

25p

# What's Doing

MAY 1997



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## MANCHESTER'S BREWPUBS

Two 'Firkin' pubs opened in Manchester recently. The former Flea & Firkin on Grosvenor Street has been spruced up to become the Footage & Firkin (*below*). The upstairs balcony is now open at weekends and for functions, and new brewing equipment has been installed and put into production. Equipment and expertise have been supplied by Brendan Dobbin, we understand. The beers are Flicks (3.5%), Footage (4.3%), Osc'Ale (5%) and Dogbolter (5.6%).

The Footage is supplying the town's other Firkin - the Forgery & Firkin (formerly the Bank) on Mosley Street. Readers who recall the Bank will know it was a fairly flashy affair that didn't quite work. It is much improved with its new image, despite all the Firkin-this and Firkin-that nonsense. Beers are the same as at the Footage, with variations in the names - thus we have Genu-Inn, Forgery, Replica and Dogbolter. There has also been a seasonal beer called Imitation, flavoured with spices. The Forgery & Firkin





is a nice addition to the city drinking scene and should do well. It also has the first giant Jenga and Connect-4 games in the city!

Across town at the Marble Arch, work continues on the installation of the micro-brewery. The back room has been subdivided, the old bar removed and the room redecorated in a very pleasant style. The fermenting vessels will now be sited in the cellar, separate from the other brewing equipment. Owner Vance de Bechevel reckons the first brews may be ready by June.

Meanwhile, over at the upmarket Mash & Air, brewer Paul Home is running Saturday guided tours of the brewery combined with a lunch. Details of the Mash Brewers' Lunches and tours are available by phoning 0161 661 6161.

As well as the three house beers, Mash, Peach and Blackcurrant Porter, Paul also brews for the company's sister restaurant, the Atlantic Bar and Grill in London. Demand has reached such a level that he is now brewing three days a week. Maybe they will soon be ready to start serving the beers in cask conditioned form?

## **Ancoats roundup**

*Mark McConachie has been on a tour of Ancoats' lesser visited pubs and uncovered the following...*

The River, formerly a Burtonwood house selling Boddies, has now gone keg - the only beer is nitro Boddies. The large fish tank has gone, too. Up the road on Pollard Street, the Bank of England (ex Whitbread) has gone over to nitrokeg following its purchase by the owner of the nearby Ale House on Old Mill Street. Despite the presence of a Tetley handpull, on asking for a pint you are offered John Smiths Smooth.

Further down Pollard Street is the Auld Lang Syne (Mayfair Taverns). This too offers nitrokeg instead of the advertised handpulled Tetley. All three of these pubs had previously sold cask beer with varying degrees of success - the Bank of England sold Chesters mild and Boddies at one time.

On nearby Every Street the Cheshire Cheese has changed hands yet again. The other Cheshire Cheese, on Oldham Road, has been painted externally and the 'For Sale' sign has gone.

The above changes really do emphasise the shifting nature of today's pubs. But if you want to have a decent drink in a great pub in Ancoats, try the Mitchell Arms on Every Street. The Banks's mild and bitter on electric meters are excellent and a warm welcome is always assured.

Now a word of advice for those doing the J W Lees 'Passport'. The Britannia on Rowsley Street, up Ashton New Road in nearby Beswick, may not be open for very much longer. The licensee is only temporary and current trading levels may lead to another change or the pub closing altogether. Get your card stamped while you can!

## Lees Corner

*Bernie Jackson*

As reported in the March edition of WD, another new fermenting vessel has been commissioned in the brewery. The original brewhouse had ten round fermenting vessels made out of oak and of these, three remain. The others have been replaced by five square, stainless steel ones, the latest being a completely covered one. It is thought that just one of the wooden vessels will be kept as an historical artefact.

On to the beers that the vessels will be producing. I can confirm that Lees are to brew a beer for Whitbread's Hogshead chain in the summer - a 4.6% premium bitter called Scorcher. However, when asked about the rumour that the brewery is to start producing a series of seasonal ales for their own estate, a spokesman commented that he was 'In no position to deny this!' I look forward to drinking these, which are expected to be quarterly, starting in June.

## Monton update

The canalside Bargee has been transformed and reopened as the Barge Inn (Banks's). The exterior has been finished in a pale cream pebbledash and there are window boxes and hanging baskets on the front walls. Flower beds have been replanted and around the outside are several distinct drinking areas. Round the left side of the building is a fenced-off children's play area and a grassed area with four bench tables for mums and dads. Between this and the canal is another lawn with benches and umbrellas, whilst in front of the pub a slatted wooden floor has been laid, supporting more bench tables.

Inside and to the right, there is a carpeted area and a wood-floored room separated by an island fireplace. At the back of these, the bar is much as it was before. On the other side of the front door is a stone-flagged space and another carpeted room on the far left. Throughout the pub the walls are in stained pine, topped with beige plaster which has the odd gap to expose erratic brickwork.

On the drink front, the 'Banks's' (formerly known as Mild) had not been selling well and has been dropped. However, the number of cask ales has been increased. Six handpumps serve Banks's Bitter (139p), Camerons Strongarm (150p) and Marstons Pedigree (163p). Food is served 12-2 and 5-8 (12-4 weekends) from an extensive menu. The pub is open 12-11 and 12-10.30 Sundays.

