

30p

# What's Doing

NOVEMBER 1999



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## NEW BREWS FOR OLDHAM

The Ashton Arms on Clegg Street in Oldham town centre has been acquired by the Porter Brewing Company of Haslingden. The pub will be reopening in late October or early November.



The five Porter beers will be on sale (mild, bitter, Rossendale Ale, Porter and Sunshine), plus seasonal beers when available, a real cider and maybe some guest brews in the future.

Another new Porter Brewery pub is expected to open in Bury in December.

## **New brewery in Bury**

The Leyden Brewery, based at the Lord Raglan, Nangreaves, Bury, began commercial brewing last month. Monday 11th October saw the launch of 'Brendan's Birthday Beer', a tawny, very hoppy 4.5% beer which proved very popular. Efforts are now being concentrated on producing a permanent 3.8% session beer, which should be ready in time for an exclusive launch at the Bury Beer Festival in November.

## **Guest beers at the Salisbury**

The Salisbury Ale House on Wakefield Street, next to Oxford Road Station in Manchester has begun selling two guest beers as well as the usual S&N range of Theakstons Best, XB and Old Peculier. First off the mark were Hoskins Harvest Moon (4.2%) and Hook Norton Old Hookey (4.6%). Broughton Merlin Ale (4.1%) was recently available and among those promised at the time of writing is Orkney Dark Island (4.5%). The licensee is at present ordering the guest beers in nines, and they were going down well.



## **Beer House**

The new licensee at the Beer House in Manchester is Ian Casson, formerly the manager of the Stafford Arms, Stafford, a Good Beer Guide pub which belonged to the Titanic Brewery for a while. Things are expected to remain much the same at the Beer House, with maybe a regular beer from Titanic.

## **Eccles Wetherspoons**

*Paul Roberts*

The Eccles Cross, Wetherspoon's latest outlet, opened on 5th October. Located on Regent Street, near the new Metrolink station, it is without doubt the plushest pub in Eccles. There is the traditional Wetherspoon layout - split level drinking areas, a long bar, no-smoking area, etc - and the two meals for a fiver and food served until 10pm seven days a week is a welcome addition to the Eccles pub scene. JDW's pricing policy - the rougher the area, the higher the price - has been applied here. Guest beers are £1.59 per pint, whilst across the canal in Urmston, JDW's Tim Bobbin sells guest beers at £1.29 and there's a better range of offers on bottled beers.

## Bury News

Alex Koval

It's been rather exciting for the fair people of Bury recently. A plethora of new drinking establishments have aroused their curiosity, if not their taste buds. The best of these new ventures is the **Paper Mill** at Pilsworth, near the cinema. It is next to a Wacky Warehouse and obviously aimed at families and those intending to dine, rather than the average pub-goer. A sign by the door warns people to be smartly dressed and the all-too-standard décor ensures a rather sterile atmosphere. It was somewhat surprising, therefore, to find three real ales on: Marstons Pedigree, Tetley bitter, and a rarity for us, Tetley mild. Quality so far has been good, but I wonder how long it will be before we see a reduction in choice?

The centre of Bury has seen the most changes. On Haymarket Street, opposite the bus interchange, the **Chicago Rock Café** has opened. This is a barn-like structure with sub-Wetherspoons décor. The combination of live music and late licence at weekends has made it popular with the young. Unsurprisingly, there is no real ale, but keg is available at £2.20 a pint. Just round the corner on Silver Street, we find not one, but two new bars. **Lilly's** is a deceptively small bar with polished wood being the main theme. Again, it's keg and expensive. **Y2K**, a Spanish theme bar aimed at the over thirties, is slightly more upmarket. No real ale, but Krombacher Pils is on draught and very expensive. Over the road, the **Clarence**, an ex-Vaux pub, is now selling Stones and John Smiths. An unexciting choice perhaps, but at £1 a pint on weekdays, we shouldn't complain too much.



Outside Bury centre, the news is mixed. Beer quality at the GBG-listed **Royal Oak** at Heaton Park has been variable, but at the **Heaton Park Inn**, Heaton Park, you can get a cracking pint of Banks's bitter at £1 a pint before 6pm. Be sure to ask for trad or cask bitter though, as the smooth is also on offer. The **George and Dragon** on Rochdale Old Road has reopened, but sadly remains keg. The same applies to the **Masons Arms** on Walmersley Old Road, which really is a shadow of

its former self. There is a new manager at the **Rose and Crown** on Cockey Moor Road but there has been little change apart from the return of Sky television. The **Cricketers** on Walmersley Road (pictured) has initiated a guest beer programme, whilst across the road the **Hark to Towler** has swapped Websters for Tetley bitter. And finally, there has been a welcome return for cask beer at the **Pack Horse** on Whalley Road, Shuttleworth, in the form of Boddingtons and Theakstons.

The ROB web site is at <http://www.robcamra.freeuk.com>

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## Fight over?

Chesters 'Fighting Mild' may soon be no more. The beer has been much mucked about with over the last few years, brewed at several locations since the Cook Street Brewery in Salford closed, and rumour has it that it is now being brewed by Burtonwood.

Chesters Best Mild pumpclips still abound and the handpumps dispense a tasty drop of dark mild. Outlets in Manchester include the Edinburgh Castle on Blossom Street, Ancoats, and Mother Mac's in Back Piccadilly.

## Billinge

The Running Horses on Gantley Road, Billinge, has adopted Burtonwood's guest beer policy. If Bombardier or Buccaneer aren't your cup of tea, cask Burtonwood bitter is still available, albeit from an unmarked handpump.

