

25p

What's Doing

JANUARY 1999



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

MORE BEER AT THE MOULDERS

Beer from Phoenix Brewery and Thwaites bitter have replaced Hydes at the Moulders Arms on Heyrod Street, Ancoats.



NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL 1999

Upper Campfield Market, Deansgate

Thurs 21 January - Sat 23 January

Details inside



CAMRA 1999 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

Upper Campfield Market, Deansgate, MANCHESTER
(4 minutes from Deansgate BR and G-Mex Tram stations)



**National Champion Winter Ale Competition,
Huge Range of:**

**WINTER WARMERS, OLD ALES,
STOUTS AND PORTERS
EXTENSIVE SELECTION OF BITTERS
AND OTHER REAL ALES
FROM ALL OVER THE NORTH,
including many brand new beers**

**Unique Foreign Beer Bar featuring: Draught Winter Beers
from Belgium, Germany & the USA and an extensive bottled range
Hot & Cold Food available at every session**

Open: (hours subject to confirmation):

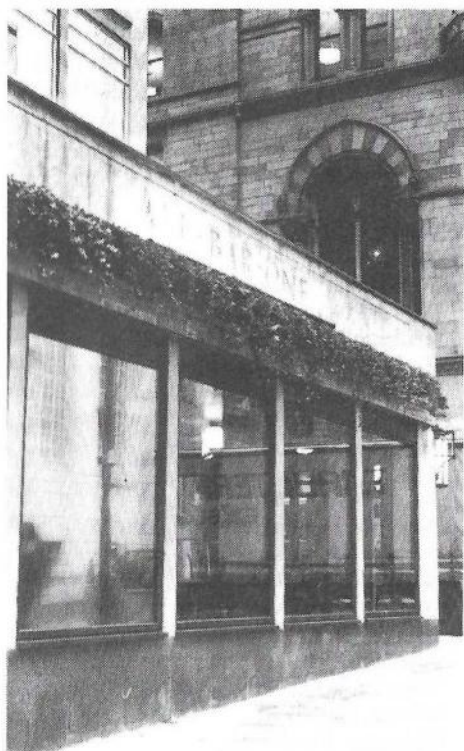
**Thurs 21 January 5.30 - 10.30pm, Fri 22 January, 12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm
Sat 23 January 12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm**

**Admission: £2 Thurs Eve, £3 Fri Eve, £1 Sat Eve, £2 Lunchtimes
CAMRA members FREE at lunchtime & Sat Eve, £1 Thurs & Fri Eve**



**21-23 JANUARY 1999
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**





All Bar One

This new bar opened in the city centre in late November. It occupies the ground floor of the Norwich Union building, on the corner of King Street and Brown Street, and it's a Bass pub that **does** sell cask beer - Stones (at £2.20 a pint!) and draught Bass.

The spacious interior is set out refectory style, with long tables flanked by church chairs to the rear and a smattering of other tables to the front. Everything is in light wood - polished floor, bar, seating and so on. A varied food and wine menu is available most of the day. Opening times are 11-11 Mon to Sat, 12-10.30 Sun. Sunday evening opening hours are under review.

Marie's Minstrel

The long-closed and former GBG pub, the Minstrel on Wigan Road, Hindley, has been bought by the Stockport-based Marie Pub Company. They also own the Park in Stockport and the Ducie Bridge in Manchester and the pubs generally sell Lees or Holts as well as doing food.

Man & Scythe

Wadworths 6X has joined the regular beers - Holts bitter, Boddies bitter and Flowers IPA - at Bolton's Old Man & Scythe. Marstons Pedigree and Merrie Monk Mild have been recent guests. All the beers are consistently well kept. In fact, it has been said that the Holts is generally on better form than in many of Joey's own outlets!

Price rise

The cover price of What's Doing will increase from 25p to 30p from February 1999. The last price rise was in January 1993 when Holts mild was 84p. Postal subscriptions will increase in line with this - six months £3.30, 12 months £5.80. There will also be a small rise in advertising rates. Full details will be published in February.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Joey's DBA premium bitter was launched in November at the Ape & Apple, with the Lord Mayor Gordon Conquest pulling the first pint - and paying for it, to help raise funds for the Holt Radium Institute. The following pubs are selling the new beer...

Ashley Brook, Salford
Abbey, St Helens
Angel, Knutsford
Ape & Apple, Manchester
Ashley Brook, Salford
Atherton Arms, Atherton
Black Dog, Belmont
Blue Bell, Blackford Bridge
Bolton Castle, Bolton
Bridgewater, Hollinwood
Brigadier, Sale
Brooklyn, Bolton
Chapel House, Denton
Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle Hulme
Cock o'Budworth, Great Budworth
Cricketers, Swinton
Crown, Horwich
Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham
Doffcocker, Bolton
Eagle & Child, Prestwich
Friendship, Prestwich
Golden Lion, Blackley
Grapes, Peel Green
Griffin, Heald Green
Griffin, Heaton Mersey