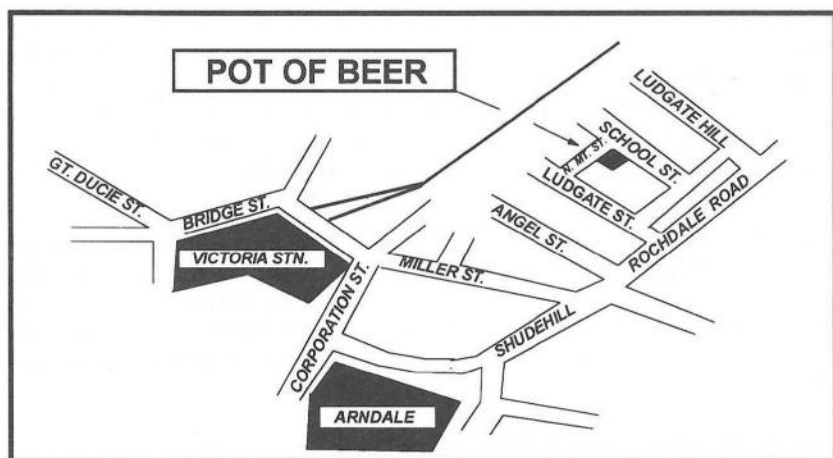
## 1997 World Beer Championships

The fourth World Beer Championships, conducted by the Beverage Testing Institute of Chicago, have given awards to Sam Smiths for their bottled export range. Oatmeal Stout scored 99% and won a Platinum medal, as did the Taddy Porter. The Old Brewery Pale Ale got 90% and a Gold. Traquair House Ale scored 97% and won a Platinum for the World Champion Scotch Ale. Once again Aying, of the village of the same name south of Munich, swept the board with seven beers over 90 points. Lindemans won medals for their lambic range.

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## **A tour of the South East Inner City**

*Roger Hall*

Rhys P Jones had risen to the challenge of providing a pub crawl of inner city pubs within easy walking distance. The date was March 26th and we were to start at the Seven Stars in Beswick.

We got off the bus at the Beer House and walked down Cable Street to emerge at New Cross next to what used to be the St Vincent. Across the road was the boarded Crown & Kettle, one of Manchester's most spectacular pubs in its heyday. The closure of Express Newspapers dealt the final blow to one of the last remaining Victorian gin palaces. As we walked down Ancoats Lane, I reflected on the pubs we'd known in this part of Ancoats. The Edinburgh Castle was still open, but the Church, the Jersey Lily, the Hammer (Smiths Arms), the O'Connell Arms, the Nelson and the Green Dragon have all closed. The burned-out shell of the Green Dragon can still be seen down Jersey Street. Across the road the oddly renamed Ancoates stands derelict.

It was still some time before 7.00pm and the Cotton Tree and the Dancing Weasel were not yet open. We crossed the Rochdale Canal and looked for the charred remnants of the Cob o'Coal, but this was hidden behind the wriggly tin of Toys 'R' Us. The White House, dating from the reign of George III, is now the last pub on Ancoats Lane. The Rose & Crown and the Crown & Sceptre (*below*) have both gone. Up Pollard Street you can still see the Auld Lang Syne, but the Fire Brigade next door has vanished. In 1974, when the North Manchester CAMRA pub crawls began, this was a cider-only house which Rhys would have treasured. On the other side of Ancoats Lane, tucked away among the warehouses, the Moulders Arms survives.

From the Audi showroom on the corner of Every Street you can see the River on Palmerston Street. This and the Cheshire Cheese are the only pubs remaining from a cluster of seven, twenty years or so ago. The Spread Eagle, the two Groves, the Pineapple and the Palmerston have all disappeared. Further away, the Falcon has also gone.

There used to be a pub called the Bridge hanging over the Medlock where you cross from North Manchester to South. It's long since gone, together with the Blue Bell on Pin Mill Brow.

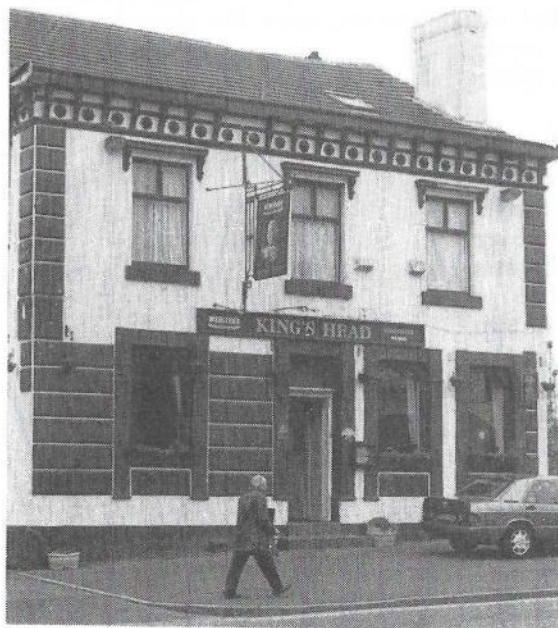


You'd be hard pressed to get a pub crawl together on the north side of Great Ancoats Street, with only ten pubs in the block bounded by Oldham Road, Butler Street and the Medlock. Twenty years ago the area offered three or four distinct crawls.

Our starting point, the Seven Stars, was once the fifth pub on Ashton Old Road. It's now the first. The George & Dragon, the Shakespeare, the Old House at Home and the General Birch have all closed. The last to go, the Old House (*right*), is now a car rental office. Despite Holts' best efforts to turn it into a featureless barn, the Seven Stars is nonetheless popular and serves a good pint of mild and bitter. The pubs between Ashton Old Road and the river, including the Commercial Inn, the Viaduct Inn and the Blacksmiths Arms have all been demolished.



The Kings Head (*below*) was once one of four pubs on Chancellor Lane. The Swan, the Crown Hotel and the Wellington Inn are but memories. In what



was a warren of streets opposite the Kings there were once four pubs - the Britannia, the White Lion, the Midland Hotel and the Steam Engine Tavern. The area was also home to Chesters Ardwick Brewery. The last of the pubs, the Steam Engine Tavern, was destroyed by a mysterious fire about ten years ago.

