

25p

What's Doing

APRIL 1997



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

TETLEY PUBS SALE

Got a few grand to spare? Fancy a pub? Well, squire, Allied Domecq may be able to help you there. The estate agents' brochure, 'Disposals 97', contains details of 69 ex-Tetley pubs which are now surplus to the company's requirements. The pubs range from the big and expensive (around £395,000 for the Fforde Grene in Leeds) to the more basic (£30,000 for the Bull near Liverpool Docks).



In Greater Manchester, the most expensive is the Ellesmere in Walkden (offers around £200,000), whilst readers of more modest means could snap up the Chequered Flag in Hulme for £60,000. The Greater Manchester pubs in 'Disposals 97' are:

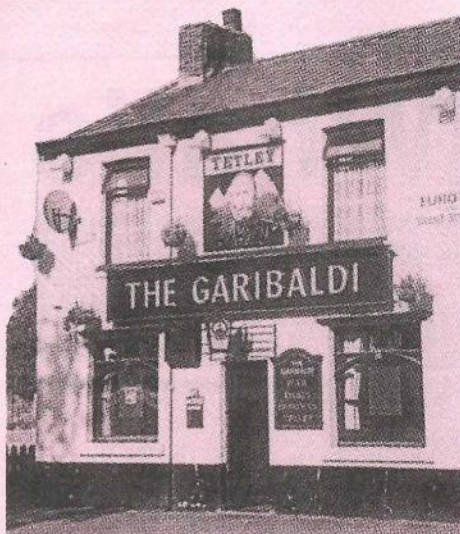
Albion, Manchester Road East, Little Hulton

Bee Hive, Rake Lane, Clifton

Black Bull, Hardybutts Lane, Wigan

Brewery Inn, Brewery La, Leigh

Charlestown, Charlestown Road, Blackley



Chequered Flag, Boundary Lane, Hulme

Cock & Bull, Stockport Road, Ardwick

Ellesmere, Walkden Rd, Walkden

Garibaldi, Lees Street, Gorton

Hope & Anchor, Chorley Old Road, Bolton

Junction, Bury New Road, Whitefield

Lord Nelson, Bridge St, Hindley

Park Hotel, Bridgeman St, Bolton

Railway, Leigh Road, Hindley Green

Red Lion, Church Street, Atherton

Sally Up Steps, Chorley Old Road, Bolton

Silverwell, Darlington Street East, Wigan

Station Hotel, Bolton Road, Pendlebury

2,000 minus 1,000

Readers who need a reason for a celebration may care to note that Saturday 5th April is exactly 1,000 days from the end of the millennium.

Wetherspoons win

J D Wetherspoon have won their planning appeal against Rochdale MBC and now have permission to convert the former Woolworths and Kwik Save premises in Middleton into a pub.

But there is one more obstacle - they still need a licence!

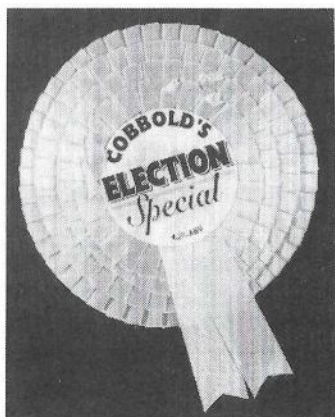
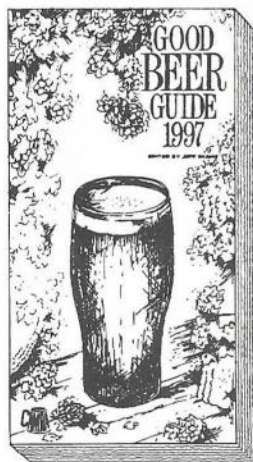
Gutted

Ken Birch, whose ventures in the licensed trade include the Marble Arch and the Crown in Stockport, is now providing a range of culinary delights at the Kings Arms on Bloom Street in Salford. The official opening of The Beer Gut Kitchen on 3rd March provided invited guests with samples of the fare on offer and the quality was excellent. We can particularly recommend the real ale pie. Prices seem keen and the Beer Gut promises value for money.

Bland Beer Guide?

There is a growing body of opinion in CAMRA that the Good Beer Guide isn't as good as it should be. Basically, it's too big. Too many pubs selling decidedly iffy beer get included to make up the numbers.

Maybe a slimmer volume would be better - a guide to the beery Premier Division - and all the other real ale pubs could be publicised in local guides. The proposal is to reduce the number of entries by 10% for the 1999 Good Beer Guide and reduce the entries by a further 10% for GBG 2000.



Election Special

In case you hadn't heard, there's going to be a general election next month and the first brewer off the mark with a special election beer was Tolly Cobbold. 'Election Special' is a 4.2% 'rich, golden special cask bitter' according to the press handout.

The 'pump clip' is a rosette, available in a choice of colours - blue, red, yellow or multi-coloured.

A DOUBLE EVENT

A two venue beer festival linked by a railway theme.

Held at the original Victorian Buffet Bar and The Station, Ashton-under-Lyne. A plethora of fine ales will be on offer including



specials and new brews.



*See you
There and
There*



OPEN ALL DAY

HOMEMADE FOOD

FESTIVAL GLASSES

ENTERTAINMENT

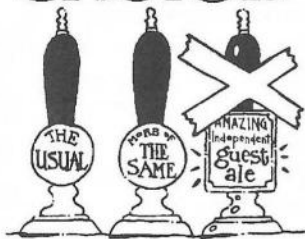
OVER 100 REAL ALES
FRI 2nd MAY - MON 5th MAY

Guest Beer Law stays

CAMRA has been successful in fighting off the European Commission's challenge to the guest beer law, which gives tenants of national brewers the right to buy one draught cask conditioned beer from a supplier of their choice.

