

25p

What's Doing

OCTOBER 1995



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Castle & Falcon

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive have applied for Conservation Area Consent to demolish the Castle & Falcon.

Six years ago the owner of this famous Manchester pub was served with a Compulsory Purchase Order because the PTE wanted to knock it down to



provide temporary working space whilst the Metrolink tracks were being laid behind the building. As a result of a major campaign by CAMRA, the PTE moved the tracks ten feet away from the pub and spent over £30,000 of public money on new foundations and retaining walls.

A fire in January 1990 damaged the roof of the building, but there was a glimmer of hope for its complete restoration when a consortium led by the Co-op and Robert Maxwell (an unlikely coupling) proposed a major redevelopment of the area, including the pub. Unfortunately these plans were thrown overboard, so to speak.

Since then, GMPTE have continued to neglect the Castle & Falcon (details of which appear in nearly every guide book to the city centre) and now the bastards want to get rid of it! Instead of spending more public money on knocking it down, why don't they just sell it to some budding entrepreneur for £1?

Peter Wadsworth

You can object to the application to demolish the Castle & Falcon by writing to the Chief Planning Officer, Town Hall, Manchester, quoting reference number 048284/CC/CITY1/95.

Bury Beer Festival

Planning for the Bury Beer Festival is proceeding apace. Most of the beers will be served by handpump and it is hoped that Lees Harvest Ale (11%) will be one of those featured. (Provided the harvest is gathered in on time!). Subject to negotiations with Lees, there will also be a cask conditioned lager. Hot and cold food, including vegetarian options, will be available at all sessions.

The organisers still need active CAMRA members to help with staffing the Festival, the more the merrier. Contact Alan Ainsworth or Sue Barker on 01204 574790.



Samson shorn

A short-lived trial of cask Vaux Samson at the Lorimers Arms has failed. The Collyhurst Vaux pub is back on keg beer.

Closed and Boarded Corner

No new closures this month, but there have been some developments. The Waverley (Whitbread) in Weaste may become a cafe with flats above if a planning application gets approval. In Manchester, Marstons have sold the Harp & Shamrock (below) on New Mount Street. Rumours that it will become a bistro have been denied, but it may be a couple of months before the premises reopen. In Miles Platting, European cash is being put towards the £120,000 costs of converting the long-closed Hat & Feathers into a family community centre.



Scuppered?

The Tetley Pub Company has put in a planning application to demolish Jacksons Boat, on the Trafford side of the River Mersey from Chorlton-cum-Hardy. They want to replace the eighteenth century building with a big family-style eaterie, including a playbarn (*sic*) and provide car parking on adjacent land.

Not long ago an extension was added to the building and at present it can be described as having a homely atmosphere. There's a rectangular bar area, a lounge, vault and patio with outside seating. Farmhouse implements adorn the walls, plenty of wood and brass is in evidence and there are many split-level alcoves. The pub is in a leafy, picturesque area overlooking the river by the site of the old chain ferry. It would be such a shame if this hostelry went the same way as many others.

The beers available at present are Tetley bitter, Jennings bitter and Imperial. This could change if TetPubCo gets its way, and it may already be too late.



BEER FESTIVAL

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Kings Ale

Leo King

The Beer House

This enterprising real ale free house on Angel Street, off Rochdale Road, Central Manchester, deserves a mention. The pub is run by Idy Phillips, an enthusiastic and tireless licensee who provides a range of traditional beers, including a mild and a 99p-a-pint bitter (Burtonwood). There are many handpumps on the bar, twelve for the ever-changing range of beers, the others for traditional cider, and you can't miss the detailed beer list chalked on a very large blackboard.



There are regular mini beer festivals, such as Scottish and Welsh Beer Festivals, a West Country Beer Festival and a Strong Ale Festival. Not long ago the world's strongest beer was on sale: Uncle Igor from Ross of Bristol (1200og, 23%ABV) could be had for £9.40 a pint, £4.70 a half or £2.35 a quarter.

The Beer House is a lively and friendly place, with sociable drinkers and a jukebox which deserves a place in the Guinness Book of Records for its continuous playing! There is good food, with a half-price menu on Mondays, cheap specials and free chip muffins between 5.00pm and 6.00pm on Wednesdays. (The muffins are not baby-sized either, and the chips are the real thing, not packet products.) The Beer House is open all permitted hours, including Sunday and is well worth a visit.

Sorry, Middleton

I must apologise to Middletonians! Last month I stated that Middleton was geographically part of Rochdale. In fact, it is only politically part of Rochdale, a state of affairs engineered by Tory Government bureaucracy.

