

25p

# What's Doing

MAY 1998



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## New Pub for Worsley



Worsley's grandest pub yet was opened to the drinking and dining public in late March. More than £1m has been lavished on an old lodge near Worsley Church to turn it into the John Gilbert, one of about ten outlets belonging to Watling Street Inns, a division of Yates's Brothers.

An oil painting of the great man (Gilbert) greets you as you enter. On the right and up a couple of steps is a small non-smoking area; to the left are tables large and small with an assortment of chairs. Food is served in this part of the pub and the meals are good value at under a fiver. There's another non-smoking area in the 'Library', to the front of the pub. The decor is quite restrained, with not too many canal orientated objects about, and I did like the choir stall seating near the bar.

Beers are Boddies £1.70, Theakstons XB £1.90 and Directors even dearer. The pub is on Worsley Brow and buses 26,33,35 and 68 will take you to the door.

*Mark McConachie*

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## **Black Marble**

The latest beers to come out of the Marble Brewery are McKenna's Revenge Porter and Dade's Bitter. The McKenna's (5%) bears a marked resemblance to Dobbin's Yakima Grande Porter. Once again, an excellent beer. The name comes from the brewery which once owned the Marble Arch, McKenna's of Harpurhey. The company's ale and porter store was behind the pub and the entrance (*shown here*) was demolished in the early 1980s.



Dade's Bitter (3.8% and £1.40 a pint) is lighter than the other brews and it has also been well received.

## **Yates's sale**

Yates Brothers have sold their outlets in Ashton, Oldham and Urmston, amongst others, to Century Inns. They may be converted to Tap & Spiles - watch this space.



## Hogsheads

Whitbread opened two new Manchester Hogsheads at the beginning of April. The first to open is on Deansgate, the ground floor of a former insurance office. The other one opened a week later in a new two-storey building on the corner of Oxford Street and Grafton Street, next to the MRI. Both offer nine or ten ales from the bar and four on gravity from a back bar stillage. The beer range is much the same as at the High Street Hogshead - Boddies, Flowers, 6X and rotating guests.

Food is available most of the day and evening and they open early in the morning to serve coffee, breakfasts and such. They have similar decor - bare brick, part-panelling, wood flooring and the odd rug here and there. Both have designated non-smoking areas - at Deansgate front and back of the pub and at Oxford Road on the first floor.

They seem set to do well and Deansgate is ready for the good weather with doors that open fully to the street. The Oxford Road building is of a quite striking design, echoing the 20s/30s with its windows and glass block cylinder entrance.

## Pub Design Awards

CAMRA and English Heritage are once again co-operating in the annual Pub Design and Conservation Awards and suggestions for likely contenders should be sent to local CAMRA branches.

The award categories are:

- 1 Best Newly Built Pub.
- 2 Best Conversion to Pub Use. This is for a building not previously used as a pub, although it could have been licensed premises such as a restaurant.
- 3 Best Refurbishment. More than just a tidy up and new wallpaper.
- 4 Conservation Award. Making the best of existing features of a pub.

## Romper Revamper

Greenalls have new plans to knock the Romper at Ringway about by building extensions at the side and rear and making the car park bigger. All in the best possible taste, no doubt.



# THE MAD MAY EXPERIENCE

*or "They SHOOT Scratchers, Don't They?"*

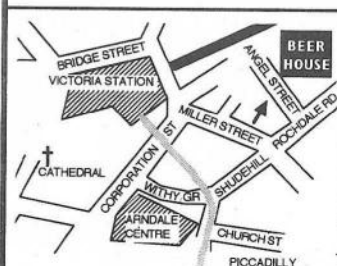
## **FIVE BEER FESTIVALS AND 200 NEW BEERS IN THE MONTH OF MAY**

- 1. OPENING TIME - THE MAY DAY HOLIDAY FESTIVAL**  
THURSDAY APRIL 30 - MONDAY (BANK HOLIDAY) MAY 4  
**40 BEERS UPSTAIRS AND DOWN**
- 2. THE BEER & CIDER EXPERIENCE**  
FRIDAY MAY 8 - SUNDAY MAY 10  
**AT LEAST FIVE EXTRA CIDERS & PERRIES**  
**JOIN 30 NEW BEERS FOR YOUR DELECTATION**
- 3. YET ANOTHER FESTIVAL - GET CASK & BOTTLED AT THE**  
**BELGIAN EXPERIENCE** FRIDAY 15 - SUNDAY 17 MAY  
**30 NEW CASK ALES ARE COMPLEMENTED BY AN EXTENSIVE**  
**RANGE OF BOTTLED BELGIANS!**
- 4. SPRING BANK HOLIDAY MEGA FESTIVAL**  
THURSDAY 21 - MONDAY (BANK HOLIDAY) 25 MAY  
**40 MORE NEW BEERS PRESENTED ON TWO FLOORS**
- 5. THE "AND FINALLY..." FESTIVAL**  
FRIDAY 29 - SUNDAY 31 MAY  
**30 MORE NEW CASK BEERS UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS**  
**ALL FESTIVAL BEERS £1 A PINT ALL DAY SUNDAY MAY 31st!**