Behind the railway, between the Mancunian Way and Ardwick Green, three pubs remain from the eight which were there thirty years ago. The Rifleman, the Albion,



the Queens Arms, the Grove and the Imperial have gone; the Union, the Park (*below*) and the Church remain. The Union and the Park are both excellent little pubs serving good quality Burtonwood bitter. Both pubs were, sadly, almost empty, as was the nearby Church. Twenty years ago the Church was one of my favourite pubs. It had about five small rooms, each with its own particular character. Since Grand Met's internal demolition job in the 1980s, that's no longer true. Along with the character, the customers seem to have gone as well. The pub was empty at nine o'clock and only Boddingtons bitter was on sale.

Across the road, the George & Dragon was more crowded. Perhaps Holts at £1.20, dear for Holts, but nevertheless cheap, helped. Some of the customers seemed to have taken something more potent than beer, though.

A quick trip to the Cleveland in a field off Brunswick Street revealed the pub to be closed and up for sale. A walk through the housing estate brought us to the wonderfully unspoilt Mawson, a cracking local with three rooms and a lobby, serving tip-top Tetleys mild and bitter to customers of all ages.

Bob Potts records some 325 pubs in his book on the pubs of Chorlton-on-Medlock. He lists 17 still extant in 1984. Three of these have been lost since, two in the area between the George & Dragon and the Mawson. The Sherwood was knocked down some years ago and the Kings Arms (ex-Dobbin's brewery) stands closed and vandalised.

Seven of us had started the crawl; six of us completed it. A pretty poor turnout for an interesting tour. And perhaps that's where the problem lies. Few people find it worthwhile to visit such inner city pubs. With the exception of the George & Dragon and the Mawson, most of the pubs were very quiet. This was not just a feature of the time we visited but a reflection



of their catchment areas. We walked about a mile and three-quarters and these were the only pubs anywhere near our route. We've lost dozens of pubs over the years and the rate of attrition shows no signs of slowing down. I can't see more than four or five of the pubs we visited surviving the century.

Our thanks go to Rhys for this crawl of living social history - it's the sort of crawl we won't be able to do in a few years' time. If locals don't use their pubs and CAMRA's 50,200 members can't be prised from their armchairs, what chance is there now for the inner city pub?

# A DOUBLE EVENT

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## Wigan and district

Dave White

It is fifteen years since I first submitted pub news to *What's Doing*. My two-liner in the May 1982 issue concerned the beer at the HORSESHOE on the corner of Millgate. This Burtonwood house was closed and demolished a couple of years later - along with several other good pubs - in the wake of town centre development.

So much for the history lesson. A Tetley pub which closed around the same time as the Horseshoe was the ODDFELLOWS, Manchester Road, Higher Ince (*below*), but the building has only just been pulled down. A pity, as there are a lot of new houses going up in the Rose Bridge area of Ince, and the watering holes around here are grim, to say the least. On the other side of the village, the ROCK FERRY, Warrington Road (Vaux) has gone over to keg, leaving the nearby WHITE SWAN as the only pub in Lower Ince selling cask conditioned ale (Tetley and Stones bitter).



Not far from Lower Ince is the stretch of the A58 which leads into Ashton-in-Makerfield. The desperation stakes are pretty high here too, with the BAMFURLONG HOTEL, Lily Lane, Bamfurlong (Tetley) and the CROSS KEYS, Golborne Road, Stubshaw Cross (Burtonwood) both on the fizz. These pubs gave the impression that they would have difficulty raising a darts team between them, on a recent Saturday night visit. Betwixt the two, the RAMS HEAD remains closed and up for sale (WD April).

In the centre of Ashton, the Ashtonian Club on Bolton Road has been renamed JOE'S PLACE. Banks's bitter and mild remain on freeflow, but the latter brew has to compete with nitrokeg, and the Cameron's Strongarm looked and tasted like Banks's bitter when I went in. The situation is little better in nearby Landgate; traditional Burtonwood mild has disappeared from the PARK HOTEL, the GOLDEN BALL (Greenalls) is closed, and the only handpump at the CRANBERRY HOTEL - for Tetley Dark - was defunct when your roving reporter called by last month. All three pubs are on Wigan Road.

The MILLSTONE, Wigan Lane, Swinley, reopened last month, after closing just before Christmas. Thwaites mild and bitter remain on sale, but the pub now seems to be geared towards the young and deaf who frequent the FOX & GOOSE down the road. At the other side of town, anything but Thwaites has been on sale at the SEVEN STARS HOTEL, Wallgate. The licensee is in dispute with the brewery, and ales from Ushers and Lees, to name but two, have been available.

Lees bitter is now to be had at Tetley's BRICKLAYERS ARMS, Hallgate. Across from the Brickies can be seen a new road sign for King of Prussia Yard. This commemorates a pub on the site that vanished before the Great War, but whose licence lives on at the COLLIERS ARMS, Frog Lane. This bastion of keg sells Burtonwood nowadays, but the red brick exterior reveals traces of the long-gone Albion Brewery of Hardybutts, which formerly owned both the Colliers and the KoP.

News in brief: the SILVERWELL HOTEL, Darlington Street East, off Scholes, is now closed and boarded up. This ex-Walkers pub was last seen on the front cover of *What's Doing...* There has been a fire at Tyldesley Bowling Club. The characterful old shack at the bottom of Well Street sells, or sold, Lees ales... Back in the centre of Wigan, and mid-European culture has suffered a setback, as CZECHS on Wallgate, which only opened last year, has recently re-emerged as O'NEILL'S. News of the ale on sale here will follow.

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## Angler gives full measure

In a move that is sure to meet favour within CAMRA and with anyone who thinks that they ought to get what they pay for, the Jolly Angler on Ducie Street, near Piccadilly Station, has introduced oversized, lined glasses for all draught beers.

This most welcome initiative followed the introduction of Hydes Smooth nitrokeg bitter. Licensees Mike and Sheila Reynolds believe the glasses will mean less wastage for themselves and customers will benefit twofold - a full pint every time and the presentation of the beer (with a full head) will be maintained.