Lees Corner

Bernie Jackson

In September Lees took on a full-time cooper to maintain the considerable population of wooden casks still used by the brewery. He is Mr John Harrop, a fully qualified tradesman formerly employed by Buckleys. Other news from the brewery is that the cottage on Grimshaw Lane (see WD July) has been refurbished as a visitors' centre and training facility for licensees. Trials to replace the small amount of caramel in the Bitter with crystal malt have been successful and this means that the beer is now up to the German purity standards.

This time of year brings in the new harvests of barley and hops and whilst the long, dry summer has produced a bumper harvest of barley, the hop yield has been low. It isn't clear at this time how the prices to the brewing industry will be affected, as the demand for British barley and malt is apparently very high, especially from South East Asia and China. The hop picture is different in that most hops are "contract" bought prior to the harvest.

The long, dry summer affected more than harvests, however, and at the Cross Keys at Uppermill the spring ran dry! Help from the brewery with a tanker load of water (you have to thank tank beer for something!) and from the local Fire Brigade was needed to top up the storage tank.

Elsewhere in the tied trade, licensees are on the move from the Old Boars Head in Middleton to the Golden Pheasant at Plumley; the tenants from the Three Arrows at Pilsworth and the Spring Inn, Rochdale, are also leaving. The winners of the best kept cellar awards (WD August) are:

Local tenancies and overall winner - Hollins Bush, Hollins (GBG listed)
Local managed houses - Boarshaw Hotel, Middleton

(Separate awards have been made for the North Wales houses.)

Consigned to the Museum

As a result of Sam Smiths' decision to rationalise their beer range, Museum Ale is no longer on sale in Sinclairs in the city. This leaves the pub with Old Brewery Bitter as the sole cask beer.

The Coach & Horses on Eccles New Road, Weaste, is also still selling OBB. Whether Smiths would like to see OBB replaced by nitrokeg beer remains to be seen.

The Superpub

Roger Hall

The emergence of huge pubs like the Moon Under Water will without doubt bring about the early demise of many of our traditional pubs. Don't get me wrong - I, too, was impressed with the conversion. Tasteful refurbishment, stunning, cutting edge of design, spotless toilets, ales in top condition, the 99p pint, ale festivals, guest beers, quality pub food. Not bad, eh? Well, as I toured the 8,000 square feet, three storey, 1,500 capacity pub, I had some misgivings. If it took off, then perhaps some other pubs would close. They might even include some pubs which we regard as traditional, community locals which we've struggled so hard to save.

I voiced my concerns at a CAMRA regional meeting. I was shouted down from all quarters and I then knew I was right. CAMRA's record in the accuracy of its social forecasting is pretty poor.

Wetherspoons have a number of similar developments in train, as do Bass, Allied and Yates's. Superpubs of up to 60,000 square feet are



already planned. Pub-going as a leisure activity has declined and changes in work patterns have diminished the role of the pub as a feature of working life. Over 3,000 pubs have disappeared since the publication of the MMC report. Many more may go in the wake of the Superpub.

Advocates of Superpubs dismiss their effect on traditional pubs by suggesting that these new establishments attract new trade - women, shoppers and young people who would not normally visit pubs - and turn them into pub-goers and real ale enthusiasts. Well, yes to some extent, but many of Wetherspoons' customers would have been propping up the bar of the Dog & Duck if they'd not been in the Moon Under Water. If we assume that half the customers were people who wouldn't otherwise have been in a pub, it still leaves about five pubful of people who would have been.

For every successful Superpub we're going to lose around five or six traditional pubs. If that's progress, then so be it, but we can't have our cake and halfpenny. Welcome the Superpub by all means, but don't be surprised when your local closes.

What's Doing has chronicled the demise of inner city pubs for two decades. Last month Opening Times recorded the loss of three South Manchester pubs - the Kings Arms in Chorlton on Medlock, the Lancaster in Longsight and the Clayton Arms in Clayton. Many of our suburban and city centre pubs are no longer capable of providing a living wage, as is evidenced by the rapid turnover of licensees. It will not be long before we see wholesale closure of suburban and city centre pubs of modest size. This will be accentuated if Superpubs prove as successful as their designers imagine.

In the same way that supermarkets have transformed our way of shopping and driven specialist butchers, fishmongers, bakers, greengrocers and small grocers out of business, so the Superpub is a threat to the traditional pub. We can even spot the same techniques - success measured in turnover per square foot, loss leaders, one-stop leisure. As pubs become more retail outlets and less part of a way of life, the effects will bite deeply, putting at risk the viability not only of marginal, poorly managed houses, but also of enterprising pubs of character.

