

30p

What's Doing

JANUARY 2001



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

MANCHESTER'S ABBEY HABIT



Manchester got its first Old Monk outlet in mid-November. It is called the Old Monk (naturally) and is on Lloyd Street, across from the back door of the Rising Sun and next to the Old Nags Head. The company, which has about forty pubs throughout the country, is owned by the brother of J D Wetherspoon entrepreneur Tim Martin.

The Old Monk is a spacious affair, with bars on two levels and a basement function room. The decor is mainly deep red with a few artworks - all very relaxed. The real ales are Boddies and Theakstons XB, with a third pump for Landlord, Old Speckled Hen, Directors or Black Sheep beers.

Prices are cheap for the area (£1.40 for Boddies). Food is available all day, with a menu similar to JDW pubs.



**B
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CAMRA 2001 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

Festival Open: (hours to be confirmed)

Thursday 18 January

5.30 - 10.30pm,

Friday 19 January,

12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm

Saturday 20 January

12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm

Admission:

£2 Thurs Eve, £3 Fri Eve,

£1 Sat Eve, £2 Lunchtimes

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£1 Thurs & Fri Eve



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Altrincham Brewery

The first brew was available just before Christmas and Cheshire Cat Ales are now on sale at the Old Market Tavern in Altrincham. The two beers are Agent "X", a 4.1% bitter, and Coal Porter at 4.8%.

Boggart Hole Brews

The ales that will be produced at Mark Dade's new Boggart Hole Clough Brewery (WD last month) now have names: Boggart Bitter 3.8%, Angel Hill 4.2% (named after a Clough landmark) and The Dark Side 4.4%. The last named is expected to be premièred at the National Winter Ales Festival at Castlefield this month.



Hat & Feathers

Brian and Julie Dyson took over at the Hat & Feathers on Mason Street (off Swan Street) in Manchester last year. Well kept Cains mild and Holts bitter are on handpump and guest beers will be added to bring the pub into the Northern Quarter real ale circuit.

Bass in Bolton

The new Bass outlet in the former Whitehead's store in Bolton (WD last month) will be one of their 'Goose' chain of pubs.

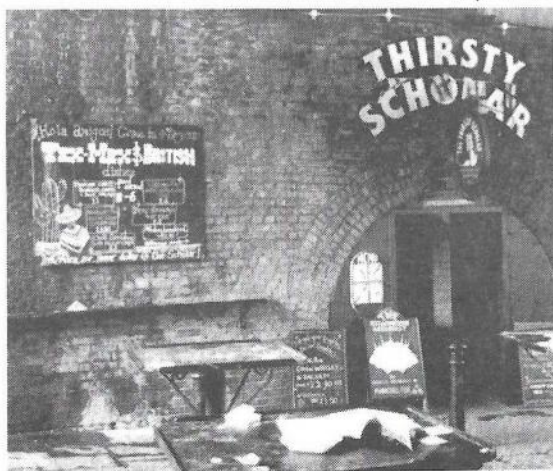
In the city

with Trotter

It had been quite a while since I visited Manchester, so I took the train to Oxford Road Station and headed down the steps to the **Salisbury Ale House**. Here I sampled Adnams Fisherman, a newish, 4.5% dark beer with a chocolate malt taste, and Old Peculier. The latter is one of the permanent ales, along with Directors and another from Theakstons. Among the forthcoming ales listed on the blackboard were Hop Back Thunderstorm, Morrells Graduate and Woods Bomber County. The interior of the Salisbury has been opened up and it has a stone floor, mostly exposed brickwork and minimal seating. It is a pub for standing, enjoying a few beers and headbanging to the rock CD jukebox.



Across the cobbles, which no doubt have a preservation order on them, is the **Thirsty Scholar**, which I recall was once named Arches. Here I tried two ales by Coach House - Three Kings Xmas Ale (6%) and Countdown (4.7%). Other ales available in this pub set in a railway arch were Taylors Landlord and Boddies.



My last pub was the **Old Garratt** on Princess Street. The central bar has nine handpumps, but the only available beers were Directors, Everards Tiger and a house beer - Old Garratt Ale (3.8%). The pub has a traditional style, bare wood floors and two snug-type areas, and is worth a visit.

