

WHAT'S DOING



JAN
1993

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

HAT & FEATHERS



The Hat & Feathers on Mason Street (off Swan Street), Manchester, has a new licensee and an extended range of cask beers. This Whitbread pub now sells Chesters mild and bitter, Marstons Pedigree, Flowers Original and Castle Eden. A rotating guest beer - Boddingtons bitter, Fullers, Flowers IPA and Whitbread Best Bitter - will be tried.

MORE PUBS FOR BURTONWOOD

In November Burtonwood bought 13 pubs from Greenalls and last month they got 34 more from Tetley. Among them are the following:

Wheatsheaf, Oak St, Manchester	Rocket, New Lane, Bolton
Gladstone, Lwr Hillgate, Stockport	Bowling Green, Blackburn Rd, Bolton
Talbot, Market St, Stalybridge	Church, George St, Farnworth
Cock o'th'North, Wythenshawe	Lord Raglan, Water St, Radcliffe
Brindley Arms, Whittle St, Walkden	Abbey, Redcross St, Rochdale
Glass Barrel, Hindsford, Atherton	Red Rose, Lees New Rd, Oldham
Colliers, Frog Lane, Wigan	Staff of Life, Worsley Rd, Swinton
Three Crowns, Lwr Leigh Rd, Westhoughton	Carlton, Camp Street, Salford
	Keystone, Salford Precinct
Cotton Tree, Princess St, Bolton	
Founders, St Georges St, Bolton	

TOMMY DUCKS

At the end of November CAMRA and the Manchester Branch of the Victorian Society submitted their objections to Greenalls' planning application to knock down Tommy Ducks in Manchester. Greenalls want to replace the pub with an eleven-storey office block with underground parking.

The objection points out that the demolition of Tommy Ducks will be a significant loss to the character of the city centre, which has lost more than sixty pubs in the last twenty-five years. If the trend continues there won't be any left in another fifty years.

Tommy Ducks, like other city centre boozers, has a character that cannot be replaced, especially by designers whose only consideration is how much floor space can be squeezed into a project. The pub has been going for over 150 years and has connections with Manchester's old theatreland of Oxford Street and Peter Street. The knickers on the ceiling have been aggravating feminists for almost as long.

QUEENS LOSS OF COURAGE

1992 was an annus horribilis for Queens in both Windsor and Collyhurst. The Queens on Osborne Street was burnt down but reopened in October as a Vaux house serving Samson on electric pumps. The place looks quite smart and the clientele of "young headaches and druggies", which by all accounts frequented the pub in its John Smiths days, have been replaced by people who, whilst not geriatrically challenged, are, nonetheless, more mature.

CITY CENTRE PRICES

The annual survey of Manchester's pub prices took place on 25th November. Here are the key points:

- Number of pubs surveyed: 107
- Number of pubs with visible price lists: 52
- Pubs selling real ale: 90
- Pubs selling traditional mild: 23
- Cheapest pint: 84p (Holts mild, Crown & Anchor)
- Dearest pint: 171p (keg Boddies, Henrys)
- Dearest lager: £2 (Muswells)

Once again some disturbing trends can be discerned:

- * Traditional mild is on its way out
- * Real pubs are disappearing in favour of cafe bars
- * Some establishments are selling traditional and keg versions of the same beer with the keg discounted

There is, however, some light amongst the gloom. There is now more choice in Manchester, not all of it "badge-brewed". Vaux, Cains, Moorhouses, Oak and Thwaites are now fairly permanent features in an area which regularly offers some 50 beers from 35 breweries, with guest beers in addition.

The local independents still offer the best value for money - Holts, Hydes, Lees, Robinsons and Burtonwood - and generally still have the most traditional pubs.

