25p

What's Doing

CAMRA

APRIL 1996

The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

City Centre Openings

Two Manchester city centre pubs reopened last month after extensive refurbishments. The Pack Horse and the Oxnoble have both been virtually rebuilt in big-budget spends by Greenalls and Whitbread respectively.

The Pack Horse at Knott Mill (right) was in a forlorn state for a number of years and regular WD readers will recall that Greenalls have dithered over a couple of schemes proposed by prospective tenants before





settling for the in-house job. There was industry talk of a Cockney theme pub, but in the end the Pack Horse has reopened under its original name.

The facade has been cleaned and looks smart, but the red sign at the top of the building is not very clear. The interior is a mish-mash to say the least, with a vast eating area and an even bigger kitchen that would have no trouble feeding the five thousand. The drinking area is oddly laid out with uncomfortable metal chairs, probably destined for outside when the weather improves. Most incongruous of all are huge cast iron lighting columns and a red telephone box. Cask ales are Greenalls mild, bitter and Original, Tetley bitter and Boddingtons as a guest.

Like the Pack Horse, the Oxnoble suffered from a downbeat image, overshadowed by its hyperactive neigbour, the White Lion. The work here was required as the building was in danger of falling down, the legacy of a disastrous Whitbread refurbishment in the 1970s when the bar collapsed into the cellar.

The Oxnoble has been virtually rebuilt from the ground up and the former paper shop next door has been incorporated into the premises. In fact, it has become a small hotel with a number of high quality en-suite rooms on the first floor. An odd Georgian column entrance is the only incongruous note on a smart, rendered, cream-painted exterior with large sash windows.

Inside, wooden floors, kitchen tables and odd chairs give a farm kitchen style. There is a kitchen range with a 'real' gas fire in a second, separate drinking area (formerly the pool room). All the walls are covered by old photographs of the area, a fascinating history lesson in itself. The overall effect in the pub is excellent and by the end of week one it was proving very popular with a very busy atmosphere.

There is a good selection of real ales, including Tiger and Fullers London Pride; Taylors Landlord is the next guest. Bitters are around £1.60. One bad mark is the Cidermate fake handpump. When approached, the new tenant was concerned about this and intends to tell Whitbread to take it out.

Well worth the wait. The Oxnoble scores well and might give Greenalls' interior designers something to think about.

Paul Mason

Cakes and ale (2)

The Land o'Cakes on Great Ancoats Street in Manchester is now a 'London Tavern' (not a 'Tap & Spile', as reported last month). Real ales are Chesters mild and bitter and Boddingtons bitter.

CAMRA Recruitment

A recruitment drive was launched on CAMRA's 25th birthday (16th March 1996), with £2 off the membership fee until the end of April (normally £12, now only £10). There are currently 47,000 members and CAMRA wants to increase this figure to 50,000 this year. Student membership is only £6.

Queens Arms update

Following a site meeting between the architect, the council conservation officer, the applicants and the objectors, new plans have been prepared for the Queens Arms, Patricroft. These are certainly an improvement on the original proposals. Instead of knocking down the back wall of the bar, the new plans show a hatch 1.3m x 1m high. The stud wall would still be removed and the opening between the two back rooms taken down to floor level. One improvement involves the reinstatement of a baffle screen which was found in the cellar.

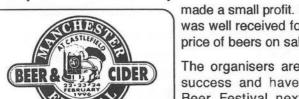
The new plans still involve much unnecessary work. There are in Salford and elsewhere plenty of examples 'inconvenient' arrangements which have been made to work and. conversely, of pubs which have been 'improved' in this respect and failed.



It is important that the Queens survives as a pub and provides a decent living for the licensees. The building needs to be upgraded and much of the proposed work does just that. But it does not need structural alterations which change the character of the pub and do little to improve bar management.

