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What's Doing

AUGUST 1998

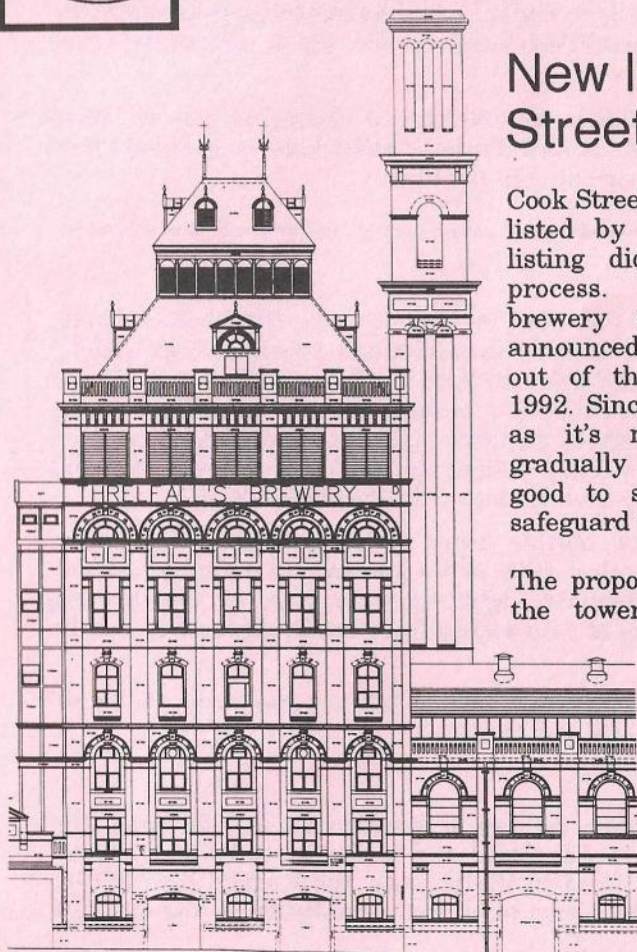


The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

New life for Cook Street Brewery

Cook Street Brewery in Salford was listed by CAMRA in 1988, but listing didn't save the brewing process. Whitbread shut the brewery as listed status was announced and the brewers moved out of the premises entirely in 1992. Since then the Deva Centre, as it's now called, has been gradually falling to pieces, so it's good to see there are plans to safeguard the building.

The proposed development retains the tower, chimney and copper room (which are all listed) and the façade of the cottages (which aren't). The boiler room and stores, which are listed, are to be demolished. The site is in a sorry state at the moment and the proposals are welcomed. Salford will retain an important building



which is part of its skyline and which will form a characterful focus for the new development.

What, you might say, is the point of listing a brewery if it doesn't stop brewers abandoning it? Well, there are several reasons. First, breweries are part of our heritage. Fine buildings should not be demolished out of hand. Efforts should be made to adapt them for other uses if their original purpose has gone. Otherwise we may be guilty of bequeathing acres of wriggly tin lookalike developments to our grandchildren. Secondly, listed building status does shackle developers who would prefer empty sites in many cases. This tends to reduce the value of listed buildings and may weigh in the decision to continue brewing or sell the site.

Perhaps with Whitbread it makes little difference, but with other breweries it might make a difference at the margin. For example, the decision to close Morrells in Oxford could have been influenced if the brewery and pubs were listed buildings for which alternative uses were impossible.

Listing Cook Street didn't stop Whitbread closing it, but we have retained a landmark in Salford. Perhaps other breweries should now be listed to stop asset-stripping in the future.

Chorlton Marble

With the opening of the Marble Beer House, Manchester Road, Chorlton, on July 23rd, the Marble empire has grown to three outlets. This new pub was formed from the former off-licence that was Marble Arch World Beers. The old shop premises have been enlarged to the rear and a front fenced-off drinking area has been added to good effect. The bar, midway along, divides the narrow space very well and overall the place has a relaxed, cosmopolitan cafe feel to it.

There are usually four Marble beers on - Chorlton (aka Dade's), bitter, Totally and another, plus three guests and a draught cider. Batemans mild and Summer Lightning were there on the opening night. Food in the form of sandwiches from the Barbikan deli can be provided.

The Marble Beer House is near Chorlton Library and buses 47, 84, 86 and 110 from town will get you there.

Tameside Tales

Sullivans, Penny Meadow, Ashton, is boarded up and for sale. The Talbot in Stalybridge is still closed and is shortly to be demolished. Over on Huddersfield Road in Stalybridge, the Cherry Tree is also closed. Inner city blight seems to be well established in the outlying towns.

Independents' Day Treasure Hunt

The Rat & Handbag Dominoes Team, winners of the 4th July Treasure Hunt, are pictured here with Pauline Wadsworth at the shield presentation at the Beer House. The team scored 100% and the overall standard of entrants was high, which was no doubt something to do with the fact that the questions were a lot easier than last year! Sixty-five people took part, the best turnout ever, the weather was kind and a good time was had by all. Thank you to Brian and the staff at the Beer House, and see you all at next year's Independents' Day Treasure Hunt?



Beer Festival

The High Peak & North East Cheshire branch of CAMRA is running the real ale bar at the Glossop Rugby Club Competitions Festival Weekend, 28th to 30th August 1998.

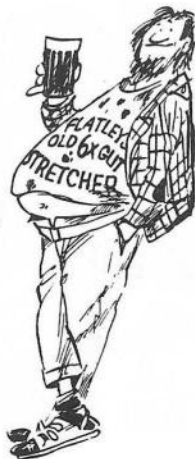
Entry is free during the day and £2 for each evening session (CAMRA members £1). There will be about twenty different real ales and ciders and a regular shuttle bus will be running between the centre of Glossop to the Festival site at Hargate Mill Lane, Charlesworth.

