

30p

What's Doing

APRIL 2000



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

NEW BEER AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Bridgewater Ash Blond has joined Holts at the White House on Great Ancoats Street, Manchester, where the other beer is usually from Phoenix.

The pub has seen some redecoration of late and the 'Metrolink' colour scheme in the vault has been replaced by a sedate grey.



Mild triumph

Talk of pubs ditching cask mild in favour of smooth is all too prevalent in the Holts estate, so it's nice to see that one pub is positively thriving on sales of the real stuff. The Duke of Wellington on Weardale Road, Higher Blackley, sells far more cask mild - five barrels a week - than any other Holts pub.

Reopening in Salford

A provisional full licence has been granted to a Midlands firm for the Brown Bull on Chapel Street, Salford. The pub, next to Salford Central Station, has been closed and empty for a few years. After a £300,000 refurbishment it will reopen with the main bar downstairs, a restaurant on the ground floor and will be residential upstairs.

Big Joe's

Holts have applied for planning permission to extend the brewery, build a new caretaker's flat and convert the existing flat into offices. Moving into the big time, eh? They have also applied for permission to incorporate the empty shop next to the Railway on Lapwing Lane in Didsbury into the pub and extend both properties.

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

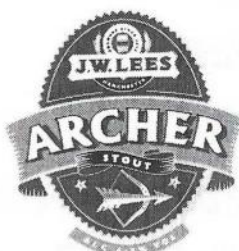
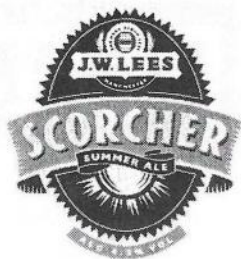
Free Chip Barms every Monday 5-6pm

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

Y2K with John Willie

This year's six seasonal beers from J W Lees range from Malted Mayhem (an explosion of tastes, geddit?) in March-April to Plum Pudding in November-December.

The 1999 Tesco Beer of the Year, modestly titled John Willie's Manchester Champion Beer, will be available in September-October.



Bar breaks 2,000

Stalybridge Buffet Bar recently served its 2,000 guest beer since reopening just over three years ago. The beer was St Peter's Well (4.2%) from the Houston Brewing Company in Renfrew. It was a popular brew and will be available again in the near future.

No Bull

The former Bull Hotel on Briscoe Lane, Newton Heath (*right*), is to be used for the sale of cars. Pity it wasn't called the Rovers Return.

Contributors to this issue:

Stewart Revell,
Roger Hall, Mark
McConachie, Phil
Stout, Daddy Bell,
Steve Smith, Dave
White, Rob Magee



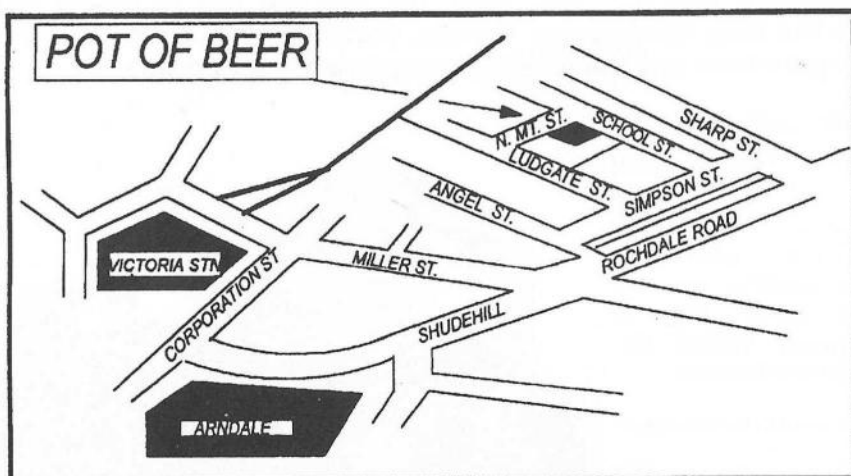
POT OF BEER

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**

Holts corner

Stewart Revell

On 3rd March a newly-formed company called Inhoco 1849 contacted Holts' shareholders and offered to buy their shares for £23 each. This was £8.55 more than the price quoted for the previous four days' trading on the stock market. Inhoco 1849 had been set up by the family members and directors of Joseph Holt plc to buy back shares and make the company secure from takeovers. There was an alternative to the cash offer: one Inhoco 1849 share (valued at £15) for each Holts share.

If the exercise is successful (and by all accounts it will be), Inhoco 1849 will then apply to change its name to the Joseph Holt Group and the brewery will no longer be listed on the stock market, which it had been since 1951.