Wigan and district

Dave White

In July, I reported that the **Scarisbrick Arms** in Wroughtington had been blitzed and transformed into the **Mulberry Tree**. Less than a mile away, on Mossy Lea Road the **Hinds Head** has had a similar going-over, and has emerged as **Chatterley's**. Unlike the Mulberry Tree, however, real ale has not survived the changes. This, and a general reduction in the range of beers in other hostelrys, means that a crawl of the Wroughtington-Shevington Moor area is not the joy it once was.

Nevertheless, there are worse places to go to on a night out. The centre of Ashton-in-Makerfield is now a beer desert, apart from J D Wetherspoon's **Sir Thomas Gerard**. On my last visit to the 'Tom & Jerry' the mild was past its best and two blokes almost came to blows. The ten-minute walk to the **Bay Horse** on Warrington Road is worth the effort.

News in brief. There have been signs of life at the long-closed keg emporium, the **Inn Between**, Appley Lane South, Appley Bridge. Over in Springfield, that bastion of fizz known as the **Guardians** on Frog Lane has had a lick of paint (most of it, anyway) and could open its doors again soon. You read it here first.

Weihnachten Crackers

Paul Roberts

Although the German Christmas Market in St Ann's Square offered only Glühwein to wash down the bratwurst, the International Market in Albert Square featured a stall selling draught Dessau pils from the town of the same name in the former East Germany. Bodo from Dessau and Wolfgang from Helmstedt gave a very warm welcome to all visitors. Bratwurst was also on sale at £1.50 each and this helped to soak up the delicious pils.

The beer was on sale for the four-week duration of the market at only £1 for a 0.4 litre glass. That equates to £1.40 a pint, but when the very generous over-measures were taken into account, the price was more like £1.25 a pint. The beer was served using the usual German method of minimum pressure - why can't Manchester pubs selling German beer do the same? What is the point of selling real Bitburger, Krombacher, etc, when it is ruined by massive CO2 pressure?

Bigger Lion

Now that work on the extension at Robinsons' White Lion in Swinton has been completed, the pub has a large, well-appointed kitchen and a new small public room between the kitchen and the bar. An area at the rear of the pub has been fenced off from the car park and will form a beer garden as soon as the weather is warm enough for outdoor drinking.

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SATURDAY	27th Jan	12 noon - 4.00 p.m.	£3.00
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Out and about

with Daddy Bell

The **Jollies** on Oldfield Road in Salford is closed and boarded. Formerly titled the St Philips Hotel, it has recently been open erratically, perhaps the least successful of J W Lees' houses. My main memory of the pub is as the venue for a post-christening trans-sexual disco.

Its closure means that the ancient highway of Oldfield Road now shares the dubious distinction of its parallel thoroughfare, Cross Lane, as a real ale free zone. The word on the street is that the Jollies is another casualty of the wholesale redevelopment of the area; but there is a suggestion that J W Lees may be looking to secure a new outlet in or near the impending Snow World complex.



The photo shows the St Philips Hotel in the 1960s, when it was a Wilsons house. It had been known as the Jollies (or Jolley's) for years, ever since Edward Jolley was the landlord. The nickname appears in some of those 'Inn Signs and their Meanings' books, whose authors believed that it derived from Jolly Jack Tars who came to the pub from Salford Docks in ye olden days. The Prince of Wales ('Little's') on the left of the photograph is now Chung's chippy.

The **Stowell Spire** on Eccles New Road is advertised as a 'business opportunity' by the Union Pub Company (ie Banks's/W&D). Does this offer the hope of selling something other than the least wonderful of West Midlands beers? Bathams or Holdens would be more than acceptable replacements.

I am rightly upbraided for highlighting the closure or shortcomings of fairly nondescript pubs, while neglecting the continuing progress of others which are trying to secure their future in difficult trading circumstances. In the 2001 Good Beer Guide, the **Wellington** on Church Street, Eccles, receives a well-deserved 'try also' mention. Holts have undertaken a refurbishment of the pub in the past year: the front has not received as thorough a remodelling as the Old Bulls Head nearby, but the interior has been greatly improved.



A green colour scheme predominates in the split-level lounge, which seems more spacious than before, while the appropriately plainer vault is decorated in red. Both mild and bitter can be found in good form, and the staff make a point of asking whether traditional or smooth mild is preferred. There are three pool teams, and one darts team with the prospect of a further two in the new year. For those who like a change from beer, a selection of cocktails is now available. Dave and Jane have worked hard for over two years to build up trade and to realise the pub's potential. I can vouch for the spotlessness of the extensive cellar and for the quality of the beer.