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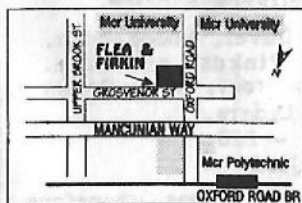
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MANCHESTER'S BIGGEST EVER BEER FESTIVAL

KING'S ALE

Leo King

The **UNICORN** on Church Street in Manchester hasn't changed much over the years. The bar area has been modernised, but the coloured glass ceiling illumination still exists, there is plenty of wood panelling and even some tiled areas remain. The pub has a pleasant atmosphere and the old room layout has survived.

The Unicorn was one of my father's favourite city centre pubs and when I was sixteen he took me with him to look at the beautiful interior. At that age I wasn't interested in the decor and I suspect his real reason was to make a man of me by buying me pints of draught Bass! I was too pissed to remember much of the visit, but I do recall him taking his Bass back to the bar to complain because it had a head on it. (Draught Bass was normally served flat in those days.)

In more recent times the Unicorn has seen a few not-too-popular licensees and one in particular will be remembered for the way he varied the closing time! If the pub was almost empty, you sometimes wouldn't be served if you walked in well before last orders. At other times you could be given your marching orders well before closing time whilst other customers were still being served.

However, all that is now in the past and the Unicorn is run by John Tilson and his wife, Jill. The bar staff are attentive and the beer is excellent. Four handpumped ales are on offer: Draught Bass, Stones bitter, Worthington BB and the rare Bass light mild (formerly Toby Light). Opening hours are: Mon-Thur 11.30am-10.30pm, Fri 11.30am-11.00pm, Sat 11.30am-3.00pm and 7.00pm-11.00pm, Sun 12.00pm-2.00pm.

At one time Bass had four pubs in Manchester, now they have two - the Unicorn and the Town Hall Tavern on Tib Lane. The Burton Arms on Swan Street is now a "Theakstons" pub and the fourth Bass pub was the Griffin, All Saints, now long gone.

Several other Manchester pubs belonged to far-away breweries. Among



THE CITY ARMS

KENNEDY STREET, MANCHESTER



BEER FESTIVAL

1ST - 20TH FEBRUARY

FEATURING - AMONG OTHER GUEST BEERS:-

ABC Bitter

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Bateman's XXXB

Coach House Innkeeper's Special Reserve

Thomas Greenalls Original

Jennings Snecklifter

Oak Bitter

these was the Railway (Higsons), opposite the old Knott Mill Station; the Gaythorn, Albion Street, and the Old Wheatsheaf, Deansgate, were both tied to Hammonds United Breweries, and the Old White Bear on Swan Street (now Polars and shut) was an Ind Coope pub.

KEN'S ALE

BodPubCo are turning another of their pubs into a "free house", along the lines of the Kings Arms on Bloom Street in Salford. This time it's the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport, and it is rumoured that the manager will be that well known local aficionado of the hop, Ken Birch.

NO IT AINT

Contrary to the report in last month's WD, Ye Old No.3, Little Bollington, is not threatened by the new road, but the road will pass just yards away. That's OK for a town pub, but it's a disaster for a pub with a large beer garden in an idyllic location by the canal.

NOT SO TEDIOUS TRAFFORD

Trafford has another real ale gain. The Bird in Hand, Flixton, now sells Tetley Walker bitter, Greenalls bitter and, at the time of writing, Youngs bitter.

BEER TAX

The beer drinkers of Britain contribute over £4 billion to the Exchequer and, with the 1993 Budget in mind, CAMRA is organising a petition to Parliament to point out that this is quite enough and we don't want to pay any more. The price of a pint of bitter includes about 24p excise duty and 20p VAT, so the tax amounts to a third of the price.

British beer drinkers pay 25 times more tax than the French, 11 times more than the Germans and 4 times more than the Belgians. Our Beer Duty is 8 times more than the EC recommended maximum tax on beer.

Copies of the petition are being distributed to pubs throughout the country, so sign it if you see one and, who knows, you may be helping Mr Lamont to keep his bills from Threshers' off licence to a manageable level.