In August the Commission announced that it would take action against the law, claiming that it discriminated against imports. But allowing the guest beer to be any type of beer would have resulted in a few well known lagers swamping the market; small brewers would have lost business and there would have been less choice in thousands of pubs.

BRUSSELS THREATENS REAL ALE CHOICE



Fortunately CAMRA was able to demonstrate that a wide variety of beers across Europe qualified under the British guest beer law and, after agreeing to some relatively minor amendments to the legislation which will actually improve consumer choice, the Commission has backed off.

The Government proposes to extend the guest beer provision to allow tenants to sell a bottle-conditioned beer as well as a cask beer. This will offer British and Continental brewers of speciality beers new markets for their products, and it will stimulate the production of these beers in the UK.

Fringe Bar

Prices at the Fringe Bar (WD last March) on Swan Street, Manchester, were increased last month, but the Hoegaarden Witbier is still good value and selling well at £1.50. There is a promise of draught Kriek in the future, together with a host of continental beers.

The Fringe does have a 'continental' feel about it and the bar can be an oasis of tranquillity away from the noisy Oldham Street bars. Marstons Pedigree has joined Whitbread IPA on handpump.

Snacks, including a cheese kebab (three cheeses served with pitta bread!) are served until 8pm and the bar is now open all day every day.

New pub

Greenalls plan to convert 63 Richmond Street in Manchester city centre into a pub. The premises are behind the New Union.

Lees Corner

Bernie Jackson

First, news of several licensees leaving their pubs. Steve and Sharon are moving from the Lancashire Fold at Alkington (a GBG listed pub) and are to be replaced by Phil and Julie Warrington from the Rose of Lancaster at Chadderton. Another GBG listed pub will lose its long serving licensees when Jim Schofield leaves the Puckersley in Royton later this year.

Nearer the brewery, the Carters are to leave the Firwood Tavern (*right*) in Middleton Junction. The brewery say there are plenty of people waiting in the wings to take over the good pubs, but some of the more marginal ones are proving difficult to let and there are already several being run by an agency.



At the brewery, a new cask elevator from cellar to loading bay has been installed but unfortunately there are teething problems (anyone remember seeing or *hearing* the old one?). Owing to increased demand another new fermenting vessel is being installed: you may be drinking its produce as you read this. Lees' Passport Trail is proving to be popular, with one person having already completed all 152 pubs listed.

Other news from the brewery is that Christopher Lees-Jones has taken over as Chairman of the North West Brewers and Licensed Retailers' Association.

The March edition of WD reported that the Assheton Arms in Middleton is to be extended. The brewery do own the property next door (the old bank) and say that they are looking at the possibility of extending, but no decision has yet been made. The Royal George at Greenfield, opened some three months ago, is reported to be trading very well.

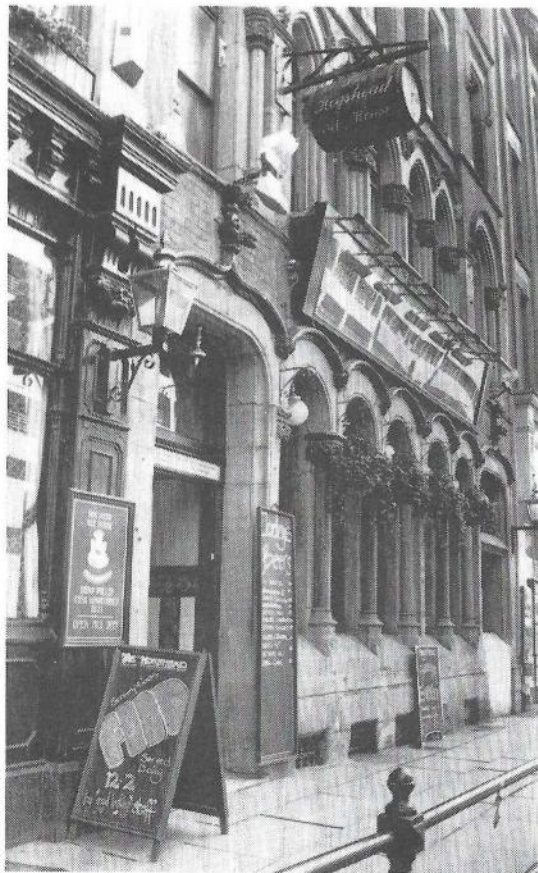
The Roger Hall Surprise Crawl

Pete Cash

On 5th March (Roger's birthday) we entered the **Old Monkey** on Portland Street for the start of what had been conceived as a mystery tour, but for which Roger had issued a route a few days earlier.

The first surprise was how empty the downstairs was at 7.15pm. We found our party upstairs, along with a couple of other groups of discerning drinkers. We enjoyed our Holts bitter.

Next to the **Circus**. No surprises here; the Tetley bitter was up to its usual standard and the pub unchanged. I would have been surprised at the reappearance of Hydes Dark Mild at the **Grey Horse** up the road, but for the fact that we had already sampled this excellent beer some four weeks earlier.



The next surprise was an unwelcome one. At the **Waldorf** on Gore Street, the only real ale on offer was the ubiquitous Boddingtons bitter; all the other pump clips were turned inwards. We eschewed the Boddies and had a half of Draught Guinness. It is to be hoped that we had stumbled on a rare off-night, as I understand that the pub is a candidate for the Good Beer Guide.

