

25p

What's Doing

FEBRUARY 1994



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

TOMMY DUCKS *The Anniversary*



At 12.30pm on Monday 21st February there will be a wake to commemorate the first anniversary of the demise of what was Manchester city centre's most famous public house. The wake will be held on the brick croft car park on the site of Tommy Ducks. Greenalls' chairman, Peter Greenall (left), will be presented with a special award for pub demolition, to wit, a bulldozer. Anyone wishing to attend will be most welcome.



Trading Standards

The 1985 Business Names Act requires businesses which are carried on under a name which differs in any way from that of the owner or owners to make that known. This involves displaying a notice in the premises where it can be read easily and bearing the following information:

- * The name of the owner or owners
- * An address in Great Britain for each of the owners

The notice could look like this:

Dockers Wedge, Grotley Particulars of ownership as required by Section 4 of the Business Names Act 1985	
Full Name of Owner	Address within Great Britain at which documents relating to the business may be effectively served
Puntercon Taverns Ltd	Registered Office 4th Floor, Alescam House 2 Back Basics Street Grotley GG1 2FU

How many notices like this have you seen? It is a criminal offence not to carry out these requirements which are policed by the Trading Standards Departments of Local Authorities. CAMRA's prices survey in Central Manchester revealed that few premises were complying. This is more important now that pub ownership is becoming fragmented. If effective action is to be taken to ensure decent pubs in the future, we need to know who owns them now.

Grenadier to fight back?

Middleton brewers J W Lees have applied for a licence for the long closed Grenadier on Briscoe Lane, Newton Heath. Let us hope they are successful as this part of Newton Heath is sadly deficient in pubs at present and could do with a good one. If approved, the pub will bring more choice and also complement Lees' existing outlet in the area, the Grosvenor on Goddard Street.

Central Manchester Pubs - *The Guide*

Continuing poor representation in the Good Beer Guide for the city centre and the non-appearance of Ale of Two Cities 2 has resulted in a decision to produce a new guide to Manchester City Centre. It will cover over a hundred pubs from Castlefield to Ancoats with odd forays over the Irk and the Irwell. The pocket-sized guide, containing descriptions of real ale pubs, with details of facilities and opening times, will retail at £2.95.

CAMRA members can purchase copies at £1.95 and pubs can buy multiple copies at £1.95. It is available by post for £2.50 (inc. p&p) from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Manchester M9 6PW. Cheques should be made out to CAMRA North Manchester. The guide will be available from early April and will be on sale at CAMRA's AGM at Scarborough.

Blackley Ale Gain

An oft overlooked pub has turned to cask ale after years of selling the keg stuff. The Charlestown on Charlestown Road, a Tetley house, has undergone a transformation. A refit (inside and out) has changed what was a rather run-down, shabby pub into two establishments in one building. What was the lounge on the left is now "FG's Lounge" and is aimed at younger drinkers, having loud music and lots of video screens. Be warned that the Tetley bitter here is keg and 121p. Whereas in the next door Charlestown Pub (the old vault) the handpumped Tetley sells at 100p and there is no loud music or other nonsense.

Cheapest Beer in Manchester (2)

The Top Derby, Rochdale Road, Blackley, has, after many months in the old Wilsons livery, been restyled as a Vaux house. The Holts bitter has gone, but there is Vaux bitter for 90p. Also on sale is Samson at 110p.

Ale trial fails

A recent experiment with cask Burtonwood bitter did not succeed in wooing customers away from the keg variety. The trial took place at the out-of-the-way Brindley Arms, Whittle Street, Walkden. Even with the cask product at 100p it didn't sell. The mistake, perhaps, was having the keg version available alongside. Win some, lose some...

Death knell

The demolition men are still at it and several pubs have come down in the last month or so. The latest is the Lancaster (Belhaven) on Oldham Road, Miles Platting. Before that, two Salford pubs were reduced to rubble - the St James on Phoebe Street, Ordsall, and the Sports/Woodman, Belvedere Road, Pendleton. What next? Hobsons Choice, perhaps?