ROLLING STONE

The Millstone on Thomas Street, Manchester, is open again, selling Wilsons, Websters and John Smiths.

THE STATION

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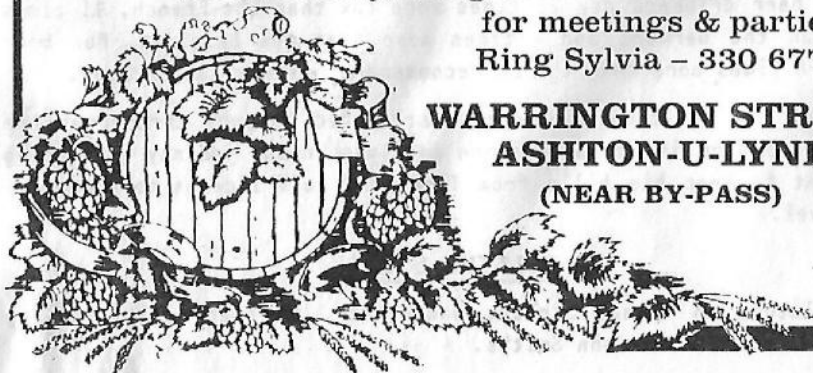
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(NEAR BY-PASS)



HOLTS CORNER

Stewart Revell

Holts have given us some details on what they are going to do with the four pubs they bought from Tetley last year...

The **SIR CHARLES NAPIER** at Golborne will close for refurbishment on 13th January and is expected to reopen two or three weeks later in the Joseph Holt style.

The **TAMMER** (Leigh) will shut on 5th February and reopen a couple of weeks later with significantly reduced beer prices.

The **THREE CROWNS** (Macclesfield) is to be refurbished at the end of January with the minimum of disturbance.

The **QUEENS HOTEL** in Macclesfield will close on 11th January for three or four months to enable extensive alterations to be made. When it reopens it will have been transformed into a classic Holts pub selling beer at extremely low prices for Macclesfield.

As was expected, Holts put up the price of a pint by 4p on 1st December. This is in line with inflation and the only other increase may come with the next Budget in May.

The brewery continues to look for suitable outlets and there may be news on this front very soon. Once the Old Monkey in Manchester is rebuilt, the Holts estate will number 107, but other pubs might be taken over before then.

NEW IMAGE

Last month Tetleys opened the Athenaeum on the corner of Spring Gardens and York Street, Manchester. It is in an old bank building and last time round it was called Greens. The beers are Tetley bitter, Burton Ale, Jennings and Cains.

COLLYHURST FIVE

Holts is available alongside two other bitters (Boddies and Tetleys) and both Tetley milds at the Sparrow, an unlikely-looking 60's pub on Thornton Street North in Collyhurst (behind the Parkland Hotel).

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Roger Wood, Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, Rob Magee, Leo King, Jim Bracken, Peter Wadsworth, Peter Barnes, Brian Gleave

REAL ALE GUIDE TO THE RAILWAYS

Brian Gleave

APPLEY BRIDGE TO GATHURST

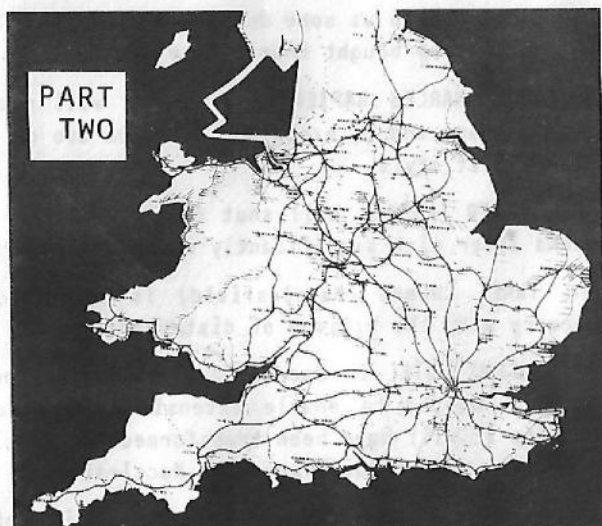
The station buildings at Appley Bridge have been converted into a "bar, brasserie and restaurant" called the Old Station House. This is a fairly upmarket concern and the accent tends to be on the food. Real ale is available in the form of Websters Green Label and Yorkshire Bitter, plus John Smiths bitter and Magnet. Courage Directors and Marstons