## Let us pray

Greenalls' Church Inn on Ford Street, Salford, has reopened after another period of closure. No cask beer as yet, though.

## Old one-eye is back

The Lord Nelson on Newton Street, Manchester, has reopened after a brief period of closure. No news yet about the beer.

## Real mild gain

For the first time in seven years, cask mild is on sale at the Egerton Arms, (Boddies, right), Winton. As an extra incentive for pensioners, both mild and bitter are £1.20 a pint up to 5pm. The pub may be refurbished soon.



## Higher Blackley happenings

With all the redecoration complete, the **Duke of Wellington** on Weardale Road looks very tidy indeed. Beers are Holts mild and bitter, both in excellent condition.

The Good Beer Guide listed **Pleasant**

(Robinsons) on Chapel Lane (*above*) is as lively as ever, despite the retirement of long-term licensees Doug and Joan Knott. There is no difference in beer quality (Hatters Mild and Best) or ambience under new landlady Dawn Chapman.

The **Flying Horse** (Greenalls) on Crab Lane is now doing three beers - Greenalls mild, bitter and Boddies.

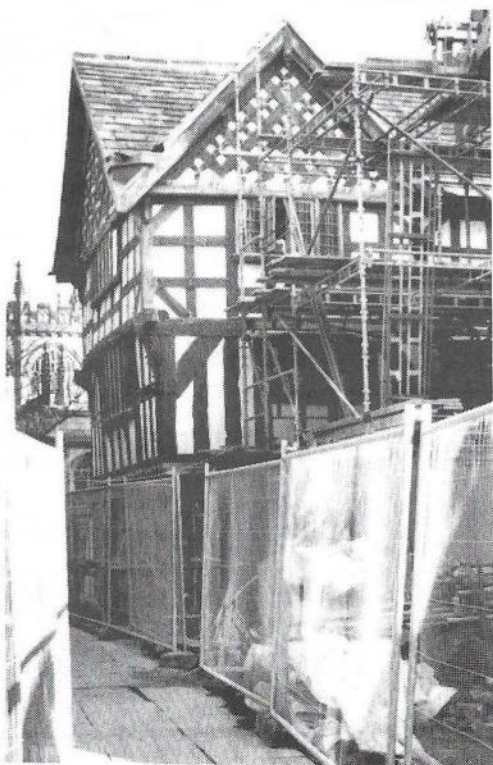


## End to the Shambles?

They are advertising for staff and there is a proposed opening date of 1st November. Could the new Sinclairs Oyster Bar and the adjoining Wellington (*right*) really be ready? After so many delays and false starts, it sounds too good to be true. Exchange Square nears completion: the day of reckoning cannot be too far off

## Ashton ale

The Burlington on Oldham Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, is selling Ashton-u-Lyne's cheapest pint, probably. No, it ain't Holts, it's Hydes bitter at £1 - all day, every day. The pub also sells Holts, but the Hydes is now outselling it.

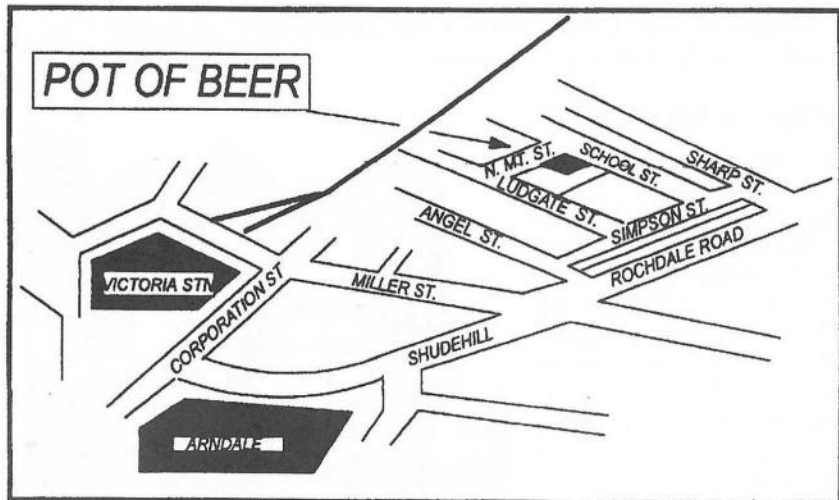


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## Salford and beyond

*with Daddy Bell*

### **The Crescent**

Idy and Sal have lost no time in bringing their distinctive flair into play at the Crescent, to the great benefit of its heterogeneous clientele. Changes to the opening hours ('all day, every day'), to the menu (yes, even chips!), to the decor (including midnight blue paint in the gents), and to the beer range have been enthusiastically welcomed. That heady blend of the Mersey and the Mediterranean, which proved so successful at the Beer House, promises to be equally exhilarating at the Crescent. The vault, which in the past sometimes looked more like an auction rooms annexe, is now fully back in commission, its first function being an anniversary party on October 8th for a local cleric with a penchant for real ale and out-of-tune pianos.



### **Wetherspoons in Eccles**

I breezed into the **Eccles Cross** on October 4th, to find that it was not open to the public till the next day. However, after I had introduced myself, the manager kindly handed me a voucher for an on-the-spot complimentary pint. It was a welcome gesture: but unfortunately the beer (Old Hooky) was cloudy and nowhere near full measure. I returned two days later for a more extended visit, to find the Old Hooky (£1.59) still with something of a cast to it and the other guest ale, Exmoor Gold, not (or not yet) available. There were plenty of customers, though, mostly in their fifties or older, including several familiar faces from the Salford drinking scene. The two ranks of six handpumps were dispensing Theakston Best Bitter, Courage Directors, Boddingtons Bitter (£1.29), and Thwaites Mild (99p). John Smiths extra smooth is also 99p. Now that Holts bitter has gone up to £1.14, I can see the Eccles Cross attracting a reasonable trade; but the price of the guest beers ought to be reviewed if Wetherspoons want to attract more discerning customers.

