

25p

What's Doing

JANUARY 1995

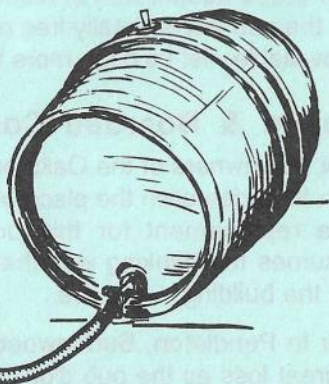


The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Skimming off the Cream

How much conditioning should real ale have? Not a lot, according to Manchester's favourite brewery. In answer to What's Doing's questionnaire, Whitbread has indicated a period of less than six hours from fermenting vessel to throat. Whatever next? Tablets to which water can be added in the pub cellar? In being honest beyond the call of duty, Whitbread has confirmed what we have long suspected. Real ale ain't what it used to be. There's little point in having real ale everywhere when it matures in minutes rather than days.

(See over for questionnaire)



The Questionnaire

Whitbread's answer

Once fermentation takes place, how long is the beer left in conditioning tanks?

ZERO

After racking into casks, what is the length of time the casks remain at the brewery?

ZERO

When does fining take place?

AT RACK

How long should the beer be stored in the pub cellar before venting/tapping?

< 6 HOURS

What shelf life does the brewery give once the cask has been broached?

RECOMMEND EMPTYING CASK
WITHIN 3 DAYS OF BROACHING

Over the Moon?

The old Cannon Deansgate Cinema is to be converted into a cask ale pub which could see the cheapest beer in Greater Manchester. J D Wetherspoons, famous for their chain of traditional pubs in the Capital, are spending £1.7 million to convert the former cinema into The Moon Under Water. Wetherspoon's prices are way below average in the Capital and one of their London pubs was reported to be selling beer at 59p a pint! If that policy features in their first North West venture, the prices will be well below those of Holts and Lees, our two cheapest breweries.



Over 6,500 square feet of drinking space will include a no smoking area and the pub will be totally free of music and pool tables. Six cask ales will be available - let us hope more Wetherspoon pubs will follow.

Closed & Boarded Corner

S&N, the owners of the Oaks on Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton, have now seen fit to demolish the place. Apparently they intend to build a new pub as a replacement for this under-pubbed corner of the area. One presumes the thinking was that the place's bad name would disappear with the building. Let's see...

Over in Pendleton, Burtonwood's Keystone has been boarded up. It is no great loss as the pub didn't sell cask beer, although it did at least try some time ago.

Central Manchester Prices

Poor publicity and the prospect of United on the box meant that in 1994, for the first time, we were unable to survey all the pubs in the City Centre. Only 56 pubs were surveyed on 23rd November. Surprise, surprise, Holts was not the cheapest pint. Websters Green Label was on sale at 89p in the Rising Sun and the Beerhouse was serving Burtonwood bitter at 95p. There's not much mild around and much of that is keg. Lager's still poor value for money. Some good news - 75% of pubs now have price lists. So, only a quarter of them are breaking the law in this respect. Far more are failing to comply with the Business Names Act.

Most prices have risen by more than the rate of inflation. Holts, at 2p a pint, have kept pace. The Britons Protection has raised its prices by as much as 25% and they still charge over the odds for a half (or give discount for a pint, if you look at it in their cloth-headed way).

The prices from the full survey are printed below.

(K=Keg)	Mild/Bitter/Best/Lager Bitter		
Athenaeum	-	150	155 185
Atlas Bar	-	170	- 190
Beer House	120	95	145 185
Bouchelle's Café Bar	-	160	180 180
Brahms & Liszt	SHUT		
Britons Protection	-	150	155 180
Burton Arms	120	135	145 160
Canal Café Bar	-	150	- 195
Cheshire Cheese	REFUSED SURVEY		
City, Oldham Street	-	120	- 160
City Arms, Kennedy St	137	139	159 187
City Road Inn	-	100	150 170
Conservatory	-	K	- 105
Corbières	-	133	150 175
Corner House	-	140	- 190

