existing scheme and a reconsideration of the necessity of demolishing some of these pubs.

CAMRA recently met with the chair of the Highways Committee, Cllr Spencer, and some of the City Council officials to discuss these issues. Manchester City Council are proud of the fact that they were instrumental in helping to save the Castle & Falcon from the Metrolink Scheme and, although they stressed that they were not able to make any promises at this stage, they were willing to have another look at the layout of the Hyde Road scheme and try to accommodate CAMRA concerns wherever possible. Quite a few pubs are potentially affected. Some of them have no architectural merit at all, but are important as community institutions. Suggested pubs which are worth saving because of their traditional qualities or simply because they are unspoilt examples of their genre are: Plough (Robinsons), corner Wellington Street and Hyde Road; Coach & Horses (Robinsons), 227 Belle Vue Street; Travellers Call (Hydes), 521 Hyde Road, and Friendship Tavern, 786 Hyde Road.

Watch this space for further developments.



BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

Bolton Metro have given Listed Building Consent for Burtonwood to turn the **Swan Hotel** into an office block. This was despite a petition from CAMRA and objections from Bolton Civic Trust and the Victorian Society. However, the Commercial Director at Burtonwood has now informed the local press that the Swan may not be turned into offices after all. Could it be that he has had a little walk around Bolton and noticed both the empty offices and the plummeting property prices? Now he's promising an "extensive refurbishment".

Just across the road, the **Bear's Paw** now has Ind Coope Burton Ale on sale beside Tetley mild and bitter.

Marstons Pedigree has gone from Whitbread's **Blue Boar** on Deansgate. Boddingtons bitter is now the only real ale there. Another Whitbread pub, or at least a Whitbread-supplied pub, the **Crown & Cushion** on Mealhouse Lane, has dispensed with real ale altogether.

The **Black Swan** at Harwood Precinct has reopened after a short closure. This ex-Greenalls pub is now run by Favourite Inns, a subsidiary of Metrolands Investments which owns the rest of the precinct. Sadly real ale has gone from here, too.

The **Rose & Crown** on the A6 at Wingates now has four real ales on sale. Wilsons bitter, Websters Yorkshire Bitter, Websters Choice and the seemingly omnipresent Ruddles County...at £1.36 a pint.

The **Clifton Arms** on Newport Street has added Moorhouses bitter as a guest beer. The visitor to Bolton now has a three-pub mini-crawl without straying more than 100 yards from the railway station. The Clifton serves Tetley mild and bitter, Jennings bitter and Moorhouses bitter; the nearby **York** has Burtonwood mild and bitter and Hook Norton Old Hookey, while the **Sweet Green Tavern** on Crook Street has Tetley mild and bitter and Hydes bitter.

BEER FESTIVAL

The Second Bent and Bongs Beer Bash will be held at the Formby Hall, Atherton, on 24th-26th January 1991. Around 50 beers will be available, including over 20 winter ales.

Contributors to this issue: Roger Hall, Paul Roberts, Peter Barnes, Glenn Worth, Peter Alexander, Roger Wood, Stewart Revell, Robin Pendragon, Des Nogalski, Brian Gleave.

THE BEST BEER IN MANCHESTER?

For anyone who has been following the recent debate about beer preferences in What's Doing (WD July, August, September), here are the results of a survey of people's tastes. Participants were simply asked to rank their six favourite locally available beers and this is the aggregate result. The sample size is 33, composed of CAMRA members and others who regularly drink local beers in a variety of outlets. Beers over 1060 o.g. were not included in the survey because it is not really appropriate to compare strong ales with everyday beers and they only represent a tiny proportion of consumption anyway. Highest score represents highest preference.

Holts Bitter.....94	West Coast Bitter...16	Walkers Mild.....6
Taylor's Landlord....89	Taylor's Golden Best.15	Hydes Dark Mild.....6
Holts Mild.....72	Lees Bitter.....15	Hydes Light.....6
West Coast S.Nevada.43	Jennings Bitter.....13	John Smith Bitter.....5
Robinsons BB.....37	Ind Coope Burton....12	Tetley Bitter.....4
Marstons Pedigree...28	Hydes Bitter.....12	Lees Mild.....4
Theakstons Bitter...25	Boddingtons Bitter..12	Chesters Mild.....3
Draught Bass.....23	Tetley Dark Mild....11	Thwaites Bitter.....3
Taylor's Bitter.....22	West Coast ESB.....9	Robinsons Bitter.....3
Robinsons Mild.....21	Greenalls Mild.....8	Theakston Old Peculier.2
West Coast Mild....20	Walkers Bitter.....7	Wilsons Bitter.....2
Courage Directors...19	Marstons Merrie Monk.7	Burtonwood Bitter.....1
Marstons Bitter.....18	Sam Smith Bitter.....7	

You will notice that these scores do not accord with Paul Roberts' preferences at all (WD July), but of course one individual's scores do not count for much when part of a sample of 33 rather than a sample of one.