Pedigree have also been on sale in the recent past. Turn right out of the Old Station House and take the pedestrian exit into Mill Lane. Here you will find the Waters Edge, but sadly this is a keg pub.

If you turn right you will soon come to the Railway, a Tetley managed house where Tetley bitter is on handpump. Further along is the "In Between", which sells cask John Smiths bitter and usually one other beer from the Courage/Grand Met stable.

However, unless you have plenty of time to spend at Appley Bridge, I would advise turning left into Mill Lane. After about half a mile you come to a big road junction where on the left there is a gem of a Greenalls house called the Wheatsheaf. This super local sells Greenalls mild and bitter and the 1993 Good Beer Guide recommends the good-value meals.

Returning to the station, take the train back towards Wigan. The next stop is Gathurst and here we are in for a real treat. The old station buildings have also been converted into a pub. Initially this stocked a boring range of Whitbread products, but recently there has been a much more imaginative selection, usually involving Dobbins and Clarks of Wakefield. On my visit last month the beers on sale were Tetley (Yorkshire) bitter, Boddingtons bitter, Dobbins mild and Yakima Grande. The pub consists of a fairly basic, but nicely decorated, single room, with photographs and paintings from the Golden Age of Steam.



Walk down the station approach and turn right at the bottom; just round the corner is the Navigation. This old pub next to the canal is a favourite summer haunt and features a children's play area. A conservatory-style dining room has been added to the original building. Bar snacks are available as well as restaurant meals. Tetley bitter is the only standard real ale available, but the "Navi" has begun a guest beer policy and Cains bitter was proving popular on my visit. Now back to the train and the next stop is Wigan....

BEST BUY FOR BURTON?

The Portland Bar, underneath the Piccadilly Hotel in Manchester, keeps a very good pint of Ind Coope Burton Ale. The price has been pegged at £1.30 for over 14 months, so it is surely the lowest price for Burton Ale around.

CHEETHAM HILL

Scaffolding is in place on the Egerton Arms and restoration work is due to start in January, but we're told that this won't be as dramatic as previously reported in WD. Interior work is likely to follow and handpumps are promised to replace the old electric free-flows.

ALL OUR TOMORROWS

Bensons on High Street is due to close in January. It will reopen in March with a range of six beers on handpump. Where have we heard that before? Yes, but this time one of the beers is Holts.

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LETTERS



KIDS IN PUBS

Sir - I agree with many of CAMRA's licensing recommendations (WD last month), but no time limit on children in pubs? Oh dear, oh dear!

A family day out is one thing, and I've no real objection to kids in pubs during the day and early evening, though I'm still inclined to think they're better kept in a garden or properly decorated and furnished children's area, where they're not exposed to adults' cigarette smoke, dirty jokes, foul language or any of the other foolish habits that make growing up so much fun. (Yes, I know they're calling each other fucking wankers at six these days, but that's no reason for parents to encourage them to limit their vocabulary in this way.)

But in the evening?! Every parent knows that however much we love our children, there are times when they drive us up the wall and we need to get away from them. A pub is one of the few places where one can still do this, and I don't relish the taste of my pint being soured by someone else's overtired brat whining "Home now".

Have any of the right-on people who thought this one up actually considered the children's point of view, or is this emphasis on juvenile freedom merely an excuse for adults to be selfish? If you don't expect kids to change your lifestyle, don't have 'em! Most children don't actually like pubs much - or hadn't anyone noticed? It is, after all, quite boring sitting around watching adults get pissed and talking about things you don't understand. Much more fun to be at home tormenting the cat or playing Nintendo - better still, doing something you want to do with Mum and Dad for company, not the other way round.