The sessions are as follows:

Friday 28th August 7pm-11pm - Comedy Night
entertainment

Saturday 29th August 12 noon to 11pm - Live
music in the evening

Sunday 30th August 12 noon to 10.30pm - Rugby
knock-out competition in the afternoon and live
music in the evening.



R.O.B. Independents' Day

Ian Mitchell

Until recently one of the best kept secrets in CAMRA has been the ROB Independents' Day Trip. This celebration of independent breweries has been run on the first Saturday of July for a number of years. The format has been simple and, until this year, unvaried. A free coach (a double-decker for the first year, coaches since) has left from an alcoholic location at 11.00am and toured round independent pubs and breweries in the ROB area, with people joining and leaving wherever they chose.

The favourite meeting place has been Lees Brewery (*below*), where we have progressed from the basement to the new lounge. Lees have provided a great start, especially the year when the coach didn't arrive and it was nearly 1.00pm before a replacement could be found! Most trips have also passed through or terminated at Phoenix Brewery in Heywood. A more popular finishing point has been McGuinness in Rochdale, mainly because Rochdale has the best public transport connections to all points of the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch. The Millgate caused us to pass through Failsworth for a couple of years, whilst for the last couple of years we've climbed up to the Church above Uppermill for Saddleworth Brewery. In 1997 the occupants staggered in on foot, the bus not being up to the task!

Before this year we've also visited many independent breweries' pubs. Whitefield for Holts and Bury for Moorhouses (the first ever trip started at the Dusty Miller) have been popular. We've been to Bamford and Shaw (for Robinsons), Ramsbottom (for Thwaites) and all over for Lees, Banks's and Marstons, plus the odd visits to Sam Smiths, Vaux and (on the first trip) Boddingtons (RIP).



This year was slightly different. The trip just visited Lees, Phoenix, McGuinness and Saddleworth breweries/pubs. There was one other oddity, a visit over the border to Riverhead Brewery in Marsden, West Yorks. The trip has also grown so popular that it was advisable to pre-book. Your correspondent who turned up at Lees only made the complete journey because someone else didn't turn up. My grateful thanks to whoever it was - they missed an (as usual) brilliant day. As we were visiting breweries, we also didn't have the 'Mike Robinson raffle'. You lucky, lucky people don't know what a highlight this has become in pubs, with astonished drinkers receiving goodies (and guides to East Anglia).

My hopes are that the trips continue for many years and that the event doesn't become a victim of its own success. There must be a number of surprised partners who have their other halves return home slightly the worse for wear after deciding to join us for the day. Needless to say, a number of people have heard of CAMRA because of these trips. Finally, thanks to the organisers over the years, especially Ken Holt, Mark and Elaine Hardman and (you lucky, lucky people) Mike Robinson.

Swinton and Pendlebury

The Black Horse on Bolton Road in Pendlebury has been sold but unfortunately not as a pub. The former Tetley pub is being transformed into McQueens musical repair workshops and showroom. Further along Bolton Road at the GBG-listed Newmarket (Holts), work on turning a patch of spare land to the rear of the pub into a beer garden is in progress.

At the White Lion on Chorley Road in Swinton, Robinsons Old Tom has been withdrawn for the summer. The handpump is now being used to dispense alternately Frederics and Hartleys XB. Finally, the Bulls Head is being advertised as 'Manchester's most haunted pub' and psychic meetings are held there! Presumably one could have foreseen the demise of traditional ale here (*WD June*) by a visit to one of the meetings.

Brass Tax

The Pen & Wig near Salford Station is boarded up again. This time, however, it may not be a sign of further failure but in preparation for a new boom in its fortunes. Not a stone's throw away, the Inland Revenue is building a new office of enormous size. (No, we don't know either, why they need one when self-assessment's here.) The Pen & Wig failed to attract the legal eagles, so will they be able to draw in the taxman? Can we expect yet another change of name? Suggestions on a postcard, please.



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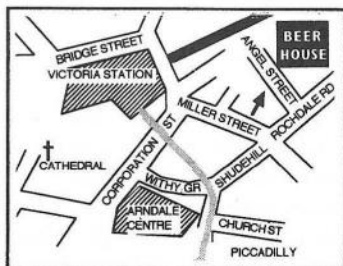
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King's Ale

Leo King

Hogshead

We are fortunate in having the Marble Arch, the Beer House, the Smithfield Hotel (Swan Street) and the Queens Arms (Honey Street) all in the same area to provide real ale drinkers with a wide variety of real ales. But there is yet another multi-handpump real ale emporium which seems to get hardly a mention. This is the Hogshead on High Street, where licensee Mick will be organising his first real ale festival during August. All twelve handpumps will be used for festival beers - even those usually reserved for Boddingtons and Whitbread products. What, no Boddies or that Abroad Coopers? Well, why not!

The guest mild (the excellent Batemans) will be retained throughout the event and a total of thirty-two real is are expected, plus a real cider. The pub usually closes early on Sundays, but will be open all day during the festival.



Marble

Mark Dade is to be commended for the great beers he is producing at the Marble Brewery, in particular the IPA Liberty. Apart from the ever growing list of brewed-on-premises beers, the Marble Arch also sells Phoenix beers and Pedigree. Marble beers are sold at the Bar 1 and Bar 2 in Chorlton and they will also be on sale at the Marble Beer House, yet another addition to the Chorlton real ale scene which is now open at 57 Manchester Road.

Beer House

In the month of June up to two hundred different real beers were sold at the Beer House. Quite an outstanding achievement - congratulations to Idy and the staff.

