

30p

What's Doing

MAY 2001



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine



NEW SWAN?

The Swan With Two Necks on Withy Grove in Manchester city centre has been closed for a good while and now it has been sold by Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries to a firm of developers from Altrincham.

It is believed that the company plans to rebuild the premises as a restaurant and bar, with offices and apartments upstairs.

Considering the prime site adjoining the Printworks development, it seems surprising that W&D aren't doing the job themselves. After all, their only other city centre outlet is Rothwells on Spring Gardens.



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M E M B E R

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May is Mild Month

To celebrate this event, CAMRA North Manchester is holding its annual Mild Crawl in Manchester and Salford on Saturday 5th May. Starting at the Smithfield Hotel on Swan Street at 12 noon, the crawl will visit most, if not all, of the following pubs:

Hat & Feathers, Mason Street; Marble Arch, Rochdale Road; Queens Arms, Honey Street; Crown & Cushion, Corporation Street; Pot of Beer, New Mount Street; Beer House, Angel Street; Hogshead, High Street; Gullivers, Oldham Street; Castle, Oldham Street; Jolly Angler, Ducie Street; Lass o'Gowrie, Charles Street; Rain Bar, Great Bridgewater Street; Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford; finish at the Crescent, Salford, late afternoon or early evening.

Fifteen pubs, and on a recent (nearly) dry run it looked as though at least fourteen different milds and possibly up to twenty will be available on the day. Apart from the start and finish pubs, the above order is a rough guide only.



Swinton

The Moorside Farm on Moorside Road reopened on 23rd March after being closed for two months for a major refurbishment. Outside, the brickwork has been painted cream and the children's play area has been replaced by extra tables in the beer garden, now surrounded by a sturdy-looking fence.

Inside and to the left of the bar, the food bar has been removed - although meals are still served till 9pm - and a no smoking area has been created. To the right of the bar, the wall of the vault has been replaced by a railing, giving a view into the lower level room. On the raised area at the far side of the vault, the pool table has been replaced by tables and chairs.

The beers are Banks's Original and bitter and Marstons Pedigree, all on handpumps and sold in lined, oversize glasses.

The tale of ale

'A Brewers' Tale', the CD which includes the histories of Manchester and North West breweries, can be ordered from John Richards via his website: www.jonvivrichards.freemove.co.uk

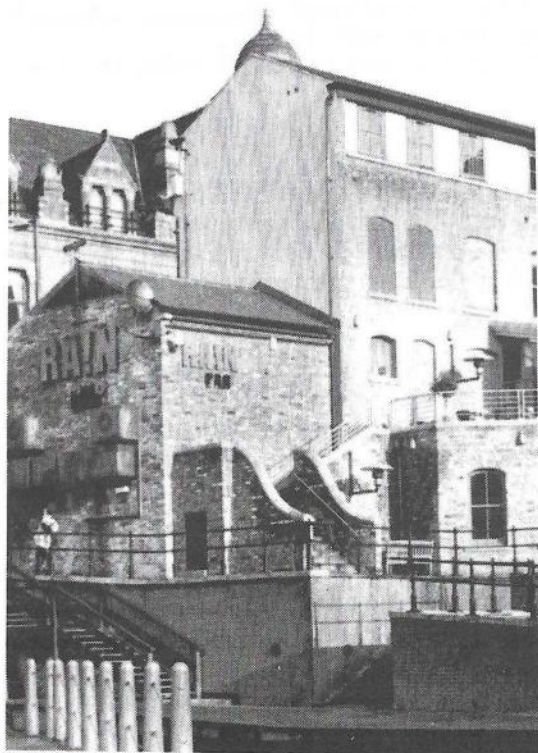
Drinking Diary

with Daddy Bell

We seem to have an unremitting succession of festivals. I managed to get to **Oldham** on the Saturday (April 7th), where I was particularly taken with 'Tigertops' White Max, a wheat beer with a powerful sensation of bananas, and Porter's Young Tom, which yielded a marvellous aroma when swirled in the glass. Tony 'Oak' being there, I felt honour bound to rediscover his White Monk, which one can now enjoy as a regular brew.

Simultaneous with the Oldham festival was the latest feast of 'very rare and unusually seen beers' at the **Smithfield** in Swan Street, Manchester. For a limited period halves of the Real Mackay from the Far North brewery in Sutherland were available, the first appearance of this beer away from its home pub: we have Terry to thank for collecting it a week before. My favourites were the organic wild oat Glencoe Stout from Bridge of Allan, and the Golden Blonde from Holland Brewery in Kimberley, which had an attractively fragrant aroma with a taste to match.

Some of the Smithfield's selection are likely to have reappeared, with many others, at the **Beer House** festival which was due to reach its climax on St George's Day. No doubt I shall have found time to look in, knowing that neither the food nor the beer will disappoint. Indeed, it was in the Beer House on April 5th that I first tasted Pictish Maelstrom, a fine 5% ale which for me (though not for everybody) was redolent of the incomparable Yakima Grande Pale.