I'm not sure that we should campaign against the Superpubs, but if we do welcome them, we should reflect on the effects which they may have. Their attractiveness may well be a two-edged sword.

Jolly Carter, Winton

Mike and Irene Fildes, previously at the Royal George (Vaux), Manchester, have been running this Magic Pub Company enterprise since 5th June.

The interior has been lavishly decorated in the company's house style: pictures cover almost every square millimetre of wall space and the ceiling is festooned with wicker baskets, fishing nets and heavy-duty copperware. The furniture is smart and comfortable and large wall mirrors add to the sense of space. The main room is U-shaped around the central bar, with dividers to provide a sense of three distinct areas. To the left, and a couple of steps up, are two more drinking areas.

Handpulled beers currently on offer are Websters Green Label (99p), Banks's mild (120p), Boddingtons bitter (135p) and Camerons Strongarm (135p). This last is supplied in 9-gallon casks and tends to sell out. The company has a big portfolio of "approved" beers and Mike is currently dealing with four suppliers. His biggest problem is the tiny cellar, which is only about four metres square. There is more cellar space (currently unused) underneath the left side of the pub, which may eventually be opened up and recommissioned.

Current activities include a Tuesday quiz and Eddie's "Free & Easy" piano on Wednesdays. One Thursday a month there's a sixties disco and on another Thursday a darts knock-out.

Some CAMRA members will remember Mike from his time at the White Swan (Holts), Swinton, which his parents, George and Ruby, ran for many years. Some of the old Swan regulars, including George himself, are now to be found in the Jolly Carter, which is a welcome adjunct to the three-pub triangle featured previously in these pages.

Farnworth Illuminations

Bombay Potato

There's no need to travel to Blackpool to see the Lights any more. Just come to Market Street, Farnworth, and experience the new sign over the Royal Balti House. The new man at the helm of what was the Ajmeer has not only renamed the place but has improved the quality of the food to rival that in Rusholme.

Beers to wash down, or soak up, your curry include Holts bitter at the Clock Face, Burton Ale at the Market Hotel, Exmoor Gold or Youngs Ramrod at the Black Horse, Flowers Original at the Britannia and Vaux Samson at the Victoria, which has gone back to cask after being on keg for possibly the shortest time ever.

The Berwick Arms

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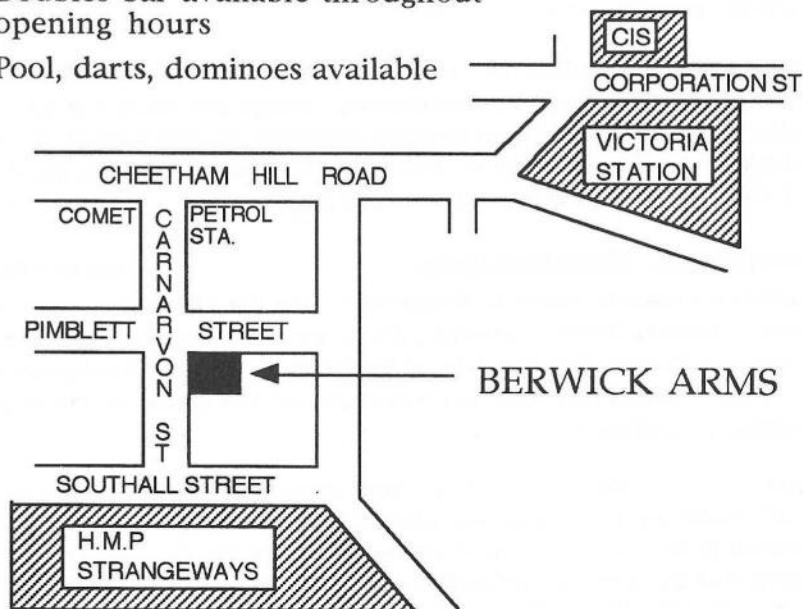
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Sitting on the POTY

Vince Fitzgerald

The North Manchester branch of CAMRA has had much heated discussion on the subject of a Pub Of The Year award (to be known from here on as POTY). Why have an award? Well, to use the words of a fellow Pubs Group committee member, "Publicity, publicity, publicity." I couldn't have put it better myself.

Most CAMRA branches have POTY awards and the chosen pubs are put forward for regional and then national awards. Finally, one pub becomes the National POTY. If the North Manchester branch were to have an award scheme, CAMRA would gain publicity through the local press and if our pub won the regional and the national awards, there would be national press coverage.

