

WHAT'S DOING



JUNE
1991

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

HOLTS HUNDRED



Holts have bought their hundredth pub – the Gardeners Arms at the top of Hollin Lane (Top of Hebers), Middleton. It is a large ex-Whitbread "estate" pub.

Meanwhile, work has started on their hundred-and-first. The new Hyde Park Corner on Silk Street/Adelphi Street, Salford, should be open by Christmas.

Earlier this year Holts announced a record £5.72m profit. Turnover was up from £15.1m to £17.8m.

AIN'T WHAT SHE USED TO BE

The Grey Mare on the corner of Grey Mare Lane and Ashton Old Road is boarded up, presumably in advance of the road widening scheme which has claimed other pubs in the area.



GUEST BEER LAW

One year after its introduction, the Government's guest beer law is still not working as well as was intended, although there have been some successes. National brewers have widened the choice of real ales they offer, some small breweries are benefitting from increases in sales and the availability of real ale is on the increase. However, many tenants fear reprisals from their brewery if they take up their right to buy beer from another source.

According to "Publican" magazine, up to 30% of eligible tenants are stocking some sort of guest beer, but the majority of these are bought through their brewery's approved list. The law needs to be clarified so that tenants know they have the right to buy from a source other than their brewer landlord.

Publican's research found that 5% of all eligible tenants say they do not stock guest beers because they fear reprisals. It appears that too few tenants are prepared to complain to the Office of Fair Trading about intimidation, and even if Publican's figure is correct, over a thousand tenants have been frightened off stocking a guest beer.

MORE BREWERY CLOSURES

The current business climate is likely to bring about the closure of several more breweries. The Boddingtons bid may have failed to acquire Devenish, but the attempt has sealed the fate of the Redruth Brewery. Devenish pubs will be supplied by Whitbread, who will take over the brewing of Newquay Steam beers.

Brent Walker's dire financial position has brought about the impending closure of Camerons. The pubs are likely to be supplied by Allied, who have decided to remain in brewing and shed further pubs.

The country's biggest brewer, Bass, has announced the closure of two breweries. Nobody is likely to shed any tears about the products brewed at Runcorn, but it is there that most of the jobs will be lost. Fewer jobs will be lost at the company's Springfield brewery, but this will mean the disappearance of yet another real ale.

Naturally, CAMRA has mounted two further after-the-horse-has-bolted campaigns, a la Higsons, to save Camerons and Springfield. Too late, I'm afraid, once the decision's been made. When will we learn to identify vulnerable breweries early, when action may well save them, rather than after all the redundancy notices have been handed out?

Roger Hall



QUEST FOR KEG PUBS!

Peter Barnes

This is not as strange as it sounds. Usually the only comprehensive lists of pubs for an area are the ones of real ale pubs published by CAMRA and which occasionally appear in What's Doing. Knowledge of the whereabouts of the remaining keg pubs is patchy and these are not normally frequented by CAMRA members. Now and then attention is focussed on a keg pub which has converted to real ale or because it is an untouched little gem. The fact is that many keg outlets are still relatively unspoilt traditional pubs because they have a low turnover, exist in backwaters and are sometimes run on a low-profit basis by a long-term licensee approaching retirement. The Railway, Didsbury, came into this category for many years; also the Colliers Arms, Mossley (is it still the same?). The Tallow Tub in Salford was a keg pub for many years until 1988 and is still mercifully unchanged, albeit threatened with demolition.

It would be nice to know about these untouched keg pubs because often, by the time they appear on the real ale scene, they have been refurbished by the brewery or owner, lost their individual qualities and just look like hundreds of other modernised pubs. If anyone knows of any in the Greater Manchester area or elsewhere, please tell What's Doing about them.

BODS IN BOOTHSTOWN?

BodPubCo have applied to build a new pub on Booths Hall Way, near the Bridgewater Canal, Boothstown. The pub will be part of a development which includes the clearing of the canal basin and building some 35 houses.

KENYON ARMS

Alan and Pat Gray, who have been tenants at the Kenyon Arms (SEN), Little Hulton, for the last few months, are to reintroduce cask ale - either IPA or Scotch bitter on handpump. The Kenyon is their first pub and the place has been smartened up.

