

25p

What's Doing

JUNE 1995



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Courage - S&N Merger **Breweries and Beers to go?**

The sale of Courage to Scottish & Newcastle is expected to be given the go-ahead by the Office of Fair Trading. If the OFT do not refer it to the Monopolies Commission, the £425million deal will result in a brewery group with a 30% market share. It will also bring about even more concentration of brewing in this country.

Market shares of the big four brewers will be approximately:

Scottish Courage	30%
Bass	23%
Allied Domecq	16%
Whitbread	12%

The expected merger of Allied and Whitbread's brewing activities will reduce the players to three.

As always, takeovers threaten both breweries and brands. The S&N/Courage merger makes sense geographically, with S&N strong in Scotland and the North, Courage in the Midlands and the South.

Courage have real ale breweries in Bristol, Tadcaster and Halifax, S&N in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Masham and Nottingham. At least two of these breweries are vulnerable - Websters in Halifax and Home in Nottingham. They have been in jeopardy for some time, so the merger will merely hasten their demise.



There is a tendency these days for beers to be badge brewed à la Warrington, but an examination of the portfolio of beers raises concerns for the future of the beers which are not national brands.

Current portfolio of real ales:

Courage

Bitter, Best Bitter, Directors
John Smiths Bitter, Magnet
Websters Green Label, Bitter
Wilsons Bitter

S&N

70/-, 80/-, No.3
Theakston Mild, Best Bitter, XB,
Old Peculier, Newcastle Exhibition
Matthew Brown Mild, Bitter
Home Bitter

Wilsons bitter, Green Label, the Matthew Brown beers and Home bitter are unlikely to survive the merger and resultant brewery closures. All we can hope is that the beers are subcontracted to small brewers and survive in that way.

Further concentration in brewing leads to loss of choice and a diminution of local brews. We will shortly be in a similar position to Australia or the USA, with three brewers owning 80% of capacity. Nobody holds up those countries as exemplars of quality beers. CAMRA, despite over twenty years of campaigning, has been unable to do much to halt this most potent threat to our traditional beers. Amalgamations, mergers and takeovers have continued apace and improved choice is illusory. National brands are set to dominate the market. Real ale looks likely to lose out to the new gimmick - nitrokeg - and regional and local brewers have been reduced to little more than an interesting side show.

Greater Manchester CAMRA

To all members

First Castlefield Beer Festival

Upper Campfield Market
Liverpool Road, Manchester

22nd-24th February 1996

An inaugural meeting of all those regional members who would like to be involved in the above festival will take place at

The Beer House

Tuesday 13th June at 7.30pm

Contact Paul Mason 0161 236 5051

Pub Week

The North West Brewers' & Licensed Retailers' Association are promoting the third "British Pub Week", 18th - 25th June, celebrating choice, variety and value-for-money in the region's pubs and highlighting the pub's contribution to local life and the economy. Events during the week range from entertainments and family events to beer festivals and parties.

The North West region has the most large-scale breweries - fourteen - turning out over four million pints of 135 different ales and lagers a day. The Association points out that you can still get a pint of bitter for less than £1, compared to the UK average of £1.55.



The price of a pint of draught beer in a bar compares favourably with other countries - £2.24 in Germany, £2.61 in France and £2.10 in Holland. The chaps who do the statistics have also calculated that it takes 14.8 minutes work in manufacturing industry to earn the price of a pint, roughly the same as Germany, where wages are much higher and taxes much lower. The French have to work 27.6 minutes and the Dutch 16.8 minutes.

Reopenings

Last month WD noted that the Griffin in Cheetham Hill had shut. Well, it's open again, but for how long? Also last month, it was predicted that the Northumberland in Old Trafford would reopen. And it did, on Friday 28th April to be exact. Unfortunately the pub retains its genuine "Sports" interior, albeit painted over (is this now the only Sports in existence?) and the beer is nitrokeg Tetley bitter. Over in Pendleton, the Kettledrum (Bass) has reopened. Not much has changed, though - drum pub, drum beer.

Smithfields, the former bank on Shudehill, may reopen in the near future. Rumours have it that Banks's (appropriately) are keen to get their hands on the place and turn it into a pub again.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Mason, Keith Egerton, Peter Wadsworth, Kevin Clinton, Jim Leatherbarrow, Paul Mason, Stewart Revell, Des Nogalski, Bernie Jackson, Roger Hall, Mark McConachie

COME TO THE ALL YEAR ROUND BEER FESTIVAL

THE BEER HOUSE

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BITTER, OLD PECULIER & PENDLE WITCH
PLUS EVER-CHANGING RANGE OF GUEST BEERS
(INCLUDING GUEST MILD)**

