What's Doing



MARCH 1998

The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Middleton Moonshine

The Ring o'Bells in Leonards Square Middleton is selling draught Moonraker straight from the barrel at £2.25 a pint. The 7.5% Moonraker has always been one of the more palatable strong brews on offer from the local brewers. but it is very rare on draught. It makes a nice mixer with bitter and enterprising landlord Harry Knight has christened this 'Moonshine' -£1.78 for an aggregate 5.75% pint. The Moonraker is proving very popular and is selling at the rate of one pin a week - some drinkers have strayed to the Ring o'Bells from other pubs especially to try the beer.

The Ring o'Bells also sells excellent bitter and mild, together with the Lees seasonal brews, all served in peaceful, comfortable surroundings by friendly bar



staff. Although there is a juke box, this is set at a low volume in the lounge and does not interfere with conversation. The pool room is well out of the way at the back and there is an upstairs room (complete with a famous collection of butterflies) for meetings.

The Ring o'Bells is a classic, traditional pub and is an example to all brewers of what can be achieved without resorting to cheap gimmicks - the ingredients of success are simply good beer, convivial surroundings, a welcoming landlord and friendly bar staff. The pub has the best pint for miles around and it is well worth visiting.

Paul Roberts

City Centre openings

The first of two city openings in February was the Slug & Lettuce on Canal Street, owned by a southern-based outfit called Grosvenor Inns. It's their first in the Greater Manchester area and is another warehouse conversion, at the Courts end of Canal Street. The premises are large, open and much use is made of quality timber and the colours cream, orange and purple. Full length windows add to the openness and from the raised areas there are views of the Rochdale Canal and environs.

Cask beer is available, but it will cost you - £1.90 minimum for Theakstons BB, XB and Directors. There's reasonably priced (for the area) food until 10pm (8pm Fri/Sat).

One week later Bass opened **Edwards** on Portland Street, opposite Piccadilly bus station. The pub is on two levels in the corner of an office block. Here again there is full height glazing and much use is made of bold, primary colours, particularly red. The only thing missing is real ale, showing yet again Bass's lack of commitment to cask beer in the North West. To paraphrase R P Jones, 'It may be classy, but it's all gassy.'

Nose out of joint

Pub company Watling Street Inns has taken note of local opinion about the name of a new pub in leafy Worsley. The £1.5m development at the former Church Lodge was to have been named the Parsons Nose but now it will be called the John Gilbert. He was the land agent and mining engineer who oversaw much of the Duke of Bridgewater's underground canal works. The pub is due to open in April.





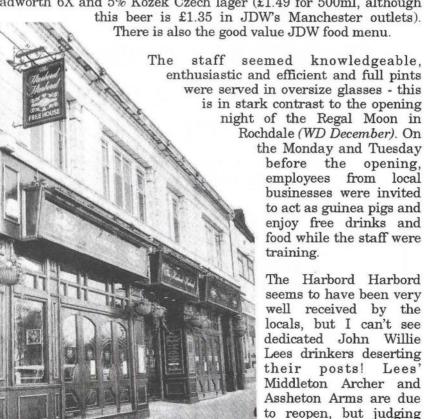
Parson

Gilbert

from the success of the opening of the Harbord Harbord, Lees will have a hard act to follow.

After almost two years of legal wrangling and pages of letters in What's Doing and the local newspaper, Wetherspoon's Harbord Harbord opened its doors to the Middleton public on Wednesday 18th February. The pub is designed to the standard Wetherspoon criteriasplit level seating, a large no smoking area (including bar area) and very plush furnishings. The walls are adorned with plaques on topics of local history and on the rear of the doorway is a plaque explaining the unusual name of the premises.

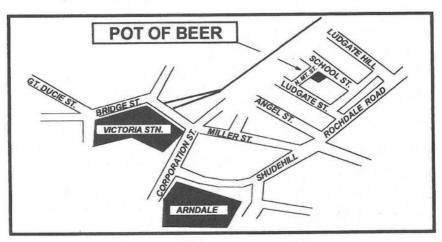
Beers are the standard JDW range including Theakstons Bitter at £1.20 and Courage Directors at £1.39 per pint, with guests Exmoor Stag and Hardy & Hansons Kimberley Classic at £1.59. Boddingtons Bitter and traditional cider are also available. Bottled beers include the large (500/550ml) bottles of Hopback Summer Lightning, Wadworth 6X and 5% Kozek Czech lager (£1.49 for 500ml, although



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Central Manchester Pubs - The Survey

The second survey of the city's pubs started at the Old Garratt. The prospect of a tour through the Gay Village clearly daunted many surveyors and the small team was limited in the scope of its survey. As a result of the budget, prices have increased slightly since our November survey of the Northern Quarter. The Old Garratt had dozens of blackboards advertising food, special offers and bizarre concoctions which, presumably, students might drink. Nowhere were the regular prices of draught beers displayed. Perhaps it is not surprising as these varied from £1.59 for Boddies to £1.88 for Tetleys, Castle Eden, Pedigree and Wonkey Donkey. Flowers was £1.81. None of the beers was in good condition.