We next joined the bulk of the party (who had missed out the Waldorf) at the excellent **Castle** on Oldham Street, where every real ale brewed by Robinsons can be found in fine form.

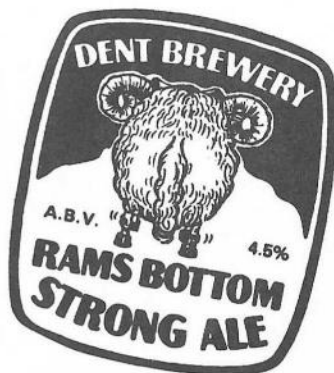
From the Castle to the much improved **Hogshead** (left) on High

Street. As reported last month, to coincide with the Five Nations Rugby Championship the pub is selling a special ale from each country (all 4-5%). Thus we have Sweet Chariot (Youngs), Flower of Scotland (Caledonian), Bread of Heaven (Brains), Molly Malone (Hilden) and Marseillaise (Deux Rivières). Several of our group tried the French brew (4.6%) and declared it OK but rather sweet.

There were no more surprises in store. The **Hare & Hounds** on Shudehill was as good as ever, with its Tetley beers and a guest. As was the **Beer House**, which should be specially commended for its Guest Mild policy; Taylors Dark was a welcome end to the evening, along with the birthday butties provided by Idy.

Beermat meet

The British Beermat Collectors' Society will be meeting at the Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham, at 12 noon on Saturday 26th April. New issues, auction, raffle (prizes for all), plus good food and good ale. All are welcome. After the meeting there will be a tour around the Manchester Beer Quarter.



John Willie's is best

A survey published in the middle of March named Lees bitter as the most popular bitter in Manchester. (Admittedly, the survey was carried out by Lees themselves.) 54% of bitter drinkers in Manchester told them that John Willie's was their favourite, and in the North West/North Wales region the beer was favourite again, with 28% of bitter drinkers opting for it, compared to 18% preferring Boddingtons.

This is a vast improvement on the survey taken two years ago, when Lees got only 20% in Manchester and 15% across the North West - coming 20 points behind Boddingtons.

No Hope

Another Oldham Road pub bites the dust. The Angel, built in the seventies to replace a much older pub, changed its name, hoping to change its image. However, it became known as the Dope Tavern, reflecting the habits rather than the intellect of its clientele. There aren't many pubs left to go now.

Wigan and district

Dave White

Further to my article in the February edition, the BOAR'S HEAD, Market Street, Leigh, reopened in early March as the FLITCH & FIRKIN. To be fair, the interior hasn't changed all that much, and the range of beers has increased. Dogbolter is to be had, and the remaining ales have names like 'Flitch', 'Porker' and 'Streaky'. (The local connection is, presumably, the butcher's shop on the corner of Church Street, long since closed.) At the back of the F & F is Shergar's nightclub, which has been disused for years. Any chance of a brewery?

There have been a few changes in Hindley, though not entirely for the better. Brewery conditioned mild has replaced cask in the ROYAL HOTEL, Castle Hill Road, leaving Theakstons bitter as the only real ale on sale there. Theakstons mild and bitter have succeeded Tetleys at the CUMBERLAND HOTEL, down Chapel Green Road, though John Smiths nitrokeg also graces the bar. Burtonwood Smooth has seen off the traditional mild at the ELLESMERE INN, Lancaster Road, and the quality of the cask bitter has suffered accordingly. On a happier note, Lees mild and bitter have appeared at the MINSTREL INN, Manchester Road, and the Greengate Brewery looks set to give this GBG-rated free house a refurbishment.

Lees bitter is also now available at the TIPPINGS ARMS, Poolstock Lane, Worsley Mesnes, alongside the well-kept Tetley bitter and dark mild. Further down the B5238 into Poolstock, the Vaux logo has replaced that of John Smiths outside the BEER ENGINE free house, although a number of guest beers remain.

News in brief: Tetley's RAMS HEAD, Bolton Road, Stubshaw Cross, is closed. Ashton-in-Makerfield is no longer the beer drinker's Mecca of yore... The inexorable advance of nitrokeg has reached the Supporters Club of Wigan Athletic FC. John Smiths Smooth 1, Ruddles Best 0.

Finally, many thanks to everyone who made the Tenth Wigan Beer Festival such a success. See you next year?

Anvil Tales

Anvil Special Smooth is now on sale in about half the Hydes estate and the brewery reports that it is being well received. This is the first 'bright' beer from Hydes for several years and it is seen as meeting a demand in the pubs as well as opening doors in the free trade.

Eccles News

The **Bargee** at Monton was closed at the beginning of March. The entrance at the right hand side of the pub had been bricked up, and builders' materials could be seen inside the main room.

This pub was bought by Banks's last year; previously it was a free house selling mainly Robinsons and Hartleys beers. Before that it was a licensed restaurant and even earlier there was a Scottish & Newcastle off-licence at the end of a terrace of cottages.

Further evidence of the Greene King purchase of Magic Pub Company has appeared at the **Jolly Carter**, Winton, where XX Dark Mild has joined the IPA on handpumps. The other real ale is Websters Green Label. Apart from the Castle in Manchester, is this the only pub in our region selling two traditional milds on a regular basis? The appearance of the XX has coincided with an expanded menu. There are about fifteen main dishes in the £4-£7 range, including 'Krazy Steaks' and three vegetarian options. Lunches are £2-£3.

News Flash

Not content with knocking the Bridgewater about, Greenalls want to put a neon sign up. Just the thing we need in a village like Worsley.