The pub is not as cavernous as many Wetherspoons conversions. There are more reminders of the building's cinema days (e.g. the balcony) than of its latter guises as a night club or a children's playcentre. It is intimate and comfortable, with several seating levels and a range of sunken alcoves. One could enjoy making it a regular

point of call, but only if Wetherspoons would do more to justify confidence in their much-vaunted commitment to quality cask ales.

### **Wetherspoons again**

However... Credit where credit is due. Wetherspoon's **Postal Order** in Blackburn (in any case, one of the few pubs worth frequenting in the town centre) seems to be trying to redeem its reputation after my strictures in October's WD. During the week two guest ales seem to be regularly available: I have recently enjoyed excellent pints of Brakspear Special, Harviestoun Schiehallion (beautifully lemony) and Nethergate Augustinian Ale, all at £1.39 or £1.49.

Another bright spot in Blackburn is the reopened **Cellar Bar** in King Street, which I had not visited since the demise of the Blackburn Brewing Company. The one guest ale, Dent Aviator, had just gone, but the barman volunteered to bring me a pint of Jennings Cross Buttock Ale from the cellar. I had only met this seasonal ale in bottled form before, but it proved excellent in taste and condition. And they wouldn't take any payment! Free beer or no, I shall certainly be returning to the Cellar Bar and hope to be able to recommend it further.

### **Todmorden**

One rainy day in Salford, I decided to take a train to Todmorden. I know this was a reckless undertaking for someone as (allegedly) topographically challenged as myself, but I have a soft spot for the place: it seems neat and clean, with a good little market and a reassuringly old-fashioned ironmongers, the sort of town where 'Bishop to visit villages' gets top billing on the newspaper placards. I particularly wanted to visit the **Queen Hotel**, just a few strides from the station and recently reopened after a 'no expense spared' (well, £750,000) refurbishment.

One of a small group of freehouses rescued from closure and dereliction by a local independent operator, it sells eight cask ales from regional (but nationally distributed) brewers, the cheapest on my visit being Cains Bitter at £1.50. The bar fittings are remarkable in themselves, with blotchy blue panels and metal-effect woodwork; there are several distinct eating and/or drinking areas on different levels. The Queen is a real residential hotel which also incorporates a leisure club - with fitness suite, swimming pool, jacuzzi and sauna. How about some bold entrepreneur with a passion for real ale opening something similar in Salford?



## Holts corner

Stewart Revell

The annual increase in Holts prices took place early in October. Bitter is now 114p per pint, with mild not too far behind, maintaining the differential between the two.

Regarding beer quality from the brewery, a spokesperson close to the action tells me that new equipment is being installed, particularly in the coppers and mash tun areas. A new laboratory is also being set up. This should help with quality control matters, since samples had to be sent out to a local lab for analysis and sometimes the results arrived too late for the brewers to act upon them.

Contrary to the remarks in the 2000 Good Beer Guide (that production of DBA premium beer will cease), I can confirm that no decision has been made. It is hoped that a few selected pubs will be selling DBA next year.

All the paperwork has been signed and the **Millstone** in Bolton is now part of the Holts tied estate.

*Stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk*

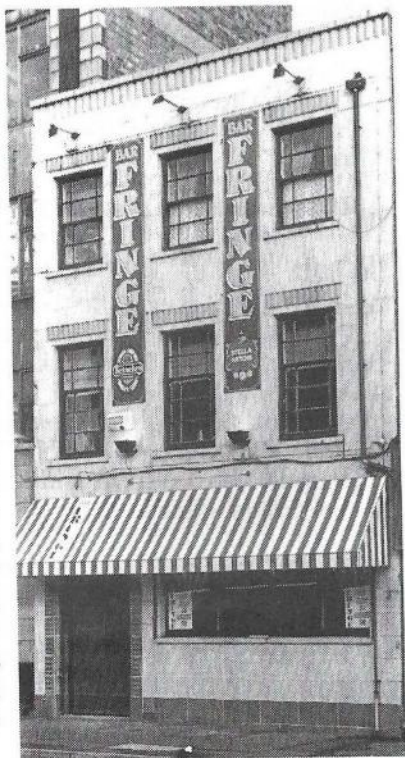
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## Fringe benefits

The beer range at the Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Manchester (*right*), has had a makeover of late. The Bank Top beer has been joined by one from Bridgewater (usually Barton or Navigator) and Theakstons XB. A draught cider and a wide variety of Belgian beers are also available.

## Th'Height of Elegance

The internal redecoration of Holts' Wellington at Irlams o'th'Height has been completed and the pub is looking very smart. Down the road, the Red Lion (also Holts) has had a complete makeover - new roof, exterior paint job and interior refurbishment - which meant that the pub was closed for about a day and a half. The only feature which looks out of place is the old pebble-dashing on the blocked-up vault doorway. Even a false door would have improved the balance of the exterior view.



## News from Irlam

*Sean Kilgarriff*

### John Willie ain't my mate

Passing the Nag's Head pub in Irlam recently (keg-only for over a year) I spotted a sticker in a window advertising J W Lees bitter. Then I noticed that each window had similar stickers, as had the main entrance doors. Delighted to find a second Lees outlet in the town (the other is the Steel Works Club, which has handpulled bitter at £1.20), I entered the premises.

