

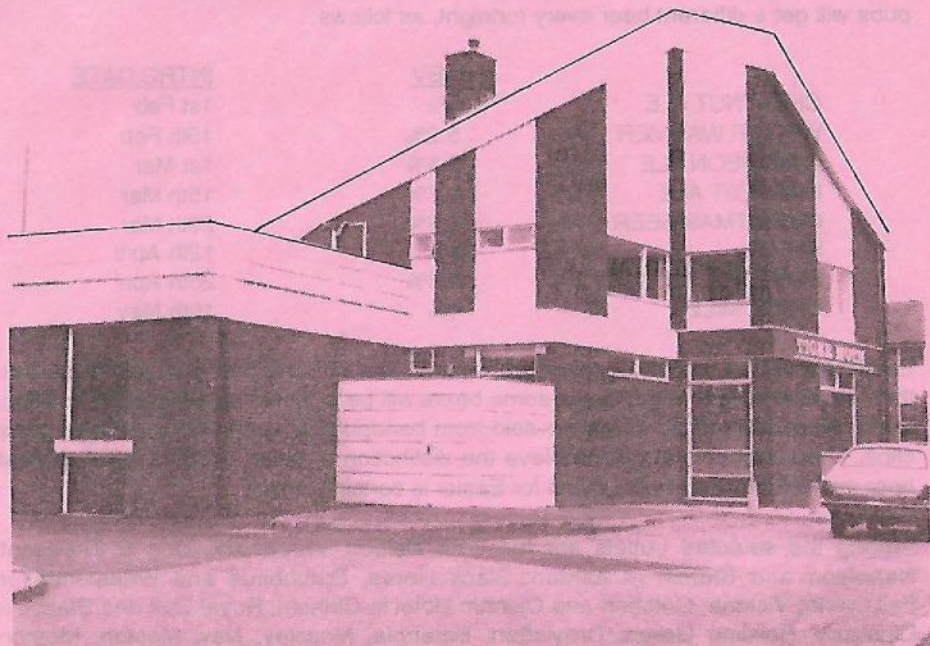
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WHAT'S DOING

FEB
1993

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FREE HOUSE FOR IRLAM



The Tiger Moth (ex-Websters) on Swallow Drive, Higher Irlam, is now a free house, owned by landlord Tommy Kirtun. Beers currently available are Holts bitter (99p), Websters Green Label (90p) and Marstons Pedigree (1.10p).

Higher Irlam Social Club is now a solid real ale venue, selling Wilsons mild (92p), Wilsons bitter (94p) and Websters Green Label (94p). Courage Directors bitter should soon be available.

This happy state of affairs contrasts sharply with the situation regarding the nearby Liverpool Road pubs. The White Lion/Sports has been closed for about two months and Intreprenuer are advertising the lease. There are rumours that an independent brewery may be interested in what is essentially a good pub site. The Nags Head is now on keg beer only, the result of what is understood to be a Whitbread marketing decision.

The Boathouse (BodPubCo) on Ferry Road may soon be under new management, and there is a distinct possibility of refurbishment and/or restructuring, together with the building of a function room. Handpumped Boddies mild (108p) and bitter (112p) are available and the pub has a guest beer policy.

Eight New Beers from Marstons

Following the recent rationalisation of their beers portfolio and the axing of their Border brands, Marstons have announced the introduction of a new range of traditional beers in 400 selected outlets (tied and free) nationwide on a trial basis. The pubs will get a different beer every fortnight, as follows:

	<u>ABV</u>	<u>INTRO.DATE</u>
CHESTNUT ALE	5%	1st Feb
WINTER WARMER	5.2%	15th Feb
LUNCHEON ALE	2.5%	1st Mar
HARVEST ALE	3.7%	15th Mar
CHRISTMAS BEER	4.8%	29th Mar
STOUT	4%	12th April
BURTON PALE ALE	3.8%	26th April
UNION MILD	4%	10th May

Each beer will be available in firkins if required, but all participating outlets must order the complete range. From these, some beers will be selected as permanent additions to the Marstons range. All will be sold from handpumps, each with distinctive pump clips. The Luncheon Ale will achieve the distinction of being Britain's weakest cask beer and a Christmas beer in time for Easter is certainly novel!