Meanwhile, normal business continues and the free trade department is about to supply Holts beers to a selected number of outlets belonging to Avebury Taverns. The first five are:

Portway, Wythenshawe

Hat & Feathers, Mason Street, Manchester (*below*)

Clough, Blackley

The Aces, West Gorton

Land o'Cakes, Great Ancoats Street, Manchester



Saturday morning brewery visits continue until the end of May. They are on 15th April, 13th May and 27th May - telephone the brewers' office (0161 834 3285) to see if there any places left. The visits are for groups of between 12 and 15 and each participant makes a donation of £10 to Christie's. Pie and peas are served at the Derby Brewery Arms after the tour. The visits may be repeated next year, again from March to May, and Saturday mornings only.

A recent addition at the brewery is a quite impressive archway at the entrance to the yard, bearing the words 'Joseph Holt Brewery'. I wonder if they got the idea from Newton & Ridley's Brewery, as seen on Corrie a couple of years ago?

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Fest time fever

Not satisfied with just one beer festival a month, Ian Casson at the Beer House is having two - the one in early March was his most successful ever and the 'Oh no! Not another March' fest should prove another winner.



The fight is over

Chesters mild, the once famous 'fighting beer', has been taken off the Whitbread list. Its demise was hastened by a recent change in recipe/brewer - all for the worst. In a most worthy move, one former Chesters mild outlet, the Olde Nelson in Salford, is to try Tetley dark mild instead.

Marstons bitter

The demise of Marstons bitter has led to changes in a number of tied houses. The New Moston (left) will now be serving Camerons Strongarm plus a regular guest alongside Banks's bitter. OK, you lose some, you win some.

Wigan and District

Dave White

The **Black Bull**, Hardybutts, which made it into the Good Beer Guide for the first time ever this year, no longer sells cask Tetley mild, and a smoothflow font gleams malevolently near the bitter handpump. Then again, the other seven pubs in the Scholes area don't sell any real ale at all; a far cry from only a few years ago.

The **Plough & Harrow**, a former GBG entry in Up Holland, has lost its traditional Boddingtons bitter. Beware the sign outside advertising cask ales: there aren't any. Three out of the four pubs on this stretch of Ormskirk Road have gone over to gas, leaving only the **Hare & Hounds** with Greenalls bitter... hardly worth leaving the **Old Dog** for.

Further down the A577, the **Abbey Lakes Hotel** had no real ale on a recent visit, and not many customers either, for that matter. An interesting feature of the pub is the set of chequerboard tiles in the gents' loo, a reminder of its illustrious past as a Wilsons house.

Finally, the **Guardians Inn**, a keg free house on Frog Lane, Springfield, appears to be closed. Has the Saturday night karaoke been silenced forever? Let's hope so.

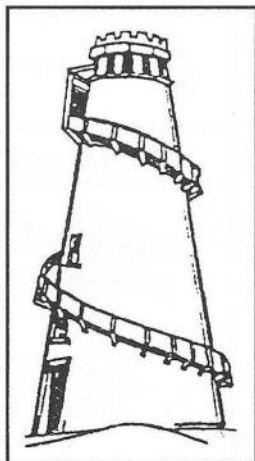
Holts Mild

At least one Holts pub has been excluded from the 2001 Good Beer Guide for serving nitrokeg. When the surveyor visited at 10pm he was served a glass of the fizzy stuff. When he asked if traditional mild was available he was told yes, but it would have to be pumped through. If nitrokeg is served automatically, it's little wonder that real mild goes unserved for seven hours. How long before they dispense with it altogether?

Frodsham Beer Festival

The eighth Frodsham Beer Festival is on 26th and 27th May and offers a selection of new brews, old favourites and farmhouse ciders. The venue is the Community Centre, Fluin Lane, and opening times are: Friday night 6 to 11pm; Saturday 12 noon to 11pm.

Tickets are £4 for all sessions (£1 refund for CAMRA members) and are available on the door (subject to fire limit) or in advance from Dave Brown, Joiners Cottage, off High Street, Frodsham WA6 7AN. Cheques payable to 'Rowlands Care'.



