

30p

What's Doing

FEBRUARY 2000



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

SHIP SUNK

The Old Ship in Salford has been demolished. The pub was on the corner of Chapel Street and Victoria Bridge Street and for many years was a highly regarded Boddingtons outlet.



Bolton briefly

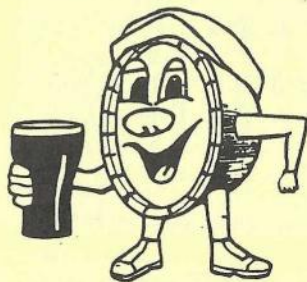
Trotter

The Malt & Hops Bar, adjacent to the Swan Hotel on Bradshawgate, reopened towards the end of 1999, but it seems to have closed again. On the several visits I made during the brief reopening, the real ales were national brands and only four were available at any one time, although there were six handpumps on show.

The Hen & Chickens on Deansgate continues to sell three quality guest beers alongside Greenalls bitter and mild. On a recent visit, Marlow Rebellion Smuggler, Pedigree and Gold Digger from the Bolton brewery were available. Listed on the 'coming-up' board were Batemans XXXB, Flowers OG and Hop Back Thunderstorm.

At the Old Man & Scythe, Caledonian Deuchars IPA is a worthy addition to the beer range and is proving very popular.

It amazes me that despite being brewed in Bolton, Bank Top beers are sold in so very few pubs in the town. People who have tried the beers for the first time at beer festivals have then visited Bolton, toured the pubs looking for the stuff and departed in gloom because of the limited availability.



Wigan Beer Festival

The 13th Wigan Beer Festival is on 16th-18th March at the usual venue, the Mill at the Pier. There will be over forty real ales, plus cider and bottled beers. On the Saturday night selected beers will be £1 a pint and entertainment will be provided by an Eagles tribute band. Full details next month.

Salford news

Daddy Bell

On Cross Lane, the long-shut **Golden Gate** (the erstwhile **Craven Heifer**) has been turned into a convenience store

I had wondered in December what was going on behind the scaffolding at the **Old Ship** on Chapel Street. The next time I passed, the scaffolding was gone, but so was the pub. It seems to have become a casualty of the conversion of the adjacent office block into an hotel, sacrificed to create working space for hoists and other tackle. True, it had gone nitrokeg, but there's always the hope of repentance. So there are now, by my reckoning, just two sources of real ale on the south side of Chapel Street (the **Albert Vaults** and the **Old Nelson**) with but one on the north, the **Salford Arms** on the corner of Bloom Street. Still, that's three more than on the once notorious crawl of Cross Lane.

Bridgewater Ales

By the time this WD appears, drinkers should have had a chance to enjoy a new Bridgewater ale, Salford Pride, which is intended to bear more than a passing resemblance to another proud beer from some southern metropolis.



Ten Cent, the 9.8% millennial special, appeared on sale on the Epiphany in the **Kings Arms** in Bloom Street. Initially smoky, it has a lingering jamminess, like a double strength Snecklifter. The beer was due to be available at the National Winter Ales Festival, with a 'nine' kept in reserve for the Stockport festival. It will be interesting to see how it matures and develops in the intervening months.

Outlets for Bridgewater Ales continue to increase, with determined penetration of North Wales and other outlets nearer home. A re-badged Barton Ale is available as a house beer in one promising establishment, but I have had to swear a quasi-masonic oath not to divulge its identity.

THE ALL YEAR BEER FESTIVAL

THWAITES BITTER, MOORHOUSES PENDLE
WITCH, TIMOTHY TAYLOR LANDLORD
+ 9 EVER CHANGING GUESTS
from Independents & Micros including a MILD



PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS,
DRAUGHT KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN &
EXTENSIVE BELGIAN & GERMAN BOTTLE RANGE
& NEW BELGIAN DRAUGHT GUEST BEERS (IN ROTATION)

BEER FESTIVAL

Thursday 2nd - Sunday 5th March

40+ New and Rare Beers

**Festival Food at Lunchtimes
including Cheese and Meat Platters**

Beers from micros and independents - all served from handpump
(6 upstairs and 12 down) and chilled to cellar temperature

Hot Lunchtime Food Seven Days a Week

LUNCHES DAILY & EVENING MEALS 5 - 7pm (FRI ONLY)

THURS SPECIAL (5-8pm) CHOICE OF 6 CURRIES (VEG & NON-VEG) + RICE £3

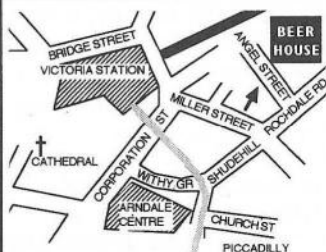
SUNDAY 12-2.30pm - Giant Yorkshires with choice of meat, roast potatoes and veg
for just £3



HALF PRICE MENUS & CHEAP SPECIALS MON LUNCH
FREE CHIP MUFFINS WED 5-6pm



NEWLY REFURBISHED FUNCTION ROOM UPSTAIRS WITH BAR BILLIARDS TABLE & SKY SPORTS



THE BEER HOUSE

Angel Street, Manchester
0161 839 7019



Wigan and district

Dave White

The rest of Cool Britannia may be celebrating the new millennium but here in Wigan the pubs are rooted firmly in the nineteen-seventies. Cask conditioned beer has gone belly-up at **Crooke Hall Inn**, Crooke village, and the **Eagle & Child**, Heath Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield. Both are ex-Greenalls pubs, and the latter must be a recent conversion to keg because the pub still boasts of its traditional ales on the exterior. No doubt the offending sign will have been removed by the time you read this.