**OTHER NEW BEERS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE BAR EVERY WEEKDAY.**  
**WHITE FANG**

**SPECIAL FESTIVAL ALE (ALL MONTH), BREWED BY SAL AND IDY AT**  
**SHUGBOROUGH - A SORT OF CRAZY, HOPPY, PREMIUM BITTER.**

**FOOD, BBQ's AND ENTERTAINMENT**



**ONLY AT**

# **THE BEER HOUSE**

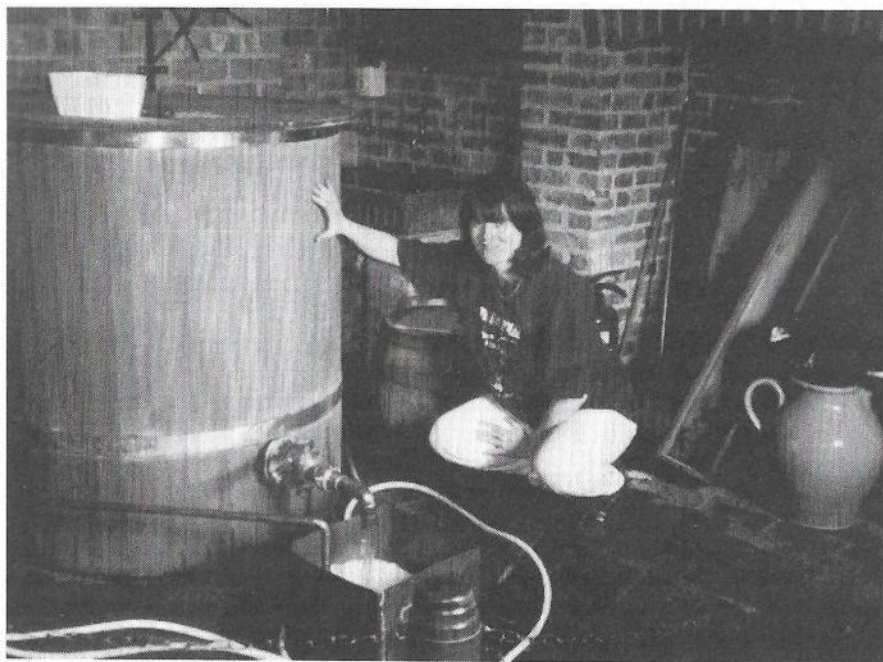
Angel Street, Manchester  
0161 839 7019





## Beer House Brew

In April Idy and Sal of the Beer House went to Shugborough Hall to brew their May Festival Beer at the wood-fired brewery situated in the museum there. With help from Keith and Brad of the Titanic Brewery, they have produced a pale bitter, with Bramling Cross hops for a citrus aroma. The 4.4% beer is called White Fang ('A Light Beer with a Bite' - geddit?) and it will be on sale at the Beer House during the Mad May Experience (*see advert*).



## Cap in hand

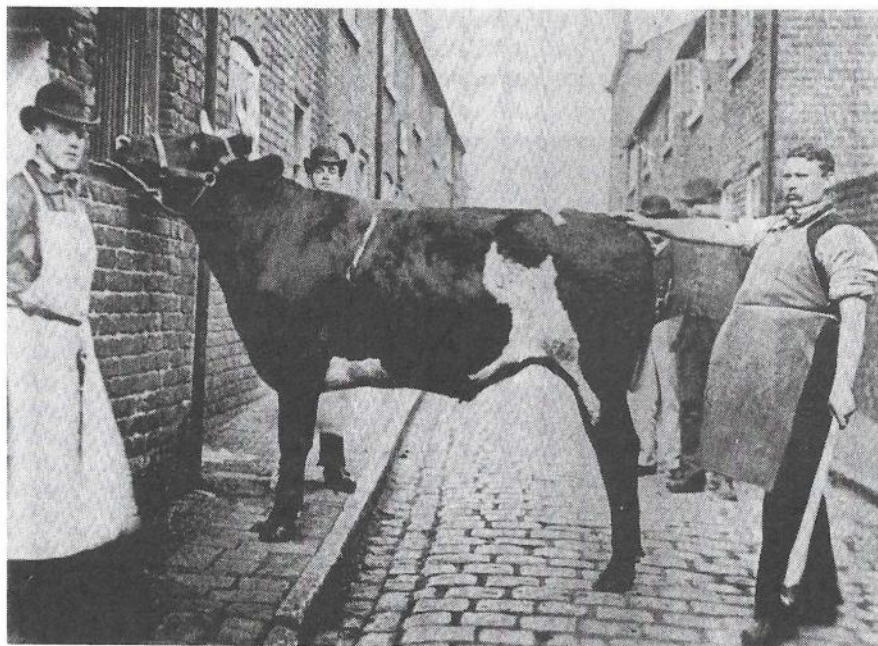
The John Willie Lees in the Arndale Centre was closed in April. What's Doing discounts wild rumours about problems with the VATman in favour of a more realistic theory. The growth of the flat cap as a *de rigeur*, modern fashion accessory is clearly the main reason. The rapidly increasing number of flat cap wearers has inevitably resulted in many more potential customers being ejected for sartorial inelegance. What a shame! Bring back the Lower Ship.