BROADHEATH GAIN

This month sees a rare real ale gain in the form of Draught Bass at the Navigation at Broadheath, Altrincham. The beer is served by hand-pump into "flower vases", however, and this means you have to watch carefully the amount that you are actually being served, particularly as a fairly tight sparkler is used to give a creamy head. Yes, really! On Bass!

ECCLES UPDATE

Boddingtons is becoming almost as common as Holts in the Eccles area these days. In addition to the nine Boddingtons pubs in the area, Boddies bitter is now also available at the Top House (Railway), Church Street, alongside the usual Tetley/Walker/Burton range, and also at the Town Hall, together with Websters/Wilsons beers. It is probably also available in some of the Whitbread pubs which members of the local CAMRA branch tend not to visit.

The Duke of York now stocks eight beers: Thwaites bitter, Chesters mild and bitter, Taylors Landlord and Ram Tam, Marstons Pedigree, Bentleys Yorkshire bitter and a guest beer.

The Oddfellows (Wangies) in Patricroft now serves cask Greenalls beers plus Stones bitter. The pub has had a complete refit and is now smart but soulless.

1992 GOOD BEER GUIDE

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA has selected the following pubs for inclusion in the next Good Beer Guide...

Legh Arms, Sale
Peveril of the Peak, Manchester
Vine, Manchester
Cornbrook, Hulme
Manor Hey, Urmston
Orange Tree, Altrincham
Melville, Urmston
Swan with Two Nicks, Little Bollington, Dunham

Hope Inn, Cornbrook
Railway, Sale
Quarry Bank, Timperley
Railway, Broadheath
Toll Gate, Old Trafford
Bakers Arms, Altrincham
Ye Olde No.3, Little Bollington,
Dunham

In the "Try Also" category...

Malt Shovels, Altrincham Abercrombie, Manchester
Mr Thomas's Chop House, Manchester Railway, Hale
Briton's Protection, Manchester

PRESTWICH NEWS

The Turf Tavern, near Heaton Park, is up for sale. Although a Whitbread-owned pub, the Turf has been serving up excellent Thwaites bitter for the past ten years. As the nearest Thwaites outlet is practically in Bury (Swan & Cemetery), it would seem an ideal solution if Thwaites were to buy the Turf. Failing that, perhaps there is an opportunity here for Moorhouses of Burnley?

The Same Yet in Simister is "discounting" on the beer. Normally, Lees mild is £1.04 and bitter £1.08. If you call between 12pm and 8pm the "same yet" can be had at £1 per pint.

NOT ASIAN CORNER

Tarka Dhal

It is widely believed that CAMRA members have a keen, possibly unhealthy, fascination with Indian food. The "Asian Corner" of this magazine has hardly dispelled the idea.

By way of redress, it may be appropriate to look at another outlet for food, the sandwich shop. One such establishment is "Food for Thought", 8A Lever Street, Manchester. It offers good quality standard fare, breakfast items (black pudding, sausages, eggs, bacon, toast, etc), plate salads, filled baked potatoes and sandwiches to suit both vegetarians and omnivores.

Stereotypical CAMRA members should not despair, however, as pappadums, samosas and chicken tikka are available. House specialities "Bombay Blackout" and "Wortiwallah" are generously spiced and should suit those who despise blandness in all its forms.

WHEN GOD WAS A LAD

15 years ago... Back in June 1976 What's Doing was bemoaning the impending alterations to the Three Arrows at Rhodes and the imminent demise of the Papermakers Arms and the archetypal Docker's Wedge, the St James's Tavern in Ordsall. The same issue contained an article about the Town Hall in Eccles which brought the editor his first solicitor's letter. The Old Shears, the Flying Horse and the Waterloo were still open on Greengate and What's Doing was hoping to publish John Worthington's memories of pubs of Salford in the 60s. We're still waiting.

10 years ago... Salford Council were about to knock Regent Road down and Boddies wanted to demolish the Royal Oak near the brewery. Bitter was around 50p a pint and only 44% of pubs in central Manchester sold real ale. John Smiths were heavily criticised for not selling real ale and Rupert reported on the funeral of Bilko's pet parrot, Boddington.