The appearance of Smooth on the bar is intended to complement the two Hydes cask beers - bitter at 132p and either Billy Westwoods at 115p or Hydes Light. These beers offer good value and good taste when compared to the cold and fairly tasteless Smooth at a hefty 145p.

## Closed & Boarded Corner

Lower Broughton has seen the closure of another pub. This time it's Gibbs Mew's (formerly Centric) Royal Archer on Lower Broughton Road. This joins the long closed Unicorn (ex Whitbread) on the same road. Over in nearby Charlestown, the boards have come off the Kings Arms (Tetley) on Langley Road South, latterly known as Jolson's Bar. The building may be converted into an old people's home.

Another pub which seems to have had a change of use is the Devonshire Arms (S&N) on Liverpool Road, Eccles. This is now called 'Cherries' and would appear to be operating as a club. No real loss there, then.

In Manchester, the Dancing Weasel on Great Ancoats Street was burnt out and boarded up in mid-April.

## 'A CAMRA spokesman said...'

We are now able to communicate with the mainstream press telepathically. Without speaking to the Evening News, our innermost thoughts appear in that organ.

When Roger Hall was asked whether he did indeed provide the comment attributed to him (*right*), he said:

'Bollocks. Where did they get that from? "Bit on the large side." Would I make some crap, anodyne remark like that? It's bad enough being misquoted, but having words put in your mouth is a bit on the naughty side.'

HESTER EVENING NEWS

## New pub in store for real ale buffs

By Susan Press

PUB giants J D Wether-  
spoon are hoping to set  
up shop in a former  
supermarket.

Spokesman Roger Hall  
said: "It's good to see real  
ale on offer to beer-  
drinkers but some of these  
pubs can be a bit on the  
large side."



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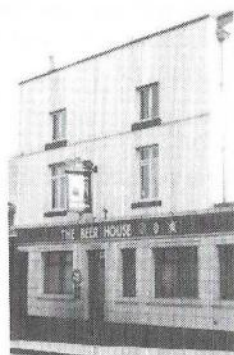
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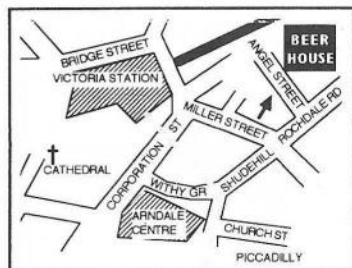
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# Letters

## **Middleton matters**

Sir - Mike White seems to miss the point completely in his letter in the April issue of *What's Doing*. In my letter in the March issue I stated there was not one pub in Middleton where one could have a truly quiet pint, i.e. a pub with NO music.

The Joiners Arms is truly a nice, friendly local - but it can be an extremely loud one. There are frequent bands and on my last visit it was karaoke night - certainly not a place to go for a peaceful pint. In fact, as my humble abode is literally only a stone's throw away from the Joiners, in the summer months with all the windows open I am frequently bombarded with noise from there.

I do not know if Mike White ever drank real Oldham Ales before Boddingtons bought the brewery and closed it down, but I can assure him the beer calling itself Oldham Bitter now is nothing at all like the former excellent Oldham-brewed product. This does not reflect in any way on Gary and Lesley (who will have moved on from the Joiners when this issue appears), as they keep the beer as well as it is possible to keep it.

I maintain that the nearest central Middleton has to an oasis of tranquillity is the Ring o' Bells and that the opening of a Wetherspoons will be a bonus to all those who want a quiet pint.

Wetherspoons' licence application for their Middleton venture will probably be in June. Once they have the licence, they need a name for their pub. How about 'Moon Over Greengate', to celebrate their victory over John Willie Lees?

*Paul Roberts*

## **Manchester Beer Festival**

Sir - I am very disappointed with the Manchester branches of CAMRA. Being a member of the Campaign, I attend most beer festivals in the Greater Manchester area, and last year visited the Manchester Beer Festival held at Castlefield. I was very impressed and considered it to be the best festival in the area.

I was therefore looking forward to a repeat performance this year. Alas February, the month of last year's festival, has passed and there has been no publicity either in *What's Doing* or *What's Brewing*. Can you please get your acts together and let people know what's going on?

*Gary Page*

## **Reclaiming the Territory (2)**

Sir - As secretary of the Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA, I note your item 'Reclaiming the Territory' (WD last month). The Deansgate and Castlefield areas will stay in the T&H branch and are not for negotiation.

During the forthcoming year the pubs will be surveyed regularly by the branch, with members awarding points for the quality of beers. Then at the



end of the year the pubs with the best beers in the area will be entered into CAMRA's flagship publication, the Good Beer Guide.

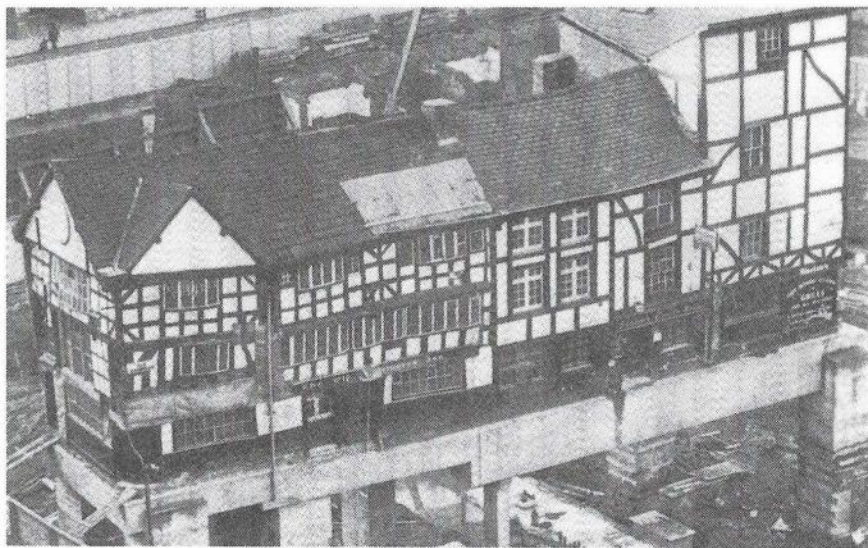
This system is to be compared with that of some branches north of the Manchester Ship Canal, where a pub might be put in the guide after **one** single visit, or perhaps because it is a cracking boozier, shame about the beer.