I was greeted by more JWL stickers, beermats, posters on the walls and no fewer than a dozen A2-size posters pinned to the ceiling. (I counted them!) Each poster showed a full pint of J W Lees alongside a handpump and the words 'John Willie to his mates'. Approaching the bar I noticed two handpumps without beer clips and without sparklers. As I began to wonder if I had entered on a wild goose chase, a barperson offered assistance. Pointing to one of the posters, I asked if J W Lees was really available in the pub. The barperson said it was, and pointed to a tall beer dispenser among the illuminated fonts. Then I saw it. Draughtflow! This John Willie is certainly not my mate!

### Boathouse

There used to be an interesting guest ale at the Boathouse on Ferry Road, priced at around £1.50 or £1.70. Now there is just Boddies, the chalkboard advertising guest ales has gone and Tetley smooth has been installed. I'm off to the White Lion for a £1.10 pint of Grays bitter!

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### Bolton

Recent deliveries of Holts bitter to the **Old Man & Scythe**, Bolton, and the **Railway Hotel**, Moses Gate, were found to be much paler than usual, to the extent that in the Man & Scythe drinkers were offered a choice of either light or dark bitter. The light version was straw coloured, slightly sweeter than usual but still with the Holts acerbity and quite drinkable. The licensees said that the barrels appeared to be identical and they were informed by the brewery that it was simply a variation in the brew.

The latest guest ale at the Man & Scythe is Hartleys XB at £1/pint. This follows the recent special offer on Tetleys Bitter at £1/pint - competing with the all-day happy hours next door at the Swan. It will be interesting to see if the special offers continue now the Swan is closed for refurbishment. Drinkers with an asbestos mouth and lead-lined stomach might like to try the chilli con carne at the Man & Scythe. You have been warned!

## The Lost Beers of Lancaster

*Richard Cleverley and Alan Thorpe visited Lancaster in July, the weekend before Mitchells Brewery closed...*



Our tour began with two pubs which reminded us of other lost brews. Robinsons' **Wagon & Horses** is a comfortable enough, bric-a-brac lounge bar with a few seats at the front overlooking the quayside on the River Lune. It offers Hatters Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom, and 'Hartleys XB', a lingering reminder of the fine little Ulverston brewery with its wooden barrels and three-ale range, long since closed by Robbies. A little further along is the Vaux pub, the **George & Dragon**. Perhaps the Sunderland brewery's products were not to everyone's liking, but not much could be argued for the replacements in this house - the lacklustre Worthington and the pedestrian Tetley bitter.

Round the corner was our first Mitchells house, the historic **Three Mariners**. We were already too late. The last drops of the Lancaster beer had been drunk and the replacement was Whitbread's Flowers Original, to my taste a sickly beer at the best of times, and more so in the circumstances. The licensees were helpful in pointing us towards pubs where we might still sample some Mitchells and they also told us that the Lancaster Bomber brand was likely to remain, contract-brewed, possibly by Jennings.

Going past the bus station, we came to the **Bobbins**, recently refurbished and renamed, and at last some Mitchells was available. This opened-out pub with large TV screens would not normally appeal to me greatly, but the Mitchells bitter was a clean-tasting, welcome relief after the previous two pints. We lingered here, not knowing for certain whether this would be our last Mitchells. The barman told us that they planned to replace the local beer with a range of guests - a more promising future than the Three Mariners. Let's hope it works for them. We called briefly at the **Golden Lion**, a fine, traditional house stocking well-kept S&N beers, and worthy of its recent entries in the Good Beer Guide.

Across the road, Mitchells' Moor Lane Brewery, which saw the death of Yates & Jackson in the eighties, is now witness to the end of brewing in the county capital. From here we were helpfully directed along the canal towards the **Moorlands**, an imposing corner pub in a residential street. This proved the 'find' of the day - the remaining Mitchells beer (of which there seemed to be plenty) was being sold off

at £1 a pint! The locals appeared to be enjoying the deal, which diverted minds from the beer's imminent demise. This value-for-money experience curtailed our tour somewhat, but there was time to call at the **John O'Gaunt**, a popular pub with a range of real ales. We ignored an old GBG suggestion to 'find the garden' (an exceptionally small patch!) as we were sheltering from an unseasonable and substantial early evening shower.



So Mitchells passes away. A city which twenty years ago boasted two independent breweries has now lost both. It is a story likely to be repeated until such time as steps are taken to curb the current drive towards consolidation and 'rationalisation'. Meanwhile, let us wish success to those pubs which try to offer some worthwhile alternatives to the lost beers of Lancaster.

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### **Fire at the Zoo**

A fierce blaze badly damaged the living quarters of the Two Hundred on Carisbrook Street, Harpurhey, recently. Thankfully nobody was hurt and the pub should be back to normal working soon.