A quick look in O'Shea's revealed that it was now keg. Draught beer was never a great seller there, but it was usually in good form. The New Union, which has been extended considerably in recent years, serves only one real ale, Burtonwood bitter at £1.50. Once again,

lists were not visible. Manto's on Canal Street at one time served Boddingtons and Pedigree. It's now keg. Further up the street, the Via Fossa was serving Boddingtons and Flowers at £1.80. Again, there was no price list for beer. We'd looked through the windows of the Rembrandt as we passed. The place has had a much needed refurbishment and was sporting handpumps for Lees mild and bitter. The Slug and Lettuce was poised to open the following evening handpumps in place Theakstons Best Bitter. XB and Courage Directors.

Passing by the Old Monkey, the next ports of call were the Circus Tavern and the Grey Horse. Tetleys bitter at the Circus was £1.45 and Hydes mild and bitter were £1.33 and £1.40 respectively at the Grey Horse. The Seven Oaks on Nicholas Street was serving Boddingtons and Thwaites bitter at £1.62. The new Yates's on Portland Street was the busiest



pub we'd visited. It was also the loudest. Undrinkable Boddies was £1.35 and John Smiths £1.60. There was no proper price list here either and this was the only place where a full measure was not offered immediately. Fine for the deaf who don't like beer.

Perhaps the best beer of the evening was Chesters Dark at the Waldorf at £1.35. The pub also served Boddingtons bitter at £1.45 and Wadworth 6X and Taylors Landlord at £1.75. These, too, were in good condition.

In summary, our survey revealed a decline in the availability of real ale, variable quality, high prices in many outlets, few visible price lists despite a plethora of blackboards and full measure in all but one outlet. Long established pubs like the Circus and the Grey Horse provide the best guarantee of quality, whilst local independents are still the best value for money. Greenalls (a pub chain) gave the worst value in the Old Garratt and the Via Fossa. Yates's are targeting a market sector where real ale quality evidently is not important.

Watch this space for Survey Number Three.

Exit the Dragon

The Green Dragon on Jersey Street, Ancoats (sorry, Northern Quarter), long derelict and vandalised (below), has been pulled down and the site levelled.



Altrincham news

Rumours continue to abound about the **Hogshead** (originally the Unicorn Inn). Are Whitbread, in their own inimitable style, about to undo all the hard work put in over the past five years? An excellent trade in real ales has been established, with usually over ten beers being available on draught at any one time, but this may come to an end. The Bolton Hogshead has been converted to a 'fun pub'; will the one in Altrincham be the next to go?

Further to last month's item about the end of jazz sessions at the Malt Shovels (Sam Smiths), rumour has it that the order to cease came from Mr Smith himself. Mr Smith doesn't like live music in his pubs and all forms are banned forthwith. Can this really be true?

The Bakers Arms, Pownall Road, has been closed by Hydes for a £250,000 refit. The pub was a Chesters and latterly a Whitbread house which Hydes acquired about twenty years ago, along with the Bulls Head in Lymm. The two entrances have been bricked up as part of the redesigning of the place and the new entrance will probably be created to attract shoppers from the nearby Sainsbury's.

Bass were reported to have purchased the premises of Taylor & Cross, the gentlemen's outfitters on Stamford New Road, in order to turn them into an O'Neill's Irish theme bar. The shop has been closed and boarded up for over six months now. Does anyone know if Bass are still interested?

Fun Pubs' reprieve

There were objections by members of the public to two licence renewals at Salford's February brewster sessions. The Bluebell in Monton and the Bridgewater in Worsley were the pubs in question, but the objectors hadn't quite got their acts together. The Bluebell objectors had written in, but didn't turn up and the licence was renewed. The Worsley Residents' Association had handed a copy of their objection in time to an employee at the Bridgewater. This was deemed not to be 'good service' after arguments by Greenalls' solicitor and the pub group wriggled off the hook.