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)

Oh, no! Not Another March BEER FESTIVAL

Thursday 30th March - Sunday 2nd April
40+ New and Rare Beers
Festival Food at lunchtimes with an Italian Theme
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

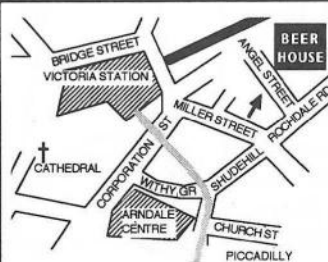
LUNCHES DAILY & EVENING MEALS 5 - 7pm (FRI ONLY)
THURS SPECIAL (5-8pm) CHOICE OF 6 CURRIES (VEG & NON-VEG) + RICE £3
SUNDAY 12-2.30pm - Giant Yorkshires with choice of meat, roast potatoes and veg
for just £3



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



Around and About

with Daddy Bell

Richard Bazen's **Bridgewater Ales** grow in quality and quantity. Of the regular brews, Navigator continues to be the most popular, while latest tastings of Delph Porter show a most appealing wineyness developing. Now these and other familiar favourites have been joined by a series of seasonal specials. I feared I had missed out on TLC, but met up with it on February 12th in the **Kings Arms** in Bloom Street: it is a fine 4% beer, ruby red or chestnut brown in hue (depending on your paint chart or clarity of vision) with plenty of hops, Cascade being well to the fore.



Inglewood Ale, a 4.1% single varietal hop (NZ Green Bullet) beer, was brewed on February 17th. I met it in the Kings Arms on March 6th: the third 'nine' was nearly exhausted after only four days on sale. The beer was a fine sparkling gold, without astringency - none of the thickness of taste often experienced with some antipodean or New World hops.

The next seasonal special, Mad Hare (4.3%) was racked off on March 6th. I first sampled it at the Kings Arms on March 11th, when it was not fully cleared. By March 15th, however, it had developed into an attractively reddish drink - not a conventional mild, perhaps (nothing like the 3.3% but full bodied and chocolatey Minotaur Mild from Milton I enjoyed in the **Crescent** on February 22nd) but an agreeable beer in its own right.

Richard Bazen has scored another two successes: indeed, many would judge Inglewood Ale to be his finest beer to date.

Bridgewater's Blondie (4.7%) continues to fly the flag for real ale in the **Albert Vaults** on Chapel Street. It has increased in price, however, to £1.30 a pint - still a bargain for such strength and flavour, but maybe at a competitive disadvantage on the same bar as Tetley Smoothflow and Milligans Mist (both £1.20).

Kelham Island, a Yorkshire brewery with a keen following this side of the Pennines, received a visit from the twin cities on January 28th, with a coach trip organised by Ian Casson at the Beer House. Now nearly ten years old, the brewery moved a few yards last year into larger premises, with a ten-barrel plant but scope for vertical expansion into a twenty-barrel one. Even so, the premises seem none too spacious for a business which aims at thirty barrels a week, brewing fine ales with Maris Otter malt and mainly American hops.

Most of the details of the evening have dissipated in the mists of time, though I do remember drinking copious quantities of excellent free beer in the atmospheric visitor centre (the original brewery), principally succumbing to Temptation while being matey with a Bete Noire and unable to resist a Pale Rider. Otherwise, the evening was memorable for the length of time it took to reach Sheffield (almost via Rotherham) and for Sal's singing on the (thankfully) swifter return journey. Our thanks go to Ian and to our generous and congenial hosts at Kelham Island.

I rarely venture far from Salford, but I was persuaded to travel by train to **Bristol** on February 4th. My companion had other business there, leaving me a few hours to explore railway installations and public houses. The former (apart from the glories of Temple Meads station) proved something of a wild goose chase, but the latter (with the aid of hastily scribbled notes from the GBG 2000) was much more rewarding.

In Temple Gate, directly opposite the station approach, and with a clear view of the station clock, is the **Reckless Engineer** (presumably in honour of the great I K Brunel himself). All you see on the street is a wide-windowed facade, part of a modern block of shops and offices, with a Holiday Inn next door. Inside is a single large room, with bare boards and a chequered ceiling, and a stage for weekend music. Only four of the eight handpumps were in use: I plumped for an agreeable dark beer, Dicky Pearce's Winter Ale (4.9%, £1.90) from Berkeley Brewing Co.

I headed thence towards the city centre, past extensive new office developments, and along Victoria Street. Two pubs here proved much too full to be comfortable: the **Shakespeare** boasts a date of 1636 and at least three handpumps, but all had their clips reversed. The nearby **Kings Head**, a Victorian pub reminiscent of the Queens Head (Tumers Vaults) in Stockport, proved almost equally impenetrable, even through its back door, which is opposite the leaning tower of the ruined Temple Church. The three handpulled beers included Courage Best and Smiles BB.

From here I turned right into Temple Street, spotting the fire station

not far ahead and at the end of the road, the closed Courage Brewery. At this point one might be so transfixed with sorrow or anger as to neglect to glance to the left and identify, across a car park, another GBG entry, **Cornubia**. This L-shaped bar was also crowded, with besuited lunchtime eaters and drinkers, but I procured a seat and a pint of Porterquack Oliver's Ale (4.3%, £1.90). As the good book says, this pub specialises in beers from West Country micro-breweries: Wickwar Rite Flanker and Tisbury Best were also available, being joined within minutes by Wickwar BOB and Oakhill Mendip Gold.