The local 'Ask if it's cask' launch at the **Rain Bar** (left) on April 4th was an ideal opportunity to enjoy J W Lees' generous hospitality, especially in the form of their seasonal Cereal Filler. I

have great expectations of their forthcoming 3.8% dark mild, Moonlight Oak.

So enjoyable was lunchtime that day at the Rain Bar that I didn't get to Wigan for that evening's crawl. So I made a point of heading for Wigan on April 17th, to seek out Hydes' new pub there, the **Anvil**, on the corner of Hallgate hard by the bus station and up the street from the not-so-Grand Hotel. (By the way, is the latter being renovated and restored to its former glory?)

The Anvil is a pleasant pub, subtly decorated, with three distinct drinking areas, including a sort of snug handy for the Ladies. The beers, all on handpump, were bitter, mild, Jekyll's Gold, Wells Bombardier, and Hydes' own seasonal, the 4.2% Down the Hatch (£1.75). All in all, the Anvil is a welcome addition to the real ale scene in central Wigan.



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In the City

After a hard day's work in the office, Trotter continues his tour where he left off last month, in Rothwells...

This time I noticed an extra handpump with a Mansfield Cask Ale pumpclip, but the beer wasn't on, so it was a pint of Banks Bitter before heading for Kennedy Street. The **Vine**, clad in green tiling, has a listed frontage and a surprisingly large interior. It's a split-level pub, with two bars and a downstairs area mainly used as a restaurant and for private functions. Photos of old Manchester adorn the walls. The real ales are John Smiths Cask and Boddies.



The **City Arms** next door can go one better than its neighbour; the whole pub is listed and it's a Tetleys Festival Ale House. The 'bar:gains' promotion offers Tetley Bitter for £1.35 a pint, while the guest ales (there are usually six) were £1.99 a pint. I sampled the Badger IPA. Inscribed on the wall of the back room there is the statement, 'English Beer is an acquired taste... the pleasure lies in gaining the experience.' I'll drink to that.

On leaving the City Arms, I made my way towards the **Forgery &**

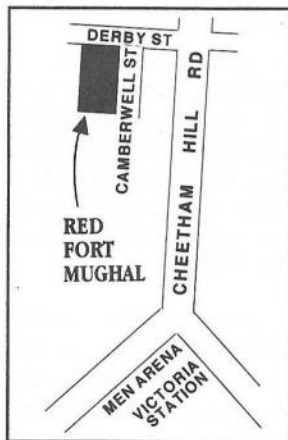
Firkin, making sure I avoided the trams while crossing Mosley Street. Going up the steps of this large stone building, one enters the open-plan bar with its high ceiling; a typical Firkin Alehouse. The place was previously a pub/restaurant called The Bank and this name is still displayed in colourful stained glass over the doors. The Forgery & Firkin has a bare wood floor, a slightly raised central area and some strategically placed rugs. On my visit, all the beers - Bass, Tetley and Fullers London Pride - were being sold for £1.50 a pint, so I ordered a pint of London Pride.

My final call of the evening was a short distance away in Nicholas Street, where the **Seven Oaks** is on the edge of the Chinatown district. Here the ales are usually Thwaites (but this was not on) and Boddies, with two guests - Tetleys (!!) and Black Sheep Bitter, which I sampled and found slightly warm. I returned a couple of nights later and was served the same. 'It could have been a warm glass,' said the bartender, who exchanged it for the Tetleys, which was passable. Despite signs stating the upstairs bar was now open, on my two visits it wasn't. Maybe the next leg of the tour will begin on a more positive note.

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Letter

Hare & Hounds

Sir - There is no by-line on the JDW No.3 article (*April What's Doing*), but whoever wrote it obviously hasn't a clue about how very hard it is to run a business in today's cold climate, and how unnecessary and hurtful glib and cutting comments can be.

Why should the other Printworks tenants 'better look out or lose custom'? Why should JDW3 have an effect on the small local pubs mentioned (of which I have one)? What does the writer expect us to do? Scaremongering never did do anyone any good, only harm, and rumours spread quicker than greased lightning in our small community. Who can compete with the prices of large chain outlets? Certainly not small tied pubs, and I dispute the maxim that all competition is good.

There are still some licensees left who are not out to fleece the customer, and who aim to provide the friendly welcome and atmosphere of a local pub in the city centre, with the best kept beer we can possibly provide. I am proud to be one of them.

Maxine Doyle, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester.

(Maxine is keen to find some old photographs of the Hare & Hounds. If you can help, please telephone her on 0161 834 9088.)

Zitcream

Roger Hall

I've just received, free, a 115-page publication entitled 'Itchymanchester the insider's guide'. It's dated 2001, but is about as much use as a one-legged man at an arse kicking party. Apart from a tendency to say nice things about people who advertise (and what's wrong with that?), it's out of date. In the restaurant section, the Reform closed ages ago and the Yang Sing has been back on Princess Street for years. And no mention of the This and That, the Shalimar or the Yadgar.