## DA

The Blues Shack (originally Wilsons' Spotted Cow) in Oldham, which was famous for its live jazz, has become a pub again - the unusually named Ring of Feathers. However, a quick glance through the window was enough - the bar was a mass of keg and nitrokeg fonts!

## Pub Food Guide

The fifth edition of CAMRA's Good Pub Food Guide is being prepared and local branches are collecting details of recommended pubs. The guide will contain about 620 pubs (as opposed to 5,000 in the Good Beer Guide), which means a dozen or so per county.



The recommended pubs must serve good quality real ale and value-for-money meals cooked with fresh ingredients. Somewhere selling frozen chips and peas is allowed, so long as the catering emphasis is on home-cooked, fresh meals.

A new feature of the guide will be a section devoted to pubs selling the best snacks - soups, ploughmans, sandwiches, pie and chips, that sort of thing.

## Robinsmooth

Robinsons are selling a smooth version of their best bitter in four pubs. Strangely, it's cask conditioned beer which goes through a nitrogenator. This ruination will cost an extra 10-15p a pint.

## Farnworth

The Britannia on King Street, Farnworth, is holding a beer festival on 1st-4th May. Over at the Clock Face, Holts bitter has been on sale there for a few months.



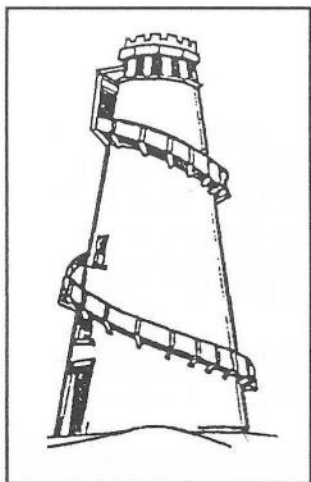
## Bavarian brews in C-on-M

*Paul Roberts*

The recently extended Sandbar on Grosvenor Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock now sells bottled Augustiner Edelstoff (5.6%) at £2.30 for a half litre. Edelstoff is the premium of three bottled Hell beers produced by Augustiner and has a very hoppy taste and aroma.

Augustiner is the smallest of the six Munich breweries and is the one that the vast majority of Munich drinkers prefer. Although I have seen Augustiner on sale in a few select bars in the USA, this is the first sighting in the UK. The Sandbar is also selling Spaten's Franziskaner Weizenbier on draught at £2.40 per pint. As Hofbräuhaus Helles and Paulaner Weizenbiers are available at £2.25 per 500ml bottle, only Löwenbräu and Hacker-Pschorr are missing from the Munich line up.

Diebels Alt and Dom Kölsch are two more German beers (both top fermented) not normally seen in this country. It is nice to see a bar offering a selection of German beers, other than the fashionable Weizenbiers, although with the current exchange rate the prices are steep! Edelstoff in Munich currently sells in Augustiner's brewery tap at DM4,20 (£1.40) per half litre, but in German supermarkets half litre bottles of Edelstoff can be picked up at 35p each.



## Frodsham Festival

The sixth Frodsham Beer Festival, sponsored by Rowlands Care in association with CAMRA is on 22nd and 23rd May at the Community Centre, Fluin Lane. New brews, farmhouse ciders and food available at all sessions.

Sessions are 7-11pm Friday, 12-4pm and 7-11pm Saturday. Entry is by ticket only: £3 for the lunchtime session, £3.50 for the evenings. Tickets are available from the Helter Skelter Bar (01928 733361) or Dave Brown, Joiners Cottage, off High Street, Frodsham WA6 7AN. (Cheques payable to 'Rowlands Care').

# THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PUB



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

21<sup>ST</sup> GREAT BRITISH  
**BEER**  
FESTIVAL

LONDON  
OLYMPIA

4th-8th AUGUST 1998



## Wigan & District

*Dave White*



Things may be looking up at the **Old Pear Tree**, Frog Lane, on the edge of town. This Paramount Inn has recently undergone yet another change of management, but there is now more of a commitment to real ale. Burtonwood bitter competes with a guest beer, and cask Burtonwood mild may return (the pub used to be tied to the Bold Lane brewery). The Old Pear Tree has lost a lot of friends since Frank and Jean retired eighteen months ago, and it would be good to see the place picking up again.

