

30p

What's Doing

JANUARY 2000



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

BURY PUB FOR PORTER

Brewing and pub-owning entrepreneur Dave Porter is adding a fifth pub to his empire. The Arthur Inn, 95 Bolton Road, Bury, is a former Thwaites house and he will take possession on 6th January. Allowing for a general tidy up and redecoration, the Arthur should be selling Porters beers around 12th February.



BEER



CAMRA 2000 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

Upper Campfield Market,
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WINTER WARMERS, OLD ALES,
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MASSIVE SELECTION OF BITTERS
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**Unique Foreign Beer Bar featuring: Draught Winter Beers
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Hot & Cold Food available at every session

Open: (hours subject to confirmation):

Thurs 20 January 5.30 - 10.30pm, Fri 21 January, 12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm

Sat 22 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



**20-22 JANUARY 2000
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**



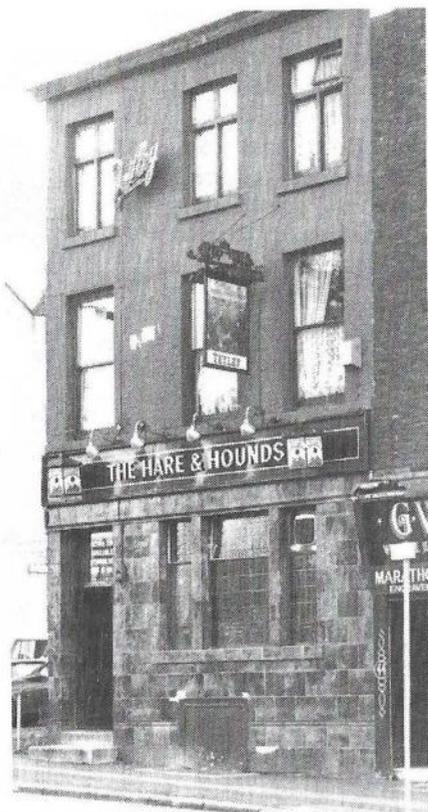
FESTIVAL

Listed

Thanks to the efforts of the licensee, the Hare & Hounds on Shudehill Manchester, became a Grade Two listed building in December. The property dates back to the first half of the eighteenth century and it was first licensed in 1778, making it one of the oldest surviving pub buildings in the city centre. The tiled frontage and the tiled, wood-and-glass interior dates from the 1930s.

Bolton pubs gone

Donagh's on Great Moor Street was pulled down in December. The pub, which had been shut for months, was once a Tetley house called the Railway (*below*). Down on Manchester Road, opposite the muddy expanse that was once Burnden Park football ground, the King William IV has become business premises.



On Crook Street, across from the Sweet Green, the Academy is boarded up. The building has been put through several incarnations since its days as a Whitbread pub called the Painters Arms.

Changes at the Bridgewater

Ken Birch and Bridgewater Ales have parted company. Ken was on the sales side and his place has been taken by Danny, the former licensee at the Marble Beer House in Chorlton.

Down Eccles way

It has been some time since anyone did a thorough Eccles pub survey, so Mark McConachie rose to the challenge, beginning at the top of Church Street and wending his way down Liverpool Road. The main findings are summarised thus...

The **Grapes** on Church Street was closed for a refurbishment, but it did promise traditional ales on a signboard. Across the street, the **Oddfellows** is now styled a Porters Ale House (ie Greenalls) and sells Boddies and something called Porter Cask Ale. At Holts' **Old Bulls Head** (right), a very promising and thorough redecoration is under way.



Whilst I was aware that the **Town Hall** (Vaux) was on keg beer, it came as a bit of a shock to find the **Duke of York** (Whitbread) opposite had also gone keg. It was not that long ago that this was a multi-beer alehouse - what can have gone wrong?

Another convert to keg is **Websters' Church**. I'm sure this used to sell Websters Yorkshire Bitter or Gold Label. On to Barton Lane and



a very sorry tale - only one pub, the **Royal Oak**, does cask beer. Of the other three, one is closed (**Star**, left) and two (Greenalls' **Golden Lion** and Vaux's **Ship Canal** are converts to keg beer.

Things get a little better on Liverpool Road, but are let down by the **Diamond XX** (Mayfair), the **Black Boy** (Banks's) and the **Spinners** (Burtonwood), all succumbing to the 'dash for gas'.

The full survey is as follows...