What makes a good pub? Here's a clue from my recent experience. It was in a North Western maritime town, with a few minutes to spare before my train. The town's sole entry in the GBG was close by, so I hastened towards it. I scarcely expected the pub to be open all permitted hours, and it was well after 3.00pm. The front door was

shut, but I pushed it open. The lights were out in the bar area, but sitting to the left of the door were an old lady, a middle-aged man and a young lad. I apologised for disturbing them, but they insisted that, contrary to appearances, a drink was to be had and I was duly served and invited to stay as long as I wished.

The old lady turned out to be the landlady: now 85, she had lived her whole life in the pub. Goodness knows how long the pub will last. It has little passing trade and the bustle of the docks is a distant memory. Another pub, not too far away, the Sailors Return, is now permanently closed, presumably for lack of returning sailors, and others have clearly seen better days. But a pub which stays open, just on the off-chance that a visiting stranger may pop in, is a pub which deserves to survive and to be celebrated.

New guide

The 2001 Central Manchester guide is out this month. Copies will be on sale at the Winter Ales Festival.

Gone but not forgotten

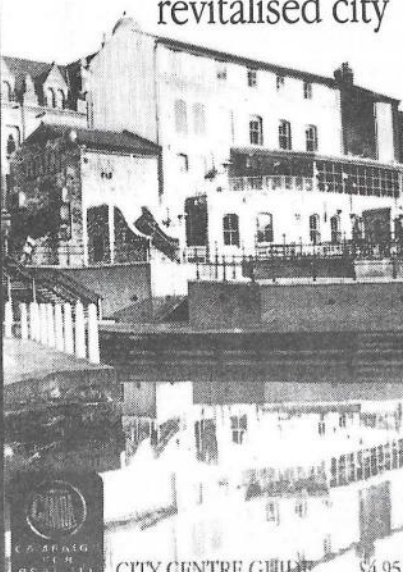
Thwaites opened their new Lord Nelson at Ringley in December. The famous old village pub featured in the Good Beer Guide for many years. It was in a conservation area, but only the front wall has been conserved and the new Nelson is just one more of those out-of-town pub/restaurants.

Watling Street sell-off

Yates's premier pub division, Watling Street Inns, has been sold to Midlands brewer Hardys & Hansons. This should mean the appearance of their Kimberley beers in pubs such as the John Gilbert at Worsley and the Kings Ransom at Sale. The John Gilbert sells a variety of real ales at present, but what will become of this arrangement remains to be seen.

MANCHESTER

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CITY CENTRE GUIDE \$4.95

Contributors to this issue: Mark McConachie, Rob Magee, Roy Bullock, Paul Roberts, Pete Cash, Steve Smith, Mike Goode, Paul Warbrick, Roger Hall, Dave White

Badge Brewing

Beers bearing the names of defunct breweries continue to appear on the market. Leo King provides a list of operating breweries which go in for this dubious practice...

Tetley of Leeds brew Walkers (ex-Warrington, 60 miles away) and Greenalls (also Warrington). It is ironic that in the Tetley-Walker days, Tetleys beers were brewed in Warrington alongside the Walkers. Tetleys also brew Ansells (Birmingham, 130 miles away), Friary Meux (Guildford, Surrey, 212 miles away - wow!), Benskins (Watford, Herts, 186 miles away) and Gilmours (a Leeds brewery which closed many years ago).

Everards of Leicester brew Chesters (ex-Manchester, 87 miles away). Chesters is also brewed at **Burtonwood Brewery**, which produces Higsons (ex-Liverpool), Oldham Brewery beer and Mitchells (ex-Lancaster, 70 miles away). Burtonwood continue to sell Almonds, named after a brewery in Standish which they took over in the 1960s.

Gales of Horndean, Hampshire, brew Brickwoods (ex-Portsmouth) and Wethereds (Marlow, Bucks, 49 miles away). **Ushers** of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, brew Gibbs Mew (ex-Salisbury) and **Eldridge Pope** of Dorchester brew Morrells (ex-Oxford, 81 miles away). **Bass** of Burton on Trent brew Stones, a beer which originally came from



Sheffield, a city which produced some really great beers. Bass once experimented with a keg Cornbrook Bitter, which was not a patch on the original Manchester beer.