Peter Barnes

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".

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, $\frac{1}{2}$ page £20, $\frac{1}{4}$ page £15, $\frac{1}{8}$ page £7.50. Discount on bookings for 6 months or longer.

It seems that even the well-heeled citizens of Alkrington have drawn the line at the prices charged at Whitbread's **Roebuck**. Readers may recall (Sept WD) that Castle Eden Ale and Marstons Pedigree were on offer at £1.17 and £1.26 respectively. No more! Both beers have been withdrawn because of low sales. Chesters mild at £1.01 per pint has joined Boddingtons bitter as the only other real ale on sale.

Meanwhile, the **Joiners Arms**, Middleton town centre, a 1991 Good Beer Guide pub, will shortly lose its licensees of some 8 years' standing, Roy and Brenda Coupe. Disenchantment with the policies of the Boddington Pub Co seems to have been a major factor in their decision to leave. It is likely that some redecoration will take place when they leave, along with the addition of kitchen facilities. It is to be hoped that nothing too drastic ensues, as this is an excellent community boozer which needs little change to attract custom - it is full to bursting almost every night. The beer (OB mild and bitter) is jolly good, too!

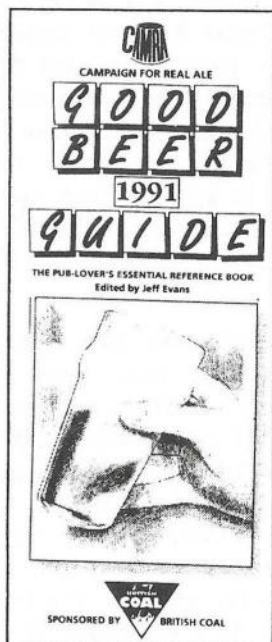
Still in Middleton town centre, Lees' **Britannia Inn** has lost its electrically-assisted handpumps. Lees free-flow taps have been installed. The bitter and mild were in excellent condition on a recent sampling. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of Thwaites' **Hare & Hounds**, Oldham Road, Middleton. Until fairly recently this popular three-roomed local sold dependable cask-conditioned beer through keg-style founts. Now keg beer matches the method of dispense. It appears that a change of licensee has caused this real ale loss. This is a particular disappointment as Thwaites now provide no real ale in the town at all. Their other pub, the Old **Roebuck**, is a keg house of long standing. It is to be hoped that Thwaites will do the decent thing and remove the references to Real Ale on the external signing of the **Hare & Hounds**.

Moving slightly further afield, those ordering mild beer in Banks's **Langton Arms**, Heywood, should be aware that it is keg. In fairness, this is clearly stated at the point of sale, but the careless can be caught out. I was! Bitter remains traditional. Both beers are served from the usual Banks's plastic founts.

I am reliably informed that Graham Rawlinson is still the owner of **Brown's No.1**, also in Heywood. Graham has, in fact, acquired the premises next door and is currently planning to extend Browns.

Finally, a new(ish) free house for Oldham. The **Malt & Hops** on Lees Road has seven real ales on draught: Banks's mild (86p), Vaux Samson, Theakstons best bitter, Boddingtons bitter, Banks's bitter, Wards

Sheffield Bitter (all 90p) and Marstons Pedigree (£1). The beers are all served by handpulls and were in good condition when sampled in late September. The pub itself is rather chintzily decorated in dark blue. But it is comfortable and the welcome is friendly. Patrons can enjoy all day opening and every success is wished to this new venture. Only one small criticism - couldn't a corner be found for a guest beer from some of our smaller brewers?



5,000 BEST PUBS

The 1991 Good Beer Guide is in the bookshops. This 18th edition of the beer lover's essential reference book has some serious articles about Whitbread, pub destruction and the aftermath of the Monopolies & Mergers Commission Report. There are also features on beer and television, items on the collecting of bottles, mats and labels and a light-hearted beer quiz. The breweries section has been expanded to include many new small breweries. The Good Beer Guide costs £6.99 from bookshops or from your What's Doing distributor.