As for pubs such as the Lord Clyde, I regret that we didn't lie in front of the bulldozers. However, as I am a new member in the Campaign (1989), some of the pubs mentioned are just words, unlike Wetherspoons, which is very much here to stay.

*Roger Wood*

### **Moving the Shambles**

Sir - Sorry to spoil a good story, but the Wellington and Sinclairs **will** fit between the Corn Exchange and the Mitre Hotel in the orientation shown in your illustration last month. So intrigued was I by David Bell's conspiracy theory (Letters, April), that I took my big tape measure and visited the two sites.



The Wellington and Sinclairs property (*above, in 1971*), corner to corner, measures 89 feet. The distance between the Cathedral perimeter wall and the existing building line on Cateaton Street/Hanging Ditch is 96 feet. So there really is room for the two pubs and a footpath between the Wellington and the Cathedral wall.

*John Byrom*

### **Nose Job (2)**

Sir - I will assume that Rhys Jones writes out of ignorance rather than malice about the unfortunate proposed name for Church Lodge in Worsley (Letters, WD April). My great grandfather, the Reverend Robert Dodd, lived at Church Lodge between the wars. He was, by all accounts. a



character in Worsley. His partiality for beer earned him the nickname of 'Boddy Doddy' and 'Bridgewater Bob'. His caricature inspired the numerous drawings which adorned the vault of the Bridgewater Hotel until the latest refurbishment. Sadly, his love affair with the pint also lost him his job. He, nevertheless, continued to live at Church Lodge and to drink in the pubs of the village.

It was on Christmas Day 1940, after one of Manchester's worst air raids and one of his most extended drinking sessions that he was discovered by his housekeeper, collapsed in the kitchen of the house. His face was a mess and his nose smashed beyond repair. When my father and his brothers returned to Eccles from Shropshire after the war they used to visit Grandpa Bob, whose prosthetic nose was a fascination to them all. The Reverend Robert Dodd died in 1951 and is buried in St Mark's churchyard, not a hundred yards from where he had lived. To call the new pub 'The Parson's Nose' may be amusing to some, as it no doubt was to the reporter who used that headline in the Worsley Guardian to describe the events of 1940 and was promptly sacked. To others it smacked of irreverence. What's wrong with 'Church Lodge'?

*Peter Dodd*

### **Wrong number?**

Sir - Re: '2,000 minus 1,000', April WD. Far be it from me to poop on anyone's party, but doesn't the millennium begin in the year 2001? Sorry to spoil a good countdown.

*Dave White*

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### **Up the Kriek**

Draught Belle Vue Kriek is now available in the Fringe Bar, Swan Street, Manchester, and it is selling extremely well at £1.90 a pint.

Draught beers at the Sandbar in Grosvenor Street include two Czech and guest German and Belgian as well as guest English cask beers. The bottled range covers a host of German brewing styles, with Weihenstephan (the oldest brewery in the world) and Maisel Weizen biers in addition to the more usual Schneider and Erdinger products. Gatweilers Alt, Dom and Gaffels Kölsch are unusual finds in a Manchester pub. There is also a range of about thirty Belgian bottled beers.

The Temple of Convenience - in the converted gents' toilet at the Oxford Road end of Great Bridgewater Street - has a bar which rivals the Circus as the shortest in Manchester. There are no cask beers, but interesting bottled beers include half-litres of Pilsner Urquell, Budvar, Tatra and Warsteiner as well as Erdinger and Schneider Weiß beers. Well worth 'paying a visit'.

### **Beer gone**

The Oaks on Oakwood Drive, Wardley, is no longer selling Banks's bitter. The free house is now on keg Boddies, but may try the proper stuff again in the future.

## Book Review

Steve Smith

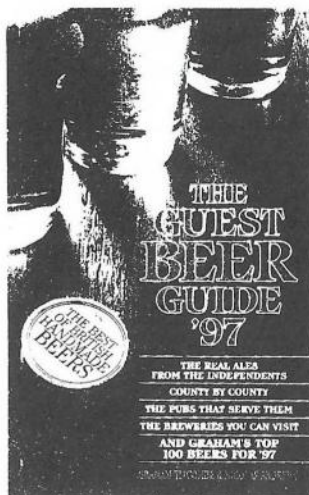
### **The Guest Beer Guide '97** by Graham Titcombe & Nicolas Andrews

(Foulsham Publishing, 288pp, £8.99)

Judging by the title, one may assume that this is to become an annual publication. Co-author Graham Titcombe is hailed as legendary landlord and twice winner of Area Cellarman of the Year Award. A quick scan through the book reveals that sadly there are no photographs, only illustrations of pump clip labels and the odd line drawing. English counties are arranged alphabetically. Those in Scotland, Wales and offshore by towns. Opening sections deal with topics such as the history of beer, 'in the cellar' and the top 100 beers in Britain.

There are detailed entries for each brewery, listing address, phone number, whether there are any tied houses, beers produced and if they allow visits. Notable free houses are listed, along with a brief description of each and the beers you could expect to find there.

Unfortunately there is no beer listing or pub and brewery index, and finding a particular town can be difficult. Stalybridge and Stockport appear under Cheshire and Rochdale under Lancashire, even though there is a section for Greater Manchester!



