

25p

What's Doing

SEPTEMBER 1996



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

From the Kings to the Queens

Dave and Sue Price have moved from the Kings Arms in Bloom Street, Salford, to the Queens Arms in Honey Street, Red Bank. Dave and Jo Glass have sold the Queens but have no firm plans for the future, yet.

The quality which has been evident at the Kings over the years will no doubt continue at the Queens - there are no worries on that score, so the Queens remains in the 1997 Good Beer Guide.

But what about the Kings? Greenalls aren't famous for consistent high quality in their pubs. The Kings has been selected for the 1997 GBG, but there are concerns as to who the new permanent licensee may be and



what might happen to the range and quality of ales. Already the cask ciders have disappeared. Clear reassurances from the pub-owning group would help to retain what has been an excellent establishment in the Good Beer Guide for the future.

New Porter Pub

Brewer David Porter of Haslingden has increased his pub stock from two to three with the acquisition of Byrons on Great Portwood Street, Stockport. The former Vaux pub will become the Railway (its original name) in mid-September. This really is good news as it brings Porter's wonderful beers to the town at prices that should be keen, to say the least.



Moulders Arms

Alan Southgate has left the Moulders Arms on Heyrod Street, Ancoats, but he will reappear at the barge moored in Paradise Wharf when that eventually opens. The new man at the Moulders is Dennis Rigby from Burnley and he intends keeping things much as they are, including the value-for-money lunches. The Burtonwood tie has gone and the Moulders is now selling John Smiths. Courage Directors may be added to the range if trade is good.



What's Doing's 21st

Coming of Age celebrations take place on Sunday 17th November. The venue has been booked, food arranged and ale sorted. The cake's on its way and a special brew has been commissioned. Tickets are now available and will be issued soon to those who've asked for them. It's not too late. If you deserve a ticket because of your involvement, even if only as a long-suffering insultee, let the editor know.

The Consumer Affairs Minister has rejected the EC ruling that Britain's guest beer law is wrong because it unfairly discriminates in favour of British beers. So the heat is off for the moment, but we probably haven't heard the last of this one. CAMRA's arguments are reproduced here. For a view from the other side of the barricades, see the article by Beinlos elsewhere in this issue.

BRUSSELS THREATENS REAL ALE CHOICE

What is the guest beer law?

Tenants of some pubs are allowed to buy one draught real ale from a supplier of their choice - the 'guest beer law'.

Since 1989 the guest beer law has meant

- * wider choice for drinkers
- * thousands of pub tenants have stocked new beers
- * more interest in traditional beer



All British brewers have benefited, but in particular the guest beer brought new markets for hundreds of small brewers - concentrating on traditional cask conditioned ale.

The guest beer law works and is popular.

The guest beer law is under threat from Brussels!

The guest beer has to be a real ale. The European Commission specifically approved this condition in 1989. Now they are threatening legal action unless Britain widens the law to include any draught beer. They claim the guest beer law discriminates against imports - although this claim is ridiculous.

This legal challenge could do two things - both very damaging.

- * It might lead to the guest beer being scrapped. Then no-one could argue about discrimination.
- * The law might be widened. But this would be much less effective in offering choice. It would hand power to the biggest brewers and the most heavily advertised beers - just the outcome the guest beer law was supposed to avoid.

Why make the guest beer real ale? This was done for sound practical reasons. Just about every British brewer brews real ale - it is the only sort of beer brewed by the biggest brewers and the smallest alike. It is fair to every size of brewer.

A wider guest beer ruling would simply be swamped by the five or six best-selling beers - heavily promoted with advertising and massive promotional discounts.

Real choice would not be widened. You might get Bass lager in a Whitbread pub and Whitbread lager in a Bass pub. What you wouldn't get is new beers from smaller companies.

- * The ten best selling beers get more advertising than all other beers put together.
- * The top five lagers have over half the draught lager market.
- * Guinness has three quarters of the stout market.

Widening the guest beer just wouldn't work

A wider guest beer law would drive hundreds of smaller brewers out of the guest beer market. What chance would they have?

- * Choice wouldn't improve - we'd just get more of the same
- * Tenants would be penalised through higher rents
- * Smaller brewers would lose business and might close

The one thing we wouldn't see is new foreign beers on sale! Foreign brewers wouldn't get past the mass-produced fizz of big British brewers.

Everyone would be worse off - even foreign brewers wouldn't benefit.