KEEP OFF THE BASS

The Ramblers' Association is calling on walkers to boycott Bass beer and pubs. Wessenden Head Moor in the Peak District National Park is owned by Yorkshire Water and leased to Bass North Inns. At Bass's request, signs have appeared banning the public from roaming on the moors. Bass they they just want people to keep to the footpaths.

CASTLEFIELD

A planning application has been made to convert the cafeteria on the Lockwood Motors site on Castle Street into a pub.

ROYAL OAK

A new licensee, Vic Young, has taken over at the Royal Oak, Boothstown (Wilsons). It is his first pub and on a recent visit the Wilsons bitter was in very fine condition. A guest beer is under consideration.

HOPE STREET

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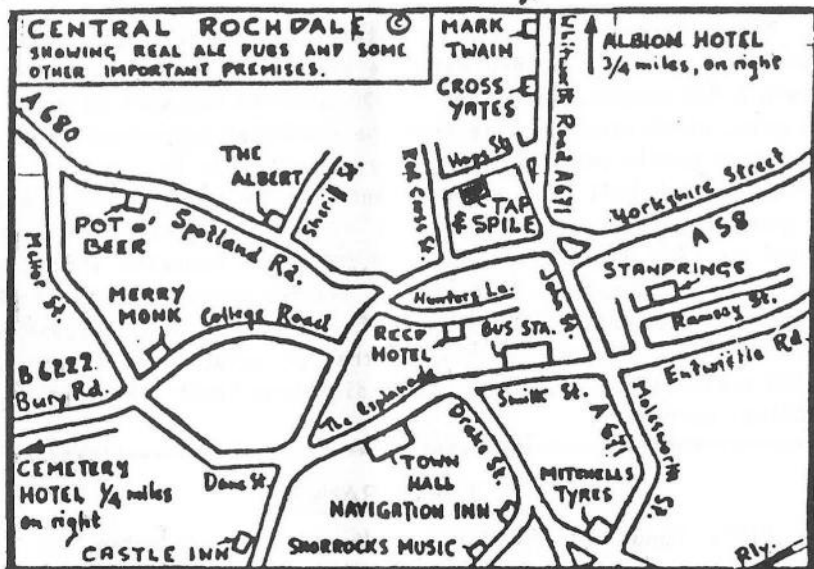
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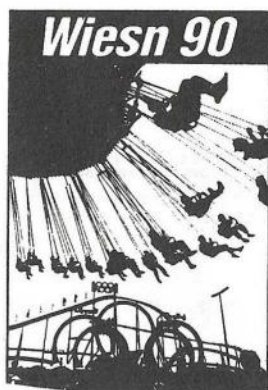
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OKTOBERFEST 90

Paul Roberts

The 1990 Oktoberfest opened in the largest state of all eleven West German states and ended in the largest state of all sixteen German states. That was the main point of 1990. Prices of the beer were up a massive 4% on previous years, which emphasises Germany's runaway inflation!

Despite worse weather than in recent years, all beer halls were more full, helped by 16 million former DDR citizens being able to partake in this feast of plenty for the first time. The first weekend started with a record number of arrests, but it is worth noting that none of these involved Bavarians - they were Australians and Kiwis for brawling and Italians for mugging and counterfeiting DM100 notes.

Prince Luitpold continued in his attempts to have his locally-brewed beers on sale at the 'Fest, but the "Munich Mafia" of City Fathers refused his requests yet again, preferring to share the spoils between the Munich big brewers.

For those interested in trivia statistics, some facts about the Oktoberfest: There are 640 separate businesses employing a total of around 8,000 people. There are 94,000 seats in the various beer halls and pubs, which range in size from the Münchener Suppenküche (seats 80 and serves garlic soup which leaves you unsociable for almost a week!) to the largest hall, the Hofbräu tent (10,264 seats, mainly occupied drunken Aussies and Kiwis). The 1½ million gallons of beer are soaked up with 775,674 chickens, 79,508 pigs' knuckles and 77 whole oxen. They are disposed of in 692 WCs and 522 metres of urinals! Power to the people means 1,829,082kW of electricity and 190,357 cubic metres of gas. Then 67,570 cubic metres of water helps clean up the 13,200 cubic metres of rubbish! Just digesting facts like that creates a thirst, so Pros't.

LONG RANGE

The Rifle Range at Burnley Lane/Broadway, Chadderton, is to be extended into the adjoining (unused) cottage. This will make the games room even bigger. An internal wall separating the snug from the vault will be removed, thus making one large room. Let's hope the basic character of this excellent Lees Good Beer Guide pub will not be completely destroyed.

