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# What's Doing

JUNE 2001

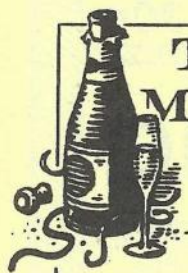


The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## PLATES AGAIN SAM

After being closed for many years, Sam's Chop House, the pub/restaurant on the corner of Back Pool Fold and Chapel Walks in the city centre has reopened, serving Landlord, Wadworth 6X, a house beer and the ubiquitous Boddies.





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## Ongoing in Oldham

*Grognard*

At the **Dr Syntax** on the corner of Union Street and Clegg Street, a metamorphosis is ongoing. The old management left a month ago after holding a closing down sale. All bitter was advertised at £1 per pint and as Taylors Landlord was advertised on the Saturday I believed that Christmas was early this year. However, I discovered that the cellarman must have had two pages of his manual stuck together, namely the bit dealing with temperatures for different ale types.

You would not, for example, expect Fosters Draught Amber Mouthwash to be served at anything but tonsil-numbing temperatures in order to disguise its dismal taste, but to serve Landlord at ice-age degreeage should entail an automatic death penalty. There are unrepeatable experiences and experiences you never want to repeat again.

Fortunately the **Buck & Union** across the road offers several examples of how real ale should be served and now as a permanent feature has a dark mild on offer (the brand varies) at £1.60 per pint. Another dark mild, sadly temporary/seasonal, can be found at the **Bank Top**, behind the Mecca Bingo in King Street, namely Lees Moonlight, 3.8% and £1.60 a pint. Delicately sweetish, it reminds me of the Magic Mushroom Mild at the Sportsmans Arms in Hyde. At the end of June it will be replaced with Scorcher, the golden bitter with citric tones.



But now, back to the saga of the **Syntax**. Business abhorring a vacuum, a management replacement was sought and quickly found, to most people's surprise in the slightly adipose shape of John - veteran-vintage landlord of the Ashton Arms, native of Fleetwood and man of mixed drinks. As the Syntax is only a short hobble down Clegg Street from the Ashton, the migration should not be too strenuous for his fading strength. Most of us assumed he was happy enough at the Ashton, or as happy as he generally gets, but to put it in suitably vague terms, there has been a conflict of personality between himself and brewery supremo Mr Porter.

Sad perhaps, but looking on the positive side it means that the Syntax will now become a reliable purveyor of the real stuff at correct temperatures, while the Ashton (with whoever takes John's place) will continue to provide the excellent Porter range. One sour note is that the Ashton, which managed to enter, at last, the Good Beer Guide for 2001, should, under the change of landlord rule, be excluded from the next edition. I suspect that Mr Porter might be slightly upset about this.

Finally, just to prove that I still get out and about on occasion, I mention that now the trans-Pennine passes are snow-free, the mini-metropolis of Marsden is open for business, especially the Riverside. The wife (God bless her) and I dropped in last week and worked our way through most of the ale range. The ales are, I am happy to note, as good and consistent as ever.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **The Request Stop Beer Hop**

The sixth Bhurtpore Inn Beer Festival takes place from Tuesday 10th July until Sunday 15th July, with all day opening on the Saturday (see advert). The Bhurtpore is at Aston, near Nantwich, twelve minutes' walk from Wrenbury Station, a request stop on the Crewe - Shrewsbury line.

Record numbers used Wrenbury Station during the beer festival weekend last year, and since there has been a substantial increase in passenger numbers, the Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers' Association has arranged with Wales & West Trains for two Manchester - Cardiff expresses to make the special stop at Wrenbury on Saturday 14th July. These are the 1133 and the 1433 from Piccadilly (also calling at Wilmslow at 1149 and 1449). For the return journey, two through trains will call at Wrenbury at 1705 and 1936. Owing to engineering work, the trains will not be stopping at Stockport.

The beer festival organisers promise double the fun this year, as Paradise Brewery will be hosting its own festival at the brewery between 10th and 15th July.

## Licensing Reform

Roger Hall

Three recent Acts - *Deregulation (Sunday Dancing) Order 2000*, *Deregulation (Sunday Licensing) Order 2001* and *Licensing (Special Hours Certificates) (Amendment) Rules 2001* - go some way to liberalising our archaic and arcane licensing laws. Extensions can now be granted on Sundays. I suppose we've moved a long way. It's only a short time ago that all pubs were closed from 2.00pm to 7.00pm on the Sabbath. But we're still a way off complete deregulation, or even from getting back to the days before the 1916 Defence of the Realm Act.