Regent Street

Lamb	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Eccles Cross	Wetherspoon	Theakstons, Thwaites & others

Church Street

Top House	Enterprise	No real ale
Cross Keys	Bass	No real ale
Grapes	?	Shut for refurbishment
Oddfellows	Greenalls	Boddies, Porter Cask Ale
Finn McCouls	Greenalls	Bitter, Boddies
Hare & Hounds	Wilson's	Websters Green Label, Bitter
Old Bulls Head	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Town Hall	Vaux	No real ale
Duke of York	Whitbread	No real ale
Wellington	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Albert Edward	Sam Smiths	Old Brewery Bitter
Crown & Volunteer	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Dog & Partridge	Greenalls	No real ale

Barton Lane

Star	Vaux	Closed & boarded
Royal Oak	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Golden Lion	Greenalls	No real ale
Ship Canal	Vaux	No real ale

Liverpool Road

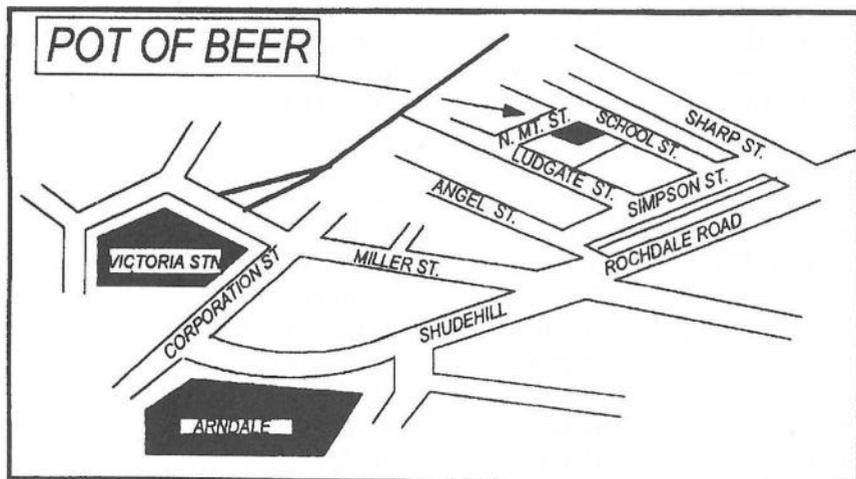
Swampy's Pub	S&N	No real ale
White Lion	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Diamond XX	Mayfair	No real ale
Star	Gibbs Mew	No real ale
Ellesmere	Old King Cole Pub Co	No real ale
Black Boy	Banks's	No real ale
Golden Cross	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Bridgewater	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Stanley	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Oddfellows	Greenalls	Mild
Bird in Hand	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Spinners	Burtonwood	No real ale
Red Lion	Greenalls	Festival, Boddies
Packet House	Greenalls	Boddies, other
Grapes	Holts	Mild, Bitter
Waggon & Horses	Tetley	Shut at time of survey
Unicorn	Greenalls	Boddies

POT OF BEER

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- ▶ *Draught Leffe Blond and Hoegaarden*
- ▶ *Black Rat Traditional Cider*
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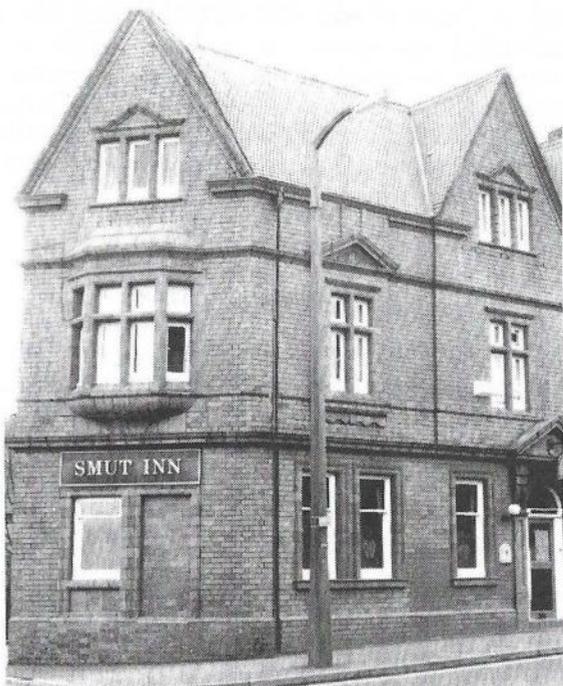
POLISH AND ENGLISH MENU
AVAILABLE 12 TO 9 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY
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Millennial musings

Groggnard

New Year is the time when some of us turn into Janus, the Roman god of pathways with his double face for gazing into the past and the future simultaneously. Myself, I enjoy a good wallow in rose-tinted nostalgia: that deliciously fruity cider I tried at that Devon clifftop pub when I was a lot younger and thinner, the dedicated domino players in the Smut when it was the only Boddingtons pub in West Oldham and Boddingtons still brewed bitter, my first beer festival/AGM at York in '73 and so on, etc.

