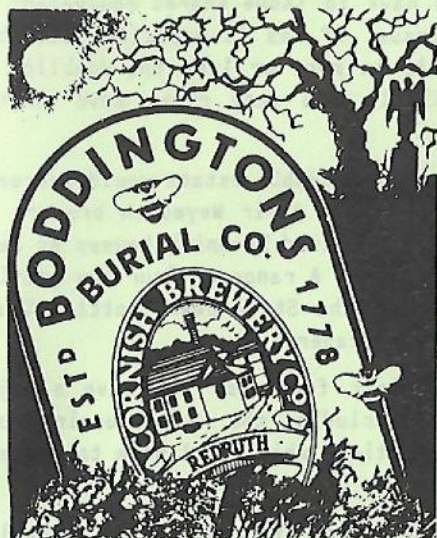


WHAT'S DOING

MAY
1991



THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE



BAD BOYS BODDINGTONS BID FOR DEVENISH

Local pub-owning group Boddingtons has mounted a hostile bid for West Country brewer Devenish, famous in these parts for the range of Newquay Steam Beers. BodPubCo were offering ten of their shares for every seven of Devenish's, which at the time of the offer represented 224p per share or 210p cash. However, Devenish shares closed the same day at 232p and Bill Blake, Devenish's Financial Director, claimed that the true asset value of their shares was 285p.

Denis Cassidy, BodPubCo's Chairman, said, "Devenish has run out of steam. Its performance has declined sharply as a result of a discredited management strategy which has seen millions of pounds of shareholders' money wasted on ill-judged investments in brewing and brand development. We will dispose of the Devenish Brewery and merge the two businesses to create a powerful independent force in retailing."

While Denis Cassidy reckoned on raising £15-25 million from the disposal, independent analysts said it would be very difficult to find a buyer for the brewery and closure would be inevitable.

The two companies had held amicable discussions over a year ago but nothing came of them. Only a week or so before the bid, Devenish sold its 4% holding in Boddingtons for a loss of £1.4 million. 40% of Devenish shares are held by the board. Whitbread hold 15.3% of the Devenish shares so it looks as though once again the devilish duo could swing it.

As the bid stands, BodPubCo would have to issue shares equivalent to 75% of the number currently in issue. If, as is expected, BodPubCo have to up the ante, it will result in more or less the doubling of the number of their shares available - a very risky move in the current financial climate.

If the bid were to be successful, the BodPubCo estate would increase from 500 to 900 outlets. Devenish closed their Weymouth brewery in 1985 and the Redruth brewery supplies 355 tied Devenish houses as well as 45 Inn Leisure ones recently acquired. A range of four low gravity bitters include the draught version of the Steam Beer. Bottled Steam Beers range from stout to a very strong lager.

Bill Blake of Devenish summed up their feelings: "We have a major problem with Boddington's strategy, including the risky nursing home investment and their wholesaling operations which will have to compete against the majors."

If the bid succeeds it will halve the number of breweries in Cornwall, leaving St Austell the only survivor apart from the two home brew houses - the famous Blue Anchor at Helston and the Paradise Brewery at Hayle.

Paul Roberts

MILD MAY

Traditionally the month of May is the time of year to drink mild beers. Many bitter drinkers say they have tried mild but are not too keen on it - it lacks the bitter taste. As an alternative, why not try a pint of mixed? All the Holts pubs I've been in are quite happy to serve equal parts of mild and bitter in a pint pot and the price is a very modest 82p. Yes, I know, I've heard people say it spoils the taste of a good mild, or even that it spoils the taste of a good bitter. Others say that a pint of mixed is for drinkers who can't make their minds up! I prefer the view that you get the best of both worlds in one glass.

Stewart Revell

BODDIES GOES WEST?

Having moved out of brewing, Boddingtons would no longer be a danger to breweries. So went the conventional wisdom. Whitbreads are the bad boys who must be watched. Boddies had shut down Oldham Brewery, sold out to Whitbread, thereby ensuring the demise of Higsons, but severed their association with brewing. Breweries would remain safe from one former predator. But no! The pub-owning group is on the prowl again: not after breweries, you understand, but pubs. These are still largely owned by breweries, so what could be easier than to buy up a small brewery, keep the pubs and throw the brewery away?

Boddingtons' hostile bid of some £127m for Devenish, with 400 pubs and the Redruth Brewery, is unnecessary when thousands of pubs are about to come on to the market as Bass, Allied, Whitbread and Grand Met continue to shed their tied estate. The commercial wisdom of paying £317,500 per pub at a time when prices are poised to fall considerably is also questionable. The move would reduce choice in the West Country and lead to price increases both there and in Boddies pubs in this area. It must be resisted. Pub-owning chains, far from increasing choice as we had hoped, could become the harbingers of death for our remaining independent brewers.