Elsewhere in Ashton, the once-peerless **Kings Arms** on the corner of Warrington Road and Liverpool Road was closed and in darkness on a recent call. If the ubiquitous Wetherspoons is not your kind of place, the **Bay Horse** on the A49 to Haydock is worth a visit, with an unusual guest beer alongside the Boddies and Greenalls.

In Lower Ince, Enterprise Inns have put the **Shepherds Arms** back on the market, and the Warrington Road pub is closed and boarded up once again. This ill-starred boozer was advertising a forthcoming second-hand book sale when I drove past the other day. Perhaps Enterprise Inns ought to be renamed the Optimistic Pub Company...

News in brief... Hindley's **Lord Nelson** on Bridge Street has reopened (see WD Aug 99) but your reporter hasn't been in yet... the **Clarence Hotel**, Wallgate, Wigan, has gone over to real ale in the form of Jennings mild and bitter (WD Dec 99), though the clientele remains the same... reports of the demise of Tetley bitter in the **Red Robin** at Robin Park appear to be premature (WD Dec); at least one of the ten handpumps was seen working recently. Amen to that.

Holts triangle

On 30th January there will be changes at three of Holts' best known pubs. Jimmy McCormack is moving from the Ape & Apple on John Dalton Street in Manchester to take over the Woodthorpe on Bury Old Road, Prestwich. Terry and Carol will move south from Prestwich to the Spread Eagle in Chorlton, where money is to be spent on a kitchen and other improvements. To complete the triangle, Geoff and Jenny will move from Chorlton to the city centre.

There is a new licensee at the Church in Whitefield and a former relief manager at Winters, Stockport, has taken over at the Half Way House, Ashton New Road.

Closed and Boarded in Salford

The New Lima on Peru Street is closed once again. The Brewery Tavern on Adelphi Street is also closed again. Between the two, the Dock & Pulpit is yet to open. Over on Cross Lane, there is a sign on the closed and boarded Corporation saying the building is to be auctioned.

Out of Town

Glossop

To get to Glossop, catch a train from Piccadilly Station (usually platform 1 or 2) with 'Hadfield' on the front. The service is half-hourly except in the late evening. The journey takes just thirty minutes.

Star Ale House

Turn left out of the station for this Greenalls house, which sells up to four guest beers in addition to the regulars, Boddingtons bitter and Taylors Landlord. The greater choice is at weekends. The bar dominates the pub; there is a small corner area separated by half-panelling and a small, separate games room with a dart board and bar skittles.



Bulls Head

From the Star, turn left up Norfolk Street and after 700 yards turn right on to Hall Meadow Road, then follow Church Street round to the right. The Bulls Head is on the left. The oldest part of the pub is the two-storey kitchen area, which dates back to the seventeenth century and is believed to be the oldest building in Glossop. The main part of the pub was built later and in the nineteenth century the Bulls Head was a stopping place for coaches on the Manchester - Sheffield run.

An unusual feature is that two rooms are franchised to the owner of one of Rusholme's Indian restaurants, and are set out in appropriate style. Each day a chef and staff are sent over from Rusholme. All food



is prepared on site and meals are served from 6.30pm to 10.30pm (5pm to 10.30pm Sundays). It is advisable to book if you are going at popular times.

The smaller room is for smokers, the larger (Red Room) is non-smoking and this is where the pub ghost removes plates from the walls and lays them carefully on the floor. However, most manifestations are apparently on the middle floor and there are also stories of a tunnel from beneath the kitchen to the nearby church. (Not to be outdone, the vicarage and the Queens Arms also claim to have tunnels.)

The Bulls Head is a listed building and sells Robinsons Best Bitter and Old Stockport, with Old Tom on gravity in winter.

Egerton ales

Following a smart refurbishment which has left the internal layout intact, the Egerton Arms, Worsley Road, Winton, has introduced a guest beer policy.

Regulars are Boddingtons bitter (143p) and Tetley dark mild (138p), which replaces the discontinued Boddingtons mild. Pensioners pay only 120p a pint. The first guest was 'Egey Brew', made by Ansells. This is likely to be followed by Old Speckled Hen.