Shropshire has only one brewery entry, plus the town of Edgeley (a suburb of Stockport) for its one pub. Where, then, is the delightful town of Shrewsbury, with its famous Castle Vaults pub on Castle Gates, or the notable Three Fishes? Also, I can find no reference to O'Hanlon's on Tysoe Street in Clerkenwell, London, a superb home-brew establishment. The Stanley Arms in Stockport is listed, a pub which is no longer with us.

Rather bulkier than CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, the Guest Beer Guide may still prove to be a useful addition to the beer buff's bookshelf. But if there is another edition, let's hope they get it right.

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## **Brrrr...**

Unique to our area (?), the Barge Inn, Monton, has introduced the concept of 'frosted glass' to serve a Czech lager. A special 'frosting cabinet' pre-chills glasses used for the Zamek pilsner lager. Apparently the device is capable of producing a thick layer of ice on the outside of the glass.

The 'lager mitt' featured in *Men Behaving Badly* might be a best seller here.

# Holiday Ale

## Dublin Dayze

*Dublin's St Patrick's Day festivities are spread over several days and feature street entertainers, spectacular decorations and, of course, giant inflatable Guinness pots outside most of the pubs. There's a huge parade through the city streets and a big funfair down by the Quayside. Steve Smith and Mark McConachie were there and provide this report on the pubs...*



With over a thousand pubs in the Dublin area - there seems to be one on every street - the imbibor has plenty to choose from. However, most sell only Guinness, Smithwicks and Harp lager. You can also find Beamish, Murphys, Kilkenny and Caffreys, and the odd Bass and Furstenberg beers - all keg, of course. Some of the pub names seem familiar, too, such as O'Neill's. But once inside, these places bear no resemblance to the pseudo-Irish theme pubs in England and they have a charm and friendliness which is hard to beat. Unfortunately most of the ales are served at gum-numbing, teeth-chilling temperatures!

### South of the Liffey

This is the more fashionable part of the city, the subject of the *Dublin Literary Pub Crawl* (an illustrated book by Peter Costello). Pubs of note include the legendary DAVY BYRNE'S, Duke Street, with its rather glitzy interior; the BRAZEN HEAD, reputedly Dublin's oldest establishment, reached through a passageway on Lower Bridge Street, and the STAGS HEAD, Dame Court, with its ornate interior and the accent on cheap lunchtime food. JOHN MULLIGAN'S on Poolbeg Street has a reputation for the best pint of Guinness outside their own HOP STORE. Sadly, two pubs of note, the TEMPLE BAR on Temple Bar Street and the AULD DUBLINER on Anglesea Street are both encased in scaffolding, their futures uncertain.

There are several excellent pubs close to each other around Merrion and Baggot Streets (Upper and Lower). O'DONOGHUE'S has possibly the quickest pint of Guinness, as several pints are already pulled and lined up on the bar, waiting for the final top-up. There is BIG JACK'S (still owned by

Jack Charlton?), BAGGOT INN (a noisy place), DOHENY & NESBITT'S, TONER'S, the OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY on Temple Bar, KEHOE'S on South Anne Street and McDAID'S (once a haunt of Brendan Behan) on Harry Street. Try also the HA'PENNY BRIDGE INN, opposite the pedestrian bridge, and the OLD STAND in Exchequer Street.



The highlight of the tour must be the newly opened PORTER HOUSE BREWING COMPANY on



Parliament Street. The pub has several rooms and levels to explore and there is an extensive display of bottled ales in glass cabinets - the bottles appear to be full! The draught beers available (some purporting to be real ale) include Plain Porter (4.3%), Wrasslers XXXX Stout (5%), Oyster Stout (4.8%, a personal favourite), Porterhouse Red (4.4%) and the aptly named Brainblasta, an incredible brew at 7%. Most beers range in price from £2.10 to £2.40 per pint. This is also the norm for most outlets in the city.



### North of the Liffey and suburbs

North of the Liffey is a much more run-down area and it has the cheapest pints. Around Upper and Lower Dorset Street there are a few good pubs, including JOXER DALY'S (the £2 pint) and AULD BROGUE. The cheapest pint we found was at the TRAVELLERS REST (McGEOUGH'S) in Mountjoy Street - £1.98 for Guinness. Other worthy pubs are SLATTERY'S on Capel Street, LANIGAN'S (part of the Clifton Court Hotel) on Eden Quay and FIBBER MAGEE'S, Parnell Street.

Along the coast south of the city at Bray can be found the PORTER HOUSE on the Promenade, of several years' standing and the forerunner of the present brewery in Dublin, albeit with a more limited beer range. At Dalkey, two pubs of interest are the QUEENS HOTEL on Castle Street and the SORRENTO BAR (FINNEGAN'S) on Sorrento Road, near the rail station. Along the north coast there is the BLOODY STREAM, below the rail station at Howth, where there are also several other good pubs. At Malahide, SMYTH'S on New Street does excellent food.

That about sums up the Dublin scene on a brief but hectic visit. Over the weekend a lot of places were extremely busy. Useful information to note includes opening hours: around the docks and market area, pubs may open at 7.00am, otherwise it's 10.30am Mondays to Saturdays and 12.30pm on Sundays, with an afternoon break between 2.00pm and 4.00pm. Closing time is 11.00pm in winter and 11.30pm in summer, with half an hour's drinking-up time.

Food is available in most pubs, at least soup and sandwiches or toasties. Otherwise there are the usual fast food outlets, plus Asian food at the



Abrakebabra chain of shops. For fish and chips, try Beshoff's on O'Connell Street, where you can eat in, or the takeaway on Werburgh Street, Leo Burdock's famous fish bar. Do try Gallagher's Boxty House on Temple Bar for traditional Irish food. Bewley's Oriental Cafe in Grafton Street and the Periwinkle (!) Seafood Bar in the Powerscourt Townhouse shopping complex are useful.

