

# What's Doing

SEPTEMBER 1995



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## Moon Under Water

Wetherspoons have arrived in Manchester - and on a vast scale. Monday August 14th saw the official opening of the Moon Under Water, a £2 million conversion of the Cannon cinema complex on Deansgate. With three bars, 6,500 square feet of drinking space, a library, balconies, stained-glass windows and three beer cellars (one apparently just for lager) you could be forgiven for thinking Blackpool sea front or even Las Vegas would be a better setting for this gigantic pub.

For readers who are not acquainted with Wetherspoons' rise and rise (they currently own over 100 pubs), here's a quick history lesson. Company chairman Tim Martin built up his huge chain in London and the Home Counties in five years. The company began by converting



pubs which had been sold off by breweries, then Martin's legal training was put to use and they specialised in securing new on licences for buildings such as shops, garages and, in one case, a freezer depot. The company prides itself on providing a large selection of reasonably priced cask ales served in top condition, with one priced at under a pound; a good selection of wines, quality pub food available at all times, no music, no pool tables and spotless toilets. The requirements of female customers are important in all aspects of a pub's operation and design.

The Wetherspoon expansion has now moved north, with pubs planned or open in Chester, Liverpool and Southport. Many industry watchers are looking forward to Wetherspoons versus Newcastle Licensing Bench, which is notoriously difficult when it comes to granting a new on licence.

But back to Deansgate and the Moon Under Water. The pub has a high glass frontage and a vast front bar area stretching away into the distance. This opens up into a second huge galleried bar area, where there is a greater emphasis on food. This bar is three storeys high and incorporates the refurbished cinema ceiling, complete with circular fan lights. On the opening night an army of staff was much in evidence and with a crowd estimated at 700-800 there was still plenty of space left.

The beers sampled by various CAMRA members were reported to be in top form and Youngers Scotch Bitter was the much touted "under a pound a pint", at 99p. Other beers from the S&N stable included Theakstons mild at £1.31, Theakstons Best at £1.34 and Marstons Pedigree at £1.72. Two cask ciders were promised - Farmyard Scrumpy (£1.67) and Weston Old Rosie (£1.81) - but they had not arrived in time for the opening. An Ale Festival is promised for September, with thirty guest beers available during the month, and from 28th September to 1st October there will be a Cider Festival.

The Moon Under Water is a welcome addition to Manchester's pub and real ale scene, and an investment on this scale must mean Wetherspoons are optimistic about an upturn in city centre drinking. I would hazard a guess that the pub needs to turn over at least £40,000 a week to pay back the company's investment, and that will take some doing.

Nevertheless, Wetherspoons must be in confident mood because another pub is to be developed on the Halford's shop site in Piccadilly by the end of the year.

*Paul Mason*

## Glenn Worth

*CAMRA members throughout Greater Manchester will be saddened by the tragic death of Glenn Worth. The following appreciation is by Mike Robinson.*

Glenn, a former member of the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury Branch of CAMRA, will be fondly remembered for his love of real ale, his interest in pubs and local history and his dedicated support of the Bury Beer Festival over many years.

Everyone who knew him could not help but notice Glenn's passion for mild ale, especially Joseph Holt mild, which he drank with pride in the pubs of his beloved Whitefield and Prestwich. Many a CAMRA meeting will be remembered for his vocal support for his favourite drink and the pubs where it was sold. The 1993 Good Beer Guide selection meeting at the former Tap & Spile on Hope Street, Rochdale, was enlivened by Glenn often questioning the audacity of the Branch for including a pub in the Guide that didn't even sell real mild!

His interest in pubs and local history has been preserved in his excellent book, "A History of Whitefield Pubs", which was published in 1993. Glenn must have visited each one dozens of times, all in the name of research, with many of the landlords becoming personal friends.



Glenn was a stalwart of the Bury Beer Festival and many other CAMRA beer festivals over the years, where his enthusiasm on the Products Stall was second to none. He was the life and soul of the party and how can we easily forget his post-beer-festival "entertainment" at the Bury and Oldham festivals?

All who visited "The Late Taste" over the years for his many "special events" will never forget him. No words can express the ambience of the place.

Please raise your glasses of mild to Glenn. He will be sadly missed.

IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT MANCHESTER'S NEW PUB



## THE HEAD OF STEAM

DEANS\_GATE STATION  
(2B Whitworth Street West)

Tel. 0161 2366645

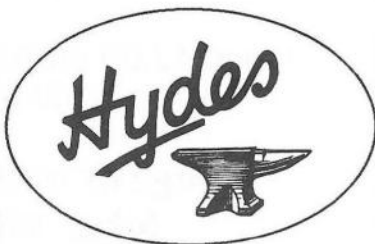
- 1 MILD AND BITTER **89p** A PINT ON SUNDAYS!  
(HIGHGATE DARK 99p ALL THE TIME)
- 2 STUPIDLY LOW POLYPIN PRICES - from 79p a pint!
- 3 NORTH WEST BEER FESTIVAL 5-10 September  
including Passageway, Millgate, etc
- 4 RARE ALES BEER FESTIVAL 15-19 September  
including - no, you'll have to come and see!!
- 5 HOLTS AND HYDES now regular beers, along with  
Hop Back, Bateman, Shepherd Neame, Banks's  
and others, plus loads of GUEST ALES
- 6 BREWERY TRIPS - Hydes and further afield!
- 7 AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE PARTIES
- 8 HORNBY etc RAILWAY MODELS 25% OFF  
CORGI MODELS 25% OFF (with vouchers)
- 9 GREAT FOOD, GREAT MUSIC

# Anvil Angle

Smithy

## Forging Ahead

Following the success of Victory and Summer Ales, Hydes are now producing another special beer called Forge Ale and this should be available in managed and selected tenanted houses in early September. It is a full-bodied, deep ruby bitter (4.3%) with a distinct but not overpowering bitterness. Production of Summer Ale ceased at the end of August to make way for Forge Ale, but this popular beer may well reappear in 1996.