Brussels gets it wrong again

Widening the guest beer law won't widen choice. Brussels doesn't understand the British market. There is a real danger that the net outcome will be the complete abolition of the guest beer.

Is Britain a closed market for beer? Is the Commission right to take action against us?

On the contrary.....

- * British pubs offer a wider choice of draught beers than any other European nation
- * We have more types of foreign beer on sale
- * And we import more foreign beer than any other beer loving nation



Most other European countries

- * have a much more restricted beer market
- * Offer less choice of beers in bars
- * have lower levels of imports

No other EU country has introduced legislation to widen consumer choice. Why pick on Britain?

Why interfere in a rule which works well and hurts no-one?

Two ways to help save the guest beer

If you care about your beer choice act **now** to protect it. Write in protest to your MEP, MP and direct to the European Commission at the following addresses:

MEPs: 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA

MPs: House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

EC: L Gonzales Vaque, Head of Unit DGXV European Commission, Rue de la Loi 200, Brussels, B-1049 Belgium

Manchester Beer & Cider Festival

The next two meetings of the steering committee considering the feasibility of next year's festival will be held at the Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester, on Monday 2nd September (pre-regional) and Monday 23rd September (post-regional), both commencing at 7.30pm.



Closed and Boarded Corner

The long-closed Langworthy (Whitbread) on Langworthy Road, Salford, will be converted into sixteen flats, following Council approval last month. The place has been shut for nearly two years, so this is a sensible solution. It wasn't viable as a pub and would have seriously deteriorated if left for much longer.

Over on Broughton Road, the Maypole (Centric, right) is once again shut. For how long for this time? On Oldham Road, Miles Platting, the Bird in Hand is also shut once again; this despite a recent 'tasteful' refurbishment. Nearby, the long-closed Lightbowne (ex-Whitbread) in Moston may not now become a car valeting establishment. It might even become a pub again, and selling Lees beers too.



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.

Buffet Bar Saved

John Hesketh, licensee of the Station free house in Ashton, has been granted the tenancy of Stalybridge Station Buffet by North West Regional Railways. The Victorian bar and its conservatory are being redecorated and will reopen once the kitchen has been refurbished and new toilets have been built. (So no longer will you have to find your way to the gents' at the other end of the platform, or pee on the tracks.)



Later, the buffet bar will gain a further eating and drinking area. John also plans to take over an adjoining room (one of the old waiting rooms in the old station building) for use as a function room. Real ale will once again feature, including interesting guest ales, on six or eight handpumps.

Antwerp comes to Rochdale

The Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch will be presenting a slide show of the branch trip to Antwerp on Friday 20th September at the Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale, starting at 8.30pm. It is a social evening and all interested parties are welcome.

The slides will feature Mortgaat (Duvel), Het Anker (Gouden Carolus) and Koningshoeven (La Trappe) breweries, plus the De Konink brewery tap. Further details about the evening are available from the ROB Social Secretary via the branch contact (see Branch Diary).

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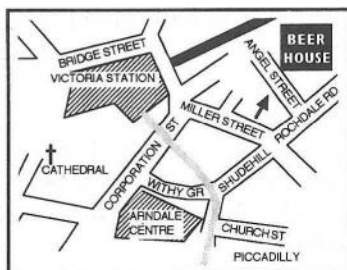
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Lees Corner

Bernie Jackson

Lees launched their 1996 Pub Guide (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) in the recently completed Brewery Cottage on 7th August. Some 50-60 people, including several from local CAMRA branches, were present to hear the Chairman's son, William Lees-Jones, in the only speech of the evening, give full and warm support to CAMRA and its relationship with the brewery, especially with regard to the Campaign's support over the imminent threat to the tied house system from Europe. Such praise, coming direct from the boardroom, must surely be welcomed. It was a very pleasant evening, the hospitality was more than generous and even Peter Alexander commented on the excellence of the beers!

Lees cask ales were on show at the GBBF in Olympia (sadly, not the mild) and several of the once-rare Lees umbrellas were to be seen. Is this a sign of increasing generosity or another example of the marketing ploys of the new generation at the brewery? Either way, the umbrellas were a welcome sight, as were the very reasonable prices charged for the beers - £1.40 per pint for bitter and £2.30 per pint for Moonraker.

Anvil Tales

Hydes IPA is now in the pubs and is being quite well received. Another 'craft' ale is under consideration and details will be provided when the formula and name have been decided.