Dublin possesses a good, if somewhat complicated, transport system. Dublin Bus operate frequent buses from the city well into the suburbs. Trains are infrequent, take forever and a day and are expensive. The alternative is the Dart rail line - the Dublin Area Rapid Transport System - from Howth in the north to Bray in the South, via the city centre. You can 'fart along the Dart' unlimitedly for £3.50!

Finally, the GUINNESS HOP STORE on Crane Street is worth visiting. For a £3 entry fee you get a museum display spread over several rooms, an audio visual film set and a pint of the black stuff, but there isn't a tour of the brewery.

A useful guide book is the no-frills *Lonely Planet Dublin City Guide*, £6.99 from booksellers.

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## Moston happenings

Mark McConachie

Following a period of closure, the Gardeners Arms (BodPubCo), Chain Bar, Moston, reopened after a fairly major refurbishment. This prominent, corner-site pub has lost its large lounge and equally large vault in favour of a diagonally-oriented bar separating three new areas. The old gents is now a stage!

There is now a 'Wheeltappers Cask Ale Bar', offering only the bitters of Boddies (127p), Tetley (115p) and Greenalls (110p), although not all were advertised, may I say. Traditional Boddies mild has gone - it's now keg.

The new Gardeners is indistinguishable from most other modern pubs and if that was the aim of the designers, they have achieved their goal. If not, well, all traces of individuality have been removed and links with the pub's locale have been erased. A bland effort. Buses from Manchester are 77, 80, 87, 112 and 145 should you wish to see for yourself.

Further down Lightbourne Road you will come across one of the biggest pubs in Manchester - the Lightbourne (*below*). Old owners Whitbread could not keep it open so it was boarded up in 1996. It's nice to see that the Lightbourne has reopened, albeit only the old vault area on the right hand side. Quite what is happening to the remainder of the vast building is unclear - there is still talk of workshops and car valeting. The disappointment is that the place only sells keg - and pricey keg at that! Surely this could have been an opportunity to sell Lees or Holts at around the pound mark?



# Home Brewing Revisited

*Humulus Lupulus*

## Part Two - Cracking the Grain

The main ingredient of most home-brewed ales, from the palest bitter to the blackest stout, will normally be pale malt grain. Exceptions are lager, and possibly mild; these are discussed in a future article.

Because just one 5-gallon brew will use 3 - 4kg of pale malt, it is more economical to buy larger quantities than the 1kg bags found in home-brew shops. 25kg sacks are a sensible size, and will provide 8 brews on average.

Before it can be mashed, malt grain must be cracked (not ground to a powder) so the hot water can reach the starch and enzymes. It is on this process more than any other that most home brewing books fail to describe a satisfactory method.

H E Bravery (1) simply reminds us to 'crack grain malts before use'. C J J Berry (2) used a small hand coffee mill, but also suggested a food mixer, or a wine bottle used as a rolling pin. (Just try a little grain with a wine bottle - most of it ends up, uncracked, in the corners of the room!)

David Line (5) describes a hand mill, as Berry, but driven by an electric drill. Later (8) he recommends buying malt ready-crushed. This is fine if you are going to use it all within a few weeks, otherwise it can go 'slack'; enzyme activity suffers and poor extracts result. In his last book (9), a photograph of a home-made malt mill with at least one roller is shown but no constructional details are given. It appears to have been made from a cannibalized piece of commercial equipment. This book was published posthumously so we shall never know.

Wilf Newsome (6) devotes a page to the question of milling. He mentions several types of mill without giving specific details, but they appear to be expensive commercial types.

Dart & Smith (10) describe the construction of a wooden two-roll mill from a pair of rolling pins. These are given a roughened surface and are counter-rotated by each hand, with the grain passing through a small gap.

I have tried most of these devices with mixed success. The rolling pins soon produced severe cramp of the wrists. Berry's hand mill worked but was slow and produced too much fine material. Connecting it to an electric drill certainly speeded things up, but I wore out two coffee grinders; the grinding faces had too small an area for the throughput, and a foreign body such as a pebble in the grain was disastrous!

A different type of mill, with equispaced parallel blades rotating between fixed vanes, and normally used for herbs, was once

*There is a **Home Beer & Winemaking Show** in Sheffield on Saturday 7th June. The venue is Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, Sheaf Street, near the rail and bus stations. The time is 10am to 5pm, price £2.50. I hope to attend and keep a special lookout for malt mills and other useful gadgets.*



recommended for malt crushing. I found this excellent at first: the malt had the right degree of cracking with little dust. However, the blades tended to snap off one by one and it soon had to be thrown away.

A local CAMRA member, whose brother had obtained a grain-kibbling machine (intended to be driven by bicycle power in Third World rural societies), mounted it on a board and linked it to a powerful washing machine motor. He invited me to try it for malt crushing. The result was terrifying - with much din it reduced a kilogram of grain to a fine flour in about five seconds! Even when mixed with 2kg of normal cracked grain this caused the mash to 'set'. It stubbornly refused to sparge and I never used the infernal machine again.

*Next month, some successful solutions.*

## References

- 1 *Home Brewing Without Failures* by H E Bravery, Max Parrish, London
- 2 *Home Brewed Beers & Stouts* by C J J 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.
- 8 *Brewing Beers like those you Buy* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker
- 9 *Beer Kits and Brewing* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker
- 10 *Woodwork for Winemakers* by C J Dart & D A Smith, Amateur Winemaker

## Dog taught new tricks

A new theme being 'rolled out across the country' by Greenalls has reached Eccles. The theme is 'Porters Ale House' and it has been applied to the Dog & Partridge on Liverpool Road. The result is quite pleasing, although all the walls have been removed and the pub now looks like the identikit ale house. As well as a shortage of walls, there is a lack of real choice in ales. On a recent visit the beers were Porter Ale (3.9%) at 130p, which wasn't on, and Tetley and Boddies bitters at 135p.