Beer Festival success

Rumours, largely unsubstantiated, abound about beer festivals losing the odd few bob. Happily, the first Castlefield Beer Festival was a success and not only in financial terms. Early indications are that the festival broke even or



made a small profit. It also recruited well and was well received for the quality, range and price of beers on sale.

The organisers are keen to build on this success and have a second Castlefield Beer Festival next year. Yet there are suggestions that the Great North Western Beer Festival should re-emerge at Bolton's

new sports centre, also in March 1997. Too many beer festivals and not enough volunteers is a problem which needs a speedy resolution.

COME TO THE ALL YEAR ROUND BEER FESTIVAL

THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester. 0161 839 7019

12 REAL ALES ON OFFER

including

BURTONWOOD BITTER,
THEAKSTONS XB and BEST BITTER,
MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH

plus

8 EVER-CHANGING GUEST BEERS including a GUEST MILD

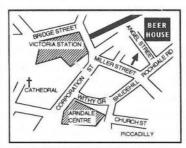


PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS, DRAUGHT BELGIAN KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN & MANY BOTTLED BELGIAN and other FOREIGN BEERS

SOMETHING FOR EVEN THE MOST DISCERNING TASTE

- * Lunchtime food seven days a week
- * Try our Sunday Breakfast 12 2.30
- * Evening Meals 5 7 Friday
- * Thurs 5 8 Choice of three curries (veg and carnivore) + rice £2.50
- * Half price menus Monday lunch





OPEN ALL DAY MONDAY - SUNDAY
Bar Billiards & Darts
THREE TRADITIONAL CIDERS
ALWAYS AVAILABLE
GOOD FOOD - Vegetarians welcome
NOW TAKING CHRISTMAS
BOOKINGS FOR FREE PARTY ROOM

The Magic Pub Company has 'equestrated' the Old Nags Head in Irlam and turned it into a Hungry Horse pub/restaurant. The vault has gone, along with many of the internal walls, the pool table and the jukebox. A large canteenstyle serving area occupies what was once part of the parlour, with the fayre available boldly displayed on large blackboards overhead.

The remaining walls and ceiling are festooned with the contents of *many* antique shops. Mirrors and wooden seating abound and you can even sit (and eat) at a converted double bed! A number of wooden hogsheads sprout signposts directing you to Irish towns and seaports. None of this is alien to the new landlord, Mick, whose previous pub was Paddy's Rat & Carrot in Manchester. The exterior of the pub has been given a muchneeded facelift and the troughs filled with plants look nice. But painting the concrete traffic bollards red and green? Let's go back inside.

Real ales available are Worthington and Boddies bitters at £1.30 and Toby Cask at 99p. On opening evening, and for some time afterwards, these were warm, but now Cellar Services appear to have rectified the situation. The publicity material invites you to 'ask about the huge selection of Beers of the World'. I'm asking Mick.

Irlam Magic #2...

Across the road is the 'Starvin' Sheep', aka the White Lion. (Colin, the landlord, has a day job - he's a sheep farmer!) Joey Holts arrived on stream the first weekend in March and the bar staff had developed segs on their hands by the end of the first evening. Holts bitter at £1 a pint in Irlam! Now that's magic!

Meanwhile, in Downtown Cadishead...

The George Hotel continues to expand its range of guest beers and there are never fewer than six on at once. On a recent visit, Murphys Oyster Stout was selling well at £1.75 and Timothy Taylors Landlord was an incredible £1 a pint! Cadishead magic?

Sadly, the Tiger Moth on Irlam's Moss Vale estate (aka the Bird Sanctuary) is closed and boarded. This follows on the heels of the closure and subsequent torching of Irlam Town Football Club's premises. The large estate no longer has a pub.

Midnight opening

An announcement is expected shortly about proposals for an extra hour on Friday and Saturday evenings. When the story breaks, why not write to the Home Office supporting deregulation of licensing hours? The address is: Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1A 0AA.