I was in haste, however, to turn right at the end of Temple Street into Counterslip, to take some photographs of the defunct George's Brewery (*below*), whose most impressive building had been transformed into the Courage Accounting Centre. I crossed St Philip's Bridge to the **Bridge Inn** at 16 Passage Street, another tiny one-roomer but with hardly a suit in sight, and with both time and space to enjoy my lunch. All three beers here were from Bath Ales: though not a tied house, the pub is owned by a partner in the brewery. The beer I chose, Bath SPA (3.7%) was the clearest, the tastiest and at £1.70 almost the cheapest of the day. The pictures in the pub are a curious selection - stills from *Reservoir Dogs* and of Marilyn Monroe and Tony Hancock.

I returned to Victoria Street, noting the late Fleece and Firkin brewery in a street to the left, crossed Bristol Bridge and turned left into Baldwin Street. On the right, at 59-63, is **The Old Fish Market**, a Fuller's Ale & Pie House, where ESB, London Pride, Chiswick Bitter and the seasonal Jack Frost were all available on handpump. I had to hurry on, through the banks and building societies quarter, to cross the wide expanse of Colston Avenue in search of the **Smiles Brewery Tap** in Colston Street. I headed too far north, but turned back and up an alleyway and steps, where the unmistakable aroma of a boiling wort wafted across my path. I just had time for a pint of Smiles



BA (their 3.3% session ale, £1.65) before retracing my steps and catching the train home.

Central Bristol, in short, is not the cheapest place to drink, but there are interesting buildings everywhere you go, including several ruined or converted churches. George's Brewery dominates its stretch of the river: one wonders what its future will be. I look forward to a return visit, with more leisure to explore and imbibe.

On March 7th, as I cycled to Eccles in nasty rain, I noticed that the **Coach & Horses** (Sam Smiths, *right*) on Eccles New Road was boarded up again. A notice said that closure was for refurbishment and that the pub would reopen shortly. Will the revamping include the return of real ale - or is such a privilege to be accorded locally only to Sam Smiths drinkers in the **Albert Edward** in Eccles or **Sinclairs** in Manchester city centre?



I managed a quick visit to the **13th Wigan Beer Festival** on St Patrick's Day. Never a scratcher's paradise, this festival nonetheless always offers good beer in good company. The highlights for me were the spicy/herby Maiden Century (4%) from Brown Cow (North Yorkshire), and the 5% Cuthbert's Ale from Durham Brewery, a beautiful pale gold beer.

Blackley closures

It is not often that you get a pub closing in Higher Blackley, but now the Pikefold (Mercury Taverns) has been boarded up. It will probably open again soon, but it is a sign that pub-going is diminishing even in the once stable suburban areas. This closure comes at the same time as rumours of closure-cum-change of use at two Victoria Avenue pubs. Allegedly the Lion & Lamb (Banks's) and the Berkshire (ScotCo?) could be sold for redevelopment as drive-thru-type establishments.

GBG 2000 *The Millennium Pub Trail*

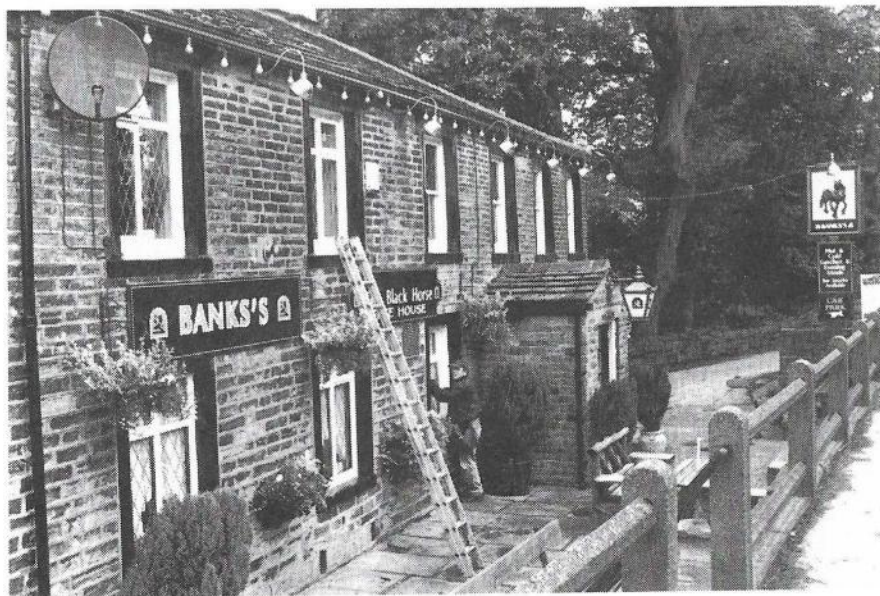
Part 2

Continuing Steve Smith and Mark McConachie's tour of Greater Manchester's Good Beer Guide pubs.