This is a real ale gain for Eccles, but it is unlikely to remain a real ale outlet for long as the former customers, mostly young lager drinkers, have stuck with the pub and will not be interested in cask beers.

We understand a certain Haslingden brewer is concerned that confusion may arise over the name of this theme.

## Busy Bury

There have been a few applications for new licences in Bury town centre recently. Property developers have bought the former Post Office on Crompton Street with a view to turning the three-storey building into a pub/restaurant. Yates's want to open a wine bar in the former Skipton Building Society offices on Market Street (Yates's seem to be following Wetherspoons around the North West) and Bass want to turn the former Pramland store on Silver Street into a pub.

# Rupert

Quite frankly, Tish was wrong. She and Fiona had fancied themselves as fifth columnists and came rushing into the Vapid Toad after their induction as *Opening Tripe* distributors. 'I went round about twenty Snoot Magna taverns with one of Charlie Super's right-hand men, hawking his organ,' Tish began. 'It was nearly March and we were delivering the February issue. In every hostelry it was the same story. We dropped off ten or twenty and they threw away eight or eighteen of January's edition. Their readership figures are a complete fabrication. Nobody reads the thing, even though it's a freebie - the advertisers are being ripped off.'

A knowing, fogeys smile could be seen on the faces of the assembled contributors to *What's Doing*, for whom, in their declining years, Schadenfreude was the only remaining pleasure. I, however, remained unmoved. I could not believe that this could be the truth and resolved to investigate.

Throughout March, heightened by elevator shoes and disguised with a false beard, I ensconced myself in a number of Snoot Magna alehouses which displayed *Opening Tripe* to find out for myself. Rumpleshirtscream had confided in me that late delivery

was a deliberate policy to 'keep the punters gagging for it,' as he so succinctly described it. At 9.00pm in 'Bolly's' (The Bollinger Arms) my efforts were rewarded. The place was quiet, but as soon as Charlie's new organ was delivered and displayed things changed. News spread by word of mouth and by 9.30 all thirty copies were being avidly consumed by groups of customers.

Portions were read aloud for the benefit of those who'd not been able to get a copy for themselves. Copies were passed on as soon as they'd been read and at closing time all but one copy, which was soaked in draught perry, were returned to the display. I should estimate that over two hundred people read *Opening Tripe* in Bolly's that night and no doubt that pattern would be repeated on subsequent nights until April's edition hit the streets just before May Day.

Far from overestimating his readership, Charlie Super must be seriously underestimating it. Surely the time has come for *What's Doing* to reinvent itself as a cheeky freebie and skyrocket its circulation to unprecedented heights. But, dinosaurs did not invent Super Mario, did they?

As my modest scribblings e-mail their way to Eddy, unconfirmed reports come in of strange happenings at the beanfeast. More next month.

**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.

**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".

# Branch Diary

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tue 6 May 8.30pm, Annual General Meeting, Cemetery Hotel, Rochdale.

All members please attend.

Tue 20 May 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Britannia, Market Place, Middleton

Tue 27 May 8.30pm, What's Doing collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Tue 3 June 8.30, Branch Meeting, Hunt Lane Tavern, Hunt Lane, Chadderton

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

## **Trafford & Hulme**

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, Cycle Ride. 8pm Railway, Irlam Road, Flixton. 8.45 Church Inn, Church Road, then via Windmill and across Carrington Moss to finish at Railway, Broadheath).

Thur 15 May, Racecourse (Sale) Survey. 8pm Plough, Green Lane, then Lively Lobster, Manor Ave, via Firsway to finish at Cock Robin, Manor Ave.

Thur 22 May, City Survey. 8pm Moon Under Water, Deansgate, then Ganders Go South. Finish Vine and City Arms, Kennedy Street

Thur 29 May, Stockport Beerex

Thur 5 June, Timperley Crawl. 8pm Gardeners Arms, Deansgate Lane. Finish Quarry Bank, Bloomsbury Lane in village

Contact: Roger Wood 0161 747 3987

## **North Manchester**

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

Sat 10 May, 12 noon, Regional Meeting, Atherton Arms, Atherton. Buses 32,33,35,39. Train 1130 from Victoria.

Wed 14 May, Committee & Social, Pen & Wig, New Bailey Street, 7.30; Egerton, Gore Street, 8.30.

Wed 21 May, 8pm, Branch Meeting, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford

Tues 27 May, 6pm onward, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 28 May, Train to Riverhead Brewery, Marsden, West Yorks.

Wed 4 June, Reclaiming the Territory: Moon Under Water, Deansgate, 7pm; Sawyers Arms, 8pm; White Lion, Liverpool Road, 9.30pm.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

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Contributors to this issue: Roger Hall, Steve Smith, Mark McConachie, Paul Roberts, Phil Stout, Dave White, Pete Cash, Roger Wood, Stewart Revell, Bernie Jackson



*Dave and Sue welcome you to the*

# QUEENS ARMS

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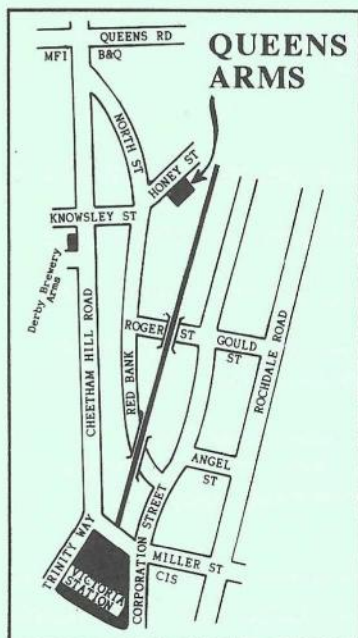


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