The branch would like to know the views of What's Doing readers and those CAMRA members who don't normally attend branch meetings. We are also considering having an award for Best Newcomer, which could be for a new pub, a keg to cask ale conversion or a much improved real ale outlet.

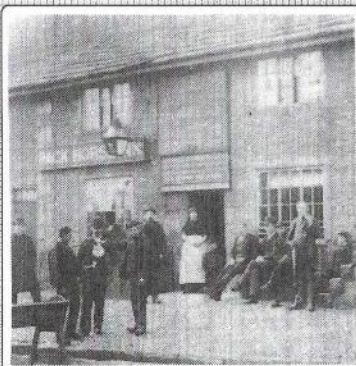
Please write to me via What's Doing, or you may wish to attend our next branch meeting (see Diary) to discuss the POTY with us.

New history

Rob Magee's latest book covers the history of the pubs of Failsworth, from the oldest (the Bulls Head and the Pack Horse) to more recent licences like the Millgate. As well as all the well known pubs, there are the more obscure, such as the White Hart, last heard of in 1776, and the Goldfinder. A horse called 'Goldfinder' won the 1853 Chester Gold Cup and a local factory worker who backed it at 50-1 used his winnings to open the beerhouse. His luck didn't last and he was back in the factory after a few years!

The book contains Rob's usual mixture of fact and entertaining anecdote and there are comprehensive lists of licensees, photos and plans. The book can be bought from selected Failsworth pubs.

FAILSWORTH PUBS 1731-1995 *and their licensees*



Rob Magee

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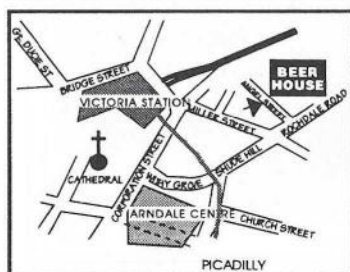
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Letters

Yeast counts, or does it?

Sir - Rhys Jones (Letters, Sept) wasn't listening to Dr Thomas. Dr Thomas did say that beers with low yeast counts were capable of bringing about secondary fermentation in the cask. He went on to say that because of the low yeast counts, the time needed for secondary fermentation to take place would be considerably extended to perhaps as long as twenty days. I would argue that low yeast count beers can indeed be properly termed cask conditioned, but only if they are stillaged in the pub cellar for the requisite time. Our own surveys (WD Jan, Feb 95) indicate that this is not the case.

Rhys was present at the meeting when the original Regional motion was put forward. It was well thought out and well worded and he did not vote against it. Unfortunately this motion was emasculated by the CAMRA AGM organisers. By amalgamating it with another marginally related matter they effectively stifled debate. I'll let Peter Cash defend his alleged inanity.

Roger Hall

CAMRA AGM motions

Sir - As the inane proposer of one of the motions referred to by Rhys Jones (Yeast Counts - WD Sept) I should like to clarify the facts and purpose behind our motion.

Following replies to a questionnaire sent by CAMRA Region to local breweries, the Region was quite rightly concerned about the lack of cellar conditioning of many so-called "real" ales. Yeast levels apart, the short times between delivery and serving - often only a few hours - would allow for little cellar conditioning, let alone maturation.

The Region accordingly submitted a properly worded motion to the CAMRA AGM, calling for such suspect beers to be excluded from the Good Beer Guide and CAMRA beer festivals. The North Manchester branch, whilst fully supportive of the Regional motion, feared that it would suffer the fate of many others since the rise of the Standing Orders Committee - emasculation by compositing with other, vaguely related motions.

Our branch therefore proposed a "safety net" motion. This was deliberately worded to express the opposite sentiment to the Regional motion, ie that CAMRA should compromise its definition of "Real Ale" and welcome all dubious contenders into the fold. The intention, of course,

was that this should be heavily defeated, thereby giving new emphasis to existing policy.

We were proven right about the Regional motion: the one which appeared bore no resemblance to the original, being concerned solely with "racked" beer at beer festivals. The North Manchester motion appeared intact, but after the Regional one. Realising that the Regional composite was likely to fall, I successfully persuaded the meeting to take our branch motion first.

My failing, which I readily admit with hindsight, was to reveal to the meeting our strategy, and call for our motion to be defeated. This clearly got up the nose of Tony Millns (Standing Orders Committee), who realised that we had pulled a fast one in sneaking an existing policy motion past SOC. He promptly moved "next business" and we had no debate.