Refurbishment of the Junction in Hulme has been completed and plans are being submitted to provide a proper vault/games room at the Hoop & Mallet near Warrington.

Ashton ales

The Ash Tree opened on Wellington Street, Ashton, a few weeks ago. It's a new pub in a former shopping arcade and according to a report in the *Tameside Advertiser* there's no music, no pool tables and a quarter of the space is designated non-smoking. The Ash Tree was selling five cask ales when it opened, including Youngers Scotch bitter at 94p.

Down the road in Stalybridge, the Cherry Tree (ex-Church) on Huddersfield Road is selling Cherry Tree Bitter at £1 a pint.

Thumbs Up

The Harp & Shamrock (aka Thumbs Up) on New Mount Street, off Rochdale Road, Manchester, opened again on 22nd August. It is now called the Pot of Beer and is selling seven draught ales.

Marble Arch

Paul Roberts

The quality of the beer at the Marble Arch on Rochdale Road has improved enormously under a new licensee and a good range of exotic cask beers is now supplemented by draught Becks, Bitburger, Krombacher, Budvar and Hoegaarden Witbier. Bottled beers include Schneider Weiß, Erdinger, Warsteiner, Gambinus and Chimay.

The licensee was previously a chef, so naturally there is a range of quality food. The curry nights are becoming increasingly popular and the Mexican night proved a great success. There will be a Chinese night soon and further international culinary experiences are promised.

It is nice to see the Marble Arch being restored to its former glory - it's a pity the bar can't be moved back to where it was! I strongly recommend a visit, especially on one of the Cuisine or Beer Tasting nights.

The Best of British

From 12th September until the end of the month there will be a festival of British independent and regional brews at the Marble Arch, the Sandbar and The Bar.

Brews from the North and Scotland will feature at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, Manchester, including Orkney, Border, Hexhamshire, Longstone, Butterknowle and Cropton.

The Sandbar, Grosvenor Street, All Saints, will be supplied by a dozen breweries from the Midlands and the North West, including Marstons, Phoenix, Burton Bridge, McGuinness, Weetwood and the Brunswick brewpub. The Bar, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, will have beers from the South, including Fullers, Youngs, Hogs Back, Cotleigh, St Austell and Wychwood.

On the opening night the 'Beerbus' will be providing a shuttle service between the three venues.



Pub buried

The remodelling of Cheetham's Fairy Lane and Hacking Street estates has meant the loss of the Cavalier. This ex-Whitbread house was on Northgraves Drive and was demolished at the beginning of July.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

There is a steady flow of licensees throughout the Holts tied estate, as most managers stay for between three and four years before moving on to another Holts outlet (either promotion or otherwise) or leaving Holts altogether. The brewery's tenanted houses are a special group, where the few remaining tenants have retained their 'own' pubs for many years (some managers also keep the same pub for a very long time).

After two-and-a-half years at the Dukes Gate, Little Hulton, Alan and Margaret Townley have recently moved to the Pullet Inn at Sholver, Oldham. Taking over at the Dukes Gate are John and Joanna Cloran from the Duke of York, Hightown. Next month sees the tenth anniversary of the Dukes Gate, for it opened in late October 1986 (taking the licence from the demolished Spread Eagle, Regent Road, Salford).

Regarding the high price of Joey's in Scotland (WD last month), a spokesman for Holts says the retail price is out of their control (the beer agent has to add his transport costs), but it is probably still good value compared to other beers available there.

Millgate Micro

Brewing has ceased at the Millgate micro-brewery, Ashton Road West, Failsworth, although the pub is still in business and serving a selection of guest ales in place of the two Millgate brews.

The brewery didn't have the capacity to keep up with demand and so plans to expand on the present site were made. This led to the discovery of defective foundations under the brewing equipment, putting it out of action.

The owner is now looking for a new site for the brewery, preferably in the centre of Oldham, so if you know of somewhere suitable, contact the Millgate.

The Millgate is still worth a visit, with Holts, Boddies, up to three guest ales and very good food at lunchtimes.

New Queens

Alterations began at the Queens Arms, Patricroft, on 21st August. The pub will reopen on 12th September. Views about the wonderfulness or otherwise of the transformation will be gratefully received. Please let the editor know what you think. (Except Peter Barnes.)

New name

Thwaites have spent a bit of money on the Butchers Arms in Pendlebury and given it a new name - the Pendlebury.

