

What's Doing

SEPTEMBER 1998



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Salford Free House Relaunches

The future of the Kings Arms on Bloom Street is secure now that landlord Tom Jones has obtained a long lease on the pub. It became a true free house when it was sold by Greenalls' Owl Inns a few months ago. The Victorian interior is being given a sympathetic refurbishment and there are long term plans to restore and reopen the upstairs function room.

There are two regular real ales, Hydes Anvil and Taylors Landlord, together with up to six guest beers. Danish Faxe lager is also available.

The Kings Arms is being 'relaunched' at 8.00pm on Thursday 3rd September with a festival of cask German beers. Meissel Brau Kellerbier, Andecher Weissbier and Keesmann Pils are among the unusual beers on offer.

There will also be a prize competition to name a new beer-flavoured meal which will be added to the Kings Arms menu, which features beer and cider dishes as well as the more usual bar food.



Pubs gone

Another Bury pub has bit the dust. The Brewers Arms (Thwaites, *right*), Bell Lane, was demolished last month. Out in the countryside, the Black Bull at the Walves crossroads near Edgworth has become a private house. At the auction of the pub fixtures and fittings, the stuffed deer's head went for forty quid. So which pub will it turn up in next?



Laurel & HarDay

The Sixth Annual Laurel & HarDay is on 5th September in the concert room of the Beer Engine, Poolstock, Wigan, noon til night. Admission £3.

As well as the annually popular Fin's Beady Eye Bitter, this year there will also be a specially commissioned session beer from the Marble Arch Brewery, dedicated to Walter Long, a popular 'nasty' in Laurel & Hardy films.

Missing Middletonians

Several pubs in Middleton have noticed a drop in clientele, especially amongst the more senior imbibers. They are not being lured away by Wetherspoon's Harbord Harbord, but have been tempted by the recently opened Buckingham Bingo complex. It seems that this is not just a bingo venue, but also a cabaret club offering a variety of *Wheeltappers* & *Shunters* type acts and beer well below the average pub prices.

Not surprisingly, local licensees are less than chuffed, as Buckingham Bingo seem to have got a cabaret bar licence 'by the back door'.



Burtonwood

A new company is being formed to run the Burtonwood brewery and expand the contract brewing and packaging side of the business. The company will be 40% owned by Burtonwood and 60% owned by Thomas Hardy Holdings of Dorchester, which runs the Eldridge Pope brewery.

Burtonwood already brew Oldham and Higsons bitters for Whitbread and head brewer James Dick says that contract brews for other brewers will increase production closer to capacity. New lager fermenters will be installed and possibly a bottling plant. Burtonwood's is a modern brewery and is well situated for contract brewing for the North West. There will, however, be an agreement to brew a guaranteed amount of beers for the Burtonwood estate.

Some Burtonwood pubs in Yorkshire are already selling Tetley bitter, so will there be more guest beers in Burtonwood pubs as a result of the changes?



The photo shows Burtonwood's deputy chairman Richard Gilchrist (left), who will be a director of the new company, and head brewer James Dick (right). The man in the middle is Stewart Main, second brewer.

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Steve Holt, Michael Lynn, Roger Hall, Chris Coffey, Ken Birch, Paul Roberts, Mark McConachie, Stewart Revell, Brian Gleave, Dave White

Out and About

with Grognaard

Tib Street used to be well known for its numerous pet shops. Less well known is the now hidden river it is named for. One of the side streets is Brightwell Walk, where the **Wheatsheaf** is located. A Burtonwood pub, it has never been upmarket in my experience and the interior has definitely seen better days. But at least it held a few local 'characters' and sold real ale at reasonable prices. A recent visit, however, found the handpumps inoperative and due for removal. 'Smooth' is now the order of the day. If ever a word was misapplied, it must be that one. I might redefine it as thin, chilly, equinus urinus or speculate that the lost river has been rediscovered. Yet, someone must drink the stuff and perhaps even pay money for it. 'Ad gustum', as the Romans would say - it's all a matter of taste.

Up the Oldham/Manchester Road at Hollinwood, the **Waggon & Horses** was closed for business for at least three months. It was one of two pubs of identical name on the road. The other, a mile closer to Oldham (opposite the Smut Inn) was known as the 'Top Waggon', so this was the 'Bottom Waggon'. The Top Waggon vanished a few years ago when the road was widened/improved, along with most of the pubs around the Roxy Cinema, in preparation for the extension of the M60 from Denton to Middleton. The Bottom Waggon escaped the carnage but hardly seemed to profit from its competitors' disappearance. Now it has reopened and the interior has had a fresh coat of paint, but this is just a passing observation as I've not been



Top Waggon

inside yet. I know this is not the action of a conscientious reporter, but it is still advertising Wilsons.