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

Holts in the free trade

The Volunteer in Darcy Lever, Bolton, one of the pubs acquired by Holts from Greenalls last year, is now owned by Greenwood Leisure. The pub still sells Holts bitter, as do the five others in the Greenwood chain. These are the Original British Queen on Blackburn Road, Bolton; House with no Name, Lee Gate, Harwood, Bolton; Jolly Wagoners, Manchester Old Road, Bury; Peel Hotel, Rochdale Road, Bury, and Bird in Hand, Manchester Road, Blackford Bridge, Bury.

Not so Grand

The Grand Hotel in Manchester is to be converted into apartments and a restaurant. The hotel has been in the closed and boarded category for some considerable time.

Greenalls and guests

Rationalisation of beer supply in the Greenalls Group means that all their licensees have, in theory, access to national brands, the Whitbread guest list, the Greenalls guest list (changed weekly and mainly micro brewers) and Tavern (88 beers changed every three months). This has reduced choice for some (Boddingtons Ale Houses, for example) and means that popular guest beers cannot be retained if they go off the list. Unfortunately not all licensees are being fully informed by their area managers of guest beer availability and have to push for what they want.

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: £3 for six months, £5.50 for twelve months. Send cheque/PO 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.

Contributors to this issue: Keith Egerton, Roger Hall, Paul Roberts, Stewart Revell, Alan Gardner, Pete Cash, Bernie Jackson, Roger Wood

COME TO THE ALL YEAR ROUND BEER FESTIVAL

THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester. 0161 839 7019

12 REAL ALES ON OFFER

including

**THWAITES BITTER,
THEAKSTONS XB and BEST BITTER,
MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH**

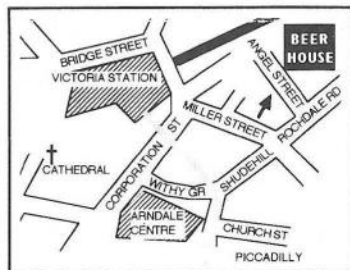
plus

**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**

- * 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 £2.70
- * Half price menus Monday lunch



OPEN ALL DAY MONDAY - SUNDAY

Darts

TWO TRADITIONAL CIDERS

ALWAYS AVAILABLE

GOOD FOOD - Vegetarians welcome

FREE PARTY ROOM AVAILABLE

Letters

Middleton

Sir - Let me congratulate you on the sheer professionalism and consistency of this publication, which is the best 25p's worth of local history and beer socio comment you can get. Well done, keep it up, don't change the design or spirit! Your November 1996 21st birthday special was a superlative success!

Now a couple of local issues regarding my own town of Middleton. Firstly, the area for the intended Wetherspoons is **not**, contrary to your March article on the subject, one in need of regeneration in the accepted sense, nor is it a 'shabby part of the town'. You would get an utterly wrong impression from such souped-up reportage. Next, even though I am assured that Wetherspoon outlets are well-run, I do not think we need a large-scale beer emporium in this small town centre - there are plenty of worthwhile pubs round about which would feel the impact severely, so I do not think the Council is being unenlightened in taking the cautious stance it is, despite the influence of local brewery interests which also rightfully come into the picture.

Paul Roberts, in his letter in the same issue, clearly does not know the town very well. I can think of several pubs in the centre of Middleton where a quiet pint can be enjoyed in pleasant surroundings, as he puts it. One such is the Joiners Arms (*below*) on Kemp Street, just behind the Middleton Archer pub, on the way to Archer Park. The OB ale is a superb pint of bitter and the Joiners is a lovely, snug pub in the unspoilt Peveril



of the Peak mould, with a traditional bar and rooms surrounding it, including a tidy tap room. On a Monday night there is an Irish-influenced band of quality singers and instrumentalists to entertain and give you atmosphere (and a **full** pub on a **Monday** night). The current licensees, Gary and Lesley Hoolickin, have made it a 'little gem'.

If there was a Wetherspoon emporium in all town centres, as Paul Roberts wants, then you would witness the demise

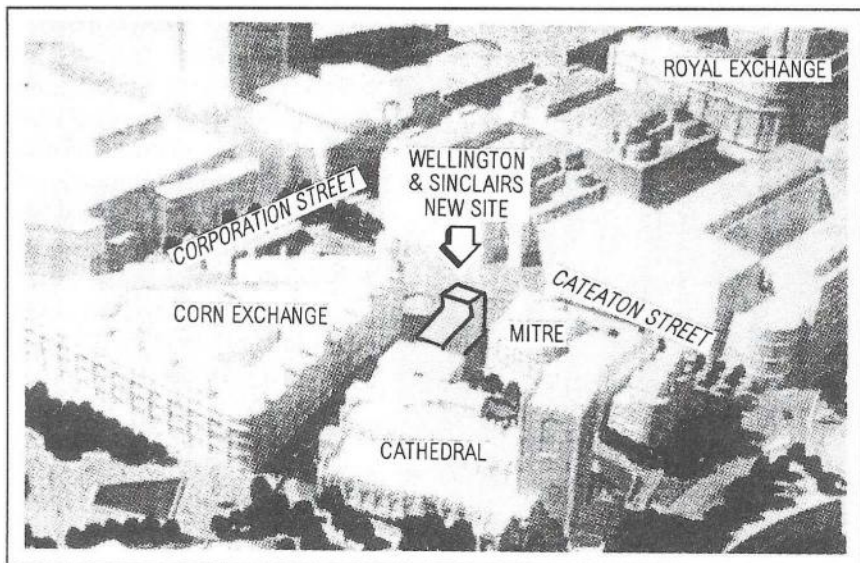
of many small, desirable, but borderline (economically) pubs in and around the town centres. Wetherspoons is OK for large cities, but not for town centres the size of Middleton's.