Guests are
always welcome
at



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there are always interesting guest
beers - old favourites and also
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Batemans Brewery

Mark McConachie

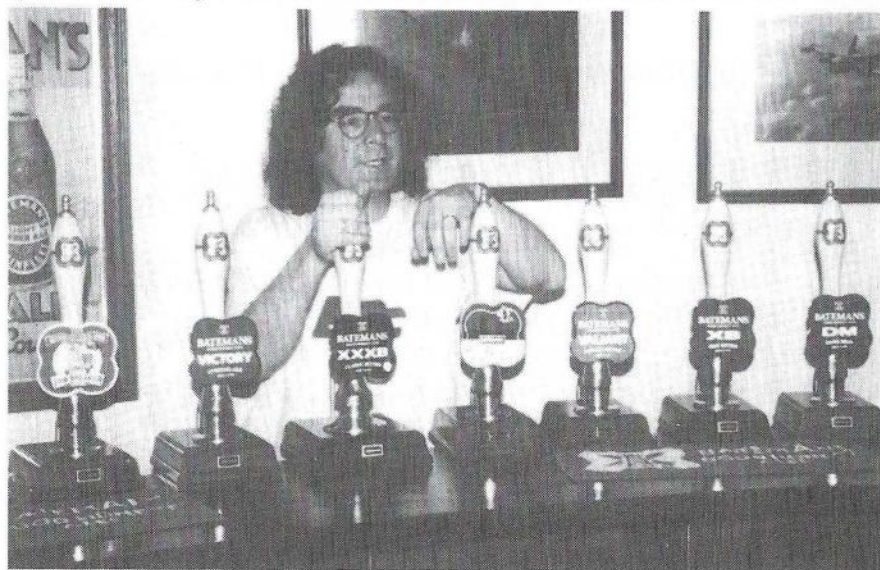
Batemans beers are sold in the various free houses and Marstons houses in the area, and I'm sure that all those who have tried them will have been impressed by the taste and quality. So when the opportunity to visit the brewery in Wainfleet arose, we jumped at the chance.

Batemans arranged a special weekend deal that took in a brewery tour, beer sampling, pie, peas and chips for lunch and an overnight stay in one of three Batemans houses - all for £25.

The small Lincolnshire town of Wainfleet is very pretty and the brewery has to be the most picturesque that I have seen, comprising two sets of buildings divided by a narrow public road - the ivy-clad, sail-less former windmill, topped with a beer-bottle weather vane is simply stunning. Our witty and informative guides were the husband and wife team of Charlie and Denys Newton.

Batemans beer is sold in all parts of the country, so we were all surprised at the small size of the well-organised brewery (only eight fermenters). Quality is maintained by the use of small 9 and 18 gallon casks throughout (apart from a large account in Nottingham). The hospitality area (set in the windmill) allowed us to try all seven beers, including their seasonal brew, Jawbreaker - a toffee-flavoured confection. The mill also houses a boardroom and a rather extensive museum full of beer mats, bottles and other pub and brewery items.

After the aforementioned pie, peas and chips we were taken to selected pubs in nearby Boston, then it was back to Wainfleet for tea. In the



evening we visited the town's five pubs - Red Lion, Royal Oak, Woolpack, Jolly Sailor and Angel; all but the Angel are Batemans houses.

Suitably refreshed by the decent accommodation and a good breakfast, we set off home, stopping off for lunch in Lincoln. A good time was had by everyone and our thanks to all at Batemans, especially Charlie and Denys.

Details of brewery visits can be had from Sandra Raymond at George Bateman & Son Ltd, Wainfleet, Lincs PE24 4JE. Tel. 01754 880317.

New Pubs for Greater Manchester

Mansfield-based, family-oriented pub operator Tom Cobleigh has announced plans to open five pubs in the Greater Manchester area in the next three years. Locations are not known as yet because they are still negotiating. What is known is that all the pubs will be in out-of-town locations and they will be in new or change-of-use buildings. There has been speculation of late that Yates Brothers of Bolton are to acquire Cobleigh.

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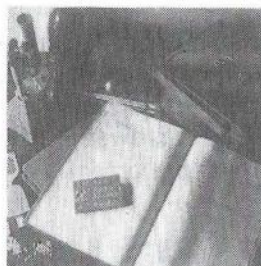
J W Lees Pub Guide

Mark McConachie

The 1996 Lees Pub Guide, listing all the brewery's pubs, was launched last month. The glossy, A5-size book deals with eight pubs per page, each with a photo-cum-drawing, address, map reference number, facility symbols and a brief, if not terse, description.