Afterwards, the Technical Committee told me they regretted Tony's action and were looking forward to replying to what they recognised as valid points contained in our motion. As for the other motion, our Regional Director tried to speak to the original Greater Manchester version, but as these words had not appeared anywhere on the agenda, few in the meeting appreciated his arguments.

Surely, whatever the fate of AGM motions, the real issue is whether CAMRA is willing to stand by its long-held definition of Real Ale, or whether those members who order beer for festivals or who worry about sales of the Good Beer Guide, are willing to ignore the trend, which we all know is taking place, towards totally brewery conditioned beer.

Peter Cash

Hogsheads

Sir - I was glad to see the deserved tribute to the Hogshead in Manchester and I would like to draw your attention to the Hogshead on the main Dunham road in Altrincham. Manager Dave Collins keeps his ales so well that some old-timers swear his Boddingtons is as good as it was ten years ago! Dave also shows some imagination in choosing his guest beers. There are eight handpumps and two barrels behind the bar, which are currently offering Jennings New Seasons Ale (4.5%) and Wells Bombardier (4.2%).

The handpumped beers include Broughton Merlin (4.2%), Wadworth 6X (4.3%), two of Whitbread's promising newcomers - Colonel Peppers (5%)

and Abroad Cooper (5.1%) - plus (my own weakness) Whitbread's new Ginger Ale. There is also Old Hazy for the cider fans. On the food side, it would be hard to find a better bargain than a choice of two hot meals for £3.75.

Geoff Atkins

Inside Out

Sir - In last month's WD you took another swipe at the reluctance to allow pavement drinking in parts of the city centre. ("Spanish Steps", WD Sept.) Why this obsession with people having the right to drink outside bars in a traffic-polluted city? Sitting outside the family *auberge* and watching the sun go down over the vineyard is all right for Nicole and Papa, but in the middle of Manchester?

Last month when I made my way to the Moon Under Water the pavement outside two nearby bars was packed with people sitting at tables. This was about 6.00pm on a very hot day. Traffic was thundering along Deansgate as it always does, the air was full of dust and there was the usual toxic cocktail of exhaust fumes. Inside the Moon Under Water it was quiet, cool and air-conditioned. Only two sorts of people want to sit outside bars in the city centre - the chronically fashionable and the terminally daft.

Stuffy Sam

Late correction

It was Lord Thomson who said commercial television was a licence to print money, not Lew Grade (WD July, Aug 1994). John Greenway has written, citing the quotation as used by Tom Bower in "Maxwell - The Outsider".

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.

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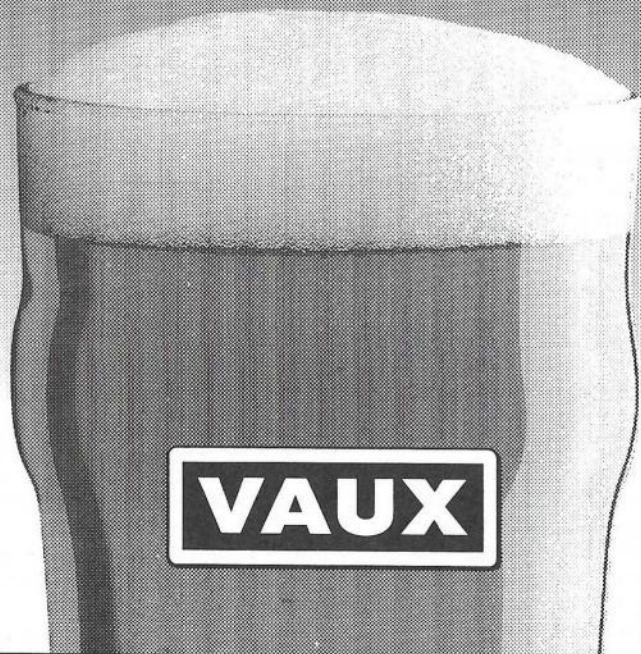
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Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Around November 1994 Holts produced a draught, handpumped version of their strong ale, Sixex, and put it in six of their tied houses. It was a trial, to see if there was a demand for the product (normally only available in bottles) and the beer retailed at 79p a half pint.

Those who managed to sample draught Sixex were pleased with it and everyone rated it quite highly. However, from Holts' point of view the trial was "disappointing", ie not successful. So who's to blame for the perceived failure? Why didn't the public drink it in vast quantities? Well, for a start Holts didn't tell anyone about it. Perhaps the wrong pubs were chosen for the trial. Also, the Sixex was dispensed from 22-gallon containers and these take an awful lot of shifting at 79p a half.