Halfway House, Droylsden
Kings Head, Droylsden
Kingsway, Levenshulme
Lamb, Eccles
Legh Arms, Sale Moor
Lord Nelson, Urmston
Millhouse, Warrington
Morning Star, Wardley
Navigation, Rochdale
New Grove, Whitefield
Park, Monton
Queens, Macclesfield
Red Lion, Prestwich
Red Lion, St Helens
Roebuck, Urmston
Rose Hill, Westhoughton
Spread Eagle, Chorlton-cum-Hardy
Starkey Arms, Heywood
Volunteer, Sale
Waggon & Horses, Gorton
Wilton, Radcliffe
Welcome, Prestwich
Winters, Stockport
Woodthorpe, Prestwich

I recently called in at **Winters** in Stockport with some friends. We all enjoyed the bitter (the DBA was not due on until the following week) and we kept an eye on the magnificently restored turret clock which is housed in a large glass cabinet. Every fifteen minutes, up to 10.45pm, the quarter hour striking chain comes into operation to operate the quarter bell. Holts are to be commended for restoring the clock, which had not been in working order since the days of Winters the Jewellers some twenty years ago. Every week the three weights for the three trains (going, quarter & hour, for those into horology) have to be wound up and I am told that a certificate will be issued to each person who does this. I think you'd need a pint or two of DBA after that feat!

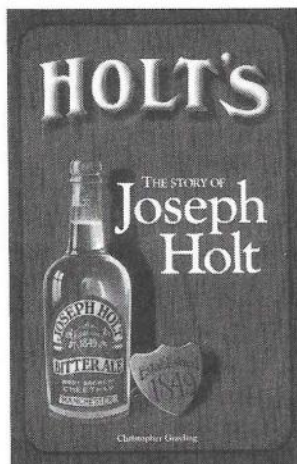
Sixex is under threat. Holts brew a small quantity of the strong 6% ale about once a year and send it off to WDB for bottling. Apparently the bottling plant is no longer able to cope with 170ml bottles. The alternative would be to use larger 330ml bottles (close to half a pint) but this would put the price up to around £1.50 from the present 77p

a bottle. I hear that many people who know of the problem are stocking up with bottles of Sixex from their local Holts pub.

Regarding the list of pubs in the Good Beer Guide through the years (WD last month), the **Union Tavern** on Liverpool Street, Salford (22 years in the GBG) has become a managed house and the former licensee, Danny Grayson, has taken over. He recently ran the Coach & Horses (the Sam Smiths pub not far away). Josh & Julie have moved on to the Widows Rest (Royal Oak, Weaste - Bass, no real ale).

I hope to be able to give details of brewery visits soon. The donation (to the Holt Radium Institute) will be £10 and visitors will be provided with beer, pie & peas.

A second edition of 'The Story of Joseph Holt' by Christopher Grayling has just been published. It costs £4.99 + 60p postage and is available from the brewery. The price includes a donation to the Holt Radium Institute.

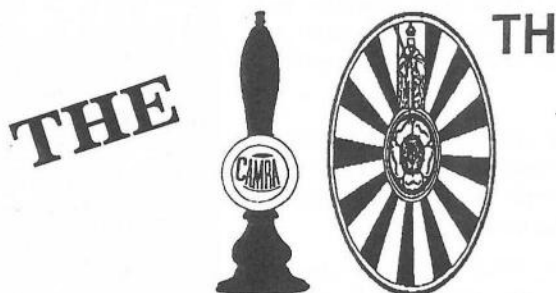


Woodies gets the axe

The former Woodlands Hotel on Woodlands Road, Crumpsall, has been demolished. After a period as 'Woodies' it closed and then reopened as the 'Emerald Isle' (or some such name) a few years back. This soon closed and the large building stood derelict for some time.



**ATHERTON & TYLDESLEY
ROUND TABLE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAMRA
PRESENT**



BENT & BONGS BEER BASH

28th 29th 30th January 1999

FORMBY HALL, ATHERTON

Main Beneficiary



CHILD FLIGHT

THURSDAY 28th JAN	6.00pm - 7.30pm	£2.50
	7.30pm - 11.00pm	£3.50
FRIDAY 29th JAN	6.00pm - 11.00pm	£4.00
SATURDAY 30th JAN	12 noon - 4.00pm	£3.00
	7.00pm - 11.00pm	£3.50

**CAMRA MEMBERS £ 1.00 REDUCTION ON ENTRANCE FEE
ENTERTAINMENT & FOOD AT ALL SESSIONS**

Wigan and district

Dave White

Way back when, the **Old Pear Tree**, Frog Lane, Wigan, was a permanent fixture in the Good Beer Guide. Frank and Jean Fielding ran this Burtonwood house until just over two years ago, and whilst the ale could be a bit iffy at times, a warm welcome was always guaranteed (even to me) and the Old Pear Tree was a fine example of a community pub. In the twenty-four months since then, various pub chains and licensees have given an object lesson in how to run a good local into the ground. Customers were usually disguised as empty seats, and the beer quality suffered before the inevitable conversion to smoothflow. However, things could be looking up at last at the Pear Tree. Mine host is now one Dave Dobson, formerly of the **Zetland Hotel**, Southport, a GBG regular, and by the time you read this, cask Burtonwood bitter should be available on the new bar top.