Lees of Middleton have brought out another of their seasonal beer range. Summer Scorchers at 4.2% and £1.50 a pint is a soft-tasting ale with a flowery nose and is a palatable alternative to their regular bitter. Yet the name is not exactly descriptive of its character. To me it rather suggests a hot barbecue sauce, while the weather with its long-term leaden skies turns the glowing sun symbol into an ironic joke. Also, though this may be an exception, the beer, in my experience, has not been well presented to an unknowing public. At one of the outlets (and I keep it nameless) of Summer Scorchers I was invited to try the new 'stout'. As it was not signed outside and the pump clip could not be located, the beer was not being consumed in noticeable quantities. Perhaps a verbal grapevine should be employed - 'Pass the word around, Sam. Knock three times on the bar and ask for Scorchers.'



While on the subject of Lees, someone appears to carry a grudge against the brewery. Fly posters have been seen around Oldham town centre with the messages 'Boycott Lees Beer' and 'Think Before You Drink'. Is it some disgruntled ex-employee's way of getting back? Perhaps we'll find out before the next edition.



Bottom Waggon



We're in the 1998 Good Beer Guide

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Angel Street, Manchester. 0161 839 7019

12 REAL ALES ON OFFER

including

USHERS BEST BITTER £1.05

DIRECTORS BITTER

MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH

plus

9 EVER-CHANGING GUEST BEERS

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MANY BOTTLED BELGIAN and other FOREIGN BEERS

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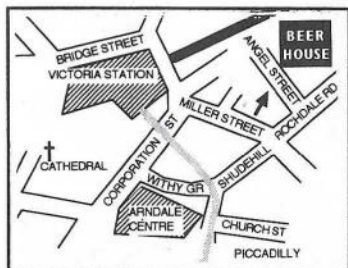
Evening Meals 5 - 7 Friday



Thurs 5 - 8 Choice of three curries (veg and meat) + rice £3



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OPEN ALL DAY
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Kings Ale

Leo King

The Unicorn on Church Street in Manchester is a grade two listed building with many original features, such as the etched glass, brass arm and foot rests, wood panelling around the walls and the tiled fireplace. There have been a few changes - the once familiar ceiling



and bar counter lights have been replaced and I have heard that the Church Street entrance once had swing doors, although some of the regulars dispute this.

At one time Bass had four pubs in Manchester - the Griffin at All Saints, the Town Hall Tavern, the Burton Arms and the Unicorn. The first was demolished many years ago, the second is no longer a Bass outlet and the sign outside the third indicates it is a Theakstons house. Which means that the Unicorn is now Manchester's only true Bass outlet. (The Old Wellington, ex-Shambles, wasn't an 'original' Bass pub as it belonged to Cornbrook Brewery, then Charringtons of London.)

The traditional ales at the Unicorn are draught Bass and Stones bitter on handpump.

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.

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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.

Letters

Back to Basics (1)

Sir - I write in response to Roger Hall's article 'It ain't what you say...' (WD August). Having read through it two or three times, I listed some of my own favourite pubs: the Beerhouse, Crescent, Dock & Pulpit, Marble Arch, Jolly Angler, Moulders Arms, Castle, Circus, Grey Horse, Hare & Hounds, Queens Arms, Star (Back Hope Street) and too many Holts houses to mention.



Apart from good beer, I noticed something else they have in common; they are all basic boozers of the type Roger describes in his second paragraph, and a far cry from the John Gilbert type of establishment. Places where I do not feel out of place wearing my flat cap and scruffy jeans.

It is true that a large number of CAMRA members turned up on the night in question, but I ascribe much of that to curiosity. It was a new outlet and somewhere the branch had not visited before. On arrival it was pleasant enough, despite the expensive beer. But as the evening wore on, it became crowded, noisy, hot and oppressive and the piped music seemed pre-programmed to get louder and louder towards closing time. I was glad to get out and will not return in a hurry. Two members of my family, on a subsequent visit, complained about the heat and humidity and were informed that the windows 'did not open' despite there being fittings on them to indicate otherwise.



But back to the main argument. In earlier times, when the potential customers of public houses lived in abject poverty, breweries built sumptuous 'gin palaces' which provided a sharp contrast to their hovels, and a temporary escape into a more luxurious world.

Today, in the post G-plan era, most of us have comfy chairs, sofas and carpets at home. When we go out for a social drink, we too seek a

contrast, but now it is provided by the simple, basic (spartan even) boozer. If I wanted to drink sitting in a soft chair, I would stay at home with either my home-brew or a draught takeaway from my nearby Holts house.

