

30p

# What's Doing

SEPTEMBER 1999



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## Welcome Rain

John Willie Lees' Rain Bar was launched on Thursday 5th August, with former council leader and local MP Graham Stringer pulling the ceremonial 'first' pint (a few dozen had already been served) and declaring the premises open.



The Rain Bar is at 80 Great Bridgewater Street and is part of a redevelopment by Bellway Homes, who sold the premises to Lees. Years ago there was an umbrella factory next door, which is one reason for the unusual name. The brewery's pre-opening advertising material described rain as Manchester's most famous commodity, but it was unfortunate timing as July proved to be the driest in Manchester since records began!

I was apprehensive that this new venture by Lees



would be another café bar, sporting a token handpump and catering mainly for designer-drink-swilling Hooray Henrys. The restaurant on the first floor came up to expectations - café bar type decor and a solitary steel handpump dispensing bitter from amongst an array of designer fonts. However, the main drinking area on the ground floor is in traditional surroundings - bare boards and lots of wood surrounds, plus a few alcoves, reminiscent of some Fullers Ale & Pie Houses in London.

The full Lees range is on offer - mild at £1.50, bitter at £1.70, Scorcher at £1.75 and Moonraker at £2.50, served from two banks of handpumps. Half litre bottles of Jumbo (£2) and Ruff Yed (£2.10) are also available. While these prices are well above (about 35%) Lees' usual managed house prices they are still significantly below prices charged by other pubs in this area.

Rain Bar is John Willie's new flagship and cost around the £1.5 million mark. They could have bought a lot of run-down back street pubs from the likes of Greenalls for that! Apart from the ground floor pub and upstairs restaurant, there is a large beer garden overlooking the Rochdale Canal and an outside patio to the rear of the first floor restaurant. Not many Central Manchester pubs can boast one beer garden, let alone two! As could be expected on the opening night, with the presence of the Lees-Joneses and the head brewer, the beers were all in excellent condition.

For dedicated CAMRA reformers wishing to preach about the evils of nitrokeg, there is a pulpit neatly built off the main staircase. Another interesting feature is Lees' roll of honour, listing the various awards achieved by JWJL over the years, on the wall in the alcove by the bar.

The premises are open from 0800 (for breakfasts) until 2300 (2230 on Sundays). Food is served until half an hour before closing. Hot panini sandwiches and smoked salmon croissants seem a long way from Middleton Junction (and are priced accordingly), but there are bangers and mash, brewer's pie and fish and chips at prices more in line with bar meals. There is also curry of the day at £5.75 including poppadoms, for those of us who like our daily spice.

On a subsequent visit on a Saturday night the quality of the beer was still as good and it was pleasing to see several customers trying the Scorcher. Also encouraging was the positive attitude of the many bar staff. Despite the bar becoming quite full, the staff ensured that nobody had to wait long.

I have to admit I was very pleasantly surprised. I think Lees have done a marvellous job and, given the revitalised locality, I am sure they will soon recoup their substantial outlay.

*Paul Roberts*

## Free House changes

*Pete Cash*

On 20th September Idy Phillips and Sal will be moving from the ever-popular **Beer House** on Angel Street, Manchester, to the also popular **Crescent** in Salford, where Ruth Bloomfield comes to the end of her two-year stint.

Ownerships remain unchanged (Graham Rawlinson and Andy Davies). A new manager for the Beer House has not been announced yet, but we can expect somebody with a good real ale track record.



Meanwhile, at the Crescent, Idy and Sal have promised all-day opening every day and we should see features such as beer and cider festivals for which the Beer House has become famous. They feel that the Crescent has a lot of potential.

Feline continuity at the Crescent is assured since Sammy and Cino will be moving, too, along with Fang the dog.

## Chadwick comes to town

*Mark McConachie*

Sir Edwin Chadwick, that is, the new J D Wetherspoon pub on Stockport Road, Longsight. The place opened on Friday 13th August and can claim to be Longsight's most upmarket boozer. Sited on Stockport Road, near the junction of Dickenson Road, the pub is a departure in design from other JDW houses, having much light wood and pale creams, greens and blues to give the medium-sized space an airy feel. The outside is a striking off-white, with a railed beer garden to the right. Another beer garden behind the pub affords excellent views of passing rail traffic.

The pub is like nothing the area has ever seen and I suspect it will do very well. Its size and the effect it could have on existing pubs may prove too much for some. Buses 190-2, 196-7 go there from Manchester.

The name, by the way, comes from noted philanthropist and public health reformer Sir Edwin Chadwick, who was born in Longsight.



## Kings Ale

Leo King

The **Hogshead** on High Street in Manchester is having a cider festival from 26th August to 5th September. All the ciders are £1.80 a pint and include Thatchers Cheddar Valley (6%), Westons Old Rosie (7.3%), Inch's Stonehouse (6%) and Moles Black Rat (6.4%). You can 'try before you buy' and a 'pint & plate' (cider and cheese) costs £3.99.

Work is well under way at the new **Wetherspoons** in the centre of Chorlton. The listed building used to be a snooker club and it is adjacent to the former Gaumont Cinema (now the Co-op funeral parlour). When visiting the nearby **Royal Oak** (Whitbread), I noticed that two forms of Boddies bitter are on offer - draught from a four-tap, one unit system that delivers keg products such as Heineken, and traditional handpumps.