The same bitter has returned to the **Crown Hotel**, Wigan Road, New Springs. The new licensees here are Elaine Webb and Nigel Parsonage, who are also running the GBG-rated **Swan & Railway** in the town centre. Sadly, the couple may leave the latter if the Crown proves a success; the Banks's pub has had several landlords recently, and the beer quality had improved. Elsewhere in New Springs, the **Kirkless Hall Hotel**, Albion Way, has a new licensee, but Burtonwood smoothflow remains.

The licensee of the **Rose & Crown** by Orrell railway station looks set to change over to the **Hare & Hounds**, Upholland Road, Billinge. The recent history of this fine boozer reads remarkably like that of the Old Pear Tree, and the sole cask offering, Tetley bitter, was not so much tired as comatose when I popped in recently. The situation can only improve.

As usual, there are a number of conversions to nitrokeg to report. The **Shamrock** and the **New Seven Stars**, two Burtonwood pubs on Preston Road, Standish, have gone over to the stuff, as have the **Bridgewater**, Liverpool Road, Hindley (Burtonwood); the **Stag Hotel** (Mr Q's) at Orrell Post (Tetley) and the **Balcarres Arms**, Copperas Lane, Haigh, although real



ale should return to this free house when it reopens. Further to last month's report, the **Bird i'th'Hand**, Liverpool Road, Hindley, is still keg.

The word is out that the **Bird i'th'Hand** (pictured), Ince Green Lane, Ince Bar, is about to reopen after several years. Elsewhere in Ince, the **Fox** on Manchester Road has closed for renovation. This pub has been on keg beer since the days when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Ince-in-Makerfield's abysmal track record on real ale (see *WD December*) does not give grounds for confidence at either pub.

Further up Manchester Road, the 'sold' sign is finally up at the **Minstrel**, and there has been much evidence of activity there lately (see *Marie's Minstrel* in this issue). Still in Hindley, and the **Banner**, Chapel Green, now sells a guest beer alongside cask Stones bitter.

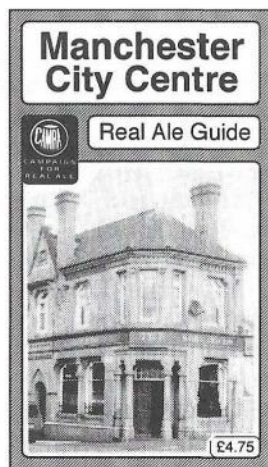
News in brief... Lees bitter is no longer on sale at the **Old Engine**, Gathurst Lane, Kitt Green, although both Tetley milds are on sale as well as the bitter... the misleading sign proclaiming the availability of traditional ale on the exterior of the **Whitesmiths Arms**, Standishgate, has been removed, following the objection by a local campaigner. This Boddingtons pub now simply advertises 'ales'. Will Tetley do the decent thing at the **White Lion & Railway**, Whelley, as well? The reopening of the Wetherspoonised **Brocket Arms Hotel**, Mesnes Street, came too close to copy date for me to get a look-in. More news on this one next month. Is there any truth in the rumour that JDW is to buy the gargantuan **George & Dragon** in Tyldesley?

New Beer Guide

The Central Manchester Guide nears completion. It will be launched at the National Winter Ales Festival in January. The cover price is £4.75 (CAMRA members £3.75). By post the guide is £5 post paid or £4 to CAMRA members. It will be available at the beginning of February from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Manchester M9 6PW. Please make cheques payable to CAMRA North Manchester.

Coach & Horses

The long-closed Coach & Horses on London Road is being converted into a computer shop.



Coniston continued

In November Dave Crookell described the attractions of the village of Coniston. Here he covers some of the pleasant rural real ale pubs to the south...

South of Coniston, between Broughton-in-Furness and Torver, is Broughton Mills, a scattered farming community at the foot of the Dunnerdale Fells. Here you will find the **Blacksmiths Arms**, a recent convert to real ale that rates as a CAMRA Heritage Pub for its unspoilt character. The building was originally a farmhouse, has whitewashed walls, hanging flower baskets and an outdoor drinking area complete with rustic tables and chairs. There is a small bar, containing a scrubbed wooden table and an open fire, and three other farmhouse-style rooms. Beers are handpumped Theakstons Bitter and Old Peculier, together with a guest from a local independent.

In the village of Torver is the unpretentious **Wilsons Arms** (Tetleys), while across the road is the **Church House Inn** (*below*), an extensive, part-fourteenth century building with low beams and separate vault and lounge bars offering Old Speckled Hen, Castle Eden and Boddies Bitter.