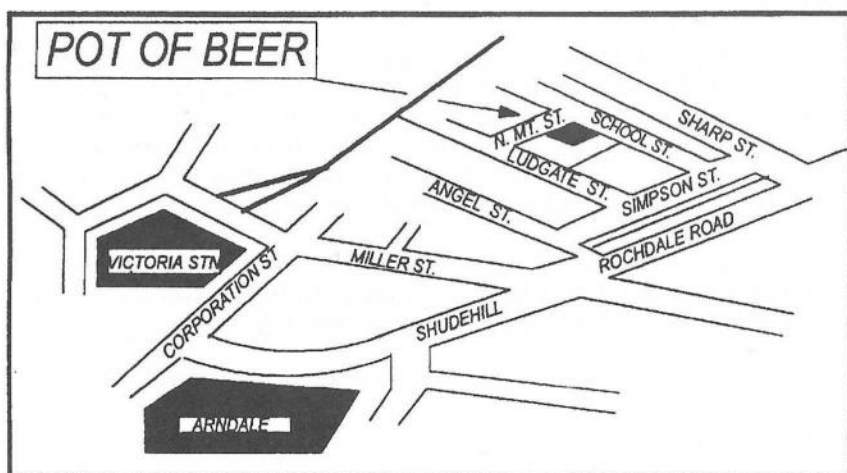
POT OF BEER

36 NEW MOUNT ST.

0161 834 8579



- ▶ *Everchanging Guest Cask Ales*
- ▶ *Robinsons Dark Mild*
- ▶ *Draught Leffe Blond and Hoegaarden*
- ▶ *Black Rat Traditional Cider*
- ▶ *Continental Bottled Beers*
- ▶ *Wide Selection of Wines*



POLISH AND ENGLISH MENU

**AVAILABLE 12 TO 9 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY
AND 12 TO 4 PM SATURDAY**

Rose & Crown

Garry and Denise have left the Rose & Crown, Manchester Old Road, Bury, and the pub is being run by Ernie and Barbara Berry until Pubmaster find a new tenant/franchisee. (It has been advertised in the press for a minimum investment of £15,000.) There is a rumour that a current J W Lees landlord is interested!

Beer quality has been maintained and the range is still as good as ever, with slightly more frequent appearances by beers from our local brewers (Bank Top and Leyden), not forgetting the permanent Phoenix-brewed house bitter.

Beinlos in Bavaria

Paul Roberts

Paulaner Brewery's Salvator Keller, the largest beer hall in Munich, was destroyed in an arson attack in late 1999. The Keller had a capacity of 5,000+ and was to be the main venue for *Starkbiertzeit* (the strong beer festival) which begins on 17 March.

Starkbiertzeit is described as the local Oktoberfest, but there are no drunken English or Australian hooligans here - just a few incapable Bavarians lining the gutters around the perimeter!

The other breweries' beer halls will be open as usual, but it is not known whether a temporary marquee can be erected by Paulaner for the 17-day event. Only litres of their 7.5% Salvator Doppelbock are served at the festival; the weaker Helles and Pils are not available.



For those unable to travel to Munich, Salvator is available in half-litre bottles at the Sandbar, Grosvenor Street, Manchester.

Mild concerns

Pete Cash

North Manchester CAMRA members are partial to mild, so have become quite dismayed at two recent trends.

An excellent version of Chesters dark mild, brewed in recent years by Everards, has been available in handpumped form in numerous Whitbread outlets, usually in fine form. Now it appears that the contract with Everards has not been renewed and the beer is made elsewhere (Mansfield, we think). Although a cask version is apparently available, most local licensees have such a low opinion of its quality that they refuse to stock it and now offer only a keg mild.

Many Holts houses now offer Holts mild in nitro keg form alongside the handpulled version. In itself this is not a problem since the beer comes from the same (real ale) cask, and no extra is charged for injecting it with gas on its way to the bar. However, in many pubs you are given the gassy version unless you specify the handpump when ordering, and at least one pub has refused to sell the traditional type. We were told the nitro keg was superior because 'it reduces wastage'. A statement from Holts on their instructions to bar staff would be most welcome.



THE CRESCENT

SALFORD

OPEN ALL DAY, EVERY DAY!

10 cask ales always available

**John Smiths Bitter, Son of Crescent,
Roosters Special, Phoenix Thirsty Moon
& Wobbly Bob**

plus 5 guests including a mild
Erdinger on draught, Liefmans Kriek
+ Quality Doubles Bar!

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

Letters

Humbug

Sir - Why did What's Doing not pay homage to, or even recognise, the festive season just departed? In a time of peace and goodwill and especially giving, would it not have been fitting to reward

loyal readers with a bumper edition, or even a freebie?



Other publications delight us during the Christmas and New Year season with titles featuring snow-capped letters, holly, plum puddings and other icons such as Christmas trees and even a Santa with his swaying sack.

Not so long ago there was a wide and varied range of commemorative issues of WD. There has been a steady decline over the years and the editorial policy seems to be to produce plain and simple editions.

If the turn of the 2000 'Millennium' did not inspire the editor to commemorate the festive season, perhaps the coming of the proper Millennium will. I can only wait with anticipation.



An avid reader

Home Brewing Revisited Revisited

Sir - Last month's article on cider making should have read as follows: 'Here the technique was to freeze, then **thaw** the apples...' and not '**throw** the apples...'