And if we expose them to all our nasty ways so young, what have they got to look forward to? How many present CAMRA members once got a kick out of saying, "I'm not going to drink like my dad"?

C.S.B. SANH

(Children Should Be Seen And Not Heard)

TRAIN SPOTTERS

Sir - Following recent correspondence regarding train spotters (Nov & Dec WD) and as an ex train spotter myself, from the days when there were real (ie steam-hauled) trains to spot, I should like to report on an interesting recent phenomenon.

There is a growing band of young real ale drinkers who were train spotters until even the diesel and electric trains became too boring and who now travel the land "beer spotting" instead. These enthusiasts can be found doing the rounds of CAMRA beer festivals. They search tirelessly for brews they haven't supped before and then underline them in their Good Beer Guide - the beery equivalent of Ian Allen's famous little volumes - after they've supped them. And like train spotters, they even have their own argot. For the benefit of What's Doing readers, here is a glossary of the terminology:

WINNER - a beer not previously supped (equivalent to "copping" a loco)

MOULDY - a beer supped before (equivalent to "a stink" amongst train spotters)

HELLFIRE - a good drinking session, where many WINNERS are SCORED

CABBAGED - a person who is too pissed to know what he's drinking

SCRATCHERS - fellow beer spotters, who underline in their GBGs

NORMALS - the general public, who just like supping ale

TOILETS - people who have no knowledge of the joys of beer (and should be flushed down the S-bend)

So, beer festival organisers, beware! When ordering your range, try to get as many new and unusual brews as possible and you'll have a HELLFIRE festival. Otherwise, your amber nectar show will be condemned as MOULDY and the SCRATCHERS will quickly depart!

James the Red Engine

BOTTOMS UP

Since they upped sticks and went to Yorkshire, Wilsons have gradually been getting shut of their tied estate around the former brewery in Newton Heath. Oldham Road and environs were jam packed with pubs like the Dead House and the Alsatian & Pickaxe Handle. Some they've let fall down, some have been sold to Control Securities (which amounts to the same thing) and some have fallen into the hands of smaller breweries who've generally made a go of them. Into this last category falls the last Wilsons pub in Miles Platting, which was bought by Vaux in 1992. I'm sure that the dashing cornet of dragoons after whom the pub was named, Roger Aytoun, would have been more at home supping hand-pumped Double Maxim and Samson before rushing off on his amorous conquests than he would have been swigging the best that Websters can brew.

NOW & THEN

by Rob Magee

No.71

HAT & FEATHER

44 Bottom o'th'Moor, Oldham

The Hat & Feather closed nearly ninety years ago and had a history going back to the 1760s at least. One of the first licensees was probably Joseph Fletcher, who is recorded at an alehouse called the Hat & Beaver in 1762. Four years later he changed the name to the Hat & Feather and kept the licence until his death in 1789.

Oldham's second post office was opened at the Hat & Feather in 1825. (The main post office was in the Market Place) There were two deliveries of letters a day from Manchester and there were two collections. The post office side of the business must have been profitable for the Hat & Feather's landlords. Indeed, William Hall, who had the licence in the 1830s, held the job of postmaster at Greenacres Moor and at Bowden, Cheshire, as well.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Hat & Feather was a meeting place for some of Oldham's influential citizens. They met in the commercial room to discuss the burning issues of the day, such as how to go about improving the paving and lighting of the town's streets (some streets were in a pretty awful state) and what to do about the Great Exhibition in London in 1851.

Brewers J W & T Lees leased the pub in the 1880s, but they didn't



look after it and the building was in a bad state in 1886. Eight years later a survey noted the pub was free from brewer, in good repair and very clean. There were four drinking rooms, seven bedrooms and stabling for eight horses.