Continue north and you will arrive at the previously documented delights of Coniston village, but turn south on to the A5084 and travel along the southern shore of Coniston Water, and you will come to Lowick Bridge, a village that once had a blacksmith's, a joiner's



and a corn mill. Here is the **Red Lion Inn**, a friendly local with real fires and a separate dining room (with a piano). It is a Robinsons pub (formerly Hartleys) and sells Hatters Mild, Frederics and Hartleys XB.

From Lowick Bridge a very minor country lane leads to the hamlet of Oxen Park on the southern edge of the Grizedale Forest and the aptly named **Manor House** (an eighteenth century manor house). This is another ex-Hartleys pub with a separate lounge and dining area, offering Hatters Mild, Best Bitter and Hartleys XB, together with Egon Ronay recommended meals. The snug is also a pool room and a sub-Post Office.

South from Lowick Bridge is Lowick Green and the **Farmers Arms**, a picturesque old inn with an original spinning gallery and many exposed oak beams, but only one real ale, Theakstons XB. There are more oak beams in the lounge and dining room; a slate floor and a plethora of horse brasses in the Saddle Bar and a separate pool/games room.

Prized pub?

To find that Bass's Halfway House in Cheetham Hill has gone keg (it was doing Stones or Worthy on handpull) is no real surprise. The surprise is that Bass have not mucked about with the inside of this good looking, double-fronted house. It has plenty of original features - fine panelling, original doors, two fully operational revolving doors - and must surely merit a thorough look-over for consideration in English Heritage's national inventory of pub interiors.



Desert Storm

Groggnard

Two of the 'heavy mob' are on sale in Oldham: Lees' latest home-made guest beer, Storm (4.8%), is at selected outlets, and Holts DBA (5%) is being sold at the Bridgewater on Manchester Road. Storm, when on form, is a sharp, hoppy 'fugglish' ale which reminds me of Jennings' Sneck Lifter. Unfortunately the nearest outlet, the Woodman on Manchester Road, Hollinwood, has a struggle to persuade the regulars to sample the stuff (reluctant, maybe, to find the extra 20p) so keeping it in condition must be a problem. The locals tend to be of the 'I've bin suppin' this beer for thirty/forty years and I'm not changin' now' persuasion. The challenge for Lees must be in picking the pubs where the clientele's tastes are not set in stone. The Storm symbol - a flashing lighthouse - might be better appreciated in Anglesey with its South Stack Light. Such luminary erections are not a noticeable feature of the Manchester landscape.



One noticeable feature of the Oldham landscape is the aforementioned Bridgewater (*below*) - probably because it is the only Holts pub in town. Here the DBA or Derby came as a pleasant surprise. The usual bitter has a few too many units of bitterness for my personal taste, but the Derby is very well balanced, dry yet smooth, with hints of coffee/caramel in the aftertaste. At £1.29 it is excellent value, though probably not so to the regulars who are still in



a state of collective shock at the bitter finally breaking the £1 barrier a couple of years ago.

Sadly, across the road from the Bridgewater, the changes at the Golden Buck are definitely not good news. The pub used to supply handpumped Boddingtons and OB bitters and for a while even tried guest beers. But now the OB has departed, the Boddies sits in a plastic keg font and has acquired a consort - Greenalls mild, 'smooth in flavour'. A preposition makes all the difference; 'brewed with bullshit', you might say.

If the Golden Buck has now entered the sterile drifts of the Greater Manchester beer desert, then Oldham town centre has been living there for a long time now. A good pub guide to Oldham centre would be on the lines of 'the smallest book in the world', rather like 'Greenalls' Guide to Pub Preservation' or 'Whitbread Memorial Breweries'. Anyway, once upon a time in the middle of this urban Sahara was a reasonable little pub with the novel name of Hark to Topper. It was a Samuel Smiths tied house, and while the brewery supplied a variety of real ales (on paper, anyway), it offered only the handpumped Old Brewery Bitter, at a very fair price of £1.16. On the strength of this solitary offering the pub was given a place in the 1999 Good Beer Guide, which tells you a lot about the state of the competition. When the handsome prince of landlords was given the accolade of inclusion, did he flash his eyes, twirl his moustache and declare his intention of introducing another couple of handpumps? Sadly, no. Time is wasted on the care and nurture of real ale: smooth-flow has replaced it and the Good Beer Guide now has a cuckoo in its pages.

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.

Manchester Pubs - a history

Part Five: Brewers

Between the 1890s and the 1930s many of Manchester's pubs came under the control of brewing companies. In a period when the authorities were using new licensing and public health laws to close run-down premises, these companies had the money to spend on improvements and rebuilding. Typical of the pubs which were completely rebuilt in the late Victorian/Edwardian era are the Pack Horse, Deansgate (then owned by Cronshaws Brewery, Hulme) and the Crown & Cushion on Corporation Street (Chesters Brewery, Ardwick).

Some owners who didn't have brewing interests were cautious when they were rebuilding, as there was a chance that a new pub or hotel would fail. Easy conversion to alternative and more profitable use had to be considered, so when the Wheatsheaf (Hogshead) was built on the site of an old High Street alehouse in the 1880s, only part of

the present ground floor area formed the licensed premises. Business must have been good, because in 1890 it was extended into the shop next door and the shop doorway became the main entrance; the original door was converted into a window.