Readers are warned that frozen apples make highly dangerous missiles and on no account should they be thrown, even in jest.

Malus Sylvestris

For sale

Two central Bolton pubs were for sale in January - the Academy (ex-Painters Arms) on Crook Street (mentioned last month) and the Derby Arms on Derby Street (freehold, ex-Whitbread).

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Paul Roberts, Mike Goode, Steve Smith, Rob Magee, Paul Warbrick, Alan Ainsworth, Stewart Revell, Daddy Bell

Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.116 **Washbrook Tavern** 317 Washbrook, Chadderton

Last year the Britannia Inn at Washbrook acquired a new owner and was renamed the Washbrook Tavern. It had been a Wilsons house for many years and the photograph below shows the pub and the brewery's first steam dray wagon. The wagon, a Foden with solid Macintosh rubber tyres (guaranteed for 10,000 miles) cost Wilsons £645 and it was used on the long haul up from the Newton Heath brewery to Wilsons pubs in Chadderton and Oldham. Until then, the brewery had the expense of hiring chain horses to assist their own horses on the journey up to Werneth.

It was this slope which gave rise to the name Washbrook, since in earlier times streams flowed through here from the higher ground at Werneth. About 1792 the Manchester and Ashton canal company decided it was a good place to build a canal basin. The basin and coal wharf were constructed, along with tram roads so that coal could be brought from the local pits to be loaded on to the narrowboats. This industrial development resulted in the growth of the hamlet of Washbrook.

In January 1868 John Percival obtained an excise licence to sell beer



at a house at Washbrook which he called the Britannia Hotel. In the August he applied for a full licence, explaining that his house measured thirty-one and a half feet by twenty-seven and a quarter feet, there were four rooms upstairs and four downstairs. He didn't have any stables, but there was an enclosed yard and his water supply came from the local mill. The nearest public house was the Colliers Arms, 294 yards away. The magistrates granted the licence on condition he built some stables.

The Britannia proved to be a successful venture for John Percival and he ran it for twenty-five years. In the early days the workers at the mill were paid their wages there; no doubt some of the £50 weekly wages bill was spent in the pub. When the 1871 census was taken John and his wife Alice had two young children, Dan and Freddie. Ten years later John had a new wife, Sarah Ann; Daniel was an apprentice wheelwright and Ted (Freddie) an apprentice mechanic. There were also four younger children, Frank, Fred, Lizzie and Harry, and to help out the family had a domestic servant called Eleanor Sankey.

In the late 1880s a bowling green was laid out and a survey in 1890 found the Britannia to be in good condition and able to supply meals for up to twelve people, with overnight accommodation available for one traveller and stabling for two horses.

After John Percival retired in 1893 Wilsons Brewery took a lease on the Britannia and later bought it. Their first tenant was John Houghton, who saw the pub extended into the house next door. By this time the area had become built up. Oxford Street had been in existence for about thirty years, complete with its own pub. Interestingly, when this licence was first applied for in 1872, the plan was to call the pub the Britannia, which would have caused some confusion! John Percival was probably relieved when the application was turned down. It had another name, the Freehold Hotel, at the 1873 application and when the licence was eventually granted in 1874 it was the Oxford Hotel.

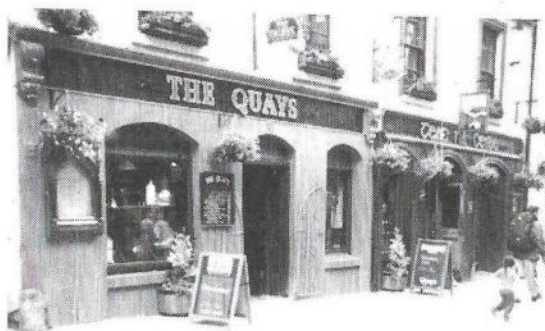
By the 1920s all but one of the area's collieries had closed, but more cotton mills had been built and Chadderton could boast fifty-five mills. The licensee of the Britannia from 1912 until 1926 was James Whitehead and after he left the licence changed hands regularly. There were some exceptions, such as Fred Crompton, who stayed for several years in the 1940s and 1950s and Bernard Caveney, who was there in the 1970s. Susan and Michael Scanlon took a lease on the Britannia in 1990, then in July 1998 the pub closed.

However, it was given a new lease of life in 1999 when John Bridges arrived, changed the name to the Washbrook Tavern and started selling Lees beers.

Galway, Clare and elsewhere

Last summer Steve Smith took in some of the sights and bars of Ireland...