Hydes are the first of the Manchester regional brewers to enter the special/seasonal sector which is creating so much interest among beer lovers nationally. The more observant aficionados may have seen Hydes Brewery on ITV's "News at Ten" recently, when a brewer was shown sampling a trial batch of Forge Ale from an oak fermenter.

## Quality Counts

Hydes now have firm "Best Before" dates on all casks leaving the brewery. So now your pint can match your pie!

## Pub news

Investment is forthcoming in Cheadle, where both the **Crown** and the **Cross Keys** are to undergo traditional-style refurbishments. The Crown also has a new licensee - Bonnie Lee, formerly of the Oddfellows in Hyde. Bonnie was recently presented (at the Crown) with a CAMRA award for her past efforts at the Oddfellows. In Burnage, Hydes' recent acquisition, the **Farmers Arms**, is set to open in late August or early September after refurbishment. Alan Benthams is the new licensee.

## Fashion note

Hydes devotees will soon be sporting new polo shirts emblazoned with the company's re-designed Anvil logo, which appears on bar towels and point-of-sale material.

## New cask ale plant

The company is installing more new fermentation vessels in order to cater for their "special" beer production. More on this next time. Finally, will XXXX be back this winter? Hydes will not confirm or deny its reappearance, so - watch this space!

# The Berwick Arms

FREE HOUSE

21 Carnarvon Street, Cheetham, Manchester. 0161 832 4708

\* \* \* \* \*

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

Robinsons Best Bitter

Comprehensive range of home-cooked meals.

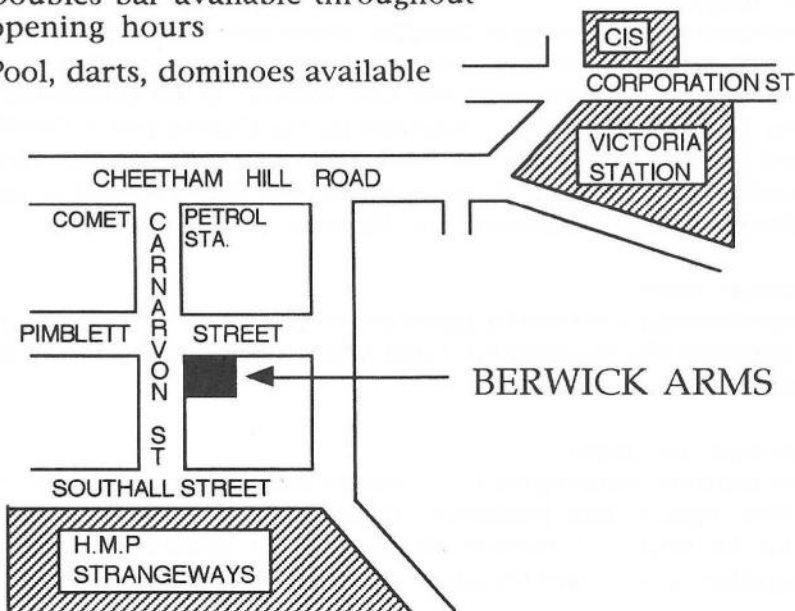
Hot and cold bar snacks

Served Mon-Fri 12.00-2.15

Large selection of bottled beers, lagers, ciders,  
etc.

Doubles bar available throughout  
opening hours

Pool, darts, dominoes available



# Kings Ale

Leo King

## Hogshead

Of all the many Whitbread pubs selling guest beers that I have visited, the Hogshead on High Street in Manchester is the best. The beer choice is extensive, with up to eight real ales on at the same time, and there's an ever-changing range from brewers up and down the country as well as the usual Whitbread portfolio - Boddingtons (obviously), Pedigree, Castle Eden Ale, Landlord and Chesters. Whitbread Choice brews from Castle Eden and Cheltenham also appear regularly and some beers, usually the stronger ones, are on gravity.



The Hogshead is a pleasant pub and a far cry from its former incarnation as the Americanised "Bensons", a neon-lit barn of a place that sold little real ale. Before that, it was a rough and ready pub which catered for some rough but great characters. It was then called the Wheatsheaf and it was a Chesters house when Chesters was Chesters.

I hope that Whitbread keep the Hogshead the way it is. Manager Mike Gorstridge nurtures the beers into tip-top condition; there's an appealing atmosphere, the service is very good and the pub caters for all types. The easy-to-read blackboard outside lists the beers, the ABVs and the prices per pint.