The pubs are arranged alphabetically in two sections - Greater Manchester and surroundings, and North Wales and Anglesey. There's a map for each section and also a map of the Middleton area on the centre pages.

The guide also contains articles about the Lees beer range, a brewery history and even a CAMRA membership form. A couple of things struck me about the design - the pub names are printed black on grey and the history had a dark background, making both difficult to read. That said, it is a well produced and well presented guide and should prove its worth to all lovers of Lees beers who wish to explore the area. It is priced at £1 and is available in all J W Lees houses.



A collection of our Head Brewer's artefacts from yesteryear

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Wetherspoons in Bolton

A notice stuck on the former Scholes & Scholes shop in Nelson Square announces that J D Wetherspoon will take a lease on the premises if they can get a licence. The building has been derelict for years. There are already a lot of licences in the Bradshawgate area, but the prospect of unloading the eyesore in Nelson Square might well predispose the authorities to grant another one.

Monks Hall

The fate of Monks Hall on Wellington Road, Eccles, has still not been decided. Salford Council may allow it to become a Banks's pub, as widely predicted, but local brewers Hydes Anvil have also shown an interest.

I Spy

Remember the St Georges Tavern on the corner of Water Street and Regent Road in Manchester?

No.

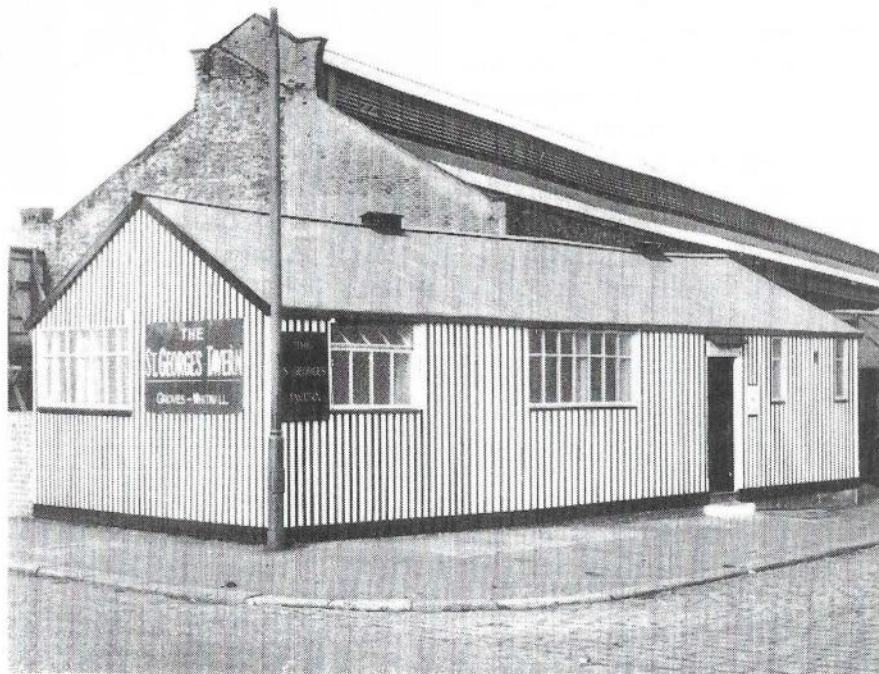
You're too young. It was a wooden hut, painted in black and white stripes for the Old English Pubbe effect.

Whose idea was that?

Groves & Whitnall's, the Salford brewery which was nearby on Regent Road. They built the hut after the original St Georges Tavern was put out of action during the Christmas Blitz of 1940.

You did the Blitz last month.

This is a bit different. The 'temporary' premises were used until the late 1960s. There was a bar and two rooms and every night, after the landlord locked up, he took the bottles of spirits home with him for safe keeping. The brewery (taken over by Greenalls) never did get round to building a replacement.



(Photo courtesy Salford Local History Library)

Irlam & Cadishead News

A crawl in late June revealed some interesting developments in this far-flung area of Salford on the banks of the Ship Canal.

The first surprise was in Burtonwood's Lion, which is now entirely keg. The second surprise was more pleasant. The Plough has been thoroughly refurbished on a sporting theme - lots of sporting pictures and equipment adorn the walls. There appear to have been some small structural alterations as well. The Plough was a long time keg Greenalls pub, but now it is selling cask Greenalls and Stones bitters at £1.30. There is no mention of the Greenalls name outside the pub, just 'Clubhouse', and the wooden window blinds are reminiscent of those used by the Host Group.