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'95

FROM INDEPENDENT BREWERIES

PLUS 3 TRADITIONAL CIDERS

WE'RE
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GUIDE
'95

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LEFFE BLONDE AND MANY
BOTTLED BELGIAN AND
OTHER BEERS**

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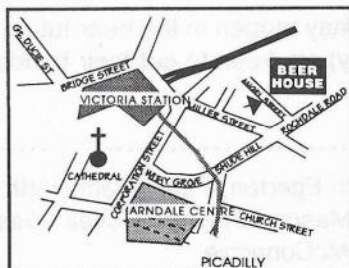


INDEPENDENTS WEEKEND

Fri 31 June - Sun 2 July

OVER 30 SCOTTISH & WELSH BEERS

BAR-B-Q AND WELSH & SCOTTISH FOOD



**SUNDAY BREAKFAST 12 - 2.30
EVENING MEALS SERVED 5 - 7
THURSDAY & FRIDAY
HALF PRICE MENU EACH MONDAY
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New Chestnut

After a long period of closure, the Gladstone on Lower Hillgate in Stockport was due to open on 26th May under the ministry of Ken Birch. This is an interesting multi-roomed, 1930s-style pub and Ken is planning to serve the full range of Burtonwood real ales - mild, bitter, James Forshaws and Top Hat - on handpump. The Gladstone is expected to be the first outlet in Stockport for the new Buccaneer Strong Ale (5.5%ABV).

Ken and his partner Keith Sutton will be familiar figures to Stockport's fans of good beer from their days at the Crown on Heaton Lane and CAMRA wishes them every success with this welcome addition to the Hillgate Crawl.

Thwaites Connoisseur

Along with the Horseshoe at Ringley, another pub in the Bolton area, the Dog & Partridge on Manor Street, is selling beers from Thwaites' Cask Ale Collection. Town Crier (4.5%ABV) was on sale in both pubs in May; the June beer is White Oak (3.8% - "a clean drinking beer with a sharp, lightly hopped palate") and in July it will be Scallywag (4.5% - "a premium beer which is a bit of a rascal" Who writes this stuff?)

Small Victory

From all reports, Lees' VE Day bitter was not a great success, proving difficult to find and hardly worth the effort of doing so, apart from the novelty value. The reason most licensees gave for not stocking the beer was the high retail price of £1.45 a pint (4.8%ABV) compared with the managed house price of £1.08 for bitter.

Good News, Bad News

First the good news. The Black Horse, Higher Market Street, Farnworth, now does a monthly guest beer alongside regulars Greenalls bitter and Stones bitter. Forthcoming attractions include Marstons Pedigree, Tanglefoot, Bombardier and Anniversary Ale.

Now the bad news. The beers are all on top pressure. The licensee took our reporters into the cellar to show them that "beer gas" (a mixture of 25% carbon dioxide and 75% ordinary air) is fed at atmospheric pressure through the spile hole of the cask. He claims that this reduces the risk of infection and does not interfere with the secondary fermentation taking place in the cask. You pays your money and you takes your choice!

The Victoria on Market Street in Farnworth has gone on to keg beer. This fine boozer once sold four cask beers from the Vaux range and featured in the Good Beer Guide.

The Berwick Arms

FREE HOUSE

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* * * * *

Open 12.00 until 11.00 Monday to Saturday
12.00 until 3.00 Sunday

* * * * *

Range of traditional ales includes:

John Willie Lees Bitter

Guest Beer Boddingtons Bitter

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Comprehensive range of home-cooked meals.

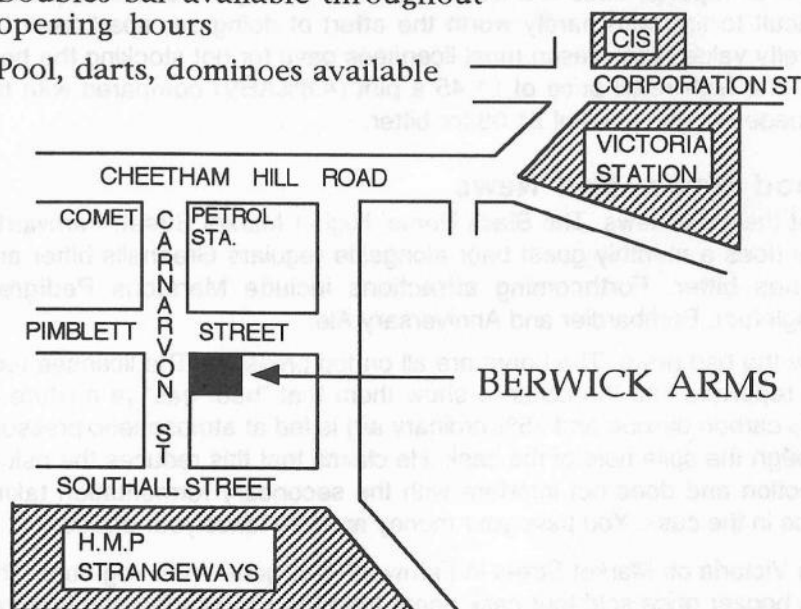
Hot and cold bar snacks

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Large selection of bottled beers, lagers, ciders,
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Doubles bar available throughout
opening hours

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Bolton News

Des Nogalski

Whitbread's latest Cask Ale House in Bolton is the **Hogshead** on Bradshawgate, which opened at the beginning of May. The pub is situated in what used to be the VAT office at the corner of Silverwell Street. So far the beer quality appears to be good, with cask Boddingtons mild one of the twelve on sale - eight on handpump and four on stillage.