Middleton News

Peter Alexander

At last there has appeared a further glimmer of hope from giant brewers Whitbread, in the shape of the recently renovated Dusty Miller. Whitbread seem desperate to embrace the real ale revival and despite my earlier doubts expressed in this magazine, all systems are go in this "Whitbread Cask Ale House". No fewer than ten handpumps grace the bar and the choice of beers is evenly distributed between Whitbread and non-Whitbread ales. In addition to Chesters mild and bitter, Boddingtons bitter, Castle Eden Ale and Marstons Pedigree, regular guests are Taylors Landlord and Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew. There has been a good range recently with, for example, beers from the Jolly Roger Brewery.

Charlie Ashton, the landlord of the Dusty Miller, is a real ale enthusiast and does his best to ensure that the beers are in good condition. Prices, always a bugbear in the case of Whitbread, are reasonable at the basic end of the range, with Chesters bitter and mild at £1.07. Guests are £1.30 upwards, with Taylors Landlord retailing at £1.45. While we in CAMRA can (rightly) be a bit sniffy about Whitbread, there are several positive aspects in this case. With the exception of the ubiquitous Boddingtons bitter, the Dusty Miller was a keg desert, so it is effectively a real ale gain and the choice of cask beers regularly available in Middleton has increased substantially. There is still one problem with the pub, however, in that the guest beers are often sold out and the choice is limited to Whitbread products.

Not so encouraging is the news that the Dyers & Polishers Social Club has closed. It was fairly unusual, if not unique, as the only club in the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury CAMRA branch area which didn't sell any keg beers. The closure is certainly a loss to the area as there was a choice of up to five different real ales. "For Sale" signs now adorn the building, but a return to real ale seems unlikely.

Another real ale loss is at the Oddfellows Arms on Oldham



Road, where a brief flirtation with Morlands Old Speckled Hen is over - the price of £1.71 a pint may well have contributed to its demise. Holts bitter continues in excellent form at £1.02 a pint. The much improved (Morlands-brewed) Wilsons mild is also available and it is understood that another guest beer is not entirely out of the question as there is a spare handpump. Returning to the gloomy theme, it appears that the recently refurbished Albion, just out of the town centre, has ceased to sell Cains FA. The thirsty customer is confronted with a bewildering array of handpumps, but all dispense Boddingtons bitter.

Finally, no report of Middleton would be complete without a mention of the Brunswick. A house beer, Brunswick bitter, brewed by Coach House Brewery of Warrington, is available. It's a deep brown, slightly sweet brew (4.1% ABV) and it sells at £1.14 a pint. There have been one or two disappointments at the Brunswick in the past, with the guest beer range losing some of its imagination and the odd hiccup in quality. But the problems seem to have been overcome and the beer quality of late has been excellent. The Christmas choice was very much enhanced by Adnams Broadside and the excellent Humbug from Oak.

Shoulder of Mutton

This Vaux hostelry in Holcombe Village, redecorated and under new management since last October, now offers Taylors Landlord in addition to its usual range of Vaux Samson, Wards bitter and Flowers IPA. The beer quality has certainly improved over the past few months and it's good to see Landlord regularly available in the area.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

"Limited and strictly controlled supplies" of Holts beers have been on sale in the Midlands recently, distributed by Max Taylor, who has worked in the recent past for Mitchells of Lancaster and Moorhouses of Burnley and is now freelance. All sales via Mr Taylor are agreed in advance with the brewery and distribution is strictly monitored. However, it is expected that these sales will soon cease. On the other hand, sales to Scotland may improve!

Some licensee changes: Just before Christmas Vincent and Christine Pandolfo from the Bridgewater (Sale) took over at the Grafton. Steve and Paula Rowcroft are now running the Broadway (near Salford Quays) after doing relief work in a number of Joey's outlets. Janine Irving, who has been a barmaid in Holts pubs for four years, has taken over at the Crown & Cushion, Corporation Street.