The George (Whitbread) is now in the hands of Richard Joyce, who at one time ran the Kings Arms in Chorlton-on-Medlock during its Dobbins days. Richard has introduced a wide range of cask ales to the George at very keen prices - Boddies, Bentleys, Trophy and three guests, all at £1.30. The guest beers were Charles Wells Fargo, Batemans XXXB and Caledonian 80/-. Future plans for the George include the introduction of a happy hour, 8.30 to 10.30, with all cask beers £1 a pint; live entertainment throughout the week, a refurbishment in September, the provision of food and possibly a beer garden.

All the pubs are on Liverpool Road and Irlam Station can be reached by train from Oxford Road, every half hour in daytime, otherwise hourly. Buses are 10,11,67 and 127.

The other GBBF

As reported last month, the Britannia Hotel, King Street, Farnworth, will be holding the town's first ever outdoor beer festival. The event begins at 7.00pm on Friday 6th September and finishes on Sunday 8th, or whenever the beer runs out. (Open all permitted hours.) There will be approximately fifteen beers on most of the time, selected from a wide variety of breweries throughout the UK, from Caledonian to Greene King and Jennings to Batemans.

The Brit is easy to get to, being opposite Farnworth's one and only bus station, which is served by the following buses: F1, 25, 27, 30, 31, 68, 501, 502, 512, 513, 521 550 and 557. The 8, 9, 22, 28, 500, 551, 553 and 554 also stop nearby.

Letter

A Case for Mixed Gas?

Sir - So J W Lees are toying with the idea of a nitro-gassed keg beer (Lees Corner, WD Aug). Why don't they forget the idea and consider applying the aforesaid gas mixture to their cask beers? We might then be able to taste their cask ales with a semblance of 'condition' about them.

Of all the real ales brewed in the North West, J W Lees beers are amongst the flattest on the palate. It is the exception, rather than the rule, to find a Lees pub serving beer with lots of condition, and this applies as much to pubs with large turnovers as to smaller locals where the beer can suffer because of slow consumption from too large a cask.

Aren't Lees' licensees instructed on the finer points of cellarmanship, or is the beer devoid of condition when it leaves the brewery? Answers, engraved on a hard spile, to the brewery, please.

Natural Gas Lover

Ice Cold in Prenzlau

A Czech entrepreneur has developed an ice lolly made from beer. Well, it was bound to happen, what with all the Fosters Ice, Carlsberg Ice, etc. The Bier Zapfen is produced by the Frost family in Prenzlau, near Pilsen and the lolly has an alcoholic content of 1%.

Stiff drink?

A Bavarian brewery, Sailerbräu of Marktoberdorf, has launched a 'sex beer'. After a litre and a half, we are told, the drinker is sexually stimulated. The can carries a warning: 'Bei Überdosis bitte kalt duschen!' - in case of overdose take a cold shower.

The contents are 70% Weißbier and 30% lemonade/secret formula - an additive which certainly does not comply with the Reinheitsgebot!

Special Advertising Rates

To celebrate its Coming of Age, What's Doing is reducing advertising rates for the November issue by 50%. If you wish to congratulate the organ, or wish it well or evil, then get your copy to the editor by 30th September. Hurry, now; we'll all be dead before a similar offer is made.

The Brussels threat to real ale choice?

Beinlos disagrees (as you might expect)...

CAMRA is supposed to promote freedom of choice and a wider range of beers for the consumer. It is also an important member of the European Beer Drinkers' Union, so it seems absurd to me that the organization has taken it upon itself to attempt to restrict the freedom of licensees to choose what they want to sell.

By backing the current restrictive practice of limiting licensees to a few mediocre cask beers, CAMRA is doing nobody any favours - apart from making some British brewers extremely rich.

Under the present system, the large pub owners drew up lists of approved 'guest' beers for their outlets. Sometimes, and especially in the case of Whitbread, the beers are from breweries in which the pub-owning concern has a stake. For example, Marstons and Morland products are sold in Whitbread pubs.