	Mild/Bitter/Best/Lager Bitter		
Crown, Booth Street	-	136	148 192
Crown, Deansgate	120	-	130 165
Crown & Anchor, Cateaton St	92	98	158 105
Crown & Cushion	92	98	- 105
Ducie Bridge	122	134	143 175
Dutton Hotel	-	124	- 172
Exchange Bar	-	145	120 190
Grand Central	-	125	140 175
Grinch	-	180	- 200
Gullivers	K	115	- 140
Hare & Hounds	135	137	- 180
Harp & Shamrock	-	120	136 156
Hat & Feathers	110	99	- 140
Hogshead	128	135	150 ?
Horts	-	165	- 190
H R Fletcher's	140	144	158 195
King, Oldham Street	K	120	- 150
Marble Arch	-	130	150 190
Metro Bar	K	120	155 140
Millstone	SHUT		
Mitre Hotel	K	126	- 164
Mr Thomas's Chop House	SHUT		
Old Nags Head	K	135	150 172
Oscars	-	130	- 160
Pack Horse	K	128	- 165
Peveril of the Peak	-	135	160 175
Rising Sun	89	140	150 175
Ronnie's Café Bar	-	165	- 195
Rosie's	-	144	- 165
Royal Central	-	135	- 179
Salisbury Ale House	-	148	158 176
Sam's Chop House	-	153	165 186
Shakespeare	-	152	164 182
Sinclair's Oyster Bar	K	115	136 161
Sir Ralph Abercromby	K	129	150 171
Smithfield Hotel	110	110	135 165
Sportsman	K	125	- 160
Square Albert	-	146	158 195
Swan with Two Necks	-	130	-
Town Hall Tavern	K	138	145 177
Unicorn	116	126	136 168
Victoria Station Buffet	-	140	170 180
Vine	K	138	160 184
Wellington	K	124	135 177
Wheatsheaf	122	125	- 165
Yates's, High Street	SHUT		

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(INCLUDING GUEST MILD)**

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IN THE
GOOD
BEER
GUIDE
'95

FROM INDEPENDENT BREWERIES

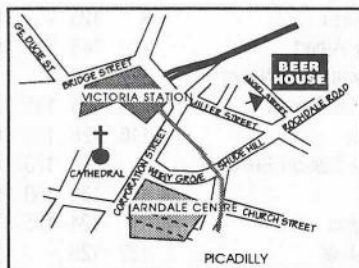
PLUS 3 TRADITIONAL CIDERS,

WE'RE
IN THE
GOOD
BEER
GUIDE
'95

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Openings in the City

Mark McConachie

There was a considerable amount of activity on Manchester's pub opening and reopening scene in late November and early December.

The first to emerge was O'Shea's Irish Pub - O'Shea's II, if you like - sited on Chester Street in the shadow of the Metropolitan University. The similarities between this and the original O'Shea's on Whitworth Street are obvious. The pub is serving Tetley bitter and Burton Ale (145p and 150p) and lots of Guinness, but the main attraction must be the live music. There are a lot of nice features about this place and all in all I think it works well.

Not far away, on the corner of Oxford Road and Booth Street West, Trafford & Hulme (if not the world!) has its first Trumpton Pub - Barney McGrew's. Yes, really. It is a Bass theme pub named after one of the firemen in the children's TV puppet show. The Trumpton theme is not carried through inside, though. Instead, we have lots of panelling, separate areas, bare boards and twee quotations on ceiling beams. For example: "It's life Jim, but not as we know it - Bones". The standard five-beer range is Highgate Dark, Worthington BB, Stones, Bass and St Austell Hicks. Prices start at £1.38.

Still in studentland, the former Archies underneath Oxford Road Station on New Wakefield Street reopened as the Thirsty Scholar. We are informed that it is being run by the same people who own the Jabez Clegg, hence the beer range is Marstons bitter, Pedigree and Boddies. Prices start at £1.40. The bar is set out straight in front of you as you enter, with all the handpumps in the middle. The place is small (as you might expect, being in a railway arch), has a stone-flagged floor and most of the seating is in side booths. Worth a visit, but noisy!

Over in Salford, the Cornerhouse (formerly the Three Legs of Man) opened on December 2nd. Now free of the Robinsons tie, the pub was selling twelve beers, although six were from the Courage range - J Smiths mild, bitter, Wilsons, Directors and so on. The independent guest beers were priced from 125p to 155p for Speckled Hen. The Smiths Chestnut Mild was the "bargain" beer at 95p. This is WD's first sighting of the beer in cask form in the area - any further information, anyone?

The layout of three rooms is only different in the main bar, where the bar is now along one wall to give extra space. The black and red decor is something of an acquired taste but you can get used to it.

What of the future? Well, it's nice to see a venture like this get off the ground in such a remote part of town. I wish it success, but I don't see all of the beers surviving - maybe two or three. Do give the Cornerhouse your support!

ATHERTON & TYLDESLEY

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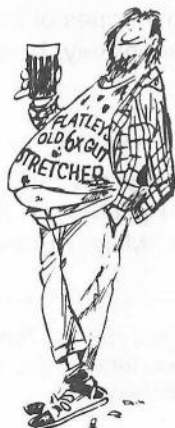
Lees' tied houses cover a wide geographical area, although none can be found in that strange land east of the Pennines. The outlets stretch from Burnley to Chester, with a fair sprinkling in North Wales as far west as Holyhead. About 80% of the total are tenancies; the 32 managed houses either have substantial food sales or are high volume outlets.