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**Weds 5-8pm Choice of Six Curries**

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## **BEER FESTIVAL**

**Thurs 28th Oct 11.30am to Sun 31st Oct**

### **THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON**

**30 Winter Ales, Milds, Porters &  
Stouts from microbreweries**

**Chilled to cellar temperature in the vault**

**Friday 29th Oct:**

**Pendle Witch £1 a pint from 8pm**

**Fancy Dress Halloween Party - With many prizes!**

**Saturday afternoon:**

**Charity pump clip and beer mat sale**

## Holts Brewer for the Day

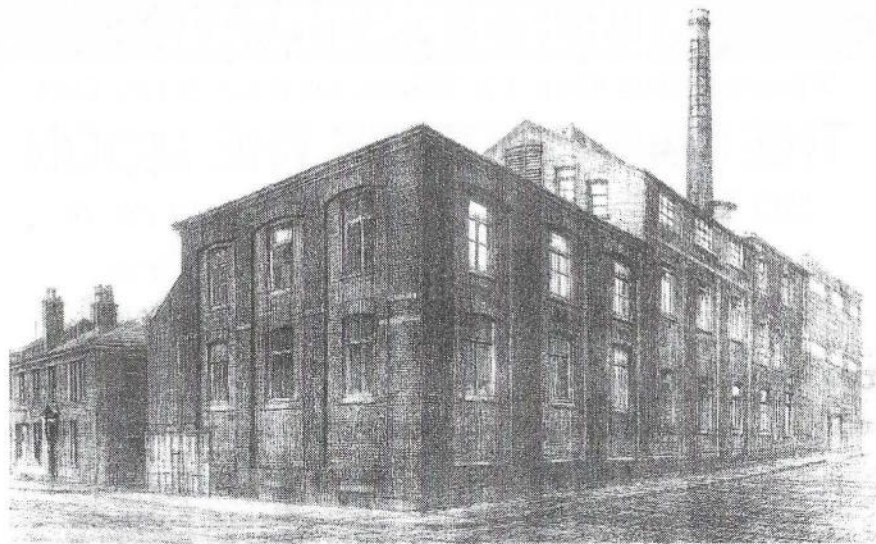
*Hundreds of visitors were shown round the Derby Brewery during the company's 150th anniversary celebrations this year and one 'Brewer for the Day' was chosen. That lucky man was Terry Gorst...*

One damp morning back in July, I met Head Brewer Keith Sheard at 7.45am at the brewery gates. Overnight accommodation at the Woodthorpe Hotel in Prestwich had been offered so that I could make the 6 o'clock start to the brewing day, but I thought 7.45 was early enough. The brewery was buzzing with people, which was a complete contrast to the evening of the tour, when there was nobody around apart from the guide.

I was introduced to Bob, who'd been in for two hours and had already done the mash for the day's brew of bitter. It was a Wednesday, the day that Holts do a split brew (or double mash) and as well as 250 barrels of bitter, 130 barrels of mild were being brewed. Holts only brew their mild once a week.

Bob turned a valve and hot liquor poured into the mash tun (MT2) to mix with malt to form the mash for the mild. This could be left for an hour. Meanwhile, the bitter was run off via the underback to the copper, where hops had already been added. It took around 50 minutes for the brew to reach the desired temperature of 102°, and the boil in the copper continued for another hour.

Whilst the bitter was bubbling, the mild was transferred from mash tun to copper. The mild wort is much darker than the bitter wort, as



there is much more black malt in the mild recipe. At this stage I actually got to help, by adding a sack of hops to the mild brew. This meant a trip in the lift up to the next level of the brewery in order to access the hatch to the copper.

It was then time for Bob to add finings to the bitter, before running off the wort to the hopback. From the hopback, the bitter (and later the mild) would be pumped to a receiver, and then to a collection vessel for holding overnight. Hops are kept in a chilled room near to the collection vessels and there's a great aroma when the door to this room is left open! To complete the brewing process, the beer is moved to fermentation vessels, where yeast is added. After fermentation, the almost finished product is pumped to settling vessels prior to racking into casks. It would take at least a week for the beer brewed on the day of my visit to reach the cask.

When the mash tuns and coppers have been emptied, they have to be cleaned. The coppers can be washed down from the outside using a hosepipe, but Bob, assisted by Niklos, had to strip off and get in the mash tuns. I declined the invitation to join them, opting instead for a tour of areas of the brewery that had not been covered during my previous visit. First stop was the lager plant! Holts brew their own brands, Holtenbrau and Diamond, using enormous conical fermenters that look like a flotilla of Thunderbird 3's. There was a filtration machine, which was to be replaced because it couldn't cope with the big demand for lager, and a machine for filling kegs. One person could operate this, whereas a team of workers is required on the cask-filling operation.

Next up was the blending room, where spirits are blended. These are sold in Holts pubs without a brand name - 'Vodka Spirit', 'Dry Gin', 'Scotch Whisky', 'Dark Rum', etc.

The washing plant is located in a building of its own. This takes all kegs and casks except firkins (9-gallon casks), which are washed separately one at a time. Holts use a variety of cask sizes - 54's, 36's, 22's, 18's, and (very few) 9's. The bitter is racked into either hogsheads (54 gallons) or barrels (36 gallons). Despite the weight, the brewery workers prefer these bigger containers because they don't have to bend so low to roll them.



Empty and full casks are rolled about the buildings and across the brewery yard, with a chain of workers keeping them heading in the right direction. Constant vigilance is required during a walk round the brewery in order to avoid any off-course hogsheads!

There was just time before lunch for a trip to the brewery roof for some good views of the city centre. The roof area is where spare casks are kept in readiness for peak periods of demand. On the top floor I passed a stockpile of out-of-date hops awaiting destruction.

For lunch, Keith invited me to join himself and two other brewers (Nick Massey and Tony Spencer) at the Woodthorpe, once the home of the Holt family. We met up with Mike Hitchen, who checks on beer quality in the Holts estate (around 125 pubs), and had a look round the hotel's immaculate cellar. Then, over steak and kidney pudding washed down with glasses of Holts mild and bitter, I listened to a number of brewing anecdotes. Of particular interest was a recent tale about a licensee who complained that the bitter he'd had delivered was much paler than usual. Enquiries were made and it turned out that black malt had been omitted from the usual recipe. Could this have been a trial brew for Holts Summer Ale?