Our destination was Saddleworth and the GBG pubs there, but first a brief stop in Salford. **Ye Olde Nelson** on Chapel Street is a fine example of a Victorian drinking house. It has a multi-room layout with a sliding door to the vault and a larger, plusher lounge at the end of a corridor. The pub sells Boddingtons bitter (it's a shame that there is now no Chesters mild) and a good pint of Lees bitter. We opted for that.

Oldham next, and a call at the recently acquired Porters pub, the **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street. The full range of the brewery's ales is available, plus a traditional cider. The Ashton is not in the GBG yet, but it cannot be long before it is. Perhaps 2001? It is a handy stop before and after our wanderings, since it is next to the bus station.

When we eventually arrived at Denshaw we bypassed the excellent **Junction Inn** (Lees) owing to time restrictions and went straight to the **Black Horse** (*below*) on Oldham Road. There is a good selection of beers here; Banks's Original (the mild, which we sampled), Banks's bitter, Taylors Landlord and guests. It's a popular, three-roomed roadside inn, with a countryside feel and good food as well as good ales.



A twenty minutes' walk through narrow country lanes brought us to the **Royal Oak** (th'Heights, *below*) at Delph. This is a true country pub, some way out of the village on Broad Lane. There are three rooms, a real fire and a traditional atmosphere. The pub sells three regular handpulled ales - Boddingtons bitter, Coach House Gunpowder mild and a house beer, Royal Oak, which is brewed by Moorhouses - plus two guests. I opted for the mild, my colleague going for one of the guests from Beartown.

After another twenty minutes' journey, on foot and by local bus, we arrived in Dobcross. Up by the Square is the **Swan** (*right*), also known as the 'Top House' and formerly the Kings Head, as one of the window panes testifies. This is a regular outlet for Phoenix Brewery beers (Porter and Oak Best Bitter were tried), plus the all-too-rare Theakstons mild and Moorhouses Pendle Witch (probably a guest). The Swan has three rooms (the games room has had its pool table removed of late), uneven stone floors and creaking floorboards.

It was a short stroll to another GBG entry, the **Navigation** on Wool Road, a smartly opened-out Banks's house displaying much brass band memorabilia. It is a popular haunt, close to the soon-to-be fully restored Huddersfield Narrow Canal. The beers were Original, Bitter, Camerons bitter and one we hadn't seen before, Banks's Passion (4.5%, £1.80), so we tried this before returning to Oldham.

An excursion through Bury to celebrate the opening of Dave Porter's latest acquisition, the **Arthur Inn** on Bolton Road, gave us the





opportunity to visit the **Dusty Miller** on Crostons Road. This Moorhouses pub offers guest beers as well as their own excellent range. It is a well established outlet with two comfortable rooms and a small outer area. A substantial amount of Black Cat mild - a dark, satisfying brew - was consumed here.

We returned through Heywood and visited the **Wishing Well**, a multi-roomed free house just off the town centre. This thriving establishment is an outlet for Moorhouses beers, including the pleasant house beer, Millersbrook, and beer from the nearby Phoenix Brewery.

Passing through Swinton, we had the opportunity to visit Robinsons' **White Lion**, set back at the confluence of the Chorley and Manchester Roads. Plenty of buses run to here from the city and there's a conveniently placed bus stop. Both Best and Old Stockport bitters are available, along with Hatters mild. The pub has a split-level interior; a comfortable front lounge bar, a traditional vault and another lounge to the rear.

Our monthly foray ended with a promised return to the **Smithfield** on Swan Street in Manchester. There were some interesting guest beers from the small Orchard Brewery stable - Mulligan Stew, a light coloured bitter, and the stronger, darker Blanket Lifter. We look forward to more interesting brews from this Lincolnshire micro.

Pints and Pin-tables

What makes a good pub? For Dillan Bizwarp, it's a number of things, including good beer, a friendly atmosphere and a good pin-ball machine...

Forget pool, table football, darts, video games and fruit machines. Here's a guide to some of the best kept ales in and around the city and some great pin-ball games to enjoy whilst you drink them:

The **Kings Arms**, Bloom Street, Salford, sells two Bridgewater beers, plus four or so others. The game is Medieval Madness, my personal all-time favourite.