Within the last few weeks two John Willies outlets in Salford (the Druids on Liverpool Street and the Jollies on Oldfield Road) have reopened, and on 12th December the formerly derelict Grenadier on Briscoe Lane, Newton Heath, opened under its original name - the Phoenix. This pub, previously owned by Wilsons, Grand Met and Belhaven (among others) has seen some major rebuilding work, including the addition of pitched roofs to replace the 1960s-style flat ones. The result is a pub with a separate lounge, vault (no pool table!) and upstairs function room.

Early in December came news of the release of the 1994 Harvest Ale, made from the new season's malt and hops. This is the ninth year of production and, many say, it's the best yet. It is a brewery conditioned bottled beer with an OG of 1120 and an ABV of 11.5%. The shelf life of Harvest Ale is undetermined, as the first vintage (1986) is still drinking well! Rumour has it that a small quantity of the 1994 vintage has been stored in cask for the next Stockport Beer Festival.

Wigan Beer Festival

This year's Wigan Beer Festival will be on 2nd-4th March at the Mill on the Pier. All the usual fun is promised, including a family room on the Saturday afternoon.



Wonky Widgets!

British Airways have announced their intention to serve tinned "draught" Boddingtons bitter on their flights from Manchester once they can overcome the technical problems of pressure on the widget. Sounds painful!

Meanwhile, Business Air are offering a selection of complimentary bottled beers from US micro breweries on their flights from Manchester to various other UK cities. This is obviously something to do with Lufthansa's large holding in the airline.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Something to look forward to in 1995 is the opening of the Tara Hotel in Chorlton-cum-Hardy as a Holts pub. It will be their 110th tied house and is expected to be ready around Easter.

The brewery is continuing with the trial of draught Sixx in six of their pubs (see December WD) and they tell me that it is too early to say if the beer will be made more widely available or - heaven forbid - withdrawn. As is usual with Holts, the only publicity the beer has had has been in CAMRA publications.

As WD went to press, Holts were evaluating the implications of the Chancellor's penny on a pint. They may absorb the increase and keep their prices the same - the decision will be made in January.

Railway privatisation

The Railway on Manchester Road, Broadheath, Altrincham, has been sold by BodPubCo to Peel Holdings, the company responsible for developing the nearby industrial estate. The present licensee leaves in mid-January.

The original Broadheath development plan shows a fast food outlet on the site of the pub, but presumably this was changed when it was discovered that the Railway is a listed building. Now that BodPubCo has taken the money and run, the fate of the pub rests in the gentle hands of the property developers.

Licensing Hours

Home Office Minister Michael Forsyth has hinted that Sunday afternoon opening may take place under the Deregulation Act. Any hopes of longer opening hours for pubs and clubs during the week are unlikely, he said, because of public hostility.

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Mark McConachie, Heather Johnson, Roger Hall, Duncan Roberts, Stewart Revell, Paul Mason, Brian Gleave, Paul Roberts, Keith Egerton, Rob Magee, Mike Robinson, Bernie Jackson, Roger Wood

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.

Handpumped Banks's

Banks's have admitted that using electric pumps might not be the best way to sell cask beer (see December WD), especially in areas where handpumps are the norm for real ale. The company's tenants are now allowed to install handpumps and one of the first off the mark was Geoff Prendergast at the Werneth Arms on Manchester Road, Oldham. He took over in April 1994, bringing his handpumps with him from his last pub, the Star at Ardwick. When Geoff arrived the Werneth was selling just over a barrel of keg beer a week - sales of cask beer are now much better! The beers are Banks's mild and bitter - between 12 noon and 6pm they are priced at £1 a pint.



The Werneth Arms is one of the area's newer pubs; the building was used as a doctor's surgery before Wilsons Brewery licensed it as the Yarn Spinners just over twenty years ago. In the 1980s it was converted into a windowless disco establishment called Rascals, then Banks's arrived on the scene in 1990 and turned the place into a pub again.

Stanley

Nigel Bailey is the new licensee at the Stanley Arms in Patricroft. He has worked in various pubs along Church Street for the past seventeen years and so decided it was time to run one of his own.

In AIL seriousness

AIL has complained to CAMRA HQ about our coverage in December's WD. In case there's any misunderstanding, let's spell it out. We support AIL. Intreprenuer and Grand Met are a bunch of nasties. OK?