Rochdale & Littleborough

Mark Hardman

The Reed Hotel, off Yorkshire Street in the centre of Rochdale, has changed hands. It was a Good Beer Guide entry in the days of Draught Bass and XXXX Mild, and recently it was selling Boddingtons bitter, but now the pub has been acquired by Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. The beers are Banks's mild and bitter on electric dispense and Marstons Pedigree and Camerons Strongarm on handpump. This is W&D's second pub in the town, the other being the Cloverdale Hotel, Entwistle Road (Banks's bitter only).

Other Rochdale pubs to have changed hands recently are the Foresters Arms, Bury Road, and the Bulls Head, Halifax Road. Both have been acquired by Vaux from Tetley.

The Kingsway on Kingsway has reopened after another of Sam Smith's impressive renovation jobs. The pub now features a bar area, lounge, dining area and function room, and is selling Old Brewery Bitter.

The Fish at Hollingworth Lake, Littleborough, is now the Fishermans and the pub has been renovated. The plastic is out and in has come the wood and a decor on a variety of themes - musical instruments, maritime artefacts and ... Whitbread keg font heads! However, real ale is on sale. The regular beers are John Smiths bitter, Tetley bitter and Websters Green Label, and these have recently been joined for real ale promotions by the likes of Marstons Pedigree, Morlands Old Speckled Hen and Clarks Festival and Rams Revenge.

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Bolton News

Des Nogalski

The Gypsy's Tent at the corner of Deansgate and Marsden Road is now selling beers from the Bass guest list. One guest beer at a time is on sale alongside the cask Stones bitter, but there are plans to put the Stones on keg and bring in another guest. Highgate Old Ale, Fullers London Pride, Greene King Abbot and Thwaites Craftsman have all made recent appearances at what seems to be a standard price of £1.35 a pint.

Meanwhile, across the road the White Lion remains closed. Another Innpreneur/ex-Wilsons pub, the George on Great Moor Street, reopened just before Christmas although the "To Let" sign remains outside.

Speaking of the White Lion, Richard James, a former landlord, is now at Arkwright's Ale House on Valletts Lane and he is hoping to introduce guest beers there. Richard was best known at the White Lion and at the Bowling Green on Bury Road, where he held a popular annual outdoor beer festival. He had a spell at the Howcroft on Pool Street earlier last year following the departure of Dennis Lund. Dennis has recently been seen behind the bar of the Astley Bridge Conservative Club.

The Jolly Miller on Chorley Old Road, Doffcocker, has reopened after being closed for almost twelve months. The pub has reverted to its original name after being one of Pennine Host's Sports outlets and, before that, it was known as Barnabys. Tetleys bitter is on sale, although guest beers are a possibility.

Finally, Greenalls have been given planning permission to demolish the Boars Head on Churchgate (see Dec WD). Work is expected to start shortly.

Swan Street

The Burton Arms on Swan Street, Manchester, has been run by Wilf Seville for the past three years and sells Theakstons Best Bitter (132p), XB (144p) and a guest beer. The pub, which is now owned by Wilf, provides live Irish music every Thursday, stand-up comics on Tuesdays and R&B and Jazz on Mondays. Food is available all day until 10.00pm.

Renovation work continues nearby at Walkers Hotel, where the downstairs kitchen has been removed to make more drinking room.

Entrepreneur's Corner

We hear the Sabre in Ordsall is for sale for £50,000. So Holts really are getting shut of the place.