Galway, Co Galway, is a delightful city with a collection of quaint shops and likewise public bars. Three of the bars are cavernous places, resplendent in wood and glass and extending back into several



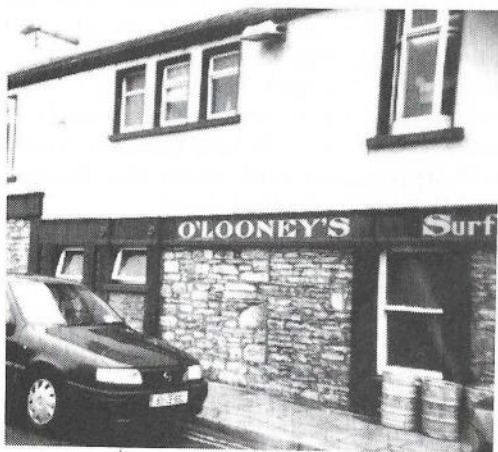
areas. These are the **Quays** on Quay Street, the **Kings Head** on High Street and **McSwiggans** (a good name for a drinking house, this) on Eyre Street, nicely placed for bus and train connections.

In Cross Street, practically opposite the Quays, is **Tigh Neachtain**, a n

unspoilt pub with tiny rooms. Murphys is available here as an alternative to Guinness. In the High Street, Beamish is on offer at **Murphy's Bar**, a no-frills, two-roomed drinking house. On Foster Street there is **Rabbitts**, a lounge bar and restaurant, and the one-roomed **An Púcán Bar**, which has occasional live music sessions. More basic bars can be found over the river on the west side of the city, such as the **Crane Bar** on Sea Road. You can't fail to notice **Monroe's Tavern**, a huge black-and-white edifice at the corner of Dominick Street Upper, which caters for all tastes.

Lahinch, Co Clare, is a pleasant coastal village with a few pubs.

O'Looney's by the promenade is a comfortable retreat for good food and



ale, but its most striking features are the giant Sony television screen and an enamel jerry pot which hangs outside the entrance to the loos. Lisdoonvarna in the same county has **Lynch's** in the main square, a plain, opened-out affair.

Westport, Co Mayo, is a thriving town which seems to delight in holding bonfires during the middle of summer. The most famous pub around here, **Matt Molloy's** on Bridge Street, pays homage to the Chieftains, one of Ireland's most famous bands, of which Matt is a member. It is a traditional Irish pub with a number of small rooms and antique fixtures and fittings. Also on Bridge Street can be found the **West Bar**, a corner local with a number of rooms around a rectangular bar, and an outlet for the Guinness Breo white beer. In the vicinity of Castle Bar Street are the **Spinning Wheel**, a modernised sort of place, and the **Anglers Rest**, a more basic retreat. The **Select Bar (John J O'Grady's)** on the corner of the Mall is a quiet one-room pub with wood panelling and booth seating. On James Street, the **Clew Bay** is an upmarket hotel offering good value meals. Other pubs worth mentioning are **J Gerahty** and **P Dunning**, both by the Octagon, and the **Clock Tavern**, with its mock Tudor decor by the clock tower.

Still in Co Mayo, Newport has the **Bridge Inn** on Bridge Street and Louisburgh the **Derrylahan** on Bridge Street, offering good meals and snacks.

Sligo, Co Sligo. In the county town we had a brief stop at the popular **Stables** on Wine Street for a pint of Breo and a substantial sandwich (large portions).

Donegal, Co Donegal, has some pleasant riverside walks and views across Donegal Bay. The Diamond is the main thoroughfare and most of the pubs can be found here. The most popular is **Mo Groary's**, a stone-fronted traditional Irish bar which features live music sessions. The **Abbey Hotel** is a plush residential place, therefore the drinks are not cheap. **Voyage Bar** is a simple but trendy drinking pub, at times noisy. Around the corner in Bridge Street and overlooking the river is the **Riverside**, a somewhat spartan affair, and the popular **Blue Stack Bar**. On Castle Street is the **Olde Castle Bar**, one of those wood-panelled pubs which extends back into several drinking areas. The **Schooner Inn** on Upper Main Street, with its cardboard pirate outside, offers live music, bed and breakfast and pavement seating.

In the Gaeltacht, the Irish-speaking part of Co Donegal, is the **Pipers Rest** in the coastal village of Kilcar. This is a traditional olde worlde stone and thatch inn, with flagged floors, collections of bric-a-brac and pipes (the kind you smoke), tea towels on the ceiling and musical instruments on the wall.

Buncrana has a thriving industry with two Fruit of the Loom factories to keep it going and a fine collection of pubs and bars. Most of these are placed at regular intervals along the main street. At the

bottom end is the **West End Bar**, a popular locals' pub which has been extended in recent years. The **Brass Rail Bar** has plain furnishings, while next door **O'Flaherty's**, owned by the same people, is a grander affair, spacious and with mahogany fittings. The one-room **Dinny Grant's** is a shrine to Manchester United, with framed pictures of presentations and autographed players' shirts. The single-storey **Cottage Bar** is a cosy place, with pictures of Buncrana's heritage on the walls and leaded windows. Unusually, there are no beer founts



on the bar; the beer is dispensed from the back wall. The **Atlantic Bar** is comfortable and opened-out, while the **Central Bar** is a more modernised affair, almost wine bar/bistro-ish in comparison with the town's other pubs. By the bus station is the small and friendly **Croiskeen Lawn** and on the main road a quarter of a mile out of town is the **Drift Inn**, housed in

the old, almost Gothic-like railway station building. The interior is full of maritime bric-a-brac and there is a separate restaurant.