Mike D White

Moving the Shambles

Sir - I am sure we are all pleased to see the old Wellington Inn and Sinclairs open again, but some of us must be alarmed at the prospect of the planned moving of the property to the other side of Cateaton Street, between the Corn Exchange and the Mitre. (see below)

The proposed move got me thinking about the last great upheaval in the 1970s. The new sign on the Wellington wall tells us that the structure was raised 4ft 9in in 1974. So prior to 1970 drinkers in either downstairs bar would have St Mary's Gate at about head height.



However, the obviously pre-1970s photo (*opposite*) clearly shows that the Shambles and the Royal Exchange were originally on the same level.

Either something has happened here that I don't understand - or we have all been the victims of some gigantic hoax. Also, I have paced out the site between the Corn Exchange and the Mitre and guess what? It is approximately twenty feet too short to accommodate the Shambles.

Remember, during the last 'move' they cracked the Shambles and shut it for three years! The talk at the time was that the Council wanted the buildings knocked down, and not part of the 'New Square'.

The proposed move would mean turning the building through ninety degrees and carrying it north for more than a hundred yards at a drop of several feet.

Are we being told the truth? Or is this important part of our heritage to face a 'Tommy Ducks solution'? Your comments, please.

David Bell

Nose job

Sir - Why is The Parson's Nose deemed inappropriate as a proposed name for Worsley's new pub (WD March)? I know What's Doing is one of the strongholds of CAMRA's regrettably numerous old fogey tendency, but this is ridiculous.

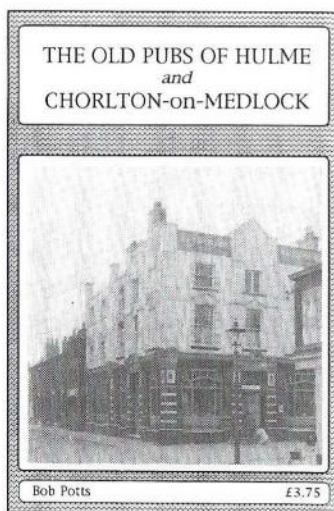
Rhys P Jones

New book

The Old Pubs of Hulme and Chorlton on Medlock

by Bob Potts. £3.75

'The Old Pubs of Hulme', Parts 1 and 2, and 'The Old Pubs of Chorlton on Medlock' were first published in 1983 and 1984. This is an edited and updated version, in one volume, containing additional information about the first pubs in the two townships and notes on many of Manchester's old breweries. There are listings of all known pubs (there were once over 850 of them) and the book is well illustrated with old photographs and maps.



CAMRA Membership gives:

- ✱ Monthly copies of *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's entertaining and highly-regarded newspaper.
- ✱ Discounts on CAMRA products and publications (including the best-selling *Good Beer Guide*).
- ✱ Advance warning of beer festivals throughout the U.K. and Europe - and discounts when you get there.
- ✱ An invitation to join CAMRA's activities such as brewery trips, meetings and socials.
- ✱ **ABOVE ALL**, you will belong to a flourishing and successful consumer movement which is acting as a champion for beer drinkers and pub users.

APPLICATION TO JOIN CAMRA

I/We wish to become members of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

Name(s)

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Signature.....Date.....

I/We enclose the remittance for:

Single £14 ☐ Joint £17 ☐ (at same address)

OAP Single £8 ☐ OAP Joint £11 ☐ (at same address)

Student/Unemployed/Disabled £8 ☐

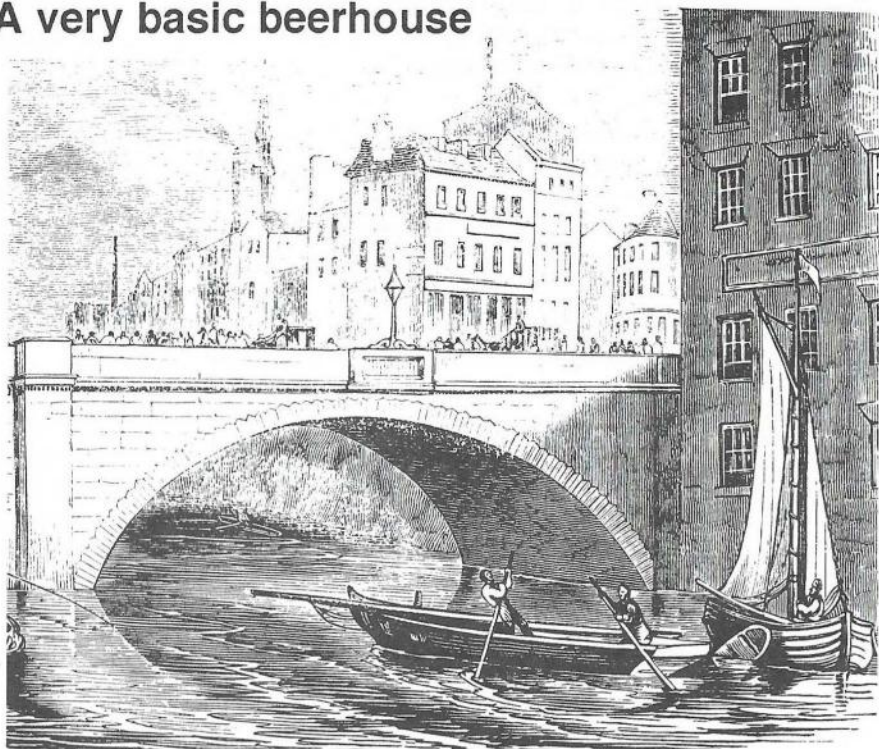
For Life and Overseas rates contact CAMRA HQ (01727 867201)

Send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Ltd) with this application form (or a photocopy) to:

The Membership Secretary,
CAMRA Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road
St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



A very basic beerhouse



This is the bridge over the Irwell which connects New Bailey Street, Salford, with Bridge Street, Manchester, viewed from where the Mark Addy pub is now. The drawing was made in 1844 - when Mark Addy himself were only a lad - and of interest is the row of shops in the three storey building on the other side of the bridge. There was nothing remarkable about the building, which was pulled down a year or two later to improve the approach to the bridge, but in 1840 the shop at the end, next to the bridge, achieved some notoriety.