It is now almost certain that the second Lancashire Beer Festival will be held at the Beer House, and in Idy's capable hands it is bound to be a success. Beers from 'real' Lancashire (not 'Greater Manchester') towns such as Bolton, Heywood and Rochdale, as well as from Liverpool, Warrington, etc, will be on sale. Lancashire Day is November 27th, so more details nearer the time.

It's a pub Jim, but not as we know it...

Manchester's first sci-fi theme bar has opened. The Fab Cafe is a sub-basement bar between Princess and Oxford Streets and it is probably the wackiest opening of 1998.

Fab Cafe celebrates all that is TV and movie sci-fi. It has a dimly-lit interior with a plethora of TVs constantly showing film or TV sci-fi series. (Godzilla was on when our correspondent beamed down.) The decor is a cross between a moonscape and a starship, with plenty of photos of stars of the series, artefacts and lifesize monsters - there is even a Dalek in there.

Cask ale is on sale on the form of Hydes' seasonal beer - Mad Ferret at 190p. Have a look, it's Fab.

Brown Cow

Robinsons are spending some money on the Brown Cow at Winton, a pub which was built about thirty years ago to replace an earlier Brown Cow which was demolished for the M602. The work has involved some opening out of the back lounge and the construction of a patio and an extensive children's play area in the grounds. Wood panelling reclaimed from Chadderton Court House has been used on some of the walls. The beer range remains the same - Hatters mild and best bitter.

On the rack

Whitbread have sought planning permission to install two rough beer vessels and two draught racking tanks. There are some who would say that there's enough rough beer coming out of Strangeways already. Presumably the additional capacity is to accommodate beers from breweries they've closed. Good for Strangeways. Bad for regional beers and consumer choice.

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.

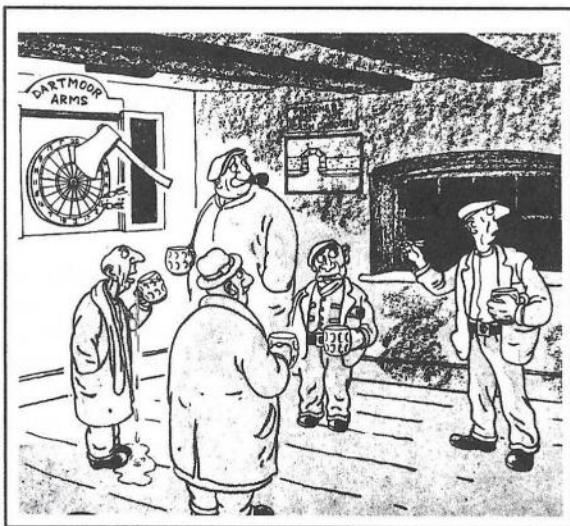
It ain't what you say it's what you do that counts

Roger Hall

In most things there's a difference between what people say they like and what they actually like. Our espoused tastes are influenced by a vast range of social pressures and conventional wisdom. In pressure groups, the received opinion becomes the individual's espoused view. Yet, what that individual really likes might be very different. Just think about what you might say you like to drink and what you do actually drink.

I want to focus on pubs. There's a widely held view in CAMRA that basic, back street, working class boozers with lots of small rooms are good and new, well furnished, middle class pubs are bad. We'd all agree to that, wouldn't we? It's part of what we are. Heritage, tradition, roots, history, dominoes, vaults, darts, football teams, folk culture, honest-to-goodness, salt of the earth - all the resonances and nuances are there.

But what happens in practice? Organise a pub crawl of Cross Lane or arrange to meet in Miles Platting and what happens? Half a dozen stalwarts turn up if you're lucky. Visit a new horrid pub with split level



libraries, choir stalls and an artefact-stuffed roof void, posh seats and expensive beer and what happens? That's right - twenty-odd people turn up to the John Gilbert. Well, why?

The reason is we don't actually like or feel comfortable in the pubs of the inner city. They are no longer part of the link with our industrial past. They are largely run down and uninviting. Few of them serve beer of excellent quality. Their customers are often part of an urban underclass. Their ambience is threatening and potentially violent.

New pubs are comfortable, well furnished and inviting. They serve a wide range of food and drink to suit all tastes. Good cellarman'ship usually results in well kept beers. Professional management ensures a trouble-free environment. Women, in particular, feel comfortable.

Next time you go in a filthy, sawdust-strewn hovel with torn seats, drug dealers, retired prostitutes and a dishevelled fag-smoking barperson, ask yourself, 'Do I **really** like this?' Or are you merely complying with the political correctness of CAMRA? There is no excuse for squalor, poor service and poor management. We should not condone it in the name of nostalgia. Such places should close and we should be prepared to pay a little more to ensure the survival of pubs of quality which succeed in combining a sense of history with the expectations and demands of a fin-de-siècle society.

Planning News

Lees have signalled their intention of joining the cafe society by submitting an application for a cafe bar in a disused warehouse in Great Bridgewater Street near the Peveril.

There are plans to build a six-storey residential block at the Ashton Canal Basin on Ducie Street with licensed premises on the ground floor. Upmarket competition for the Angler.

Greenalls' plans for a new pub on Jackson's Wharf in Castlefield include an outside eating and drinking area. Just like Venice.

Wetherspoons have plans to convert retail premises at 587 Stockport Road in the middle of Longsight into a 'traditional real ale' pub. Perhaps this confirms worries about their performance which has resulted in some share price slippage recently. Groups or brewers who don't know Manchester very well have had their fingers burned investing in downmarket areas. Lees in parts of Salford (Victoria, Druids) and Banks's in Collyhurst (Osborne, Robert Tinker) are a couple of examples, but there are many pubs which have not survived new owners and few which have. It would be surprising if Wetherspoons were to repeat their success with town centre ventures in the cut and thrust of the inner city. Let's wait and see.