I do not believe any of the old pubs I have listed above are run-down, uninviting, threatening or violent, nor should any of them be allowed to close.

Peter Cash

Back to Basics (2)

Sir - What's happened to Roger Hall? For years he's dragged me, my wife and our friends into scruffy pubs all over the country, despite our protestations. Only now, twenty years on, does he recant. What can we expect now, tea at Claridges?

Peter Snapper

Back to Basics (3)

Sir - I agree with Roger Hall that many of the pubs in the region are far from pleasant places in which to spend an evening.

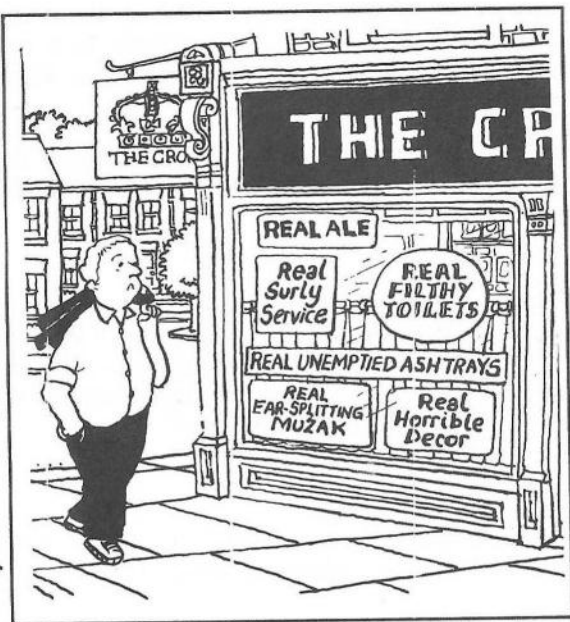
There is a major failure by Environmental Health Inspectors to ensure that laws relating to public houses are enforced. Many pubs (including some which appear in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide) continue the revolting practice of pouring the contents of the 'slops



tray' back into the barrel. Some pubs serve their draught beers through lines which are cleaned twice a week at the most, while others go weeks on end without cleaning them. In most other countries all dispense lines are cleaned thoroughly at the end of each session to prevent the build-up of residues and bacteria and this is a practice that should be introduced under Environmental Health laws in the UK.

CAMRA members apparently think there is nothing wrong with dirty lines and drinking 'slops' - as long as beer is served through handpumps they enthuse about it wildly, paying no attention to what it actually tastes like!

The quality of beer leaving the breweries has also fallen over the past few years. Much of this is due to 'badge brewing' by the large breweries, whereby the once excellent Wilsons and Oldham Brewery beers are produced around the country. The original breweries were closed by greedy accountants long ago. Quality hops and the best malt are being replaced by hop oils and extracts along with a host of other adjuncts.



The breweries complain about the unfair alcohol duties levied on our beers and at the same time put on price increases well above the inflation rate. CAMRA is again at fault by supporting free houses which insist on charging London prices for beer in Manchester pubs. Breweries are not interested in friendly local hostelrys where a pie and a pint can be enjoyed in peace and quiet. Instead they want disco and theme pubs with loud jukeboxes to attract teenagers who will pay well over the odds for designer drinks. Apart from Wetherspoons outlets, how many pubs are there in North Manchester without a jukebox?

Unless there is a major reversal of policies by both the breweries and by CAMRA (which was established to support traditional pubs serving excellent beer), the traditional British pub will be a thing of the past in this area.

Paul Roberts

Barking

Sir - I recently visited the Lord Clyde near Bollington. I was hoping to get a copy of *Opening Times* but, as usual, it had 'sold' out very quickly and the dispenser was empty... well, not quite empty. It contained a supply of dog excrement bags. I am sure that this will not happen to *What's Doing* because you have to pay for it and the dispensers are too small. Beware, this could be your fate if you become a tabloid free sheet.

P Curstool

Champion Beers

A panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists has judged Coniston Bluebird Bitter to be the 1998 Champion Beer of Britain. Bluebird (named after the land-speed record car) is a 'beer with a pronounced, complex, fruitiness backed by a lingering soft sweetness and a hoppy bitterness,' it says here.

Second prize went to Mordue Radgie Gadgie (from Tyne & Wear) and third to Moorhouses Black Cat. Other prizes awarded by the beery cognoscenti at this year's Great British Beer Festival were:

Milds: 1 Moorhouses Black Cat, 2 Elgoods Black Dog Mild, 3 Harveys Sussex XX Mild.

Bitters: 1 Coniston Bluebird Bitter, 2 Oakham JHB, 3 Itchen Valley Godfathers and Dent Aviator.