I don't know why Boddies (and others) cannot just sell the real stuff. Both the Whitbread pubs in Chorlton (the **Feathers** is the other one) sell only one real ale - the ubiquitous Boddies bitter. Both pubs have an array of handpumps, all with Boddies pump clips. Surely there could be at least one guest beer? Then again, I remember the days when both pubs sold only keg beers. Ah well, one real ale is better than none at all.

### A BREWER'S TALE

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5/ Greenall Whitley, Groves & Whitnall, Bass Runcorn & Guinness.

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## Salford roundup

Grays Premium Bitter (4.5%) is now available at both the **Albert Vaults** and the **Salford Arms** on Chapel Street. It is selling at a very affordable £1.10 a pint. Also at the Albert Vaults, there is Bridgewater Delph Porter at £1.50.

### 'It's not unusual to be shut by anyone'

Tom Jones is the latest licensee of the **Kings Arms** on Bloom Street to experience closure. On 18th August the pub was closed and



boarded. Since its Greenalls days the Kings has experienced mixed fortunes, with perhaps more downs than ups. It may be just on the wrong side of the tracks. The Salford Arms and the Egerton seem to thrive, Yet the **Pen & Wig** (left), clearly on the right side of the tracks, has a similar record of failure to the Kings and now carries a notice offering the place as a 'refurbished ground floor retail / showroom opportunity.' With the closure of the Kings, Bridgewater Ales has lost a third of its outlets and it is to be hoped that Ken Birch will be able to recoup the loss.

The **Pied Piper** on Broadwalk, near Pendleton Precinct, appears to be another candidate for demolition.

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## Boothstown

Since she took over about seven months ago, Marcelle Roberts has made a great improvement to the **Royal Oak** at Boothstown. The enormous satellite dish that was fixed to the front of the building has gone and complete redecoration is planned. The best selling guest beer - Holts bitter - has been retained.



## The Holts Nine

Holts Brewery are donating the proceeds from the sales at their pubs on 9.9.99 to Christie's Hospital as part of their 150th anniversary appeal. The Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch of CAMRA has therefore organised a nine-pub crawl for that evening. All are welcome to join in for the whole or part of the crawl. It starts at the Church, next to Whitefield Metrolink



Station, and proceeds through Whitefield and Prestwich to the Red Lion. The ninth pub is in Manchester for those who don't live locally. Those who do can visit the Friendship, the Ostrich or the Woodthorpe (or all three) to round off the evening.

*The itinerary is as follows:*

7.00pm	Church	Bury New Road, Whitefield
7.20pm	New Grove	Bury New Road, Whitefield
7.40pm	Eagle and Child	Higher Lane, Whitefield
8.05pm	Coach and Horses	Bury Old Road, Whitefield
8.25pm	Welcome	Bury Old Road, Whitefield
8.50pm	White Horse	Bury New Road, Prestwich
9.10pm	Foresters Arms	Bury New Road, Prestwich
9.30pm	Red Lion	Bury New Road, Prestwich
10.30pm	Crown and Anchor	Cateaton Street, Manchester

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## The 51st State

*Roger Hall*

I've just returned from holiday in the USA. Their brewing industry gave me a horrifying preview of what our own industry may be like in four or five years time. The USA is dominated by national giants with their lacklustre wares. You can avoid drinking Coors, Bud and Miller, but decent alternatives are thin on the ground. There are microbreweries producing real ales and bottle conditioned beers, but these are of a curate's egg nature. Quality beer in a range of outlets is difficult to find.

If the closure of regional breweries in Britain and the spread of nitrokeg continue, it may not be long before our only respite from national brands will be our own microbreweries. How confident are we that they will be able to produce beer of acceptable quality in sufficient volume to satisfy our thirst for cask conditioned beer?

## Touring Tottington

*Tottington has always had a good reputation for providing real ale. A good choice of pubs, all within walking distance of each other, all selling cask conditioned beer. What more could you ask for? However, in these days of nitrocreep, Alex Koval and Rick Brindley began to wonder if Tottington was still an oasis for beer lovers...*



We decided to start at the furthest point and work our way back into Bury. Our first port of call was the **Old Dungeon Inn** (left) on Turton Road. Thwaites have invested both time and money here and it shows. This is a very pleasant multi-roomed pub that serves an excellent pint of bitter. Resisting the temptation to try the home made chicken curry, we took our leave and turned right into Market Street. Here, the **Robin Hood** presented us with a dazzling array of illuminated fonts, but no real ale. This was a major disappointment as the pub used to boast three cask ales and standards have

obviously declined. Luckily, it was only a very short walk to the **Hark To Towler**. This ex-GBG Thwaites pub used to sell both bitter and mild and was famous for its very high bar. Only bitter is now available but this proved to be very reasonable. We were surprised to note that the pub now only opens its doors at 4.00pm. This is a far cry from the halcyon days of the 1980s when it was fondly referred to as the 'staff room', because of its lunchtime popularity with local teachers.

Swiftly hurrying down Bury Road, we came to the **Royal Hotel**. Here we were apologetically offered handpulled Boddingtons because the smoothflow had run out! After a drink and a chuckle we left for Tottington Road and the **Lamb Inn**. This stop was the most curious of the night. The landlord buys an unmarked cask from Whitbread and sells it as Old Scrotes Bitter. Unfortunately, our attempts at identification were hindered by the beer being on the turn. Still scratching our heads we made for the **Wagonmakers** across the



road. This small Thwaites pub was very quiet. It was also dimly lit and only offered smoothflow. Our request for real ale was met by open-mouthed amazement and the claim that 'all beer is the same'. With that reassurance ringing in our ears, we left to try our luck elsewhere.