Roger Hall

BUCK & HAWTHORN

Refurbishment work is almost complete at this rather special little Robinsons pub in Ashton. The lounge, games area and the tiny snug are unaltered, apart from new carpeting and upholstery where appropriate. New cellar access arrangements have reduced the bar area by a third, cut off some natural light and done away with the little cubby hole which was the remains of the outdoor department. The coping stones around the bar, said to be originally from Ashton Cemetery, have been retained and cleaned up. The impressive glazed timber screen entrance to the toilets has been taken down to provide extra drinking area and is to be reused as a bar canopy and possibly as a partial screen to the newly-built toilet block. Robinsons have been unusually accommodating to locals' and CAMRA's representations about this pub. They seem to recognise that the Buck & Hawthorn has character and needs sensitive treatment. It will be interesting to see how the re-use of the screen works out.

Peter Barnes

HOLTS GUEST

The Bridge Inn, Wigan Road, Westhoughton, is selling Holts bitter alongside the usual Whitbread range of ales.

TALLOW TUB UPDATE

Paul Mason

The campaign to save the Tallow Tub on Chapel Street, Salford, has gained a good deal of momentum. It is expected that the Planning Committee will be considering the application to demolish the pub and redevelop the Chesters Brewery site on May 4th.



The developers say that the removal of the Tallow Tub would create a better frontage on to Chapel Street and show off the railway viaduct to better effect. CAMRA are arguing that this can be achieved without knocking the pub down and, in fact, the Tallow Tub would form an ideal gateway to the site and a point of social focus for the buildings' new occupants.

The campaign has resulted in articles in local newspapers and all members of the Planning Committee have been lobbied. The Victorian Society is also taking an active interest. June's issue of What's Doing will contain up-to-the-minute details of the bulldozer's progress - or news that the pub has been saved.

WITCHWOOD

Alterations are taking place at the Witchwood free house in Ashton-under-Lyne. An extension will double the size of the concert room at the rear of the pub and this will be separated from the bar area so that the front part will remain as a traditional bar. Eight cask beers are regularly on sale at the Witchwood and the alterations are due to be completed at the beginning of June.

KING'S ALE

Leo King

JOHN WILLIE LEES

Further to my item on Manchester's J W Lees pub (WD March), I can now report that handpumps have been installed in both the vault and the upstairs lounge. Those in the lounge are assisted by electric motors, as the cellar is deep underground, but the beer tastes even better than before!

The John Willie Lees sometimes appears under used in the evenings - the pub is part of the Arndale Centre, dominated by the shops and the bus station. However, a change of image and a new name is on the way. At the licensee's suggestion, the thirteen-year-old John Willie Lees is to be rechristened the Lower Ship Inn, the name of the Wither Grove pub which it replaced when the Arndale Centre was built.

TOP CAT

The Top Cat Tavern in the Corn Exchange building on Hanging Ditch, across from the J W Lees, has been a long-time venue for keg Tetley beers. Now there is real ale in the form of John Smith's bitter at a modest 90p. The handpump is positioned on the bar facing the entrance for all to see.

FINCH FLIES IN

Simon Finch has left the Beer House on Angel Street, off Rochdale Road, and he now manages the Kings Arms in Chorlton-on-Medlock. This former Tetley house is the pub/brewery that produces Brendan Dobbin's range of beer, stout and lager. Brendan, who has brewed beers of many different colours and tastes - even some with aromatic hops - has taken his talents elsewhere. Both the Beer House and the Marble Arch continue to thrive and both regularly sell beer from Manchester's two remaining independent breweries - Holts bitter (Beer House) and Hydes bitter (Marble Arch).

CHANNEL ISLANDS ALE

Guernsey Brewery's LBA mild was on sale at the Crescent free house in Salford recently. It is a pleasant, dark and sweet drink with an og of 1036.6, which is quite high for mild. The high price (£1.45) is probably because of the vast distance the beer has to travel to get here. I wonder if this is a first time for the LBA mild in this country? If it is, then what better place to introduce it than Salford, where CAMRA was born!

BOARDED UP

The Crown & Kettle and the Ancoates on Great Ancoats Street remain closed and boarded up and Polars on nearby Swan Street is also shut.

This used to be the Old White Bear, an Ind Coope and then Tetley pub. It did not last long as Polars. Across the road, the Royal Crown (formerly the Smithfield Vaults) deserves more patronage. It is an extremely clean and comfortable pub, with Boddingtons bitter on electric pumps.

GOOD BEER GUIDE PUBS

The following pubs have been selected by the North Manchester branch of CAMRA for inclusion in the 1992 Good Beer Guide...