Robinsons of Stockport brew **Hartleys** (ex-Ulverston, 93 miles away), whilst **Boddingtons** in Manchester produce Whitbread beers. Whitbread have had no London brewery for years. Boddingtons have also brewed Oldham Brewery beers, Higsons and Flowers, named after a long-closed brewery in Stratford-on-Avon. Boddingtons once brought out a bitter called **Clarkes**, named after a brewery they took over years ago.

When the Carlisle State Management Brewery closed, **Greenalls** acquired some of the pubs and replaced the reasonably priced ales with a keg bitter which they called Local Bitter. Local? Warrington is 132 miles from Carlisle!

Once a brewery has been closed, the decent thing to do would be to terminate the beers and stop kidding the drinkers. I have no idea where Wilsons and Websters beers are brewed these days. Maybe somewhere between Dover, Dorchester, Dudley, Darwen, Doncaster, Droylsden and Dundee - who knows?

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Now and Then

Rob Magee

No.120

Cotton Tree

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The photograph below shows a group of customers outside the Cotton Tree, a Wilsons pub which stood on Huddersfield Road, Waterhead Mill. The name over the door is that of Fred Schofield, who was landlord from 1910 until 1923. The pub faced Howard Street and was one of four at Waterhead Mill: the Cotton Tree, Coach & Horses and George & Dragon were on the New Road and the Bulls Head was on the Old Road in Mill Bottom.

The Cotton Tree was opened by William Buckley in 1823, it occupied an area of 207 square yards and there was a brewhouse of 18 square yards. Unfortunately trade doesn't seem to have been too good, since several tenants came and went after only a few years at the pub. John Buckley stayed for six years, and he got into trouble on Sunday December 13th (unlucky for some) 1857. He was serving a man with half a gallon of beer at 1.30am when a policeman knocked on the door. Mr Buckley refused to let him in and the magistrates took a dim view, handing out a fine of ten shillings.

Wilsons Brewery bought the Cotton Tree in 1893 and they must have got it cheap, if the following year's report is anything to go by. The house was described as being in an unsafe condition; the cellar walls and flooring were giving way and the old brewhouse was dilapidated. The pub had three drinking rooms and two bedrooms, but no bathroom and no overnight accommodation, no stables and the yard was not enclosed.

The brewery evidently spent some money on the Cotton Tree, since it survived for another seventy-six years. The pub closed on 17th December 1970 and was pulled down for redevelopment.



Sons of the Desert

Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar is the new home of the Blotto Tent, the Laurel and Hardy film club for the Tameside area. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month and the next is on 10th January. New members welcome. For further information contact Peter Brodie on 0161 339 7355.



Oliver Hardy Heavy Bitter and Stan Laurel Light Ale are produced for the society by the Beer Engine at Wigan.

Malt & Hops revived

The Malt & Hops Bar on Bradshawgate in Bolton reopened on 9th December selling Hancocks HB, Pedigree, Adnams bitter and two from Brakspear - bitter and O be Joyful, a seasonal ale. It is expected that there will be three permanent and three guest ales.

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Beer Garden

GBG 2000 - The Millennium Trail

Part Eleven

Steve Smith and Mark McConachie's penultimate perambulation began with a visit to the Rochdale area...

About two miles from the centre of Rochdale, on the Bolton Road at Marland, is the **Success to the Plough**, a brick-fronted Lees house. There are two rooms, one a spacious lounge with arched alcoves and presided over by a Samoyed dog; the other room is a vault to the rear. The beers are GB mild, bitter and the occasional seasonal.



Continuing through to Heywood, there is a GBG 'try also' entry here - the extremely lively **Engineers Arms** on Aspinall Street. From the outside, an ordinary pub on an ordinary street, but inside it is a popular, brightly-lit affair, with an opened-out lounge and a compact vault. Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter is the real ale.

To Little Lever next (change of bus required at Bury) and the imposing **Queen Anne Hotel**, set back from High Street. This attractive double-fronted Thwaites house still has many original



features, including etched windows, entrance hall and staircase. The separate tap room contains a collection of Laurel and Hardy figures. The real ale is Thwaites bitter.

A journey to Farnworth took us to the **Clock Face** (actually in neighbouring Kearsley), another 'try also' entry. There is a working clock outside and inside there are three rooms, a vault and two lounge areas. This is a no-nonsense traditional boozer and the beers are Tetley and Holts bitters.