The **Swan**, on the other hand, was very busy and offered both a decent pint of Thwaites and a beer garden to relax in. The **Globe** was keg and so we marched on to the **Oddfellows**. This ex-Bass pub now sells a cracking pint of Holts. Sadly, the last pub on Tottington Road, the **Pleasant View**, could only offer fizzy Thwaites, which we found easy to refuse. This left us with time enough to visit the two pubs on nearby Crostons Road. First was the **Help Me Thro'**. This is a cosy Thwaites house that lost its GBG status some years ago. Here the bitter tasted more like something you would expect to find on your chips than in a pint glass. It was changed, however, without argument from the publican and subsequently the beer was fine. The last call of the night was also the best. The **Dusty Miller** is a GBG Moorhouses pub that also sells two guest beers. Here we tried both the Premier and RCH Pitchfork and found them in excellent condition. If you fancy following in our footsteps the easy way, then the 481, 508, 560 buses from Bury all go to Tottington throughout the day.

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*Jo and Andy are delighted to announce that  
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## Wigan and district

*Dave White*

Last month I reported that the once-reliable village of Billinge was not the real ale haven it used to be. Sadly, the same can now be said of Standish. On a recent visit, two Good Beer Guide recommended pubs proved particularly disappointing; the **Dog & Partridge**, School Lane (GBG 1999) offered warm Tetley mild and Boddies bitter that was on the turn; whilst at the **Globe** (GBG 2000) on High Street, the Riddleys IPA had just gone off and Ruddles County was slightly sour. If two of the supposedly best pubs in one of the better parts of Wigan can't serve a decent drop of traditional ale on a Saturday night, then the time may be right to discover the joys of malt whisky.

Elsewhere in Standish, the **Potters Bar**, Church Street, was closed and the **Standish Arms**, also on High Street, had no real ale in spite of the wickets. The **Horseshoe** on Wigan Road may have resembled a small Labour Club with its rows of chairs and tables, but at least it was distinctive. Sadly, the demolition boys have been at 'Nobby Clark's' and it now resembles any pub. Cask Burtonwood bitter survives.

On the subject of Good Beer Guide entries, Wigan suffered a sad loss recently with the departure of Dave Dobson from the **Old Pear Tree**, Frog Lane. The Burtonwood pub had been selected for the 2000 edition of the GBG, but after ten months of trying to turn trade around, Dave has given up. The new licensee of the Old Pear Tree formerly ran the bar of the Wigan Athletic Supporters Club. Before its recent demolition (along with Springfield Park) the club sold John Smiths smooth; an ill omen indeed.

More club news, and the former St Andrew's Labour Club, later known as **Laurel's** Nightclub, Woodhouse Drive, Beech Hill is now the Amanco Furniture Outlet. Beds to clear, but no real ale.

News in brief - the **Phoenix Fantasy Bar** on the Wiend, a keg den previously known as Let's Wine Bar, Dollars, the Temple of Sound, etc, etc, is to be turned into Council offices ... the **Silverwell Hotel**, a former GBG pub on Darlington Street East, Scholes, is under new management. Will cask conditioned beer return? Wait and see...

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## Hot Pot

Linda and Tony Goddard are the new managers at the Pot of Beer, New Mount Street, Manchester. The Good Beer Guide listed pub will continue to serve a variety of cask beers and Linda will be dishing up Polish food from the kitchen.



## Letters

### Cask Marque

Sir - In answer to Sean Kilgarraff's enquiry (*WD last month*) this is an initiative set up by a group of regional brewers who were alarmed by the quality of cask beer in many public houses. The four founders were Adnams, Greene King, Marstons and Morlands.

The scheme started in early 1998 and revolves around unannounced visits by Cask Marque inspectors, mostly ex-brewers and brewery quality control staff. They will test a sample of each cask beer on offer, up to a maximum of six, for four things - temperature, appearance, taste and aroma - then award five, three or no marks.

For each beer to pass it must receive at least 16 marks and this must be repeated for each beer on offer for an outlet to pass.

There is no cellar inspection involved as the scheme is only aimed at the beer passed over the bar. After two clear inspections an establishment is accredited and the sponsoring brewery will present a Cask Marque plaque to be displayed on the outside of the property.

*Dave Crookell*

### Tommy gunned

Sir - In response to Tommy Field's praise and criticism of my recent Saddleworth wanderings, perhaps I should mention that Marstons are now part of the Banks's estate, or more correctly Wolverhampton & Dudley, which owns both. I suppose that it doesn't really matter whose name appears on the pub's exterior, the beers are the same anyway and who cares?

I wonder if Mr Field will be critical of Grognaard's 'Out and About' feature (*WD Aug*), where he mentions the Station at Greenfield. As far as I know, it's the Railway. I'll try to remain politically correct in future.

*Steve Smith*

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### Makeover time

The **Ellesmere**, Patricroft, has received a much-needed makeover and is now looking very smart indeed. (*See WD August*)

At Irlams o'th'Height, Holts' **Wellington** has had its lounge closed for most of July and August. Decorators' gear could be seen from the vault, which remained open. Down the road, Holts' **Red Lion** has roof-high scaffolding all around the exterior.