Back at the brewery, I was taken to the sample room. A firkin of each racking is kept, to assist when dealing with licensees' queries. There were 29 firkins to sample from on the day of my visit. I tried two different examples of the bitter, which were excellent, before trying DBA, the premium bitter brewed for the 150th anniversary. This confirmed my previous thoughts on this beer - uugh! It is to be discontinued in 2000.

And so ended my day with Holts. The hospitality of the brewery staff was excellent - despite having jobs to get on with, everyone I met took the time to explain the various processes and made me feel most welcome. It was a day to remember!

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## **Holts Nine**

The Holts Nine crawl on 9.9.99 was deemed a success, with a large contingent of people from the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch of CAMRA touring Holts pubs in the Whitefield and Prestwich area. The brewery donated the proceeds from all bitter sales on the day to Christies Hospital.

Various pubs had also been doing some fund-raising for Christies, most impressive being the Welcome, Whitefield, which raised approximately £5,500 on a fun-day.

## Dun Plowman Brewery

*Pete Cash & Barbara Lee*

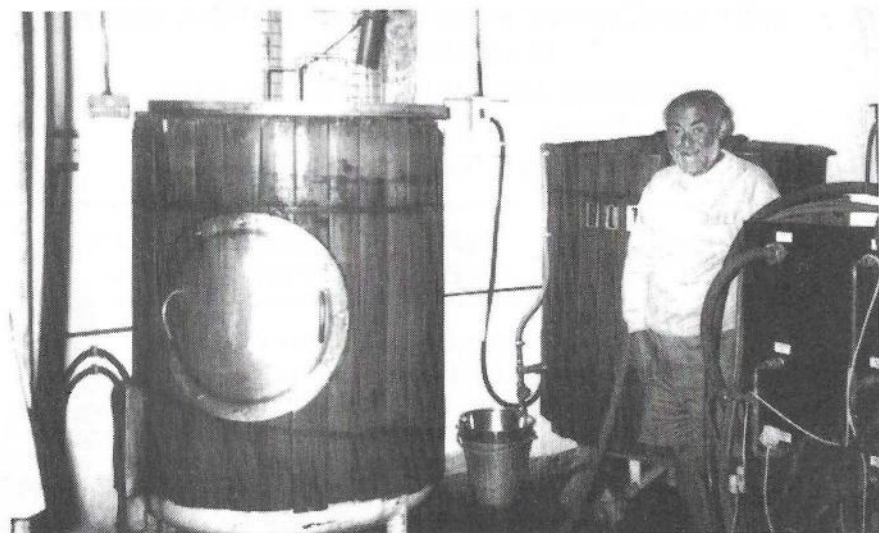
Walking Offa's Dyke in September, we spent a night at the Queens Head, Kington, Herefordshire. A 'try also' in the 1999 GBG, selling Three Tuns beers, it looked promising. The landlord invited us to try his brewed-on-the-premises beers, which were not Three Tuns, but Dun Plowman, made in a brewhouse at the back.

On cue, in walked the brewster herself, Gaye Dunn, with husband Steve, who brews for the Three Tuns at Bishops Castle, Shropshire - 21 miles to the north and also near the Offa's Dyke path. Gaye explained that they had brewed at the pub once before, but the recent revival started a year ago.

Dun Plowman originally started in Bristol and the Kingdom Bitter (4.5%) is an echo of those days. She also makes Brewhouse Bitter (3.8%) and Early Riser (4%). The strong winter ale, Crooked Furrow (6.5%) is sold in bottles all year round. Other pubs selling the beers are to be found in Leominster, Ludlow, New Radnor and Glasbury.

The malt (pale and crystal, along with some wheat) is bought in ready crushed. They don't make any black beers, though there is an unused sack of dark malt somewhere. Hops are Fuggles and Goldings. I had noticed that the local water was very chalky; it is given a boil, then acid-treated before mashing. If Steve uses a Plowman recipe at Bishop's Castle, a different beer results owing to local water variations.

Next year an Annual Beer and Jazz festival will be established. There are also plans for a beer and wine off-licence, a home-brew shop and even weekend courses on brewing.



# THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester 0161 839 7019



## THE ALL YEAR BEER FESTIVAL

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MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH  
TIMOTHY TAYLOR BEST and LANDLORD  
+ EIGHT GUEST BEERS INCLUDING A GUEST MILD**

PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS, DRAUGHT KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN and BOTTLED BELGIAN AND GERMAN BIERs

### ***BELGIAN BOTTLE RANGE NOW 40 & GROWING***

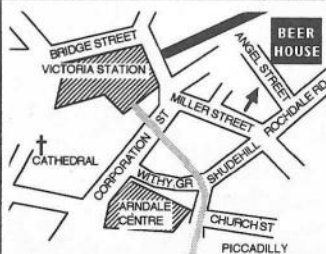
20 German bottled beers now in stock including Rauchbier, dark and light wheatbeers and other specialities

### **HOT LUNCHTIME FOOD SEVEN DAYS A WEEK**

LUNCHES DAILY

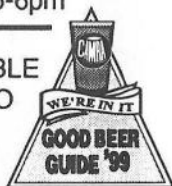
EVENING MEALS 5-7pm (Friday only)

Thurs Special (5-8pm) choice of 6 curries  
(veg & non-veg) + rice



**HALF PRICE MENUS MON LUNCH  
FREE CHIP MUFFINS WED 5-6pm**

SKY SPORTS NOW AVAILABLE  
UPSTAIRS FOR THOSE WHO  
LIKE GOOD BEER AND  
FOOTBALL!