ANCOATS: Jolly Angler, Smiths Arms

BLACKLEY: Pleasant, Golden Lion

CHEETHAM: Queens Arms

ECCLES etc: Drop Inn, Crown & Volunteer, Park Hotel, White Lion, Stanley. (Try also: Queens Arms)

IRLAM: Coach & Horses

LITTLE HULTON: Dun Mare (Try also: Dukes Gate)

MANCHESTER CITY: Castle, Dutton, Unicorn (Try also: Wheatsheaf)

MOSTON: Blue Bell, Dean Brook

NEWTON HEATH: Robin Hood

SALFORD: Ashley Brook, Braziers, Crescent, Eagle, Peel Park, Welcome, Union Tavern

SWINTON & PENDLEBURY: Cricketers, Lord Nelson (Try also: Park)

OFF LICENCES

CAMRA HQ is compiling a list of speciality beer shops throughout the country. If you are aware of any such shops in this area, please let What's Doing know.

BLARNEY

We hear that brewer Brendan Dobbin has opened a pub called the White Hart in a remote skiing region of Bulgaria. Business is said to be booming, with wall-to-wall British skiers on the piste. We also hear that Mr D is in Norway, establishing a brewery. Anyone had a card from him?

WIGAN & DISTRICT

Dave White

The £1.30 pint has come to downtown Wigan, presumably to stay. Ind Coope Burton Ale at the RAVEN HOTEL has now reached this figure, and the same can be said of HARRY'S BAR further down Wallgate. The cask beers on sale here now are Theakstons best bitter and Youngers Scotch and, if you can make yourself heard above the cacaphony, the ale's in pretty good nick. But £1.30?!! If you venture to Harry's Bar on a weekday evening before 8pm then the Happy Hour prices knock 30p off a pint. Big of Harry...

On a slightly more modest scale, the VICTORIA, still on Wallgate, is selling the real stuff for the first time in light years; namely Tetley bitter at £1.18 a pint. The bar staff here still have a tendency to lunge for the gunge, so be sure to ask for cask. Perhaps the licensee of EDISONS on Hallgate will pass his "Traditional Tetleys Sold Here" plaque on to the Vic, since it hasn't served any purpose up to now.

Elsewhere in the town centre, Boddies bitter has replaced draught Bass in the OFFICERS CLUB, Barrack Square, which means that on a busy night you can't hear yourself think nor taste what you drink! The WHITESMITHS ARMS on Standishgate, meanwhile, has reintroduced Boddingtons mild to Wigan, again alongside the keg version. I understand that BodPubCo have bought this place back from Cafe Inns and the pub has quite improved of late.

The MARKET TAVERN on Mesnes Street is due to be blitzed, starting some time in May, and should be open again in August. It's only five years since Scottish & Newcastle resurrected the pub after a skirmish with Bolton Wanderers supporters, but I suppose they know best. Let's hope that the management continue their policy of a guest ale from the S&N range when the Tavern reopens.

Up the Weind now, and the OLD BRICK HOUSE (a name to conjure with, to be sure) has opened its doors again. Aficionados of keg beer will remember this place as DOLLARS (Tetley) or, before that, LET'S WINE BAR (Bass). You won't be disappointed anyway, as the place still serves fizzy Tetleys.

Just out of the town centre, the FLAMINGO HOTEL, Scholes, is back on cask. The unmarked handpulls dispense Greenalls bitter, which I'm sure tastes better than the Wilderspool brew of old. (What a pity Tetleys have loused up the mild). Scholes is not exactly awash with decent pubs, which makes the Flamingo a welcome oasis.

It's all go in Hindley, with pubs opening and shutting like nobody's business. The LANCASHIRE UNION on Wigan Road has re-emerged as the MINSTREL. This ex-Greenalls house, which once sold cask mild and keg bitter, is now a free house, though John Smiths bitter is currently the only real ale available. Just down the road, the SIR ROBERT PEEL is closed and boarded up. Maybe when the pub reopens Whitbread will do the decent thing and stock the traditional ales they always said they did. Then again, if it means Whitbread...

Still in Hindley, the EDINGTON ARMS on Ladies Lane has received the ultimate accolade of "Pub of the Year 1990" from Wigan CAMRA branch. A strange choice, you may feel, as the pub spent most of last year boarded up. The Edington does sell Holts beers, however, which is good enough for some people, as we know; and on that contentious note, TTFN...

REAL ALE AT THE VINE

After very many years the Vine Inn at Dunham Massey, near Altrincham, is selling real ale in the form of handpumped Sam Smiths OBB. This follows a recent change of manager: Les and Ann Coates have come from the Sun in September, Burnage, where they accumulated two "Pub of the Month" awards. Barrelage at the Vine is said to have increased significantly, to the extent that there is now a cellar capacity problem!

Food is available at every lunchtime session and early evenings Monday to Friday. Children are permitted inside the pub if eating, otherwise there is a beer garden with outside seating. A visit to the pub may be followed by a walk in the nearby Dunham Park or along the Bridgewater Canal.