The City Arms, Kennedy Street, with Empress Brewery sky sign in the 1930s

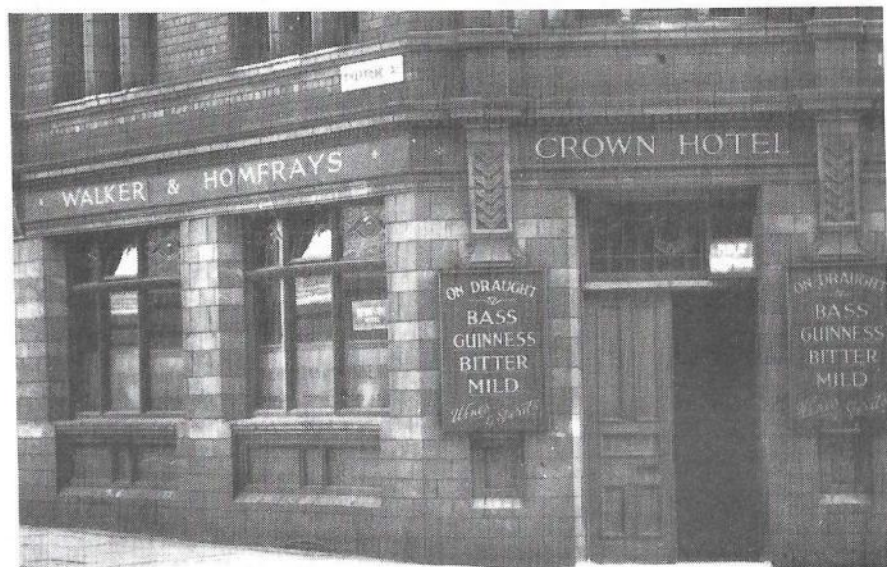
Etched in the wall of the office building on Chapel Walks now occupied by Grinch wine bar are the words 'Old Half Moon Chambers'. The building covers the site of the Old Half Moon alehouse. The pub, brewhouse and other outbuildings stood on 250 square yards of freehold land which were sold for redevelopment in the 1860s. A new Old Half Moon was included in the office block, but unlike the Wheatsheaf this pub didn't last and the premises were converted into a restaurant.

Several pubs and many beerhouses didn't survive because they were beyond saving. Among these must have been Thomas Cooke's beershop in the cellar of an

old house on Miller Street. During alterations to the upper part of the building, the roof caved in, smashing a beer barrel and damaging furniture. It was raining, the cellar was soon flooded and until the roof was fixed Mrs Cooke had to serve her customers whilst sheltering under an umbrella.

The brewers sometimes acquired old properties just for the licences, which they could surrender in exchange for a new licence or permission to make improvements to a pub in a better area. In the 1930s several of the city's old licences were transferred to pubs on the new housing estates. The Market Restaurant on Edge Street was originally a pub called the King Richard III and when this closed in 1934 the licence was transferred to a new venture in Gorton, the Gorton Mount Hotel.

One licence which was transferred, but not very far, was that of the Old Garratt on Princess Street. The original building was a few yards lower down the street from the present site, next to the railway bridge. In 1905 it was over a hundred years old and Boddingtons Brewery wanted to transfer the licence to better premises. They owned a beerhouse on the corner of Granby Row called the Masons Arms, so they gave up this and two other beer licences in return for permission to transfer the Old Garratt's public house licence to the Masons Arms building. The present Old Garratt replaced this one in 1963.



The Crown, Deansgate, in the days when it belonged to Walker & Homfrays of Salford and draught Bass was a fixture along with the Guinness

In the 1920s there were around twenty breweries in Manchester and Salford and when touring the city one could sample Walker & Homfray's ales (brewed in Salford) at the (New) Union, Cronshaw's (from Hulme) at the Old Nags Head, Yates's (Ardwick) at the Vine and Taylor's Eagle ales (Greenheys) at the Crown & Anchor, Cateaton Street. The C&A was later taken over by Threlfalls of Salford, one of the area's big brewers along with Wilsons, Chesters, Walker & Homfray and Groves & Whitnall of Salford.

Some out-of-town brewers had pubs in the city. Chadwick's of Bury supplied the Ducie Bridge, the North Cheshire Brewery (Macclesfield) owned the White Bear on Swan Street (now Bar Fringe) and Creese & Co of Hyde had an interest in the Waggon & Horses (now Mulligans). Of the big brewers, Bass had the Burton Arms, the Town Hall (now Copperbutts) and, for a time, the Britons Protection. In the post-war years, Tetleys of Leeds acquired a number of pubs in the city, such as the Britons Protection, the Hare & Hounds and the Circus. These pubs were later supplied by Walkers of Warrington when Tetley merged with Walkers.