**OVER THE MOON AND INTO THE MILLENNIUM!**

## Letters

### Fag end

Sir - On the opening evening of the Eccles Cross (Wetherspoons) two guest ales were available at £1.59 and both were in good condition. On the second night there was only one and the 'smoking' area had been extended to all of the ground floor and to the first raised level at the request of the manager. At lunchtime on the fourth day both guest beers were off, but the 99p smooth stuff was selling like there was no tomorrow! The non-smoking area is now only on the uppermost raised level. Doesn't smoke rise when in the atmosphere?

*Sean Kilgariff*

### It's not Christmas yet

Sir - On a recent visit to Wetherspoon's Spinning Mule in Bolton, our barman when invited to 'take your own' helped himself to £1.89 of our hard-earned - the price of a pint of Stella - on top of what was merely a round of two pints and a Coke. In spite of all their other well-documented policies, Wetherspoons do not have a policy regarding tips taken by bar staff. The manager claimed there is no recommended fixed amount to be accepted by staff and that gratuities are at the discretion of the customer. We seem to have experienced the indiscretion of the barman who was, apparently, a recent addition to the staff.

*Dave Crookell*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Advertising standards

For the past couple of months poster sites in the Manchester area have been adorned with the image of seductive Samantha, offering to pull your John Willie. It's nice to see local brewer J W Lees maintaining some traditional advertising standards at a time when that insufferable Boddingtons cow is everywhere.

### Oldham

The **Queens** on the corner of Rochdale Road and Featherstall Road (ex Wilsons) was closed and boarded up recently. Over on West Street, the **Commercial** (Lees) is for sale and will probably close.



## Pendleton

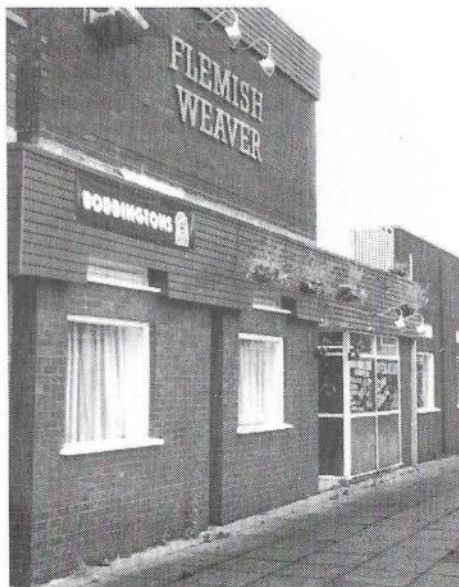
*Pendleton is the heart of the City of Salford. Have recent changes in the brewing industry taken their toll here? How many pubs still sell cask beer? Mark McConachie undertook a survey of the area between Broad Street and Liverpool Street...*

The **Pied Piper** (ex-Tetley) on Broadwalk was the starting point - it is closed and up for sale. Across Churchill Way is the **Winston** (ex-Holts), which sells a decent drop of Holts

bitter. There is no cask mild, however, only keg smooth. Next to Salford Precinct and the market is an old pub called the **Flat Iron** (Whitbread, *above*). This, too, is selling Holts bitter and it is looking quite smart inside. It is open only until 7.00pm. Going past the site of the **Kettledrum** (demolished in the summer) and on to Fitzwarren

Street, one comes to the **Brass Handles**. This used to sell Chesters beers but, alas, no more. It is keg now. Keg too are Wilsons' **Mariner** on Liverpool Street, Vaux's **Ship** and Greenalls' **Paddock** on Cross Lane. Also on Cross Lane, the **Golden Gate** and the **Corporation** are closed.

There is better news on Belvedere Street. The **Flemish Weaver** (Whitbread) is selling Grays at 105p and Boddies. Down the road, they are also selling Boddies at the **Woolpack**. So of the pubs not closed, 50% sell cask beer, which is not too bad.



# Home Brewing Revisited

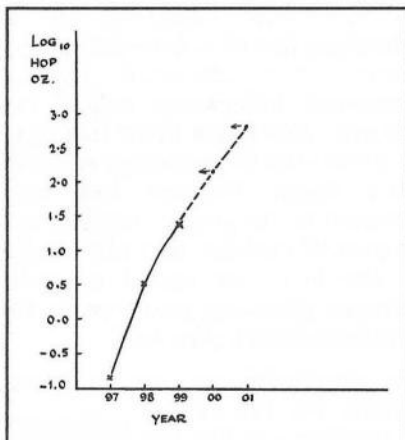
*Humulus Lupulus*

## Part 22 - The 1999 Hop Harvest

Last December (part 16) I described gathering hops from a home-grown cutting which yielded just under one pound (fresh weight) but including an unknown proportion of a recent rainshower. I did measurements which gave an equivalent dry weight of three ounces.

This year, the same plant was picked in fine weather and we obtained a total of 5lb 4oz of fresh hops. Allowing for lack of rain, this represented about 1lb 8oz dry weight. At 1oz per gallon, this equates to 24 gallons. I had never made so much beer in one day before, but this would be necessary as I didn't want to dry the hops.

In fact, two brews were made, 10 gallons at o.g. 1048 and 11 gallons at 1035, each with about 12oz (dry weight) of hops. Both boilers were used in parallel for each brew. The working day extended from 5.30am (this first mash taking place overnight) until about 9pm when the second wort was finally cooled.



In 1997, at two years old, the plant produced about 0.2oz, in 1998 3.25oz and in 1999 24oz. I tried to draw a graph to predict what might happen next year and beyond. A linear scale didn't work, so a logarithmic (base 10) scale was used and is shown here. Extrapolation is a dangerous thing, but if the two intercept points for 2000 and 2001 are converted back, hop weights of about 10lb and 39lb can be expected! Of course, other factors are likely to reduce these quantities considerably.