CHORLTON LOSS

Chorlton is seeing a temporary loss with the closure of the Royal Oak, which appears to be undergoing another major refit. Let's hope that this will be better than the last one, and with luck the beer quality might improve as well.

DERBY CLOSED

The Bottom Derby on Rochdale Road, Harpurhey, is boarded up again. The Foresters, opposite, is closed; plans for a hotel don't seem to have come to fruition.

SIMON SAYS

Further to Leo King's report in May, Simon Finch has provided the following information...

Since 26th March he has been tenant at the Kings Arms, C-on-M, although Brendan Dobbin continues to own and operate the brewery in the cellar. So far as day-to-day running of the pub is concerned, Simon is independent of the brewery.

Whilst the range of West Coast beers stays, Simon has done away with pressure dispense except for Guiltless Stout. This is still on a font but there are plans to serve it unpressurised in one of the two bars. Guest beers should also appear by June. Meanwhile, Simon has responded to the Budget changes by DECREASING the price of bitter from 92p to 90p and the mild from 88p to 85p. We are assured this is not a gimmick, but a long term reduction. The back room is available for functions and the problem of the obtrusive cellar conditioning vent will be eliminated.

Pete Cash

BURTON BEERS

The Burton Arms on Swan Street, Manchester, now serves regular guest beers. Recent guests have included Flowers IPA, Kimberley best bitter and Premier Knightly bitter.

LISTED PUBS

Three further pubs listed for their architectural or historical interest have come to light since last month's feature:

White Lion, Delph Lane, Delph, Oldham

Cross Keys Inn, Oldham Road, Thurston Clough, Oldham

Hare & Hounds, High Street, Uppermill, Oldham

MIDDLETON MUTTERINGS

The Brunswick on Oldham Road/Townley Street is selling handpumped Burton Ale at £1.15 per pint alongside Dobbin's bitter and Tetley bitter. Keg Belhaven 80/- is also on handpump.

Across the road, the Railway (Wilsons) is now selling a guest beer. On my visit the guest beer had sold out, no doubt because it was such a novelty in that area - J W Lees!

DANNY BEER

Daniels on Chapel Walks, off Cross Street, Manchester, is selling handpumped Vaux Samson at £1.40 (£1 in happy hour).

NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.56

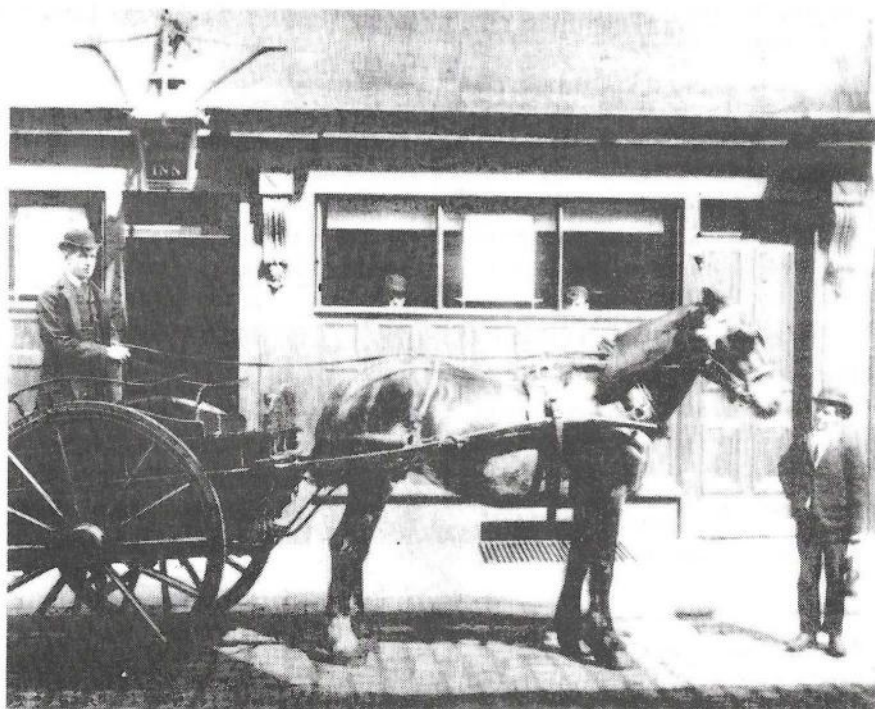
NEW MARKET INN

Corporation Street,
Stalybridge

The foundation stone of the New Victoria Market Hall was laid on October 6th 1866 and about the same time a house on nearby Church Street became a beerhouse called the New Market Tavern. It was first kept by John Woolley, but by 1872 William Higson was the licensee and the beerhouse was known as the Cheshire Cheese.