Brews from Burtonwood

From January tenants of Burtonwood pubs will be able to order a guest beer of the month from the brewery's 'Cask Collection'. The beers will be from other regional or small brewers, but not the microbrewers. Burtonwood's marketing manager, Simon Eyles, says that the micros they approached could not cope either with the volume or the number of casks Burtonwood will require. The January/February guest beer is Caledonian 80/-. This will be followed by Mansfield Old Baily in March, Everards Tiger in April, Black Parrot (a Burtonwood 4.2% dark ale) in May and Jennings Cocker Hoop in June.

Burtonwood's Buccaneer is to be discontinued, but may reappear as a Cask Collection beer of the month. Cask mild is now sold in only about twenty outlets, with an average throughout of slightly less than a firkin a week, so this may go as well early in 1999.

The brewery is planning to spend some £18m on its pubs over the next three years. In addition, more pubs may be acquired. The supply deal with Thomas Hardy (*WD Sept*) is for three years but the parent company hopes it will continue beyond that.

Cask overboard!

Greenalls' Chapel Street flagship, the Old Ship, has gone over to smooth keg beer. This would have been unimaginable a few years ago, when the pub did a good trade in cask Boddies mild and bitter.



We're in the 1999 Good Beer Guide

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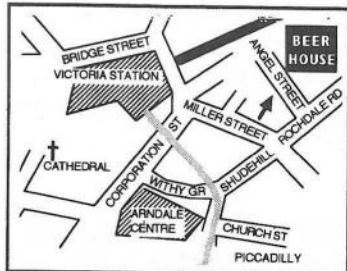
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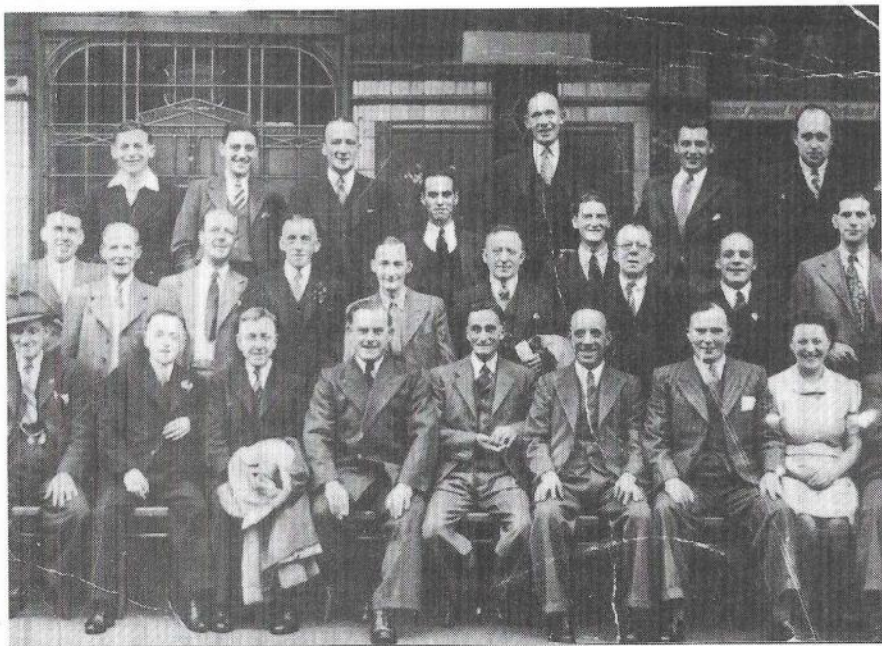
Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.109 **Help the Poor Struggler** 303 Manchester Road, Oldham
The old Help the Poor Struggler building was a landmark on Manchester Road for over twenty years after the pub closed. It was demolished a few years ago, soon after the death of its most famous tenant, Public Hangman Albert Pierrepont. I wrote about the pub at the time (WD June 1993) and since then more information has come to light, including this 1950s photo showing Albert (*front right*) with some of his customers.

The Strugglers Tavern, as it was originally known, is first recorded in 1841. It was then a small beerhouse on the end of a row of houses - the double-fronted pub of recent memory came later - and the first licensee was James Blackwell, who had lived at the house since at least 1827. James died in 1846 and his widow 'Owd Sally' carried on the business until her own death in 1865.

It was probably around this time that the beerhouse was enlarged by extending into the house next door. The property included a cottage at the back, rented by one Nancy Wray for 1/6d a week. Nancy must have been fond of her beer, as it was said that as a 'lodger' she had the right to be served at any time, providing it was the landlord who served her! Twenty years later the Struggler was owned by Cronshaw's Brewery of Hulme and they rebuilt the house. Nancy's cottage was pulled down to make room for a stable and some water closets in the back yard.



The Struggler was a Groves & Whitnall house when Albert Pierrepont arrived in 1946. He left in 1954, and that was when I first visited the place. A friend told me Albert was leaving and we decided to have a drink there before he went. It was still a beerhouse then, and it didn't become fully licensed until 1961, the year Greenall Whitley took over the Groves & Whitnall pubs.

The Struggler closed in March 1972 and the building was used by a variety of businesses until the long-planned widening of Manchester Road began in the 1990s.