Despite this glowing report, the Hat & Feather went into a slow decline. Several tenants came and went and the crunch came one Sunday in September 1903. Police went into the pub and caught customers gambling for high stakes. The landlord was fined £20 and closure was recommended. The licence was eventually removed on 11th February 1905 and the building became a doss house. It was demolished in the 1960s.

VAUX POPS UP EVERYWHERE

Vaux have acquired a number of unprepossessing pubs in the most unlikely locations. In Salford these include the Oxford, which has been closed as much as it's been open over the last couple of years, and the Ship on Cross Lane, between the leafy suburbs of Ordsall and Pendleton.



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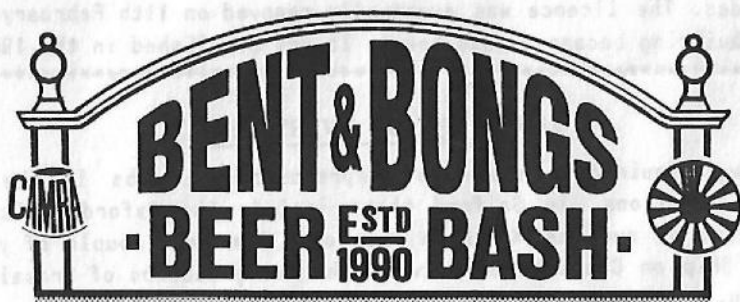
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rupert

It was our second year of yuletide escape from hostelrys resplendent with bumfuxing yahoos and feather-trumpeting yoes. Our quiet sojourn to plot the events of Slumley 93 was ameliorated by a hogshead of Carthorse's Old Nobthrutcher and Tish's latest electronic game - Empathy Nightmares. I don't pretend to know how it works, but we sat in a spherical tent holding hands around a circular table, which had a complex projector at its centre. We wore those, by now familiar, interactive body stockings and an alpha brain-wave probe. Tish said that the database contained details on numerous persons of fame, all known myths and legends and the entire writings of Freud, Jung, Adler and Stephen King. Tish asked us to concentrate on a character known to us all. As we thought, Tish tapped into the keyboard details of known career paths, idiosyncracies and famous people to whom our chosen subject bore a passing resemblance.

The result was electrifying, if frightening. Our first venture involved ourselves as an ageing stentor being pursued by regiments of monstrous women armed with smoothing irons and pints of Tetley bitter. The chief beer pourer appeared in our next encounter where our hero was seduced by her and a penniless Frenchman before escaping to become a King of

Brobdingnag, where a giant iron horse fell through his roof, crushing him to death. Much of this adventure was in blurred stereoscope.

As we concentrated on our next subject, both Tish and Fiona gave involuntary squeals of what could only have been apprehension as we found ourselves in a giant bed and climbing on to an enormous, slavering, pot-bellied Vietnamese pig. I could distinctly feel my posterior burning on the light bulb as men in morning suits and hats with lamps on looked on askance.

A frisson of excitement ran down my spine as we embarked on what turned out to be our last journey. We were a furry creature with big ears and we were spanking the bare buttocks of young ladies wearing aprons and little else. Suddenly this all went sadly wrong and we were chased by giant whippets dressed in evening suits with batons in their paws. They were shouting "Necklace the bastard!" as they clubbed us to death with No.1 woods and hung a balding tyre around our neck which they filled with petrol. As the flames singed our nostrils the projector exploded and the tent vanished in a puff of smoke. It may be some time before we tamper with the supernatural again.