Malin Head is the republic's most northerly point and the **Crossroads Inn** is a useful stopping place. The large lounge and back room bar with open fire are decorated with pictures of the maritime past.

On the eastern side of the country, the busy



port of Dundalk is the administrative centre of Co Louth. On the north side of the town is the **Cuchulainn (Brady's)** on Bridge Street. The rather shabby exterior is not much to look at, but the inside is neat and tidy with a long, narrow bar. It is an outlet for 'Macardle's Traditional Ale', which is definitely a keg beer, but a change, nevertheless. **McKeown's** on Clanbrassil Street has some green patterned tiling on the outside, a comfortable interior, a mosaic tiled floor and a cabinet displaying beer engines. **Kay's Tavern** on Crowe Street, with its worn carpets and frayed seats, has seen better times, but it is roomy, with imposing arches separating the various areas.

On the south side of Dundalk is **Loughran's Railway House**, a friendly vault bar and lounge. On Ann Street, **Jockeys** is fitted out with a horse racing theme, with areas such as the Weigh In and Tack Room. The television in the back bar was showing horse racing, of course. Across the road is **McArdle's**, which has some wonderful ornate tiling along its walls. The **Windsor Tavern** at the corner of Dublin Street and Vincent Street was a nice surprise. What appears to be a street corner local extends back into modernised rooms and a staircase leads to an upper saloon with split-level rooms and a superior restaurant. It is all tastefully done and the Windsor is easily the best pub in town.

On the main Dublin Road out of Drogheda is the **Black Bull**, a modern roadside pub incorporating Egan's Food Hall, which sells all sorts of provisions, has a cafe and a delicatessen.

Balbriggan, Co Dublin, is a seaside resort and by the harbour is **O'Shea's**, with its intimate drinking areas such as the Captain's Den and the popular Sizzlers Restaurant.

Our last port of call was Skerries, Co Dublin, a pleasant harbour



town. **Fingals Cave** on Church Street is a quiet, two-roomed pub, whilst the **Windmill** on New Street is an opened-out sort of place with a separate restaurant.

Two useful pub guides are Barrie Pepper's 'Irish Pubs' (Eric Dobby, £7.99) and 'Bushmills' Irish Pub Guide' by Sybil Taylor (Appletree Press, £6.99).

Manchester Pubs - a history

Part Eight: Crimes and misdemeanours

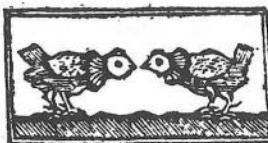
In Victorian times, visitors to Manchester's pubs in search of recreation more basic than a singalong or a game of billiards could usually find something. A pastime associated with beerhouses in the poorer districts was rat worrying - setting a dog on to a pack of rats in a rat pit. There were several rat pits near the city centre, such as the one in William Hamilton's workshop next to his Pier Head beerhouse on Albert Street. The buildings overlooked the River Irwell, where Mr Hamilton had a number of rowing boats for hire. A rat worrying session in November 1850 was brought to the attention of a wider public when so many spectators were packed into the workshop that the floor collapsed on to the boats, destroying five of them. The new Trinity Bridge marks the spot where once you could hire a boat from Mr Hamilton for a row on the river.

Using dogs to kill rats was part of the way of life, but setting dog against dog was illegal. Nevertheless, there were dog fights in the city and a venue discovered by the police in March 1861 was the Rose & Shamrock beerhouse on Wood Street. They found two bleeding and exhausted dogs in a ring in the house and arrested nearly fifty spectators. The licensee was sent to prison for a month.

On Tib Street, a few doors up from the corner of Whittle Street, there is a shop which a century ago was a beerhouse called the Black Boy. In 1896 the tenant was convicted for assisting at a cock fight, a sport which by then was also against the law. A hundred years earlier it was a traditional pastime in the yards of alehouses. Some fights were well organised and advertised in the newspapers, such as the two-day event in May 1776 (*below*) at the Windmill on Deansgate, which was across from where the John Rylands Library now stands.

In Tib Street and other streets around Smithfield Market there were betting shops, or 'list houses', such as the Manchester Arms on the

To be FOUGHT,



A MAIN of COCKS,
at the new Cockpit,
the Sign of the Wind-
mill, in Deansgate, Man-
chester, for 2 Days, play,
to weigh on Saturday
next, 21 in the Main,
and 8 in the Byes; to fight on Monday and Tuesday next,
for 2 Guineas a Battle, and 50 the Main or odd Battle.
A PAIR of COCKS to be on the Clod, at Ten and
Two each Day.

TOWNLEY for Lancashire,
AND
TAYLOR for Yorkshire,

} Feeders.