Recently a letter of encouragement was sent to Holts from the Greater Manchester branches of CAMRA, expressing the hope that Sixex would reappear this autumn. If the brewery told CAMRA when the beer was coming out and where it would be sold, then the organisation could do its bit in promoting the beer to the general public.

The brewery has a few dozen 9-gallon containers, used for mild in a handful of low turnover pubs, and some of these 9's would be ideal for Sixex, rather than the 22's. Let's hope that Holts do the right thing this time and turn last year's "disappointment" into success for Christmas 1995.

The licensee of the GBG Morning Star at Wardley, Danny McQueenie, is moving to the Eagle & Child at Whitefield. I hear the licensee from the Frigate is to take over at the Morning Star.

The Dukes Gate at Little Hulton has recently been redecorated and re-upholstered. It is hoped that the badly faded map showing the old Dukes Gate area will be restored.

Patricroft news

A large skip full of junk outside the Bird in Hand (Holts) caused our reporter to stick his head through the door. Apparently nothing had happened to the public rooms, so perhaps Joe is splashing out on the living quarters?

Manchester's first railway hotel

Not too long ago there was a railway hotel near every major railway station in the country and these ranged in size from the fairly modest to the monumental. Manchester's Midland Hotel is one of the biggest and you can't miss it, but at the bottom of Liverpool Road is the city's first railway hotel. The Railway & Commercial opened when the Liverpool & Manchester Railway began operating in 1830, but it wasn't the success its owners had hoped for and in 1843 the licence was not renewed. The advertisement reproduced here lists the contents of the hotel when tenant William Westall decided to call it a day. But back to 1830...

On 10th September 1830 Benjamin Taylor obtained a licence for the hotel across the road from the new terminus, just in time for the official opening of the world's first passenger railway five days later. The opening didn't go off quite as planned after the VIPs set off from Liverpool, since William Huskisson MP was run over by the *Rocket* at Parkside. The delayed procession of locomotives and carriages eventually trundled

MR. FLETCHER is instructed by Mr. Westall to SELL BY AUCTION, on Monday and Tuesday, June 19 and 20, 1843, on the premises known as the Railway and Commercial Hotel, Liverpool Road, Manchester, the Entire of the Valuable EFFECTS.

The Commercial Room and various Sitting Rooms are furnished with sets of excellent mahogany chairs; dining, loo, Pembroke, and occasional tables; mahogany sideboards and chiffonniers; sets of superior crimson moreen window curtains, with rods; mahogany sofas, several sets of polished steel fire irons, steel and brass fenders, pier and chimney glasses, in carved and burnished frames; Brussels carpets and hearth rugs, &c. richly cut wine and spirit decanters, tumbler and wine glasses, jelly and custard ditto, celery glasses, large bowls, china and earthenware dinner, dessert, tea and breakfast services; ivory-hafted knives and forks, bronze tea and coffee urns, silver plate and plated articles, &c.

In the Bedrooms will be found upwards of 30 capital mahogany four-post, French, tent, and camp bedsteads, with suitable moreen, chintz, and other draperies; very excellent white goose feather beds, bolsters, and pillows; excellent hair mattresses, blankets, and counterpanes; washstands, tables, and chairs, painted *en suite*; swing dressing glasses, in polished mahogany tray frames; white and chintz draperies and blinds; bedside carpets, white and gold and chintz toilet services, &c.

Lobby and floor oil cloths, mats, umbrella stands, suspending and lobby lamps, scagliola pedestals, &c.

The Bar contains large filling counter, with cupboards underneath, patent brass taps, &c.; beer engine and spirit fountain, mahogany tables, chairs, Brussels carpet and rug, chimney glass, fender and irons, and floor oil cloth.

The fixtures throughout the establishment are in excellent condition, and comprise those in general use in the trade; together with gas meter and piping, with about thirty burners; the whole of the Vault Fixtures, casks, stillages, puncheons, and quantity of brass taps, filling counter, handsome spirit fountains, 50 dozen bottles, &c.

through the rain into Manchester, carrying a subdued trainload of dignitaries.

The Railway & Commercial Hotel didn't get off to a good start, either. Stage coach businesses were thriving and Manchester's leading hotels, up-to-date successors of the coaching inns of yore, wanted the railway trade. They had the advantage of being at the heart of the town; some sent carriages to meet the Liverpool trains and collect visitors, and they also had the advantage of being allowed to serve drink to travellers at any time, whereas Benjamin Taylor had a standard publican's licence. This was changed after a court case in May 1831, when Benjamin was summonsed for serving drinks on a Sunday afternoon: the authorities relented and put the Railway & Commercial on the same footing as the other hotels. The man who brought the case was an employee of the Old Quay Company, which was responsible for shipping on the Mersey and Irwell and no lover of the new railway to Liverpool or anything connected with it!