But there's always the sour with the sweet, with beer as with anything else. Changes and disasters (sometimes the same thing) have shaped and twisted the British brewing/pub industry since the 1960s, as symbolised by Grotney's 'Red Revolution' and Wetbeds' 'Tour of



Destruction' of the regional brewers. No longer headed by brewers but by 'bean-counters' in suits, the big boys continue to worship at the shrine of rationalisation, offering a constant supply of sacrificial victims to their economic ideology in the form of demolished breweries, disappearing rural pubs and decent urban hosteleries gutted and re-marketed as 'Scabby Paddy' theme pubs or the disgusting 'Scream' concept of the Bass (or Base) group.

Ironically, underpinning these 'rat' schemes is their belief, as with Hitler, that if you tell a big lie often enough and loudly enough then enough people will believe it and you will make lots of lovely money from marketing bland, 'smooth' insipid gnats' piss to gullible simpletons, and in order to maintain the momentum of the lie you need to budget for increasingly large advertising revenues to continually remind the madding crowd of what they need to be doing - lining the brewery pockets.

Sadly, cask ales are hardly advertised at all. This, it seems, would not

be rational. What would be rational to me would be to put this collection of overpaid creeps up against the brewery wall and pelt them to death with full cans of their own foul products. I would be happy to throw the first 'Stones'.

Now with Millennium nearly upon us (and I refer to the correct one on 1st January 2001, not the false one being trumpeted by the big tent in London) will this symbolic date bring any new hope to the embattled champions of real ale? Will there be a sliding duty favouring the small brewer? Will the government stop using beer as a milk-cow for the exchequer? Will CAMRA finally make up its mind about the cask breather and will certain establishments start charging reasonable rates for real ale? Janus is looking forward to a rose-tinted future.

So enough of polemic, let's finish with a happy new year for all lovers of good beer, with a special thought of the Ashton Arms and not forgetting all my fans at the Buck & Hawthorn.

One final thought. At the last millennium it was confidently predicted that the world was coming to an end. Instead, William II, Rufus by name, was twanged by an arrow and Judgement Day was deferred. Perhaps some public spirited citizen could be found to emulate his self-sacrifice. Personally I would recommend the man at Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries who abolished Marstons bitter in the name of rationalisation.

Bent & Bongs Beer Bash

The annual Atherton & Tyldesley Beer Festival is on 27th - 29th January at the Formby Hall, Atherton. This year there is a Yorkshire beers theme and selected beers are £1 a pint between 6pm and 7.30 on the Thursday and 7pm and 11pm on the Saturday. See the advert for details of times of opening and admission prices.

Millennium brew

John Willie Lees' Millennium offering is MM Ale, a 4.7° winter warmer with a robust, full flavour and spicy aftertaste (it says here). The brew is on sale in JWL's usual seasonal ales outlets and can also be tried at the Winter Ales beer festival.



Thought For The Day

Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder.

Hillock and Hollins

Mark McConachie investigates the area between Blackford Bridge and Besses o'th'Barn...

The starting point was the **Hollins Bush** (Lees), which looks like a cottage-type pub from the outside but inside has been modernised since its days in the Good Beer Guide. Comfy, nonetheless. The beers were Lees GB mild, bitter and the new seasonal beer, MM (Roman for 2000, geddit?) This was in excellent nick - a great balance of malty body with a wonderfully restrained fruitiness, much as in Belgian beers.

Next stop was the newly refurbished **Queen Anne** (Thwaites) in Unsworth. This has had the same treatment as the nearby Swan & Cemetery at Redvales - a food orientated, country-rustic-cum-cosy retreat. Interesting, but hardly a challenge to the senses. Thwaites bitter was the sole cask offering. Not bad.

At Unsworth Pole one finds Holts' **Bay Horse**, one of the job lot the brewery had designed in the seventies. (You know the sort of thing - separate lounge and vault with connecting bog corridor.) Here, it seems more plush and spacious, probably because the two rooms are joined. The beers are Holts mild and bitter.