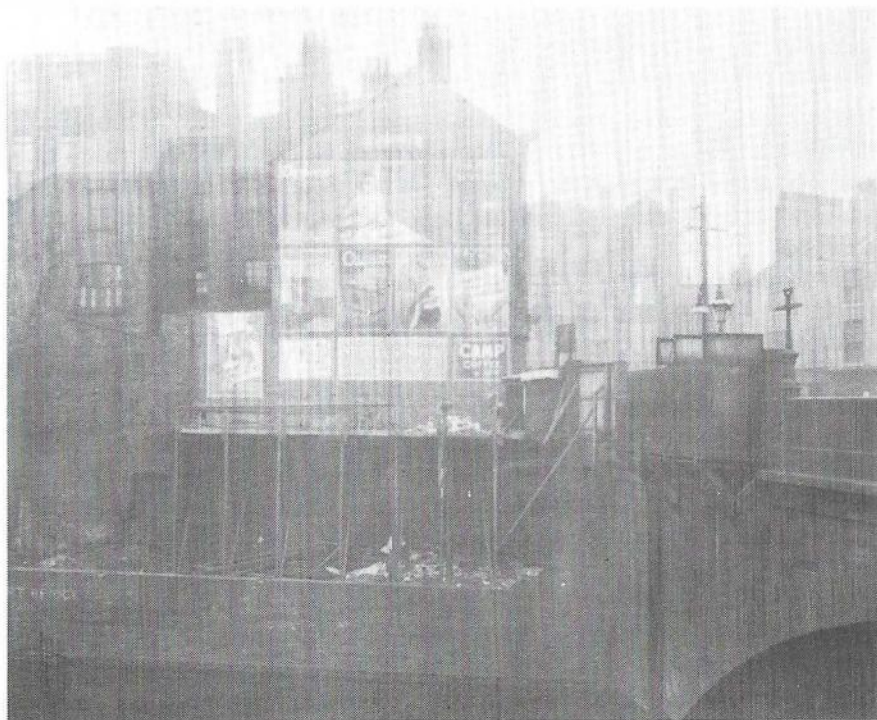
It was then a combined pork-butcher's shop and beerhouse. The shop was on the ground floor and the beerhouse part was a single room above the shop, furnished with a few benches and tables. Beerhouse licences were easy to get then. Some premises were fitted up on a par with the established public houses and stayed in business for many years; others, like this one, were rather basic and short-lived.

At the beginning of February 1840, neighbours and passers-by noticed the shop was no longer open, although dogs could be heard barking inside. There was no sign of the tenant, a man called Leigh, and as the weeks went by the place developed an unpleasant smell. Then the rumours started. It

was said that Mr Leigh, a man of low and intemperate habits, had murdered his wife and left the country. The police were informed and Superintendent Sawley was dispatched to investigate.

When he arrived at the shop there was quite a crowd outside, with more spectators on the Salford side of the river. The door was locked, so Mr Sawley and his helpers went round the back and down a steep passage to the cellars, which were almost at river level. They broke into the first cellar, where they found a pile of rubbish and a few pickling tubs, then climbed up to another cellar, still below street level, where they found Mr Leigh's pork butchering equipment. A second room, under the front of the shop, was his beer cellar and contained one nearly full barrel and a few empty ones.

Going upstairs again, they came to the shop and the remains of the butcher's stock of meat which had provided the dogs with a continuous feast for five weeks. In the window was an assortment of decomposing black puddings, sausages and pork pies. The dogs were persuaded to go down to the cellars as the explorers made their way to the drinking room. Here there were some glasses on a table, one of them half-full of beer, a broken clay pipe, but nothing more. Next to this room was a bedroom where the dogs had been sleeping and it was in a filthy state. The two bedrooms on the top



floor were worse, containing half-eaten bits of pork and bacon, taken up there by the dogs, and on one of the beds was the family cat with its head bitten off.

There were no signs of the butcher or his wife, but when the search party went back downstairs his brother turned up and the mystery was explained. It seems Mr Leigh, pork-seller and beer retailer, was also a failed horse dealer and he and his wife had left town in a hurry because they owed a number of people a lot of money.

What happened next isn't recorded, but it's probably safe to say that the dogs were given a drink of water (eating salty bacon for five weeks can give you quite a thirst) and it is most unlikely that the beer licence was renewed!

The photograph (*courtesy Salford Local History Library*) shows the site of the building in the 1960s. Just visible on the right is the George & Dragon, corner of Bridge Street and Gartside Street, a Wilsons pub which some readers may remember.