Another pub given the Cask Ale House treatment is the **Victoria** on Chorley New Road in Horwich, which is now known as the **Vic Beer Engine**. Two other Whitbread pubs in Horwich with a decent range of cask beers are the **Old Original Bay Horse** on Lee Lane and the **Bridge** on Church Street. The latter claims to have the highest sales of any Whitbread Partnership pub in the North West, with around 10 guest beers on offer each week.

The **Clifton Arms** on Newport Street has gained popularity in recent years for its regular beer festivals. Now a wider range of guest beers is being sold to complement the Tetley and Jennings beers. The pub recently had a special Jennings Week with the whole range of beers from the Cumberland brewery on sale.

The **Old Original British Queen** at the bottom of Blackburn Road has reopened after a lengthy closure. This ex-Whitbread pub has been bought by local company Greenwood Leisure. Greenwood's have a number of other pubs on lease from Whitbread in the Bolton and Bury area but the OOBQ is the first to be purchased outright. On sale are Tetley bitter, Holts bitter and a house beer, Pomp's Bitter. (Pomp's is the pub's old nickname.)

Planning permission has been put before Bolton Council to turn the **Albert** on Albert Road, Farnworth, into a car showroom. The building was originally the fire station before being converted into **Brando's Fun Pub** in the mid 1980s and then the Albert free house.

The **New Inn** at the bottom of Halliwell Road has been put up for sale by Bass, although the pub is still open. **Serendipity's** on Great Moor Street (formerly the **Wheatsheaf**) has been closed by Greenalls and it seems unlikely that it will reopen as a pub. A few months ago Greenalls looked set to sell **Magee's** on St Georges Road, which has been closed for over a year. Unfortunately the sale fell through and the premises are on the market again. Also put up for sale recently was **McGinlay's** on Bath Street, owned by a company in which Bolton Wanderers footballer John McGinlay has a stake.

Gas Masquerade

Few sightings of the new mixed gas dispense systems have been made in North Manchester. The first pub to sport a new widget font, the Wellington in Ordsall, was closed following a machete attack. Perhaps that discouraged les autres. But no, what's this in the Marble Arch, an erstwhile beacon of free houses? The back room is now (what else?) an Irish room and sports a font serving Kilkenney Bitter, which turns out to be Smethwicks. The beer, to stretch a word, is served by mixed gas, giving a "nice smooth drink" to quote the barperson. Sad, really. The Marble is one of few pubs to have a real Irish connection as it used to be a McKenna's house in the 1880s. At the moment it's as Irish as a Bedouin wedding. Perhaps to revive its fortunes it should be renamed McKenna's and serve Connemara oysters and boxty amid wall-to-wall di-diddley music.

The way we were

We all know that road widening schemes and new roads have been responsible for the loss of hundreds of pubs in recent years, but awareness of the nuisance caused by motor transport is not a recent thing. Back in 1914 the government set up the Select Committee on Motor Traffic to make some rules. The committee's recommendations also covered the proper behaviour of pedestrians, such as, "The pedestrian's right is limited in practice to a safe passage across the road, conditional upon his exercising reasonable care and caution in crossing the highway."

Drivers were not to have it all their own way, as a Home Office minister explained: "The driver of a vehicle would not be entitled to run over a drunken man lying in Piccadilly if he saw him and could avoid him, even although he had been grossly negligent in lying where he was." Sounds fair enough.

Invitation

In celebration of his 50th birthday, Mr Peter Wadsworth, Publicity Officer for the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA, will attempt to complete the trawl (a tram assisted pub crawl) of the Metrolink in one day.

Mr Wadsworth will be starting at the Station Hotel, Altrincham on Tuesday 6th June at 11.00am prompt. He will be lunching in the City Arms, Kennedy Street, Manchester City Centre, at 1.45pm; there will be a 7.00pm meeting point at the Church, Whitefield, and he will be ending up God knows where.

Any other sad people out there who wish to accompany him on this epic voyage will be most welcome.

Planning News

Plans have been lodged for the building of a new pub in Cheetham Hill. The site is on the corner of Smedley Lane and Alms Hill Road and the proposals have already brought forth objections. Locals say the area is already plagued by prostitutes and drug users, and they feel the development could attract more unsavoury characters. Fathers dropping kids off at nearby schools have been approached by scantily-clad females offering their services - any suggestions for an appropriate name for the pub?

Swan Song

The deadline for this edition of What's Doing coincided with the deadline for objections to the demolition of the Swan Hotel in Weaste. The pub is due to come down to accommodate Metrolink tracks on the Salford Quays to Eccles extension, which runs along Eccles New Road. Currently owned by Vaux, it has been much altered since it was built in Victorian times and it doesn't sell real ale, but it could. The Swan's loss will be a loss to Salford and the local community.