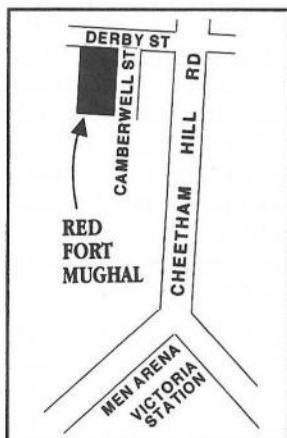
## Sorry Sam

At a recent Regional Meeting of Yorkshire CAMRA branches, it was reported that as many as 80% of Samuel Smiths pubs are using cask breathers or aspirators on the Old Brewery Bitter. It is believed that Sam's policy is to install them in all but the very high turnover pubs. Readers who know of any Sam Smith outlet using the system on what appears to be handpulled beer are asked to notify CAMRA's Brewery Liaison Officer, John Thornton, on 01132 689170.

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## In the City

### Stage Six

*Trotter takes a look at the pubs on Liverpool Road and the lower part of Deansgate...*

Revamped and renamed, the former Oxnoble Hotel has purple walls, solid wood tables and a mix of fixed leather seating and wood chairs. The **Ox** attracts a mixed clientele and in the evening operates as a pub/restaurant, with some tables reserved for diners. It can get extremely busy when there is an event at the Castlefield Arena. The handpumped beers are Boddies, Taylors Landlord and Tetleys plus two guests - Pendle Witch and Old Speckled Hen on my visit.

At the **White Lion**, a short stroll away, the main corner door is guarded, not by men in black, but by two huge white lions. The regular beer is Tetleys and the guests were BPA and Golden Smiles from the Blackpool Brewery and Taylors Landlord. I quite liked the 'try before you buy' policy here, and naturally took the bartender up on the offer.

It was a fine, sunny evening so I sat outside, next to the Roman fort site, to enjoy the Barnsley Bitter, a creamy and hoppy ale from Oakwell Brewery. The Barnsley Brewery closed in 1970 after being taken over by John Smiths, but brewing of Barnsley Bitter began again in January 1997. Before departing, I tried a half of the Golden Smiles - straw coloured, with a bitter aftertaste.

From the White Lion it was left on to Deansgate and into the **Pig & Porcupine**. This is a purpose-built pub adjacent to the Upper Campfield Market (home of the National Winter Ales Festival). Inside, there is a raised drinking/dining area to



the rear, with the bar on one side in the middle. (Dining is 12-3 only.) Cask ales were Bass, Boddies and Robinsons bitter.

Across the road and next to the Harley Davidson showroom is the **Crown Inn**. A former Wilsons pub and more recently Vaux, it has reopened following interior beautification in pastel green/cream. Gone is the football table. The four handpulls served Boddies, Taylors Landlord (yet again!), Pedigree and Charlie Wells Bombardier, though the pump clip was turned round for this one. I was charged £1.20 for a half of Pedigree - no wonder there were only two people in the pub at 8.15 in the evening!

Finally, over to the **Atlas Bar**, the glass fronted bar next to Deansgate (Knott Mill) Station. Here one can order a pint of Coach House Dick Turpin or Tetley bitter and sit and watch the trams going to and from G-Mex, or just chill-out and read one of the broadsheet newspapers available. The Atlas is also handy for the train home.

The other Liverpool Road pub, the **Commercial**, doesn't serve cask ale, but it is worth mentioning for the vast array of boxing photographs and memorabilia.



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

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

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## Festival fun

*with Daddy Bell*

Mary's month of May turned out to be a month of celebration, not just of mariolatry or mild but of the sheer pleasure of brewing and consuming good beer.

For the moment, let's stick to mild. I unaccountably missed the annual Mild Crawl on May 5th, but I gather that Ian Casson, not to be outdone by any other premier freehouse, laid on a septet of milds at the **Beer House** that day, for which he will be duly and rightly certificated. The mild with which I have been most seized is the seasonal Moonlight Oak from J W Lees, which went on sale, as promised, in the **Welcome** in Ordsall at the start of the month and proved gratifyingly popular. Even the price (£1.57 for a 3.8% beer) proved no deterrent, and at least one 'draught' Guinness drinker was converted. A dark mild, it has the hallmarks of a recognisably Leesish beer, but with a distinctive array of flavours. Quite a few pints (and days) later I experimented with a pint of mixed GB mild and Moonlight Oak, which appealed to me even more than either on its own... but maybe I am being a little too idiosyncratic for once.

The Moonlight Oak was much consumed at CAMRA North Manchester's own 'thank-you' gathering at the **Welcome** on May 9th, when tribute was paid and good wishes expressed to Iris Johnson, now well established in her retirement from public life but still a familiar figure in her local. A fine example of Peter Cash's calligraphic handiwork was presented to Iris, accompanied by many affectionate words of appreciation and reminiscence.

Circumstances possibly beyond the control of even the most efficient and attentive of licensees seem to mean that pub-based beer festivals often extend way past their





advertised termini. This has been true lately of the **Beer House**, the **Crescent**, and at least some **Wetherspoon** branches. Of the last named, the **Moon under Water** on Manchester's Deansgate was making a better stab than usual at ensuring availability of its late April festival beers, and at £1.29 a pint one had no shortage of bargains. Indeed, I did even better than the ubiquitous Beer Monster™ in that on May 4th I found the Früh Kölsch in there on handpump, reduced to 99p! Of the other 'European masters' in the festival, the Herold Bohemian Black Lager (5.2%) was very agreeable but without as much smoke in the finish as one might have expected from the tasting notes.