## Lees

I disagree with the claim that the new "Golden Original" lager is a "superior product" (Lees Corner, last month). No lager can be a "superior product" (except, perhaps, traditional lager, which is almost non-existent in draught form). Golden Original is just another keg lager. The beer mat tells us that Lees have been producing award-winning lagers since 1959 and there were brewing trials over twelve months to decide the final Golden Original recipe. "We have used sourced Saaz hops from Eastern Europe...We are using a completely new method of bar dispense...using a mixed gas of nitrogen and carbon dioxide." So JWJ go to all the trouble to produce a new lager and then sell it under gas pressure.

How can you have "award winning" lagers when the stuff is pressurised? Only traditional lagers should come into this category. If Golden Original is so great, why not serve it naturally by handpump or electric pump? Many years ago Lees produced a great traditional lager on two occasions - for two beer festivals. It was handpumped and it was excellent. However, it was never on sale in the pubs and it vanished as quickly as it appeared on the scene.

Another item in Lees Corner shows the new company logo - "J W Lees, Manchester". When did they move the Manchester boundary? J W Lees should be proud of their long association with Middleton. The city of Manchester has only three breweries - Boddingtons, Holts and Hydes - but the daft county name, "Greater Manchester" can kid a lot of people. Manchester is basically a long, narrow strip bordering on many other towns and it stretches from Heaton Park in the north to the airport in the south. Geographically speaking, Middleton is in Rochdale, not Manchester.

Now, having said that, I will praise Lees for their mild and bitter. In good form the beers are great, as Peter Alexander (Middleton News, WD August) reported. The Britannia in Middleton Gardens serves consistently good beer - the bitter is superb. Also, try the John Willie Lees in the Arndale Centre in Manchester city centre.

Finally, Lees say they are on the lookout for more tied houses - why not have a look round Chorlton, where I live?

## Victory Ales

The following beers were noted during recent real ale rambles:

Arkells: Victory Bitter  
 Arundel: Winston Church Ale  
 Banks's: V.E Day Beer  
 Banks & Taylor: Victory Gold\*  
 Bass: 1945  
 Batemans: Victory Ale  
 Bathams: V.E Mild  
 Blewitts (Kingsbridge): Hitler Blewitt  
 Brains: Victory Ale  
 Brewery-on-Sea: Dive Bomber  
 Burton Bridge: It's Over  
 Burts: Freedom Ale  
 Carlsberg-Tetley: V.E Day Beer  
 Cheriton Brewhouse: Beera Lynn  
 Coach House: V.E Commemorative Ale  
 Courage: 1945 Ale\*  
 Daleside: Hitler's Ruin  
 Durham Brewery: Victory Beer  
 Eldridge Pope: Liberation Bitter\*  
 Gales: Victory Ale\*  
 Harveys: Liberation Ale\*

Hull Brewery: Monty's Revenge  
 Hydes: Victory Ale  
 Joules: Victory Ale #  
 Kemptown Brewery: V.E Ale  
 King & Barnes: V.E Day Ale  
 Larkins: Hande Hoch Bitte  
 Lastingham: National Pride  
 Mansfield: Churchill's Pride  
 Mauldens: Victorious Endeavour  
 Morlands: Hope & Glory  
 New Ale Brewing: Valediction Exodus  
 Pilgrim: V.E Day Mild  
 Ringwood: True Glory\*  
 Whitbread (Castle Eden): V.E Day Ale  
 Wood Brewery: Forces' Favourite  
 Woodfordes: Victory Ale\*  
 Worldham: Hero's Bitter  
 Wye Valley: V.E.45  
 Youngs: Victory Ale\*

\* Also bottled

# Is this Joules connected with the former company of the same name in Stone, Staffs, which was acquired by Mitchells & Butlers some years ago?

## Brews News

I am indebted to Graham Mitchell and Keith Osborne of the Labologists' Society for information on the V.E Day ales and the following list of new brews with their ABVs:

Ash Vine: Mahatma Gandhi India Pale Ale 4.5%

Black Beard: Trafalgar 4.4%

Black Bull: Anklecracker 4.2% (*Brewed for the World Toe Wrestling Championship*)

Church End: Cuthbert's 3.6%

Church End: Fred & Lucy 5%

Crouch Vale: Kursaal Flyer 4.5%

Exe Valley: Spring Beer 4.3%

Fullers: IPA 4.8%

Morlands: The Tanners Jack 4%

Pilgrim: Spring Bok 4.5%

Pilgrim: The Great Crusader 6.5%  
(900th anniversary of the Crusades)

Ryburn: Wolstenholme Xmas Porter 5.5%

Springhead: Cromwell's Hat 6%

Steam Packet: Ginger Minge 4.5%  
(ginger beer)

Titanic: List 3.7%

Townes: GBBF 4.5% (*Brewed for the Barnsley Beer Festival*)

Traquair House: Jacobite Ale 8% (*Coriander flavoured and bottle conditioned*)

Woodfordes: Stout Cat (o.g. 1042)

Woods: Shropshire Lad 4.5%

\*\*\*\*\*

## Failsworth Brews

The Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch of CAMRA held its summer Pub of the Season at the Millgate, Failsworth, in July. It was a very well attended evening, helped (unintentionally) by the fact that it was the pub's music night. The beers were in excellent form and as it was a particularly hot and sticky evening they were consumed quickly - to the point of complete intoxication by some members.