If the objectors want to pursue their case they'll have to bring revocation orders to the court. Perhaps the pub owners will have got the message and will put their own houses in order so that such drastic measures are not required.

Hogwash

Contrary to the report in February WD, the management at the High Street Hogshead are not going to the Deansgate Hogshead; they're going to the one on Wilmslow Road.



We're in the 1998 Good Beer Guide

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12 REAL ALES ON OFFER

including

USHERS BEST BITTER £1.05
DIRECTORS BITTER
MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH
plus

9 EVER-CHANGING GUEST BEERS including A GUEST MILD



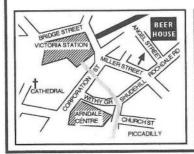
TWO TRADITIONAL CIDERS ALWAYS AVAILABLE
DRAUGHT BELGIAN KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN &
MANY BOTTLED BELGIAN and other FOREIGN BEERS

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☐ Thurs 5 - 8 Choice of three curries (veg and carnivore) + rice £3
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Ceilidh Band every Tuesday from 9.30
OPEN ALL DAY MONDAY to SUNDAY

FREE PARTY ROOM AVAILABLE



Corrections to GBG '98:

- & We open at 12 on Sunday
- & We do have a beer garden
- ☆ We do not have a Laurel & Hardy Club (although it looks that way at times!)

Shurely shome mishtake?

Greenalls have decided to close the PAVILION on Main Street, Billinge. Formerly the GEORGE & DRAGON, this pub never really recovered from the notoriety of a local murder, and was looking decidedly tatty on my last visit a few months ago. I am informed that the Pavilion is unlikely to reopen as a pub.

Visitors to Gathurst should note that the Railway Station Bar seems to have been closed as often as not recently. Those waiting for a train will be cheered by the news that the BIRD i'th'HAND (ScotCo) and NAVIGATION INN (Tetley) both sell a decent drop of the real stuff within walking distance.

Finally, apologies for giving duff information about the Eleventh Wigan Beer Festival in the February issue. The true dates are 5th-7th March. The extolled 'Longshanks Ale' on sale at the festival has now been beefed up to 5.1% ABV.

Swinton & Pendlebury

The licence for the Bowling Green in Pendlebury has been renewed and the pub will open shortly. Over on Chorley Road, the Foresters and the Red Lion seem to have given up on cask conditioned beer. Funny how losses in the late 1990s seem to be in the reverse order of gains in the 1980s.

The BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester. 0161 839 7019

BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 13th March to Sunday 15th March

FOUR YEARS AT THE BEER HOUSE!!

40 Spring Beers
Many New Brews
Upstairs and Down
All Day Food



1ST-13TH APRIL 1998

25 PLUS ALES

featuring
FESTIVAL ALE FROM WHIM
& BEERS FROM
BUTTERKNOWLE,
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EIGHT ALES AVAILABLE
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ALES DIRECT FROM THE CASK

A CHOICE OF CASK CIDERS FOREIGN BOTTLED BEERS & SPECIAL FESTIVAL MENU

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Marble keeps rolling

The first two beers produced by the Marble Brewery at the Marble Arch pub have been very well received and at times brewer Mark Dade has been hardpressed to keep up with demand. Marble Bitter and Totally Marbled have been joined by two new beers - Dobber (6.5%) and the exceptional IPA (4.6%), which is similar to Dobbin's Yakima Grande Pale Ale.

Looking to the future, more fermenting vessels are to be installed to meet demand and cater for seasonal brews - a 4.7% porter is due in March. Later, a Belgian-style Bruin beer and a Kriek-style fruit beer are likely and these will be kept under a low gas blanket pressure to ensure quality and longevity.

Contact the brewery for brewery visits (nominal fee) and for festival beer orders.

Distributors wanted

Having been involved in the distribution of What's Doing for nearly twenty-five years, Keith Egerton is to retire from the job in April. New distributors are therefore required to take the magazine to pubs in Chorlton, Flixton, Sale and other areas. Please contact the editor or turn up at a Trafford & Hulme branch meeting (see Branch Diary).

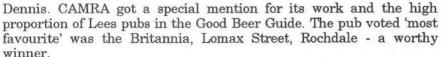
Moulders changes

Hydes Light and, for a time, XXXX, have been on sale at the Moulders (free), Heyrod Street, off Great Ancoats Street in Manchester.