BLASTED HEATH

Newton Heath, an outer suburb of the City of Manchester, is some four miles from the city centre and you'd expect it to have more in common with places like Blackley or Failsworth than with areas of the inner city. Yet the pubs around the centre of Newton Heath seem to be exhibiting a decline similar to those of Ordsall or Blackfriars. One, the White Lion (Tetleys), is boarded up and the New Crown (Marstons), opposite, is a sad reflection of its former self. The vault looks as though it is rarely used and the lounge, with its scruffy appearance and torn seats, seems to attract few customers. Cask mild is no longer sold and the quality of the bitter is not such as to warrant consideration for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide, as it was from 1981-1983.

There are two further Marstons pubs in the village. The Newton House was always known locally as the Soap Box and the recently revamped pub now rejoices in that name officially. Inside, virtually all the walls have been knocked down, resulting in a one-room pub, albeit one where the log end dartboard has been retained. Cask mild and bitter are served via electric pumps. Until a couple of years ago the Robin Hood had remained in a 1950s time warp - old enough to be unfashionable but not old enough to create nostalgia. It has been brought up to date by the simple expedient of redecoration and refurbishing without altering the layout or destroying the character. It is now one of the most popular pubs in the area, with a thriving vault trade and handpumped mild and bitter of excellent quality.

Newton Heath boasts two Holts pubs - the Church and the Railway. The Church, in the centre, is a modern two-roomed pub which is beginning to show its age. Despite a considerable price advantage over local Marstons pubs (about 16p), the Church is by no means as busy as this would lead you to expect. The Railway at Dean Lane is a building of much more character than the Church. Dating from the end of the last century, it occupies a triangular site and features etched glass windows depicting railway engines. The tall electric fonts are unique and the Railway must have seen a greater variety of beer dispense systems than most. Over the last few years there have been electric diaphragm pumps, Lees-type free flow dispensers and handpumps as well as the new fonts. Both the Railway and the Church have appeared in the Good Beer Guide in the past, the Railway for many years; yet on our recent visit both pubs compared unfavourably with Holts pubs in other areas.

Roger Hall

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NEWS FROM HULME

Some Hulme notes and amendments to "Ale of Two Cities" by Roger Wood..

At the **Cornbrook** (Vaux), Darley Dark Mild has been replaced by Wards Sheffield Bitter. The beers, Vaux Samson and Wards Bitter, are usually in excellent condition, as are those at the Hope Inn (Hydes) across the road, where Light has replaced the mild.

The **Boatmans Home** (Vaux) remains keg.

The **Church Inn** (Lees) has introduced cask GB mild, but the **Red Admiral** (Robinsons) has withdrawn mild altogether.

The **Crown** (John Smiths) and the **Hussar** (Wilsons) are closed and boarded up.

At the beginning of October the **Old Abbey** was selling keg Websters Yorkshire Bitter through a font (with badge) adjacent to a handpump (with Yorkshire Bitter pumpclip). Presumably the latter was for display only. This practice can also be found at the **Cheshire Hunt** (John Smiths) in West Gorton.

The **White Horse** (Tetleys) sells keg beer via handpump.

The **Salutation**, described as "a little gem" in "Ale of Two Cities", still sells keg Tetley bitter in competition with its one real ale (Burton Ale). When the Burton runs out the Salutation becomes a keg-only pub, and this happens not infrequently.

The **Gamecock** (Wilsons) has been sold to Nazmu Virani's Control Securities and so keg Tetley and Belhaven have replaced real ale.

The formerly keg-only **Falstaff** (Wilsons) now sells real ale. However, on a recent visit the handpumped Wilsons bitter was not available and Boddingtons bitter was the "guest beer".

INNER CITY PUB CLOSURES

We all know that Greenalls have lost interest in brewing, but they don't seem to be desperately interested in running pubs either. The Broughton Tavern in Salford and the Bobbin in Beswick are both boarded up.

CONSERVE YOUR PUBS

Don't forget the Pub Conservation Day at the Crescent on Saturday 24th November, from 11am to 6pm. There are still some places left, so if you want to participate in an event which is a must for anyone interested in saving pubs, please contact Roger Hall without delay.

Well, there used to be lots of it around, if I can believe what the old-timers told me during a recent visit. Copenhagen had about a dozen breweries "within living memory", but now there are only three - Carlsberg, Tuborg and Bryggeriet Apollo. The first two you will have heard of, but not, I fancy, the third.