There are now two beers brewed regularly at the Millgate: Willy Booths (ABV 4%, £1.10 a pint) and Sam Macs (ABV 3.8%, £1.05 a pint). Some Dobbins beers are also being produced (with help from Brendan Dobbin, of course) and so far Green Bullet and Sierra Nevada Pale Ale have been on sale. With Holts mild and bitter, plus Boddies, there's certainly no lack of choice at the Millgate. The pub is on Ashton Road West and Failsworth Station is only ten minutes' walk away.

## Day of Action

Last year's Day of Action by CAMRA branches concerned Sunday Opening. Lo and behold 1995 brings Sunday all-day opening. Coincidence? This year the Day of Action is 2nd September and concerns short measure. Fearful of bottoms full of short measure credit cards, the North Manchester branch of CAMRA is not staging an event that day. A survey of short measure will, however, be incorporated in the annual prices survey which takes place on 29th November. Watch this space.

Guests are  
always welcome  
at



ASHTON'S PREMIER  
FREE HOUSE

With NINE beers on hand pumps  
there are always interesting guest  
beers - old favourites and also  
rare and exotic brews. (BETWEEN-  
8 and 12 different ales EACH WEEK.

MONDAY-  
FOLK NIGHT

PLUS

LUNCHEONS TRY OUR HOT MEALS  
& SUPER COLD BUFFET

Conservatory & Rooms

For Meetings & Parties

OPEN ALL DAY  
- MONDAY TO FRIDAY

WARRINGTON ST

ASHTON-U-LYNE

NEXT TO  
BY-PASS



## Wigan & District

*Dave White*

The Herculean efforts of Wigan CAMRA branch chairman John Barlow have finally paid off, as traditional ale returned to the **John Bull Chophouse**, Coopers Row, off Wallgate, for the first time in many moons. The cellar has been enlarged and Thwaites may add to the range if the cask bitter sells, but at the moment the real ale has to compete with the keg variety, so be sure to specify when ordering.

A bit further up the A49, real ale is on sale at the **Mabs Cross Hotel**, Cartwright's Yard, off Wigan Lane. The town now has its first outlet for Brew XI (a dubious honour, to be sure) and Draught Bass is also on the bar. The beers are served a bit on the cold side, but both have been going for 99p a pint, which isn't bad.

Elsewhere in town, the Gidlow and Beech Hill Social Club on Gidlow Lane has been renamed the **Cabaret**. Handpumped Tetley mild and bitter are on sale alongside "Beech Hill Bitter" which, on investigation, turned out to be our old friend Websters. (Loses its mystique a bit, doesn't it?) The Cabaret has a small entrance fee, but on a recent mid-week visit the mild was in very good nick and was selling for £1.10 a pint. A welcome oasis in a rather arid area.

The news is not so good in Bickershaw, where the only pub has reverted to keg beer. The **Queens** on Bickershaw Lane had sold Theakstons best bitter, but now the stretch from Platt Bridge to Leigh is barren indeed. Only a couple of years ago the Queens was a candidate for Wigan CAMRA's "Best new cask beer outlet". How times change...



Finally, wickets have appeared at the **Bridgewater** on Liverpool Road, Hindley. The village is better known nowadays for a plethora of free houses (well, three actually) but the Bridgewater is an unspoilt gem, selling a tasty drop of Burtonwoods. Well worth a visit.

## Setting the Hare running

When Maxine Doyle moved into the Hare & Hounds on Shudehill at the end of July she was surprised to read in What's Doing that she had been responsible for the disappearance of Cains mild and guest beers. In fact, the previous licensee, John Thompson, had taken the beers off some time before. Maxine is now serving Tetley bitter and dark mild and both were in excellent condition on our correspondent's visit.

Maxine is also looking for a suitable guest beer to serve alongside the Tetleys - Boddies, Thwaites, Theakstons and Hook Norton are among those under consideration. She would welcome other suggestions from knowledgeable real ale aficionados, so call in and let your preferences be known. The Hare & Hounds is open all permitted hours including Sunday

afternoon. It is hoped that lunchtime food will be reinstated in the near future. Maxine and her partner Frank are committed to running the pub in a way which reflects its heritage and will continue to justify its entry in the Good Beer Guide. We wish them well.



## Spanish Steps

An outfit called Hale Leisure plans to convert two arches in Catalan Square, Castlefield, into a café bar and restaurant. They also plan to use the square occasionally as a drinking area. Heaven forbid such continental practices.

## Spuds

The Oxnohle on Liverpool Road, Manchester, has shut for its long-heralded gutting by Whitbread. Another item of potato-related news is that the chip shop next to the Britons Protection has been knocked down.

## Jump suit?

The licensee from the Frog & Bucket has taken over the King on Oldham Street - it can only improve.

## Lees Corner

Ken Holt

Situated in a pleasant rural location between Slattocks and Royton, the Tandle Hill Tavern has been the venue for the local CAMRA branch's rare display of physical exercise - their annual 10K event. The pub has undergone some changes recently with the arrival of new licensee Mike Pilling, a local man who was a regular at the Tandle Hill. This is his first venture into the licensed trade and he is keen to develop the pub without changing the essential character.