Mooning in Piccadilly

No, it's nothing to do with people displaying their bums in public. J D Wetherspoon, who are due to open their Moon Under Water on Deansgate in July, managed to get the planning permission (WD March) for premises in Piccadilly. The former Banshee Club at 49 Piccadilly (currently a Halfords store) is to become J J Moon's. (The company has a thing about the word "moon" in its pub names.) There's no opening date yet.

Get your kicks off the M66

The CWS have plans to develop the site on the corner of Greengate and Victoria Avenue East, opposite the Gardeners Arms. The development includes a pub and restaurant, but it doesn't look as though it'll be much of a replacement for all those fine hostelries which were knocked down in Hollinwood to make way for the new motorway.

Win one, lose one

Bass are trying to jump on the student booze bandwagon with an application for a pub on Whitworth Street, across the road from UMIST and the MMU. As the Swinging Sporrán will soon be no more, it might even take off. The area's not exactly flush with pubs, and whilst we might complain about the motives leading to the demise of the Sporrán, the pub was no great shakes architecturally and can easily be replaced. Let's hope we don't get another O'Rileys or Bibulous Bibliophile.

Pack Horse and Sportsman

Latest news on the Pack Horse at the Knott Mill end of Deansgate is that it will be turned into a restaurant by a company which will lease the property from Greenalls. On Market Street, the Sportsman (J W Lees) is to close in order to make way for a superstore.

When the Pack Horse is transformed, there won't be a great deal left of the old district of Knott Mill. The short stretch of road which ran down from the corner of Whitworth Street West to the old bridge over the River Medlock has been a quiet sort of place since the heavy industry thereabouts disappeared. The main road traffic was taken away long ago, when Bridgewater Viaduct was built over the canal to make a better link between Deansgate and Chester Road.

Knott Mill was the name given to the area around an ancient corn mill which was next to the Medlock bridge and across Little Peter Street from the Pack Horse. At one time Knott Mill boasted an iron works, cotton mills, the Bridgewater Canal Old Warehouse and even a railway station of its own. Now the station is called 'Deansgate' and developers prefer to call the whole area 'Castlefield'.

The present Pack Horse replaced a smaller pub which was built on the same site over two hundred years ago, following the development of the



canal terminus on the other side of the road. There was an alehouse at Knott Mill well over a century before that, and this one may have been on the site of the Duke of Bridgewater's Old Warehouse (where the car park is now).

His Grace and his warehouse are long gone, but the canal basin's new role no doubt prompted Greenalls to do something with the Pack Horse, just as their predecessors decided it was worthwhile replacing the old alehouse by the bridge when the canal first came to town.

In contrast to the Pack Horse, the Sportsman has been a pub for less than fifty years. In the 1930s it was the Metropole Restaurant, one of many eating houses established in the Victorian era to cater for the employees of warehouses, shops, banks and other institutions in the city centre.

As the Sportsman, it rose to fame in the 1950s when the room to the left at the bottom of the stairs was a Trad Jazz venue. Humphrey Lyttelton and George Melly performed there and Melly is remembered in particular for what was considered to be a highly suggestive rendition of 'Frankie and Johnny'!

The pub kept what were known as 'Scotch hours', closing early on Saturday night and not opening on Sunday. It had a 'hunting lodge' decor, then it was renamed the Auld Lang Syne for a few years.

Most of the city's eating houses disappeared as buildings were pulled down or turned to other uses. Of those which have survived, Sinclairs is still in its original premises, but Sam's Chop House had to move from Market Street to Back Pool Fold in the 1960s. As for the Sportsman, J W Lees are looking for suitable premises in the city, so it may well survive.

Northern Moor Highlights

As indicated in last month's WD, Lees' Park in Northern Moor has been given a complete refit, including new bar backs, carpets and upholstery. The only hiccup so far was the siting of the wall lights in the lounge. These were fitted too low and were responsible for a few sore heads before they were raised! There have been no structural alterations at the pub, so the very popular large vault is still a separate room.

Price Rises

Whitbread were due to push up their beer prices at the end of May and indications are that Boddingtons bitter will go up by 10p a pint, which is about twice the rate of inflation.

Guests are
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Letters

The Oldham Beer Festival

Sir - This year's event saw the highest ever numbers of people attending (CAMRA members and non-Oldhamers included!) and the beer sales over the weekend created a record-breaking success for the Mayor of Oldham's Charity Fund. Regarding Robin Pendragon's views (May WD), let me present your readers with a few facts.

Mr Pendragon seemed to have some concerns about the availability of tables and chairs. However, I think he will find that the Oldham Beer Festival, having the benefit of two main rooms, provides far more tables and chairs than other Festivals, where standing is the norm and sitting on the floor is an option.