In Standish, however, Burtonwood mild is not faring so well. The **Horseshoe** on Wigan Road and the **Shamrock**, Preston Road, have gone over to keg, leaving traditional Burtonwood bitter up against the ubiquitous Smooth. In contrast, the **Globe** on High Street has bucked up no end, with two guest ales on offer (Ruddles bitter and Barnsley Brewery Black Heart stout when your scribe called in.) Beware the John Smiths Smooth, though.

A recent trip to Pemberton found real ale in surprisingly good form. Lees bitter is on sale alongside Tetley bitter at the **Travellers Rest**, Orrell Road; nearly as exciting, in fact, as the Worthington bitter available at the **White Lion**, Ormskirk Road (Tetley) and **Dog & Partridge**, Chapel Street, (Greenalls). The D & P also sells White Shield Pale Ale. Elsewhere in Pemberton, cask-conditioned beer is holding its own, though the **Fishergate Inn** on Orrell Road (Burtonwood) is closed, and appears to be a site hut!

News continues to pour in from Ince-in-Makerfield... all of it bad, alas. The Holts ales that I wrote about in February at the **Engineers Arms** were on promotion only, and the pub has reverted to keg Scottish & Newcastle products. Further up Belle Green Lane, the **Oak Tree** now sells Burtonwood fizz only, whilst the **Manley Hotel** on Ince Green Lane is, I am told, being turned into a doctor's surgery. The keg pubs in Ince now outnumber the real ale outlets by 11-4, with another inn closed.



In Abram, the **Bucks Head** on Warrington Road (*above*) has been selling guest beers since February: on Good Friday these were Robinsons Frederics and Parish Somerby bitter. Over on Plank Lane, the **Nevison Inn** also had a range of beers on offer in rather quieter surroundings. Both pubs sell Tetley bitter. On the other hand, the **Dover Lock** in between sold only one real beer when I called by - Greenalls mild, of all things.

Real ale survives in Platt Bridge! Greenalls bitter is still on sale at the **Commercial Inn**, Victoria Road, whilst the **Railway Hotel**, a former Tetley house on Liverpool Road offers Theakstons bitter. Check 'em out.

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## Making his Mark

Taking over as Chairman of the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA is Mark McConachie, formerly Branch Secretary. Whether Mark will be able successfully to preside over a merger of North and South Manchester branches remains to be seen.



## Oldham Wetherspoons

Paul Roberts

The Up Steps Inn in Oldham town centre opened on Wednesday 25th March and it is an excellent example of what can be achieved in a new building. Although it appears quite small from the outside, there are two floors, decked out to the luxurious standard expected of JDW emporia.

The guest beers are all priced at £1.59 per pint, which is below the JDW average, and the Batemans XXXB on the opening weekend received much praise. You can get two meals for £5.95, so at last there is somewhere in Oldham town centre offering reasonably priced food in the evening. (The Bank Top Tavern is worth a visit for food, but this is a few minutes walk away, on the edge of the centre).

There is a very pleasing large sign by the entrance underlining the company policy: strictly no under-18s and no children at any time - a brat-free zone as well as a noise and smoke free zone!

The first weekend of the opening coincided with the Oldham Beer Festival. Several imbibers at the festival visited the Up Steps Inn first and it appears to have received universal praise.

## 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 WEDNESDAY** 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 HARDY

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

### Middleton Matters

Sir - I am surprised at Peter Alexander's complaint (Letters, April) concerning my article about the Ring o'Bells. It is very rare that a Middleton hostelry graces the front cover of What's Doing and I would have thought that Peter would support the local coverage.

Every weekend I tend to try a few Lees houses before finishing up in the Ring o'Bells and I have always found that the pub offers by far the best pint of the evening. I was particularly surprised that Peter praised the Crown and the Britannia, so I visited both pubs before writing this letter. I was unimpressed by the beer and I know that several people have strayed from the Crown to the Ring o'Bells! I believe the Middleton Archer comes second to the Ring o'Bells in terms of quality out of the Lees pubs in Middleton centre.

I cannot understand what the local branch of CAMRA has against the Ring o'Bells - I hope they will frequent the pub and return it to its rightful place in the Good Beer Guide.

*Paul Roberts*

### Wetherspoons

Sir - Regarding the various comments for and against Wetherspoons houses. I prefer the smaller, longer-established ones in the London area, such as the Sarsen Stone, Wealdstone, and J J Moons, Wembley, as these have more of a pub-like feel to them.

It is possible to visit these outlets by train (Harrow & Wealdstone and Wembley Central stations) on the return half of a ticket to London from Manchester, unless you are using an Apex ticket. Indeed, you can generally break your journey using the return half of a saver, cheap day or ordinary return ticket.