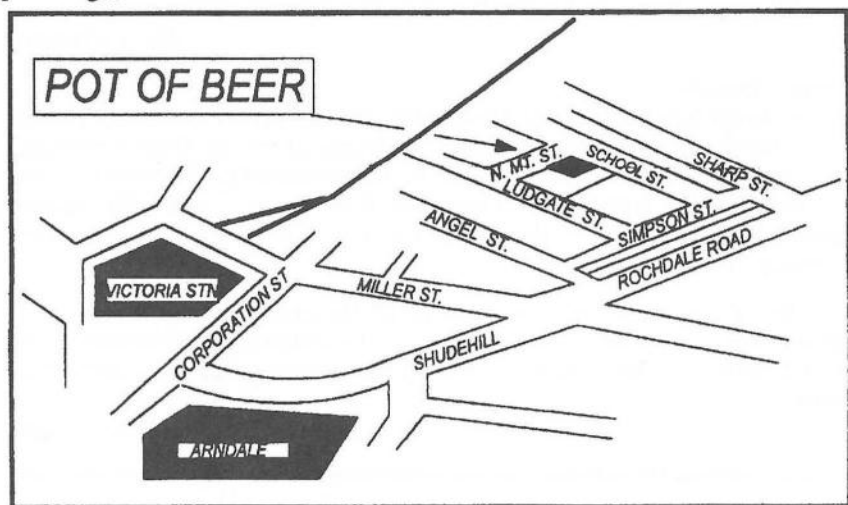
Incredibly, Greene King's **Jolly Carter** at Winton is to have yet another refurbishment, involving closure for a short time. Only last October, £275,000 was spent on the extension and total refitting.

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## Bolton news

A Trotter

The **Swan Hotel** is due for a refurbishment and when the work is completed the part of the building which housed the **Malt & Hops Bar** on Bradshawgate will reopen. This closed in 1997 after Regent Inns bought the hotel. When it reopens, will it be a real ale bar again, or will it be turned into a continental-style café bar serving overpriced designer bottled drinks and smoothflow?

Down the road in Nelson Square, Thwaites' latest addition to Bolton's pub culture is nearing completion and is to be called **Red on the Square**. The building is situated next to Wetherspoon's **Spinning Mule**, so it will be vying for custom with this established no-music pub. Let the battle of Nelson Square commence.

Scaffolding went up round the **Alma** (*right*) on Bradshawgate last month and the builders moved in for another makeover. The Alma has seen a few changes of style since it became a Burtonwood pub and has attracted clienteles ranging from real ale aficionados to those of a less discriminating palate. What next?

**Donaghy's Bar** on Great Moor Street has been closed for some time and the building is to be demolished to make way for redevelopment connected with the nearby Water Place.

Down in Little Lever, the **Canary** has dispensed with bland Boddies, though there has been no replacement as yet and Holts is now the only real ale.

Things look a lot brighter at the **Jolly Carter**, Little Lever, these days, where there are six real ales to wet the ale drinker's thirsty throat. On my visit, these were Fullers London Pride, Old Speckled Hen, Chesters mild, Tetley bitter, Flowers Original and bland Boddies.

Nestling beside the River Irwell in the tranquil village of Ringley is the **Lord Nelson**. The pub was the venue for the first North Manchester CAMRA meeting and also its 25th anniversary some



years ago. The pub hasn't changed much; the Railway Room is still there and old photos of the village adorn the walls. The real ale is Thwaites bitter.

Across Ringley Bridge is another Thwaites pub selling cask bitter, the **Horseshoe**. Back up the road on Market Street, Stoneclough, the **Market Street Tavern** has only John Smiths bitter on handpump next to the smoothflow. The last time I was here, there were also guest ales. Further along the road is the **Grapes** (Bass), but I couldn't see any handpumps. The last pub on the road is the **Hare &**

**Hounds**, where Joey Holts is available for £1.18 a pint.



Back in Bolton, the town's only brewer, John Feeney, may be moving his brewing operations. In the planning section of the evening paper there was a 'change of use' application - for the conversion of a tennis club house at Bank Top Tennis Club into a micro brewery with meeting and reception rooms. Some Bank Top residents are already objecting to having a brewery nearby because of the smell!!

Finally, the word is that the **Millstone** on Crown Street (left) will soon become a Joseph Holts pub. Just what the town centre needs.

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## **Eccles New Road**

The closed **Waverley** (ex-Chesters) has become a Chinese restaurant and café bar. The bar sells no real ale and is called 'The Waberrey'. (Only kidding on the name).

Further towards Eccles, the **Widow's Rest** (formerly the **Royal**, Bass) is firmly boarded up and closed. Has all the tram work taken its toll, or are people tired of paying high prices for Bass lacklustre products?



## Higsons ghost laid to rest

*Paul Roberts*

Whitbread have announced they are ceasing to brew Higsons Bitter. This will be no sad loss to the drinker, as the bland offering of today is nothing at all like the excellent, distinctive hoppy beer produced by the independent Higsons before Boddingtons took over the brewery and closed it down. The Stanhope Street premises later became Cains Brewery and Cains have stated that they would be interested in brewing Higsons Bitter if Whitbread would let them use the trade name.