Structural work and internal refurbishment have already been carried out and the kitchen is being renovated - a limited range of hot food is planned. The small side room is to be converted into a proper tap room to provide better facilities for the many walkers who visit the adjacent Tandle Hill Country Park. A small beer garden has already been made behind the pub, between two farm buildings - not always an ideal situation for sniffing the hop aromas! Lees' GB Mild is now available alongside the handpumped bitter and is selling well. The powerful Moonraker will continue to be served during the cold winter months - something to look forward to when the current hot spell is just a memory!

A major refurbishment is about to begin at the Boarshaw Hotel, Stanycliffe Lane, Middleton. Lees are

planning to develop the pub as a community local and the vault will be retained. On the move from the Assheton Arms in Middleton are Dave & Yvonne Farnsworth. They are taking up the tenancy of the Woodhouse Gardens in - yes, you've guessed it - Woodhouses!

Finally, some free trade news. John Willies has replaced Thwaites bitter at the Zeneca Recreation Club in Crumpsall, and selling at £1 per pint this undercuts Holts bitter by 1p. Unfortunately the happy state of affairs is unlikely to last long because the club is expected to be sold at the end of the year.



COME TO THE ALL YEAR ROUND BEER FESTIVAL

# THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester (off Rochdale Road)

**12 REAL ALES ON OFFER FROM 95p/PINT**

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

WE'RE  
IN THE  
GOOD  
BEER  
GUIDE  
'95

**FROM INDEPENDENT BREWERIES**

**PLUS 3 TRADITIONAL CIDERS**

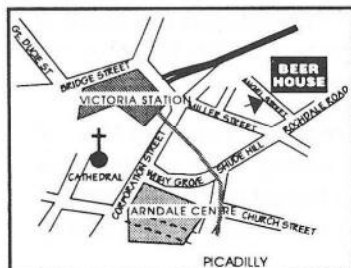
WE'RE  
IN THE  
GOOD  
BEER  
GUIDE  
'95

**DRAUGHT BELGIAN KRIEK &  
LEFFE BLONDE AND MANY  
BOTTLED BELGIAN AND  
OTHER BEERS**

**EVER INCREASING RANGE OF  
SINGLE MALTS at £1.50/single**

**ONLY £2.20/double**

**Lunchtime Food 7 Days A Week**



**SUNDAY BREAKFAST 12 - 2.30  
EVENING MEALS SERVED 5 - 7  
THURSDAY & FRIDAY  
HALF PRICE MENU EACH MONDAY  
FREE CHIP MUFFINS EACH WED 5-6  
PARTY OR MEETING ROOM  
AVAILABLE FREE  
RING IDY ON 0161 839 7019**

## Pubs worth saving

Roger Hall

Vince Fitzgerald in a letter to the MEN (29.7.95) takes issue with my views on pubs worth saving. He also takes the bait and the biscuit in demonstrating an endearingly naïve view of the pub. Pubs aren't all salt-of-the-earth locals exuding community spirit, with the urban equivalent of roses round the door. Of course, we'll continue to campaign against the wilful destruction of pub interiors by brewers and retail chains.

My point is that many pubs have already lost their feeling of community. They are shunned by many, frequented by few and exude an atmosphere which is at best unwelcoming and at worst menacing. Who will help us save these pubs?

Vince cites the Swan in Weaste. There was one objection to the proposal to knock it down - by CAMRA. The brewery, the licensee, the regulars and the locals don't seem to be bothered. Faced with such indifference it is difficult for CAMRA to mount a convincing campaign.

When pubs are closing every month, we can't hope to save them all. We do need to prioritise and let those which are more easily expendable go to the wall. Idealism must be tempered with realism.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Another opening

The Staff of Life at Rainsough has reopened as a free house called the Rainsough Brow.

## Open and shut

The Corporation on Cross Lane in Salford opened again in early August. At the other end of the city, the Broughton Hotel is to become a Buddhist temple.

**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:** Full page £50 or £200 for six months, half page £35 or £150 for six months, quarter page £25 or £100 for six months. All adverts must be accompanied with payment. Cheque payable to What's Doing.

**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, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW.

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

# Letters

## **Yeast counts**

Sir - Whoever reported (WD August) on Dr Keith Thomas's talk to members of the Manchester CAMRA region in July must have been to a different meeting from the one I attended. At the meeting held upstairs at the Beer House, Dr Thomas did indeed address the problem of perceived insufficient yeast counts in cask beers. However, what he told us was that the "suspect" cask beers had been investigated and analysis had shown that the yeast counts, while lower than those that had been stipulated on a "rule of thumb" basis, were demonstrably capable of bringing about secondary fermentation in the cask, and that the beers concerned could therefore be properly termed cask-conditioned. Even allowing for the proviso that we clearly need to check that these levels of yeast activity are maintained in the future, this is just about the diametrical opposite of what you report. If CAMRA experts are to be invited to meetings, courtesy surely demands that their views are reported accurately or not at all.

As to why CAMRA's AGM "refused to allow discussion" of motions on this topic submitted by CAMRA's North Manchester branch and Greater Manchester region, I think the answer is quite simple. The motions in question were poorly thought out, poorly worded, and proposed in an inane manner which the meeting rightly felt to be a frivolous waste of its time.