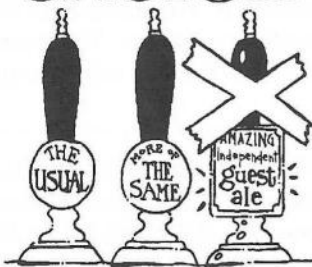
Other breweries supply their own products as 'guest beers', with the excuse that the beers are not normally available in a particular trading area. Hence the introduction of beers such as Bentleys and Highgate into the North West.

True, some small breweries have flourished as a result of the guest beer system. Unfortunately the quality of their beers has fallen because they are producing too much beer too fast, and the beer is trucked across Britain to be stored in various distribution depots. Theakstons and Taylors are prime examples of this. In the good old days when the beers of both breweries were only available in a handful of outlets on the other side of the Pennines, the quality was excellent. Now they have joined the range of mediocre, bland beers available nationwide.

An enterprising Lancashire landlord attempted to bring in an excellent draught Bavarian beer (Ingobräu from Ingolstadt, just north of the Hallertau - the main hop growing region in Europe). The present restrictions prevented him from selling it as a guest beer, so he resorted to the law and we now have the present debate.

Bottled foreign beers are extremely popular

**BRUSSELS
THREATENS
REAL ALE
CHOICE**



at CAMRA beer festivals and in certain free houses. The case for getting top quality German, Czech and Belgian draught beers served without CO2 has never been stronger. Bitburger is an excellent beer from the Eifel region of Germany, close to the Luxembourg border. It is sold in a few outlets in Greater Manchester, but is ruined in all of them by the use of a hideous amount of CO2. Why not serve the beer direct from the cask or by air pressure - the way it is supposed to be served?

There is a whole range of cask cooling systems for bar tops on the market and these would be ideal for serving continental beers. The range of brewing styles available is amazing - Alt, Helles, Dunkles, Kölsch, Rauchbier, Weizenbier, Zwickelbier, Export, Bock and Pils are just some German examples. Belgium can offer Witbiers, Trappist biers, fruit beers, oak-conditioned beers, etc.



By refusing to allow landlords the choice, we are not only breaking European law on the restriction of trade, we are also denying discerning drinkers a feast for their tastebuds. The introduction of real competition would shake up the domestic brewers and, if it isn't too late, inspire them to produce distinctive beers once again, instead of going in for bland badge brewing.

Piccadilly Beers

The beer range in Bonaparte's Bar on Manchester Piccadilly Station has been changed. First, Robinsons Best Bitter was replaced by Marstons Pedigree, then Castle Eden and John Smiths Bitter replaced Websters. Draught Bass remains.

Manchester Piccadilly Staff Club has finished with Whitbread beers after a long association. The beers are now Walkers, Tetley and Greenalls bitters and Tetleys mild and dark mild.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Allan Whitehead, Keith Egerton, Roger Wood, Bernie Jackson, Peter Wadsworth, Stewart Revell, Peter Alexander, B Aldred, Roger Hall, Mark McConachie.

Now & Then

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No.97

Tim Bobbin

5 Whitelands, Ashton-u-Lyne

This pub was in the old part of Ashton, on the west side of Whitelands between the canal and the River Tame, and it was originally called the Navigation Inn. The house was leased by Robinsons of Stockport for a few years before it closed in 1940, and in the early 1900s it was supplied by the nearby Scholfield's Portland Brewery.

When the pub opened in 1835 the address was Bridge End (the Bridge End Ironworks was nearby) and the property was owned by the Lees family of the Park Bridge ironworks until it closed.

One incident concerning the Tim Bobbin (the name was changed in the 1850s) was recorded in the local press in 1868. Suspecting that licensee Thomas Jones was serving out of permitted hours, the police decided to keep an eye on the place. At 6.25 one Sunday morning they saw over twenty people go in and out of the back yard in a short space of time.

Two constables went inside and found two men with glasses of rum. The landlord quickly picked up the glasses and poured the rum down the sink, but it didn't do any good. He was fined five shillings, plus costs!

The photograph was taken about 1909.



Rupert

There was a time when you knew what was what. Looking in my battered and vomit-stained 1975 edition of the toppers' vademecum, I see that there were 87 brewing companies, 150 breweries and 6 homebrew taverns then. You couldn't get Drabs outside Grotley or Boringsods in Smokeley. Things was stable in them days. Now you get bloody lasagne and chilli con carne on every half-timbered twee tavern fayre menu you come across. And the same's happened to beer. In half the anorak/scratchers' haunts favoured by the ageing and fattening bearded tendency, you're assaulted by an array of wickets serving amber nectars from a choice of 1,000 brews from 300 breweries. They've all got barny names and half of them are rotten, but you don't usually know which until you've bought them.