William Higson died about 1875 and his widow, Harriet, took over. A few years later the beerhouse was called the New Market again. About this time there were some town centre improvements which resulted in Church Street becoming Corporation Street. Swales' Brewery bought the beerhouse about 1892 and a few years later it became fully licensed.

The New Market's place in the annals of Stalybridge history was secured in the early hours of 31st January 1912. Lodging at the pub was Jack Judge, a singer at the Grand Theatre across the street. He



had spent the evening in a club with fellow entertainer Frank Newbury, manager of a troupe of performing seals, and had bet Newbury that he could write and sing a new song within 24 hours. As Jack made his way back to the New Market after midnight, a fellow night stroller commented, "It's a long way to..." Jack didn't catch the name of the place, but it gave him the idea for a song: "I added the word 'Tipperary', did a little thinking until bedtime, and after a fish breakfast in the morning I completed the song..."

"It's a Long Way to Tipperary" went down well with the Grand's audiences - even Frank Newbury's performing seals liked it - and the song soon became a standard of the day.



JACK JUDGE

The New Market Inn closed in 1932, but the composer was not forgotten and in 1953 band-leader Jack Hylton unveiled the Jack Judge memorial plaque on the wall of the old pub. (By then the building had been re-fronted and the original entrance, under the lamp in the old photograph, had been bricked up. The plaque was placed on this wall, between the windows.)

The building was pulled down about 1980 and the plaque was transferred to the wall of the Old Band Club in Corporation Street, where it can be seen today.

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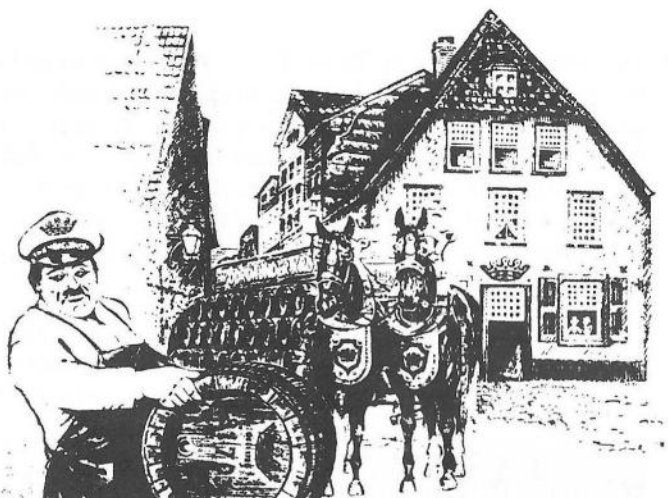
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DORTMUND DRINKING

Paul
Roberts



Although Germany boasts a wealth of scenery from the North Sea beaches to the Black Forest and Bavaria, one place which doesn't feature in the tourist brochures is the Ruhr Gebiet. This massive conurbation stretches north of Düsseldorf from Duisburg to Dortmund and includes Germany's fifth largest city (Essen). Although this region is Germany's equivalent of the Black Country, it still offers some remarkable scenery and is a must for anybody interested in public transport and, of course, beer.

The most famous brewing city is Dortmund. Indeed, when you alight at the main station you are greeted by a sign proclaiming Dortmund to be Europe's greatest brewing city – a claim which Munich would no doubt challenge. Dortmund is famous for seven large breweries and at one time gave its name to a type of beer. Sadly, the Dortmunder (Export) style is now almost extinct, even in its Heimat. Pils has replaced the stronger Export in most pubs and is supplemented by Alt (the original Düsseldorf style) in many outlets.