Anvil Tales

Billy Westwoods, the current seasonal session beer being brewed by Hydes, is said to be 'going like a bomb' - it certainly sold out at the Manchester Beer Festival without any difficulty. Billy Westwood's daughter and niece have both contacted the brewery to express their delight at Billy being remembered in this manner. Details of the next seasonal beer have not yet been finalised, but these will be provided as soon as they are available.

The major refurbishment of the Plough in Ashton-on-Mersey is behind schedule and completion is now expected to be around mid-May.

New name, new brew

The Stone Jug on High Street, Stalybridge, is now called the Barge and it has changed from being a Bass pub to a Vaux pub. Handpulled Vaux bitter is £1.30 a pint; the pale ale is keg. There has been a change of name because the Huddersfield Canal on the other side of High Street has been restored.

Brook no more

One of Manchester's first Banks's pubs, the Gorton Brook near Ashburys Station, is closed and boarded up.

Now open

THE MIDLAND BEER COMPANY

826 Manchester Road Castleton, Rochdale near Castleton BR

FOUR REAL ALES

Burtonwood 99p a pint
Theakstons, Taylors and Guest Beers
Thatchers Cider
plus German and Belgian Beers
Lunchtime food Monday - Friday
01706 750873 Open all day

During March the brewery took over ten outlets from Greenalls (see WD last month). Five are managed houses and no doubt these will fit in well with the rest of the Holts estate:

Brooklyn, Great Lever, Bolton Kingsway, Levenshulme Angel, Knutsford Abbey, St Helens Cock o'Budworth, Great Budworth

The other five pubs are tenanted and since Joeys are progressively phasing out their tenanted outlets, I expect they will be making a decision about these in due course:

Pack Horse, Higher
Openshaw
Duke of York, Chorley
Railway, Moses Gate,
Farnworth
Volunteer, Darcy Lever
(right)
Chapel House, Dukinfield

A few weeks ago Holts became the proud owners



of Traditionals on Woodhouse Lane in Wigan. No more news yet on their attempt to buy the Imperial Hotel in Manchester.

New Kings Head

The Kings Head, a BodPubCo house near Barton Bridge in Eccles, has opened after another refurbishment. We thought they'd knocked most of the walls down already.

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.



ASHTON'S PREMIER FREE HOUSE

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60 PLUS BEERS

INCLUDING MANY NEW BREWS FROM THE SMALLER INDEPENDENTS SERVED IN THE MARQUEE AND PUB (MARQUEE FRI-MON)

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THURS 2nd MAY --- MON 6th

HOME-MADE FOOD AVAILABLE

FESTIVAL GLASSES

THE STATION • WARRINGTON STREET
ASHTON-U-LYNE

Full Measure

The new guidance notes on draught beer dispense issued by the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association are a significant improvement on previous notes and reflect the criticisms made of short measure...

BRIM MEASURE GLASSES

- 5. When dispensing beer with a head into a brim measure glass the head must reach the brim or above it to ensure that the quantity of beer (liquid and head) dispensed is at least a pint or half a pint. As the head collapses the small proportion of liquid it contains will fall into the rest of the beer and the gas will disperse into the atmosphere. When the head has totally collapsed the amount of liquid may be less than a pint or half pint. The deficiency will depend on the size of the head and the type of beer. The Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association and the Retail Organisations listed have agreed that a head of froth is excessive and unreasonable if the measure of draught beer does not contain a minimum of 95% liquid after the collapse of the head. They recommend as strongly as possible that all licensees follow this principle. The recommendation that the measure of draught beer should contain a minimum of 95% liquid applies whether or not a top-up has been requested.
- 6. The following best practice should apply:
 - If beer is served in a brim measure glass at the time of service and the liquid level of the beer does not meet the customer's requirements, it must always be recognised that he can ask for a top-up to meet them. Such a request should always be received with good grace and should never be refused although spillage of liquid should be avoided. Many licensees have found useful the use of notices in bars where beer is served with a head in brim measure glasses reminding customers of their right to ask for a top-up.
 - Should bar staff have difficulty in serving any beer with a head in a standard brim
 measure glass so as to provide a measure with a minimum of 95% liquid,
 consideration should be given to serving that product in a line measure glass or a
 special badged glass.