Among the selected outlets are the Lord Nelson, Woodcock, Dog & Pheasant, Napoleon and Station in Ashton; Black Horse, Dutchbirds and Wheatsheaf in Failsworth; Victoria, Criterion and Oldham Hotel in Oldham; Royal Oak and Station in Didsbury; Bowling Green, Droylsden; Britannia, Mossley; New Moston, Moston; Cherry Tree, Stalybridge; Oddfellows, Chinley; Red Lion, Withington; Whitworth, Rusholme; King William IV, Partington; Crescent, Salford, and Ganders, Barton Arcade, Manchester.

The Station at Ashton also promises a special surprise ale on April 1st.

YE OLD NELSON - THE STORY SO FAR

Last year Salford's Planning Department rejected CAMRA's suggestions for modifying the proposed improvements to Chapel Street (A6), Salford. In order to save Ye Old Nelson, the pavement outside would have to be 1.8m wide and the road lanes 3m wide. The planners said that a 1.8m pavement was too narrow for a major road such as the A6 and that 3m wide lanes would create unsafe conditions for road users such as cyclists. The width available - 22.004m between the pub and the Education Offices - isn't enough and the pub will have to go. CAMRA recently countered the planners' comments with the following:

1. Pavement width. The 'footway' will only need to be 1.8m wide for a length of about 20m at the front of the pub. There are some recently-constructed footways in Manchester where 1.8m is the width for considerable distances, such as alongside the Intermediate Ring Road between Hyde Road and Pottery Lane.
2. Lane widths of 3m are too narrow for cyclist safety. Chapel Street is not suggested as an appropriate route by the North West Cycle Campaign. Their published route is by East Ordsall Lane and St Stephen Street.
3. 22.004m is not wide enough. CAMRA's calculations are based on six lanes at 3m, two footways at 1.8m and a central reservation of .4m, making 22m in total.


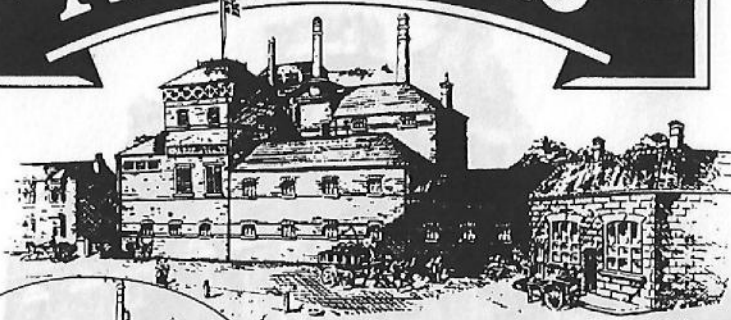



The Chapel Street widening is a medium to long term scheme and dependent upon government funding. Salford City Council have at least four other major schemes awaiting funding before Chapel Street, so it could be years before work starts. In view of this, the planners will have plenty of time to consider the opinions of all those who want to save the pub and produce a plan that will leave some bits of old Salford standing.

New Cafe

Manchester's latest ethnic cafe opened in the Smithfield area at the end of 1992. The Al-Faisal Tandoori is on Thomas Street, on the corner of John Street. It's open from 11.00am every day including Saturday and shuts at 7.00pm Mon-Wed, 8.30pm Thurs-Sat and around 4.30pm on Sunday. It offers main dishes at around £2.30, with vegetable curries a snip at £1.30. On my only visit so far, the food - chicken curry with fresh coriander and chapatis - was of a standard comparable to the best that our fair city can offer. Further surveys would be welcomed. ...P Laychaval

* Planning permission is being sought for a further cafe at 8-12 Turner Street.

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First the good news. Years ago, Seftons Hotel, a Wilsons pub on Corporation Street, Manchester, was demolished to make way for the Arndale Centre. When the Centre was built, a replacement was incorporated into the development and called the Isaac Newton. It was soon renamed the Samuel Pepys and then Seftons, after the original pub. For years the place sold no real ale, then on a recent visit I found handpumps with Websters bitter and Ruddles bitter pumpclips, although only the Websters was actually on sale. Now the bad news. I was charged 74p for half a pint of Websters! That works out at 55p a pint more than the stronger Holts bitter. Seftons is a characterless place, and with prices like that is it any wonder that Wilsons (sorry, Websters/Wilsons) pubs are disappearing fast? Many former Wilsons pubs have been taken over by Banks's, Vaux and Burtonwood and one of Vaux's latest acquisitions is the Little Alex on Alexandra Road, Moss Side. The Vaux beers, traditional of course, are excellent.