I have done this a few times returning from beer festivals: Stalybridge on the way back from Huddersfield, Uttoxeter on the way back from Derby, Macclesfield/Stockport on the way back from Stoke, and Chester, Frodsham, Knutsford, etc, on the way back from Rhyl. These breaks in a journey provide a welcome addition to a Saturday lunchtime visit to a beer festival - do other readers have any favourite stopping-off places?

*Kim Rampley*

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### Up the Junction

The Radclyffe Arms, the Burtonwood pub near the John Willie Lees Brewery in Middleton Junction, reopened on 20th April after a refurbishment.





# The Crescent

Free House

Would like to invite you to the

## **A-Z Beer Festival**

Starting on Monday 25th May

12 noon

Beers available from Summerskills, Darwin, Six  
Bells, Linfit, Cartmel, Roosters, Freeminer, York  
and many more.

Food Available.

For more information please contact Ruth at

The Crescent Pub, 20 Crescent, Salford.

(opposite Salford University.)

Tel: 0161 736 5600



## Brown Cow, Burrs

*Steve Smith*

The Brown Cow at Burrs is Bury's oldest pub building, reputedly dating from 1752. It was originally part of a farm, then when Burrs was developed as a centre of industry it became a licensed house. The industry has gone now, and during the 1980s Burrs was redeveloped as a country park.

The Brown Cow became a Wilsons pub in 1949 and to this day there is a 'Wilsons Ales' signboard on the roof, but there are no clues to the present owners. The pub has a cosy atmosphere, with two tastefully furnished rooms, leaded windows, button-back seating, low ceilings and potted plants here and there. It is open Monday to Thursday evenings from 7.30pm, and Friday to Sunday lunchtimes from 12 noon and again in the evenings from 7.30pm (closed during the afternoons). There are reasonably priced meals and snacks and the real ale on offer is Grays Landlords Best Bitter at £1.40 a pint.

Burrs is about a mile from Bury centre and can be reached by frequent bus services from the Interchange: 476 or 477 to the junction of Woodhill Road and Hunstanton Drive, or 472/474 to the top of Woodhill Road. Leaflets about Burrs and the walks in the area can be obtained from the Tourist Information Office in Bury. Another pub worth visiting is the Garsdale (Boddingtons) on Woodhill Road, a few yards from the entrance to the country park.



## Now and Then

*Rob Magee*

No.105

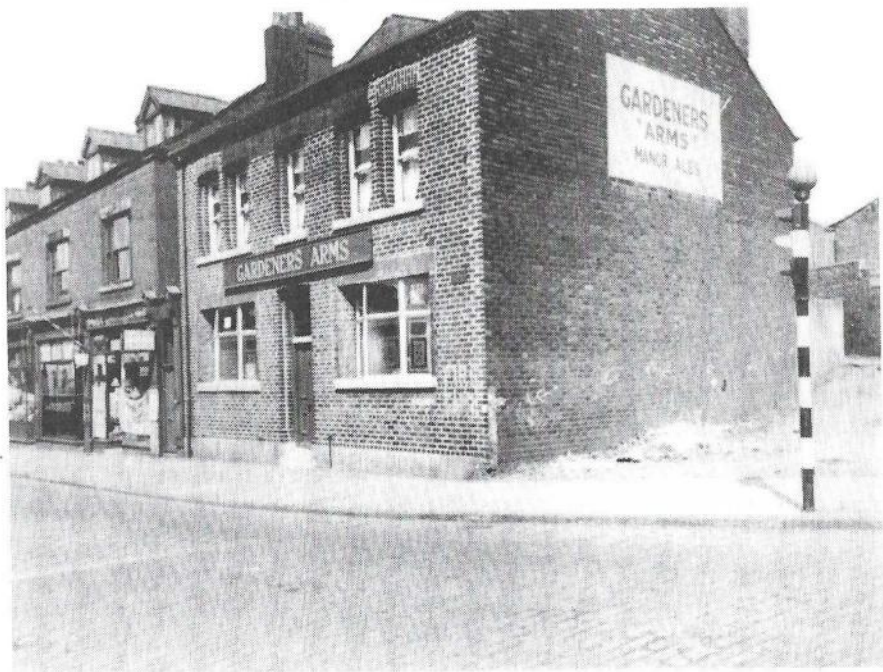
**Gardeners Arms**

*39 Cross Street, Oldham*

The Gardeners Arms was one of many Oldham beerhouses which closed under Compulsory Purchase Orders in the 1960s. It had been in business for over a hundred years and was originally called the Empress Inn. The Mutual Progressive Botanical Society held their meetings there around 1860, which was probably why the name was changed to the Gardeners Arms.

A local brewer, Thomas Sutcliffe, owned the property in the 1880s and a survey of 1894 found the place roomy (three drinking rooms and three bedrooms) and in good repair.