Down into Salford next, and the **Union Tavern** on Liverpool Street, a small, homely and welcoming pub. The beers are Holts mild and bitter. Back on the main A6, near the university, is the **Crescent**, an ale house of some repute. There is a formidable range of beers, mostly from the independent micros, and a house beer, Son of Crescent, from Titanic Brewery. There is usually a mild and sometimes a stout on offer. The pub has a front bar room area and a quieter back room populated by students and real ale aficionados.

The next outing began with a train to Daisy Hill and the **Rose Hill Tavern** (aka the 'Bug') on Leigh Road, next to the station. This grand building has been opened out to provide a games room to the left, bar and lounge area to the right. It is a Holts pub and the beers are the usual mild and bitter.

Daisy Hill is almost a suburb of Westhoughton, so that's where we



headed next, using the S40 bus. On Market Street, by the Town Hall, is the **White Lion**, an evocative Holts pub in their true style, 'oozing with boozing'. The low, multi-room building offers good mild and bitter in classic surroundings, although the piped music can be a bit obtrusive.

The S16 took us out of the town centre and into the neighbouring area of Wingates for the **Waggon & Horses** on Chorley Road, from where there are good views across the valley towards the Reebok Stadium and Middlebrook. The regular beers are Burtonwood bitter and one from Bank Top (Fred's Cap). The building's interior is 'brewer's baronial': cross-membered ceilings, scenes depicted on stained glass windows, inglenook fireplace, neo-gothic archways and adzed woodcarving. The conservatory extension does not detract from this. The Waggon & Horses is only a 'try also' entry in the GBG, but it was undoubtedly the best pub of the night.

Journeying through Salford once again, we made for the **Welcome Inn** on Robert Hall Street. It is on the Ordsall estate and is similar to other former Wilsons houses which were built in the 1970s to serve local communities. The Welcome was acquired by Lees and is equally welcoming inside, with a spacious lounge and back room vault. GB mild and bitter are the beers.

Once again combining bus and rail travel, our next tour took in some



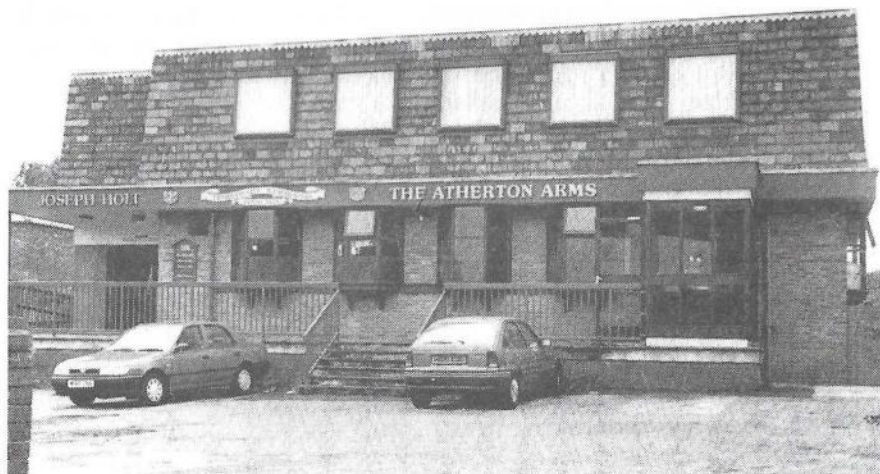
town and country hostelries. The 26 bus from Manchester dropped us off at our starting point, the **Cart & Horses** on Manchester Road, Astley. This is another of Joey Holt's grand drinking emporiums, with a red-brick exterior, skyboards and original etched windows. There are three rooms - a traditional vault, lounge and raised no-smoking area. The beers are Holts mild and bitter.

A short bus ride into Tyldesley took us to another pub selling Holts. The bitter is £1.25 a pint in the **Half Moon** on Elliot Street, a pub which was in the throes of a refurbishment.

More buses and more Holts, but first a Hydes pub on Wigan Road in Atherton. The **Royal** has a spacious interior, with a one-time billiard room now given over to pool. Some neat wooden surrounds have been retained in the modified lounge. Anvil Light and Bitter can be consumed in the shadow of a giant inflatable football referee, complete with red card. The **Wheatsheaf** on Market Street has unique (for this area at least) spring-return hinged doors. Reminders of past times prevail in two original front parlours (one no-smoking) and a bar area with television. Lees GB Mild and Bitter are the beers.

Where else to finish but the **Atherton Arms**? This is on Tyldesley Road and has excellent Holts mild and bitter in another of Joey's conversions. It is a former Labour Club, with large lounge and full-size snooker table and pool table in the back room.