The Big Seven have begat two small "Hausbrauereien" (home brew pubs) in recent years. The first one to appear was in 1984 when a corner of the giant Dortmunder Thier brewery was transformed into HÜvels Hausbrauerei. (Named after Freiherr von Hüvel, one of the Dortmunder Thier brewery founders in 1854.) It produces a range of occasional beers, with HÜvels Bitterbier being always available. This is a very pleasant session beer and with an ABV of 4.4% is one of the weakest beers available in Germany (apart from the Schwankbiers – specially brewed



low alcohol beers). As well as the main bar and restaurant, there are several function rooms and a large beer garden complete with Brewery Maypole. The brewery is located at Hoher Walls 5-7. The Walls form the ring road on the site of the old city walls and a circuit of this takes in several of the breweries and many interesting little pubs.

Along the ring road, then off into Märkische Strasse, brings you to the Dortmunder Kronen brewery, which dates back to 1430 and has been in the Wenker family since 1729. Go through the main gates, take a left and there is the Brewery Museum. This is open every day except Monday and admission is free. It is a wonderful example of an old brewery and a series of numbered plaques on the walls leads the visitor around, explaining the brewing and bottling techniques. The cellar is the old lagering cellar, complete with the original oak casks. As you would expect in a German brewery, everything is spotlessly clean and after walking up and down the several flights of stairs you will certainly have developed a thirst which can be well satisfied in the in-site pub. This serves excellent value Export, Classic Pils, Pilskrone and Alt, all on draught and in absolutely excellent condition. There are brewery representatives on hand to answer questions and there is an English translation of the description of the brewery available on request. (This is more or less the script of a BBC programme filmed a few years ago.) A definite must for all beer enthusiasts.



The Kronen brewery has established a brand new home brew pub in the old Market Place called **Wenker's Brauhaus**, where nice, cloudy, unfiltered light and dark beers are available, along with the usual filtered styles for the less adventurous.

The other breweries in Dortmund are all worth sampling as they produce excellent Pils-style beers and Export versions. The first brewery you see

when you leave the station is Dortmunder Union Brauerei. The huge 'U' on top of the building can be seen from miles away in the evening. DUB linked with Schultheiss of Berlin in 1973 and this group owns part of the Dortmunder Ritter brewery. DAB (Dortmunder Aktien Brauerei) is part of a national group which includes the Berliner Kindl and Binding megabreweries, and also controls Dortmunder Hansa. The last brewery in Dortmund is the Dortmunder Stifts Brauerei, which no longer brews but has distinctive beers produced under contract by Thier.



In Essen there are two large breweries producing Pils-style beers - Stauder and Stern. The latter, as well as its huge central premises, has reopened the old Borbecker Dampfbier Brewery as a home brew pub. This lies a few minutes outside Essen and is directly opposite Borbeck Station (a half-hourly service on the local line to Haltern). A Salonbier (light filtered) and Zwickelbier (light unfiltered) are available, with occasional brews.

The beers outside the home brew pubs (which are a little pricy) in Essen and Dortmund are usually DM1.20 for a .2 litre glass, which translates into £1.12 a pint for a 5% ABV beer - this compares very favourably with Manchester prices and obviously the quality is very much higher, with all beers still brewed strictly in accordance with the Reinheitsgebot.

This area is a must for public transport enthusiasts and the number of trains and road routes is incredible. The area boasts the world's only monorail system - Vohwinkel to Oberbarmen - and this is an unforgettable experience, especially after a few pints! There is Germany's only trolleybus system - Solingen - plus the usual multitude of municipal tramways and independent bus operators. Essen has just developed a new diesel/trolleybus with overhead poles and a normal diesel engine. As the electric wires haven't yet been installed, Solingen's claim to fame is still safe at the moment.

The bargain area rail ticket is Area 645 Wuppertal (RUhr-Süd). This allows two people, travelling together, ten days' unlimited travel by DB rail and DB bus anywhere in the region for £22 each! The area also covers Düsseldorf, with its twelve Altbier breweries, and Cologne, with its two dozen Kölsch breweries, as well as allowing travel to the Dutch border town of Venlo. The tickets must be purchased in Britain before travel as they are only valid for non-German residents.

Gute Fahrt!