ALL CHANGE AT THE WHITE LION

With the departure of Mike and Sylvia Daly from the White Lion, Castlefield, a number of changes have taken place. The exterior has seen a good deal of refurbishment and Chesters mild (90p) is back on sale.

PRICE INCREASES

As a result of the Budget increases, the managed house price of Holts is now 84p for bitter and 79p for mild. Most other brewers took the opportunity to ram their prices up by more than the four or five pence which the Budget demanded. Finding a pint for less than £1 anywhere other than in a Holts pub is now virtually impossible in most parts of Manchester.

LISTED PUBS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

There is often confusion about which pubs are listed buildings. In the past, certain pubs were thought to have been protected by listed status and the fact that they were not only came to light when the buildings were threatened by redevelopment. Pubs in conservation areas are given a measure of protection, but not as much as they would have if they were listed. What follows is a comprehensive schedule of the listed pubs in Greater Manchester. All are Grade II, except the Boars Head in Middleton, which is Grade II*.

If there are other pubs which you consider have sufficient architectural or historical merit to be listed, why not contact your local Conservation Officer? These days, more attention is being paid to Victorian and Edwardian buildings by conservation bodies, so it is worthwhile focussing attention on any worthy building, providing it has not been altered too much.

Peter Barnes

BOLTON AREA

Conservation Officer: Christine Ellis, 0204 22311 x6043

SWAN HOTEL, Churchgate

OLD MAN & SCYTHE, Churchgate

FINISHERS ARMS, Church Road

CROFTERS ARMS, Halliwell Road

STORK TAVERN, Halliwell Road

KINGS HEAD, Junction Rd, Deane

BLUNDELL ARMS, Chorley Old Road,
Horwich



BURY AREA

Conservation Officer: Harry

Hopkinson, 061 705 5317

LORD RAGLAN, Mount Pleasant

TWO TUBS, The Wylde

CHURCH INN, Church La, Prestwich

SHOULDER OF MUTTON, Holcombe

WATERSIDE INN, Summerseat

GRANTS ARMS, Market Place, Ramsbottom

DUKE WILLIAM, Duke St, Ainsworth

MANCHESTER AREA

Conservation Officer: Warren Marshall, 061 234 4585

DERBY BREWERY ARMS, Cheetham Hill Road

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, Chepstow St

NICKLEBY'S, Dale Street

STAR & GARTER, Fairfield Street

CITY ARMS, Kennedy Street

MR THOMAS'S CHOP HOUSE, Cross St

SAWYERS ARMS, Deansgate

VINE INN, Kennedy Street

WELLINGTON, Old Shambles

SINCLAIR'S, Old Shambles
 ST VINCENT, Oldham Road
 CROWN & KETTLE, Oldham Road
 CITY, Oldham Street
 CASTLE, Oldham Street
 BRUNSWICK, Piccadilly
 IMPERIAL, Piccadilly
 NEW UNION, Princess Street
 MARBLE ARCH, Rochdale Road
 WITHINGTON ALE HOUSE, Wilmslow
 Road, Withington
 RED LION, Wilmslow Rd, Withington
 YE OLD COCK INN, Didsbury
 DIDSBURY HOTEL, Didsbury
 FLEA & FIRKIN, Oxford Road
 RAMPANT LION, Anson Rd, Rusholme
 TURVILLES, Chester Road, Hulme
 BRITONS PROTECTION,
 Great Bridgewater Street



OLDHAM AREA

Conservation Officer: 061 678 4117

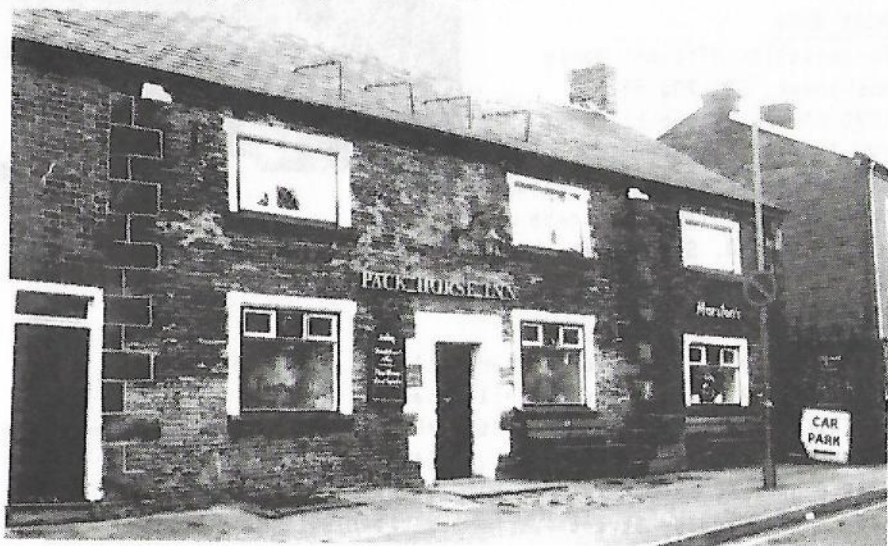
THROSTLES NEST, High Grove Road, Grasscroft