LINE MEASURE GLASSES

7. When beer is dispensed by free flow into a line measure glass sufficient beer (liquid and head) must be dispensed so as to ensure that if the head totally collapsed the liquid in the measure would be level with the line defining the measure.

Strangeways

Is the Brewers Arms on Great Ducie Street due to reopen? Whitbread plan to refurbish the facade. It was never much of a replacement for the Ducie Arms opposite, which was the sort of pub dossers shunned because it was too downmarket, or the Royal Oak on the site, which smelled endearingly of brontosaurus vomit.

Supablobs

Yates's will be opening a new Manchester 'flagship' wine lodge on the corner of Portland Street and Chorlton Street later this year.

Treasure Hunt

The highly successful Independents Day Treasure Hunt (piss up for brainteaser nerds) will take place on 6th July this year. Details later.



Theakston Best Bitter

Black Bull Bitter
One of the special ales from the Theakston range

As supplied by Matthew Brown plc, Chorley, Lancs

The Head of Steam company opened its latest outlet at Huddersfield Railway Station on Friday 8th March. The pub comprises an island bar serving four rooms and it occupies the former Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company ticket offices. It is open from 6.30 each morning (except Sunday) to serve breakfast (without ale, unfortunately) and remains open until 11.00pm; Sundays 12 noon until 10.30pm.

The range of handpulled beers extends to a maximum of seven and on the opening night included Highgate Dark (£1.29), Banks's Bitter (£1.49), Bass (£1.59), Black Sheep Bitter (£1.49) and Hambleton Station (£1.54). Food is served through until about 9.30/10.00pm every night and inevitably includes the giant Yorkshire Pudding with various fillings.

Also on draught are Staropramen (£2.40) and De Koninck (£2.40). De Koninck is brewed in Antwerp in the style of an English ale to an ABV of 5%. In Belgium the draught beer is served in a 33cl goblet-style glass which is known in Flemish as a bollcke, pronounced 'boll-uh-kuh'. When ordering in England, be careful how you say it.

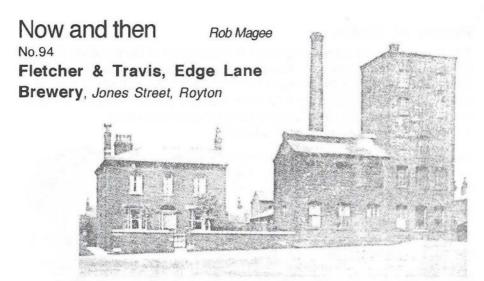
The pub is furnished with many items of railway history, all of which managing director Tony Brookes insists are genuine - no reproductions here! Most of the articles were removed from the Head of Steam in Manchester, so if you were wondering what had happened to the collection, rest assured that it is now on the other side of the Pennines.

The railway journey from Manchester to Leeds and back could take quite a long time these days, what with Stalybridge, Huddersfield and Dewsbury all offering excellent watering holes without leaving the railway. Why weren't there station waiting rooms like this when I was a student?

The former Head of Steam on Whitworth Street, Manchester (WD last month), is now called the Rocket. It has been completely changed inside and is more of a 'disco pub', opening at 5pm each day and closing at 11pm Monday to Thursday, 12 midnight Friday and 1am Saturday night/Sunday morning. There is still cask conditioned beer, including Bass and Highgate Dark, from four handpumps.

Clocking off

The Clock Face in Kearsley, a Good Beer Guide pub for many years, is to close. Apparently the high rents mean that licensees can't make it pay. Where have we heard that one before?