There doesn't seem to have been any progress with the extension to Holts' Crown & Anchor on Cateaton Street. The sooner this is completed, the better! The pub can - and does - get too packed for comfort, but as it's Holts, we can't complain too much. There are a few pubs in Manchester which would make ideal Holts houses, such as the Imperial, the Crown & Kettle, Smithfields and, er, Seftons!

Beer Engine

It was business as usual at the Beer Engine, arguably Wigan's premier free house, following a mysterious fire and change of ownership. The fire, which gutted the newly refurbished function room and entrance hall, occurred a few days before Christmas and it is understood that it is being treated as arson.

The new owners, builder John Moran and former manager Chris Docherty, bought the pub (it used to be a club twelve months ago) from the receivers on Wednesday 23rd and were shocked to discover their new enterprise had been torched less than 48 hours before they took over. Fortunately the vault suffered only slight damage and the large lounge only smoke damage, so they were able to reopen in time for the Christmas festivities. John and Chris hope to rebuild the large function room in the next couple of months and restore the range of high quality beers which drinkers have come to expect from this establishment. Observant WD readers will realise that Chris Docherty's reign at Edison's was somewhat shortlived.



Beer Festival

The Wigan Beer Festival will take place on 18th - 20th March. There will be the usual good range of top quality beers; glasses, T-shirts, pies, sausages, entertainment - all the fun of the Pier. More details next month.

Walkden & Little Hulton

The Stocks Hotel in the centre of Walkden, a keg-only Greenalls pub for years, now sells Greenalls bitter (124p), Original (134p) and Stones (126p). The mild is still keg. Alan Moakes has recently taken over at the Kenyon Arms, Little Hulton, and to win over new customers will be offering handpumped Theakstons bitter and Scotch bitter (70/-) for £1 a pint between 12 noon and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. (Normal prices are 124p and 114p.) The Spa, Little Hulton, is offering Websters bitter on handpump for only 99p until 19th February. Green Label is also on handpump, at 110p. The mild is keg.

John Laffin has been running the Raven at the top of Cleggs Lane since October last year and the keg beers have been replaced by handpumped Tetley bitter (109p) and mild (106p) and Thwaites bitter (109p). A quarter of a mile from the Raven, on Eastham Way, is a Robinsons outlet - the Pied Piper. The pub sells best bitter and mild on electric pumps and gravity Old Tom at 84p per half pint.

The new licensee at the Ellesmere, Walkden, is Alan Gibbons, who also runs the Top House at Eccles. He will be holding a mini beer festival in the upstairs room of the Ellesmere in March and all the beers will be sold straight from the barrel. More details when the plans are finalised. The handpumped Tetley bitter is currently on special offer at £1 a pint.



Stockport

BodPubCo's fourth 'Alehouse', the CROWN on Heaton Lane, Stockport, was selling Boddingtons, Cains, Brains SA, Potters Pride and Charles Wells Eagle in January. From February 1st mine host Ken Birch will have the choice from BodPubCo's longer list and up to ten cask beers will be on offer.

The other three BodPubCo Alehouses are the Kings Arms in Salford, the Black Bull, Preston, and the Crown, Birkenhead.

KIDS IN PUBS (2)

Roger Hall

The suggestion that CAMRA's licensing recommendation will allow screaming infants in all pubs at all times (Letters, Jan WD) is a little short of the mark. The recommendations in fact offer more control. The present law regarding children in pubs is complex and is understood by few licensees, let alone customers. Depending on the circumstances, a child of six can legally drink tumblers of gin in a pub or a child of three can remain in a pub until the early hours. The age differs as to when a child may:

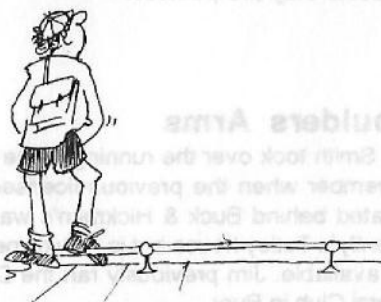
- enter a bar
- buy a drink
- buy a drink with a meal
- consume alcoholic liquor in a bar

The rules for restaurants, guest houses, hotels and registered clubs are different.