DOG & PARTRIDGE, Roundthorn Road, Oldham GRAPES, St John Street, Lees

CROSS KEYS, Runninghill Gate, Uppermill SWAN, The Square, Dobcross

WHITE HART, Stockport Road, Springhead

PACK HORSE, Wrigley Head, Failsworth



ROCHDALE AREA

Conservation Officer: Peter Bell, 0706 514360

OLD BOARS HEAD, Middleton

OWD BETTS, Edenfield Rd, Heywood

REED HOTEL, Reed Hill, Rochdale

GLOBE INN, Ramsden Rd, Wardle

RAKE INN, Blackstone Edge Old Road, Littleborough

TIM BOBBIN, Dale Street, Milnrow

EGERTON ARMS, Chapel Lane, Heywood

DUKES, Drake Street, Rochdale

YATES'S, Yorkshire St, Rochdale

WHEATSHEAF, The Square, Littleboro'



SALFORD AREA

Conservation Officer: Peter Baker, 061 788 8282 x1428

CROWN HOTEL, Blackfriars Street

PUNCHBOWL, Chapel Street

WHITE HORSE, Worsley Rd, Worsley

ELLESMERE, Walkden Rd, Worsley

QUEENS, Green Lane, Patricroft

CRESCENT, Crescent, Salford

KINGS ARMS, Bloom St, Salford

STOCKPORT AREA

Conservation Officer:

John Davies, 061 474 3532

ARDEN ARMS, Millgate

KINGS ARMS, Bridge Street Brow

CROWN INN, Didsbury Road

STAR & GARTER, Higher Hillgate

QUEENS HEAD, Little Underbank

BULLS HEAD, Market Place

BAKERS VAULTS, Market Place

BOARS HEAD, Vernon Street

SPREAD EAGLE, Hatherlow, Romiley



GEORGE & DRAGON, High Street, Cheadle
NORFOLK ARMS, Town St, Marple Bridge
STRAWBERRY GARDENS, Offerton Lane,
Stepping Hill

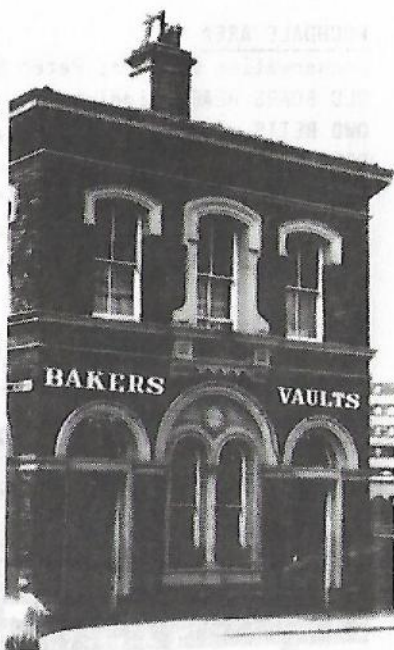
TAMESIDE AREA

Conservation Officer: David Morris,
061 344 3118
GODLEY HALL INN, Godley, Hyde
GUN INN, Market St, Hollingworth
STAMFORD ARMS, Huddersfield Road,
Stalybridge

ASSHETON ARMS, Booth Street, Ashton
COLLIERS ARMS, Mossley

TRAFFORD AREA

Conservation Officer: George Morton,
061 872 2101 x4814
UNICORN, Old Market Place, Altrincham
GRIFFIN, Stamford Rd, Bowdon
TRAFFORD PARK HOTEL, Ashburton Road E,
Stretford



WIGAN AREA

Conservation Officer: Philip Powell, 0942 821063
COLLIERS ARMS, Wigan Rd, Aspull BOARS HEAD, Market Place, Leigh
BOARS HEAD, Wigan Road, Standish MINORCA HOTEL, Wallgate, Wigan
BEES KNEES, Wallgate, Wigan SPRINGFIELD, Springfield Rd, Wigan

Kendlegate Wine Cellars Ltd.

164 Northgate Rd, Edgeley. Tel: 477 3939

Wide range of Belgian & Continental Beers.

Cask beers to order, glass hire, delivery service.

*Timmermans, Leifmans, Orval, Chimay, Duvel, Hoegaarden,
Rodenbach, Kwak, Westmalle, St Sixtus, Pinkus, and more.*

Worthington White Shield, Imperial Russian Stout.

Westons Scrumpy & Vintage Ciders.

Wide Selection of Wines £2 - £20

Parties & Functions supplied.