The **Queens Arms**, Honey Street, Cheetham, also has Medieval Madness (carefully nurtured by landlord Dave), complemented by Taylors and Phoenix beers, plus a handful of others. Check out the jukebox, too.

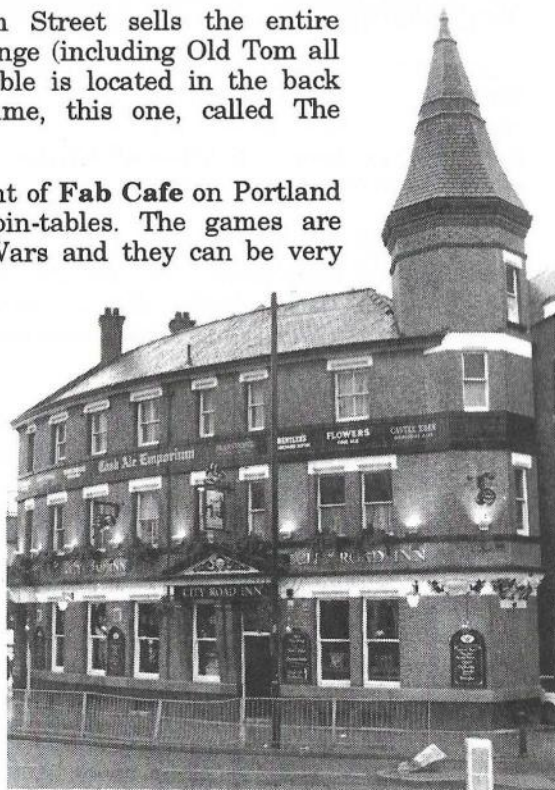
Across the valley is the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road - a free house with its own microbrewery. All the Marble beers are usually on sale and the game, Scared Stiff, is good fun, too.

The **Castle** on Oldham Street sells the entire Robinsons seven-beer range (including Old Tom all year round). The pin-table is located in the back room. A mysterious game, this one, called The Shadow.

In the funky environment of **Fab Cafe** on Portland Street there are two pin-tables. The games are Doctor Who and Star Wars and they can be very difficult to play because it is so dark inside the pub. The real ale is the latest Hydes seasonal or Jekylls Gold.

The **City Road Inn** on Albion Street is a fairly rustic affair offering City Road Ale and Old Speckled Hen. The table is a cracker - Attack From Mars.

Should I find any more pubs with pin-tables, I'll let WD know. Game over.



Out of Town

Stalybridge

Stalybridge is fourteen minutes from Piccadilly or Victoria Stations and trains run every hour.

Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar

As you leave the train, the Buffet Bar is on the platform to the left. The building dates from 1885, when the station was extended for the Great Central and London & North Western Railway Companies. In recent times the bar has been famous for its folk concerts, black peas and regular appearances in the Good Beer Guide.

It closed in May 1996 but reopened in the December after being bought by John Hesketh. The original bar and conservatory were extended into the former ladies' waiting room and toilets were installed - saving a long walk to the far end of the platform. The restoration has received awards from CAMRA and English Heritage, Ian Allan and the Manchester Civic Society.

The three regular beers - Boddingtons bitter, Flowers IPA and Wadworth 6X - are supplemented by five guests, and there have been 2,000 of these in just over three years. The bar has an extensive range of bottled Belgian and German beers and regular beer festivals are held.

Q

From the station, go under the bridge and the first building you come to is the Q. The building dates from the end of the eighteenth century and for many years was used as a shop. It was first licensed in 1983 as the Bar du Gare, then ten years later it was taken over by David Connor, who changed the name to Q, the name of an old Stalybridge pub which closed in 1934. Q is in the Guinness Book of Records for having the shortest pub name in the UK. In 1996 the bar was extended into the barber's shop next door and a beer garden was added in 1997.

The beers are Hydes bitter, Marstons bitter, Taylors Landlord, Exmoor Gold, Green King Abbot, plus guests.



White House

The White House, one of Stalybridge's oldest buildings, is a two minute walk down Market Street from the Q. This was first licensed by a gentleman called John Heap in the 1820s and for years was known as Heap's Vaults. Since then, several breweries have had an interest in the pub, including J W Lees and, in the 1950s, Cunningham's of Warrington. In the 1970s it was renamed the Laughing Cavalier, then in 1986 it was bought by David Connor, who changed the name back to the White House. The beers are Hydes bitter, Marstons bitter, Taylors Landlord, Exmoor Gold, plus guests.