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(NEAR BY-PASS)



CAMRA Anniversary

In February 1974 the very first meeting of the North Manchester branch of CAMRA was held at the Lord Nelson in Ringley. Today, twenty years on, it's good to see the Lord Nelson is little altered. It is still a splendid example of a traditional pub, nestling in the Irwell Valley opposite the ancient bridge, under which swans glide on the shimmering waters... (*Get on with it - Ed*)

All those years ago an energetic group of young campaigners, bright-eyed and slim, tousle-haired... (*Yes, yes, we know. Get on with it.*) Well, on 23rd February many of these same campaigners - now bald, pot-bellied old farts - are having a twentieth anniversary bash at the Lord Nelson. All CAMRA



members, past and present, are invited to come along and enjoy the ambience of an evening in this fine pub whilst outside, on the river, swans glide effortlessly... (*OK. I think we get the idea.*) But I haven't mentioned the squirrels and ducks yet. (*Never mind.*)

Swinton guests

The White Horse (BodPubCo) has been selling guest beers for some time now. In addition to the usual Whitbread range and Pedigree, Taylors and more recently Batemans have been featured.

Refloat for Showboat

The Shepherds Arms (Showboat) on Hall Street, Pendlebury, has been transferred from Tetley to Burtonwood and now sells handpumped mild and bitter

Contributors to this issue: Stewart Revell, Peter Alexander, Roger Hall, Des Nogalski, Barbara Lee, Peter Wadsworth, Mark McConachie, Ian Kenny, Dennis Holt, Gary Page, D Busman, Geoff Johnson, Pete Cash, Peter Barnes, Mark Hardman.



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FREE to CAMRA Members All Sessions

Brewery Action Group

Greater Manchester's Brewery Action Group meets every two months to consider major campaigning issues in the region and to initiate action. It has met with mixed fortunes. Few branches have completed comprehensive databases of all their pub stock, involved themselves in Unitary Development Plans or attempted to influence local licensing policies. At the same time, concern over pub owning groups and pub ownership has prompted National Action to add questions on ownership to the Prices Survey and produce a shock horror press release. The Central Manchester Pub Guide originated in discussions of BAG about the appalling representation of the City Centre in the Good Beer Guide. Close links have been forged with both official bodies and other groups. BAG is a forum for those who are genuinely committed to long-term campaigning for traditional pubs and beer. New members are welcome. The next meeting is on 1st March 1994 at 8.15 in the Castle, Oldham Street, Manchester.

Crown & Anchor

The Crown & Anchor on Hilton Street, Manchester, has become a "Beer Engine" on the lines of the Unicorn in Radcliffe and the Duke of York in Eccles. The changes took place over three weeks during January and the revamped pub now offers a wider range of beers, some of them straight from barrels on stillage behind the bar.

Grapes & Guests

The Old Grapes, off Quay Street, Manchester, is selling Boddingtons bitter at 130p, Cains bitter at 135p and guest beers at 140p. Recent guests have been Theakstons XB, Wadworths Farmers Glory, Morland Old Speckled Hen, Marstons Pedigree and Courage Directors.

New Bar

Waiting for a train on Dewsbury Station was never one of life's pleasurable experiences, but some comfort is now at hand. On 8th January a three-roomed pub opened in the listed station building, fitted out in tasteful style. Batemans XB, Dark Mild and Valiant are permanent and the guests in January were West Riding Bitter, Rooster Bitter and Black Sheep Special. The average price was £1.35.

Change of use?

The Manchester Evening News has reported that the former Sports pub on the Alexandra Park estate in Moss Side is being considered for a new lease of life. It could become the first legal drugs counselling and handout centre in Manchester. So apart from the absence of beer the place won't be changing much.

West Coast Brewery Visit

Mark McConachie

On the evening of January 18th a party of CAMRA members were shown around Dobbins' Chorlton-on-Medlock Brewery, which is housed in what was the King William IV pub on Justin Close, only a stone's throw from the Kings Arms.

Every inch of available floor space seems to be used. Most of the brewing equipment appears to be converted cellar tanks and the two coppers can brew about five barrels apiece. Such is the adaptability of the system that even such small quantities as a single barrel can be produced. The yeast used is their own strain; maximum output would be around 60 barrels per week; the biggest-selling beers are mild, bitter and Green Bullet (the house brew for the Crown Inn, Stockport); 50% of production goes to the Kings Arms.