Passport Party Mark McConachie

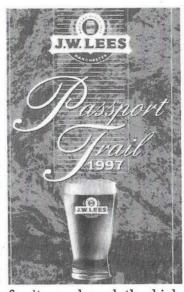
On 29 January fifty-four people who completed the 1997 Lees Passport Trail attended the Middleton Junction brewery for a dinner prepared by the staff of the Royal George at Greenfield. The fifty-four had been to all 152 Lees pubs (or 151 - the Owain Glyndwr closed half way through) and because of the large number, the dinner was held in the racking cellars which were tastefully decked out for the occasion. The last Passport Trail took place in 1981 and several people at the dinner had done that one as well.

There were speeches of thanks and anecdotes from directors Richard and William Lees-Jones and brewer Giles



Throughout the evening the Lees-sponsored Middleton Brass Band entertained and everyone received a commemorative glass, a stylish bottle opener and a personalised plaque. It was a memorable event and a fitting end to a year of trailing - thank you, J W Lees.





Club of the Year

In the past, very few CAMRA branches have submitted entries for this competition. Clubs can now nominate themselves, although they must eventually have branch support. As the only criterion is 'Commitment to Real Ale' it shouldn't be too difficult to find entries. If you know of a club which shows this commitment, why not come along to the appropriate branch meeting and put it forward? This needs to be done by the end of April.

The third request stop beer hop

The third beer festival at the Bhurtpore Inn, Aston, near Nantwich, takes place from Wednesday 1st to Sunday 5th April (see below). The Bhurtpore Inn is in the heart of the Cheshire countryside, twelve minutes' walk from Wrenbury Station, a request stop for local trains on the Crewe-Shrewsbury line.

On the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday there's a train from Manchester Piccadilly at 1733, calling at Wrenbury at 1829. For the return journey on the Friday, a northbound express will be making a special stop at Wrenbury at 2100 and will arrive in Manchester at 2202.

Wrenbury Station will be closed for engineering work on the Saturday, so catch the 1133 from Piccadilly to Crewe. There will be a bus from Crewe at 1228 to Aston crossroads, five minutes from the pub. The bus calls at the crossroads at 1725 and 1840 to connect with trains to Manchester.

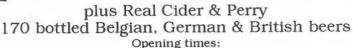


THE THIRD

BHURTPORE INN BEER FESTIVAL

1st - 5th April 1998

Bhurtpore Inn, Aston, Nantwich, Cheshire Featuring around 70 REAL ALES from Britain's small independent brewers



Wednesday: 6.30-11pm. Thursday, Friday: 12 noon -2.30, 6.30-11pm Saturday: 12 noon -11pm. Sunday 12 noon -3pm, 7-10.30pm FREE ADMISSION - All enquiries ring 01270 780917 SPECIAL TRAINS FROM MANCHESTER & CARDIFF 12 MINUTES WALK FROM WRENBURY RAILWAY STATION PLEASE NOTE: Only all-day opening is on Saturday 4th April



The small towns of Newhey and Milnrow can provide an interesting crawl or pub walk. They are situated south of Rochdale and Littleborough and are served by trains from Victoria/Rochdale and buses 181-2 from Manchester and 58,181-2, 452 from Rochdale.

Begin at the **Jubilee** (S&N) on Shaw Road, Jubilee, which is on an Sbend at the railway bridge outside Newhey. Externally, the pub has an ecclesiastical/Dutch/Flemish look to it; inside, it is spacious and foody, opened out with many different areas. The numerous teapots

around the pub make the place a worthwhile stop, as do J W Lees mild and bitter the latter at 125p.

From the Jubilee, go right, over the railway and follow the road round to Newhey centre (about eight minutes' walk), turn right at Huddersfield Road (signed Denshaw). Two hundred yards up on the right, beside Newhey Station, is Newhey Lodge



(Lees), which I believe is a club, but I got in all right. Downstairs is a comfortable lounge, up is the 'games room', which is really a plush vault with full-size snooker table. Lees mild (120p) and bitter (124p) are both on handpull - most welcome and highly recommended.

Continue north over the railway to the 'Bottom Bird', the **Bird in Hand** (Sam Smiths). It has an unusual layout for three rooms in a stone-built pub, but there is no cask ale and the decor is featureless apart from an attractive vestibule mosaic. Further up the road is the 'Top Bird', another **Bird in Hand** and again stone, again Sam Smiths, but this time with cask ale and the cheapest in Newhey to boot: only 119p for OBB. The Top Bird has retained some excellent features - superb lobby tiling and a great tap room with plank-back seating and old photos of the area.