What CAMRA is suggesting is a simplification of these laws so that accompanied children may be admitted only to suitable licensed premises at the licensee's discretion. Far from encouraging bored children "sitting around watching adults get pissed", as your correspondent suggests, this recommendation would entirely remove children from those very environments where that might happen.

Suitability would mean vetting by local licensing benches and, although criteria might vary from one area to another, it is unlikely that gin palaces or rave clubs would qualify. Magistrates would no doubt consider both the facilities which a pub has to offer and its overall character before granting a suitability certificate. Pubs which admitted children would display this outside. Paedophobes would be able to avoid such pubs.

This brings us to hours of admittance. Having identified suitable pubs where children might be admitted, what on earth's wrong with allowing the licensee discretion as to when they're allowed in? If he wants to chuck 'em out at seven o'clock, all very well and good, but is there anything seriously wrong with 17-year-olds remaining in a suitable pub with their parents after 10 o'clock? Drinking doesn't have to be nasty and sordid - it can be enjoyable, sociable and responsible. What better way to encourage our children to appreciate the positive things which a pub has to offer can there be than to introduce them to premises which have been vetted and found suitable? Revocation proceedings could and should be brought against any premises which abuse that privilege.



Guinness

The big national brewers have justifiably been the main targets of CAMRA'S criticism over the last two decades. Only one has largely escaped - GUINNESS. But the announcement that they are to cease production in April of their only real ale - bottle-conditioned Guinness Original - has, not surprisingly, aroused much anger.

Let us take a closer look at the track record of Guinness. Once upon a time, all draught Guinness was real ale. Now it is all keg and ridiculously overpriced for a beer little stronger than an average bitter. Unlike all other British brewers, Guinness have not only failed to respond to the ever-increasing demand for cask conditioned beers, they have gone backwards. In 1970, cask Guinness Porter was still available in Northern Ireland. It is now a distant memory. Irish beer drinkers are treated with contempt and offered nothing but gassed-up beers such as Smethwicks - a Guinness subsidiary.

At the present time there is a great revival of cask conditioned stouts and porters, with new examples appearing every month from brewers large and small. Even WHITBREAD have jumped on the bandwagon! It is a pity nobody from Guinness came to the recent beer festival at the FLEA & FIRKIN, where a range of a dozen or more cask stouts and porters, all delicious and distinctive, were available. Why don't they realise just how popular a cask conditioned Guinness stout or porter would be? Just imagine what they COULD produce, if the will were there!

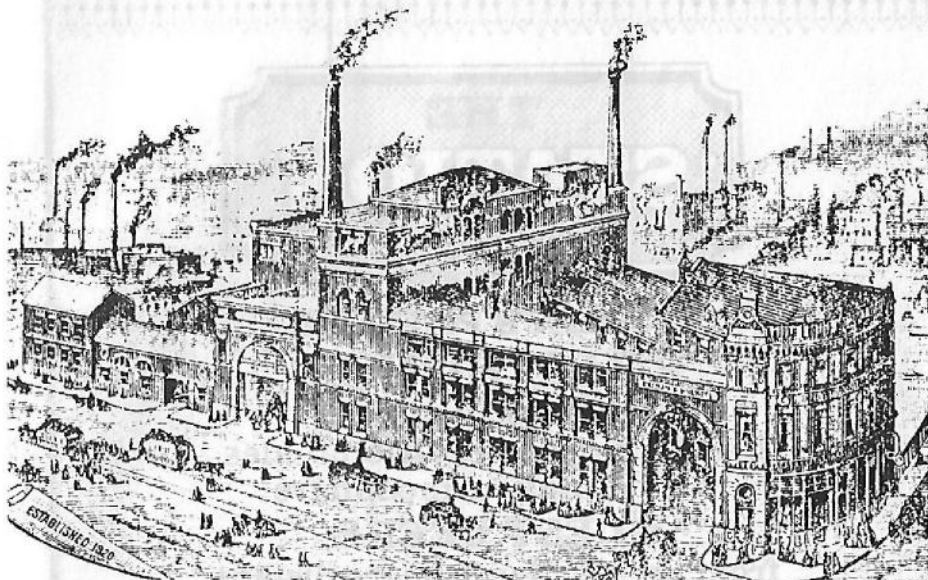
Guinness choose this as the moment to withdraw a product that has won CAMRA awards and copious praise from a multitude of beer writers. The widespread availability of bottled Guinness used to mean that you could get a drink of real ale even when you were marooned in a keg wilderness. The excuses given for its replacement with 'pre-conditioned' (filtered and pasteurised) bottles are the same as those offered by the likes of Watneys in the early 1970s. It will be 'more consistent' and have 'a longer shelf life'.