After the tour, Brendan Dobbin gave an impromptu talk covering various topics such as excise duty, discounting, alcoholism, problems with vandalism and theft in the area, loans and debts. He went on to say that he would probably make the brewery into a brewery/pub and sell the Kings Arms. He left us with a very poignant statement: "Ironically, when you drink beer, you kiss the arse of the Chancellor." Quite.

Tap & Spile

Since taking over at Bury's Tap & Spile free house on Manchester Old Road in August last year, Alistair and Carole Rutledge have sold around 200 different beers. Eight real ales, including a mild, are usually available. The Tuesday night quizzes (beer prizes) are proving popular and other events such as brewery trips are planned for the near future. The pub now has a CAMRA noticeboard, on which Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch activities and CAMRA news items are advertised.

WHAT'S DOING contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 1ET. News, letters, etc, must arrive by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Enquiries to the editor, address above. Full page £30 or £135 for six months, half page £20 or £90 for six months. 10% discount if you pay up front.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Send cheque/ PO for £2.70 together with your name and address to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW, for six 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.

Letters

Monkey Business

Sir - I was very pleased to hear of the opening of Holts' newest pub, the Old Monkey on Portland Street. I decided to pay a visit on Sunday evening and was impressed with the decor and the beer. However, my enthusiasm was dampened when at 10.35pm the bar staff proceeded to remove beermats from under drinkers' glasses, remove ashtrays from the tables and upturn unoccupied stools and place them on the tables. I found this totally unwelcoming, especially since the drinking-up time of twenty minutes had not elapsed.

Gary Page

Myths and Legends

Sir - What is going on with the Dick & Puppet? In your A2C2 (December 1993) you stated that the pub would be open in January. Well, where is it? I'm beginning to believe the pub will never open and the whole thing is just a fairytale. The Dick & Puppet's mythical status is confirmed by its listing in the current Yellow Pages, along with two other pubs which for some time have existed only in the nether world - Tommy Ducks and the Mersey Lights. If the Dick & Puppet is a fairytale pub, how do we get there and will we all live (and drink) happily ever after?

H C Anderson

A2C2

Complete sets of the What's Doing inserts - A2C2 *The Series* - will be available by post from March. For the entire set of five, send 50p and a stamped addressed A5 envelope to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Manchester M9 6PW. Mark the envelope A2C2. Cheques should be made out to CAMRA North Manchester.

Good Beer Guide '95

Pubs for North Manchester and Salford have been shortlisted and final selection meetings are as follows:

City Centre: 2nd March, Kings Arms, Salford

North Manchester and Salford: 9th March, Unicorn, Manchester

On those evenings only pubs which have been surveyed can be considered. Although a shortlist exists, there is no reason why other pubs should not be surveyed if members feel strongly enough. Forms are available at any North Manchester branch meeting or by writing to the Secretary at Flat 5, 13 Polygon Road, Crumpsall M8 6DX.

Rupert

"Well, aren't they a phallalagia?" said Fiona, referring to the Smarmford & Slutch and Snobley & Snoot Magna branches.

"How would you know?" Ophelia Hampton retorted. "You haven't got one, although I dare say you've seen a few in your time." Everyone looked nonplussed, but Fiona continued, as was her wont. Grotley was the epicentre of the known universe with the best hostelries and amber nectars in Christendom. How dare they expunge taverns of excellence from the toppers' vademecum and substitute hovels in the sticks. Something must be done about it now. Everyone fell asleep and did nothing. Luke remarked that the recent DOGSHIT meeting was more riveting. What could be more exciting than a group of hirsute architects manqués assembling in a Drabs house and being presided over by a bossperson allocated the task at random? Rab C McLaddie is the designated new DOGSHIT bossperson. He'll be good, coming as he does from Jockley, where there's lots of bazzing taverns. Bogbrush, Zimbabwe-Talbot, Lunesdale Prunes and Seamus Spud eat your hearts out. DOGSHIT in Slumley Parva was something to behold.