The pub section includes such gems as the Bierkeller, the Shakespeare and the Temple of Convenience and omits the Marble Arch, the Beer House, the Pot of Beer, the Hare & Hounds, the City Arms, the Circus, the Grey Horse, the White Lion, the Smithfield and the Jolly Angler. They don't have much good to say about the Rain Bar and seem to think that the Mitre was moved 'brick by brick' from Shambles Square along with the Wellington and Sinclairs.

I suppose that the one thing in favour of the guide is that decent pubs won't be invaded by the gormless sods who rely on it for guidance. Oh, and Lewis's is shut as well.

Boggart Hole Clough Brewery

Steve Smith

Since their appearance at the Bradford Beer Festival, Mark Dade's beers are becoming more widely available, most notably in the reputable free houses in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. In this area, **Bar Centro** has its own exclusive Tib Street Tipple, whilst **Bar Fringe** has seen Boggart Bitter and Darkside. These beers, along with Angel Hill, have appeared at the **Crescent** and **Kings Arms** in Salford and **Bobs Smithy** in Bolton, whilst the aforementioned Bar Fringe is negotiating for an exclusive house beer.

Over the border, outlets have included the **Corn Dolly** and **Fighting Cocks** (both Bradford), **Leggers** (Dewsbury), **Rat & Ratchet** (Huddersfield), **Fox & Goose** (Hebden Bridge) and **White Hart** (Todmorden). The **Station** at Ashton-under-Lyne requested Boggart beers for a festival around Easter time and it is hoped that some will be available at the Doncaster Beerex in May. Pubs in Derbyshire and Staffordshire are expected to be selling Boggart beers soon.

Cock down

The Cock in Worsley is now down to one real ale, currently Marstons Pedigree. Latterly up to four cask beers were available.

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Beer Garden

Wigan and district

Dave White

The **Stag Hotel** at Orrell Post reopened almost as soon as I had written last month's article. The pub still caters for the yoof market, but represents a real ale gain in the form of Tetley Bitter and Marstons Pedigree. On a recent midweek visit, the clientele was mixed and the Pedigree was about as exciting as this beer gets nowadays.

The good citizens of Billinge are less fortunate. The **Pavilion** on Main Street has risen from the ashes as the **Jarvis Bar**. Apart from etched windows displaying its new name, the pub looks little different, and the solitary handpump is already redundant, if indeed it was used at all. The half of Billinge that is in Merseyside is a bit of a no-go area for pubs, unless you like Burtonwood bitter.

Brit Beer Bash

The Britannia in Farnworth, opposite King Street Bus Station, will be hosting a beer festival from Friday 4th to the end of the Bank Holiday, 7th May. The event will once again take place in the specially created bar area in the beer garden at the rear of the pub. Six real ales will be served on handpump at each session and it is expected that around fifteen will be available during the festival, plus two traditional ciders.

Shut for good

It looks like the end of the line for the Corporation on Cross Lane in Salford. This former Wilsons pub has been closed for a while and steel shutters are now attached to the ground floor windows and doors. Upstairs, all windows have been smashed and the place is uninhabitable.

WHAT'S DOING contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stonecough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 1ET, to arrive no later than first post on the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Full page £52.50 or £210 for six months, half page £36.75 or £157.50 for six months, quarter page £26.25 or £105 for six months. All adverts must be accompanied with payment. Cheque payable to 'What's Doing'.

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BACK NUMBERS: 15p per copy. Send stamped addressed envelope to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW.

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

Around and about

with Grogard

The latest Wetherspoons in Manchester, namely **Lloyds No.1** in the Printworks on Dantzic Street, is a bit bland internally, resembling the Second Class Passenger Lounge of a rather mediocre 1950s cruise liner. But the place has one overwhelming attraction - five handpumped beers at £1.29 per pint. Two of the beers, namely Boddies and Theakstons bitter, aren't worth the lifting of the elbow, and Courage Directors is definitely an acquired taste, but one of them is an actual, genuine guest beer and the other the superlative Timothy Taylors Landlord. This was in perfect condition when I called in. The manager told me that there was no problem in keeping it so, as it sold so quickly. With most Landlord outlets selling at around £1.80, this is hardly surprising.

Meanwhile, back on the Wuthering Heights of Oldham, the genesis of a real ale revival might be under way. Four pubs - the **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street, the **Dr Syntax** on the corner of Clegg Street and Union Street, the **Buck & Union** on Union Street and the **Bank Top** behind Mecca Bingo on King Street - have combined in a publicity campaign on the basis of mutual advantage. The Ashton does five Porters ales, the Syntax Marstons Pedigree, the Buck & Union seven handpumped regulars and guests, while the Bank Top offers excellent Lees bitter plus the seasonal variation.