A quick dash for a 92 bus got us down Sunny Bank Road to Greenalls' **Robert Peel**. This is a middle class suburban estate pub which we expected to be rather uninspiring but it turned out to be quite pleasant. Avoiding the lounge (loud karaoke), we retired to the quiet of the vault and our pints of Boddies.

Getting the 92 back handily drops you off at the **Dragon** on Parr Lane. Having spotted it was an Enterprise house, we feared the worst. True to form, there was no cask beer. A short walk brought us



to the final pub of the night, the **Elizabethan** on Ribble Drive.

This Greenalls Inn Partnership pub is seeing some big changes in order to get rid of the reputation that made it a no-go area for local people. The licensees are working hard to make the changes and we were told that many locals were coming back to the pub, which is



good news for the area. Also good news is the cask Tetleys at £1 a pint all day every day.

THE CRESCENT

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**John Smiths Bitter, Son of Crescent,
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& Wobbly Bob**

plus **5** guests including a mild
Erdinger on draught, Liefmans Kriek
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Food served every lunchtime from 11.30am

Free Chip Barms every Monday 5-6pm

Weds 5-8pm Choice of Six Curries (veg and meat) + Rice £3

Phoenix and Cains

with Daddy Bell

North Manchester CAMRA is not notorious for including brewery visits in its schedule of activities. Idy Phillips has no such qualms, and is continuing at the Crescent the custom we welcomed at the Beer House of organising such jollies. Two such jaunts have been held recently, without serious injury to health or public decency.

On November 10th (I think it was) our destination was the Phoenix Brewery at Heywood, Tony Allen's successful enterprise. Besides a brisk tour of the brewery itself (where I discovered that Tony does indeed use whole hops) we drank our way through up to four of his beers, including some of the seasonals. I was also granted entrance to some of the non-brewing areas of this extraordinary site, where Tony has an amazing collection of bits and bobs awaiting assemblage into a museum of curios. One of his finds was a jug from a long-deceased small brewery just across the way, which was more than a homebrew house as it managed to distribute its products into Cheshire.

The original Phoenix Brewery (a late-Victorian tower with numerous ancillary buildings) survives intact in Tony's ownership. It is a local landmark which would merit thorough restoration, especially as it has great potential as a visitor attraction when the ELR trains start running through to Heywood. Our thanks go to Tony - and mine to Susan for showing me beyond the normally accessible areas of this fascinating survival of ambitious Victoriana.



December 15th saw us on another expedition by coach, this time to Idy's old haunts (and some of mine) in Liverpool. We couldn't on this occasion take in a tour of Passageway Brewery, as they were preoccupied with pre-Christmas deliveries, so we concentrated on a tour of Cains Brewery, under the expert guidance of Tony Molyneux, followed by a bite and a few drinks (notably the Blackout Winter Warmer) in the Brewery Tap, and a mini-crawl of other pubs (Cains' own Dispensary in Renshaw Street, the Swan in Wood Street, and the Cracke in Rice Street).

Tony Molyneux was in fine form, though he did not sing; and as Sal

was not with us we did not have any of the musical renditions which had accompanied our return from Heywood.

In its modernised form, the brewery is physically what Higsons made it in the last years of its independence, though it is now fully automated with centralised, one-person control. The clinical world of stainless steel does not allow much hands-on access to the process, but there are viewing panels into the inner workings of the mash mixer and the lauter tun, and the fermentation vessels still have sliding hatches for inspection and rousing of the yeast. The hop store tiling survives, unpainted, and is due to receive further restoration and development as a resource for visitors and receptions. The canning line was in full operation: though I cannot recall its precise throughput that day, it was of some daunting six-figure sum.



The greatest difference from Higsons days is in the quality and variety of the beers. It's sad that, while the original Higsons recipes are accessible and would merit re-creation, the reputation of the beers sank so much under Boddingtons and then Whitbread ownership that it would be hard to rebuild a market for them. Cains have established their own reputation and do not need to perpetuate or reintroduce the products of the past.

Thanks to the two Tonys for welcoming us to the breweries and extending our appreciation of their beers. Thanks, especially, to Idy for instigating these excursions - and for promising more in the future.

Mat Meet

The British Beermat Collectors' Society is meeting at the Crescent, Salford, on Saturday 5th February, starting at 12 noon. All interested parties are welcome. In addition to beer mats, pump clips, brewery badges and playing cards will be on offer and there will be a raffle with proceeds going to the Manchester Children's Hospital. A pub crawl will round off the day's events. Further information from Tom Corner 01457 872022.