Benjamin Taylor left after another year or so and the Railway & Commercial had at least two more tenants before William Francis Westall arrived in 1838. The end was then in sight for some of the coaching companies. It took 21 hours to get to London by road, but you could now catch a train at Liverpool Road and travel via Warrington and Birmingham to reach the capital in half that time. Mr Westall placed an advertisement in the newspaper "...to inform Private Families, Commercial Gentlemen and others departing for London or Liverpool by the early trains, that they can be accommodated with Private Apartments, Beds, &c. upon the best terms. The advantages of sleeping *close to the*



point of starting, which takes place at *so early* an hour in the morning, must be too obvious to need further comment..."

Alas for William, it didn't last. Within a few years stations at Store Street (later London Road) and Hunts Bank (Victoria) had opened and by May 1843 he had decided to sell up. There were repeated attempts to find a new tenant for the hotel during the summer of 1843, then in mid-September the Liverpool & Manchester Railway Company stepped in and proposed using the premises as railway refreshment rooms. Unfortunately they failed to get the licence renewed, and the authorities decided that it wasn't really needed as there were plenty of other pubs and hotels on Liverpool Road. (Ironically, the refreshment rooms at Victoria Station were first licensed in that year and those at London Road in 1844.)

The Railway & Commercial Hotel was no use to the railway company without a licence and so once again the owners, a firm of carriers based in Castlefield, were looking for a tenant. In June 1844 the whole block of property, comprising the hotel, two shops and three dwellings, was offered to let "at a considerably reduced rent".

In the event, industrial and commercial development around Liverpool Road meant that the Railway & Commercial survived a period when there were some spectacular bankruptcies in Manchester's hotel world. It was re-licensed in the 1860s and is still going today as the Commercial - the very first railway hotel.



Planning News

A new wine bar is planned for Oxford Road. Mandex Management want to convert No.186 near the University.

In Castlefield, another application has been made for a café bar at 29 Liverpool Road.

Following the success of the Old Monkey, Holts have plans to open a new pub in John Dalton Street next to Dalton Entry, which leads to the Hidden Gem. Any suggestions for an appropriate name will be passed on to Joey's.

Book Review

Steve Smith

Pubs of Central Manchester (Concept Publishing £2.50)

This latest publication on the Manchester pub scene reads more like advertising hype than a pub guide. The 61 entries include most of the popular real ale outlets, together with some café bars and keg outlets, although I would not have thought that a guide to Central Manchester should contain the Quay House at Salford Quays!

There is one pub per page, described using a variety of crude typefaces and symbols and there are no photographs. There are a couple of humorous designs, such as a string of sausages for the Hogshead and the outline of a ghost for the City Arms. There's a glossy cover and the centre-pages map shows the location of each pub with a solid dot, something that other guides fail to do.



I cannot see this guide appealing to the average real ale drinker, only perhaps to out-of-towners, tourists and die-hard pub guide collectors like myself. The book is available from behind the bars of most featured pubs.

Verdict: expensive.

Anvil Tales

The appointment of Tony Phillips as Quality Manager at Hydes Brewery last October heralded a thorough review of working and brewing procedures and a number of changes have been implemented, aimed at ensuring the beer is never variable.

The brewery has gained greater flexibility and, when necessary, greater capacity with the installation of two new 30-barrel fermenters. Hydes are now able to produce a wider range of beers and we have already seen trials of Victory Ale, Summer Ale and the current Forge Ale, all of which appear to have been well received. More brews are under consideration and there may soon be a decision about the reintroduction of 4X strong ale.

Rupert

Does the resilience of the human spirit know no bounds? People bounce back remarkably well. Take Tubs Caries. Barely two years ago the Grotley and Slumley Imbibers' Vademecum fiasco had reduced him to a shambling wreck, staggering about, throwing amber nectar down his neck, ears and chest at every opportunity. His economy with the actualité and ill-conceived attempts to deceive with quasi-cyberspeak meant that he could not show his face at meetings of the regional great and good. Rather did he hide, skulk and generally low profile himself.