The ROB Branch policy on beer sales has always been to provide the maximum choice of beers at each session and 42 different beers out of 44 delivered were on sale on the opening Friday night. The other two had not cleared. I think Mr Pendragon must have attended on Saturday lunchtime and I can confirm for his benefit that 38 beers were still available for sale at that session. Hardly a lack of choice!

He exaggerates when he says that at least five beers were being held in reserve. There were in fact two beers (Hoskins & Oldfield White Dolphin and North Yorkshire Fools Gold) which sold more quickly than expected on the Friday night and the reserve barrels were not ready until Saturday evening. The rest, once cleared, were available on a first come, first served basis.

I am sorry that the Festival didn't provide all that Mr Pendragon expected of it, but I am satisfied from comments made by others attending this year's record-breaking event that the formula developed over the years will ensure its success in the future. The event is designed to cater for everyone and not just for a beer-ticker's clique!

Michael Robinson, Beer Festival Organiser

Sir - As all staff at the Oldham Beer Festival wore name badges, would Robin Pendragon please be good enough to let me know the identity of the "extremely nice blond man", as I worked every session that weekend and am deeply unhappy that I never noticed him or got to meet him. Rats! Another one escapes my clutches!

Seriously, if, as I suspect, Mr Pendragon attended the Saturday lunchtime session, he may count himself fortunate to have been on the "right" side of the bar. Us workers managed about half a pint apiece over five hours. Also, if I can assume he is (a) a CAMRA member and/or (b) a

regular attendee at festivals, he must be aware that help would have been greatly appreciated - he could have volunteered for a short while and got some ale into the bargain.

No beers were "reserved" for Saturday night. The barrels were tapped as and when needed. Due to the sheer volume and speed of consumption, even the staff didn't get to try some of the more interesting ones - it's not all perks being a volunteer.

As co-organiser of the Bury Beer Festival to be held in November, let me assure Mr Pendragon that if he wishes to volunteer either his services or constructive advice towards the smooth running of this event, he will be welcomed with open arms.

Sue Barker

Sir - On reading Mr Pendragon's opinions of the Oldham Beer Exhibition, I feel compelled to put pen to paper.

First, a disclaimer: I had no part in the organisation of the event; neither do I possess a pair of trainers, gymnasium pumps or jeans and, incidentally, I do not come from or reside in Oldham.

Mr P omits to mention the splendid venue with its wonderful conservatory or, on our Friday evening visit, the pleasant and unobtrusive group performing there. His main objection appears to be that the event is organised for Oldham people (whom he denigrates). Excuse me, pardon, I thought CAMRA held festivals to introduce real ales to the local populace and spread the WORD. The festival is also in support of the Mayor's charity. He overlooks the tremendous volunteer efforts and the pleasure it gives the early rising, ill-dressed locals and other visiting imbibers. Does it matter one iota, with a choice of over twenty ales, if his desired tipple is not available?

John W Hesketh

Sir - A few weeks ago me and my mam got up especially early to go to the Oldham Beer Festival. We put on us tee shirts, jeans and gym shoes and walked down past t'mill to the Festival, where Mam found a seat next to a grumpy man. When Mam fished my toy aeroplane out of his beer she told me to show some respect as he was a Special CAMRA Member.

These people go to all the beer exhibitions and they believe the events are organised just for their benefit. Mam says that unless I eat up all my shredded wheat and pay attention when we do Interpersonal Relationship Skills at school, I will grow up to be a Special CAMRA Member too.

Crighton Rugrat, aged six-and-three-quarters

Nitrogen Joe

Sir - On a recent visit to a Holts pub I was shocked to notice that they, of all people, have jumped on the "draught beer in a can" bandwagon! Yet there it was on the shelf, a can of Holts bitter labelled "Draught". A point-of-sale advertisement claims: "New Draught Style". The small print on the can qualifies this:

"Filled with nitrogen flushing to form a smooth creamy head akin to draught beer." Well, at least the can doesn't incorporate a "widget". Knowing Holts as I do, these were probably rejected on grounds of cost!

"Et tu, Joseph?"

Jim Bracken

Why not Drop Inn?

Sir - I have been a real ale "fanatic" ever since the words were coined by CAMRA all those years ago. In fact I vaguely remember, as a child, drinking "real" Guinness in my uncle's pub in Ireland over forty years ago. I am now very fortunate to work and live in the beer drinker's Mecca of Eccles and its environs. And I do know **all** the pubs in the leafy "villages" of Winton and Monton.

Regarding Mark McConachie's article "Winton and Monton News" (WD May 1995) I must take issue with him over two points he raised, concerning the Drop Inn and the Park Hotel.

I like the Drop Inn. Landlord Frank, his wife and bar staff are always most courteous, friendly and cheerful. They keep four hand-drawn real ales in superb condition and provide excellent lunchtime meals in very pleasant surroundings. The pub is thriving and very often full in the evenings. Why not Drop Inn, Mark?