Pump clip and beer mat sales will be held on the Saturday afternoons of most of the forthcoming Crescent beer festivals, courtesy of Idy. All money raised will go to the Children's Hospital.

Also at the Crescent - at quiet times only! - collectors can peruse a box of clips and mats - ask at the bar.

Out of town

An occasional series on pubs within easy reach of central Manchester, beginning with...

Chorlton

Spread Eagle *Wilbraham Road*

200 yards west of junction of Manchester Road. Buses: 16, 16A direct or 47, 85-6 to Manchester Road.

This largish building is the former Tara Hotel, converted into Holt's only Chorlton outlet in 1994. The present name is a reminder of a Holts pub on Regent Road, Salford, which was pulled down for road improvements. There is a spacious lounge with plenty of fixed and individual seating, and to the left a separate vault where chat and cards are the order of the day. At the front, a tree-shaded terrace set out with seating is available for drinkers to observe bustling Chorlton.

The Spread Eagle has resisted the explosion of cafés and bar conversions around it and remains very popular with people who like a good drink at a fair price in no-nonsense surroundings. The beers are handpumped Holts mild and bitter.



Bar Wilbraham Road

100 yards east of junction of Manchester Road. Buses: 16, 16A, 85 direct or 47 & 86 to Manchester Road.

The original Bar was formed out of shop and restaurant premises around 1994. It was a success but small and cramped, so a couple of years later the property next door was acquired to make Bar Two. This was in an entirely different style from the bar, but it was also a success.

In early 1999 the two pubs were joined together to form the present Bar. Decoration is simple and unfussy, with plenty of tables and chairs. With its street-front terrace, large windows, coffee machine and chill display cabinet, Bar now has a café bar quality.

The handpumped beers are from the Marble Brewery of Manchester: Marble Chorlton, Bitter, Liberty IPA and seasonal.

Beech Beech Road, Chorlton Green

Junction of Beech Road, Whitelaw Road. Buses 87A (peak hours only) or 16, 16A to Spread Eagle and short walk down St Clements Road or Whitelaw Road.

At the heart of Chorlton village are the green, the church and the





pubs. The best of the pubs is the Beech, a Whitbread house selling an extended beer range: Trophy, Boddies, Flowers Original, Greene King Abbot, Taylor BB and Landlord, and Old Speckled Hen.

It is small but comfortable, with a well-appointed bar parlour, a dark, cool and cosy snug, and through the back a good sized vault alive with bustle and banter. For outside drinking there are a couple of tables at the front and a substantial beer garden sun trap at the rear.

A visit to Chorlton's heart would not be complete without a stroll along Beech Road to take in the ever-changing cosmopolitan scene that has developed there over recent years.

Marble Beer House Manchester Road

Junction of Brantingham Road, 400 yards from Wilbraham Road.

Buses: 47, 84 and 86 direct.

A new pub, opened in early 1999 in the former premises of Marble Arch World Beers off-licence. Like its sister pub, the Bar, the Marble Beer House is supplied by the Marble Brewery in Manchester: Marble

Chorlton, Bitter, Totally Marbled, Liberty IPA and seasonal, plus two guests.

The pub is essentially an extended shop unit with a railed-off terrace at the front. Good use has been made of a small extension at the rear to bring in natural light to that part of the pub and the bar counter. Simply and eclectically furnished, it is popular with a wide variety of people; the odd media personality is even seen in there.

Contributors to this issue: Alan Gardner, Rob Magee, Mark McConachie, Brian Gleave, Mike Goode, Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, Daddy Bell, Pete Cash

THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester 0161 839 7019



THE ALL YEAR BEER FESTIVAL

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

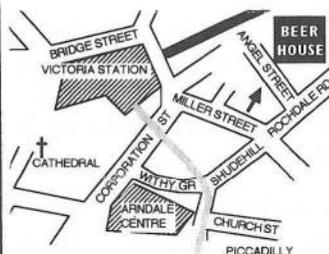
PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS, DRAUGHT KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN and BOTTLED BELGIAN AND GERMAN BIERS

BELGIAN BOTTLE RANGE NOW 40 & GROWING

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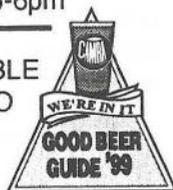
HOT LUNCHTIME FOOD SEVEN DAYS A WEEK LUNCHES DAILY

**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!

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Towards the end of last year rumours were circulating concerning the sale of some low turnover Holts pubs in Salford and Eccles. No-one at the brewery would confirm the stories - all they would say was that if a decision was made concerning the future of a particular pub, the first to know would be the licensee.