Listed Pub

The Colliers Arms on Broadcarr Lane, Mossley, became a Grade II listed building in July. According to the schedule produced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the Colliers '*demonstrates the evolution of the rural alehouse from the vernacular farmhouse, its plan form demonstrating the minimal alteration necessary to provide public and private rooms within the building, and the functional nature of the bar serving contrasting with the display detailing of the purpose-built urban public house of the later nineteenth century.*'

So now you know.

Wigan and District

Dave White

In June I reported that the **Fishergate Inn**, Orrell Road, Lamberhead Green, had reopened, and since then your scribe has visited the place. The Fishergate is now open-plan (most of the pubs in the area have so far escaped this treatment) but with separate drinking areas, and a big-screen television flickered away as merrily as a big-screen television can do when it is being completely ignored. As for the beer, Burtonwood Forshaws was unavailable on this occasion and the best bitter was not very good. All in all, a far cry from the old Fishergate Inn.

Mixed fortunes elsewhere in the Pemberton area, with the **New Enfield** (Wilsons/Websters) Enfield Street, reverting to keg. On the other hand, the **Miners Arms**, Kitt Green now sells a decentish, if cool, pint of Boddingtons bitter. Further up City Road, the **Brookhouse Inn** offers well-kept Lees bitter alongside Tetley dark mild and bitter.

Not long ago, I called in at the **Bowling Green**, Ormskirk Road, Newtown, and ordered a Boddies mild. The barman walked past the handpump and filled a pint glass from a nitrokeg Boddingtons bitter tap! This turned out to be the new, smooth version of the Strangeways mild, and was proving very popular. Feeling like a Luddite, I moved to the nearby **Queens Arms** on Warrington Road. The pub has given up on mild altogether, with Greenalls bitter now the only real ale available.

Two Market Street pubs in Hindley have recently been refurbished, though there is not much to shout about. Tetleys' **Imperial Hotel** has adopted its old nickname of **Bonnie Lassies** and is now an Enterprise Inn. Tetley bitter is the only real ale on offer, and vies with the nitrokeg variety. At least this is one up on the **Worthington Hotel** across the road, with only fizzy Burtonwood to be had. A Greater Manchester Good Beer Guide sticker can be seen above the doorway, just to rub it in. The **Dog & Partridge** on Atherton Road is another Burtonwood house to lose its real ale. The Bold Lane



Brewery's dash for gas is particularly worrying, because it has so many outlets in the area. Meanwhile on Bridge Street, the **Cross Keys** (*pictured*) has been demolished, and not before time. This Greenalls pub had been closed and crumbling for years.

Following Steve Smith's June article about the **Colliers Arms**, Kings Moss, I can confirm that the **Red Cat** at Crank is indeed keg. However, there is a third pub in the area, between Kings Moss and Upholland railway station - the **Crawford Arms** at Crawford village. Like the Colliers, the Crawford is a Greenalls inn which serves a guest ale. Recently this was Weetwood Oasthouse Gold, a golden, hoppy ale, nothing like the cloudy gunge I was served in one of Manchester's premier free houses not so long ago. On the way down from Billinge Beacon, the **Houghwood Golf Club** sells handpumped Thwaites bitter but don't make the mistake I made, by wearing jeans - you won't be served.

In Billinge itself, the **Bispham Lodge** (Vaux) on Upholland Road, has closed. The word 'unmourned' springs to mind. Of greater concern, however, is the closure of the **Hare & Hounds** further along the B5206. A Tetley pub often to be found in the Good Beer Guide, the H&H has had a chequered history of late; one hopes that its demise is but temporary.

News in brief ... the **Inn Between**, Appley Lane South, Appley Bridge, is reportedly back in business, but that's as much as I know about this John Smiths pub for now... the **Old Dog** free house, Alma Hill, Upholland has a new licensee. One hopes for a more adventurous selection of beers at this little gem... the **Queens Arms** at Fingerpost, Aspull, has lost its Marstons Pedigree, though the Tetley dark mild and bitter remain on form... the wretched **Ball & Boot**, Orchard Street, Scholes has been revamped as **Sam's Bar**. A brief spell as the **Douglas Gate** proved that this pub needs more than a name change to get bums on seats. News on the ale when I get it... Burtonwood is sprucing up the old brewery building at the back of the **Bees Knees**, Wallgate, Wigan but, alas, has no plans to get the place up and running again... Allan Houghton, the long-standing landlord of the **Bird i'th'Hand**, Gidlow Lane, Springfield, has retired. The Tetley pub has been in the GBG for donkey's years and was Wigan CAMRA's 'Pub of the Season' recently. It also happens to be my local, so I hope that Allan and his wife enjoy their retirement, and that the guest beer policy at 'Th'en'ole' will continue.

Pub gone

The Brunswick at Moorgate, Bury, once a Wilsons pub, has been demolished. Elsewhere in the Bury area, the Junction in Whitefield (ex-Tetley) has become an Indian restaurant.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Until about ten years ago, Holts had a tied estate of about ninety pubs all within Greater Manchester, with one exception - the Black Dog at Belmont. Since then the company has increased its stock of public houses considerably, acquiring pubs from other breweries, building new ones and converting other premises into pubs.

Of the pubs which Holts have acquired outside Greater Manchester over the last decade, there are the Queens Hotel and the Three Crowns, both in Macclesfield, and the Millhouse (converted from an existing building) at Padgate, Warrington. More recently, two further pubs in Cheshire were bought, the Angel in Knutsford and the Cock o' Budworth in Great Budworth. In St Helens, the Abbey and the Red Lion were taken on in recent months and Holts now own the Duke of York in Chorley.