*Note: We operate under the Wholesale Licensing Act, therefore
minimum purchase is 24 bottles beer or 12 bottles wines/spirits,
which can all be different.*

Open: 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat, Closed Sun

Telephone orders accepted on a COD basis

PUB CLOSURES

Roger Hall

The continued closure of inner city pubs may in some ways be seen as inevitable as population declines and pub densities still remain well above the national average. One hundred and fifty years ago, when the population of Manchester and Salford was 288,362, there were 1,267 pubs - a ratio of 227 people per pub. Densities may even have risen during the next 25 years, but in the last 120 years a combination of Licensing Acts, Compensation Acts, rebuilding and changing social patterns has ensured a gradual increase in the number of people per pub. In England and Wales, with a population of around 50 million and some 70,000 pubs, the ratio is currently about 700 people per pub.

In parts of large conurbations, however, the ratio remains much lower than this, despite the demise of numerous pubs in those areas. In the old City of Salford, for example, in 1990 there were 163 pubs for an estimated population of 80,850, a ratio of 496 people per pub. In some areas like Blackfriars, Miles Platting and Ancoats the ratio may fall as low as 400 people per pub. Given the general economic climate and the particular problems of the inner city, we can expect a continued decline in numbers of pubs as ratios move towards a national average which itself is increasing.

If further closure is inevitable (and this may be as high as 50% in some areas) then it is important that CAMRA draws up lists of priority

pubs; those which must not be allowed to disappear. It will prove impossible to fight for every pub threatened with closure and we must ensure that pubs which are truly irreplaceable do not slip through the net. It's not hard to choose between, say, the Crown & Kettle and Polars, but in some areas the decision may be hard. In many cases the decision is made for us as closed pubs are vandalised and damaged beyond repair.



The Old Shears on Greengate in Salford was a building of character, dating back to the second decade of the nineteenth century and with a history reaching back to mediaeval times. Its acquisition by Control Securities was its death knell, although last orders had been called

on several occasions over the last few years. Closure and dereliction followed and the pub was eventually delicensed in April 1991. The Ordsall, with many happy memories for local CAMRA members, may soon disappear, as closure has already been followed by arson.

A campaign is currently under way to save the Tallow Tub, another pub of character near the old Threlfalls Brewery. The real danger here lies not in the rapacious intent of Whitbread, who want to develop the site, but in the well-trodden Salford path of closure, vandalism and demolition. Trade is poor and could result in closure before any decision is made on Whitbread's plans. The only way to prevent permanent closure is to go to the Tallow Tub and spend some money. Include it in your pub crawls and go out of your way to visit a link with Salford's history. In York, Chester and London many inferior pubs have survived and thrived. Help the Tallow Tub survive its second century and become a focal point for a revitalised Blackfriars of the 21st century.

BODPUBCO NEWS

Peter Barnes

The Stamford Arms, Bowdon, and the Royal Central (Cox's Bar) in Manchester have reverted from the "Henry's Table" trading subsidiary to the PubCo and will be treated as proper pubs again. The steak bar at the Stamford Arms is to be converted back to a function room. Can we have the Cock, Worsley, back as well, please?

BodPubCo has taken Innpreneur leases on three Grand Metropolitan pubs - Unicorn, Peel Green; Seymours, Chorlton (name to be changed to the Grove) and the Elizabethan, Whitefield. These pubs will continue to serve Grand Met beers, plus Boddington beers as guests. They will also be reclaimed as proper pubs again. All the tat is to be ripped out and in some cases a vault will be reintroduced. Judging by the success of some recent Boddington refurbishments, the result is likely to be a great improvement.

The Robert Cain Brewery, operating from the ex-Higsons Brewery in Liverpool, now have an agreement with BodPubCo and, after being introduced into many Merseyside pubs, Cains Bitter is to be brought to the following pubs in the Greater Manchester area: Mersey Vale, Heaton Mersey; Swan, Wilmslow; Stamford Arms, Bowdon; Ladybrook, Bramhall; Offas Dyke, Bollington; Waggon & Horses, Bollington.

Contributors to this issue: Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, Peter Barnes, Rob Magee, Leo King, Keith Egerton, Paul Roberts, Bert Kerks, Brian Gleave, Phil Pearson, Glenn Worth, Dave White, Bill Collier

BURTONWOOD SHUFFLE

Burtonwood Brewery and Cafe Inns (a pub-owning group) have formed a company called Vantage Inns to run a number of Burtonwood pubs. These will still be fully tied to the brewery and so it is difficult to see the advantage in 'Vantage Inns'. Perhaps it is an Enterprise Allowance Scheme for accountants. The Vantage Inns are...