For most of its existence the beerhouse saw licensees come and go after only a year or two. The Partington family's tenure at the time of the First World War and John Hodson's nine years during and after the Second World War were exceptions. The local Rochdale & Manor Brewery were then the owners, followed by Sam Smiths. The Gardeners closed in May 1962, the building was demolished about four years later and the site is now a grass verge fronting industrial units.





## Holts Corner

*Stewart Revell*

Over the last month or so I have had a number of requests (er, three, actually, and two from the same person) to find out what is going on, or not, as the case may be, at Winters Wine Bar in Stockport.

When the brewery bought this property they were hoping to have it up and running in a short space of time, but as Holts aficionados in Stockport are well aware, no work has been done for five months. The brewery tell me that they are still waiting for the go-ahead (presumably from the planners) so they can get on with converting the listed building.

After permission is granted, it will be another three months or so before the pub will be ready. Joeys are still looking for a name for the place. Any ideas? Who knows, they may even treat you to a pint if they like your suggestion!

Improvements and redecoration have been completed at the Brooklyn, the Great Lever (Bolton) pub Holts bought from Greenalls a few years ago. I hear that it has been fitted out in splendid fashion.



The brewery was established in 1849, so next year Holts will have been in existence for 150 years. What will they be doing to celebrate the event? A '150 Year' special brew? Sixx on draught? Or something else - any ideas?



## 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 Rules.

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Under 26 £8 ☐ date of birth:.....

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

Send your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to:

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



## Pennsylvanian Pints

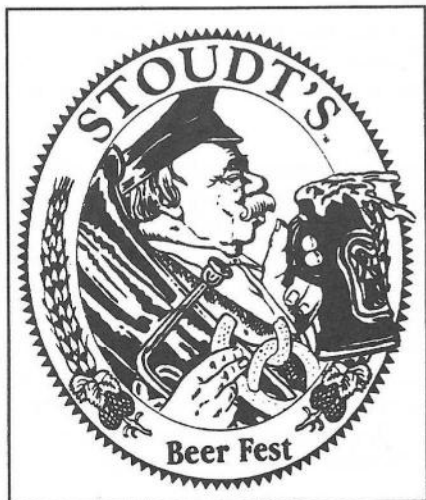
*Paul Roberts*

Pennsylvania will probably not spring to mind immediately as a holiday destination in the USA, but the second-oldest state (Delaware beat it by a week) boasts some gorgeous countryside, is easy to reach from Manchester and, most important of all, has a selection of splendid microbreweries. It also has the oldest brewery in the USA - Yuenglings at Pottsville (a former mining community with a large number of Welsh immigrants).

From Manchester, Continental Airlines fly daily to New York (Newark). Newark is a far more compact airport than JFK and customs and immigration clearance is usually quite efficient. Outside the terminal, through the haze of kerosene you may detect a whiff of hops - the modern Anheuser Busch plant is right next door. Don't be put off by this and catch the next plane home, as there is plenty of superb quality beer to be found. Pick up your hire car (Hertz rates are usually the cheapest) and it's a couple of minutes to the main New Jersey Turnpike. Head south and it's about sixty miles to the bridge across the Delaware into Pennsylvania.

The Valley Forge Brewery at the shopping mall near the Valley Forge National Park has a 10-barrel brewing plant housed in a former cinema and produces a wide range of beer styles - from a British-type amber ale to stouts and porters, as well as 'guest' brews, including a Raspberry Wheat Beer. Samplers (small glasses, between 4 and 6oz, depending on the bar) are available for those wishing to try all eight or nine beers.

The city of Reading was once home to twenty-four pretzel bakeries (there are now three) and a microbrewery there honours that history.



The Pretzel City Brewing Company at 30 South 4th Street was founded in August 1995 inside the 1885 Market House. The 15-barrel brewery offers seven different beers, and again there are samplers available for those on a flying visit who want to try them all. The Belgian-style Witbier had added coriander and curacao spices, Golden Ale is a German light beer a little like Kölsch, Duke of Ale is an English-type, cask conditioned IPA using all English ingredients and served through a handpump. Steam Horse Lager uses Belgian malt and Cascade hops, the Altbier is a

true Düsseldorf type Alt and the Oktoberfest is a Märzenbier. Also available was Richard Penn's Porter.

Reading's other brewpub is the Canal Street Pub at 545 Canal Street, housed in an old factory building and with the Neversink Brewery downstairs. Four beers were on offer encompassing American, English and German styles.

The Victory Brewing Company at 420 Acron Lane, Downingtown, is in another converted factory unit. It was Friday evening when I visited here and it was extremely noisy, with deafening rock music making conversation impossible in the bar area. We had to go into a large, warehouse-like 'lounge'. The beers were stronger than average, with Moonglow Weizenbock at 7.8% and Victory Festbier at 6%, but the autumnal guest brew on offer was English-hopped Wildbriar Ale at a more quaffable 4.4%.