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Book Review

Mark McConachie

City Life Restaurant, Café Bar & Pub Guide 1999

£3.50 162pp. Available from newsagents and bookshops

Previous editions of this guide were very handy for the eating-out sections, but often fell down on the pub side, with ill-chosen entries and sometimes inaccurate information. Well, I'm glad to say the new edition is far better in this respect, with approximately half the book given over to pubs - listed under Pubs, Country Pubs, Café Bars and chains (Hogshead, Wetherspoon, etc).

The Pubs section is clearly laid-out, alphabetically within town, and all the CAMRA favourites are there with photos and good descriptions - not only of the pubs, but of their character, clientele and the area that they serve. Beer range and opening hours are included. The small Country Pubs section goes over the Greater Manchester border to feature some classic houses in Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire.

If you have an interest in good pubs and good food, this guide will make a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf.

A Star is born

The latest beer from Marble Brewery went on sale in early December. Called 'Wee Star', after brewer Mark Dade's son, Kane, it weighs in at 8.6% and is £2.25 a pint. It is very drinkable, even at that gravity, and will be available at the Winter Ales Festival.

Dutton changes

Gareth and Stephanie Williams, who took over at the Dutton Arms in Patricroft last February, have moved on. Taking over are Jan and Andy Thornton, who previously ran the Pepper House, a pub/nightclub in Huddersfield.



Silver Jubilee

Plans are well advanced for the celebration of the North Manchester Branch's 25th anniversary. A few tickets are still available. They're £5 each and include food and two pints of specially brewed Argent Ale. The celebrations are on Sunday 21st February, beginning at noon. Tickets are available from Roger Hall.

Letters

Golden delicious?

Sir - A notice in the window of the Golden Cross, Patricroft, announced a 'Meat Draw' every Sunday. Puzzled, I made enquiries and learnt that this referred to a sort of raffle or lottery in which parcels of meat are the prizes.

This ignores the possibility of attracting vegetarian customers like myself, so I would like to suggest some alternatives. A 'Carrot Draw' might be the most obvious, alternating perhaps with a 'Turnip Draw'. For those not partial to root vegetables, Cauliflower or Celery might feature occasionally. Then, a few times a year, excitement could be raised to the threshold by holding an 'exotics' draw for rarities such as Chayote, Eddoes, Gagangal, Jicama, Scorzonera or Zalak!

Lettuce Murphy

Is nothing sacred?

Sir - What is the world coming to? The Karlsberg brewery in Homburg, Germany, is introducing plastic bottles on to the German market next April. Time was when even canned beer was unheard of in Germany.

Warsteiner and Krombacher are showing an interest and could follow suit. It is to be hoped that the Bavarian breweries will not even consider this method of ruining perfectly good beer.

Paul Roberts

Kings returns

The replacement for the Kings Head on Market Street, Droylsden, opened on 1st December. The old building suffered from subsidence and had been in a bad way for a while, so a completely new pub was called for. The new Kings Head is unique in the Holts estate. It is a three roomed pub, with vault and snug fronting Market Street and a lounge on the Greenside Lane side. The lounge is unusual in that part is given over to non-smoking and the decor is quite striking, reminiscent of a mock baronial hall complete with vestigial minstrel gallery.

The pub is far larger than the original and a good job has been done, with quality materials. Beers are mild and bitter (advertised with the new escutcheon-shaped pumpclips) and the new DBA.

Kingdom come

Brunels in Flixton, a former railway station, burnt down in November.

Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupulus

Part Seventeen - Priming

When the beer has finished fermenting, it is important to get it into a sealed container of some kind. This prevents spoilage organisms and oxygen getting to the beer and allows it to develop some 'condition'. Condition here means a small amount of dissolved carbon dioxide, produced by the action of traces of yeast still in the beer or at the bottom of the container, on residual fermentable sugars.

These 'fermentables' depend to a large extent on conditions during mashing. A high mash temperature combined with a 'stiff' mash (i.e. not much water) will tend to produce more

slowly fermentable carbohydrates which are well suited to cask ale requiring a long, slow maturation. Often, though, the beer will ferment right out, and to produce the necessary condition a small amount of 'priming' sugar must be added, prior to sealing the storage container.

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
- 13 *Brew Your Own Real Ale at Home* by Graham Wheeler & Roger Protz, CAMRA

Amounts of priming sugar vary according to different authors. Thus



Graham Wheeler (13) uses one-third to two-thirds of an ounce per gallon. Dave Line (5) recommends one ounce per gallon and H E Bravery (1) up to two-and-a-half ounces. In my view this last figure is excessive and could lead to exploding bottles, split barrels or at best very gassy beer. I usually use about three-quarters of an ounce per gallon, if I am sure that the beer has no residual 'fermentables' of its own. Otherwise I would use a little less.

Rupert

We were meeting during the hiatus between Yuletide and the New Year. Our numbers were somewhat depleted and this prompted the heated discussion in O'Riley's Rat & Handbag about the future of the Campaign. Boris Pratt had written an upbeat article in the National organ, suggesting that everything was hunky dory. Our assembled cynics were not so sure.