Poacher, Scot La, Blackrod, Bolton	Radclyffe Arms, Middleton Jct
Red Lion, Blacknape, Darwen	Red Lion, Wrexham Street, Mold
Royal Hotel, Bank St, Golborne	Royal Oak, High Lane, Hazel Grove
Sportsmans, Chorley Old Rd, Bolton	Trafalgar, Manchester Old Rd, Bury
Waggon, Milnrow, Rochdale	Westminster Hotel, Ellesmere Port
York, Newport Street, Bolton	Zetland, Zetland Street, Southport
Cross Keys, Golborne Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield	
Cyn's Tavern, Little Hulton	Dog & Gun, Long Lane, Aughton
Dog & Partridge, Atherton Rd, Hindley	Euxton Mills, Wigan Rd, Euxton
Ellesmere, Lancaster St, Hindley	George & Dragon, Church St, Flint
Grove, Rochdale Rd, Blackley	Horseshoe, Wigan Road, Standish
Mechanics, Pentre, Queensferry	New Inn, Radcliffe Road, Aspull
Oak Tree, Belle Green La, Ince	Old Springs, Spring Rd, Kitt Green
Albert, Spotland Rd, Rochdale	Alma, Bradshawgate, Bolton
Almond Tree, Abbeystead, Digmoor, Skelmersdale	
Amberswood, Manchester Rd, Ince	Black Bull, Old Langho, Blackburn
Bold Hotel, Poolstock La, Wigan	Cholmondley Arms, Frodsham
Commercial, Heath Rd, Ashton-in-Makerfield	Holts Arms, Billinge
Concert, Bolton Rd, Atherton	Cross Gates, Blacko, nr Nelson
Beacon, Dalton Heights, Upholland	Bridgewater, Liverpool Rd, Hindley
Cavendish, Brindle, nr Chorley	Delph Tavern, Tontine, Orrell
Cross Keys, Bolton Rd, Ashton-in-Makerfield	Moorgate, Scot La, Aspull
Halton Castle, Westhead, Ormskirk	Houghton Arms, Earlestown
Railway, Station Rd, Parbold	Spinners, Atherton Rd, Hindley Gn
Springfield Arms, Coppull	Station, Church St, Orrell
Victoria, Ormskirk Rd, Upholland	Worthington, Market St, Hindley
Windmill, Manchester Road, Sudden, Rochdale	

GUEST BEERS AT THE BRITONS PROTECTION

The Britons Protection on Great Bridgewater Street has added yet another guest beer to its growing selection. In the last month or so Batemans XXXB, Pendle Witches Brew and Timothy Taylor Landlord have been on sale alongside the regular range of Burton Ale, Tetley bitter, Jennings bitter and Robinsons Best Bitter. All beers, guest and regular, are in top condition, but be warned - take plenty of cash, as they are all "reassuringly expensive".

NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.55

ALBION INN

Market St, Stalybridge

The Albion Inn has been closed for many years, although the derelict building is still standing, opposite the bus station. It opened in the 1830s and by 1890 the pub was owned by local brewer John Heginbotham. Two years earlier he had built the Borough Brewery on Borough Street, behind the Grosvenor Hotel. His family had been in the brewing business since 1851, when Joseph Heginbotham ran the Kings Arms further along Market Street.

The Albion became Heginbotham's wine and spirit stores and the engraving dates from the 1890s. An advertisement of the time mentions the Albion's "large cellars for bottling ales and stout. There is also a fine cellar for the storage of wine in butts, many of which range in capacity from one hundred to four hundred gallons; other cellars adjoin this for keeping wines, spirits and liqueurs in bottle; and at the back of the premises there is a large shed for empty bottles and for bottle-washing purposes." The Albion held stocks of "foreign



wines, spirits and liqueurs, with a choice selection of whiskies and foreign spirits. Bass's ale and Guinness's stout are specialities; and careful attention has been given to the importation of select brands of Havana and other foreign cigars."

Heginbotham's Brewery went into liquidation in 1914. There were four tied pubs - Kings Arms, Grosvenor Hotel, Foresters Refuge (Vaudrey Street) and the Albion - and a beerhouse, the Royal Archer on Kenworthy Street. Robinsons of Stockport bought the pubs and ran the Albion until it closed in the 1960s.

LETTERS



UNHOLY ALLIANCE

Sir - May I correct Roger Hall's rather inaccurate article in the April edition of What's Doing. Roger lists Allied's Birmingham brewery as producing Ansells bitter and mild. Sadly, this excellent brewery was closed in 1981 following prolonged industrial action and the former Aston-brewed beers are now produced at Burton. They lost much of their character in the move. Roger also lists HPD bitter and mild from the Wolverhampton brewery. Again, this is wrong. Only the Entire is produced at Wolverhampton; the mild and the bitter come from the Tetley factory in Warrington. Even the Entire is a shadow of its former self since its move from the original brewery at Oldbury.

To be honest, I cannot raise any enthusiasm to save any of the beers listed as they are all "badge" beers, with little resemblance to the original products. Most are brewed many miles from where they originated. The only exception to this is Ind Coope Burton Ale, and again this has been extremely inconsistent of late.