In conclusion, and as a bit of a downdraught, I should mention that the **Bridgewater** on Manchester Road (Holts) has recently installed not one but two smooth outflows. One is for mild and the other will eventually be for, er, mild. It seems the stuff is so slow to produce that two outfalls are necessary. Just which direction is Mr J H travelling in?



Asian Corner

Tarka Dhal

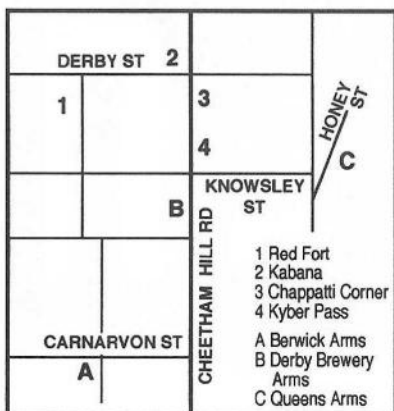
In December's edition I wrote about the excellent meal I had had at the **Red Fort Mughal** Restaurant (1 & 2 Camberwell Street: tel 835 3596). This is the latest, and most luxurious, of four outlets for food from the Indian subcontinent. The other three are on Cheetham Hill Road.

The **Kabana** (133 Cheetham Hill Road: tel 832 6144) is situated on the crossroads of Derby Street and Cheetham Hill Road. It is very much a traditional cafe, catering for the locally-employed Moslem population (though fish'n'chips, chicken, scampi and veggie burgers are offered as well). The usual range of curries, grills and sundries is augmented by a selection of weekly specials. For example, Nehari on Sunday, Batera (quails) on Wednesday and Biryani on Friday. Typical prices are £2.20 for Channa rising to £4 for some of the specials. The Kabana is semi open-plan, with several nooks and crannies. There is a no-smoking area. It is closed every evening and all day Saturday.

Diagonally across the junction is the **Chappati Corner** (152 Cheetham Hill Road: tel 834 0480). This is a small cafe catering for a similar clientele to the Kabana. It also offers a standard range of curries, grills and sundries supported by a selection of specials which include Nehari, Lamb Masala, Cabbage and Pasanda. A rice'n'three option (very popular in city centre cafes) is available. This can cost between £2.80 and £3.80, depending upon the number of meat dishes selected. Opening hours are similar to the Kabana.

A little nearer to town is the **Khyber Pass** (142 Cheetham Hill Road: tel 834 5656). The menu here will be more familiar to those frequenting suburban 'Indian' restaurants. Madras, Vindaloo, Rogan Josh and Sambar are offered. Burgers and Donner Kebabs widen the cultural appeal (or possibly reflect the differing nature of its clientele, as it opens 1100-0030 Sunday to Friday and 1700-0030 on Saturdays). Takeaways form a significant proportion of the trade, as a late evening free delivery service is offered within a 3-mile radius for orders over £8. A Chicken Madras will set you back £2.90 and a King Prawn Tikka Masala £5.50.

The nearest pubs are the Berwick Arms at the junction of Carnarvon Street and Pimblett Street, the Derby Brewery Arms on Cheetham Hill Road and the Queens Arms on Honey Street.



Pendlebury pubs

Ian Kenny

Until about ten years ago the 'top road', aka the A666, provided a formidable pub crawl. Sadly, economic decline set in and many of the pubs are struggling to survive, so it is little wonder that the availability of real ale has suffered. There are several good pubs in the area, but the general situation continues to worsen. One bright spot is the **Clifton Park Hotel** (ex Clifton Arms/Gay Willows) where Hydes Jekylls Gold has replaced Theakstons XB; the other real ale is Theakstons Cool Cask Bitter. Further down the road, by the M60 motorway, the **Robin Hood** now sells draught Bass alongside Tetley bitter.

The **Golden Lion** remains keg, whilst the **Oddfellows Arms** offers only Websters Yorkshire Bitter from a solitary handpump in the vault. The same beer is available at the **Britannia**, the Tetleys now being smooth. All real ale has disappeared from Magowan's **Beehive** on Queensway and both the **Showboat** (Burtonwood) and **Windmill** (Sam Smiths) are keg only.

Next come the two Holts houses, the **Lord Nelson** and the **Newmarket**, both offering bitter and mild. Rob Jasinski has been in charge at the former for eight years and the pub goes from strength to strength, whilst the latter continues to improve under the management of Andrea Lythgoe, who arrived from the Crown & Volunteer in Eccles shortly before Christmas.

From there on, the top road is almost a real ale desert. The **Royal Oak** remains keg only, the **Bowling Green** has lost its Grays bitter, the **Albert** (now badged a Bass house) its Boddies bitter, the **Pendlebury** its Thwaites bitter and **Craftsman** and **Halligans** its Tetleys bitter, so all are now keg only. The **Black**



Horse and the **Station** are no longer pubs and the only other outlet is the **Henry Boddington** with its Boddies bitter.

So since the last survey in July 1997, a total of seven different real ales have been lost, with the only gains being Hydes and Bass.