Reclaiming the territory

Following a momentous decision at a Regional Meeting, the North Manchester branch is to repossess those pubs which it ceded on loan to Trafford & Hulme some fifteen years ago. During its tenure, T&H has allowed cracking boozers like the Lord Clyde, the Wheatsheaf and the Haymarket to be knocked down, and premises like Wetherspoons, Sticky Fingers and Henrys to open. June 4th sees a survey of the territory between Deansgate and the Irwell, beginning at the Moon Under Water and ending at the White Lion.

AGM motions

For the outsider, CAMRA's Annual General Meeting is a pretty boring affair, with earnest stalwarts debating the minutiae of arcane topics. This year seems to be little different, with motions which smack of the obvious, such as keeping records of the conference and organising it properly, or telling off Robinsons for promoting Hartleys, which they shut.

Other motions make geeks and nerds seem mainstream. These vary from Red list compounds in brewery liquor, outlawing the imperial pint and dye crystals in drip trays, to checking out guest speakers and tinkering with the wording of internal policy documents. Riveting stuff, eh?

Meanwhile, active members are thin on the ground, brewers merge and pubs fall down. Has maturity brought bureaucracy and bollocks? Have we lost the zest for real campaigning?

Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupus

In the mid-eighties I started an occasional column which for various reasons never got beyond part three. After several enquiries over the years, I have been persuaded to exhume the feature and this time to see it through to completion. I shall start by considering the relative merits of grain and extract. Home brew 'kits' have improved considerably over this period, and I do not decry them for those taking their first nervous steps as brewers, but if you wish to progress beyond this stage, read on!

Part One: Grain or Extract?

Amongst home brewers and writers about home brew, one argument has long raged; whether beer made from freshly mashed grains is necessarily superior to that using malt extract, or even hopped malt extract (beer kits).



Restrictions on home brewing were removed in April 1963 and most literature is later than this. One of the earliest authors, H E Bravery, in 1965, spoke of 'making the very best of top-rate beers using grain malts'¹. However, many of his recipes use frighteningly high proportions of sugar, syrup, crystal and roasted malts. Some omit pale malt altogether and one wonders why he even bothers to mash his odd collections of ingredients.

Even earlier, in 1963, C J J Berry wrote, 'To make quality beers, it is true, one needs to use malt in its granular form, but malt extract has the overwhelming advantage of simplicity'². However, he gives some mashing recipes with decent proportions of pale malt.

The champion of extract beers was undoubtedly the late Ken Shales. In 1967 he stated, 'The full mashing process is messy and time-consuming'³. All his recipes use malt extract, but this is diastatic (with active enzymes) and he does usually include a short mashing period to convert the minor grain adjuncts used for flavour and colour variations.

In 1971, the same author said of 'grain' brewing, 'given the needful plant

and skills, good beer **can** be prepared this way⁴. He then likens the viability of mashing at home to growing bananas in Yorkshire (in the greenhouse). Of malt extract beer, 'it can be equal or superior to commercial brews'.

For many enthusiasts, the 'high priest' of grain beers was the late Dave Line. In his first book in 1974 he says that 'most of the criticisms of home brew can be traced back to the malt extract syrups used in the majority'⁵. Progression from extract to 'grain' beers is a natural path of evolution of home brewing. Dave was a member of CAMRA (South Hampshire branch) and understood not only the importance of correct brewing methods but correct serving methods, too.

Wilf Newsome, in 1978, wrote almost exclusively about grain beers⁶. With the simplified mashing techniques described by Dave Line, it was generally accepted that making grain beers at home was not difficult and was definitely worthwhile. Then Bob Pritchard, in a long series of articles in 'Winemaker' magazine, where he described both grain and extract beers, declared in November 1981, 'Mashers still decry extract brews and speak of the malt extract tang! I totally disagree with this and invariably make up any home brews with malt extract'.

References:

- 1 *Home Brewing Without Failures* by H E Bravery. Max Parrish, London
- 2 *Home Brewed Beers & Stouts* by CJJ Berry, Amateur Winemaker, Andover
- 3 *Brewing Better Beers* by Ken Shales, Amateur Winemaker
- 4 *Advanced Home Brewing* by Ken Shales, Amateur Winemaker
- 5 *The Big Book of Brewing* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker
- 6 *The Happy Brewer* by Wilf Newsome, Amateur Winemaker
- 7 *All About Beer and Home Brewing* by Bob Pritchard, Argus Books, Hemel Hempstead.

These and other ideas concerning the use of CO₂, were condensed into a book⁷ and led to an exchange of heated correspondence, with, amongst others, Tony Millns of CAMRA.

My own preference, after early experiments with extract, is strongly for mashed, grain beers and it is with these that I shall be mainly concerned in future articles.

Noonbounce

Bottom Yates's on Oldham Street, known as Merchants for the last few years, now glories in the name of Squizzy Taylors. In its attempt to move upmarket, which wouldn't really be difficult, door staff are employed on weekday lunchtimes to ensure that former customers don't stagger in accidentally under a meths-induced haze. Where will they go now? Answers on a postcard, please.

Rupert

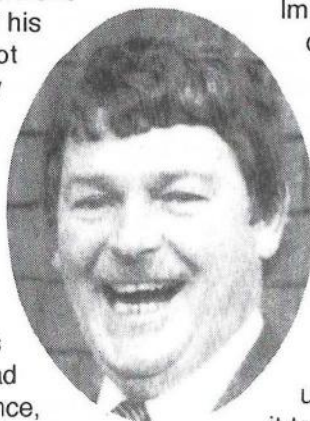
I'm delighted to see that good sense has not left Grotley. To enliven the beanfeast debates, Grotley members have inserted some gems. Duke wants to stop genetic manipulation of yeast so we won't get a beer with two heads (© Hass Brickie 1997). He also wants to stop oestrogen going into our water supply. Apparently this gives you a full head of hair and pendulous breasts. Let us hope that Duke lives to see the fruits of his labours and is not snatched prematurely by a smoking-related disease.