This is all the fault of the Beer Orders, which let big boys' tenants sell guest ales, so everyone jumped on the bandwagon. Now, at last, Johnny Foreigner's going to knock it on the head. The guest beer can now be anything, so look out for fonts of O'Smooths and Framboise everywhere you go. I'm not altogether in favour of alien ales taking over. My belief is, if you want to eat sauerkraut and drink Lambic beers, you can fly to Dagoland. But, if it gets rid of this daft proliferation of toy brewery wares with puerile titles,

then so much the better. Choice is a chimera if there is not perfect information. The Big Two will be able to satisfy our needs without any need for the Government to interfere in the operation of the Free Market.

Hattie Nightingale, when not unwell through drink, does a grand job in recruiting dynamic campaign members to the Slumley branch. How sad it is that her efforts should be brought to nought by the antics of a few whose unseemly conduct and barbed remarks cause keen greenhorns to resign the Slumley whip and go elsewhere. Where that elsewhere is remains a mystery, but gone they have. Spies in Smarmford & Slutch and Scrotton have not spotted them, but then, they could have been missed among the teeming scores of attendees. News reaches us of a frot group touring amber nectar shows called Trev Duke and the Jordanares. Could this be the refuge of those auto-rejectees?



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Sept 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Swan, Dobcross

Tues 17 Sept 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Grey Horse, Oldham Road, Failsworth

Fri 20 Sept 8.30pm, Social Evening, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale. Members who went on the trip to Antwerp are invited to bring along their photographs for the slide show. All welcome.

Sat 21 Sept 12 noon, Bury Beer Festival Meeting, Tap & Spile, Bury Centre

Thur 26 Sept 8.30pm, Whats Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Sat 28 Sept, Rail Trip on Wigan Line. 10.27 from Rochdale, 10.42 from Oldham Mumps, 11.00 from Manchester Victoria. See Branch Contact for details.

Tues 1 Oct 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Welcome, Whitefield

Wed 2 Oct, Campaigning Crawl of Royton. Meet 8pm Railway; 9pm Dog & Partridge

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

Trafford & Hulme

Thurs 5 Sept 8pm, Pack Horse, Deansgate, followed by City Road Inn, Britons Protection, Peveril, Vine and City Arms.

Thur 12 Sept 8pm, Railway, Hale, followed by Tatton, Bakers Vaults, Grapes and Malt Shovels

Wed 25 Sept 7pm, Hydes Brewery Presentation

Thur 26 Sept 8pm, Gardeners Arms, Timperley, followed by Hare & Hounds, Stonemasons and Quarry Bank

Thur 3 Oct 8pm, Peveril of the Peak, City Centre, followed by Britons Protection

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

North Manchester

Wed 4 Sept, Altrincham Crawl. Bakers Arms, Pownall Road, 7.30; Orange Tree, Old Market Place, 8.30; Malt Shovels, Stamford Street, 9.30.

Wed 11 Sept 8pm, Regional Meeting, Sportsman, Mottram Road, Hyde

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

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

Wed 25 Sept 7pm, Quality Ale Threat. Award presentation at Hydes Brewery in conjunction with Stockport & South Manchester branch

Wed 2 Oct, New Members Crawl. Moon under Water, Deansgate, 7pm; Crown & Anchor, Cateaton Street, 8pm; Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, 9pm; Beer House to finish

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)

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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Bitter & Landlord - weekly guest beers**

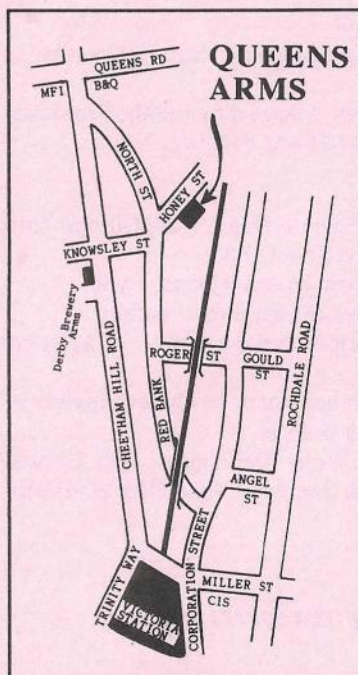


Westons Traditional Cider on handpump

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

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

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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*