CAMRA uses the handpump symbol on much of its merchandise and is justifiably proud of it. Generally this symbol means real ale, so why is Mark McConachie "living in hope" that the Park Hotel will retain the free-flow electric pumps? Incidentally, they have gone. The Bridgewater mural is propped up in the entrance hall and the wired glass windows will be replaced when the work is finished.

Sean Kilgarriff

Good Festival Guide

Sir - Would any CAMRA beer festival ever satisfy the criteria we demand of pubs which appear in the Good Beer Guide? I very much doubt it. Beer is frequently served in less than pristine condition and we have, on occasions, been guilty of serving re-racked beer, which is not really real ale. Given that we chuck pubs out of the GBG which have the brazen neck to sell Scrumpy Jack through a "handpump", aren't we being a tiny bit hypocritical? Surely the function of a festival is to introduce punters to a range of cask conditioned ales served in good condition and not to run

a mammoth piss up which drums up members and makes a load of brass. We're in danger of losing our way and recruiting folk who never knew what the way was anyway.

B Reeve

Dear Beer

Sir - While I enjoyed the recent West Country Ales festival at the Beer House, I was less impressed by the dubious arithmetic employed. In my day the price of half a pint could be readily calculated by taking the price of a pint and halving it. The Beer House (on this occasion at least) employed different logic, where a pint listed at £1.55 was charged at 80p a half. Similar dodgy calculations were applied to other prices. The beers were not cheap to start with and at an event with forty or so beers, where half pints were the rule rather than the exception, I consider this hidden surcharge as sharp practice.

With nitrokeg at the Marble Arch, what are two of our top free houses coming to? They should be wary about biting the hand that feeds them.

Peter Alexander

Pub of the Nanosecond

Sir - The North Manchester Branch of CAMRA has never, unlike many other branches, had a Pub of the Month/Year/Decade. It has, from time to time, celebrated pubs which have been in the Good Beer Guide for a lengthy period, but has not selected pubs on a regular basis for particular attention. There have been suggestions that this is the way the branch should go, but given the squabbling over Beer Guide entries, it would be invidious to select just one of them. Visions of blubbing luvvies thanking their draypersons, cellarpersons and bar staff make me shudder. However, a few free pints, the odd meal and a promise of AT's might change my mind.

S Lees

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

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Fully booked for next few months.

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BACK NUMBERS: 15p per copy. Send stamped addressed envelope to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW.

To join CAMRA send £12 to Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Great British Beer Festival

This year's beery extravaganza will be in the Grand Hall, Olympia, London, from 1st to 5th August. There will be over a quarter of a million pints of real ale, cider, perry and imported beer. The organisers tell us that one of the bars will be dedicated to British novelty brews, such as beers brewed with fruit or flowers. (Bloody hell.)

There will be live music at every session, including Alan Price on Tuesday evening and classical music on Wednesday, and both exotic and traditional food.

Joebräu

Holts have been trying out a new lager in a couple of their outlets. It is intended to be a slightly stronger replacement for Regal Lager and may be generally available in a few months time. It hasn't got a name yet, but the price will be around £1.30 a pint.

Great British Beer Festival

Pro Bona Cerevisia



Pro Bona Cerevisia

250,000 pints of
real ale, cider,
perry & imported
beers

Seating for 1000
people

Family Room

Tue-Thu eve: 5pm-10.30pm: £3.50
Wed-Thu lunch: 11.30am-3pm: £1
Fri: 11.30am-10.30pm:
£3.50 until 1.30pm then £4.50
Sat: 11am-7pm: £3.50

1st-5th August 1995 • Olympia

INDEPENDENTS' DAY TREASURE HUNT

Saturday 1st July 1995

*Meet at 12 noon, Beer House, Angel Street,
off Rochdale Road, Manchester*

Sample beers from the independent breweries as you solve a trail of clues hidden throughout the city centre which will lead you back to the Beer House for a free supper in the evening.

The entrance fee is £2 per team of between two and four people

Why not organise a team from your local?

Challenge the beer bores - CAMRA members have won every year so far - it's time to break the tradition!

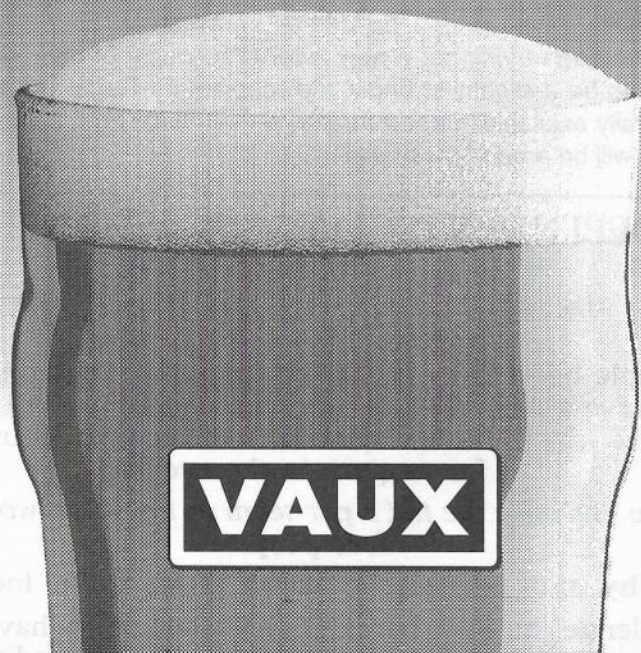
*For further information ring Pauline Wadsworth on
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VAUX MILD
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
KATHLEEN ON 01706 353847

Closed and Boarded Corner

It would be nice to see this column made redundant. but news of closures keeps coming in. All the pubs are in Salford (where else?).