The Edge Lane brewery was built in 1884 by Mr Haworth Ratcliffe of 'Thornbank', Royton, who at the time was a partner in the J & H Ratcliffe Brewery of Coldhurst, Oldham. A few years later Haworth was dead and in 1889 the Manchester Brewery Company of Ardwick purchased the Coldhurst Brewery together with its tied estate of pubs and beerhouses in the Oldham area. Soon afterwards, Widow Ratcliffe sold the Edge Lane Brewery to Herbert Fletcher and John Travis and they began to build up their own estate.

By 1895 they owned five Oldham pubs - the Bowling Green, Park Inn, Primrose View, Three Crowns (Huddersfield Road) and the Willow Bank. They also owned a number of off-licences in Royton and leased two others in Oldham (74 Horsedge Street and 139 Honeywell Lane). Unfortunately Fletcher & Travis overstretched themselves and so they were glad to accept a takeover by Oldham Brewery in 1895.

Oldham Brewery were only after the tied houses and in mid-1897 the Edge Lane Brewery was back in the hands of Messrs Fletcher and Travis. A new company was formed, Fletcher, Travis & Co Ltd, and they began buying or leasing outlets again. One of the purchases was the Church Inn, Royton, where the company spent some money on major alterations. In 1905 they signed a 77-year lease on the Bridge Inn, High Street, Uppermill. I imagine it took more than one dray horse to take deliveries up there!

Unfortunately the brewery encountered more financial difficulties and in November 1915 the receivers were brought in. The company was wound up on 1st May 1916 and most of the estate went to Oldham Brewery, including the Church Inn, Royton. The Bridge Inn at Uppermill had already been closed for four years under the Compensation Act.

The brewery was bought by Messrs H & A Beswick, who went into business as the Edge Lane Brewery & Bottling Co. They brewed ales and stout and for deliveries used the handsome motor lorry pictured here. It was a wholesale concern, which meant that customers had to purchase a minimum order of six dozen bottles of beer.



In 1926 sales may have been a bit low, because at that year's Brewster Sessions Henry Beswick applied for an off-sales licence. His solicitor told the court that not everybody wanted to buy a minimum of six dozen bottles at a time; one dozen would be a more suitable amount. The opposition pointed out that if he got the licence, he could start peddling his beer from door-to-door, in direct competition with off-licence shops, beerhouses and public houses, and the licensees were all against the idea, most emphatically. The application was refused and so the company bottled on until the brewery closed about 1939.

The personal touch

Rochdale's McGuinness Brewery is offering a personalized contract brewing service, where pub landlords wanting their own 'house beer' can get together with the brewery and formulate a suitable brew. The landlord chooses a name and decides on the strength of his house beer, then the price is set according to the required ABV.

Interested licensees who can guarantee weekly sales of two-and-a-half barrels should contact the McGuinness Head Brewer, Eric Hoare, on 01706 711476.

Rupert

Well, that's all right then. Hass Brickie and his pals can breathe a sigh of relief. The amber nectar show went like a dream. Few fights and no hands in the till. No egg on chin because of few punters and huge losses. Mind you, Grotley's a far cry from Aberdudley. It was a pleasure to meet some of the most interesting and courteous people in the entire universe at the show and hear tales of others. I was delighted to be spoken to at length by a 50-year-old tram enthusiast from Tykeley whose cap was tastefully decorated with a beermat and divers badges. It was with reluctance that I passed him on to Mr Nightingale for mutual updating on urban rapid transit systemszzzz.

It never ceases to surprise me how patient people are. You obviously come to a beer festival not to try a few pints, meet people, get pissed and have a good time, but to try a half of one particular foaming ale. If it's not available because the dray's postillion has been struck by lightning, then you'll be devastated. None of the other 126 beers are going to do instead, are they? It's remarkable how one gentleman managed to keep his cool under such disappointment. With charm

and diplomacy oozing from every orifice he approached Hass Brickie and said, 'In the absence of any member of the National Executive of the Campaign, you'll have to do. I'll address my remarks to you. I have travelled miles only to find that Wierdo's Nunfettler XXXXX is unavailable. The bar manager and the beer manager clearly haven't a brain between them and I've been fobbed off with a farrago of obfuscatory untruths. What are you going to do?'