And this at a time when their rivals in the Irish beer market duopoly - BASS - are relaunching WHITE SHIELD, a famous bottle-conditioned ale. Guinness may be famous for clever advertising, but when it comes to exploiting the potential of quality products they are pathetic.

Jim Bracken

Moulders Arms

Jim Smith took over the running of the Moulders Arms on Heyrod Street, Ancoats, in November when the previous licensee retired. This is a little gem of a pub and is situated behind Buck & Hickman's warehouse off Great Ancoats Street. It was until recently a Tetley house but is now owned by Burtonwood. Their draught mild and bitter are available. Jim previously ran the Derby Arms on Rochdale Road and also Elton Liberal Club in Bury.



No Exchange is Robbery

Whitbread may have lost their place as one of the players in the big time brewers' league but they continue to contribute most to the brewery graveyard. The latest decision to close the Exchange Brewery in Sheffield puts Whitbread firmly in first place in brewery closure. The decision leaves Whitbread with three cask breweries - Strangeways, Castle Eden and Cheltenham. In a way we may be thankful that both Boddies and Castle Eden have survived. Sheffield was essentially a badge brewing establishment, producing beers which had been shifted from closed breweries elsewhere or re-invented brews which hadn't seen the light of day since Methuselah was in knee-breeches. Higsons mild and bitter, Chesters mild and bitter and Trophy and Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter are all currently brewed at Sheffield. The hitherto credible Miles Templeman has indicated that all these 'brands' will still be produced.

Trophy will move to Castle Eden. If, as we understand, both Strangeways and Castle Eden will be operating at near full capacity, this leaves only Cheltenham for the remaining five beers. As this will mean eleven beers being brewed on one site, it seems unlikely that all beers will continue.

The people of Liverpool and Salford probably don't give a monkey's anyway. They lost their local beers when their local breweries, Higsons and Chesters, were closed. Ironically, the spiel about Exchange Brewery in the 1993 Good Beer Guide concludes, *"A major refurbishment of the brewhouse has been underway."*

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BOLTON NEWS

Des Nogalski

Two Bolton Greenalls pubs are set to be razed to the ground. The CLARENCE on Bradshawgate closed in November and, along with the adjoining row of shops, is coming down to make way for a car park. Whilst it had not served real ale for many years, the Clarence was a good traditional pub, one of a dwindling number in the centre of town.

The one-time GBG-listed BOARS HEAD on Churchgate shut in March last year and is currently the subject of a planning application to demolish the building and redevelop the site as offices. A similar application a couple of years ago brought a number of objections. The Boars Head was built in 1721, it is situated in a conservation area and at one time it was the principal inn of the town. Greenalls claim the property is unsafe and state that bodies such as Bolton Civic Trust, who objected to the original plans, now agree that the safest course of action is to pull it down. Although the original planning application included a replacement Boars Head on the ground floor, Greenalls now state that there will not be licensed premises on the site.



Some guest beer news: The PILKINGTON ARMS on Derby Street is selling handpumped Mitchells bitter, while the MORRIS DANCERS on Morris Green Lane is serving Youngs bitter from London. A real ale club gain: BREIGHTMET CONSERVATIVE CLUB on Bury Road now sells handpulled Bass Light at £1.04 a pint. Finally, the Bolton Branch of CAMRA has presented its first Pub of the Year Award to the Sweet Green Tavern on Crook Street.

Empress Ale

Whitbread's Empress on Cheetham Hill is selling Lees bitter as a permanent 'guest' at 95p a pint.

REAL ALE GUIDE TO THE RAILWAYS

WIGAN

by Brian Gleave

Wigan can be reached by train on the Southport-Liverpool-Manchester lines or via the London-Scotland West Coast Inter-City line. The town boasts two stations, Wallgate and North Western, which are almost opposite each other. If you look at the 1993 Good Beer Guide, Wigan has nearly a full page to itself, with twelve entries (including some pubs in the suburbs), so anybody taking a Real Ale Away Day will find plenty of entertainment. For the purposes of this guide we will limit ourselves to the pubs near the stations.