Of the Greater Manchester pubs acquired in the last ten years or so, there are the Starkey Arms in Heywood, the Sir Charles Napier at Golborne and the Orion at Withington (bought from Whitbread). More recently Holts took over the Volunteer in Sale and the Crown at Horwich (*below*). Also in the Bolton area there have been the Bolton Castle, followed by the Brooklyn, the Doffcocker and the Railway at Moses Gate.

In Denton there is the Chapel House and not too far away in Droylsden the Kings Head (currently being rebuilt). About a mile away at Higher Openshaw is the Pack Horse (acquired from Greenalls some three years ago). The Gardeners Arms at Hollins Lane, Middleton, came to Holts from Whitbread. The Kingsway at Levenshulme was acquired and near Oldham, the Pullet Inn at Sholver became a Holts outlet about six years ago.



Buildings that have been converted into Holts pubs include the Spread Eagle at Chorlton-cum-Hardy (the name was taken from their old pub on Regent Road, Salford), and not quite twelve months old, there is the Ape & Apple

in the centre of Manchester. Also in the city centre, the Old Monkey was built on the site of a former pub. The two other pubs in the city are, of course, the Crown & Cushion (from Whitbread about ten years ago) and the Crown & Anchor on Cateaton Street (formerly Mr Chesters, Whitbread).

In Wigan, there is now the Douglas Bank and at Hindley the Edington Arms, a former free house near the railway station. Close to Leigh, there is the Tamar on Wigan Road. In Atherton, the Labour Club was converted into a pub and named the Atherton Arms. I make the current tied estate 122 pubs with one in the pipeline, 'Winters' in Stockport. More on that when news comes through.

Finally, a warm welcome to Ken and Carol at the Dukes Gate in Little Hulton. Improvements have already taken place.

Marble takes a liberty

A new 4.8% IPA was launched at the Marble Brewery on July 4th, slightly later than anticipated. It was worth the wait, though, and is sure to be a winner. Liberty IPA is different from the regular IPA as it uses Liberty hops combined with two other varieties and these combine to give a fruitiness balanced by a strong hop bite in the finish.

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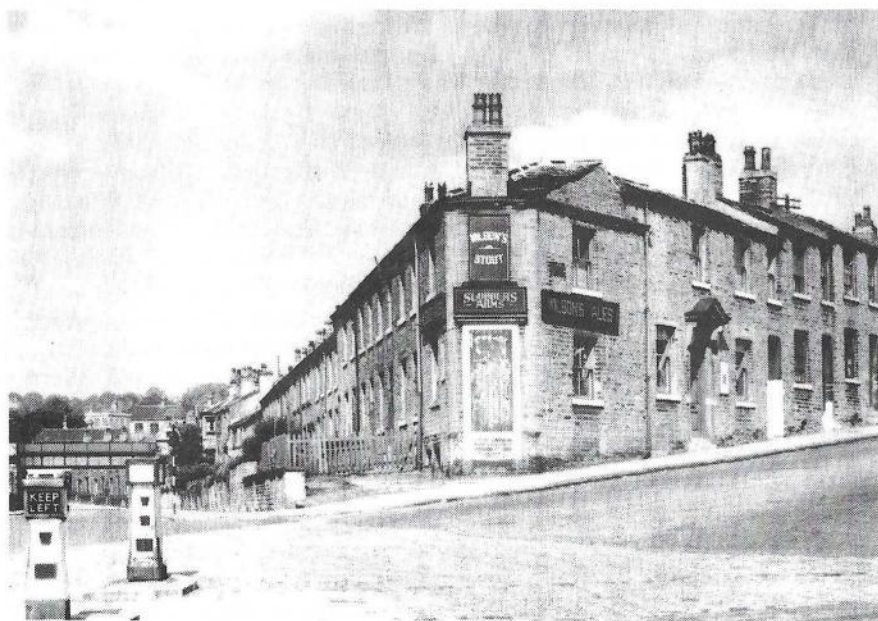
Go East, Young Man

Grognard

A couple of weeks ago my kind and understanding spouse announced she was Saturday shopping in 'uddersfield and asked if I wanted a ride over the hills. The invitation set off a train of thought; that I, the intrepid traveller, who had braved paella and cerveza in Malaga, black olives and 'Fix Hellas' in Athens and fried fish supper in Paisley (that nearly saw me off), could not remember the last time I'd been to visit our Yorkshire neighbour. I'd certainly never had a pint there. This yawning gap definitely needed bridging.

So, invitation accepted, it was then up the A62, using my superhuman willpower to ignore the temptations of the Riverside (Marsden) and Sair Inn (Linthwaite) brewpubs en route. Sadly, it was after 3.00pm when we disembarked and the pubs recommended in the GBBG are about fifteen minutes out of town and close at 3.30pm. So no Slubbers Arms this time.

My first port of call was the Old Court Brewhouse on Cross Church Street, next to the theatre and with a porticoed Greek Temple frontage leading into a minimalist interior. A brass bar plaque informed that this was a heritage brewhouse. I might have been mildly impressed if the buzz of the WC (World Cup Football to you) hadn't reminded me that it wasn't Wetherspoons. Still, the place offered ten real ales, so I settled for Higsons (3.8%), drinkable but rather uninteresting, Taylors Landlord (4.3%), tasty as ever, and



their home-brew 1825 (4.2%), an acceptably dryish bitter. The costs per half were 75p, 88p and 82p.