The curious or those who like a walk, can continue on past Peppermint Bridge (451 terminus) to Wilsons' **Bulls Head** at Ogden Lane, Higher Ogden. Whitewashed and with green lighting, this is an old pub which has been seriously knocked about inside. The emphasis is on dining, there is no cask ale, but a worthy collection of water

jugs. You can continue on this road all the way to Denshaw if you wish, but be prepared for a 2-3 mile walk and use the main road if you want to avoid deepish mud!

Between the Bottom and Top Birds on Haugh Lane is the **Wheatsheaf** (Whitbread). The place offers no cask ale but it is a good-looking building



inside and out - shame about the beer choice. The final pub is back on Newhey Road - the **Waggon & Horses** (Lees), a high-set building with cobbled forecourt. There is a large concert-type room to the right and an excellent tap room to the left, with plank-back seating and long, scrubbed tables. To the rear is an open pool room and the large bar area. Lees mild and bitter are available, the latter at 125p. A couple of friendly dogs patrol the bar and one of them is the largest black dog I have ever seen!

The delights of Milnrow next time.

LAUREL AND HARDY

Classic comedies shown on Super 8 and 16mm upon 36 square foot of silver screen. Each reel lasts around 20-25 minutes after which there is a short break while you replenish your glasses!

THE MARBLE ARCH on ROCHDALE ROAD, just ten minutes walk from the City centre, on the THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH.

THE BEER ENGINE, POOLSTOCK, WIGAN on the FIRST WED-NESDAY of every OTHER month (4 Feb, 1 Apr, 3 Jun, 5 Aug, 7 Oct, 2 Dec)

The shows all begin around 8.15pm. ADMISSION IS FREE

SATURDAY 5th SEPT 1998

THE 6th ANNUAL LAUREL AND HARDAY

Noon till night in the Beer Engine Concert Room. Admission £3.

You don't have to be in The Sons of the Desert (the L & H Appreciation Society) to come along, but if you do want to join, membership is £12 a year (£3 a quarter if you pay by Standing Order). You will have posted to you our own quarterly magazine, plus the quarterly world-wide magazine plus the bi-annual U.K. magazine. For further info ring 01744 817130.

Letters

Bury Beer Festival Party

Sir - Thanks to everyone who turned up for the 1997 Bury Beer Festival thank you party on 23 January at the Smithfield. Special thanks to Jennifer and Terry for the excellent buffet and superb beers (Outlaw Scorcher and First Gold were particularly good). Also thanks to Neville the barman for prompt service on what must have been one of his busiest Friday nights. Around thirty-two volunteers turned out to enjoy their reward for working at the Festival and everbody we spoke to had praise for the pub and enjoyed a grand night out. The Smithfield is a cracking little pub and deserves every success.

A quick note on the 1998 Bury Beer Festival - there possibly won't be one! Sue and I have too many other commitments this year to devote the amount of time necessary to organise it properly, and so far nobody else has shown any interest in taking up the position. So situation vacant folks! No pay, no holiday leave, no sickness benefits - how can you resist it?

Alan Ainsworth

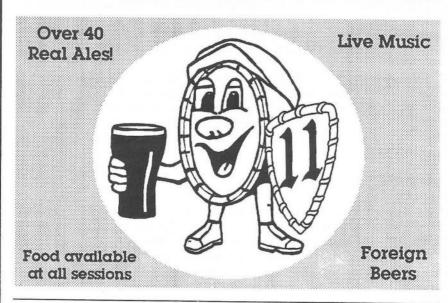
Hogtied

Sir - I await with hope the opening at the end of April of the new Bolton Wetherspoons, to be named the Spinning Mule in honour of Crompton. If the new pub follows in the footsteps of the rest of the chain, it should gain a large and happy local following in view of recent events on Bradshawgate. As many people know, the real ale Malt & Hops Bar at the Swan Hotel was closed down late last year. Although there are some real ales on in the main bar, there is no longer the range that was formerly on offer, and I haven't heard of the fate of the annual beer festival that was held in the courtyard.

The latest bad news was reported in the 23rd January 'Cheers' page of the Bolton Evening News. After a refit, the Hogshead has been renamed 'Hogs'. According to the newspaper, a spokesperson for the Hogshead Alehouse chain said that 'the cask ales and relaxed atmosphere of the Hogshead did not fit in with the mood of most other pubs along Bradshawgate. The change of name reflects the change of style to a young person's "destination" pub.' Apparently the bar has been redesigned to include video screens and a larger dance floor.