The company is continuing to acquire outlets and a pub in West Didsbury as well as one in Bury will be joining the tied estate soon. Their identities will be revealed once contracts have been exchanged.

Quality control problems such as those experienced in October and November should now be a thing of the past. Large amounts of money have been spent on refurbishing the brewery and new equipment has been installed, including a fully automatic temperature control system on the fermenters. This can control the temperature of fermenting beer to within 0.1°C and is checked every few seconds. In addition, the new laboratory should be up and running by now.

On Friday 3rd December I attended a leaving gathering for brewer Mike Hitchen at the Derby Brewery Arms. He came to Holts from Fullers three years ago (not 'a few months ago', as I stated last month!) and his replacement is John Cheetham from Marstons.

Holts Sixex in the new 275ml bottles (nearly half a pint) is going down well by all accounts and at £1 per bottle is considered good value.

I am hoping Holts bitter and mild will be available at this month's Winter Ales Festival in Manchester, but I have heard nothing definite at the time of writing.

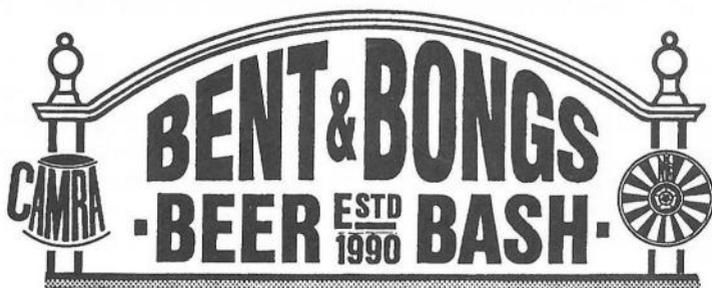
Winter Ales bash

The beer ran out at 7.00pm on the Saturday of last year's Winter Ales Festival, so this year there will be more - over 100 real ales, including milds, bitters, stouts and porters. Other attractions will be German and Belgian seasonal beers, draught American winter beers and (maybe) some real ales from Ireland.

See advert for times of opening and admission charges.



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7.00pm - 11.00pm - £4.00

CAMRA MEMBERS £1.00 REDUCTION ON ENTRANCE FEE

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Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.115 **Old England Forever** Old Mill Lane, Chadderton

No photograph of this beerhouse exists, but there is this picture of the owner, John Ashworth, otherwise known as Owd Trackey, the Lord of Mushroom Hall. Apparently he was an outspoken and eccentric character, and a labourer for Oldham Corporation until the day he told one of the town's aldermen what he thought about the Corporation's road improvement policy. Union Street was being laid with asphalt and Trackey thought that whoever had ordered the stuff ought to be put in it head first.

Owd Trackey owned an old building on Old Mill Lane in Chadderton - known as Mushroom Hall - which for a time was used as a beerhouse called the Old England Forever. The earliest record of this comes from 1861, when Trackey was the licence holder. For a few years afterwards he let the house to a succession of tenants. There are newspaper reports of vegetable shows being held there, such as the one in October 1862 when John Lees of Slacks Valley won a copper kettle for growing a carrot weighing 2lb 2oz. There are also newspaper reports of less salubrious goings-on, involving visits from the police and fines for allowing gambling at the beerhouse.

The end came in 1869, when the tenant failed to get a licence because the rateable value of Mushroom Hall was too low. Owd Trackey appealed against the assessment, saying that his tenant was paying just £16 a year for the beerhouse because times were hard. In the past he was getting £18 a year. The rates inspector was unmoved. The building was like a lot of old property he had seen and although there was a brewhouse attached, the less said about that the better, as it was worth nothing! So the Old England Forever closed, for ever.



Home Brewing Revisited

Malus Sylvestris

Part 23: Cider

1999, it seems, was a very good year for apples. Talking to people on cider bars at beer festivals and listening to gardening programmes on the radio confirmed my own observations: this year there has been a bumper crop.