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Roger Hall, Rob Magee, Peter Barnes, Duncan Busman, Stewart Revell, Keith Egerton, Pete Cash, Bill Collier, Glenn Worth



TON DOWN

John Richards (he of radio fame) writes to renew his WD subscription and to admonish me for my foolish belief that Ansells was still brewed in Brum and to ask what happened to the Salford 100. Fifteen years ago we fondly imagined that there were 100 real ale pubs in the old city of Salford and a Salford 100 Club was set up for those intrepid imbibers who'd visited all one hundred. It soon became apparent that the figure was less than a hundred. Early tours of Salford revealed pubs which were no more and pubs which were on keg beer. In the last fifteen years we have lost no less than 51 of the original 95 real ale pubs, mostly through closure.

However, all is not doom and gloom. There are still 80 pubs in the city selling real ale. Sadly, pubs of character like the Red Cow, the Sun, the Flying Horse, the Papermakers and the Clowes are no more. Perhaps John Richards should retain his memories of things that used to be. For those of us who've been here ever since, a more blurred picture remains; the erosion has been gradual as "progress" has touched on different areas of the city. How many of the 100 will remain in another 15 years?

Roger Hall

LETTERS



DENNIS THE MENACE

Sir - In January 1989 Dennis Cassidy (Boddingtons Chairman) stated that cask ale was in terminal decline. In October 1989 he said "Consumption of ale is a reflection of yesterday's society". At the CAMRA AGM in Sheffield in March this year, Miles Templeman, Managing Director of the Whitbread beer company, said, "Cask ale will overtake sales of keg by the mid 1990s" and that sales of his group's cask beers "had grown by 40% in the past six months".

All major brewers report the same astonishing turnaround: keg sales falling, cask sales soaring, especially in the session beer sector - beers in the 1035 - 1040 original gravity range. Allied Breweries say that Tetley cask bitter sales in the North are growing at 3% per year and they expect the keg version of the beer to all but disappear. In the South West, Eldridge Pope report cask sales up by 60%. North or South, East or West, big brewers and smaller independents are all reporting more demand for cask conditioned ales.

Nearer to home, Oak Brewery has moved from Ellesmere Port to the Phoenix Brewery in Heywood, where production can be increased to meet demand. The old Higsons brewery is back in production and Cain's bitter is finding its way into more and more outlets.

It would appear to me that Mr Dennis Cassidy's style of chairmanship and his meagre knowledge of the brewing industry and consumer choice are what are really in "terminal decline", and that he himself is a mere "reflection of a chairman of yesterday's society" Glenn Worth

KINGS ARMS

Sir - Contrary to the report in "King's Ale" (WD May), Brendan Dobbin has not "taken his talents elsewhere" but continues to run the West Coast Brewery with deserved success at the Kings Arms in Chorlton-on-Medlock - where, incidentally, Simon Finch is tenant, not manager. Further, the White Hart at Pamporovo, Bulgaria, has not been opened by Brendan Dobbin, but does brew West Coast beers under licence.

Finally, I was amused to read that West Coast has "even" brewed beers with aromatic hops. The non-aromatic hop is mercifully a rarity, though admittedly Websters appear to have secured a supply.

Rhys P Jones

Sir - Leo King's column last month had two slight errors regarding the Kings Arms, Chorlton-upon-Medlock. Brendan Dobbin is still happily ensconced, brewing away below stairs. Up above, Simon Finch has taken the pub on a tenancy, and has used his resources to refurbish the front room. Live music is expected soon.

It is rumoured that the 1057.5og Chinese Pale Ale, which went down well at the Bolton Beer Festival, may soon become a permanent member of Brendan's family of beer.

Ken Birch

SMEDLEY REAL

The Smedley Hotel in Smedley Vale is now serving Boddies and Chesters on handpump.

EGERTON ARMS

BodPubCo's Egerton Arms, Winton, will shortly become a tenanted pub. However, BodPubCo tenants don't have a say in the choice of guest beers.

HOLTS IN IRLAM

Holts bitter arrived in Irlam on 19th April. It has been introduced as a guest beer at the Tiger Moth, Swallow Drive, Higher Irlam. The Tiger has a spacious lounge and separate vault. The beer is being actively promoted and its introduction has proved very popular.

Beer standards do not measure up

THE chances of getting a full pint of ale are low, according to trading standards officers who took part in a recent Greater Manchester-wide survey into the sale of draught beer.