Am I missing something here? I thought cask ale and a relaxed atmosphere were what a lot of us look for when going out for a drink of a night. I know my brain cells may not be what they were several years ago, but have Hogshead subtly(?) changed their original policy?

The 11th WIGAN BEER FESTIVAL



THURSDAY 5th MARCH 5.30pm-11.00pm before 7.00pm - £1.00, after £2.00

FRIDAY 6th MARCH 12.00-3.00pm & 5.30pm-11.00pm FREE at 12.00-3.00 session • Evening £2.00

SATURDAY 7th MARCH 12.00pm-4.00pm & 7.00pm-11.00pm 12.00-4.00 session £1.00 • evening £2.00

at the Mill at the Pier



8 minutes walk from Railway Stations

ORGANISED BY THE WIGAN BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



Saddleworth Supplement

Steve Smith

Saddleworth Sojourns Part Four: Grotton, Lydgate and Springhead Dog & Partridge, 187 Oldham Road, Springhead

Despite a trio of handpumps for Stones, Worthington bitter and Toby Light, this two-roomed pub offered only keg beer.

Commercial Hotel (Top House), 38 Co-operative Street, Springhead A busy, opened-out Bass local in a side street. Sadly, the handpump for Worthington Best Bitter was not in use.

Front House, 33 Oldham Road, Springhead

A smartly decorated Boddingtons Pub Company hostelry, with large, opened-out rooms around a rectangular bar. Comfortable and busy with a darts and pool area in the vault. The ales are Boddingtons and Oldham bitters, plus Oldham mild.

Grotton Hotel, Oldham Road, Grotton

A large, imposing semi-circular 1930s Bass pub on the main drag and in a residential area. It caters mostly for the younger end of the market and there are modern fixtures and fittings - coloured glass, contrasting decor, a lot of wood panelling, raised seating areas in the lounge, pillars, gaming machines, and a smaller vault area. The Toby Light was rather cool and the only real ale.

Peels Arms, Den Lane, Springhead

A thoroughly modernised and opened out Greenalls pub, styled as an Oldham Brewery house, reached down a narrow lane surrounded by housing developments. The Peels Arms is family orientated, with a focus on dining. The decor is neat and hunting scenes seem to dominate the walls along with country prints. Muzak. Burning



candles nestle in the windows. Up to three real ales: Boddingtons and Oldham bitters, plus OB mild.

Spinners Arms, 38 Woodbrook Road, Springhead

A two-roomed Lees house in a residential area, selling the usual bitter and mild, supplemented occasionally by the seasonal beers. The lounge has low beams and comfortable furnishings, wheel-back chairs, lots of brass,

bronze and copper creations, country scenes and a view of the pub in olden days. There is a neatly laid out vault and a raised patio for outside drinking.

White Hart, Stockport Road, Lydgate

A smart, low-ceilinged, multi-roomed free house in quiet surroundings, opposite farmland. Two of the rooms are set aside for diners and a third room has a serving hatch to the rectangular bar. There is wood panelling and seating, a real fire and two replica Victorian wood burning stoves. A good selection of real ales are on offer: Boddingtons and Lees bitters, Flowers IPA, Wadworth 6X and the light mild, Websters Green Label.

Closed and boarded

The scourge of Oldham Road has reached as far as Failsworth. BodPubCo's Lamb is now firmly closed up. In Salford, the Church (Greenalls) on Ford Street, off Chapel Street, is boarded up. Over in Milnrow, the Commercial on Newhey Road (Enterprise Inns) has suffered the same fate.

Cotton pickin

Chester's Cotton Tree on Great Ancoats Street was painted and cleaned up recently. It's still a lively and well run pub, with the three beers - Chesters mild, Boddies and Trophy - in fine fettle.

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

Home Brewing Revisited Humulus Lupulus

Part Nine: Boiling the Wort

I covered mashing and sparging in Part Five (August). When it comes to boiling I would advise the new brewer to buy the largest boiler he can afford.

I started with a 2-gallon pan on the stove, then a 3-gallon brass jam pan; next a 5-gallon aluminium Burco boiler and finally a 7-gallon stainless steel Burco with a 2.5kW element. The larger size is essential for a 5-gallon boil - the 'spare' 2-gallon headroom is necessary to accommodate the turbulence of the boil and avoid depositing sticky hops over the surroundings.

I am not sure whether Burcos in this size are still available. Smaller ones which I have seen in catering and camping outlets recently have been very expensive. Brupaks (12) import a German mash tun/boiler of 29 litres (6.5 gallons) capacity. I do not favour heated vessels for mashing. They also supply 30-litre and 50-litre (11-gallon) stainless boiling pans, which require a separate 8.5kW gas burner. These, I think, have no tap, so a pump with suitable piping would also be

necessary.