HARE & HOUNDS

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Independents**

Holts *in Eccles*



Lamb Hotel

Regent Street (*corner of College Croft*)

Buses: 10,11,27,33,63-8,127,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

The Lamb is a large Edwardian pub of character which retains many of its original features, including an ornate, curved mahogany and acid-etched glass bar. Much of the art nouveau tiling remains around the walls and staircase. There are a number of rooms, including a billiard room complete with full-size table. Families are made welcome at lunchtime, although no food is served. The pub continues to be popular, particularly on Saturday afternoons, and the eight "Good Beer Guide" stickers on the windows tell their own story!

Old Bulls Head

Church Street (*near Eccles Cross*)

Buses: 10,11,27,33,63-8,127,M10

Mild, Bitter, 6X (H)

This house embodies all that is utilitarian and austere, but is none the worse for that! It was built with two rooms, now joined by a small arch beside the button-back PVC-clad bar. A decent boozer, yes. An architectural gem, no. Some bulls head windows still remain in this inter-wars town pub.

Wellington Hotel

Church Street (*next to Aldi*)

Buses: 10,11,27,33,63-8,127,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

A strange mix of a place, this. Part Holts, part big brewer. The Holts part is the solid, late fifties two-room layout, evidence of a revolving door and some nice etched windows. Unusual for a Holts pub is the raised seating area in the lounge and the loud music (occasionally). Smaller and cosier than it appears.

Royal Oak

Barton Lane (*Corner of Corporation Road*)

Buses: 10,11,27,33,63-8,127,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

An Edwardian replacement for a mid-Victorian beerhouse, from the outside the Royal Oak looks like a miniature relative of the former Manchester Central Fire Station. There are four rooms, including an out-of-use newsroom and a large table-less billiard room, and plenty of drinking space around the bar. As in the Lamb, there is much green art nouveau tiling, but the atmosphere cannot at present compare with the Lamb's smoky bustle.

Crown & Volunteer

Church Street (*near St James Street*)

Buses: 10,11,27,33,63-8,127,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

A 1938 replacement for a mid-Victorian beerhouse, the Crown & Volunteer is a compact (lounge and vault) pub in which period glazing with chevron motifs survives in windows and bar fittings. Situated between the Salvation Army and the RC Church, the pub has its own loyal following. Piped music can be obtrusive.

White Lion

Liverpool Road (*corner Roberts Street*)

Buses: 10,11,63,65,67,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

We probably kid ourselves that we have lots of unspoilt street-corner locals. We do not. Most have been given the "Brewer's Tudor" treatment, opened out, fallen victim to the manic artex artist or festooned with trinkets from Torremolinos. Therefore we must search for those that have been spoilt the least. The White Lion is relatively unspoilt. It has a lounge with fixed seating, splendid original windows and a piano. To the back of the pub is a snug that was originally part of the living accommodation (note the "Private" in the door's glass). The vault is an odd shape because it was knocked into a small room to the rear a few years ago. The lobby is a comfortable area in which to drink and has a shelf the width of a beer glass at a convenient height. The White Lion is a most pleasing pub.

Golden Cross

Liverpool Road (*near corner of Renshaw Street*)

Buses: 10,11,63,65,67,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

The present internal arrangement and decor (complete with imitation "real log" fire in the middle of the lounge) reveal nothing of the pub's eighteenth century origins. It's nickname, "Cloudy's", derives from a former landlord's alleged cask-kicking habit, and is perpetuated by purists who prefer their Holts less than crystal-clear.

Bridgewater Hotel

Liverpool Road (*corner of Green Lane*)

Buses: 10,11,63,65,67,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

A distinctive pub with a wonderful corner setting, opposite the Police Station. Altered a few years ago, it now offers the standard package - vault and lounge. There is an additional entrance on Green Lane to the lounge. Despite this welcoming face, the pub seems to fall short of its potential.

Stanley Arms

Liverpool Road (*corner of Eliza Ann Street*)

Buses: 10,11,63,65,67,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

The Stanley is a locals' pub of character. The long, narrow corridor is adorned with a collection of old photographs of the area and in the rear pool room there is a fine example of an old-fashioned fire range, complete with oven. It is hoped that Holts will restore this sadly neglected item of local history by replacing some missing parts! The pub has a friendly atmosphere and good quality mild and bitter.

Bird in Hand

Liverpool Road (*near corner of George Street*)

Buses: 10,11,63,65,67,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

Sited next to the soon-to-be-completed Eccles Fire Station, the Bird in Hand is a pub that has often been overlooked although it presents a facade of some age and character. Inside, there are four modest rooms for the imbibers. Sociable and friendly, warm and inviting, is this the secret Patricroft has kept hidden?