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The Membership Secretary,
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The Millennium Pub Trail - The Return

Part Thirteen: A New Beginning

Last year Steve Smith and Mark McConachie toured all the Greater Manchester pubs in the 2000 Good Beer Guide. Now, equipped with the 2001 Guide, they step boldly, seeking out additions and variations. They are visiting each of the metropolitan boroughs in alphabetical order and hope to complete the tour in a ten month period. Here goes...

Around Bolton

The **Hope & Anchor** on Chorley Old Road (B6226) at Doffcocker, known as the 'Little Cocker', has a lively bar room and real ales in the form of Taylors Landlord, Lees and Tetley bitters and Tetley Dark Mild. The pub still has its original front room fireplace, solid wooden snob screens and bell pushes. A back room vault is used as a games room.

The **Kings Head** on Junction Road at Deane is a comfortable retreat off the main A676. Tetley Dark Mild and Bitter and Taylors Landlord again feature, along with Moorhouses Pride of Pendle and a guest beer. The main room, opened-out and spacious, has stone floors, exposed timber beams and low ceilings. A third room, mostly for dining, was added to the Grade II listed building in the 1990s.

The **Lord Clyde**, an ex-Bass pub on Folds Road (A676), is only a short distance from the town centre, close to the Stagecoach Ribble bus garage.

The pub seems to have been in a time warp since the Bass days. There's a traditional vault with television and a side room on split levels incorporating a pool table. A further room appeared to be unused. The pub seemed



quiet and pervaded by a smoky atmosphere, but it was a good place in which to enjoy the Hydes Anvil Light and Bitter.

With its timber-framed frontage, the **Man & Scythe** on Churchgate is the oldest pub in town. Tradition says that it dates from the thirteenth century, although it was rebuilt in the seventeenth century. The rooms and drinking areas have stone flagged and bare wooden floors (sloping and on split levels), low beams, leaded windows and stained glass, and some incongruous electronic features. To the rear is a small patio area. The beer range consists of Boddingtons, Holts and Tetley Bitter, Flowers IPA and Original, plus guest beers.

In complete contrast to the Man & Scythe, across the street can be found one of Bolton's newest pubs, the **Varsity**. The interior is fitted out in light wood, from bar counter to flooring, interspersed with green columns; I-beams and ducting give the modern minimalist industrial look. The large room incorporates a gallery area and a mezzanine (non-smoking) level. The pub's name indicates the targeting of a youthful clientele, but on our Monday night visit the place was decidedly un-busy. Banks's Bitter and Marstons Pedigree are the ales.

Well away from the town centre, at Bromley Cross, we found ourselves at the renowned **Flag Inn** on Hardmans Lane, off the B6472. Styled a Whitbread Hogshead 'Ale House', the best pub in this





area does not disappoint. Amongst the regular beers, such as Boddingtons and Dent Bitter, there is a wealth of guests, including some from Bolton's Bank Top Brewery (Dark Mild and Golden Brown Bitter). The interior of the Flag Inn has been opened out, with bare wood and stone slab floors, exposed beams and the usual 'Ale House' trimmings.

Finally for this tour, to the opposite end of the borough and the **Railway Hotel** on Egerton Street, Farnworth. The pub is a stone's throw from Moses Gate Station and near

the junction with the A6053. It is a large, imposing building, with a rather basic interior, subdued, soft lights and a giant television screen dominating the substantial lounge. Holts mild and bitter can be enjoyed in the traditional vault.

That completes the round up for Bolton, a metropolitan borough where the dedicated imbibor can find a good variety of ales.

The wrong kind of pump

Holts' Railway in West Didsbury, which opened as *What's Doing* went to press last month, is selling smooth beers by handpump. These are cask conditioned, but are made 'smooth' by the addition of gas between cellar and pump. Serving them by handpump is at best confusing and at worst dishonest.

The introduction of smooth mild caused difficulties in a number of pubs and this latest move blurs the distinction between naturally conditioned beers and those with added gas. Holts have a loyal following in Manchester, so this kind of behaviour may lose them some friends. There should be a clear distinction at the point of sale between traditional beers, on which Holts reputation has been built, and their smooth beers.

Pub Operators

As Bass, Scottish & Newcastle and Whitbread sell huge chunks of their pub estates, Paul Warbrick looks at the buyers and sellers...

The Buyers

Punch Group (formerly Punch Taverns) was formed in 1997 and it controls more than 5,100 outlets in two divisions. Punch Retail has 4,095 managed, leased and tenanted pubs, bars, restaurants and night clubs, while Punch Pub Co operate 1,060 managed pubs.

In December 1997 Punch bought 1,500 pubs from Bass Lease and later bought 700 tenanted pubs from Inn Business. The group also acquired Allied Domecq's UK business in 1999. Punch are interested in the bulk of Whitbread's 3,000 pubs.