Finally for this month, we boarded the meandering 151 bus which goes along Belgrave Road in New Moston, passing a Marstons GBG pub, the **New Moston**. It is a comfortable retreat, catering for a mature clientele and selling Marstons bitter and Camerons Creamy on handpump.



Rupert

It was Christmas Eve in Wedgie's and as I returned with another round of foaming Drabs, Royal passed me Bogbrush's latest Yuletide newsletter. 'You'll probably appreciate this, Roop,' he said. 'I've never read such a load of banal, self-indulgent claptrap in my life. Alzheimer's must set in early in Scousely.' I found it strange that Royal and the televisual divorcé should not meet intellectually. After all, they share the same profession of inflicting their perverse prejudices on the gullible young.

I found Bogbrush's reflections and jottings fascinating, the more so as the same missive must have gone to some very different audiences. How riveting it was to read of his health problems and his favourite radio programme. Royal can be so insensitive at times. Even Bunty and Fiona were impressed. Fiona said that it was much more interesting than the lifestyle columns in the Sunday papers and snatched it off me, saying that she would send it off to be published in *Private Eye* or *Trainspotters' Journal*. I should think so.

After the celebrations of Yule and the New Year we used to face the

long drawn-out gloom of January and February with little to amuse us. Now, however, we have the very wonderful Grotley amber nectar show to lighten those dark nights. Like-minded aficionados of living beer will be able to enjoy an excellent range of foaming ales, away from the perils of Smokeley. With the disappearance and marginalisation of so many time-served stalwarts of the Campaign, it's surprising that Grotley can muster sufficient helpers to make a go of it. How did we ever manage without the mega-talents of Nora Tackler? And what on earth will security be like without the professional touch of Stasi-trained Duke?

It's just a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. To be able to wander about, sipping halves of winter ale and chatting amiably with long-lost acquaintances is an opportunity not to be missed. I'm reliably informed that a new edition of that excellent informative tome, the Grotley amber nectar imbibers' vademecum, will be on sale. Be there; buy it; chat; drink.

Finally, I would like to bring millennial greetings to all pedants, some of whom are possibly atheists.

Beer seminar

CAMRA is holding a Beer Festival Workshop in Manchester on 20th January, during the weekend of the National Winter Ales Festival. Subjects to be covered include beer quality, stewarding and security, publicity, health and safety, finance and beer ordering. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Peter Bridle on 0117 9248894.

Branch Diary

North Manchester

Wed 3 Jan 8pm, Social,
Smithfield Hotel, Swan Street,
Manchester

Weds 10th Jan - Regional Meeting - see above

Mon to Mon 15th-22nd Jan. Setting up, opening (18th-20th) and taking down of National Winter Ales Festival, Upper Campfield Market Hall, Liverpool Road. Social in White Lion on Wednesday evening (17th).

Wed 24 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester

Wed 31st Jan, Irlams o'th'Height crawl, Waggon & Horses 7.30pm, Red Lion 8pm, Wellington 9pm

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

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

email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

Wigan

Wed 17 Jan 8pm, Branch meeting, Robin Hood, Sandy Lane, Orrell

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 426464 (w), 427595 (h)

email john@misltd.co.uk

South East Lancs

Thur 4 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting & Social, Atherton Arms, Atherton.

Contact: Mike Thomas 01942 817335

Bolton

Sat 13th Jan, Trip to Liverpool to visit the Head of Steam and tour of selected pubs. Meet at Bolton Station for 11.02 train.

WHAT'S DOING contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stoneclough, Raddcliffe, 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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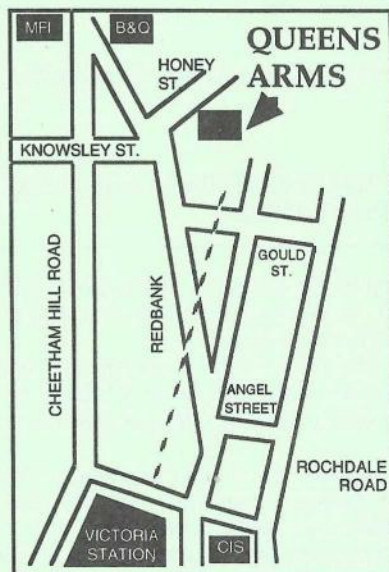
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