Grapes Hotel

Liverpool Road (*near corner of New Lane*)

Buses: 10,11,63-7,127,M10

Mild, Bitter (H)

A large, splendid Edwardian house in the same mould as the Lamb and the Royal Oak. On entering, you immediately encounter the polished hardwood and elaborately-shaped etched glass windows which separate the taproom and surround the bar. The style is repeated on the doors to each room - taproom, bar parlour, smoke room and billiards room (now containing pool tables). Other original features remain, such as draught screens, carved fireplace surrounds, green tiling and the mosaic tile floor.

Park Hotel

142 Monton Road, Monton (*near corner of Gordon Road*)

Buses: 33,64,66,68

Mild, Bitter (E)

The present Park is the third pub of that name on the site. The original 1860s beerhouse was replaced by an ornate hotel, similar to the Lamb and the Grapes, in 1902. This was knocked down in 1970 because of mining subsidence and the new Park opened in 1971. It is one of the better new Holts pubs, with three rooms - a large vault, a large lounge and a smaller snug with canal memorabilia. An extension to the lounge and a beer garden are planned for 1995. Despite its location in a posh part of Eccles, the Park is a no frills sort of pub. The mild is of excellent quality, an increasingly rare phenomenon these days.

Ellesmere Inn

King William Street, Winton (*off Worsley Road*)

Buses: 33,64,66,68

Mild, Bitter (H)

Tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac in the shadow of the motorway embankment, the Ellesmere is a small, early Edwardian house with just two rooms, a taproom and a long lounge separated by a central bar. Recently redecorated and upholstered, the lounge is often booked for functions, where licensees Lil and Paul provide the catering.



Letter

Willies

Sir - I was surprised to see Peter Alexander describe Lees beers as "usually excellent" in his Middleton News (WD December). I have enjoyed Lees bitter for many years and in that time I have defended its unique flavour/character against all comers and dissenters. However, I am dismayed at the current offering from Greengate.

I find it thin, with a harsh smack of hop-oil-type bitterness in the finish seemingly its only characteristic. My erstwhile favourite is currently not the beer your international correspondent, Beinlos, once daringly described as "the only beer north of the Midlands worth drinking".

I hope the situation is only a passing one and that I can soon look forward to savouring "full blown" Lees bitter again - God help us if it is a case of "another one gone".

John Willie Worried

Boddy Guard (2)

The dreaded draught widget ale is here in Greater Manchester, not only in golf clubs, etc, as an "enhanced keg", but in hitherto real ale establishments. The Wellington on Regent Road in Salford now sports widget fonts in the lounge. Perhaps the punters from Sainsbury's don't give a monkey's. Where will be next?

Imported Ale

Further to the item in last month's WD, all newly-produced Löwenbräu bottled beers are imported from Munich, but some bottles of UK-brewed Pils are still on sale. Unfortunately the draught Löwenbräu in Carlsberg Tetley pubs is still brewed in this country, although Löwenbräu UK tell us that the recipe is much closer to the Munich specification than before.

Munich-brewed Hofbräu Helles is on sale for £1.80 per half-litre bottle at the newly reopened Cornerhouse (Three Legs of Man) in Salford.



The Berwick Arms

FREE HOUSE

21 Carnarvon Street, Cheetham, Manchester. 061 832 4708

* * * * *

Open 12.00 until 11.00 Monday to Saturday
12.00 until 3.00 Sunday

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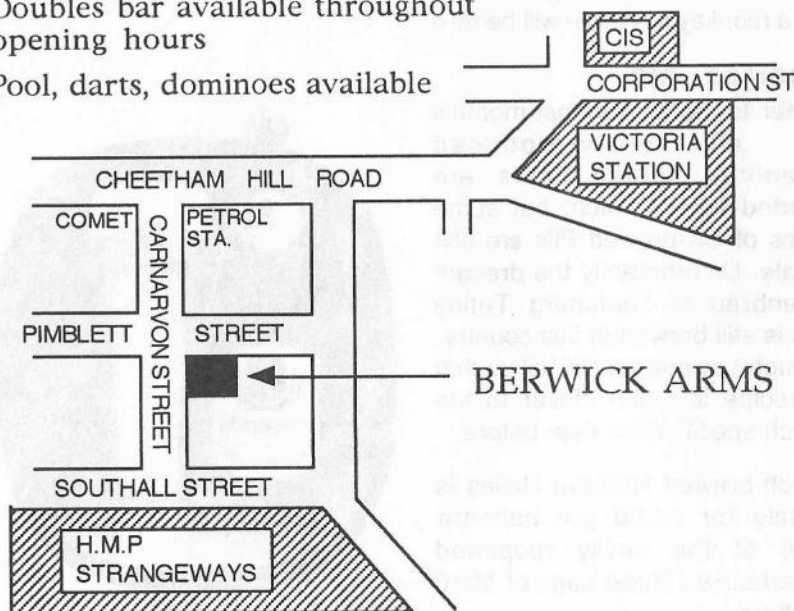
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Protection