## Jolly Carter

The Jolly Carter at Winton has reopened after alterations which were much less drastic than previously. The various sizes of penny-farthings still festoon the ceiling in the large room and on a recent visit the real ale was down to one - Websters Green Label.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Contributors to this issue: Rob Magee, Pete Cash, Terry Gorst, Mark McConachie, Steve Smith, Sean Kilgariff, Alex Koval, Peter Wadsworth, Martin Hannaford, Richard Cleverley, Alan Thorpe, Dave Crookell, Dave White, Clive Taylor, Daddy Bell.*

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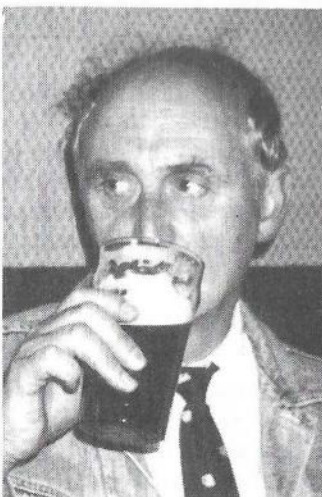
## Rupert

It's always delightful at this time of year, as the nights grow darker, to receive a copy of the following year's vademecum, that well-loved compilation of delightful taverns serving delectable amber nectar from the wickets. Last year's experience was marred somewhat by the odd thousand or so mistakes, but that little hiccup has gone. Our stalwart shining armoured helmsman knight (*no, not yet - Ed*) Boris Pratt has come to the rescue to produce a splendid little tome, Snobley has been restored to its proper position, not as part of Pieland, and aficionados of the hop can spend a useful autumn planning journeys to the best hostelries in the land.

It's wonderful to see so many entries for the centre of Grotley - a far cry from the days when the combined branches could muster only half a dozen or so. If one didn't know better, it would seem as if Slumley, Smarmford & Slutch and Snobley & Snoot Magna had actually collaborated on selecting the entries, such is the spread and quality of what we see. And yet, there are some premises included which have been the subject of criticism in these pages in recent months. Is it mere sniping by beer-sodden moaning minnies, or is the allocation being filled by less than brilliant outlets, where the ale is not always perfect?

The cynic might suggest that some dumbing down is inevitable. As the cracking little back street, archetypal working class corner locals which exude pubness from every pore (© Bogtrash 1977) disappear from the inner city, so branches need to find new entries to replace them. It's no good looking in the suburbs, where gentrification and creeping nitrokeg have taken their toll. What could be better than the city centre, with its ever increasing mass of licensed premises? It doesn't really matter if one or two of them aren't really up to scratch, does it?

I suppose purists like Billy Shippon would take issue with the fact that not much is made of D.O.G.S.H.I.T's star boozers, those premises, preserved in aspic, which are part of our heritage. OK, there's a dim star by each entry, but is this good enough? People don't go into pubs to have a few decent beers and have a great time and meet their pals, but to admire the architecture and the unspoilt interiors. It's a beer guide, but there's no reason why the pub itself shouldn't be



given a much higher profile. Perhaps branches should be allowed to select from those premises which the great and the good have deemed worthy of inclusion in the Campaign's National Inventory.

# Branch Diary

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tue 2nd Nov 8.30pm, Branch

Meeting, Junction, opposite

Lees Brewery, Middleton Junction

Fri 5th - Sat 6th Nov, Bury Beer Festival, The Met Arts Centre,  
Market Street, Bury

Tues 16th Nov 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Cross Keys, Running  
Hill Gate, Uppermill

Fri 26th Nov, Evening Social, Central Manchester & Bridgewater  
Brewery. Further details from Branch Contact.

Tue 30th Nov 8.30pm, WD 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 3 Nov 8pm, Eagle, Collier Street, Salford.

Tues 9 Nov 7.40pm, Pint and Curry Evening, Bulls Head, Old

Glossop. Train 6.53pm from Piccadilly. Return 9.44pm for

Manchester connections. Pre-booking for curry essential - phone Pete  
Cash 0161 794 5143.

Wed 17 Nov 8pm, Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton

Wed 24 Nov, Eccles Crawl. Lamb 7pm, Wetherspoons 7.30, Crown &  
Volunteer 8pm, White Lion 9pm.

Tues 30 Nov 6pm, What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey St.

Wed 1 Dec, Committee & Social. 7.59pm White House, Great Ancoats  
Street. 9.30pm Jolly Angler

Tues 7th Dec 8pm, Social. 'Our Best Pubs' No.3. Ye Olde Nelson,  
Chapel Street, Salford

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## **Regional Meeting**

Wed 10 Nov 8pm, Ape & Apple,  
John Dalton Street, Manchester

**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.

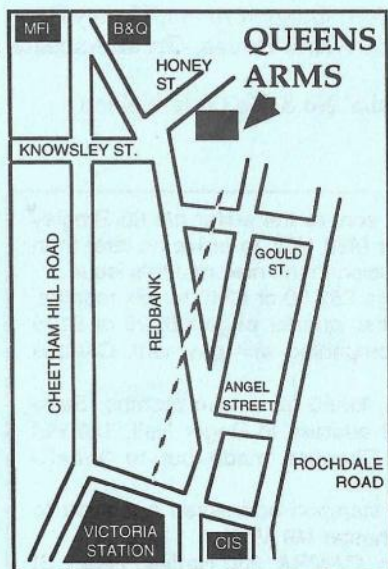
*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

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