Branch Diary

BOLTON

Thur 7 Jan 8.30pm, PUB OF THE YEAR AWARD and nominations for Good Beer Guide 1994, Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street

Sun 31 Jan 12 noon, Good Beer Guide 1994 selection, briefing and social, Clifton, Newport Street

Thur 4 Feb 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Watergate Toll, Watergate Lane, Over Hulton (near M61)

Contact: Judith Spragg 0204 397350 (w), 0204 595342 (h)

WIGAN

Sat 2 Jan, Manchester trip. 7pm Queens Arms, 8.15 Marble Arch

Wed 6 Jan Wigan Beer Festival planning, 8pm Gathurst Station Buffet

Wed 20 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Springfield, Wigan

28th-30th Jan, Atherton Beer Festival (Volunteer helpers contact below)

Contact: Brian Gleave 0942 840658 (h)

NORTH MANCHESTER

Wed 6 Jan, Membership Social Evening, Castle, Oldham Street, 8pm

Wed 13 Jan Good Beer Guide 1994 shortlisting meeting. Dock & Pulpit, Encombe Place, Salford, 8pm

Wed 20 Jan, Branch Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester, 8pm

Wed 27 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height crawl. Dog & Partridge 7pm, Wagon & Horses 7.30, Wellington 8.30, Red Lion 9pm.

Wed 3 Feb, Social, Ashley Brook, Liverpool Street, Salford, 8pm

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tue 5 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Blue Pitts, Castleton

Tues 19 Jan 8pm, Committee Meeting, Navigation, Dobcross

Wed 27 Jan 8pm, Social, Tap & Spile, Bury

Sat 30 Jan 12.30pm, Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting

Tue 2 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Woodthorpe Hotel, Heaton Park

Contact: Graham Mason 061 665 3032 (h & w)

REGION

Mon 4 Jan, AGM Planning Meeting, Marble Arch, 8pm

Thur 7 Jan, Bolton Pub of the Year, Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street.

All welcome

Sun 10 Jan, noon. Ale of Two Cities 1993, Beer House

Sat 16 Jan, Trip to West Midlands. Pick up 9am Stockport, opposite Town Hall. 9.30am under arches, Greengate, Salford; 10am Altrincham,

by Cresta Court. Contact Ken Birch 0204 887356, or send £7 payable to K Birch, 10 Holcombe Road, Tottington, Bury BL8 4AR.

Sun 17 Jan, noon. Great North Western Beer Festival meeting, Swan, Malt & Hops Bar, Bolton.

Mon 18 Jan, AGM Planning Meeting, Marble Arch, 8pm

Tues 19 Jan, Brewery Action Group, Castle, 8pm

Mon 1st Feb, AGM Planning Meeting, Marble Arch, 8pm

Wed 10 Feb, Regional Meeting, Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, C-on-M, 8pm

WIGAN

Chris Docherty, former manager of Stanley's Snooker Club and the Poolstock Beer Engine, has taken over the running of Edison's on Market Street, Wigan. This has mainly catered for the younger element and is usually packed at weekend. Let's hope that Chris and June will attract a more mixed clientele. The choice of beers has already improved, with Jennings, Robinsons and Cains guesting recently alongside the standard Tetley mild and bitter.

BANK DRAUGHT

After an umpty-thousand pound refit the Bank on Mosley Street reopened selling Tetleys, Cains and Burton Ale.

NEWTON HEATH

The Gibraltar and the Copenhagen are now Vaux pubs. The Gibraltar has bitter, light, dark mild and Samson; the Copenhagen has bitter, dark mild, Samson and Double Maxim.

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 £2.70 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: 15p per copy. Send stamped addressed envelope to Roger Hall, address above.

To join CAMRA send £10 to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW.

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THE QUEENS ARMS

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and weekly guest beers from around the country
WESTON'S TRADITIONAL CIDER ON HANDPUMP

A selection of Continental
bottled beers also available

*** OPENING HOURS ***

Sun:	12.00-3.00	7.00-10.30
Mon:	12.00-4.00	7.00-11.00
Tues:	12.00-4.00	7.00-11.00
Weds:	12.00-11.00	
Thur:	12.00-11.00	
Fri:	12.00-11.00	
Sat:	12.00-4.00	7.00-11.00

FREE

A large and varied selection
of board games always
available

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

Your hosts,
DAVE & JO