But look at him now! The proud co-recipient with Charlie Super of the Megabugle of the Decade Award for Opening Tripe, our erstwhile procrastinator royal now stands erect and pontificates with modest authority on a range of topics. No longer does he feel ashamed to appear among his regional colleagues, but confidently asserts from a warehouse of intimate knowledge. His close friendship with Tom Tit of Eunuchramforks means that he can speak with conviction about the newly opened Lunar Sea. This brilliant venture will prove amazingly successful because,

basically, it's wonderful. It will attract people who've never been in a hostelry in their lives before, transform them into ardent tavern frequenters and have no effect whatsoever on our DOGSHIT beloved alehouses. He must be right because Charlie Super, supremo of the best magazine there is, agrees with him and so does Slumley maverick Harley O'Brummie. Why be controversial when you can be right?

Not only is Tubs in with Tom Tit and his ilk, he's also privy to discussions between even more powerful forces in the land. Did you know, for example, that there is a conspiracy between the police, the licensing magistrates and the brewers to shape our licensed premises and that Tom Tit is a Robin Hood sort of figure fighting against this tyranny? Nor did I, but Tubs says so, so it must be true. Presumably the conspiracy in Slumley was to allow criminal gangs to run protection rackets, sell drugs, drive pubs out of business and let them fall down and catch fire. This conspiracy has been a signal success and all parties no doubt feel smug about their achievements. Whether today's Tom Tits and their eager spindoctors like Tubs can bring sense to this topsy-turvy world remains to be seen.

Contributors to this issue: Steve Smith, Walter Bee, Vince Fitzgerald, Peter Cash, Peter Wadsworth, Keith Egerton, Roger Hall, Alan Ainsworth, Sue Barker, Bernie Jackson, Stewart Revell, Leo King, Mark McConachie.

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Oct 8.30pm, Branch Meeting & EGM to discuss Nitrokeg and GBG entry policy, Ring o'Bells, St Leonards Square, Middleton.

Sat 14 Oct 12 noon. Bury Beer Festival Organising Meeting, Tap & Spile, Bury Centre

Tues 17 Oct 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Eagle, Oldham Road, Rochdale

Tues 24 Oct 8pm, Branch Launch of GBG 1996 plus presentation at Cross Keys, Running Hill Gate, Uppermill

Tues 31 Oct 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Contact: Peter Alexander 0113 232 4023(w), 0161 655 4002 (h)

North Manchester

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

Wed 11 Oct 8pm, Social, Crescent, Salford. Guest speaker from S&N

Wed 18 Oct 8pm, Branch Meeting, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford

Tues 24 Oct 6pm onward. What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 25 Oct. Student Social and Quiz. Details from Branch Contact

Wed 1 Nov, Swinton Crawl. Buckley Arms, Partington Lane, 7pm; White Lion, Worsley Road, 8.30pm; Farmers Arms, Manchester Road, 9.30pm.

Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

Trafford & Hulme

Thurs 4 Oct 8pm, Cornbrook Crawl. Pomona Palace, Railway, Cornbrook Inn, Hope Inn, Crown (Deansgate), Head of Steam.

Sun 8 Oct noon. Steam Fair at the Holly Bush, Little Legh (A49), near Northwich.

Thur 12 Oct 8pm. Social, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford

Thur 19 Oct 8pm, AGM, Hogshead, Altrincham, and then Orange Tree. Both on Old Market Place.

Thur 26 Oct 8pm, Altrincham Crawl. Tatton Arms, Tipping Street, then Bakers Arms, Park, Grapes, Bricklayers, Orange Tree.

Thur 2 Nov 8pm. Chorlton cum Hardy Crawl. The Bar, Wilbraham Road; Royal Oak, Spread Eagle, Trevor and Beech.

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

Bolton

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

Wigan

Wed 18 Oct 8pm, Branch Meeting, Old Springs, Kitt Green

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

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



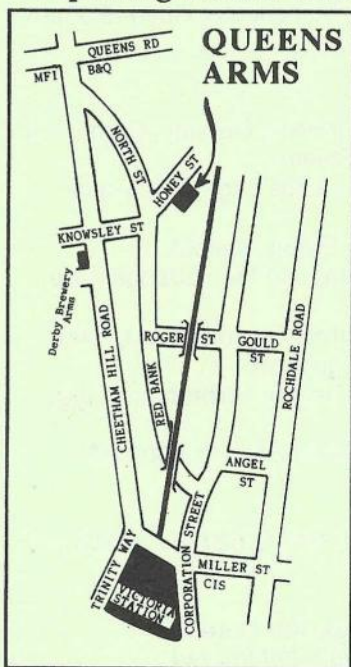
Bitter from 95p a pint

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**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; 12-10.30 Sunday



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*We have a Children's Certificate so
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**General Knowledge Quiz Night
Tuesday. Beer Prizes**

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