To set this in context, the Danes are not best known as beer drinkers. The national drink is an unpleasant, schnapps-like solvent called Aquavit. This is flung back at speed, before it gets anywhere near the drinker's tastebuds. Slow drinkers will be punished with a sensation somewhere between toluene and methyl methacrylate. As the solvent is on the way down, the Danish drinker will chase it with a mouthful of lager, partly to obviate the need for throat surgery and partly to drive the alcohol out of the gut and into the bloodstream.

All this goes on between nibbles of raw fish and incompetently-made sandwiches called smorrebrod (which have the food on the outside and the bread in the middle). After about twenty minutes, most Danes are completely pissed. Now, the role of the lager in all this is not exactly prominent. It is there purely to chase down the Aquavit and, by virtue of its high CO₂ content, get the alcohol rapidly into the blood.

This explains a lot. I have sometimes tasted lager, and have asked myself the question, "Why?" Deprived of the Aquavit, raw fish and cocked-up butties, no wonder I did not understand. But on discovering that lager is used in its own backyard in the same way that we add vinegar to fish and chips, all becomes clear. Which begs the interesting question, "Would the Danes swallow it, literally, if bombarded with telly adverts eulogising Sarson's as a beverage?"

Just recently, Carlsberg have started bottling a few new styles of "lager". I mean bottling, too. You cannot get any beverage in a can in super-Green Denmark. One is a gold-label version of their ubiquitous "Hof" brand. The Gold Label drink is still served with enough dissolved CO₂ to flatulate a rhinoceros, but after drinking six or seven you can definitely feel the effects of the alcohol. Then there is "Carlsberg Stout", black as the hobs of Hell, unexpectedly tasty - somewhere between Mackeson and Russian Stout - and definitely alcoholic.

The Danes seem to have taken to drinking these two without the Aquavit, raw fish, etc, and spotting the trend, some genius opened Copenhagen's first brew pub since the Middle Ages - Bryggeriet Apollo. On Vesterbrogade and bolted on to the Tivoli Gardens, it has

Restoration Macdonalds architecture outside and is all stripped pine and businessmen inside. Try not to let this put you off; they really do have the only real ale for hundreds of miles.

Served in oversized 250cc glasses (and no other way), BA's one style is slightly cloudy (like Waddie's), has a dull amber colour (like Robinson's), a densely malty flavour (like Sam Smiths) and a long, sweetish aftertaste (like Fullers ESB). Six of them put me in quite a good mood, though at Dkr 19-00 a glass, the total outlay of £10 is painful by UK standards but par in high-priced Denmark.

I got to talk to a member of the brewing staff - not difficult as the brewing process can be watched whilst you are having your drink. He confirmed the evidence of my own eyes: no pasteurisation, no chilling process and only light filtering to recover the yeast. No mysterious fractionating columns, no computer-controlled refrigeration gear, no pallets laden with unmarked sacksful of mystery ingredients and the laboratory consisted of a rack of hydrometers.

The food is good, too, and you can pull back some of your outlay on beer by stopping off for lunch. It's all "green" food (no additives, no chemicals, no dyestuffs) and to be on the safe side they even make up their own mustard and ketchup!

HOLTS CORNER

Stewart Revell

Work on the new pub at Weaste is reaching its final stages. All being well, the pub is due to open on Tuesday 4th December. The winner of the name-the-pub competition came up with "Ashley Brook". Apparently a small stream of that name runs through a pipe near Ashley Street.

Work has started on enlarging the lounge at the Grafton, C-on-M. When completed, the room will be some 50% bigger.

Bruce Davenport, now looking after the Griffin at Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, is looking forward to his pub being enlarged. The basic building will not be affected; extra rooms are to be added on the waste ground at the side, where cars normally park. The Griffin is a listed building and it is expected that the new stonework, windows, etc, will match the present style of architecture.

Work is due to commence any time now on the replacement Bridgewater Hotel at 197 Manchester Road, Hollinwood, Oldham. The old pub is coming down for road widening.

A site for a new Kings Arms (also Hollinwood) has not yet been decided. The old pub is to come down to make way for the extension of the M66.

LETTERS



VAUX BEERS

Sir - At the end of Leo King's "King's Ale" article (August WD), he included Chairman's Dark in his list of Vaux Group's beers. Sadly, this has not been available for many moons now. The good news, however, is that there is a Kirby Ale, selling for £1 a pint when I was last in Sheffield. This is delightful and is just a wee bit stronger than your average pint of bitter. Good places to sample it are the Devonshire (opposite Wards Brewery) and the Royal Standard (St Mary's Gate). Wards have always enjoyed an excellent reputation for the tasteful way they improve their pubs and the Devonshire is a particularly fine example.