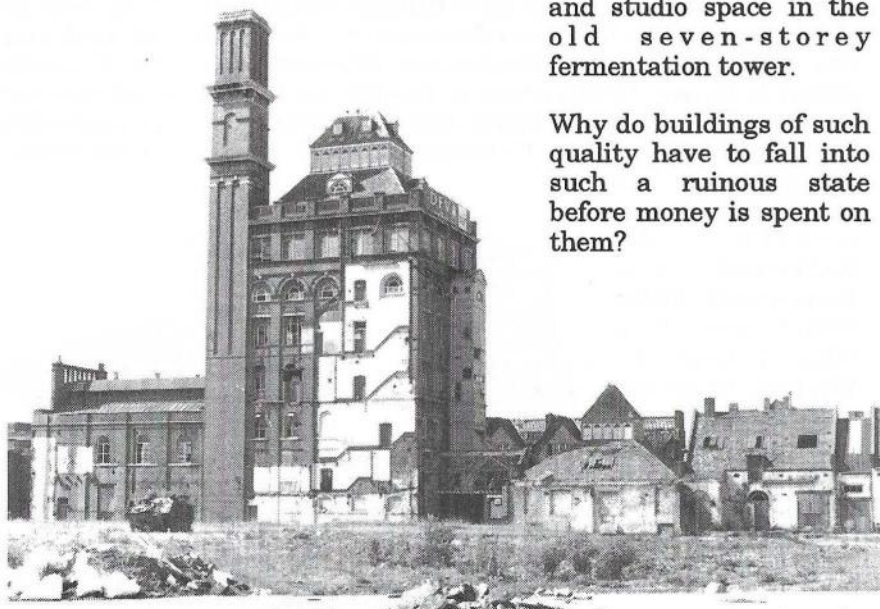
If Cains were to brew Higsons like it was in its heyday, once again it would be the pride of Merseyside. Was it just a coincidence that the decline of Liverpool FC occurred at the same time as the demise of Higsons? Let us hope that the dawn of the new millennium will see a rise in the fortunes of both these former Liver greats.

## Cook Street Brewery

The GM Property Venture Fund is to spend £11.5m on the long closed and derelict Threlfalls Brewery in Salford. The developers plan to convert the four listed buildings on the site into 23 self-contained

units, including office and studio space in the old seven-storey fermentation tower.

Why do buildings of such quality have to fall into such a ruinous state before money is spent on them?



*Contributors to this issue:* Rob Magee, Mark McConachie, Paul Roberts, Roger Hall, Mike Robinson, Stewart Revell, Paul Warbrick, Michael Lynn, Pete Cash, Dave Crookell, Leo King, Alex Koval, Rick Brindley, Dave White, Daddy Bell.

## Out and about

*with Groggnard*

When I was half my present stature my dad took me to see a piece of Hollywood hokum titled 'The Black Shield of Falworth', in which Tony Curtis swashed his buckle, beat the baddy, won his bride and came out with a piece of immortal dialogue in his best medieval Brooklynese - 'Yonder lies da castle of moi fadda.' They just don't make them like that any more. Myself, being strong on historical interest and weak on spelling, naturally assumed that Falworth was Failsworth and that somewhere in that ancient urban borough must lie the ruins of 'da castle of moi fadda'. I soon learned that Failsworth, like most of Greater Manchester, has long since had anything romantic or historical knocked down to make way for a shopping precinct or car park.

Yet one potential advantage of Failsworth is that its public houses have by and large remained intact, even along the Oldham/Manchester Road, in contrast to the section north of Hollinwood (road widening and building the orbital motorway) and south of Dean Lane, where most are boarded up, burned out or both. Is this potential fulfilled, he asks rhetorically? Sadly, no.

Anyone contemplating a pub crawl from, say, the Cloggers Arms just below Broadway up to the Roxy Cinema would have a long walk for short returns. The Cloggers advertises as a free house with cask ales, but neither of the two handpumps (Chesters mild and Greenalls bitter) is in use. Of the dozen or so pubs up to Hollinwood only two serve real ale: the Pack Horse near Failsworth Pole, an impressive stone-built edifice, does Marstons bitter at £1.45 (and sometimes Pedigree) and the Houghton Arms, nearly in Hollinwood, serves Burtonwood bitter (which was sour when I tried it). The rest, which are a mixture of Marstons, Bass, Robinsons and John Smiths are, some of them, smart eateries, others are dingy dives, but all provide keg and smooth, so I'm not bothering to list them.





But just off the main road on Ashton Road East, running on to Ashton Road West are two excellent places; the Millgate, offering Boddingtons bitter, Holts bitter and mild and two from the Bridgewater Brewery - Willie Booth Bitter (4.2%, dry and strong tasting at £1.37) and Blondie (4.7%), which is sometimes on and sometimes off. Then there is the Cotton Tree (*pictured*), a small homely pub which does a well kept Marstons bitter and at weekend, Pedigree at £1.72, 'the King of Bitter', as it was modestly advertised at one time. Don't bother with the Thwaites pub, the Star, it's smooth.

Overall, a bit of a gloomy picture. There isn't even a pub called the Castle.