Bury Councillor David Crausby, a member of the Association of Greater Manchester Trading Standards Committee, said: "Out of 65 pints purchased, only one was correct. The average deficiency was over five per cent, which represents about 6p on every pint. In one case there was a short measure of over 17 per cent. I can't believe how bad the results are."

The survey was carried out on draught "free-flow" beer served into proven glass measures which, according to the licensed trade, are preferred by North West customers who enjoy a head on their beer.

Coun Crausby observed: "There is an easy answer to this question and the breweries know it. That is to serve

the beer in a line glass which has room for a full pint including a head.

The Government should implement Section 43 of the Weights and Measures Act which states that the head on beer should be disregarded for the purposes of determining the measure."

FORBES' BREWERY

Pete Cash

Whilst holidaying on the Norfolk Broads in their flagship "Pink Champagne", members of the North Manchester branch of CAMRA stumbled across Forbes' Brewery and "Pub" at Oulton Broad, near Lowestoft.

An early evening visit was hastily arranged and the entire crew were met by Derek Longman, the brewer, licensee and general dogsbody. The brewery is owned by a Mr Forbes, who is no less than cousin to Lord Stradbrook. Derek took over the brewery from the previous tenants about eighteen months ago and inherited several problems. At first he could get no credit and was even accused of stealing other people's barrels and melting them down! Following a police raid and subsequent court case, all charges were dropped. (Some of the mystery barrels are still there.)

Derek is still encountering problems in getting his beer into local outlets. Brent Walker have a large degree of control over the whole-sale outlets, but much of Derek's venom is reserved for Greene King, who have given him a particularly rough time. His answer has been to have his own bar on the premises.

Officially designated a "Sample Room", this opened in November 1989 but didn't receive its first customer until February 1990! Now it is busy every night, and since credit has become easier there are expansion plans.

We were shown into the former windscreen fitter's shop next door where a large new bar is being installed. A stillage to the rear will dispense some of the beers on gravity. A children's room is also planned. The existing bar is spartan, but the low price (for the area) of the beers ensures a steady stream of customers. Bitter (1040) is 90p, compared to a local average of £1.40. Best bitter - "Traditional" - and Stout, at around 1050, are £1.20. Among the other beers made are Merry Monarch, Black Shuck (named after a dog) and Harvest, which local CAMRA branches praised and failed to recognise as a malt extract brew.

Stainless (ex-milk) fermenters are used: the current one has 300 gallons capacity and a new 420 gallon one is soon to be commissioned. Derek is proud of the purity of his beers and was quite scathing about other brewers' products, including Websters Yorkshire and Ushers, which he reckons are mashed from unmalted barley with added enzyme. His one big problem is the local water, which is very hard and has a high chlorine content which must be boiled out before mashing. The yeast is identical to Boot's "Dried Brewers Yeast"; malt is ground on

site and there must be a minimum efficiency of extract to satisfy Customs & Excise. Hops are mainly Hallertau, with Goldings for aroma.

Derek's bar is designated a "Sampling Room" under an agreement with the Revenue and Licensing Bench and so only Forbes' Brewery products can be "sampled".

Best bet for a quiet pint is the pub with no lager

A "novel idea" from Brent Walker. Let's hope that it catches on. The breweries may find (surprise, surprise) that these kinds of measures start to reverse the trend of declining custom at pubs. Who knows, they might also decide to put some internal walls back and reintroduce the vault and the snug. Before we know where we are we might have real pubs again!

A BREWERY has found the perfect answer to the problem of violent lager louts — the lager-free pub.

The experiment in social engineering is the brainchild of brewers Brent Walker.

They hope the ban will keep troublemakers away from the Plough at Ipswich, which reopens tomorrow after being closed by hooligans last year.

The brash interior has been refitted in more sedate brown and cream. Pool tables, a juke box and amusement machines have also been scrapped in an effort to make sure the pub remains peaceful.

The brewers think it can make money despite the fact that lager is now more popular than bitter.

John Overton, chief executive of the National Licensed Victuallers' Association, said: 'It's a novel idea. But I certainly wish them every success. If it catches on it could do very nicely, especially with fans of real ale.'

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.