Pubmaster operates more than 2,000 pubs. In June and July 1998 the company bought Mercury Taverns and part of Devonshire Pub Co's tenanted estate. In July 1999 Pubmaster swallowed up Swallow Group pubs, then in the December it was sold to Pubmistress Ltd, a special acquisition vehicle. It is interested in Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Wolverhampton & Dudley and Avebury Taverns.

Nomura is Britain's biggest landlord, owning 6,000 pubs since winning the battle of Bass. The owner is Bede Acquisition Co Ltd, formed and financed by Nomura International's Principle Finance Group.

Nomura has bought pubs from Unique (2,814), Inn Partnerships (1,179), Innpreneur (530), Phoenix Inns (35), Wizard (35) and more recently Bass (992).



Noble House Leisure is a pub and restaurant business and outlets include the Fatty Arbuckle chain. The company is interested in Wolverhampton & Dudley, with backing by venture capitalists Botts & Co.



The Sellers

Wolverhampton & Dudley, formed as a public company in 1890, owns four breweries and 1,800 pubs. It threatened to stop production of Marstons bitter, but relented following a revolt by drinkers and licensees.

It is likely that W&D will see either a management buyout or a takeover by Noble House Leisure.



Whitbread sold its breweries to focus on the hotel, restaurant and health club industry. Now the pubs are for sale. The Whitbread Beer Co went for £400million last May to Interbrew (Belgian brewers), then First Quench followed in September, with Nomura taking up the off-licences. Nomura, Punch Group, Candover and Morgan Grenfell Private Equity are all interested in the 1,710 leased and 1,288 managed pubs.

Bass sold 981 managed and several tenanted pubs in February to Principle Finance Group for £625million. The remaining 2,000-strong estate will continue to be run by Bass Leisure Retail. The company is due to start work on a new 'Goose' pub in Bolton.

Avebury was founded in 1997, when 147 pubs were bought from Wolverhampton & Dudley. The company has backing from Cabot Square Capital, which stumped up £130million for the buyout of Avebury from Daiwa Europe in 1999. The backers are now looking for a buyer willing to come up with between £160million and £180million.

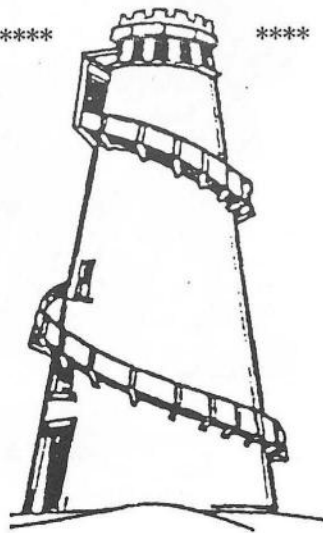
Scottish & Newcastle owns brewer Scottish Courage and S&N Retail, which has 2,373 pubs. S&N Retail wishes to sell 740 managed houses and transfer 180 to leased outlets. The policy will enable the company to concentrate on high turnover and high margin outlets, which include branded pubs like the Slug & Lettuce chain.

When all the bidding is finished and the estates are taken over, real ale drinkers will be looking to the handpumps. Can we expect more choice of beers (in particular, guests from independents and microbreweries) or will the bland branded products dominate?

Details from Financial Mail on Sunday.

Frodsham fest

The ninth Frodsham Beer Festival, organised by Rowlands Care in association with CAMRA, promises a selection of new brews, old favourites and farmhouse ciders. Opening times are 6-11pm Friday 25th May and 12 noon to 11pm Saturday 26th May. The venue is the Community Centre, Fluin Lane. Tickets are £4 for all sessions (£1 refund on the door for CAMRA members) and can be obtained from Dave Brown, Joiners Cottage, off High Street, Frodsham WA6 7AN. (Cheques payable to 'Rowlands Care')



Organic, Vegetarian and Vegan Beer

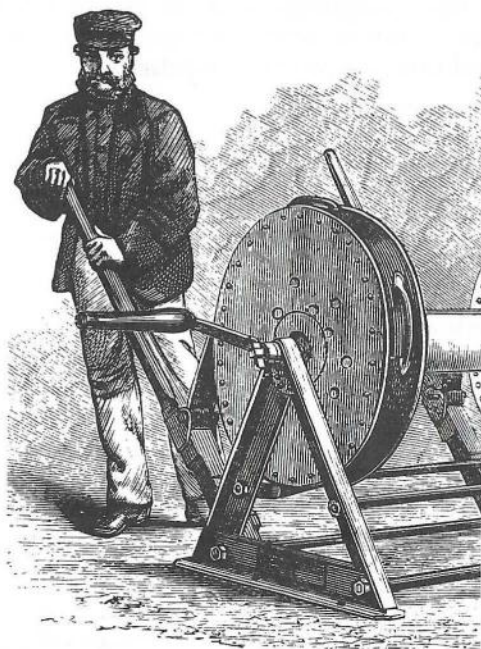
Humulus Lupulus

According to CAMRA there are now three accredited wholly organic breweries, with eight more brewing a regular organic beer.