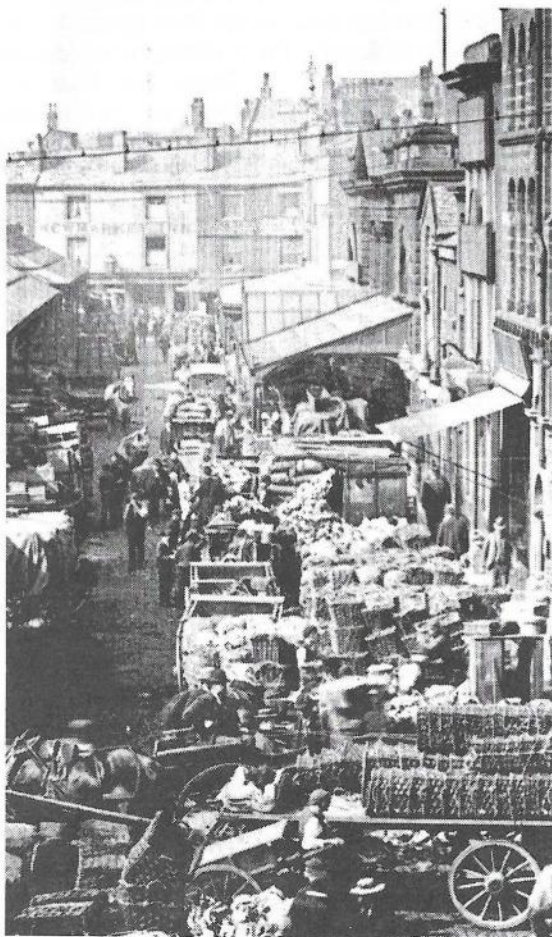
corner of Thomas Street and Tib Street. The licensee was a bookmaker and one day the police recorded about two hundred people passing in and out of the house in less than an hour. The licensee was seated at a table in the front room with lists of various races spread out in front of him. He

was fined the maximum of £100, and when he was caught again six months later he was fined another £100, so it must have been worth it. Tenants of other list houses in the area were arrested, but the police seem to have been fighting a losing battle, as a letter to the newspaper in April 1861 complained that sometimes there were so many betting men in Thomas Street that the street was almost impassable.

Pubs around Smithfield Market and the markets at Campfield were used by carters and farmers who brought produce into the city. After a long early morning drive with a cartload of Cheshire potatoes, a farmer could easily fall asleep after having something to eat and drink in the warm atmosphere of a market pub. Many did, and many woke up without their watches and wallets.

Pickpockets were not the only hazards for unsuspecting visitors. Soon after Smithfield Market was established there was a police case involving the Red House on Tib Street (now a car park on the corner of Foundry Lane), when a man from Nottingham was robbed after spending most of the day with 'a woman of abandoned character' in the pub. Like falling asleep, that sort of thing happened a lot in the years that followed.

The photo shows a busy Foundry Lane when Smithfield Market was in full swing. The buildings on the right have their frontages on Swan Street and the one with the two fascia boards is the Burton Arms. In the distance is the long-closed New Market Inn on Higher Oswald Street.



Large-scale developments in Victorian times replaced some of the poorest areas of housing. Central Station (G-Mex) and the Great Northern warehouse were welcome improvements to a part of the city where police complaints about badly run public houses were frequent and sometimes despairing. Those in the Deansgate district were regularly criticised and it's a wonder that some kept going. Two of the surviving pubs in this area had their licences suspended on a number of occasions because they were being 'conducted in a disgraceful manner'.

The Bulls Head on the corner of Deansgate and Wood Street was described as the worst in town in November 1840. The licensee had several convictions, the customers were 'thieves and prostitutes of the very worst description' and since two policemen were required to watch the premises, it was costing the public £75 a year. Pubs were allowed to open early in the morning on market days for the benefit of traders coming into town, but several, like the Bulls Head, opened just after midnight for a clientele of 'dissolute characters'. Somehow the pub managed to keep its licence and after a change of management was advertising select concerts for gentlemen only and a shooting gallery, which must be one of the more unusual pub games. A block of shops and offices was later built over the site, then in 1997 a new licence was granted to Whitbread, who converted the ground floor of the office building into the Hogshead.

For the poorer inhabitants of nineteenth century Manchester, life could be brutal and short. The city's pubs saw their share of murders and suicides and if you add to these the deaths as a result of drinking competitions and the like, there is no shortage of material for haunted pub theorists.

At the other end of the scale, the commercial hotels were a suitable environment for con men who specialised in separating the unwary from their money. A common trick, known as 'megging', was described in a newspaper article in 1841. A 'sharp' got into conversation with a 'mouth' (a man daft enough to swallow a story) on the train from Stockport and invited him for a drink at the Adelphi Hotel in Piccadilly. After two or three glasses of port they were joined by two apparent strangers, one of whom said he had been left £500 by a rich uncle. Because Manchester was such a dangerous place, he was going to wrap the money in brown paper and put it in his fob (a small, secure pocket). This he did, and he recommended that the mouth do the same with his banknotes. So the mouth took out about £40 and the sharper wrapped it in brown paper for him, then handed it back, or so the man thought. When he opened his packet later in the day there was no money. 'The race of dupes is perfectly inexhaustible,' commented the newspaper.