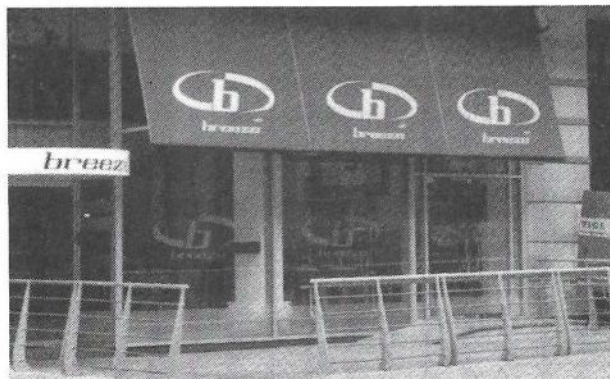
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## Beer Drinkers Blown Out

*Paul Roberts*

Hydes' Breeze Bar was opened officially on 11th August and in stark contrast to John Willie's new bar, this is an ultra-modern café bar. There is no indication on the steel and glass exterior that it is a Hydes pub. Nor is there any indication inside - two stainless steel handpumps appear at either end of a bank of four steel fonts - all anonymous. Hydes bitter at £1.90 per pint was the only real ale on offer on my visit. Smoothflow, Harp, Stella and Guinness lurk behind the fonts.

When I asked why there was nothing to say this is a Hydes outlet, the staff told me that it was a deliberate policy, They did not want to encourage beer drinkers - their aim was to cater for the cocktail set. They were after a very select upmarket clientele. In fact, when a group of customers came to the bar and asked what draught beers were on offer, Hydes bitter was not even mentioned! I cannot understand why a traditional family brewery like Hydes should develop an outlet in a prestigious location and not push its traditional beers. Breeze is open until 0100 every night apart from Sunday.



Those wishing to drink Hydes in a traditional pub still have the Grey Horse on Portland Street, where the beer quality is consistently high and at £1.50 a pint, the bitter is considerably cheaper than at Breeze.

## Pendle to Paphos

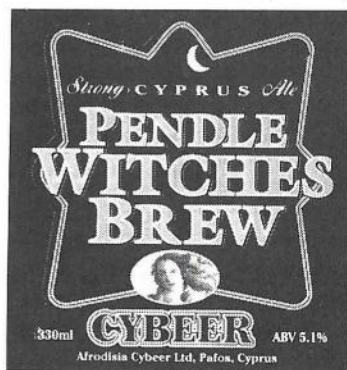
*Dave Crookell*

A gallant effort to introduce real ale in the form of Pendle Witch to the holiday island of Cyprus is being attempted by a micro brewery known as Afrodisia Cybeer Ltd of Paphos. Established about three years ago, the



brewery is housed in a former farm building in the tranquil rural community of Lemona situated in the foothills of the Troodos Mountains about 20km NE of Paphos. The first beer to be produced was Cybeer Classic Bitter at 3.8%, described as having a rich aroma, full body and subtle flavour and claimed to be the first true bitter to be brewed in Cyprus. Efforts are now being concentrated on a bottled version of Pendle Witch, produced under licence from Moorhouses by brewer Trevor Sproule, formerly of Moorhouses and Dobbins West Coast brewery.

The plant has a capacity of five barrels per day and ingredients, imported from England, include fresh whole Fuggles hops with malts supplied by Thomas Fawcett. The high mineral content of the local water supply was found to be ideal and is used virtually untreated except for a slight reduction in pH. Trevor Sproule explained that problems associated with the hot Cypriot climate are encountered, including a higher risk of infection and reduced product shelf-life. The climate and also a shortage of cellarmanship skills among the local hoteliers and bar owners prevents the supply of Pendle Witch in cask form.



The beer is described as being a strong Cyprus ale brewed in the Lancashire style with a full malty flavour, and I found it to be remarkably similar to the Burnley product, if a little less sweet. Although not widely available, bottles were on offer in the Stoa bar beneath the Paphos Aquarium at 85 cents (about £1) for 330ml and it was certainly a vast improvement on the ubiquitous KEO lager, the so-called taste of Cyprus produced on the island in Limassol and best described as cold, cheap (80 cents per pint) and refreshing.

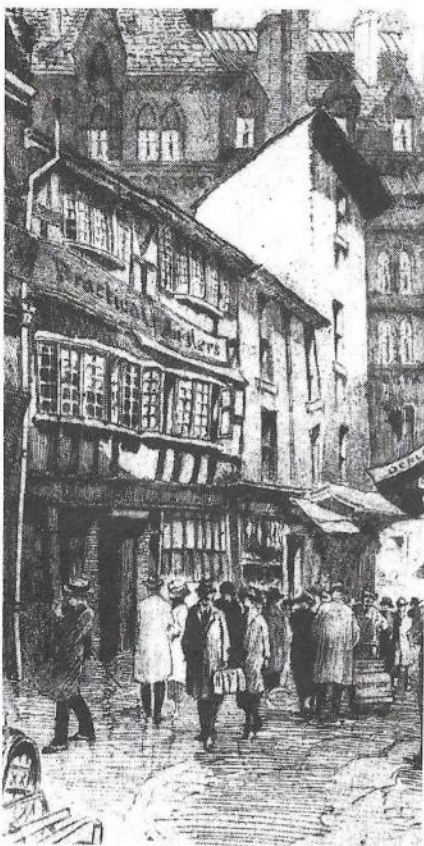


## Shambles

The new Sinclairs on Hanging Ditch was surrounded by scaffolding last month whilst the builders chipped off the render, apparently for the second time. A few weeks after the latest coating of cement had been slapped on and the black and white paint applied, cracks appeared. Come the rain and frost of winter, chunks of the stuff would have started falling off, so the whole job had to be done again.