Graham Wheeler (11) mentions two polypropylene boilers, the Ritchie Brunheat and the Thorne Electrim. He himself uses a stainless steel Burco with a home-made false bottom of perforated copper to strain the hops. I have never found this last item necessary, as I will describe later.

The boiler serves a double purpose. It preheats the liquor prior to mashing and performs the boiling of the wort with the hops after mashing. Sometimes, if I am making a high-volume brew, I press the 5-gallon boiler into service as well, dividing the wort and hops between them.

I usually bring the wort to the boil first, then stir in the bittering hops and Irish Moss. This latter, also known as Caragheen or Copper Finings,



is actually dried seaweed, and helps coagulate unwanted protein matter out of the wort. Technically this is known as the 'hot break'. After one-and-a-half to two hours I will add any aroma hops, if used, then after another five minutes, switch off the heat.

References

11 Brew Classic European Beers at Home by Graham Wheeler & Roger Protz, CAMRA

12 Brupaks, 2 Kennedy Avenue, Fixby, Huddersfield HD2 2HJ (suppliers to home brew shops)

I next let the boiler stand with the lid on for 10 to 15 minutes. Then, after siting a suitable collection vessel, I open the boiler tap very slightly. If all has gone well, a thin stream of bright, clear wort will emerge. The tap can be opened a little bit more after a few minutes: providing whole hops have been used, these settle down and form a natural filter bed for the 'hot break'. Gradually, the tap can be opened wider, but patience is essential. If it is opened too much, too early, then it quickly becomes blocked. A useful 'fix-it' then is to attach a large diameter plastic or rubber tube to the tap outlet, long enough for the other end to be held above the top of the boiler, open the tap fully, blow hard down the tube whilst quickly closing the tap, then let things settle down before cracking it open again.

I once made a brew with pelleted hops, courtesy of a local regional brewery. Whilst these were excellent for flavour and aroma, they caused difficulties for the traditional hop-back process. No matter how slowly the tap was opened, a muddy dribble emerged and the tap soon blocked. These pellets break up to a fine suspension of hop particles in the boil and breweries using them usually employ a centrifugal method of wort clarification. I resolved it by throwing in a few handfuls of whole hops and re-boiling for ten minutes. Since then, I have limited pellets to no more than 50% of total hop weight.

Next time, cooling the wort.

Patricroft news

The Ellesmere, a sixties Boddingtons pub on Liverpool Road which was recently trading under the Clarkes badge, has reportedly been sold to an outfit called the Old King Cole pub company, of which not a lot is known.

Down at the Dutton Arms, another Boddingtons pub near the Bridgewater swing aqueduct, new managers Gareth and Stephanie Williams took over on 30th January. The pub sells just one real ale, Boddingtons bitter, and it is hoped to start providing food once the kitchen equipment has been sorted out. Passing boat trade will be halted for a while as the canal was closed and drained for work on Patricroft Bridge.

Anvil Tales Keith Egerton

Hydes have an ambitious programme of seasonal beers for 1998, starting in March with a 4.3% bitter using Fuggles hops and Maris Otter and crystal malts. This is to be followed at two month intervals by a 5% brown ale, a 4% pale bitter using Styrian Goldings, a 4.5% red berry ale for autumn, a 5% old English style winter warmer, and for the start of 1999, a 5.3% porter.

Hydes are committed to cask ale and to widening customer choice, so it's up to drinkers to support their efforts by trying each of the beers and providing feedback. If there is significant positive reaction to any particular beer(s), it (or they) may be produced regularly.

Trophy for Egerton

A recent clean-up and foray into the cellars at the Egerton (Holts) in Cheetham uncovered an old silver trophy. The cup, which dates from early this century, was last used in 1970 and it has been carefully restored so it can be used as the award for the Christmas darts knockout.

Declarations of Interests

Guidelines on declaring interests have been prepared by CAMRA's National Executive. One example given is that of licensees involved in voting for Good Beer Guide entries or pub awards. The guidance reads...

"...we would suggest to all members that if they have an interest that might suggest they might be voting for reasons other than those of supporting the interests of local drinkers then they should not participate and should declare an interest."

Too many 'mights' and not enough punctuation, but the spirit's right. The process should not only be above board, but should be seen as such.

WHAT'S DOING contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 1ET, to arrive no later than first post on 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.