At least the Grotley Gogglebox Company didn't come and film them in a sort of snail on the wall documentary as they did with the assembled glitterati of Snobley & Snoot Magna at Carthorses' amber nectar emporium. Charlie Super and Rumpleshirtscream were at



their most voluble, extolling the virtues of Old Nobthrutcher and other such brews. Only four sound engineers were rendered stone deaf during the extensive filming, so the programme can be judged a success. Look out for our stars of the little screen on a programme called Peripheral Addenda.

It has been brought to my attention that our small but select band of free-from-brewer taverns has ceased to stock the excellent wares of Josiah Drab. Why can this be? Surely stories that all of mine hosts have fallen out with Uncle Josiah's minion are ill-placed. As a factotum he is the epitome of forelock-tugging servility and the mine hosts are the nicest band of persons who ever walked this earth. Nevertheless, I feel we should be told. We surely cannot have a toppers' vademecum with Drabless free houses throughout inner Slumley - that wouldn't look right.

Rumour Denial: Charlie Bass is not leaving Mrs Tiggywinkle's at all, ever.

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 1 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Bridge Inn, Well i'th' Lane, Rochdale

Wed 9 Feb 8pm, Social Meeting, Tap & Spile, Drake Street, Rochdale. *New members particularly welcome*

Tues 15 Feb 8pm, Committee Meeting, Dog & Partridge, Roundthorn Road, Oldham

Wed 16 Feb 8.30, Bury Beer Festival Post Mortem Meeting, Napier, Bolton Street, Bury

Thur 24 Feb 8pm, Whats Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Tues 1 Mar 8pm, Branch Meeting, Blue Bell, Market Street, Shaw

Contact: Peter Alexander 0532 324 023 (w) 061 655 4002 (h)

North Manchester

Wed 2 Feb, Collyhurst Crawl. Swan, Rochdale Road, 7pm; Sparrow, Thornton Street North, 8pm; Milan, Rochdale Road, 9pm. Junction to finish

Wed 9 Feb, Branch Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, 8pm. *Will everyone who wishes to assume a position in the North Manchester branch, together with all those who have constitutional or standing orders changes to propose, contact the branch secretary at this meeting.*

Wed 16 Feb, Regional Meeting, Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, 8pm

Wed 23 Feb, Twentieth Anniversary of the first branch meeting, Lord Nelson, Ringley.

Wed 2 March, Good Beer Guide Final Selection Meeting (City Centre pubs): Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford, 8pm.

Wed 9 March, Good Beer Guide Final Selection Meeting: Unicorn, Church St, 8pm

Wed 16 March, Branch AGM, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford, 8pm.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

Bolton

Thur 3 Feb, Branch Meeting, Pilkington Arms, Derby Street, 8.30pm

Thur 17 Feb, Social & Crawl of Daubhill. Meet Morris Dancers 7.30pm, Stags Head 8pm, Oddfellows, Shamrock, Albert, Pilkington 10pm, Derby 10.30pm.

Thur 3 Mar, Branch Meeting, Cattle Market, Orlando Street. Includes GBG '95 voting. (Current card-carrying CAMRA members only)

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

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 3 Feb 8pm, Committee Meeting, Volunteer, Sale, for GBG Review Meeting

Sat 5 Feb 12-3pm, Porter and stouts tastings at Kendlegate Wines, Stockport

Thur 10 Feb 8pm, Joint Social with South Manchester at the Old Monkey, Manchester City Centre

Wed 16 Feb 8pm, Regional Meeting at the Beer House

Thur 17 Feb 8pm, Chorlton Survey, starting at the Beech

Thur 24 Feb 8pm, GBG Review meeting (2) at the Railway, Hale

Thur 3 Mar 8pm prompt. Final GBG Review Meeting at the Kings Arms, Salford. All to attend!

Contact: Allan J Glover 061 962 9890 (h), 061 872 2373 or 0625 432220 (w)

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