There is no reason why the new Sinclairs has to look exactly like the original of a few years ago. The 1970s was hardly a Golden Age in terms of pub paint jobs. The old Sinclairs was rendered to keep back the damp from its brick walls. The new building is of breeze block, brick and cavity wall construction, so the extra skin is purely decorative, if that is the right word, and its only apparent function is to give students of architecture a good laugh. A new Sinclairs along the lines of the Victorian original would have been interesting and fitted in with the surroundings more, but was perhaps beyond the imagination of the City Council.

*The drawing shows the Old Shambles and Sinclairs without its stripes about sixty years ago.*



## Beeline for Waggle Dance

Youngs have bought the Waggle Dance brand of 5% honey flavoured cask and bottled beer from the now defunct Vaux group, who brewed it at their Sheffield plant until the brewery closed recently. Youngs will be selling the beer in the free trade as well as in their own tied estate. Brewing of Waggle Dance has already begun at Wandsworth.

Youngs have been celebrating winning the Bottled Beer of the Year award for their 6.4% bottle conditioned Special London Ale. This beer will be available in over 3,000 supermarkets and off licences across the country and is described as having 'a phenomenal amount of Fuggles and Goldings hops to give it a powerful bitter flavour'.

## Roving the North-West

*with Daddy Bell*

Mea culpa! My apologies to anyone who followed up my piece in August's WD and visited the **Screes Hotel** at Nether Wasdale expecting to find Erdinger Weissbier on handpump. It's only available in bottle (along with the dunkel): I was misled by a showcard propped up in front of one of the pumps. Like most pubs, I clearly need new glasses.

The **Brook House Inn** (not Boot House Hotel) at Boot continues to serve a good variety of guest beers. Best of all was the Yates XB, darker than one expects from Yates but nicely smoky. A recent introduction, Yates & Baxter Collaboration Ale (3.5%), I find hard to distinguish from the slightly stronger bitter.

The **Wasdale Head Inn** is not likely to be brewing as early as September. The various planning permissions have not yet been obtained, but there seems some hope of early progress, according to the bar manager (who is now the tenant). He intends to use water, if possible off Yewbarrow. If the result is as good as Wasdale (their 4.5% house beer brewed for them by Yates) then there will be added reason to trek over the fells or travel beyond the length of Wastwater (even if a pint costs £2.20).

What are my general impressions of the area's drinking prospects? As elsewhere, there are pubs on the market (at Waberthwaite, Drigg, and two in Gosforth). All-day opening is more common; but outside the towns or tourist hotspots, afternoon closure is more likely. At Nether Wasdale, for example, the **Screes** will generally shut at 3 pm (if not earlier) and the **Strands Hotel** opposite (Hartleys i.e. Robinsons) is open only in the evenings, except on Sundays. Prices

continue to rise: guest beers at the **Bower House Inn** at the west end of Eskdale Green cost £2.20 a pint, and at the Wasdale Head Inn you won't get a pint for less than £1.90.

For value and variety, the place to head for is the foot of the Duddon Valley: the **Prince of Wales** brewpub at Foxfield and the **Manor Arms** just up the road in Broughton. (I count this area as Cumbria, though no doubt Leo King still calls it Lancashire-over-the-Sands.)

The Prince of Wales is the Furness arm of the Tigertops operation at Wakefield, where their Axeman's beers are brewed: the Foxfield pub





opens on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 5pm, and on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12noon. They have regular festivals - I chanced upon their cask lager and real cider weekend - and stock bus and rail timetables as well as guest house wines. Their helpings of food are substantial, to say the least! The Manor Arms at Broughton-in-Furness confines itself to toasties, but is open every day from 12noon. You can expect to find up to seven beers on, including Yates Bitter at £1.45 (5p cheaper than in Yates' own pub, the excellent **Ship Hotel** at Allonby).



The cheapest beer I found elsewhere was Jennings Bitter at £1.45 in the **Station** at Maryport, which seems otherwise a real ale desert. There was a Songs of the Sea festival on, but Tony Molyneux didn't seem to be in evidence.

Cockermouth is always worth a visit, especially if you like Jennings beers. The **Bitter End** brewpub (left) in Kirkgate is still in business, though its own ales were unavailable in mid-August while the brewer

was on holiday. Jennings' Cross Buttock Ale proved an interesting alternative. Indeed, even in free houses, Jennings bitter or Cumberland Ale is the likeliest real offering, unless the pub plays safe with Theakstons or has succumbed to nitrokeg.

Again, if you like Taylors, you'll like Keighley. The Worth Brewery now has two houses of its own, the **Brewery Arms** and the **Cricketers Arms**, both of which serve Taylors as well as their own products and guest beers. But what has happened at the **Red Pig** and the **Grinning Rat**, once replete with guest beers but on my visit down to a couple of Taylors each?