Philadelphia is a city steeped in history (by US standards!) and apart from many wonderful buildings there are nine breweries: Dock Street, Sam Adams, Independence, Yards, Red Bell, Manayunk, Gravity, America U-Brew and Poor Henry's. I only had time to visit the two downtown breweries during my whistle stop tour. Sam Adams Brewhouse is at 1516 Sansom Street and is a subsidiary of the Sam Adams of Boston fame. On tap were Smart Ass Stout, Eleven Pound Ale (which uses 11lb of English Pioneer hops per batch, and a dark mild. The large Dock Street Brewery was a disappointment - very expensive and all the advertised beers, from stouts to Alt and Kölsch-type, tasted sour. But just before leaving we discovered a Dortmunder Export-type which wasn't advertised and it was excellent.

The longest established micro-brewery in Pennsylvania is Stoudt's in Adamstown. This is not just a German-style brewery, it is a whole German village. Every Sunday afternoon in October, there's an 'Oktoberfest' with a Bavarian band and food to match. The beerhall is decked out in the famous *Weiß-Blau* colours of Bavaria and the atmosphere was like the Munich Oktoberfest of years ago, before it turned pop. The range of German beers included Pils, Oktoberfest-Märzen, Gold Export and Doppelbock, and this was supplemented by American and British styles, giving a total of twelve beers, all brewed to the German Reinheitsgebot. Fat Dog Stout is named after the Stoudt's family dog - a 150lb black Labrador called Ferdinand.

Further west down Route 272 is the town of Lancaster and the



Lancaster Malt Brewing Company. This is housed in a former tobacco warehouse at the junction of Plum and Walnut Streets. Again, a superb selection of beers and one worthy of note was the Amish Four Grain, described as a symphony of oat, barley, rye and wheat, dry-hopped with plenty of Fuggles. The apple beer was unusual and quite nice as a one-off, especially for cider drinkers. The usual ales, stouts and Germanic beers were also featured.



**POCONOS, PA.**

<http://www.poconomail.com/barleycreek>

In the scenic Pocono Mountains in the north east of the state is the Barley Creek Brewing Company at Tannersville (Camelback Road). The beers here tended to be of a higher ABV than average and the best bitter-type beer, Super Hop, was a mighty 6.3%. Again, there was a full range of brewing styles, including J.B's Irish Red, Aussie Gold, Promised Land Light, Brown Antler Ale and the powerful Renovator Stout.

Several new breweries are already being planned and for those who appreciate good beer and splendid countryside, Pennsylvania should definitely be a serious consideration for a holiday destination.

# 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

## Dog & Rat days

The word 'Rat' in a pub's name today brings to mind a bar with nicely polished tables, chairs and floorboards and a choice of vegetarian meals in the refrigerated display. Back in the last century there were several Dog & Rat beerhouses in Manchester and these were altogether different and more interesting places.

There was one on Queen Street (featured in a previous article) and another on Wood Street, off the other side of Deansgate. The beerhouses were named after a popular entertainment in the days when there was no shortage of rat pits in the city. A 'pit' was an enclosure constructed so that it could contain a quantity of rats and at the same time allow a dog the freedom of movement to do its work. The sport wasn't illegal, although betting on how long it took the dog to kill all the rats was.



Local rat catchers provided the rats and there was plenty of work for this profession in the days when stables and other places prone to infestation had to be cleared regularly. A writer in the early 1900s recalled a rat catcher he knew who lived in an old cottage near Whitworth Street and kept his stock in wire cages stacked against a wall. When they were needed, the wife put her hands in the cages and pulled out the required number of rodents. The above photo shows a rat seller at the dog market in the East End of London about 1900.

There was a rat pit at the Sawyers Arms beerhouse in what is now Lloyd Street (not to be confused with the pub of the same name on

**T**O BE LET, a Sporting BEERHOUSE and PROVISION SHOP, in one of the best parts of Salford, with rat pit, &c.; the present tenant having realised a fortune. Ingoing and rent moderate.—Apply to Mr. Gee, valuer and agent, 28, Green-gate, Salford.

Deansgate). The tenant had a well-known dog, 'Dick', which was said to have killed twenty rats in twenty seconds. 'Teddy Wells', a bull terrier which belonged to another Manchester licensee, once killed thirty rats in twenty-six-and-a-half seconds at a rat pit near London Road, where the Fire Station building is now. Teddy was something of an all-rounder and used to perform party tricks for charity.

There were still plenty of rats to be had in the early twentieth century and the sport survived in some of the more respectable pubs in the city. A lady who was brought up at the Fox on Byrom Street (new houses now cover the site, near the Air & Space Museum) remembers a man bringing a sack of rats to the pub when she was a little girl (*The smallest child on the photograph below*). Through the front door were double doors, then a half door. She watched from the stairs as the sack was emptied into the space between the doors and the family's bull terrier was set on them. It was all over in seconds!