Best Bitters: 1 RCH Pitchfork, 2 Adnams Extra, 3 Taylors Landlord and Fullers London Pride

Strong Bitters: 1 Mordue Radgie Gadgie, 2 Dent Kamikaze, 3 Cheriton Diggers Gold

Speciality Beers: 1 Freeminer Shakemantle Ginger Ale, 2 Dark Horse Fallen Angel, 3 Daleside Morocco Ale.

Planning News

Plans have been submitted to convert the old Post Office Club building on Quay Street (*below*) into a pub, nightclub and budget hotel.



Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.107

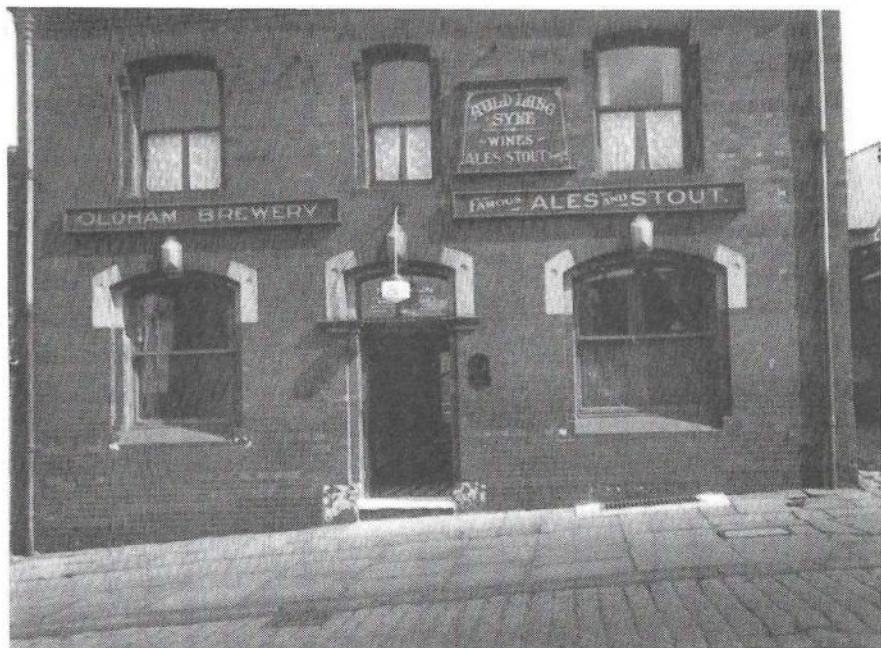
Auld Lang Syne

8 Chadderton Road, Oldham

In the early nineteenth century a string of cottages was built on the north side of Maygate Lane (later Chadderton Road) curving from the junction with the Rochdale road and into a short lane leading to an old, detached house called 'Old Clerk's'. In 1843 one of these cottages was licensed as a beerhouse called the Auld Lang Syne.

A survey of licensed property in 1886 found the building in good condition, but there was no separate backyard, the back door opening into a court where there were three cottages. It was only a small beerhouse, with three drinking rooms downstairs and four bedrooms, but Oldham Brewery must have considered it a worthwhile investment as they bought it later the same year.

Another survey in 1894 noted that the building was in fair repair, but because of the cramped conditions at the back it was not fit to be a beerhouse. Oldham Brewery quickly submitted plans for modernising; these were approved on 20th December and the work was completed in 1895. The cottages at the back were taken down to make room for two yards, one containing the cellar drop, an ashpit and gents' urinal and the other a wash-house, two-stall stable and manure pit. As it now boasted such modern amenities, the new Auld Lang Syne was given a wine licence in August 1898. The internal



layout was typical of the time: to the left of the front door there was the 'news room' and to the right the bar and small parlour; second left was the kitchen and second right the tap room.

Patrons of the Auld Lang Syne had to wait another sixty-three years before they could buy spirits there. A full licence was not granted until 6th December 1961, just in time for Christmas. Sadly it was the last Christmas for the Auld Lang Syne, as the area was being cleared for the Clarkswell estate. The doors were closed for the last time on 30th January 1962, so the Auld Lang Syne had been a public house for exactly fifty-five days!

Wigan in brief

Dave White

The news on the street is that Wetherspoons have bought the **Brocket Arms**, Mesnes Road, Wigan. The pub has sold keg ale for most of its forty-odd years and has never realised its potential, despite the paucity of taverns in this part of town.

The **Bispham Lodge** (Vaux) on Upholland Road, Billinge, is being converted into a doctor's surgery. The **Royal Oak** (Burtonwood), Wigan Lower Road, Standish Lower Ground, is closed for refurbishment.