I'd been recommended to the Head of Steam at the railway station, so it was now a five-minute trot up to MacDonald's (ignoring the blandishments of the Macbaconburgers) and turn right. The Station frontage really is delightful; built in 1856, another Greek temple copy, but with colonnades in miniature Corinthian on either side, it might have been lifted from the Emperor Hadrian's Tivoli Gardens. The Head of Steam is clearly signed and, once inside, no rumble of WC. Instead, the melodious rhythms of a modern jazz trio (live music, too). The guest beers were from Oak of Heywood and Marston Moor. I settled for a half of Wobbly Bob (6%) for £1 and a hot beef baguette. Both were very relaxing. However, two pubs do not make a crawl, so back on the road.

I rapidly concluded that most of the licensed premises in the town centre aren't worth the trouble of crossing the road, too much red-triangle rash, but some are sneaky. The Parish Pump on Kirkgate displayed a sign of that nasty painting 'The Scream' by Edward Munchkin, together with notices advertising (gosh, what a surprise) 'It's a Scream'. A glance inside told me that Bass by any other name...

I did try a Tetley pub on Byram Street - the Clarence Arms, I think. I was greeted by 'Tank Girl', wearing a three lions shirt, with the question as to whether I wanted handpumped or smooth. No prizes for guessing my answer. A plaque on the wall over the bar announced that this was the cradle of Rugby League but all the temporary decor was in praise of WC. The bitter was passable.

Returning to the car park via the street that runs parallel to Cross Church Street but a bit closer to the University, I discovered the ultimate converted furniture warehouse, the Fabricant & Firkin. A few tables outside daringly suggested that this was summer, although the weather was contradicting the assumption. Inside, the few clients were dwarfed by the dimensions of the place. Instantly noticeable was a screen the size of the backside of a double-decker bus. This was showing a WC match, which might have been Malta v Madagascar for all the interest shown. The quality of picture suggested it was playing in a hailstorm and filtered through a pair of dark nylon tights. The Fabricant at 80p a half (4.3%) was dry and tasty. I did not notice any citric overtones (or undertones).

Then 5.30 and off home, back to western civilisation. One fact I must comment on is that on a Saturday afternoon, the folk of Huddersfield were conspicuous by their absence from the local hostelrys. Is this the legendary Yorkshire 'tightness', or maybe they were suffering from a surfeit of unlimited WC. I hope so.

Little Lever

Ian Kenny

Little Lever is situated along the A6053, about three-and-a-half miles south east of Bolton. Entering the village from the south one encounters the **Jolly Carter**, the plushest pub in Little Lever and also the one with the widest range of real ales. On offer are Boddies Bitter, Morlands Old Speckled Hen, Flowers Original, Wadworth 6X, Chesters Mild and an ever-changing guest, which on my visit was Caledonian 'In the Rough'. The pub also provides food each day, often until mid-evening. Well recommended.

Further up and across from the parish church is the **Ring o'Bells**. Despite boards advertising real ale, none was available at this Enterprise Inns house. Turning left into Lever Street, on the right can be found Hydes' **Horseshoe**, where bitter, mild and Billy Westwoods can be supped. The pub has been a regular in the Good Beer Guide in recent years but unfortunately the beer was rather off-form on my visit. There's no need to continue further down Lever Street as the **Seven Stars** is now keg-only, despite sporting several handpumps. Retracing one's steps and passing into Market Street, the next pub is the **Church**. Again an Enterprise Inn advertising real ale, and again none was available. Is this a company policy?

Further along Market Street can be found the **Three Crowns** and this used to be my favourite Little Lever pub, with its multi-room layout and rather scruffy charm. However John Smiths swept away all that and now there is a single room, nicely decorated but devoid of atmosphere. The one real ale is John Smiths bitter. Just along from the Three Crowns is the **Canary**, which provided me with the surprise of the day. It was once a keg Whitbread outlet, but now Bolton CAMRA members Gary and Judith have taken charge and the place has been transformed. Real ales available are Boddies and Holts bitter at the bargain price of £1.05. There is also traditional cider from Bulmers and Thatchers. Well worth a visit.

Leaving the Canary and turning right up High Street, the next pub to be found is the **White Horse**. Here Boddies bitter and Trophy bitter are joined by Lees bitter, quite a rarity for the area. Virtually next door is Thwaites' **Queen Anne**. The pub has been



opened out, and can anybody explain why visitors to the vault are greeted by a life-size model of a grinning Stan Laurel wearing a ball and chain? The solitary real ale is Thwaites bitter. Continuing out of the village on Stopes Road, you come to the **Stopes Tavern** and the **Wellington**. Comfortably furnished, the Stopes offers the bitters of Boddingtons and Thwaites, whilst the Wellington is now a keg-only Thwaites pub.

In the ten years since the last survey of Little Lever was printed (CAMRA's 'Beer in Bolton') the number of real ales has almost doubled, one pub has disappeared, more pubs are keg-only and real mild is now almost extinct. From the early 1980s, when I regularly visited the area, some welcome improvements have been made, but at the cost of losing some excellent traditional pubs, which probably reflects events elsewhere.

Brown Bull

This long-closed ex-Marstons pub on Chapel Street, Salford, looks set to reopen shortly. It is being fitted out as a restaurant and bar with some letting rooms. Apparently the plan is to attract Man United fans from Ireland to come and stay for the weekend and see a match. Will there be cask ale, one wonders?

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Lord Nelson

For the past couple of months the Lord Nelson on Newton Street in Manchester has been under new management. Licensee Cliff is an old hand at running pubs and he is looking after the Lord Nelson on behalf of Frank and Maxine at the Hare & Hounds, Shudehill. The place has been cleaned up quite nicely and regular discos, karaoke and live music are attracting more custom. A decent drop of Websters Green Label is available at £1 a pint.

Blackley Holts

Two Holts houses in Blackley have been refurbished of late. The first was the Golden Lion in the village itself. It is now cleaner and brighter and there is a brand new bowling green, but all the original stained glass has been replaced with a modern design and the separate snug has gone.