Campaign stalwarts seem to be seeking employment in most novel ways. I was avidly reading the back copies of Teenthrob which had piled up in my absence, when I spotted Monkeyhanger Starsky. He was in one of those strip-stills stances and appeared totally out of character as a drug baron. How bizarre. Can we look forward to others following in his footsteps? There probably aren't too many rôles for hopeless pissheads, but other categories of character which may feature spring to mind - ageing Lothario, child abuser, male bimbo, fashion icon and flasher - any takers?

I was delighted to see an impressive line up of local Campaign glitterati at the opening of Ben Chestnut's

latest gastronomic venture. Billy Cosh, Charlie Super, Royal Hall, Tubs Caries and Trev All rubbed shoulders with real world salaried hacks at this début megascoff. Given Ben's track record, it should go on for ever.

Notable by his absence was our exile in Scousely, Jamie Frotter. What a delight it is to see him on any occasion! He's busy writing Swigging in Scousely all by himself since the sad demise of the Scousely Imbiber, started back in the dark ages by lexibabble Bogbrush. This estimable endeavour keeps Jamie out of Grotley and in Scousely with the lovely Red Max and Seamus Spud. Nonetheless, Jamie, through a third party, has given me to understand that he wishes it to be widely known that he is completely free of any sexually transmitted diseases. How few of us with confidence can say that?



The mental tests carried out at the same time were inconclusive and need to be readministered. Jamie will no doubt in the fullness of time be able to confirm that he is also completely free of any psychotic, neurotic or personality disorder. This will come as no surprise to those of us who have fond memories of a Baden Powell doppelgänger being mugged at a bus stop in Slumley.

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 1 April 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Woodthorpe, Prestwich

Fri 4 to Sun 6 April, OLDHAM BEER FESTIVAL, Werneth Park Music Rooms, Frederick Street, Oldham

Tues 15 April 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, New Grove, Whitefield

Tues 29 April, Whats Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale.

Weds 30 April, trip to Hydes Brewery. Social Sec has details.

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

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 3 April, Chorlton survey. 8pm The Bar, Wilbraham Road, followed by the Spread Eagle, then on to the Trevor and the Beech on Beech Rd

Thur 10 April 8pm, Melville, Barton Road, Stretford, then on to Manor Hey and Lord Nelson.

Thur 17 April 8pm, Junction, Rolls Crescent, Hulme, probably followed by survey of closed and demolished pubs!

Thur 24 April 8pm, Tatton, Tipping Street, Altrincham, followed by: 8.45 Bakers Arms, 9.30 Faulknors and 10.15 Malt Shovels.

Thur 1 May. Bigger the election - Roger's Birthday Crawl. 7pm Bulls Head, Wicker Lane, Hale Barns. Later Well Green and Broomwood. Finish Timperley village.

Thur 8 May 8pm, Railway, Irlam Road, Flixton, followed by Church Inn, Flixton, Windmill (Carrington) and Railway (Broadheath).

Contact: Roger Wood 0161 747 3987

North Manchester

Wed 2 April, Patricroft Crawl. Grapes, Liverpool Road, 7pm. Red Lion, George Street, 8pm; White Lion, Liverpool Road, 9.30.

Wed 9 April, Committee & Social. Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, 7pm; Pot of Beer, New Mount Street, 8.30

Wed 16 April 8pm, Branch Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill.

Wed 23 April. Salford crawl & survey. Braziers, Hodson Street, 7pm. Finishing around Eagle, Collier Street, 9.30pm.

Tues 29 April, What's Doing collation: Queens Arms, Honey Street, 6pm onward.

Wed 30 April, Salford crawl & survey part 2. Olde Nelson, Chapel Street, 7pm; Dock & Pulpit, Encombe Place, 8pm; Hyde Park Corner, Silk Street, 9pm.

Wed 7 May, Monton crawl. Park, Monton Road, 7pm; Bargee, Parrin Lane, 8.30; Queens, Green Lane, 9.30.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

National Prices Survey

Local CAMRA branches are currently surveying a range of pubs in the North West for prices of beers, lagers, ciders and stouts. The nationwide survey covers rural, urban and city pubs which are managed, tenanted, leased or free houses. It will compare prices of independent and national brewers' beers and analyse trends between real ale prices, keg, nitrokeg, lager and stout. In the past, Greater Manchester, with its small independent brewers, has shown best value for money. Will this still be the case? We shall see in June, when the results are published.

Dave and Sue 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 Landlord
& Best Bitter - Bantam Bitter £1 a pint
plus weekly guest beers**

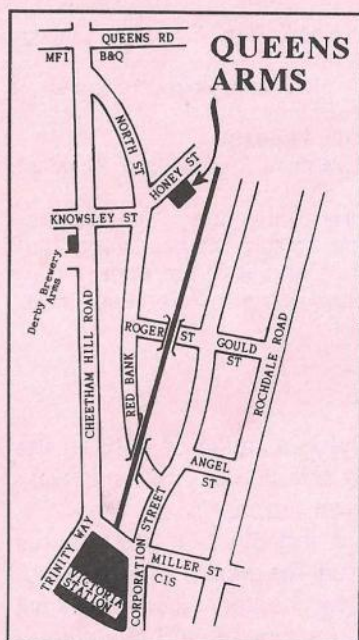


Westons Traditional Cider on handpump

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

Hot and cold food available until early 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.

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*