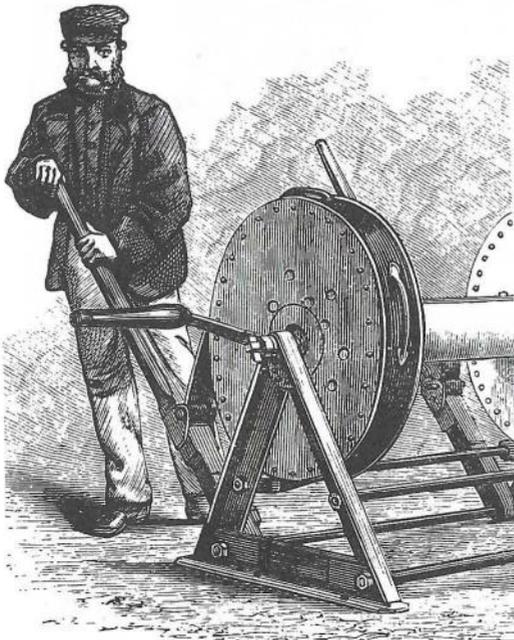
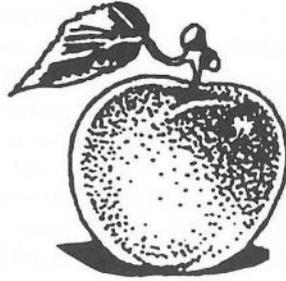
Growing 'wild' about a mile from where I live is a cluster of apple trees. I have noticed apples in previous years, but not in sufficient quantity to grab my attention. However, this time the amount was too great to ignore. Equipped with a large rucksack and a long pole fitted with a hook, I first set out in the middle of August and collected a sackful (41 lb).

It was immediately obvious that not all the trees were the same variety; in fact I identified four different types. The largest tree was almost certainly Cox's - the apples were the only ones of the four varieties which were pleasant to eat, with a good balance of acidity and sweetness. Next was an anonymous tree with large green apples, which whilst quite juicy had little taste, like a bland Golden Delicious. The third tree had smaller, golf-ball size apples, green to

start with but developing a reddish blush later in the season. These had a dry flesh and were very high in tannin. The final tree was a small crab apple with deep red cherry-sized fruit - Red Sentinel possibly.

In early September I returned and picked another 42 lb, giving 83 lb in total. These were put into 5 lb bags and consigned to the chest freezer.

I have never made cider before, but I have turned John Downie and Golden Hornet crab apples into sparkling wine using



Champagne yeast. Here the technique was to freeze, then throw the apples, which makes the job of squeezing out the juice in a press much easier.

My library has few references to cider. H E Bravery (1) has one chapter in his mainly beer book. Duncan Gillespie (18) advises adding lots of sugar to the pressed juice and making apple wine which he says is 'not only stronger but generally more pleasant than cider'.

References

- 1 *Home Brewing Without Failures* by H E Bravery. Max Parrish, London
18. *The Winemaker's Garden* by Duncan Gillespie. Amateur Winemaker
19. *Making Cider* by Jo Deal. Amateur Winemaker

I have one book (19) by Jo Deal, which proved useful. I had obtained six gallons of juice with a specific gravity of 1042. Jo recommends using sugar to increase the starting gravity to 1055. In fact I added a 1 kg bag to the six gallons, which added 12 degrees, making 1054 in all.

The other adjustment was for acidity. Apart from the Cox's, my apples were low in acid, and a titration of the juice showed that I had 3.8 grammes/litre of malic acid, whereas a balanced cider should have 6 g/l. I dissolved the appropriate amount of malic acid in a little of the juice and stirred it back into the bulk.

At this point I broke with convention. Normally a wine or champagne yeast would be used, but I happened to be racking off a batch of beer from a thick sediment of a local brewery's yeast, so I poured the apple juice on to this and stirred it.

After a few days' vigorous fermentation, the 'cider' was racked into a closed vessel fitted with an airlock, where it still remains. I will report on how it turns out in a few months' time.

(Editor's Note: Readers are advised not to try this at home until he tells us how it turns out. What's Doing cannot be held responsible for death or injury resulting from unsupervised experiments with things growing on trees.)

Pick the Kro

A listed Victorian house that was once home to a temperance society has become Kro Bar. Sited on Oxford Road, opposite Manchester University Students' Union, the bar is a well thought-out blend of the trendy and the traditional. It sells handpulled Boddies, Directors and Taylors Landlord, together with some interesting foreign beers and looks set to do very well.