Dock & Pulpit

This tiny real ale pub behind what was Salford Royal Hospital has been sold by the Davises and is currently closed for refurbishment. It should be open by September.



Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

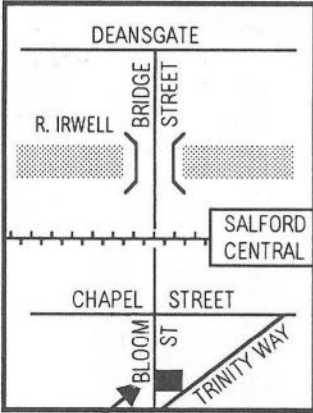
Last month Holts delivered their new 5% premium beer to around fifteen selected outlets. The Ape & Apple in Manchester was one of them and the trial brew quickly sold out. Another pub (which shall remain nameless) did not do as well. The reason given was that the punters (er, customers) are none too pleased about paying £1.06 a pint, never mind forking out £1.25 for the premium beer (even though it is 25% stronger than best bitter).

The company is looking for a name for the new beer, which is expected to become available in their pubs next year, the Derby Brewery's sesquicentennial.

Holts are believed to be in the process of acquiring a pub somewhere in the Chadderton-Broadway-Hollinwood area. Work is progressing steadily at the Kings Head in Droylsden and the Stockport outlet, 'Winters', will open at the end of September if all goes well.

Smart Gullivers

J W Lees have spent some money on improving Gullivers on Oldham Street in Manchester. As well as the internal work, there is a completely new tiled facade in the brewery colours. Very smart indeed.

FOOD Special Beer & Cider Dishes ***** VEGETARIAN ***** SNACK MEALS ***** SANDWICHES 12-2.30 Mon-Sat & 4.30-7.00 Thur-Fri ***** * SEPTEMBER * SPECIAL Two meals for the price of one all September * Meals over £1.60 on production of this advertisement	<h1>KINGS ARMS</h1> <p>11 Bloom Street Salford M3 6AT 839 4951</p>  <p>KINGS ARMS</p>	8 REAL ALES Foreign bottled beers Faxe Lager Landlord £1.53 pint Hydes Anvil £1.10 ***** NEWLY REFURBISHED ***** * SEPTEMBER * SPECIAL GERMAN BEER-FEST Unfiltered, unpasteurised cask German beers on draught Thur 3rd - Sun 6th Starts 8pm Thurs
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Manchester Pubs - a history

Part Three: Hotels and beerhouses

Part Two of this history (WD July) listed the present-day central Manchester pubs which opened in the years up to 1830. After that date, new public house licences were granted only to hotels, of modest size to begin with, which opened to accommodate visitors to the expanding commercial and industrial centre.

The first purpose-built railway hotel was the Commercial on Liverpool Road, which got its licence in September 1830, a few days before the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway station across the road. The Brunswick and the Imperial near London Road Station were typical of the smaller enterprises opened in older buildings. The Brunswick is still with us as Finnegans Wake, while the Imperial was demolished in 1997 so that the site could be used in the Joshua Hoyle building conversion. Of the big Victorian hotels, there was the Queens on the corner of Piccadilly and Portland Street, which kept going until modern times, while the Adelphi Hotel opposite, on the corner of Newton Street, was an expensive failure and closed in 1845, just five years after it had been built. The building can still be seen and now houses Lloyds Bank.

The railway hotel near Victoria Station was the Palatine at the bottom of Hunts Bank and when it opened in 1844 the licence covered both the hotel bar and the station buffet bar. Unfortunately the hotel bar closed in 1910 when it was discovered that the hotel was being used as a brothel. The manager was disqualified from ever having a licence again. The building was later occupied by a variety of businesses and it is still there, now part of Chetham's School of Music.



Another former hotel which can still be seen is the Exchange Hotel (*pictured*) on the Fennel Street corner of the Corn Exchange, behind the Cathedral. Three old alehouse licences in the Fennel Street area were surrendered for the new licence, which was eventually given up in 1945.

The biggest railway hotel of the lot, the Midland, opened across Windmill Street from Central Station (now G-Mex) in the early 1900s. The adjacent Royal Central Hotel opened some fifty years before, part of the Theatre Royal development on Peter Street. It was first called the Theatre Royal Hotel and the name was changed when the station opened in 1880.

Although the licensing of new public houses was strictly controlled, 1830 was the year the Beerhouse Act came into effect and since beersellers' licences were obtained from the excise department, local licensing authorities had no control over them. A small number of beerhouses opened in central Manchester in 1830, but twenty years later there were around three hundred, twice as many as there were fully licensed houses. A high proportion were in old house and shop property in the poorer areas, such as around Deansgate and Shudehill, and many of them went in the building developments of the late Victorian period.