*Rhys P Jones*

## **Sums (2)**

Sir - I didn't do statistics, I did woodwork. Some years ago I retired my British Thornton slide rule and obtained a Hewlett Packard HP11C. It had a "delta percent" facility. After reading Crighton Rugrat's letter (WD August) I tried it out. It told me that £1.54 (the average cost of a pint in an independent brewer's pub) is 1.91% less than £1.57 (the average price in a national brewer's pub).

So there we have it. The wonderful little breweries are 1.91% cheaper than the naughty big ones.

Perhaps we should reflect before we next shout at the likes of Whitbread (like Mick McManus, the one you love to hate) about their prices. Instead, ask these little breweries why, with their lower overheads, smaller advertising budgets, more compact distribution systems and smaller sums spent on "modifying" their pubs, they can only beat the big boys by, on average, less than 2%.

Any answers?

*Donald Pitplank*

### **Truth gets in the way**

Sir - R M Bailey (Letters, Aug) might be right about CAMRA losing direction but it ain't in the way he thinks. In case my memory was playing tricks, I looked back at the last ten years' What's Doings to see if what he said was true. Well, it isn't.

What's Doing has been just as critical of Whitbread's latest aberrations as it was about its earlier excesses. WD has been chucked out of one city centre outlet for its comments. The trouble is that there are fewer Whitbread pubs to bang on about, as the brewery has sold most of them or let them fall down.

WD has also hammered on over the years about prices, whoever charges them. It has been chucked out of another city centre pub for commenting on guest beer prices. As for Boddies, I think you'll find there were more unkind comments about the quality before Whitbread took over. We got a right smacking from the Brewery Liaison Officer for slagging off Strangeways.

Moribund, in jokes - I couldn't possibly comment.

*Anthony Sallis*

PS: Isn't the plural of Aunt Sally, Aunts Sally?

### **Churcinebars**

Sir - I note that the Deansgate Cinema is now a pub. Warner Brothers are going to open some new cinemas. Perhaps they can take over some of our disused pubs, which usually become churches. If we're short of places of worship then some of the under-utilised churches, etc, can become multi-prays with a range of denominational god-boxes. If we apply the superloo principle they could be suitably sanitized after use and act as Mosques on Fridays, Synagogues on Saturdays and Cathedrals on Sundays. Weddings would have to be held in pubs which used to be cinemas. Hope this is helpful.

*Rabbi Abdul O'Brando*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Sunday supping**

All day Sunday opening (well, 12-10.30) came in on August 6th, just in time to catch what remains of the summer. It has taken less than 80 years to reverse the Defence of the Realm Act, which introduced drinking restrictions during the First World War. By the time our grandchildren are dead, we might have achieved licensing laws in line with our European (World?) partners.

# Now & Then

Rob Magee

No.90

**Church Inn**

477 Oldham Road, Failsworth

*Failsworth Folk, a queer people,  
Irish parson, church 'bout steeple.*

Failsworth parish church was built 150 years ago and both the church (now with steeple) and the Church Inn are still there, facing each other across a stretch of Oldham Road which so far hasn't suffered from road widening.

Before there was a parish church, the alehouse was called the Three Crowns and it opened in 1767, a few years after the Pack Horse on Wrigley Head and the Crown & Cushion over the road. The other pub near Failsworth Pole, the Royal Oak, didn't open until 1834.

The Three Crowns became the Jolly Carter in the 1830s and at that time it was most probably a low, brick-built building with a stone-flagged roof; double-fronted and with windows made up of small panes of glass. Inside, the rooms would have been small with low ceilings, so that when the men lit up their clay pipes you would have had difficulty seeing from one side of the room to the other! The outside was probably whitewashed, because about 1840 the inn was referred to as the White House.



A few years after Failsworth parish church opened for business, the Jolly Carter became the Church Inn. A survey of 1890 found that the inn had beds for two travellers, could provide meals for up to thirty persons and there was stabling for three horses. Kay's Atlas Brewery of Stockport Road, Ardwick, acquired the old property around the 1890s and they were responsible for building the present pub.

Robinsons of Stockport took over Kay's in 1929 and this brewery has a better record than most in preserving the best of their pub interiors. Most Robinsons pubs of the 1950s had separate rooms - tap room, snug, parlour and sometimes a smoke room; the bar top was always a dark hardwood, with glass and shelving up to the ceiling. Quite often there was hatchway service to other rooms. The 1950s saw the development of concert rooms on the ground floor, as opposed to the upstairs club rooms of the old days, which were often unused and neglected.

As the years progressed "supervision" became the key word and encouraged by the police authorities, the brewers set about knocking down interior walls and installing RSJs. Oldham Brewery were particularly prone to this, creating single open spaces where separate rooms used to be, but Robinsons, thank goodness, kept a sense of proportion and just knocked down the odd wall, as they have done at the Church Inn. One of the longest serving landlords of recent times was Reginald Thompson, who ran the Church from 1968 until 1985 and so saw the change of emphasis from the concert room to the providing of meals and snacks.