Paul Roberts

SHIP SHAPE

The Ship in Irlam should soon be on real ale (see WD Jan). The pub has been a Greenalls keg establishment for many years and has a reputation for being popular with the younger end of the market. However, it is still a good pub, with a spacious lounge, a good vault and a separate snooker and pool room. The Ship is due for a refit by Greenalls PubCo, so let's hope the essential character is enhanced rather than destroyed.

rupert

Getting Eddy Nestfeather to listen to you is like juggling with soot. Just because he's been editing this cheeky little number since Moses had all his naughty parts, he's somewhat unwilling to take advice from those whom he regards as Johnny-come-lately smartarses teaching their grandmothers to suck eggs. Merely because people pay for What's Doing instead of picking up highly wonderful freebie ad-sheets confirms Eddy's vindication of his ongoing editorial policy.

However, I firmly believe in listening to new innovative ideas which may happily result in synergistic serendipity. Take the latest guru at HQ, who's taken over from such glitterati as Tom Duckfoot and Mr Hammerstein in telling editors why they've got their mags wrong. This one's a bit different; he's brought a new electronic John Bull kit to the job and instead of concentrating on content, looks at form. He brings to the task a freshness of mind unsullied by ever having had to do something as mundane as editing a newsletter, particularly one that punters have to pay for.

Consequently his ideas are vibrant and exciting and should not be dismissed as gift wrapping a turd. Presentation is important. The layout of

What's Doing is boring and repetitious, to say nothing of the content, which is boring and repetitious. I've tried to impress on Eddy the superiority of serif body type, leaving demi bold sans serif to headlines à la Guardian. Newspapers are produced in narrow columns; What's Doing should follow suit. I'm sick and tired of watching people fall asleep over the front page and their thirteenth pint of Drabs merely because the typeface and layout are not sufficiently interesting.

I urge all those who manage to plough through this turgid dog's breakfast to send missives to Mr Nestfeather, requesting that he pay immediate attention to improving the appearance of the magazine. If What's Doing is to be the coffee table mini bugle-ette of the nineties, we've got to get it looking right now.

When we've done that we can also look at ways of filling it with expensive adverts, remove some of the contentious material, modify the cynical iconoclastic attitude and make it freely available in the smarter wine bars and eateries of Greater Grotley. Complacency is dangerous, Mr Nestfeather. Look to your laurels, which may be poisoned thorns. Listen to your callow critics - innovate or moribund become.



Branch Diary

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 7 May 8pm, Branch AGM. Old Blue Bell, Wash Lane, Bury. Food available. All welcome

Tues 21 May 8.30pm. Committee meeting, Napier, Bolton Street, Bury

Sat 25 May. Thank you trip for Bury Beer Festival workers. Coach trip to Keighley and Bradford. Tel. Graham Mason 061 665 3032 for details

Tues 4 June 8.30pm. Branch Meeting, Wheatsheaf, Derker Street, Oldham
Contact: B Lee, 061 766 6601 (w), 0706 824407 (h)

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thur 2 May 8pm, Committee Meeting, Windmill, Carrington

Thur 9 May 8pm, Broadheath Survey, starting at the Cheshire Cheese; then Railway, Packet House and onwards.

Thur 16 May 8pm, Branch Meeting, Malt Shovels, Altrincham

Sat 18 May, lunchtime. Visit to Holly Bush Rally. Train time from Branch Contact

Thur 23 May 8pm, Mobberley Survey, starting at the Chapel House, then the Railway

Thur 30 May 8pm, Visit to Stockport Beer Festival

Thur 6 June 8pm, Committee Meeting, Bleeding Wolf, Hale

Sat 15 June, Tyldesley Crawl.

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

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 1 May, City Centre Crawl. Hare & Hounds, Shudehill 7pm; Unicorn, Church Street, 8pm

Wed 8 May, Committee/Social, Queens Arms, Green Lane, Patricroft, 8pm

Wed 15 May, Branch Meeting, Marble Arch, Rochdale Rd, Manchester, 8pm

Weds 22 May, Stalybridge. 6.51 train from Piccadilly, arrive 7.06. Also trains from Victoria

Wed 29 May, Hyde Road Crawl. Coach & Horses, Belle Vue Street, 7pm. Travellers Call, 8pm

Wed 5 June, Waddy's Birthday Crawl of Eccles. Lamb 7pm, Crown & Volunteer 8pm, White Lion 9.30pm. Finishing with a curry.

Sun 9 June. Great North Western Beer Festival Post Mortem Meeting at the York, Newport Street, Bolton. Noon.

Contact: Roger Hall 061 740 7937

WIGAN

Weds 22 May 8pm, PUB OF THE YEAR, Edington Arms, Ladies Lane, Hindley. All welcome.

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

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