No sooner had the ink dried on December What's Doing announcing the reopening of the Staff of Life on Rainsough, than the pub closed again. The reason became evident in the Cook Report on 8th December. The programme had been investigating protection rackets in pubs in and around Salford. Protection rackets, armed robberies, threats of violence, extortion and arson in the pub trade are certainly not news to readers of What's Doing. Over the last few years we have witnessed pubs in Miles Platting, Cheetham Hill, Broughton, Pendleton and Ordsall become victims of these phenomena. The difficulties of running pubs in some areas have become so great that vast tracts of the inner city have become virtually publess and brewers like Whitbread have withdrawn from Salford. In Ordsall only two pubs remain open - the Welcome and the Bricklayers. At the time of writing the Jubilee remains closed after a violent incident and the Liner opens sporadically.

In Pendleton the Brass Tally was closed after an arson attack and the nearby Langworthy appears to be permanently closed. No fewer than six pubs have closed on a short stretch of Oldham Road in Miles Platting among rumours of drugs, dog poisoning, extortion and arson. This litany of pub loss is continued across much of the inner city of Manchester and Salford. "So what?" you might think. "It only affects run-down pubs in grotty areas." Well, that's no longer true. As pubs disappear in those grotty ghettos, the villains are seeking new pastures for their criminal activities. Your own friendly neighbourhood local could be next.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of all this is the inability or unwillingness of the police to do anything about it. They either know what's going on and haven't tackled it or they are in ignorance. I'm not sure which is more disturbing. There are surely few things more serious than organised crime which manifests itself in extortion and violent assaults. It strikes not only at traditional pubs which are dear to our heart, but at the very essence of a civilized society. Perhaps the publicity given by the Cook Report will shame the police at last into tackling this growing menace to our pubs and our way of life.

PubCo sell-off

The Boddington Pub Company has announced the sale of thirty-one of its pubs this month. Twelve are to go to pub group Paramount, the rest to Real Inns, a company set up by Paramount and John Labatt Retail. We don't yet know which pubs are involved, but it's a fair bet that the move is intended to go some way towards refining the BodPubCo estate, which will eventually consist of nice middle class pubs and roadhouse-style eateries. Then again, we might be completely wrong!

Guests are
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at



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there are always interesting guest
beers - old favourites and also
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ASHTON-U-LYNE
NEXT TO
BY-PASS



1995 Pocket Beer Book

The fourth version of Michael Jackson's Pocket Beer Book appeared on the bookshelves in mid-autumn and at the end of November the man himself came to Manchester to attend a launch and a beer tasting. Mr Jackson's vast earnings from beer journalism don't appear to have filtered through to his tailor - who else would turn up in a jacket which looked like a Duncan Busman cast-off and sporting a tie bearing a picture of himself above the words "Beer Hunter", all on a background reminiscent of a technicolour yawn? Despite the strain on the eyes, the evening was an enjoyable one and MJ's definite enthusiasm for all things beery came across strongly. The talk about beer and the lack of generosity with the samples created quite a thirst!

The book itself has not changed much since the first edition in 1986 - most of the text is the same, with a few updates. The USA section, up from 18 to 48 pages, reflects the massive increase in the number of small breweries over the pond. Canada and Australasia also have considerably increased coverage. Although much of the German section is word-for-word as the original version, several new breweries are mentioned - including one just opened in the world's finest city, behind the Bavarian State parliament building.

Beer Bank

Rothwells in Spring Gardens is Manchester's latest bank-to-boozier conversion, this time courtesy of Marstons. The name was chosen to commemorate the Newton Heath brewery which Marstons took over and shut down in the 1960s, but there's no similarity between this cavernous emporium and those cosy ex-Rothwells pubs along the road to Oldham.

Marstons say they have invested over a million quid in the building and it certainly looks as if they got through a few buckets of Flash in cleaning the interior - there are shining marble walls and granite columns and there's a magnificent twin-domed ceiling. The beer is expensive - £1.50 for bitter and £1.40 for Banks's mild. Also on handpump the week it opened were Pedigree, Owd Rodger and a beer from the Brewers Choice range.

Kiddypubs

Children's Certificates for pubs are to be introduced in February 1995. This will allow children under 14 into certain family bars which provide soft drinks and food until nine o'clock.