'Smack you in the mouth, you obnoxious twat,' Hass whispered under his breath as he hid in a cupboard. Our polite but understandably less-than-gruntled customer was taken in hand by the PR section and was still to be found amiably sipping amber nectars three hours later as he cradled his 'Nicest man in Grotley' award.

I hear a tale of middle aged men crossing the tracks from a famous Station Buffet to catch the last train home. 'Get off my railway!' shouted a stout, greying person with stentorian authority, barging into the said topers, before hiding behind the Grauniad and demanding police protection as the train arrived in Grotley. Who on earth can this be, protecting our heritage in this way?

Pubtrawls on the Net

Why people who use the Internet want to go on pub crawls beggars belief. You'd think some form of automatic intravenous injection would be more suitable. Anyway, for those that do, here's some info...

Web browser URL

HTTP: // WWW. DOC. MMU. AC. UK. // STAFF / T. Neill / Pubserv. HTM

Let us know how you get on. Was it riveting?

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 2 April 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Royal Oak, Union Street, Mumps, Oldham Tue 16 April 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Britannia, Middleton Gardens, Middleton Wed 17 April 8.30pm, Spring Pub of the Season - venue to be announced - phone contact for details

Tue 30 April 8.30, What's Doing collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale Tue 7 May 8.30pm. Advance notice of AGM, Ring o'Bells, St Leonards Square, Middleton

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

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 4 April, Flixton/Urmston survey. 8pm Church, Flixton Road, followed by Roebuck, Lord Nelson and Manor Hey

Thur 11 April, Town Centre Survey. 8pm City Arms, Kennedy Street, followed by Vine, Mr Thomas's (if open!), Grinch, Ganders Go South and Abercrombie Thur 18 April, Hale/Altrincham survey. 8pm Railway, Hale (opposite station), followed by Tatton, Tipping Street; Bakers Arms, Grapes, Bricklayers and Malt Shovels Thur 25 April, Timperley Survey. 8pm Hare & Hounds, followed by Stonemasons and Quarry Bank

Thur 2 May. 8pm Hope, Chester Road, Cornbrook, followed by Crown, Deansgate; Oxnoble and White Lion

Thur 9 May, 8pm. The Bar, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, followed by The Beech, Chorlton Green

Contact: Roger Wilson 0161 827 0765 (w) or 0161 941 5602 (h)

North Manchester

Wed April 3, Higher Blackley Crawl. Wellington, Weardale Road, 7pm; Pleasant, Chapel Lane, 8pm; Old House at Home, Bottomley Side, 9pm; White Lion, Middleton Old Road, to finish.

Wed 10 April 8pm, Committee & Social. The Oaks, Oakwood Drive, Walkden Wed 17 April 8pm, Branch Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester Wed 24 April, Moston Lane Crawl. Blue Bell 7pm, Ben Brierley 8pm, Bricklayers 9pm, Golden Tavern, Rochdale Road, to finish

Wed 1 May, Patricroft Crawl. Barton Arms, Cawdor Street, 7pm; Dutton, Barton Road, 8pm; Stanley Arms, Liverpool Road, 9.30.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

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: B Aldred, Keith Egerton, Rob Magee, Sean Kilgarriff, Stewart Revell, Roger Wilson, Paul Mason, Roger Hall

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

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



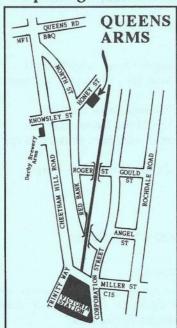
Bitter from 95p a pint

Westons Traditional Cider on handpump

A large menu plus home-made specials
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Hot and cold food available until late evening

Opening Hours: 12.00-11.00 Mon-Sat; 12-10.30 Sunday



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 including Kwak, Le Trappe & Riva Blanche, 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