Up the hill on Weardale Road, the Duke of Wellington has had a thorough clean up and redecoration, and fires have been put in the fireplaces, which all goes to enhance the place. Licensee Ian says that mild sales are 'well up' at the pub and the Welly is probably selling more mild than any other pub on the estate.

Cross gloss

The Golden Cross, Patricroft, seemed to be receiving an internal coat of paint when our reporter passed by early in July.

The pub used to be known as 'Cloudy's', after landlord 'Cloudy' Brown, who was reputed to kick the barrels in the cellar to meet the tastes of his customers who preferred a high yeast level in their pints of Holts. You were always guaranteed an eccentric welcome in one of Eccles' oldest pubs.

A Turn For the Wurst

A novel beer which is currently proving a great hit in its home town of Berlin is on its way to the wine bars of Britain.

A one-man brewery is producing a beer called Turn which contains, along with the usual ingredients, added hemp, which is perhaps better known in its marijuana form. The beer now has an import licence for Britain and the enterprising brewer assures the authorities that the average imbiber would require 3,000 litres before he/she became high on the stuff.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Ian Mitchell, Peter Barnes, Pete Cash, Steve Holt, Pauline Wadsworth, Tim Jones, Michael Lynn, Roger Hall, Leo King, Ian Kenny, Stewart Revell, Dave White, Mark McConachie.

Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupulus

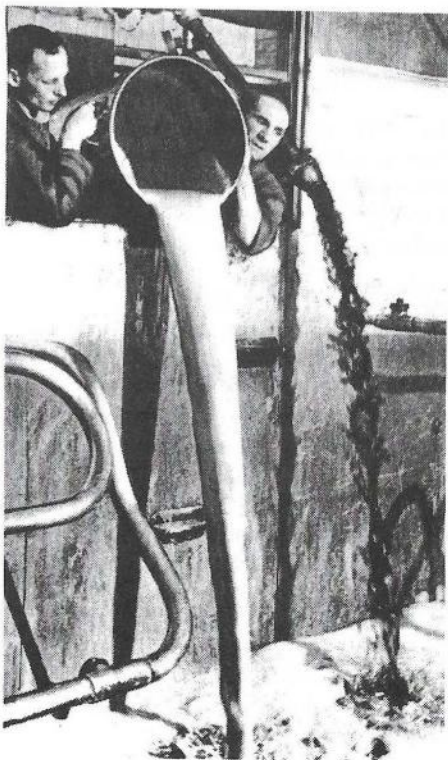
Part Thirteen - Yeast (1)

Yeast is the living organism which converts the maltose and other sugars into ethyl alcohol, an essential ingredient; most people would agree, of beer. There are many strains of yeast and new products for the home brewer are being developed all the time. British ale yeasts come under the general classification *saccharomyces cerevisiae* and are 'top fermenting'; that is, they rise to the surface during fermentation, forming a thick, foamy head.

So what is the best type to use? Turning to my oldest home-brew book by H E Bravery (1), I was pleasantly surprised by the aptness of his opening remarks. Some chapters of this book, written in 1965, have bizarre ingredients and instructions. However, on yeast he begins, 'Many people obtain brewers' yeast from their local brewery and impart some of the characteristics of the beers turned out by that brewery'. This is very good advice. If you have friendly contacts with one of the regional or micro-breweries and they are willing to part with a little of their yeast, then look no further. I have used yeast from four different such breweries, generally with excellent results.

However, the same author then goes on to say, '...many home operators successfully use yeast from bottled beers (Guinness or Worthington)'. I would like to get this one out of the way from the start. In 1965, it was true that you could use the sediment from either of these bottle-conditioned brews. However, I believe that Guinness, on the UK mainland at least, has been sterile for some years, whilst Worthington White Shield (recently 'saved' by transferring production to King & Barnes) uses a second, bottom fermenting yeast to produce condition in the bottle. This will not have the characteristics of a British ale yeast.

Most of the early authors are generally agreed on their



preference for a true top-fermenting strain. Dave Line (5,8,9) obtained some of his by (a) taking home a pint of draught from his local pub, letting it stand overnight in a sterile bottle, then cultivating the tiny amount of sediment with a malt and sugar solution until there was sufficient to pitch into a brew, or (b) getting his friendly local landlord to give him a half a pint of lees from the bottom of a quickly consumed cask. The second method is much to be preferred. The yeast eventually cultured from method (a) might not be entirely representative of that used in the brewery since much will have been removed by fining. There is also a greater danger of contamination because it may take several days to work up sufficient to use in a brew.

Wilf Newsome (6) has an interesting chapter on the history of yeast classification, including horrors such as slime forming yeasts, and methods of yeast 'purification'. However, according to Graham Wheeler (11) DNA mapping of yeast 'strains' has shown there to be far fewer genetically independent strains than previously believed and some 3,000 currently held in national collections may eventually be reduced to a few hundred. Meanwhile, he says, **all** brewing yeasts are classed as *saccharomyces cerevisiae*, then subdivided into 'ale' or 'lager' according to typical application.

If you can't get hold of a brewery yeast by any of the above methods, there are a number of products available from home-brew shops. Most notably, those who trade with Brupaks (12) will have access to the 'Wyeast' range of liquid cultures from America. These have two separate compartments within a foil pouch. When an inner membrane is ruptured, the yeast in one is mixed with a nutrient solution in the other. When the pouch is expanded, due to CO₂ production, it is said to be ready for pitching, though Graham Wheeler (11) advocates pitching this into a conventional 'starter' rather than directly into the main batch of wort. Brupaks list 21 types available in their 1997 product list. Wheeler also mentions Alemaster Zymopure, produced in Britain, which are also liquid strains, contained in screw-capped sterile tubes. Not so many strains are available and they vary from time to time, but he gives them a good report.