There were hundreds of beerhouses in districts such as Ancoats and Hulme. Slum clearances in the 1930s saw off many and redevelopment in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the closure of most of the rest. The Jolly Angler is a survivor in Ancoats, as is the Pot of Beer (formerly the Harp & Shamrock) on New Mount Street on the edge of the Angel Meadow district.

Fewer than ten of the three hundred beerhouses in central Manchester are still in business and all are now



fully licensed. The Grey Horse and the Circus on Portland Street opened in the 1840s and in 1961 they were among the last to be given public house licences. At the Princess Street end of Portland Street is the Old Monkey, opened by Holts about five years ago. Remember the nondescript building which stood on the corner before the new pub was built? It was originally a private house, but by 1831 it was one of Manchester's first beerhouses and was known as the Queens Arms (*pictured*) when it shut in 1925.

Despite all the demolition and rebuilding, a number of former beerhouses which lost their licences long ago can still be seen in the city centre. The buildings are not as obvious as the old hotels, but can you spot the British Standard in Back Piccadilly, the Black Boy in Tib Street and the Comet and the Albion on Albion Street, Gaythorn?

Station for sale

The well known and long established Station free house on Warrington Street, Ashton-u-Lyne, is up for sale for £185,000. Let's hope the new owners don't alter the character of the place, or the beers.

THE MIDLAND BEER COMPANY



826 Manchester Road,
Castleton, Rochdale. *Near Castleton BR* 01706 750873

USHERS £1.05 PINT

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GERMAN & BELGIAN BEERS

Lunchtime food Monday - Friday 12-2pm

Half-price menu Monday lunch

Free chip muffins Wednesday 5-6pm

Beer Garden

We are open all day

Cotton Tree to go

The Cotton Tree, the boarded-up Dancing Weasel and other properties on Great Ancoats Street are to be demolished. It's all part of the grand design for the regeneration of Ancoats and the Northern Quarter, in a scheme which covers the area between the Rochdale Canal and Blossom Street. Not long ago the Ancoates and the Green Dragon were demolished and their sites are now empty crofts.

The Cardroom estate in Ancoats is to be redeveloped. Many of the houses will come down and so too will the battle-scarred, but still trading, Cob o'Coal. While it will be a loss, perhaps it will not be a significant one.



Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupulus

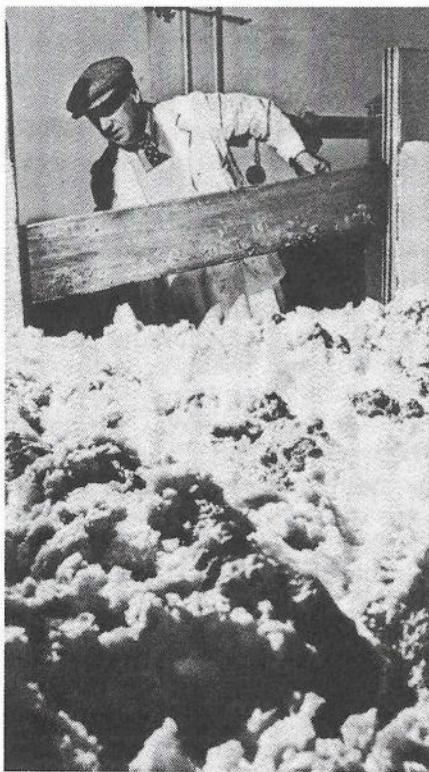
Part Fourteen - Yeast (2)

Last time I discussed brewery yeast and a couple of brands of liquid cultures available from home brew shops. Some dried yeasts are also available. Over the years I have found Boot's 'Genuine Dried Brewers Yeast' a good standby. It does not produce a thick 'rocky head' typical of fresh brewery yeast, but it usually results in a sound beer with good clearing properties. At the Sheffield show last year (WD July 1997) I picked up some free samples from two companies.

DCL (Distillers' Company Limited) (16) produce six different strains, two each styled 'Safbrew', 'Safale' and 'Saflager'. The last weren't on offer, but I obtained both Safbrews: S-33 (general purpose, non-flocculent with good attenuation) and T-58 (non-flocculent, very good attenuation with peppery and spicy flavour development). I also got a Safale S-04 - fast fermenting, bottom flocculating with compact sediment, suitable for secondary fermentation in bottles. (See Worthington White Shield last month.) Safale K-97, which I didn't obtain, is a top flocculating ale yeast.