Greenalls have lost another - the Liner Bar on Trafford Road, Ordsall, which was due for demolition for a road-widening scheme. Someone saw fit to hasten its demise and set fire to the building in mid-April. Up the road in Weaste, the Waverley has allegedly been sold by Whitbread and at present is shut. Another Whitbread pub has been boarded up - the Broughton on Great Cheetham Street East. Of the big pubs that Whitbread once had in Salford, only the Griffin, the Weaste and the Flat Iron are still trading.

Finally, in Ordsall, the closed Sportsmans on Regent Road is to become a restaurant thanks to new owners Campanile.

Ale Gains

A long-time keg pub in Pendleton has finally gone over to real ale. The Bridge Inn (Ascot Estates) on Strawberry Road appears to have had a change of licensee and with it a change of ale. The keg Tetley of old is now cask Tetley on handpump, selling at 119p. Around the corner from the Bridge, it is sad to report that the Priory has dropped Boddies mild.

On the up side, it is good to report that Collyhurst is now 100% real ale. This momentous milestone was reached when Vaux's Lorimers Arms began selling cask Samson.

Sheep and Beer

On June 7th North Manchester CAMRA members are invited to visit the hostleries of Glossop, guided by well-known Glossop pub historian Andrew King.

We're catching the 18.25 from Piccadilly and the first port of call is the Star, conveniently sited next to the station. This former Boddingtons pub sells a range of guest beers including Taylors (sometimes). Next, hidden down a side street, is the Prince of Wales and superb quality Marstons. A quick hike brings us to the atmospheric Crown, a Sam Smiths pub and arguably Glossop's best; no sheep jokes here, please.

Back in town we visit the Corner Cupboard on High Street, a traditional untouched Thwaites pub, and finally the Friendship, with great quality Robinsons. There will be just enough time for another pint at the Star before catching the 22.46 train back to Manchester.

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Munich beer revolution

Beinlos

A minor grievance between a resident of the leafy suburb of Großhesselohe and the neighbouring Waldwirtschaft Biergarten is posing the biggest threat ever to Munich's beer culture. The Waldwirtschaft, a famous jazz Biergarten, was forced to close at 10pm instead of the usual 1.00am following a court injunction. This action has now mushroomed through the German judiciary to threaten a blanket curfew on all Bavarian Biergartens and also the Oktoberfest. If the ruling is not overturned, the Oktoberfest will be forced to call last orders at 9pm and be completely closed down by 9.30pm!



Needless to say, the local population is furious and Friday 21 May saw 20,000 imbibers attend a rally in Marienplatz. Prominent supporters of the Biergarten culture include Theo Waigel (the German Finance Minister - a right-wing version of Ken Clarke) who first met his wife in a Biergarten and despite that is still in favour! The feeling was so strong that when it began to rain during the rally a prominent Munich Councillor commented that the raindrops were the tears of King Ludwig!

The matter is now in the hands of the Bavarian Parliament. If the Oktoberfest were forced to close at 9pm, millions of Deutschmark would be lost. The citizens that gave the world the Reinheitsgebot will not take this sitting down!

Meanwhile, more bad news for Oktoberfest drinkers - the prices for the 1995 'fest have just been announced and a litre will cost over ten Mark for the first time. DM10,40 is the asking price in the Löwenbräu, Schottenhamel, Paulaner, Käferschenke and Hippodrom. DM10,35 in the Spatenfesthalle and the Fischer Vroni, DM10,30 in the Armbrustenschützenzelt, Augustiner, Bräurosl and the Hackerzelt, while the Hofbräu is a mere DM10,25 per Maß. These are hefty increases over previous years (DM9,80 in 1994, DM9,45 in 1993 and DM8,80 in 1992) and when taken with Sterling's weakness against the Deutschmark mean an increase of over 50% in three years for us poor Brits. At the current exchange rate a litre will work out at £4.80 (£2.70 per pint - and Manchester will soon be seeing the 79p pint with the opening of Wetherspoons!). For those with winning lottery tickets the 1995 Oktoberfest is Saturday 16th September until Sunday 1 October - Pros't!