\*\*\*\*\*

## Barge scuppered

The Barge at Monton has dispensed with cask ale altogether. Two real ales have thus been lost - Banks's bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

## Rupert

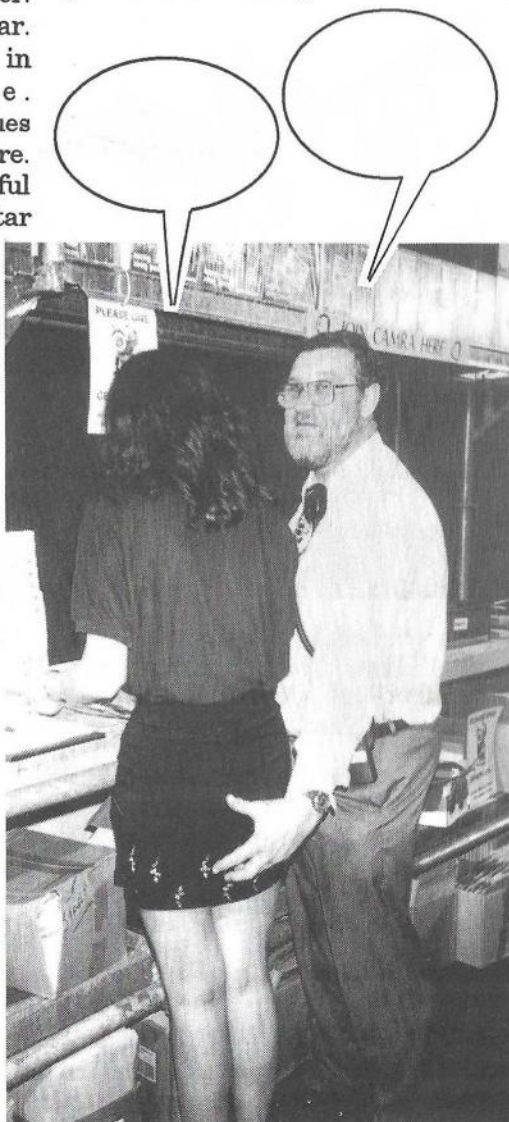
Normally August is a poor month for news. Nothing happens, everyone's on holiday and poor Eddy Nestfeather has to make up more than usual and get Glenys to write pseudonymous letters cribbing about something or other. Not so in this pre-millennial year. Grotley abounds with changes in the hostelry scene. Meteorologically related venues open in the bustling centre. Windy's and Pissers are wonderful additions to the amber nectar scene. Even Beinlos has seen fit to wax lyrical about Brasso's bold venture.

Elsewhere, Grotley loses the keeper of the amber nectar aficionados favourite tavern, who departs to nearby Slumley to become tenant of Mr Grimm, former holder of the world's nicest landlord title. What will become of The Pub is not yet known. Doubtless Carse from Leeches will be jumping with glee. His own amber nectar manufacturing venture has taken off so well that Luke is now into manufacturing full time, a far cry from the days of Charlie Bass.

Meanwhile another of Slumley's entrepreneurial ale makers hits a snag. Ben Chestnut's prime outlet round the corner from his beer factory closes. What will Ben do now? Watch this space.

## What's Doing Caption Competition

The photograph shows a senior campaign boss person encouraging a new recruit at a Clogley amber nectar show. Using your skill and judgement, fill in one or both of the balloons. The prize, as always, is a gallon of Jack Smugs.





# Branch Diary

## **Regional Meeting**

Weds 15th Sept 8pm,  
Kingsway, Moseley Road,  
Levenshulme.

## **National Winter Ales Festival - Manchester 2000**

Planning Committee Meeting at  
the Beer House on Sunday 26th  
September at 12.30pm. All  
welcome.

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tue 7th Sept 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Two Tubs, The Wylde, Bury  
Thur 9th Sept, The Holts Nine on 9.9.99. Evening Social. See  
elsewhere in this issue.

Tue 21st Sept 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Rose & Crown,  
Manchester Old Road, Bury

Tue 28th Sept 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Cask & Feather,  
Drake Street, Rochdale.

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

Email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

## **North Manchester**

Wed 1 Sept, Manchester crawl. Crown & Anchor, Cateaton Street,  
7pm; Hogshead, High Street, 8pm; Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, 9pm.  
Tues 7 Sept 8pm, 'Our Best Pubs' evening, including 'short measure'  
foray. Stanley Arms, Liverpool Road, Patricroft.

Wed 22 Sept 8pm, Branch meeting, Beer House, Angel Street,  
Manchester.

Tues 28 Sept 6pm onwards, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms,  
Honey Street, Manchester.

Wed 29 Sept, Higher Blackley Stroll. Wellington, Weardale Road,  
7.30pm, (Flying Horse), Pleasant, Chapel Lane, 8.30pm.

Wed 6th Oct 7.30pm onwards, Idy's 'Welcome to the Crescent'.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

**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 £52.50 or £210 for six months, half page £36.75 or £157.50 for six months, quarter page £26.25 or £105 for six months. All adverts must be accompanied with payment. Cheque payable to 'What's Doing'.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** £3.30 for six months, £5.80 for twelve months. Send cheque/PO together with your name and address to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW. 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 £14 to Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.

*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

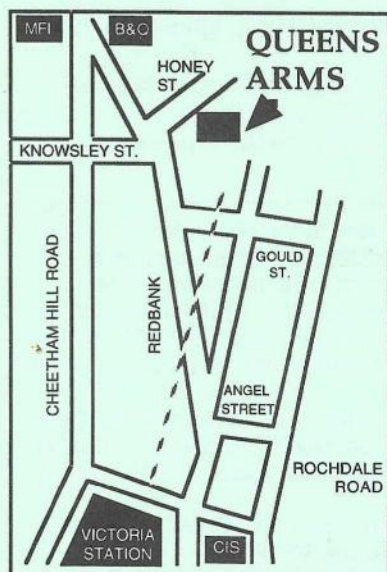
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