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rupert



It was a fairly select meeting for one reason - it was with difficulty that Tish had managed to locate a suitable hostelry after we'd turned up at the appointed venue to find it burnt to the ground. A dearth of multi-roomed ethnic taverns due to demolition, closure and gentrification had necessitated a trek through the socio-economic group Z districts of the inner city until we ventured upon the Donkeystone-makers Arms in Nether Slumley. It was a four-roomed Brasso's house run by the same landlady since Hitler was in short trousers and to my mind it was a hovel. Admittedly they'd painted the place and it was clean, but it was cramped and crowded with tiny rooms where you couldn't swing a cat. It was difficult to find anywhere to sit because of dart teams wandering about, people playing crib and dominoes, a meeting of the pub angling society and a football team presentation for winning the Slumley Sunday League B Division Championship.

We managed to squeeze ourselves into a corner of a room where a fellow was playing an out-of-tune piano and who later in the evening was joined by out-of-tune Elvis Presley and Kathy Kirby impersonators. The subject of our discussion was the success of the Campaign in preserving pubs and breweries over the last decade and a half. I felt that much had been

achieved in ridding the country of many slum taverns, in introducing wonderful home-cooked food into our better establishments, in making premises more airy and spacious by knocking down superfluous walls and in bringing modern comforts such as background music, horse brasses and wall-to-wall carpeting to our more spartan outlets.

I was also firmly of the opinion that much had been achieved in terms of beer. Far more places serve amber nectar from the wickets and now that most of it is brewed by large brewers who know what they're doing, rather than by a man and a dog in a shed, the quality has also improved. Most of our marginal breweries have thankfully closed and the much-heralded benefits of the economies of large-scale production have been passed on to the consumer.

As I came to the end of my peroration, wherein I lauded the choice and variety of ales, their very reasonable price and the vast improvements in ambience and decor of our beloved alehouses, I was derided by my colleagues, which I have come to expect. I was, however, surprised to be carried outside by the locals and thrown into the Tykeley cut. I'm still wondering why.



Branch Diary

BOLTON

Tues 4 June, Trip to Hydes Brewery. Phone Neil on 0204 51694 for details.

Thur 6 June, 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Maxims, Bradshawgate, Bolton.

Fri 21 June, 7.30pm. Meet at Tavern on Hunger Hill for Wigan Road/Deane Road crawl.

Thur 4 July, 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street, Bolton.

Contact: Steve Rishton 0204 33352 (h) 061 723 2671 (w)

TRAFFORD & HULME

Sat 1 June, 8pm. Knutsford survey, starting in the Builders

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

Thur 13 June, 8pm. Deansgate Survey, starting in the Pack Horse, then Bridgewater, Crown, White Lion, Oxnohle, Commercial, Kings Arms.

Sat 15th June, noon. Tyldesley Crawl. Meet at Miners Arms

Thurs 20 June, 8pm. Branch Meeting, Rope & Anchor, Dunham. Also visiting the Vine.

Thurs 27 June, 8pm. Towpath Crawl, starting at the Old No.3, then Swan with Two Nicks, Axe & Cleaver, Swan, Bay Malton, Railway.

Sat 6th July, Hooton Trip. All day trip to Liverpool and Chester by train. Details from Branch Contact.

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

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 4 June, 8pm. Branch Meeting, Wheatsheaf, Derker Street, Oldham

Tues 18th June, 8pm. Committee Meeting, Royal Oak, Manchester Road, Werneth, Oldham

Tues 2nd July, 8pm. Branch Meeting, Old Boars Head, Long St, Middleton

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

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 5th June, Waddy's Birthday Crawl & Curry in Eccles. Lamb 7pm, Crown & Volunteer 8pm, White Lion 9pm.

Wed 12 June, Regional Meeting, Marble Arch, 8pm

Wed 19 June, Branch Meeting, Crescent, 8pm

Wed 26 June, trip to Belmont. Details from Peter Barnes

Wed 3 July, Queens Arms, Honey Street, 8pm

Sat 6 July, proposed tour of independent breweries' taps (afternoon).

Weds 10 July, Tyldesley Takeover: Colliers Arms, Sale Lane, 7pm. Half Moon 8pm

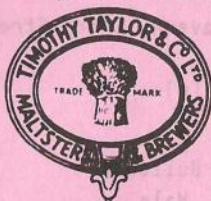
Contact: Roger Hall 061 740 7937

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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

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