Bridge Inn

The Bridge Inn is a short walk down the street at the side of the White House. David Connor is involved in this one, too, as part owner with Gordon Howarth. The pub was built by Wilsons Brewery in the 1890s, but closed in 1934. The building was used by a firm of engineers' suppliers until 1995 and it was reopened as a pub in 1998. It doesn't open until 4.00pm and concentrates more on the food side, providing evening meals and a non-smoking area. The beers are Hydes bitter, Marstons bitter, Taylors Landlord, Exmoor Gold, plus guests.



Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.117

Hare and Hounds

86 Block Lane, Chadderton

The Hare and Hounds was built 150 years ago by a local farmer called George Stansfield. He obtained a licence to sell beer about 1855, but he didn't get off to a good start with the authorities because the following year he was fined ten shillings after a passing policeman found six men drinking in his brewhouse during prohibited hours.

The police record would weigh against any application George made for a full licence and this may have been the reason he let the beerhouse to James Chadwick a few years later. At the 1859 licensing sessions Mr Chadwick's solicitor applied for the licence, saying that the house measured 12 yards by 11 yards, there were four rooms downstairs but only two upstairs. The full licence was granted providing an extra bedroom was built.

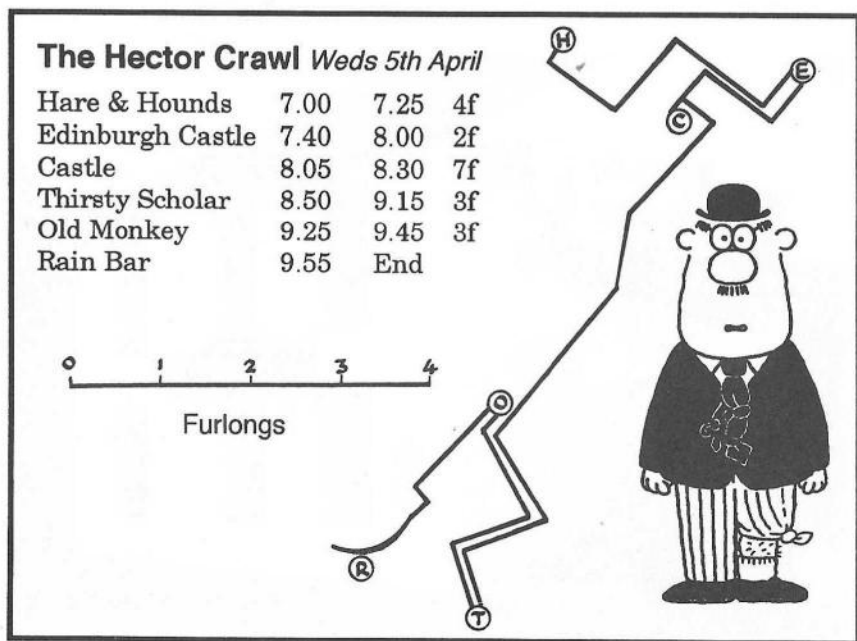
With the licence safely in his hands, James Chadwick may have let his standards drop a bit - the following year he picked up a fine for selling beer at 11.30pm on a Sunday. The next tenant at the Hare and Hounds was Ralph Meadowcroft and he also gained a police record, to the extent that his licence was suspended for a month in 1868. He left and the licence was transferred to Joseph Stansfield, a member of the farming family and probably George's son. The Stansfields continued to run the Hare and Hounds until the 1880s and their name still survives in nearby Stansfield Street.



In 1890 the Hare and Hounds was described as being in moderate condition, able to provide meals for up to six persons and having stabling for three horses. By this time there was a bowling green at the back of Stansfield Street and for the more energetic there was a football ground behind the old Blackridings hamlet, now part of Block Lane. At one time this was known as 'the Track', the venue for footraces and wrestling. The ground was used by Werneth Rugby Club, which was suspended from the League in 1890 for professionalism and disbanded about 1905, and by the Oldham club.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Hare and Hounds was being run by Edward Hughes. His widow, Sarah, took over in 1905, married a Mr Whitehead two years later and continued to run the pub until 1915. Brewers J W Lees bought the property during this period. George Stansfield's brewhouse was by this time long disused, since Boddingtons of Manchester had been supplying the ale before Lees arrived on the scene.

I first called in for a pint at the Hare and Hounds in 1977 and I was just in time to see the old pub because a year later the brewery began to modernise and rebuild. The small, separate rooms were replaced by a large, comfortable lounge and spacious games room. Ron Smith was then the licensee and in 1981 he moved to the Black Swan in Oldham. Today the Hare and Hounds is being run by Peter O'Neill, who until recently was at the Horton Arms, Street Bridge.