If you turn right out of Wallgate Station you will come almost immediately to the Swan & Railway, which is dead facing North Western Station. This is a gem of a pub with a magnificent interior and a wide range of well-kept beers at sensible prices. The usual range is Banks's mild and bitter; Bass 4X mild and Draught Bass, John Smiths bitter and Courage Directors. If you find it difficult to leave Wigan or even the Swan, bed and breakfast is also available.

Turn right out of the Swan, go under the railway and after a few hundred yards you will come to the pride of Wigan MBC - the Pier. At the heart of the Wigan Pier complex is the Orwell, with a good range of Allied beers and the odd guest or two, frequently from Dobbins Brewery. The Orwell is, of course, a modern pub and tends to be food and tourist orientated during the day and popular with the younger element at night. After the Orwell, visitors can do the touristy bit and visit the museum and steaming mill engine, but the more bibulous should continue down Wallgate. Beside the River Douglas you will find the Seven Stars. This is a no-nonsense pub with down-to-earth food and a good Northern atmosphere. The beer, Thwaites bitter and best mild, is always well kept.

Now walk back into Wigan and past the railway stations. Towards the top of the hill on the right is the Raven. This is a marvellous, large old pub which has sadly been altered a bit inside. However, the changes have been reasonably sympathetic and quite a few of the original fittings are retained. The beer is Peter Walker mild, best bitter and Winter Warmer in season. The pub caters for business people and shoppers at lunchtime, but is much more lively in the evenings and there are bouncers on the door at weekends.

If you've got time to stay longer in Wigan, all pubs on Standishgate/Wigan Lane now sell real ale, with the recent conversion of the Royal Oak (draught Bass) and the Griffin (Tetley). The latter is run by Rugby League legend Billy Barton and has a superb exterior advertising the Oldfield Brewery.

The Swan and the Seven Stars usually close in the late afternoons, whilst the Raven and the Orwell are open right through. I hope this has whetted your appetite for an outing to Wigan, and in conclusion I can't improve on the comment by George Orwell (or was it Douglas Adams - no, he wrote about rabbits, didn't he?): "When you're tired of Wigan, you're tired of life itself."

No Balls

If further proof is needed that the Monopolies & Mergers Commission has been emasculated by the Brewers then we might have to wait for Anheuser-Bass or Scottish & Whitbread Kirin. Most of us are convinced it had no balls from the start. The decision to allow Allied to join the big boys by merging with Carlsberg is the latest capitulation to the brewers. As usual, there have been denials of brewery closures, but this sort of announcement is usually followed by news of closure. Warrington is not safe - it may brew twelve beers, but in times of rationalisation that doesn't mean a lot. If it were to close, many of the beers might also disappear.

The MMC has achieved what it set out to avoid - greater concentration in the industry and price rises. Grand Met Estates stand accused of screwing their lessees, prices have risen at double the rate of inflation, big brewers have grown bigger and more local breweries have closed. In some areas there may be more choice - but at what price?

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NOW AND THEN

by Rob Magee

No. 72 **PRINCE WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER** 11 Market Place,

Oldham

On 12th April 1804 the Duke of Gloucester and his son, Prince William, reviewed the local Volunteer Corps, including the Oldham Volunteers, on Sale Moor. John Skellorn may well have been one of their number, because in the same year he opened the Prince William of Gloucester public house in Oldham's Market Place. John died three years later and his widow, Mally, took over the running of the pub.

Their son, William, became a master drummer in the Volunteers, but in 1811 he was reduced to the ranks for 'ignorance'. It has been said that the Prince William got its nickname, the 'Top Drum', because William used to drum in the Volunteers outside the pub. There is another theory, however. A 'drum' is a slang term for a doss house and when workers came to Oldham they would sometimes find lodgings in pubs and beerhouses. The Prince William provided such accommodation and, in view of its position in the town, became known as the 'Top Drum'. So where was the 'Bottom Drum'? This was the Turks Head, a notorious beerhouse on West Street.

William Skellorn must have decided against a military career as by 1821 he was a



hatter with a shop next door to the pub. His mother died in June 1837 and so he took over the licence and ran the Prince William as well as his hat shop. Another member of the family, Emery Skellorn, was in charge in the 1850s. Emery was an attorney, but that didn't help when he was fined 10/- for serving out of hours on a Sunday and again for making structural alterations without permission.