In the 1980s several pubs further along the road in Werneth were scheduled for demolition. The Black Horse was one of them and in 1989 Oliver Parkinson moved from there to take over at the Church Inn.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Real Ale at the Little B**

The Little B at Brooklands has undergone yet another extensive refurbishment. All the neon lights and other fittings have been removed and a different atmosphere has been created. Now there's a large, comfortable, open-plan pub with plenty of soft furnishings around the perimeter and plenty of standing room around the long bar. The effect is somewhat spoilt by the mountain bike attached to one wall!

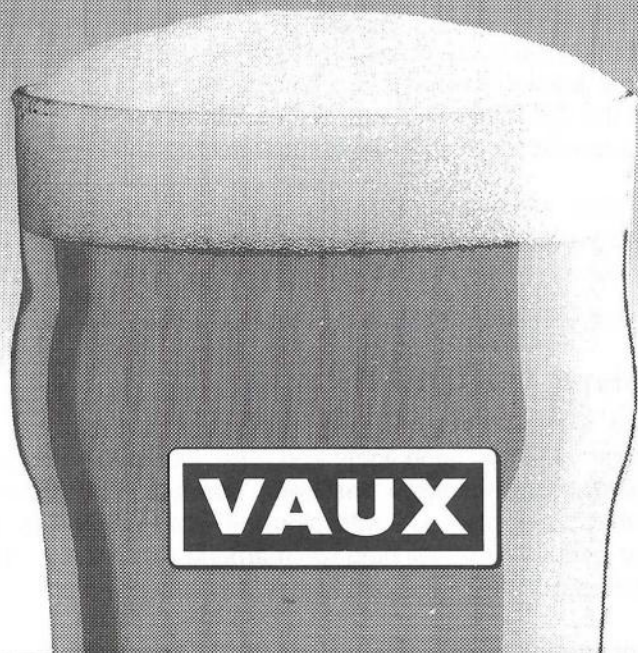
The major improvement is that real ale is now on sale at the Little B after many years as a keg-only establishment. This takes the form of Theakstons XB on handpump, but it's a hefty price - £1.75 a pint! (Beware the Theakstons bitter, which is brewery conditioned.)

# NINE OF THE BEST FROM THE VAUX CASK RANGE

VAUX SAMSON  
WARD'S BEST BITTER  
DOUBLE MAXIM  
THORNE BEST BITTER

VAUX EXTRA SPECIAL  
WAGGLE DANCE  
VAUX MILD  
VAUX BITTER

LORIMER'S BEST SCOTCH



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT  
KATHLEEN ON 01706 353847

## Pub Awards

In this neck of the woods we've never been too keen on pub awards, considering CAMRA's Pub of the Year (POTY) a little, well, yes, potty. This might all change and in case you want to nominate a pub for consideration for a national award we print below a summary of the guidance notes which the judges use. Any suggestions will be passed on to the Pubs Group for evaluation.

Community Focus. Is the pub part of the community in which it is situated? Does it attract a good cross-section of local people? Are there lots of things going on?

Atmosphere. Ask yourself, "Does this pub feel like a nice place to be?"

Campaigning. Does the pub appear to promote CAMRA's values? Is cask beer given a positive push? Is information offered about the ales being sold?

Quality of Beer. Sample all the real ales if you can. A pub doesn't have to sell a wide range to score highly - one selling just a few beers in tip-top condition is infinitely preferable to one with seven or eight mediocrities. Also, the fact that a pub is a tied house shouldn't be held against it.

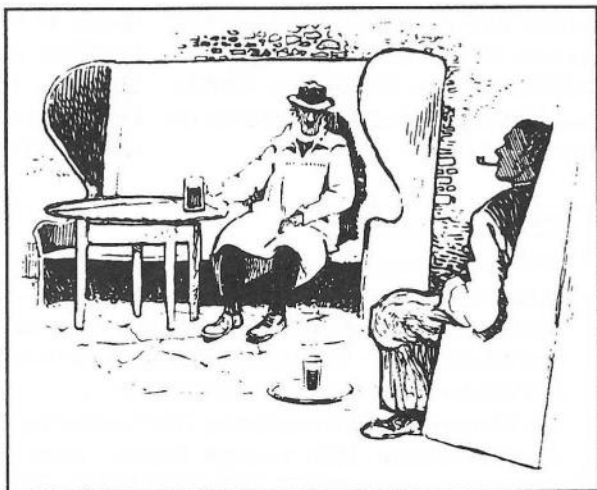
Style/Décor. Is the décor appropriate to the type of pub it is? Does the style show respect for the building? Factors like imagination, taste and restraint all come into play. Unspoilt rural gems and back-street boozers should both get high marks if style and décor are right.

### Service and Welcome.

Is service prompt, efficient and friendly? Do you get full measure or a top up without having to ask?

### Value for Money.

How do prices compare with other pubs nearby? Are there special offers, happy hours, etc?



# Rupert

I don't know what Perry Drab's playing at. Stuck in a time warp, he's still running a brewery, selling hogsheads of amber nectar in old fashioned pubs which he owns and undercutting the opposition by 30p a pint. OK, he's making a fortune, but that's not the point; he's not in tune with the Zeitgeist. What he should do is convince his dad and the other stuffed shirts that a new marketing strategy is called for. They should flog off their assets to an outfit that's already shut its own beer factories and moved into retailing - Brobdingnags or Goosegrease & Dishwater spring to mind.