Rupert

Slumley Parva has, for decades, been an amber nectar aficionado's nirvana. In neighbouring parts of Slumley, taverns have closed through redevelopment schemes, economic forces and the ravages of crime. Yet, in Slumley Parva, hostelrys have not dwindled but have grown in number. It is, therefore, particularly sad to report that Grotley's favourite alemaker wants to dispose of some of its less successful establishments, including four in, yes, Slumley Parva.

Of course, this would not be the first loss of Drabs pubs. At least three have closed in living memory, but only after gunfights, drugs raids or single-figure customers for months on end. Can it be that the inner city contagion has at last reached Slumley Parva? Well, so it seems. Happy punters will be able to buy premises in parts of Slumley proper, where residents and hence customers are thin on the ground; they will also be able to become the proud owners of Drabs houses in Slumley Parva, where the population is denser.

As an example, a mere £55K could buy you an eighteenth century former coaching inn complete with secret passage and a ghost that clouds the beer. For little more you could acquire a prime Edwardian

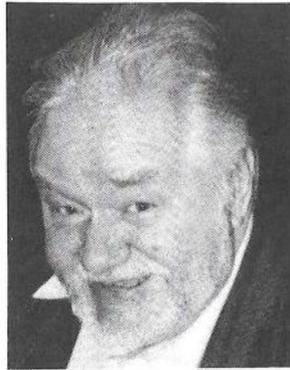
pub or one with a well-preserved between-the-wars interior, both in central localities. The only drawback is that any new owner would not be able to serve Drabs' ales, a strange condition.

Why should Drabs sell off their tied estate like this? Have they succumbed to the conventional business wisdom, when they have fought against it for so long? We've already seen the double-sided beermat and point-of-sale advertising. How much longer will it be before they ram their prices up, develop theme pubs and sell out to some suits? Or could it be that Eunuchramforks' newest venture with ale as cheap as Drabs

has been the last straw? Perhaps even Slumley Parva has become overpubbed. What, one wonders, will Beinlos do without the Drabs Eleven crawl?

We enter the new millennium on a sad note with not only the beginning of the end of Drabs as we knew them, but also with the moving on of an

entrepreneurial spirit. Ben Chestnut, whose whore's drawers career we have followed over the years, has left Duke Brewery where he brewed some very fine amber nectars, some of which won prizes. A pity, but Ben will no doubt bounce back as he has done before and we look forward to reporting his latest ventures soon.



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 4 Jan 8.30, Branch Meeting, Cemetery, Bury Road, Rochdale
Tue 18 Jan 8.30pm, Committee meeting, Merrie Monk, College Road, Rochdale

Fri 21 Jan, Evening Social, Winter Ales Festival, Castlefield, Manchester

Tues 25 Jan 8.30pm, Whats Doing collation, Cask & Feather, Drake Street, Rochdale

Sat 29 Jan 8.30pm, GBG selection meeting, Blue Pitts, Manchester Road, Castleton

Tues 1 Feb 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Ashton Arms, Clegg Street, Oldham

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

Email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

North Manchester

Wed 5 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height crawl. Wagon & Horses 7pm, Wellington 8pm, Red Lion 9pm.

Sat 8 Jan 12.30pm, Regional Meeting, Wheatsheaf, Market Street, Atherton. (Train 11.31 from Victoria)

Tues 11 Jan 8pm, 'Best 12 Pubs' social, Lamb, Regent Street, Eccles

Wed 12 Jan 8pm, GBG 2001 pre-selection meeting, Crescent, Salford

Mon 17 - Wed 19 Jan, Winter Ales Festival setting up, followed by social at White Lion, Liverpool Road, 8pm Weds.

Thur 20 - Sat 22 Jan - Festival open

Tues 25 Jan 6pm onwards, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Wed 26 Jan Branch Meeting, Beer House

Wed 2 Feb 8pm, Social, Egerton, Worsley Road, Winton

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.

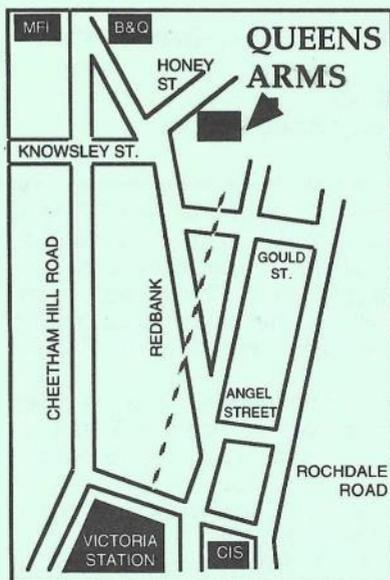
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