Local brewers Jowett & Waterhouse bought the Prince William in 1890, by which time the Corporation had decided to open up the top of West Street and several old buildings had to be cleared. Two ancient properties next to the Prince William (one was William Skellorn's hat shop) were demolished and Jowett & Waterhouse built a new pub on the site. The old pub was then pulled down, along with seven dwellings which linked it to the Stags Head on West Street and twelve hovels at the rear.

A survey a few years later found the new Prince William in very good condition, with five drinking rooms, four bedrooms and a bathroom. There was no overnight accommodation and no stabling for horses. Jowett & Waterhouse were taken over by Wilsons in 1896 and the Prince William remained a Wilsons house until it closed.

Closure came on 12th May 1972. The building stood empty for a time and rumour had it that the NatWest Bank was going to take it over temporarily. Then in 1974 the Victoria Market burned down and the pub was given a new lease of life as a market hall. When a temporary market building was put up, the Prince William was no longer needed and so it was demolished.

How Free is Free?

One of the things we may be asked to decide at the CAMRA AGM is whether a special symbol should be introduced into the Good Beer Guide to identify real free houses. But what is a real free house? I suppose we can see a spectrum of degrees of freedom from a single pub owned and run by a resident licensee with no loans or brewery ties, to a chain of brewery-owned pubs selling a range of beers. How do we then distinguish between shades of grey? Are free houses owned by national pub chains to be excluded? What then about a second pub owned by a free house licensee where a manager may have little choice of beers? Are pubs with brewery loans or partial ties to be excluded?

The area is a minefield and we should not go down the road of trying to define exactly what is meant by a real free house. If we want to say that a pub is owned and run by a licensee with no ties, then say so in the pub description. If it's part of, say, BodPubCo's estate, then say so. Fine distinctions identified by symbols are likely to be inconsistent and unhelpful to the punter.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Jim Bracken, Brian Gleave, Duncan Busman, Roger Hall, Rob Magee, Bill Collier, Paul Mason, Des Nogalski, Leo King, Stewart Revell, Barbara Lee.



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LETTER

AND YET ANOTHER BLOODY TRAIN SPOTTER

Sir - As a semi-nomadic Scot, recently come to work in Lancashire and live in Wigan, and as a life-long train spotter and real ale drinker, I cannot stay silent any longer! In reality, train spotters fall into only two categories - those who do not drink **at all** (the ones with the anoraks and cheese sandwiches) and those who drink **a lot**. The writer falls into (?) the second category but never mixes pleasures (at least not those in question!)

First comes the spotting on Wigan North Western Station (not wearing an anorak, nor carrying a cheese sandwich, but identified by the greying beard and strong Scottish accent!). Then there is the drinking, mainly in the Tudor Hotel, although sometimes in the Swan & Railway, Gems (for Holts) or others.

Just in case 45150 (WD Dec) has forgotten that there is another side to the country - an East side - this real train spotter spent his youth watching A1s, A2s, A3s, A4s, V2s, J38s, etc, go by on the East Coast Main Line in Cupar in Fife.

Alistair Fyffe

GM4ENF - Just in case other readers are radio amateurs as well!

(Bloody hell, no! Not them too! - Ed)

Mitchells as cheap as Holts!

Worth a short trip out of Bury town centre is the Little Gibb on Bridge Street, off Bell Lane. (Turn left at Lex car showrooms) Don't be fooled by the Banks's signs outside the pub, for inside is Mitchells bitter at 96p a pint (regular price). There's also Boddingtons, but that's more expensive. Sitting by the log fire in the tap room was made even more enjoyable by the cheapness of the rounds. Very palatable beer..wonder what he'd charge for ESB if he got it...?

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

I have just returned from Yowyowland and am thankful to be back in Grotley. Nora has invited me down to compose her Curriculum Vitae as an aid to her leap into stardom. She is now living in what our future king might describe as Hippo Vistula's trizers, not, as you might imagine as a strawberry flavoured jockstrap, but as a cohabitee with two gypsy families, a waltzer, a ferris wheel, 12 Bosnian refugees and their goats. As we found a seat in the no fly zone, Nora asked me what I thought should be included. I'd done my homework on the Tackler life-history and launched into a tribute to her literary and entrepreneurial skills in launching in 1985 the dynamic magazine Manky Ale, the hard-hitting professionalism of which made What's Doing seem apologetic, wimpish and amateurish. Its impact, I said, could still be felt. Its ideas were prescient and its lack of financial success could not be blamed on the editrix. Local branches were only too happy to bale out the venture with the accumulated profits of What's Doing - such was the esteem in which Nora had been held as both editrix and regional bossperson.