With the spondulicks burning a hole in his hand, Perry could then go out and buy a clutch of hostelries being sold off by one of the national brewers. Of course, he wouldn't be able to leave them as they are. What he'd have to do is change the names and nail daft crap all over the walls. Down would come names like the Golden Lion and the Rose & Crown. Up would go signs indicating such delights as the Gluttonous Giraffe and Sambo's Skunk & Banana or Sambo's Peruke.

Naturally, a few over-sensitive and politically correct individuals would whinge on about the loss of tradition, the demeaning of our heritage and the insults to gourmands, cameleopards, other animals and fruits, and those who are differently pigmented or follically challenged. But what really matters is outcome. We'd have got rid of a dowdy old brewery and transformed all the cheapskate hostelries with their impecunious clientèle. The newly acquired premises would be much busier than before, saved from their own mediocrity. Perry Drab would become a much fêted personality and media celebrity and a squillionaire to boot. He could then move on to converting redundant abattoirs and cooling towers into mega-hostelries of character.

This is surely the only way forward for our foremost amber nectar purveyor as we move towards the millenium. When we host the Olympic Games we don't want such anachronisms as Drabs to embarrass us. Gluttonous Giraffes and Sambo's Skunks & Bananas will be a clear sign that Grotley is a truly international city with a magic of its own.

## Branch events

Whingeing about hovel-crawling has resulted in a revision of North Manchester branch activities. The pattern is as follows:

1st Wednesday - Member-friendly pub crawl of decent pubs.

2nd Wednesday - Committee / Social in an outstanding pub.

3rd Wednesday - Formal Branch Meeting.

4th Wednesday - Campaigning / fact-gathering pub crawl.

5th Wednesday - Wild: surveys, brewery visits, bus trips, socials.

# Branch Diary

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tues 5 Sept 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Black Swan (Lees), Mumps, Oldham

Sat 9 Sept 12 noon. Bury Beer Festival Organising Meeting, Tap & Spile, Bury centre

Tues 19 Sept 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Tap & Spile, Bury

Tues 26 Sept 8.30pm, What's Doing collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Sat 30 Sept 12 noon. Bury Beer Festival Organising Meeting, Tap & Spile, Bury centre

Tues 3 Oct 8.30pm, Branch Meeting & EGM, Ring o'Bells, St Leonards Square, Middleton. Note venue change.

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

## **North Manchester**

Wed 6 Sept, Strangeways and City crawl: Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham Hill Road, 7pm; Dutton, Park Street, 8pm; Smithfield, Swan Street, 9pm.

Wed Sept 13 8pm, Regional Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester

Wed 20 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting, Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester

Wed Sept 27, Weaste Walkabout: Coach & Horses, Eccles New Road, 7.30pm; Ashley Brook, Liverpool Street, 9pm.

Wed Oct 4, Eccles Crawl: White Lion, Liverpool Road, 7pm; Royal Oak, Barton Lane, 8pm; Lamb, Regent Street, 9.30pm

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

## **Trafford & Hulme**

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

## **Bolton**

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

## **Wigan**

Contact: John Barlow 01257 427595 (h) 01257 426464 (w)

\*\*\*\*\*  
Contributors to this issue: Paul Jordan, Rob Magee, D Busman, Leo King, Dave White, Allan Whitehead, Keith Egerton, Ken Holt, Roger Hall, Mike Robinson, Paul Mason.  
\*\*\*\*\*

*Dave and Jo welcome you to the*

# QUEENS ARMS

**FREE HOUSE**

Tel. 0161 834 4239

4/6 Honey Street (off Red Bank), Cheetham

*Serving a large range of traditional ales supporting the independent brewers*

**Batmans Mild & XXXB - Mitchells  
Bitter - Old Peculier - Taylors Best  
Bitter & Landlord - weekly guest beers**

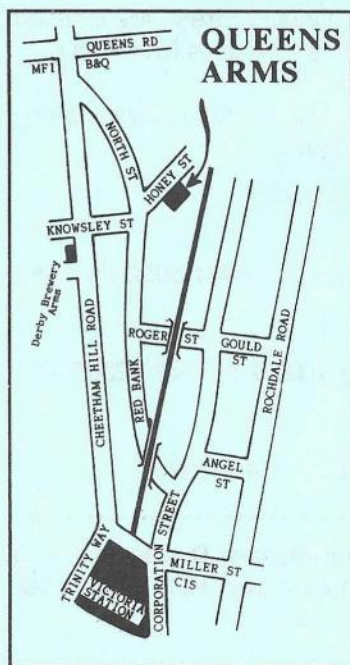


*Westons Traditional Cider on handpump*

*A large menu plus home-made specials  
available seven lunchtimes a week*

*Hot and cold food available until late evening*

**Opening Hours: 12.00-11.00 Mon-Sat; 12-3, 7-10.30 Sun.**



Children's play equipment in the Beer Garden, with swings, slides, climbing net, etc.

*We have a Children's Certificate so families are welcome inside or in the Beer Garden.*

Bar-B-Que for hire free of charge.

A permanent range of draught Belgian beers to complement our range of 12 real ales, not forgetting the Continental bottles

Bar Billiards, Backgammon, Chess, etc.

General Knowledge Quiz Night  
Tuesday. Beer Prizes

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