Theft of silverware from hotels was a recurring problem and one case in 1845 had an interesting twist. When a 'decently dressed man' was arrested after making off with teaspoons, knives and other items from the commercial room of Hayward's Hotel on Bridge Street, he apologised, saying he had drunk too much wine and didn't know what he was doing. He had just returned from Demerara, where he was a planter, and had been spending the money raised from selling his slaves. The police were suspicious and it turned out that he was a local man who made a living selling quill pens.

Some visitors lost their money to sharpers, but others virtually gave it away. In June 1860 a guest at the Wellington Hotel in Back Piccadilly (Mother Mac's, *right*) handed £160 to the man who was employed to clean the boots at the hotel and told him to take it to the bank. The 'boots' did a runner and after spending nights in hotels in Bury, Leeds and Nottingham, travelled to London for Hampton Races.

There he was identified, even though his outfit had 'undergone considerable improvement' and when he was arrested he still had £126 on him. In five days of travelling and staying in hotels he had only managed to spend £34.



Real mild gone

Speaking of Mother Mac's, the pub now sells keg mild dispensed through a Boddingtons smoothflow fount. Customers prefer it that way, apparently, saying it tastes better than the real stuff. Something sadly lacking in the taste of the traditional mild these days, perhaps?

The handpulled beers at Mother Mac's are Boddingtons bitter and Flowers IPA, although the latter's pumpclip had a large 'B' written upon it.

Rupert

So, there we are then. Yet another amber nectar show over and done with. Some people seem to have lost the plot about what these so-called beer festivals are all about, so I'd like to take this opportunity to put the record straight. First of all, what they are not: Beer festivals are not a campaigning event in their own right. They are not designed to encourage people who may not have experienced much in the way of delightful amber nectars an opportunity to sample a wide variety of high quality ales at reasonable prices. There is no intention to bring the superb range of cask conditioned ales from near and far to a wider and, as yet, unappreciative audience. Some unenlightened, dyed-in-the-wool pedants still insist on thinking in this outmoded way. How foolish!

Beer festivals are an opportunity for the Campaign to make a lot of money which it can then spend wisely elsewhere. They are also an opportunity to preach to the converted by offering discounts to CAMRA members and cheap beers to helpers. Of course, new members can be enticed into the Campaign by special offers. These will usually turn out to be future CAMRA stalwarts rather than fly-by-night one-off members. There seems to be no reason at all why a festival should not charge the same prices as hostelrys in city centre Grotley. The fact that St Allballs has criticised national beer manufacturers for ripping off the public with extortionate prices should not be seen as hypocrisy,

merely as market sense. Nor should we make any great effort to ensure that what we sell is in superb condition. After all, the pubs don't care too much.

Money making (for a good cause, of course) and an increase in membership is what it's all about, plus, it goes without saying, an unparalleled opportunity to quaff pint after pint of I-Spy amber nectars with members of a like-minded fraternity. So, get your sums right. Don't try and run a festival to break even or, with room for a margin of error, to make a small profit. Go for the big smackeroonies and put a hefty profit in your budget. That way you'll get it past the St Allballs scrutineers and be able to join that élite assemblage of glitterati who are members of the boss group.

P.S. Why has Zimbabwe-Talbot left Scousely for Grotley and not told anyone?



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

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

Sat 5 Feb, Liverpool Pubs. Train Social Trip

Tue 8 Feb 8.30pm, Oldham Beer Festival Organising Meeting, Ashton Arms, Clegg Street, Oldham

Tue 15 Feb 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Dog & Partridge, Middleton Road, Royton

Tue 29 Feb 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Cask and Feather, Drake Street, Rochdale

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

Email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

North Manchester

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

Tues 8 Feb 8pm, Social and Plaque Presentation, Eagle, Collier Street, Salford

Wed 16 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, White Lion, Worsley Road, Swinton

Wed 23 Feb, Social (Hydes beers) at the Ellesmere Bowling, Tennis & Croquet Club. Phone Stewart Revell (790 0650) to book a place. Meet in Cock Hotel, Worsley, before 8pm

Tues 29 Feb 6pm onwards, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham.

Wed 1 Mar 8pm, GBG 2001 Final Seelction (City), Olde Nelson, Chapel Street, Salford.

Wed 8 Mar 8pm, GBG 2001 Final Selection (Non-City), Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, Manchester

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.

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To join CAMRA send £14 to Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.

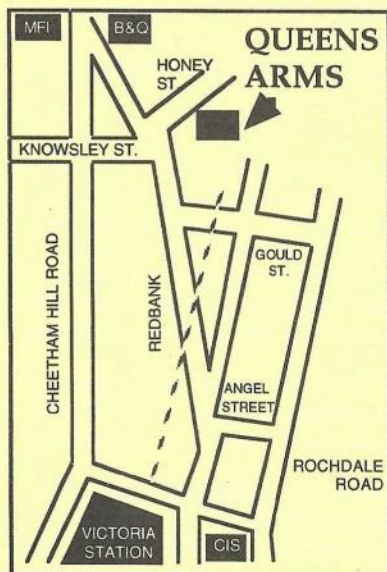
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