To my surprise, Nora asked me not to mention this, or indeed her stewardship of Greater Grotley through 1986 and 1987. Such was her humility that she didn't even want recorded the vote of confidence in her taken by her own branch. Similarly her campaigning success and organisational abilities at what I think was called the Arse of England Beer Festival should not be mentioned. When I asked her what should perhaps be included she fell silent. It is difficult to see how someone who is so self-effacing could survive among the cut and thrust of the corridors of powers. Sadly, if she is not willing to put herself about, I feel that her talents and intellectual thrust will be a loss to the Campaign.

I had envisaged that she might be able to bring her not inconsiderable experience to the problem of branch finances which Ron Badloss is attempting to resolve in a pettifogging way. I was certain that Nora would have been able to institute control mechanism to prevent the odd branch in the sticks allowing people to run off with several grand and generally stopping people putting their hands in other people's trizers as our future Tampax might say.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Some licensee changes: Karen and Bradley Leighton, who have been running the Dukes Gate at Little Hulton for the last two-and-a-half years, are moving to the Melville near Stretford. Ken and Dot Johnson are taking their place at the Dukes Gate after running the Claremont in Moss Side and, before that, the Winston in Salford. Holts' new pub in Leigh, the Tammer, is to be managed by Noelle Condon, ably assisted by Ian Partington, who have been working at the Grafton. Aren't managers of pubs getting younger these days?

Branch Diary

Bolton

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

Sat 6 Feb, Trip to Bradford Beer Festival. Meet at Bolton Station, 9.15am. Advance tickets needed for festival.

Fri 26 Feb, Coach trip to Fleetwood Beer Festival. Depart Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street, 6.45pm. Book with Branch Contact: £5.

Thur 4 March 8.30pm, Branch Meeting and Good Beer Guide 1994 Final Selection, Derby Arms, Derby Street.

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

North Manchester

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

Wed 10 Feb 8pm, Regional Meeting, Kings Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock

Wed 17 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 24 Feb, Pendlebury/Clifton Crawl: Station, Bolton Road, 7pm; Nadgers, Bolton Road, 8pm; New Market, Bolton Road, 9pm

Wed 3 Mar 8pm: Membership Social Evening: Royal Oak, Barton Lane/Corporation Street, Eccles.

Wed 10 March, Good Beer Guide 1994 Selection Meeting, Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester, 8pm

Contact: Roger Hall, 061 740 7937 (h)

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 4 Feb 8pm, Committee Meeting, Crown, Deansgate, Manchester

Thur 11 Feb 8pm, Survey: Starting in the Crown & Cushion, then Queens Arms (Red Bank), Beerhouse and Marble Arch

Thur 18 Feb 8pm: Survey Night: Starting in the Railway (Holts), then Tatton, Bakers and Grapes.

Thurs 25 Feb 8pm, Manchester City Centre Survey: Vine, Mr Thomas's, Square Albert, Abercrombie, Rising Sun and Kings Arms (Salford).

Thurs 4 Mar 8pm: Committee Meeting, Malt Shovels, Altrincham, then surveying the Railway, Roebuck and Orange Tree.

Contact: Allan Glover 061 962 9890 (h) 0524 847927 (w)

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 2 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Woodthorpe, Bury Old Road

Sat 6 Feb, Train trip to Bradford Beer Festival. Phone contact for details

Tues 16 Feb 8pm, Committee Meeting, Royal Hotel, Rochdale Road, Bursil

Thur 25 Feb 8pm, Social: Sun Mill Inn, Middleton Road, Chadderton

Tue 2 Mar 8pm, Branch Meeting, Cross Keys, Running Hill Gate, Uppermill

Sat 6 Mar 12 noon, Joint Social with Wakefield Branch in Rochdale. Phone branch contact for details.

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

Wigan

Wed 17 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Orwell, Wigan Pier

Contact: Brian Gleave, 0942 840658 (H)

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