There seems to be a degree of confusion between the terms 'organic' and 'vegetarian' or 'vegan'. Organic beer uses only ingredients (malt, hops and sugar) which have been grown without the use of artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, though it should be noted that a small number of 'traditional' inorganic compounds are permitted by bodies such as the Soil Association, which grants accreditation to organic producers.

Vegetarians (a broad term covering many different diets) generally avoid eating meat but will often eat dairy products (lacto-vegetarians) or eggs (ovo-vegetarians) or both. In some parts of the world, fish is regarded as the vegetable of the sea. However, organic producers are not restricted to fruit and vegetables but provide organic eggs, chicken, beef, etc. Vegetarians do not necessarily seek out organic products, though there is perhaps a greater tendency to do so than in the general population.

As a quasi-vegetarian (I am a firm believer in the benefits of Omega-3 fish oil products) and home-brewer, I have never knowingly used organic beer ingredients, though I respect those who do. As regards finings, I have occasionally used isinglass (sturgeon swim bladder) but more often than not I let the beer clear of its own accord; it takes a little longer, but eventually it happens.



Of course, isinglass is a definite 'no-no' for strict vegetarians and the even stricter vegans who avoid all animal-sourced products. Our own local Marble Brewery must produce a large proportion of the nationally available beers which 'true vegans' can drink, since finings are not used.

The following are all the organic brewers known to CAMRA:

Wholly organic:

Marble Brewery, Manchester. Tel. 0161 832 5914: contact Vance de Bechevel. Accredited October 2000 by Soil Association. Sells cask beer only.

Organic Brewhouse, Mullen, Helston, Cornwall. Tel. 01326 241555: contact Andy Haymer. Accredited Easter 2000 by Soil Association. Sells cask beer only.

Pitfield Brewery, London N1. Tel. 020 7739 3701: contact Martin Kemp. Accredited June 2000 by Organic Farmers and Growers. Cask- and bottle-conditioned beers.

Other Brewers Producing Accredited Organic Cask- and Bottle-Conditioned Beers:

Bateman, Wainfleet, Lincolnshire. Tel. 01754 880317. Organic Beer: Yella Belly (cask)

Black Isle, Munlochy, Ross-shire, Scotland. Tel. 01463 811871. Organic Beer: Black Isle Organic (cask), IPA (cask)

Brakspear, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Tel. 01491 570200. Organic Beers: Ted and Ben's (cask), Live Organic (bottle-conditioned)

Broughton Ales, Biggar, The Borders. Tel. 01899 830345. Organic Beer: Border Gold (cask)

Caledonian, Edinburgh. Tel. 0131 337 1286. Organic Beer: Golden Promise (cask)

Fullers, Chiswick, London W4. Tel. 020 8996 2000. Organic Beer: Honey Dew (cask)

Quay Brewery, Weymouth, Dorset. Tel. 01305 777515. Organic Beer: Weymouth Organic Gold (cask and bottle-conditioned)

St Peter's, Bungay, Suffolk. Tel. 01986 782322. Organic Beers: Organic Ale (cask)

It is interesting to note that beers containing honey (the Fullers perhaps?) must also be avoided by vegans since they regard bees as animals and honey as an animal product!

The Empire Strikes Back

In days of Empire Sir Charles Napier made a name for himself as Commander-in-Chief of the army in India. Indeed, he did such a good job in suppressing rebellion and maintaining British rule that pubs were named after him. One was the Napier Hotel on Bolton Street in Bury. By the 1970s most of Bolton Street had been demolished and new roads had been built; the pub went into decline and eventually closed several years ago. Now the old building has been refurbished and brought back to life - as an Indian restaurant called the Jewel in the Crown.

Rupert

The Campaign has an unsurpassed propensity for paradox. In the St Allballs Mother message AGM Special were articles about a Lesbian and Gay Real Ale Drinkers' Group and photographs of aspirant Boss Group members. Now, I've nothing against beards and moustaches (so, Keith Flett, let's leave WD as the only publication you've never written to, shall we?), yet, wouldn't it be nice to see the odd woman, clean-shaven black man or parvenu bumfluff among the hirsute hopefuls?

There are those who think special interest groups are divisive. It's for that reason that I've never established a Real Ale group within PORGI. The recent initiative of the Promotions and Marketing Committee gives me the green light to set up a Persons of Restricted Growth subsection within CAMRA. It mustn't become too specialised (Dwarf Big Girls' Blouses, as Bunty calls it) or I'd be drinking on my own. (*Nothing new there, then* - Ed.) I'm sure that the venture will augur well for Anal Treet, as it has so often unamusingly been daubed. Van Rijn's is one of the few establishments still to embrace ale from the cask. The Gastropod and Rocket has gone