John Harrison

HAT & FEATHERS

It's almost two years since the Hat & Feathers became a free house selling Boddingtons. The pub, on Varley Street, Miles Platting, dates from the 1960s and started its life as a keg Greenalls house. Some four years ago the Hat & Feathers reached the nadir of its fortunes. The place was filthy and covered in grafitti. Stocks were low and a sparse clientele exuded a threatening atmosphere.

About three years ago Greenalls sold the pub into the free trade and Scottish & Newcastle beers were sold until December 1988, when the premises were bought by the present licensee. The Hat & Feathers has been transformed both physically and in terms of the clientele. The lounge is now used largely as a function room, but the vault is commodious and comfortable. The idiots and druggies who used to frequent the place have been turfed out and the atmosphere is much more comfortable and relaxed.

Handpumped mild and bitter (Boddies) and Marstons Pedigree are on sale. Pedigree doesn't sell too well because of the price (£1.15) and the Boddies bitter, at 98p, is over 20p more than the Holts at the Bradford 100 yards away. Yet the Hat & Feathers still manages to attract more customers than other local pubs. The area is gradually changing as new houses are built and this can only augur well for a well-conducted pub in what has been a problem part of the city.

Roger Hall



Branch Diary

BOLTON

Thur 8 Nov 8.30pm, Branch AGM at the George, Great Moor Street. Please note change of venue.

Thurs 15 Nov, Guest Beer Survey of Bolton town centre. Phone contact for details.

Thur 22 Nov, 8pm, Social, Alma, Bradshawgate.

Contact B Kerks, Bolton 658458

NORTH MANCHESTER

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

Wed 14 Nov, City Prices Survey. Meet Hare & Hounds 7-7.30

Wed 21 Nov, Branch Meeting, Marble Arch, 8pm

Wed 28 Nov, Weaste Crawl. Old Veteran 7pm, Langworthy 8pm

Wed 5 Dec, Swinton Crawl. White Horse 7pm, Park Inn 8pm.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thur 8 Nov 8pm, Deansgate Survey, starting at Mulligans Bar and finishing at Crown & Cushion, near Victoria Station

Sat 10th Nov, all day. Houghton Trip, via Liverpool for lunchtime and Chester in the evening. Train times to be confirmed.

Thur 15 Nov 8pm. Branch Meeting and Pub of the Month award at the Legh Arms, Sale

Thur 22 Nov 8pm. Flea & Firkin pub, All Saints, Manchester. Then joining South M/cr Branch at the Grey Horse for their Pub of the Month award, 9pm.

Thur 29 Nov 8pm. Timperley Survey, starting at the Sylvan; then Moss, Stonemasons, and finish at the Quarry Bank.

Thurs 6th Dec 8pm, Committee Meeting at the Railway, Sale.

Sat 8th Dec, noon. Visit to Bury Beer Festival. Train times to be confirmed.

Sat 15th Dec, Christmas Dinner at Market Restaurant, Manchester

Contact: Allan Glover 061 876 0340 (w), 061 962 9890 (h)

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

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

Tues 13 Nov 7pm, Visit to Manchester Police Museum & City Centre Crawl. Ring for details.

Tues 20 Nov 8.30pm. Committee Meeting, Old Dun Horse, Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom.

Sun 25th Nov, 12 noon. Lunchtime Social. Navigation, Drake Street, Rochdale

Tues 4th Dec 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, The Junction, Middleton (near Lees Brewery).

Fri 7th & Sat 8th Dec BURY BEER FESTIVAL See advert for details. For information and staffing ring branch contact.

Tues 18 Dec 8pm, Branch Christmas Social at the Woodthorpe, Bury Old Road, Heaton Park, Prestwich. All welcome.

Contact: B Lee 061 766 6601 (w), 0706 824407 (h)

MILNROW BEER FESTIVAL

Milnrow boasts its first beer festival this month. A dozen or so brews, ranging from Holts bitter to Oak Wobbly Bob, will be on sale at the Milnrow Community Centre, Royd Street (rear of Dale Street), 11am-10pm, Saturday 17th November.

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Tues: 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

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Thur: 12.00-4.00 6.00-11.00

Fri: 12.00-11.00

Sat 12.00-4.00 7.00-11.00

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