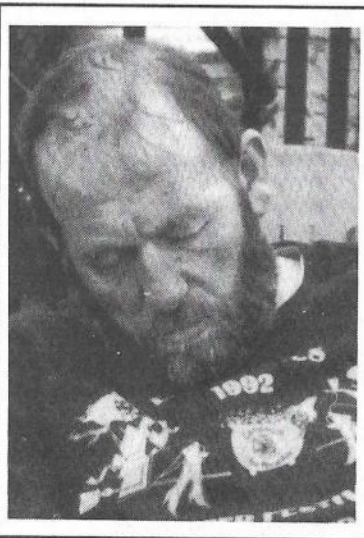
'How can you trust him?' Fiona launched into her normal invective. 'He's got himself a nice little number, right enough. Him and Bubbles Pepsi giving each other silver tankards like a pair of mincing luvvies. We may have 53,000 members, but the whole shebang is going down the tubes. Half our pubs are owned by the Japs and look what's happened to them recently. Breweries are closing right, left and centre, and nitrosmooth is ousting cask ale in hundreds of pubs. And what do our 53,000 members do about it? Bugger all, that's what. They just turn up at amber nectar shows, as you would have it, Roop, and get rat-arsed on esoteric concoctions from fly-by-night microbreweries. They don't turn up at meetings, survey pubs, deliver newsletters or lead

campaigns which are the mundane, ballsaching, grass roots basics of what a campaign is about. What's happened to our pioneering spirit? It's gone and I fear the worst. Whose round is it?'

I was beginning to feel that Slumley's 25th anniversary might turn into more of a wake than a celebration. We reflected on those who'd come and gone and wondered what they were doing now. Bunty brought back six pints of Drab's Crown Ale and suggested direct action to counter the moribund condition of the campaign. 'Just look at what's been achieved by people landing on oil rigs or freeing mink,' he began. 'Perhaps we can infiltrate nitrokeg factories and put anthrax in the beer or encourage mass violence in pubs that don't serve real ale.'

I couldn't help thinking that this was why Bunty was forever in gaol, but shared his sense of frustration and desperation. I sincerely hope that

the same period next year will not be as depressing. No doubt there will still be some foaming beer from the wickets and the millennium celebrations will mean pubs remaining open for days on end. Something to look forward to indeed, if we're all still alive and not shuffling around in our slippers.



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 5 Jan 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Merrie Monk, College Road, Rochdale.

Tues 12 Jan 8.30pm, Oldham Beer Festival Organisation Meeting, Up Steps, High Street, Oldham.

Sat 16 Jan 12 noon, Regional Meeting, Blue Pitts, Manchester Road, Castleton

Tues 19 Jan 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Merrie Monk, College Road, Rochdale.

Sat 23 Jan, Train Social, Dewsbury Station Buffet Bar and all stations back. Details from Branch Contact.

Tues 26 Jan 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation/Oldham Beer Festival Organisation, Cask & Feather, Oldham Road, Rochdale.

Sat 30 Jan 12 noon, Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting, Blue Pitts, Manchester Road, Castleton

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

North Manchester

Sat 2 Jan, Festival Postering Day & Social, Beer House, noon.

Wed 6 Jan 8pm, Crescent, Salford. GBG 2000 Shortlisting.

Wed 13 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Queens Arms, Patricroft

Sat 16 Jan 12.30pm, Regional AGM, Blue Pitts, Castleton (opposite railway station).

Mon 18 - Wed 20 Jan, all day, Festival set-up, Upper Campfield Market.

Thur 21 - Sat 23 Jan, Winter Ales Festival open

Sun 24 Jan, Festival take-down.

Tues 26 Jan 6pm onwards, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street

Wed 27 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height. Oakwood, Lancaster Road, 7pm; Waggon & Horses 8pm; Red Lion 9.30pm.

Wed 3 Feb, Piccadilly Crawl. Bulls Head 7pm, Goose 8pm, Crown & Anchor, Hilton Street, 9.30pm

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Mark McConachie, Dave Crookell, Rob Magee, Roger Hall, Brian Gleave, Dave White, Peter Wadsworth, Michael Lynn.

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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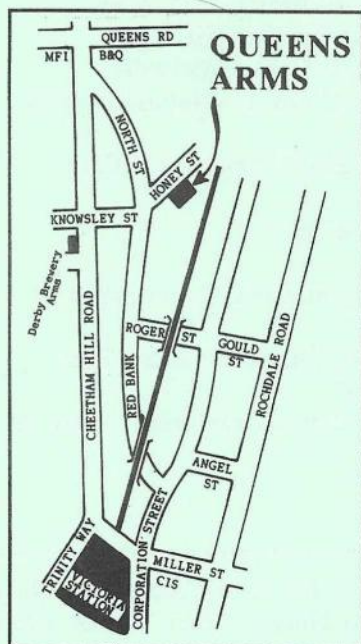


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Tuesday. Beer Prizes

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