Rupert

Don't ask me why or even how I know. She just came back from Blackpool with a black rose tattooed on her left breast. No explanation, no nothing, just flaunting it like a prize of war. I'd hoped to reproduce a photo here but the small format of this organ would hardly do justice to it. So I've sent the photo to Charlie Super and, with a bit of luck, Hattie will be appearing in all her glory in Opening Tripe.

Which brings me to the next point. Eddy Nestfeather's getting increasingly worried that What's Doing might get a gong. He's done his best over the years to avoid any accolades whatsoever and so far he's succeeded. A judicious mix of scrotty paper, blurred type, irrelevant pictures and crap articles ensured that only the terminally daft would find it remotely of meritorious mention. But the award to Opening

Tripe has really got him worried. OT's printed on recycled bog paper and uses a photographer with St Vitus dance and a typesetter with delirium tremens. It's also got millions of adverts in it.

Now WD's printed on lovely paper and Eddy's new John Bull kit is all singing and dancing. There's more adverts than you can shake a stick at and Glynis Nestfeather blue pencils into perfect syntax and spelling the contributions usually. No wonder he's got the willies. But worry not, Eddy old chap. As long as you continue to treat everything with a total lack of appropriate gravity and make mock of all and sundry, you'll be safe. Keep on recycling the same tired old slugging-off of time-worn targets and there'll be nothing from the arbiters of St Allballs.

On a happier note I'm delighted to welcome Ben Chestnut back into the world of tavernkeeping. He's still in Snobley, at the Ewart, a Burtonweed hostelry on Middle Slope Street near the Blue Cow. Let's hope he doesn't fall unconscious in the cellar and forget thingy.

Competition

Using your skill and judgement, examine the photo which shows Tubs Caries and Charlie Super with their gong and fill in one or more of the bubbles.

Prize: Six pints of Websters Yorkshire Bitter.



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Sat 3 June, Real Ale Ramble in Saddleworth. Meet 11am at Waggon, Uppermill. 12.30 Navigation, Dobcross.

Tues 6 June 8.30, Branch Meeting, Hogshead, Union Street, Oldham

Sat 17 June 12.00pm, Bury Beer Festival Organising Meeting. Tap & Spile, Manchester Old Road, Bury

Tues 20 June 8.30, Committee Meeting, Hollins Bush Inn, Hollins, Bury

Tues 27 June 8.30, What's Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Sat 1 July 11am. Indies Day Tour. Meet Lees Brewery, then coach to Oddfellows, Heywood. 1pm Dusty Miller, Bury; 3pm Royal Oak, Ramsbottom; 4.15 Old Blue Bell, Bury; 5.30 Millgate, Failsworth; 6.30 Hark to Topper, Oldham; 7.30 Marston Tavern, Royton; 8.30 Cask & Feather, Rochdale. Join the coach anytime.

Contact: Peter Alexander 0113 2324023(w), 0161 655 4002 (h)

North Manchester

Wed 7 June, train to Glossop. Piccadilly 1825, arrive 18.55. Return from Glossop 22.46, arrive 23.17. (Timetable correct to 27 May 1995)

Tues June 13, Manchester BeerFest Inaugural Meeting, Beer House 7.30pm

Wed 14 June, Ordsall/Castlefield Crawl: Welcome, Robert Hall Street, 7pm;

Prince of Wales, Oldfield Road, 8pm; White Lion, Liverpool Road, 9.30pm

Wed June 21 8pm, Branch Meeting, Prince of Wales, Oldfield Road, Salford

Tues 27 June 6pm onward, Whats Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 28 June, Blackley Crawl. Alliance, Rochdale Road, 7pm; Old House at Home, Bottomley Side, 8pm; Golden Lion, Old Market Street, 9.30pm

Sat 1 July, Independents' Day Pub Hunt. Beer House noon. Finishes mid-evening. Beer Prize.

Wed 5 July, Higher Broughton Crawl: Horseshoe, Back Hope Street, 7pm; Albert Park, Gt Clowes Street, 8pm; Star, Back Hope Street, 9.30.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

Bolton

Contact: Richard Spedding 01204 61244 (h), 01204 521771 x2305 (w)

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 1 June, Branch trip to Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Meet 8pm at Festival.

Thur 8 June 8pm, Bridgewater Canal Towpath Crawl. Ye Olde No.3, Little Bollington; Swan with Two Nicks, Axe & Cleaver, Bay Malton. Finish Orange Tree, Altrincham

Thur 15 June 8pm, Chorlton cum Hardy survey. The Bar, Wilbraham Road; Royal Oak, Spread Eagle (formerly Tara Hotel), Lloyds, Bowling Green, Beech

Thur 22 June 8pm: Romper, Ringway; Unicorn, Hale Barns; Bulls Head, Bleeding Wolf, Railway, Hale

Thur 29 June 8pm, City Centre Crawl. H R Fletchers, Courtney & Co, Mulligans, Ganders Go South, Grinch, Rothwells

Thur 6 July 8pm, Altrincham Survey: Tatton Arms, Bakers Arms, Park, Faulknors Arms, Grapes, Orange Tree

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

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