Now & Then

Rob Magee

No.87

Oldham Hotel

1 Mumps, Oldham

The Oldham Hotel was one of those pubs which began life as a beerhouse and within a few years managed to become fully licensed. William Turner put in for the full licence in 1861, saying he had six ground floor rooms, four bedrooms and a two-stall stable which was still being built. The hotel was in a busy area: to the rear were Henry Thompson's stables, which in effect was Oldham's first bus garage, as Henry and his brother ran the town's horse-bus services. (The same site is still used as a coach stop today.)

The first licence application was turned down and so nothing stronger than beer could be sold for a few years, then in 1866 the magistrates must have approved of the place as the Oldham Hotel became fully licensed. They certainly didn't approve of the man who was running it two years later, as he was ejected from the brewster sessions for being drunk and he lost his licence!

Over the years the Oldham Hotel was used for a variety of functions. The Old Cloggers' Association dinner and ball was held there in 1872, when an extension was granted so that revelry could continue until 1.00am. A hundred years later I attended union meetings in the first floor club room.



The Oldham Hotel has had a few owners, including the Crown Brewery of Greenheys (later Hardy's Crown Brewery) in the 1880s, and William Forsyth & Co, an Oldham wine and spirit business, in the early 1900s. When I first went in the pub about 1956 it was owned by Rothwells of Newton Heath, but I don't remember much about it as it was the sixth watering hole away from the Savoy dance hall!

The present owners, Marstons, arrived on the scene in 1961 after taking over Rothwells Brewery and its tied houses. The place was looking a bit tarnished when I was going to the union meetings in the 1970s, but today the Oldham Hotel is a well fitted-out pub selling handpumped beer.

Branch Birthday

The South Lancs Branch of CAMRA will celebrate its 21st birthday on Friday 27th January at a gathering at the Bulls Head, Newton-le-Willows, at 1.00pm. Founder members Graham Mills and John Robinson will welcome the company of other past members, particularly anyone who attended the original meeting (also at the Bulls Head). Members travelled to that meeting from as far afield as the Wirral and Crewe, there being no other branches in the area at that time. The area covered by the South Lancs Branch gradually became smaller and in 1986 the branch split to form the South East Lancs and Wigan branches.

There will also be a celebratory social on Sunday lunchtime, 22nd January. Details from Brian Gleave, 0942 840658.

New bar in Bolton

The old Painters Arms (across from the Sweet Green Tavern) was painted bright yellow and reopened as the Academy Bar last month. Since it ceased to be a pub, the place has been used as a "nite spot" under a variety of names and now it is aimed at the local student population. Signs outside offer £1-a-pint Websters and "happy hour" prices on production of a student union card. Our correspondent's union card went the way of his school cap some years ago, so he did not venture inside.

Richard Who?

BodPubCo's Ellesmere on Liverpool Road, Patricroft, has been nicely fitted out as a "Richard Clarke Free House". They have resurrected the name of a Stockport brewery which Boddingtons took over in 1963 and the Ellesmere is now selling a brew called Clarkes bitter (4%ABV) at 98p and Cains mild (92p). The marketing chaps at BodPubCo don't have a lot of choice when it comes to cashing-in on the bygone brewery nostalgia business. The company's only other acquisition was Swales Brewery in 1970, but "Swales Swill Shops" doesn't have the right ring to it, does it?

Rupert

Traditionally this is the time of year to take stock, to look back at the year past and forward to the year ahead. It is not a time for character assassination, vilification and ridicule of the terminally daft, which wins few friends and makes enemies of many. So this review of 1994, amber nectar personality of the year awards and Old Rupe's Almanac will bear in mind that caveat.

In January there was a threat of a Luvviedrome which thankfully came to nought. It was reported that Drabs' Senile Simian had opened amid stories of Roddy Kepple's glass breaking. Billy Shippon was elected to the British Brotherhood of Beer Bores and Charlie Bass was back at Tiggywinkles. As Snobley and Snoot Magna celebrated their 20th birthday, the name of Rumpleshirtscream was linked amorously with a member of the Royal Family. In February Slumley celebrated their 20th, Rab C McLaddie was appointed boss of DOGSHIT and Charlie Super and Rumpleshirtscream appeared on the Peripheral Addenda gogglebox programme sucking Mr Carthorse's bottom. Mr Grimm and his pals chucked Drabs out of their free-from-brewer hostelrys and rumours surfaced about Charlie Bass leaving Tiggywinkles.

March brought a lovely letter from the Guild of Fascist Pub Runners, suggesting all customers should be exterminated. My own column was syndicated world wide and Mr Grimm threatened to open the Dick & Puppet very shortly. In April Dillons staked a claim to the Pub Dereliction League championship when they let their 20th pub to close burn down. In May they were overtaken by Kepples Successors with 34. Billy Shippon had some nice words to say about the all singing Grotley Tavern vademecum. Boringsods launched a new amber nectar, Charlie

Bass left Tiggywinkles and the tarmac carpet disappeared next door. The following month Nora Tackler failed on her own merits to join the boss group and Hattie Nightingale forged a motley collection of misprints and blurred photos into a New Members' Handbook.