Rupert

'So the two men and a dog branch is going belly-up, then? Fiona grinned as she sank another half of Throbsons Olde Weirdo. 'We'll no doubt be all fighting over the spoils.' I'm not so sure about that,' I interjected. 'There's no real iewel in the crown and who on earth wants Slutch? It's just a desert.' Bunty suggested that the Grotley Branch might pick up some minor gems on the Slumley boundary and that Snobley and Snoot Magna might do some cherry picking to the South, but the consensus was that the central core would remain unclaimed. 'Anyway, they're not dead yet,' Ophelia Hampton suggested. 'They took a vote on whether to live or die and it was tied, two all. Only the Chairman's casting vote saved it. We'll need to wait to see what Wayne Bluto does after the inquorate AGM.'

Silence fell. It was the evening of the final selection for entries in the Topers' Vademecum. A directive from HQ in St Allballs was read out concerning tavern keepers voting for their own hostelries and a heated discussion ensued. In the past this had been explicitly accepted and meetings had been stuffed with frequently absent

mine hosts and their long dead relatives and serving wenches clutching newly printed Campaign membership cards. Entertaining ploys had been allowed which enhanced the member licensees' chances of inclusion. Motions to exclude entire areas or increase the entries in others had been proposed, as had suggestions to chuck out all Drabs because the amber nectar was execrable in the extreme. These stratagems had all failed but had, nonetheless, been an admirable source of amusement diversion.

It seemed that corporate political correctness would soon signal the death of this ritual positioning. I glanced around the room. It would be a brave soul who would speak on behalf of his or her own pub and insist on voting. On the other hand, they do know what they're doing and they're members of the Campaign. To suggest they're lining their pockets is perhaps over the top, but I suppose that's progress in Our Little Tony's Brave New World. I hoped that they wouldn't all clear off with their formaldehyded grandmas, otherwise the meeting would be quorate barely and hardly representative. What next, an electoral college?" Mr Grimm opined despairingly as he spoiled his vote.

Wetherspoons for Heywood

While they were at Middleton Magistrates Court for the final stage of the licensing procedure for the Harbord Harbord in Middleton on Friday 13th February, JDW also obtained a licence for premises at 10-12 Market Street, Heywood (a former Kwik Save building).

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 March 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Horton Arms, Streetbridge, Middleton Road, Chadderton

Weds 4 March, 4th Oldham Beer Festival organisation meeting phone contact for details

Sat 14 March, Coach visit to Hart Brewery, Little Eccleston - phone contact for details

Tues 17 March 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Dog & Partridge, Middleton Road, Royton

Weds 18th March, 5th Oldham Beer Festival organisation meeting phone contact for details

Fri 27 - Sun 29 March, Oldham Beer Festival, Music Rooms, Werneth Park, Werneth, Oldham

Tues 31 March 8.30pm, What's Doing collation, Flying Horse, Rochdale

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

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 12 March 8pm, GBG Final Selection and form collation, Pot of Beer, New Mount Street, Manchester Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170 (h)

North Manchester

Wed Mar 4, Deansgate survey: Oxnoble, Liverpool Road 7pm;
Abercrombie 8.15; Rothwells, Spring Gardens 9.30 onward
Wed Mar 11, Regional meeting: Beer House, Angel St. 8pm
Wed Mar 18, Branch Meeting & AGM: Castle, Oldham Street, 8pm
Tues Mar 24, What's Doing Collation: Queens Arms, Honey Street,
Cheetham, 6pm onward
Wed Mar 25, Committee & Social: Charlestown, Charlestown Road,
Blackley, 8pm
Wed Apr 1, Fools crawl: Forgery & Firkin, Mosley St 7pm; Old
Monkey; Old Garratt, Granby Row 8.30; Lass o'Gowrie; Salisbury,

Wakefield Street 9.30. Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Wigan

Weds 18 March 8pm, Branch Meeting: White Lion, Church Street, Upholland Contact: John Barlow 01257 426464 (w), 01257 427595 (h)

Contributors to this issue: Steve Smith, Mark McConachie, Roger Hall, Pete Cash, Paul Roberts, Roger Wood, Dave White, Keith Egerton, Rob Magee, Roger Wilson

QUEENS ARMS

FREE HOUSE

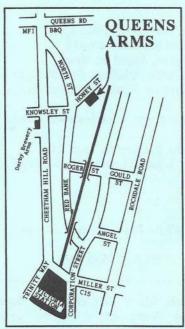
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We have a Children's Certificate so families are welcome inside or in the Beer Garden.

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