Next time, dried yeasts; also starting, pitching and storing yeasts.

References

- 1 *Home Brewing Without Failures* by H E Bravery. Max Parrish, London
- 5 *The Big Book of Brewing* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker/Argus Books
- 6 *The Happy Brewer* by Wilf Newsome, Amateur Winemaker
- 8 *Brewing Beers like those you Buy* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker
- 9 *Beer Kits and Brewing* by Dave Line, Amateur Winemaker
- 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)

Rupert

Well, here we are. Silly season once again. Eddy's busy with spacefillers in the absence of news. What sort of hops I bought on 13th January 1981, that kind of thing. Trouble is, items need to be quirky and amusing. Sad to report, I too am bereft of interesting snippets of news. The one-man-and-a-dog branch has re-formed but not reformed. True to form, they failed to turn up at the Grotley branches meeting they were hosting. Lucky for them the winter amber nectar show is in their branch area. Nobody we know was arrested during the recent internet naughties swoops in Clogland. Hattie Nightingale's alcoholic brainhurter was far too easy this year. A team of ageing yawnmerchants managed to score 100%. Next year it needs to be even easier - get completely pissed and guess who you are, that sort of thing, where even Charlie Sratsky can excel.

I don't know where Lord Bog's coming from. He's asked us all to make our breweries listed buildings. Even before he was knighted Sir Billy, activists in Slumley did just that. Following the fate of Ethicks alemakers, the words door, horse and bolted spring to mind. Being married for so long to the delectable Lady Bog, unkindly described as resembling a foghorn with piles, must have turned his mind.

There don't seem to be any developments in the von Spädspring/Ripley spat. The Smarmford Pub will by now have opened but the dispute over

intellectual property rights remains unresolved.

I'm delighted to see that Eunuchramforks have finally got their act together. What we don't need is megahostelries like the Lunar Sea in mid-town Grotley but more modest ventures in the surrounding beer tundra. Tom Tit's latest plans are to convert a furniture shop in Presbyopia. This sad inner city area is crying out for one of Eunuchramforks' nonsense real ale emporia. There won't be any drug trafficking fights, arson or trouble of any sort and the Lunar Sea II will shine out like a beacon and be a focal point for the regeneration of Presbyopia.

No doubt the success of this will encourage Tom Tit to take over premises in equally fraught locations like Vile Splatting and Nether Slumley. Just because other less visionary tavern owners have had their hostelries torched and their doormen poisoned is no reason for Tom Tit to balk at what to many may seem like a foolhardy enterprise. He clearly knows his market and his local geography and will go from strength to strength. I expect to see Lunar Sea II as Snobley & Snoot Magna's tavern of the decade in 1999 and anticipate that it will be shortlisted for the millennium award. Beinlos will doubtless be the first punter when the doors open later this year. Well, that's it then. Back to the hard news in September.

Rumour denial: Billy Cosh has not been seen quaffing Goosegrease & Dishwater's nitrogenated mild and liking it.

Branch Diary

Region

Sunday 16th August 12.30pm, National Winter Ales Festival meeting, Beer House, Manchester

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 4 Aug 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Puckersley, Narrowgate Brow, Royton

Sat 8th Aug 'Last of the Summer Beer' coach trip to Holmfirth/Penistone. Details from Branch Contact.

Tues 18th Aug 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Up Steps Inn, High Street, Oldham

Sun 23rd Aug, Rush Cart Festival, Uppermill. Details from Branch Contact.

Tues 25 Aug 8.30pm, WD collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

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

North Manchester

Wed 5 Aug, Bolton Crawl, Howcroft 7.30, Hen & Chickens 8.30, Sweet Green Tavern 9.30

Wed 12 Aug 8pm, Committee & Social, Moulders Arms, Heyrod Street, Ancoats

Wed 19 Aug 8pm, Branch Meeting and Mild Award Presentation, Smithfield, Swan Street, Manchester

Tues 25 Aug 6pm onwards, What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 26 Aug, Higher Blackley Crawl. Wellington, Weardale Road, 7pm; Flying Horse, Crab Lane, 8pm; Pleasant, Chapel Lane, 9.00pm

Wed 2 Sept, Eccles Crawl. Royal Oak 7pm, Town Hall 8pm, Lamb 9.30pm

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Trafford & Hulme

Branch activists meet on Thursday nights. For details contact Dave Ward, 0161 980 1170 (h)

Peter Whelan

The popular licensee of the GBG-listed Junction in Harpurhey suffered a fatal heart attack whilst back in his native Ireland on 4th July. His widow, Theresa, will stay in Ireland to run a pub there and his daughters Siobhan and Lorraine will continue to run the Junction. Peter was a well-known character in Manchester pubs such as the Dutton, the Hare & Hounds and the Smithfield and further afield, and he will be missed by many.

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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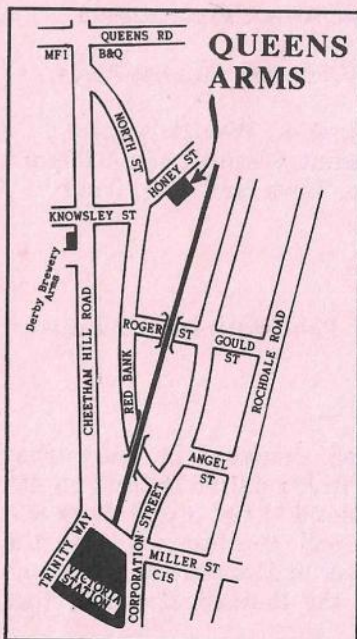


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