Danstar (17), based in Canada and owned by a Swiss company, name their products after English towns. The strains are selected and isolated from commercial breweries, though it is not clear whether these were located anywhere near the towns. 'Nottingham' is highly flocculent and fully attenuating, with neutral flavour and suitable for lagers. 'Windsor' does originate 'in England' and is an ale yeast with moderate attenuation and estery (fruity) taste and aroma. 'London' is said to be midway between the previous two, whilst 'Manchester' gives complex, woody flavours suitable for old English style beers.

The Danstar yeasts are unusual in that they are to be rehydrated in pure water for 20-30 minutes prior to adding to wort. I have actually used my 'Manchester'



sachet, but this was in an emergency after my local brewery yeast had given up the ghost, and was not a fair test. The 'best before' date on all these dried samples is either fast approaching or just past, so I will have to use them all soon if I am to evaluate them properly.

The above mentioned emergency arose because I broke one of my Golden Rules - *Always get a vigorous ferment going in a starter before doing your main mash*. The only exceptions to this are if you have just obtained fresh yeast from a brewery (say half a pint to pitch into six gallons of wort) or you are following one brew immediately by another; pouring the new (cooled) wort directly on to the yeast sediment of the just-racked previous brew.

My mistake was overconfidence in my yeast from a local brewery. I had successfully made six consecutive brews from the original sample over a period of ten months. Then there was an interval of four months during which the yeast was stored in the fridge beneath a layer of the previous brew, in a sealed container. It smelt and tasted sound, and there was a lot of it (two pints) so I confidently mashed a six-gallon strong mild at og 1043. The whole batch of yeast was tipped in and stirred. Normally I would expect to see vigorous activity within a few hours, but on the third morning the surface was flat and inky black. Leaving a wort inactive for so long is asking for trouble; off-flavours can develop and this time was no exception. The 'Manchester' dried yeast did the business of getting the ferment going within twelve hours, and it did attenuate satisfactorily. However the damage was done - the beer was drinkable, but only just!

If you have only a small amount of yeast, or if there is any doubt about its viability, the rule is *make a starter*. I usually boil a couple of tablespoons of malt extract with a handful of hops in a pint and a half of water, until it has reduced to a pint. Strain the hops through a sieve, cool the liquid and put it in a sterile wine bottle with the yeast and a cotton wool plug in the top.

It is often beneficial to aerate this starter by repeated pouring between one bottle and another, using a funnel. For yeast to multiply it needs oxygen. If all is well, the starter bottle should be working vigorously within a few days at most. *Only then* should you carry out your mash and boil, confident that the new wort will be actively fermenting within hours.

It is also advisable to aerate the wort itself by stirring and splashing *before* pitching the starter or brewery sample, and in most cases several times afterwards. However one local brewer has told me that whilst his yeast likes a pre-aerated wort, it should *not* be disturbed again after pitching.

Graham Wheeler (13) divided English ale yeasts into 'northern' and 'southern' types, the northern (mainly Yorkshire) ones requiring frequent aeration to maintain fermentation. He advised the home brewer to avoid these and to use the 'southern' ones which can be left alone.

Whether or not you rouse the wort after pitching, you should get a thick 'rocky' head within a day or two. If you have not previously removed the 'cold break' protein (see WD April 1998) it will be carried to the top of the yeast as an unsightly dark scum. Skimming this will remove it and the yeast head which follows will usually be clean looking.

References

- 13 *Brew Your Own Real Ale at Home* by Graham Wheeler & Roger Protz, CAMRA
- 16. DCL Yeast Limited, Salatin House, 19 Cedar Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JG
- 17. Danstar Yeast, by Lallemand for Danstar Ferment A.G., Alpenstrasse 12, CH-6301 Zug, Switzerland. Internet: <http://www.lallemand.com/brew>

When the fermentation is subsiding, the head will remain unchanged in appearance or may start falling back into the beer. A near-steady gravity reading, usually in the range 1005 to 1012, will confirm this. After racking off the beer, the sediment can be used immediately to ferment the next wort, assuming it is ready. If you are not brewing again immediately, you can store it for a period in the fridge (but see above) or you can bottle some of the beer with deliberately more sediment than normal, say 5mm deposit covering the bottom of the bottle. Providing the beer is sound it *can* be possible to regenerate this yeast even after a few years, but this can't be guaranteed.

I once tried filtering (with a vacuum filter) some brewery yeast and storing the almost dry product in the freezer in aluminium foil. It did not reactivate well and I would not recommend this method. Indeed, my experience with brewery yeasts suggests that those which are acid-washed and pressed are less robust than those obtained as a slurry directly from the brewery. I know that one local brewer has very strong views on this.