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*Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Mark McConachie, Dave White, Nic Keleghar, Dave Brown, Rob Magee, Peter Wadsworth, Roger Hall.*

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# Rupert

'Hello, Biggles! Hello Don Juan!' Bunty exclaimed as he attended the fourth AGM of the afternoon. Tubs Caries and Trev winced perceptibly. It had been one of Wayne Bluto's better ideas, but he'd forgotten about entrenched rivalries. What could be better to counter the falling attendances at branch events, than to have an AGM Saturday, where everyone could attend everyone else's AGM and guarantee quoracy?

Bunty had already had one altercation with the former Tubby Bleachhead, lately of the Smarmford & Slutch branch. Tubby, at Slumley's AGM, which went through as smoothly as broken glass, had dared to question Slumley's choice of hostelries in the toppers' vademecum. Why, he wanted to know, weren't all the Drabs houses in Slumley Parva in? How dare Bunty and his cronies include a Brobdingnag's hostelry?

'Look here, you gormless bozo,' Bunty had retorted, 'You're talking through your arse, as usual. You've never been able to grasp the fundamentals of the selection process, you big girl's blouse, and want to include boozers that nobody else reckons. Insulting our pubs just because you've got no branch of your own is pretty pathetic, really. Keep quiet, or you'll get a blowlamp down your

ill-fitting strides.' Tubby had obliged, merely muttering futilely to the unsympathetic, Drabs-hating Mr Grimm about how horrid Slumley's Brobdingnag's pubs were.

'What's all the Don Juan bit, then, jailbird?' Mr Caries enquired somewhat unwisely. 'Well, I hear that when you were up at Oxford with Lord Archer reading Greats, you dated the future prime minister of Pakistan and were best mates with the leader of the opposition, him of Notting Hill Carnival street cred fame. No doubt the Spice Girls, Melinda Messenger and Pamela Anderson are all lusting after your body, you ladykiller, you, or is it perhaps all in the mind? Only Charlie Starsky makes a more unlikely serial seducer.' 'It must be true,' Trev responded. 'You wouldn't lie to your daddy, would you, son? And what's with the Biggles bit then, you big fairy?'

'C'mon Bunty, it's not worth your parole,' said Tish, perhaps the only one who could make him keep his calm. As she pulled him out of the Snobley AGM, she kneed both Trevs, Tubs and the former Tubby Bleachhead in their groins, leaving them doubled up in agony, Charlie Super and Rumpleshirtscream nonplussed and the meeting inquorate as others ran out in fear of eunuching. 'Bloody daft idea,' thought Wayne Bluto as he gazed at the mayhem. 'What to do in the future, eh?'

# Branch Diary

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tues 5 May 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Cemetery Inn, Bury Road, Rochdale

Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, Weekend trip to Lake District, including Jennings Brewery

Tues 19 May 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Cask & Feather, Oldham Road, Rochdale

Tues 26 May 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Rochdale

Fri 29 - Sun 31 May, Camping Trip. Venue to be decided.

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

## **North Manchester**

Wed May 6, Swinton Crawl. Football, Swinton Hall Road, 7pm; Buckley, Partington La, 8pm; White Swan, Worsley Road, 9.30.

Wed 13 May 8pm: McGuinness Brewery Visit, Drake Street, Rochdale.

Sat May 16, National Mild Day. Beer House, 12noon. Mild Crawl

Tues 19 May 8pm, Regional Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester

Wed May 20 8pm, Branch Meeting, Welcome, Robert Hall Street, Salford

Tues 26 May 6pm onward, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 27 May 8pm, Committee & Social, John Gilbert, Worsley Brow, Worsley

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## **Trafford & Hulme**

T & H branch are out most Thursday evenings - for details contact Dave Ward, 0161 980 1170 (h)

**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.

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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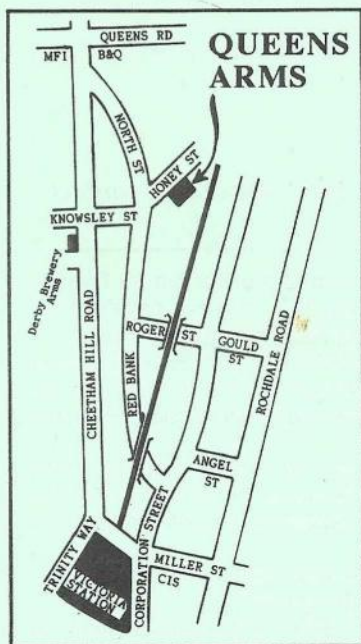


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Chess, etc.

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General Knowledge Quiz Night  
Tuesday. Beer Prizes

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*We're in the Good Beer Guide  
and CAMRA's Good Food Guide*