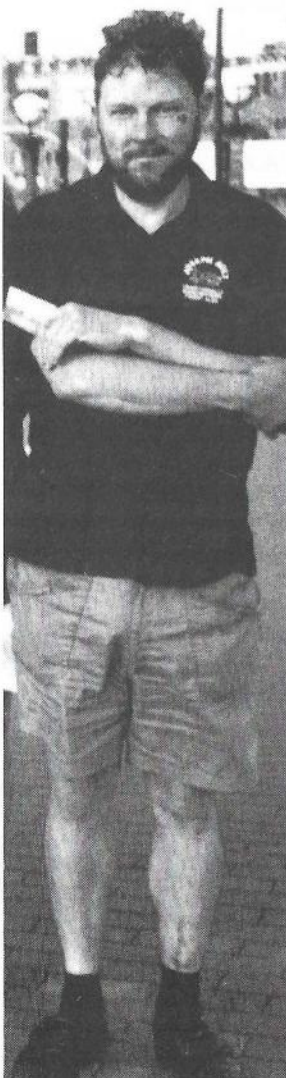
the other way, as they say. I look forward to Grotley's first midget gem.

It's good to hear some blasts from yesteryear. There are some who thought Rumpleshirtscream's brain would be atrophied by the lack of Taffyland leisure facilities brought on by Foot and Mouth. But no. He's still as sharp as a button with his corpse-knifing talent undiminished.

It was a little sad that some of his greatest admirers were unable to celebrate his half-ton, which few thought he would make. And what of Jamie Frotter? Where has he been? He may not have been allowed anything sharp, but surely he could have written using cobbler's black or whatever brass-rubbers frot with.

Talking to Eddy brings to mind brick walls and head. This organ remains the only Campaign newsletter you have to pay for. In a year you could buy two whole pints with what it costs. That's what Tubs will save. Free publications can say to advertisers - 'If you don't advertise, then we won't give you any free newsletters, nnnnyrrr!' And, of course, it doesn't affect the editorial content.

What's Doing can't do that. Let's make it free. Our first advert could be for the Grotley Escutcheon. They could give *What's Doing* away instead of *Opining Tripe*.



Branch Diary

North Manchester

Wed 2 May 8pm, Social, Hat & Feathers, Mason Street, Manchester
Sat 5 May, Annual Mild Crawl. Start Smithfield Hotel, Swan Street, Manchester, noon. Finish Crescent, Salford, late afternoon. See elsewhere for details.

Wed 9 May 8pm, Iris Johnson Retirement Social & Presentation, Welcome, Robert Hall Street, Salford.

Wed 16 May 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Wed 23 May, Piccadilly area crawl. Jolly Angler, Ducie Street, 7pm; Wetherspoons, Piccadilly; Mother Macs, Back Piccadilly, 8pm; Bar Centro, Tib Street; finish Castle, Oldham Street, 9pm onwards.

Tues 29 May 6pm, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham

Thur 31 May. Boggart Hole Brewery visit. Details from Steve Smith 205 0440

Wed 6 June, Pendlebury Social, Newmarket, Bolton Road, 8pm (includes quiz); Lord Nelson 9.30pm onwards.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 1 May 8.30pm, Branch Meeting Houghton Arms, Streetbridge, Chadderton

Fri 11/Sun 13 May Weekend Coach Social. Bateman's Brewery and East Midlands pubs. Details from Branch Contact

Tue 29 May 8.30pm, Committee Meeting/What's Doing Collation, Cross Keys, Running Hill Gate, Uppermill

Contact: Peter Alexander 0113 232 4023(w), 0161 655 4002 (h)
email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

Wigan

Wed 16 May 8pm, Annual General Meeting, Orwell, Wigan Pier. Membership cards essential.

Thur 7 June, Trip to Pictish Brewery, Rochdale. Depart from the Orwell, Wigan Pier, at 7pm. £10 in advance to Deano on (01942) 323034.

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 426464 (w), 427595 (h)
email john@misltd.co.uk

Bolton

Sat 12 May, Social outing to Southport to include 2nd Sandgrounder Beer Festival. Meet 10.35am at Bolton Station for 10.45 train.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Duncan Busman, Ian Kenny, Stewart Revell, Pete Cash, Roger Hall, Dave White, Daddy Bell, Phil Stout, Michael Lynn, Steve Smith, Mark McConachie

Dave and Sue welcome you to

THE QUEENS ARMS

HONEY STREET, CHEETHAM

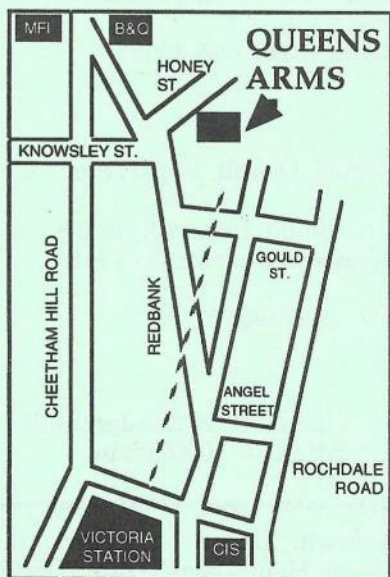
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