If you are making three or four brews in rapid succession, it is not a good idea to use *all* the sediment from each previous fermentation. The yeast multiplies up to six-fold each time, so in theory, an original half-pint would end up as thirteen-and-a-half gallons by the end of the fourth! Other factors limit the actual amount produced, but I would still remove about three-quarters of the sediment each time.

Next time: Finings - are they really necessary?

Rupert

It's good to see Rumpleshirtscream apologising in print for his excessive language at the beanfeast. Whatever next? I envisage a deluge of apologies from people who've offended others over the years. Perhaps we'd better draw a veil over alcohol-induced behavioural lapses and declare an amnesty, otherwise there'll be no end to breast-baring, cathartic confessions.

But it wouldn't do any harm if the world's most miserable landlord apologised for a decade of surliness and consummate incivility. It would also be appreciated if Tubs Caries were to admit that A2C2 was an utter cock-up on his part and if his parent were to accept that the golden orb shines not from his son's bottom and that there's more than a touch of Walter Mitty about him.

It would be pretty wonderful if Boris Pratt were to recognise that he's been living up to his name for years, writing pompous prose, engaging in road and rail rage and moving in a small circle of self-congratulating beer-luvvies. Before we know where we are, Charlie Super will be grovelling about mis-spellings, punctuation, grammar and syntax. Perhaps this will herald the demise of the unattached participle in *Opening Tripe*. If Royal Hall were to confess to being

a hypocrite and master of the volte-face this would fill several volumes.

Of course, some behaviour is beyond redemption. No amount of penance can atone for Nora Tackler's ill-judged venture with *Manky Ale* or Ms Von Trapp's pouring of a pint down Rumpleshirtscream's trousers, following the cloth-eared barmaid allegations. For most people, however, there's ample room to reflect and come clean.

Fortunately, having led a blameless life, I am not in that position, but I'd like to see others writing in. So come on, ponder your inadequacies and write to Eddy. It'll ease your conscience, provide some much-needed copy and perhaps be the first day of a new life.

Don't worry if you've pushed your misdemeanours to the back of your mind and your memory has become selective. Over the next few months I hope to remind readers of some of the indiscretions of the past. Who knows, the Noble Robin, Colonel Wetbed, Angstrom Barmley, Efrem Brobdingnag and Perry Drab may all come to terms with their flawed pasts. There's a prize of ten pints of Jack Smug's for the best confession, so come on, Tubby Bleachhead and Jamie Froter, put crayon or green biro to paper now.



Branch Diary

Regional Meeting

Tuesday 15th September 8pm, Beer House, Angel Street,
Manchester

Winter Ales Festival Meetings

Sunday 20th September

Sunday 11th October

Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester, at 12.30pm

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 1 Sept 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Old Blue Bell, Wash La, Bury

Tues 15 Sept 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Robert Peel, The Wylde,
Bury

Fri 18th Sept, Bury-Manchester Tram Crawl. Details from Branch
Contact.

Tues 29 Sept 8.30pm, What's Doing collation, Flying Horse, Town
Hall Square, Rochdale

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

North Manchester

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

Wed 9 Sept. 'WEEK OF ACTION' tour of local breweries' taps. Meet
Derby Brewery Arms 6.45pm

Wed 16 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton

Wed 23 Sept 8pm, Committee & Social. New Moston, Belgrave Road
(near Failsworth Station)

Tues 29 Sept 6pm onwards, What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms,
Honey Street, Red Bank

Weds 30 Sept 7.30pm, Committee & Social, City Arms, Kennedy
Street

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 3 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting, Railway, Ashley Road, Hale

Thur 24 Sept 8pm, Castlefield new bars survey. Meet White Lion,
Liverpool Road

Thur 8 Oct 9pm, Branch Meeting, City Arms, Kennedy Street,
Manchester

Branch members meet most other Thursday nights. For details contact
Dave Ward, 0161 980 1170 (h)

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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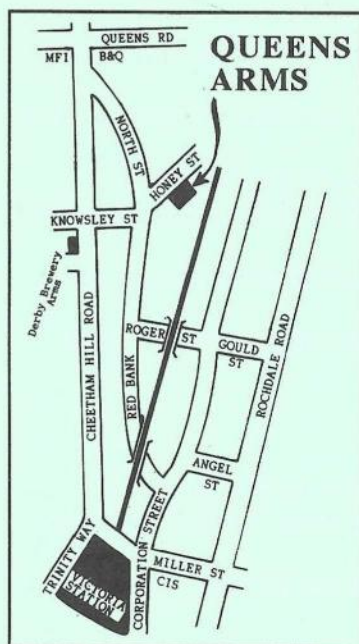


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Chess, etc.

General Knowledge Quiz Night
Tuesday. Beer Prizes

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