By July Jamie Frotter was back, Opening Tripe was giving away 37,000 copies and Eddie Nestfeather had attempted a self-topping to no avail. Billy Cosh, Rumpleshirtscream and the Nightingales, woman and husband, were proud joint winners of the intellectual piss up of the year. In September there was still no word of the Noble Bilko or Humphrey Dumpty, but Ben Chestnut had left Snobley. Jamie Frotter was back in Zimmerzett haranguing the besmocked denizens about their drinking habits. In October the Dick & Puppet really really opened, Rumpleshirtscream got this organ banned from the Senile Simian and Royal's in-vitro love child, Luke, re-established tours of hostelry-bereft socio-economic group Z slums. November's issue revealed several people who favoured restricted hours and child-strangling. Billy Shippon puffed his own book whilst reviewing another. Last month Drabs brought out draught loony juice for sale to winos, but all was not well as their lovely ales were reported as being less than wonderful in some free from tie outlets. AIL failed to understand.

So who wins? And what of 1995? Well, it's got to be the foghorn-with-piles spouse, Billy Bog, for his services to satire and for commissioning an oik to write "Lovely pubs in Smokely", which had to be shredded at the cost of a few bob. This year Ale of Two Cities will be published, Rumpleshirtscream will be married in Grotley Cathedral, Charlie Bass, Bilko, Ben Chestnut and Mr Carthorse will open the most successful tavern ever seen and Billy Shippon will be elected boss of the beer bores. Happy New Year.

Branch Diary

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 5 Jan 8pm, Unicorn Inn, Hale Barns, followed by Railway, Hale, and Tatton, Altrincham

Thur 12 Jan 8pm, Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, followed by Peveril, City Arms, Vine and finish at Crown, Deansgate

Thur 19 Jan 8pm, Cornbrook, Chester Road, St Georges, followed by Pomona, Hope, White Lion (Liverpool Road) and Crown, Deansgate

Thur 26 Jan 8pm, Church, Flixton Road, Flixton, followed by Roebuck, Lord Nelson and Manor Hey

Sat 28 Jan. Trip to Bent & Bongs Beer Bash, plus Tyldesley crawl

Thur 2 Feb 8pm, Unicorn Inn, Hale Barns, followed by Railway, Hale, and Tatton, Altrincham

Thur 9 Feb 8pm, White Lion, Liverpool Road, Manchester, followed by Crown, Britons Protection, Peveril, City Arms and Vine

Thur 16 Feb 8pm, H R Fletchers, St Mary Street, Manchester, followed by Vine, City Arms and Peveril

Thur 23 Feb 8pm, Cornbrook, Chester Road, St Georges, followed by Pomona, Hope, White Lion and Crown.

Contact: Roger Wilson (0161) 832 8237 (w) or (0161) 941 5602 (h)

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Jan 8.30, Branch Meeting, Clarence, Bolton Street, Bury

Tues 17 Jan 8.30, Committee Meeting, Engineers Arms, Aspinall Street, Heywood

Wed 25 Jan 8.30, Winter Pub of the Season - first ever. Phone contact for details

Sat 14 Jan 12.30, Regional Meeting, Blue Pitts Inn, Manchester Road, Castleton - opposite BR Station.

Contact: Peter Alexander 0532 324023 (w), 061 655 4002 (h)

North Manchester

Wed 4 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height crawl. Dog & Partridge 7pm, Waggon & Horses 7.30pm, Wellington 8pm, Red Lion 9pm (all Bolton Road)

Sat 14 Jan, Inaugural Regional General Meeting: Blue Pitts, Manchester Road, Castleton, 12.30. Bus: 17

Wed 18 Jan, Branch Meeting, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham, 8pm

Sat 21 Jan, GBG '96 Pre-Selection Meeting (City Centre): Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford, noon.

Wed 25 Jan, GBG '96 Pre-Selection Meeting (non-City): Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester, 8pm

Wed 1 Feb, North Manchester Minibus Tour. Book with Mark McConachie.

Assemble Berwick Arms, Carnarvon Street, Cheetham, at 7pm. Bus leaves 7.30 for Old House at Home, New Moston, Horseshoe, Grosvenor, Mitchell Arms, then return to city centre for 11pm.

Wed 8 Feb, Committee & Social, Grapes, Liverpool Road, Peel Green, 8pm in the RAOB room. (Possible speaker.)

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

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