Letters

The Sound of Music


Sir - Music in pubs always seems to be a talking point. Now I like a bit of music in the background as it encourages people to chat and it gets rid of that awful silence you get in some pubs. Some might say that a good pub doesn't need background music, and I've seen licensees abused by protesters who like listening to their own bellowing voices after the music has been turned off. This is followed by an exit of customers who have been bored by Mr Foghorn. Mind you, there is nothing worse than shouting over high decibels - but you do have a choice and can vote with your feet. Landlords have to look after everybody's needs.

Graeme Tonge

Drabs

Sir - I called in at the Derby Brewery Arms a few weeks ago, and cask mild was not on sale. I've tried to sup some pretty ropery pints of Drabs dark over the past year or so. Is nobody drinking the stuff any more?

Dave White



the 14th CAMRA

BEER FESTIVAL OLDHAM

28th & 29th April 2000
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Friday 12noon - 3pm	50p
Friday 5pm - 11pm	£2
Saturday 12noon - 4pm	£1
Saturday 6pm - 11pm	£2

CAMRA members free at all times

Rupert

'I've got a bazzing wheeze, Daddy,' said the young Mr Drab as he entered his father's office. 'Yes, Perry,' the increasingly frail Drab senior responded, 'What is it?' 'Well,' the young dynamo went on, 'why don't we set up another company to buy all our shares and I can be boss and you can be honorary life president? We could call it JoCo - Jo for Josiah in memory of our founder, and Co for company. That way we could encourage people to sell their shares at a premium which they would probably want to do, given the poor year we've had, and we could buy them.'

It's only fair that we should do this. After all, it's our fault that we've not done very well. I've been held back from opening fun pubs and going for the pink pound, but that's another matter. Anyway, it's not as though our tied estate is undervalued or anything like that. Or, indeed, that we might be susceptible to a takeover bid and I'd want to cash in my chips and retire to the Bahamas. No, not at all. The JoCo outfit guarantees the continued involvement of the Drab family for yet another generation. We'll have the incentive to grow our brands aggressively, develop our properties and give that

Wetherspoon outfit a run for its money. It's absolutely imperative that we take action now to ensure the future independence of the Crown Brewery and the Drab name. I've talked to Donwans, our stockbrokers and our accountants and everything's fine and dandy, but before we go ahead, Daddy, we need your agreement. I hope everything's clear. What do you think?"

'Well,' Ebenezer replied, replacing his teeth and reading from the Ronald Reagan autocue prompt sheets, which Perry had thoughtfully provided, "That's as



clear as crystal. I applaud your foresightedness in safeguarding the family name in such a transparent way. I think you should go ahead straight away, and tell all the shareholders what we want to do. I seem to have smudged my

signature with the whipped cream walnut. Never mind.'

Moments later, young Perry was back in his office and on the telephone to Horace Donwan. 'Yes,' he triumphed, 'we've got the old feller's agreement. Once this is sorted we'll look into that other idea of mine, Drab dot com.'

Drabs shareholders will no doubt react with undiluted glee.

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 4 April 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Wishing Well, York Street, Heywood

Tue 11 April 8.30pm, Oldham Beer Festival Organising Meeting, Ashton Arms, Clegg Street, Oldham

Thurs 13 April, Moorhouses & Leyden Breweries. Evening Coach Social

Tue 18 April 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Harbord Harbord, Market Place, Middleton

Tue 25 April 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Cask and Feather, Drake Street, Rochdale

Fri 28 - Sat 29 April, Oldham Beer Festival, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Oldham Centre

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

Email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

North Manchester

Wed 5 April, Hector Crawl - *see elsewhere in this issue.*

Tues 11 April 8pm, Morning Star, Manchester Road, Wardley

Weds 19 April 8pm, Branch Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester

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

Weds 26 April, Charlestown/Pendleton/New Windsor Crawl. Old House at Home, Whit Lane, 7pm; Woolpack, Belvedere Road, 8.30pm; finish at Crescent.

Weds 3 May 8pm, Social, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford.

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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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'.

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

Dave and Sue welcome you to

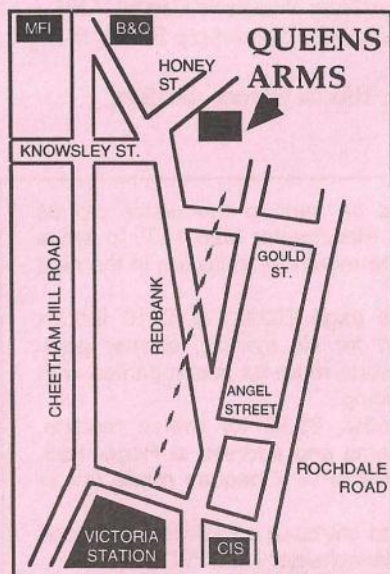
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