But my first Wetherspoons festival port of call was the usually reliable **Postal Order** in Blackburn, where I found the Diebels Alt Premium Dark (4.8%) sitting in a cask at the far end of the bar. I found it an excellent, refreshing mid-brown ale. (I met it again later in the Moon under Water, where it was behind the bar and without any point-of-sale publicity to draw attention to it: it proved disappointingly warm.) The Kozel Dark lager (3.8%) was on one of the keg gantries: gassy, cold and over lively, but still good: claret in colour, soft tasting, in this instance like a sweetish brown ale, with the flavour of one of the boiled sweets in a Yorkshire mixture. By the time the Kölsch came on in the Postal Order, it was May 9th: this time on gravity, it was past its best but still refreshing, especially at 99p a pint.

There were many good things in the St George's beer festival at the



**Beer House**, with the pleasures being prolonged by the considerable over-run of the proceedings. The early May bank holiday beer and cider festival at the **Crescent** was also an extended delight. Family preoccupations, including an uxorial broken ankle and a feline funeral, delayed my own worshipping at Idy and Sal's Salfordian shrine, but I soon made up for lost time, first tackling the six beers (from Fernandes, Tigertops and Brown Cow) in the vault. The sole festival beer from Ryburn was the Coiners, but we had already acclaimed the reappearance of Ryburn beers a few days before with pints of Luddite Stout (with its prominent burntiness) and the thickly hoppy Navigation. It was a joy to meet Ryburn beers again this side of the Pennines, and it brought back memories of the late-lamented **Stanley** in Stockport, where they were reliably available in the now distant past.

Perhaps the best beer of the Crescent festival for me was the powerful Dubbel from Passageway, one of many good things to emanate from Liverpool. But very good too was the Pilsner Irwell from **Phoenix**, which is shortly to return in an utterly authentic lager form - or so I am assured by its brewer, Richard Bazen. Many of us gathered in Bury on May 12th to celebrate Richard and Jude's nuptials, many pints of Navy being consumed, after the wedding, in the **Rose and Crown** in Bury. Jollifications continued into the evening at the **Kings Arms** in Bloom Street, Salford, prime attraction among the beers being an appropriately blended Naughty Nighty from Phoenix, its companion Wedding Tackle coming on a few days later. Christine and Mike have secured the privilege for the Kings of being the launchpad for new beers from Durham, the latest being the stunning White Scimitar.

Durham's 6% Sanctuary was a challenging choice back at the Kings on May 18th for some of us on our return from a launch party at Mark Dade's **Boggart Hole Clough Brewery**. The hospitality was excellent, both in beer and food, and so was the company - Mark and his associates and friends, a few other brewers and a host of dedicated drinkers. Perhaps I should not have started with Steaming Bitter, which turned out to be a 9 percenter: one of those 'dangerously drinkable' beers which will repay months of maturing. Though young, it was not at all harsh, and provided an ideal farewell nightcap. All the Boggart range was on (except the superb Angel Hill, which was





awaiting us back at the Kings), and there was much discussion of the relative merits of Jack's Nasty Face, which I had already encountered as the house beer at the **Bar Fringe** on Swan Street, and Dark Side. My own view is that the latter is best regarded as a porter, while Jack's is a very flavoursome brown ale. I like them both.

Finally - before I forget - another mild, Pictish Black Diamond, first met in the Beer House on April 20th. It is dark, very tasty, and much to be savoured again as soon as possible.

## **TREASURE HUNT 2001**

**The Annual North Manchester CAMRA  
Independents Day Treasure Hunt**  
will take place this year on Saturday 7th July.

This year's event is organised by last year's winning team, the **Castle Knights**, and will start from the Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester at 12.00 noon.

Teams of up to four are invited to take part. There is an entry fee of £2 per team.

All teams should be back at the Beer House by 20.00hrs, when hot food will be served, the cost of the food being included in the entry fee.

The Treasure Hunt answer forms will be marked whilst the teams enjoy the food and prizes will then be presented to the winning team.

So... if you and some friends fancy an afternoon's strolling round some of Manchester's most excellent pubs and enjoying beers brewed by independent breweries, please come along.

Contact: Mark or Elizabeth on 0161 789 5016

## **Best of Manchester**

That is the name of yet another free supplement to the top 50 places to eat and drink in Manchester. It's not as bad as the last one. The Yang Sing's back on Princess Street and only the Kailash is spelt wrongly. But no mention of any of the Northern Quarter's pubs or cafes, lots of pretentious places like Barca and the Temple of Convenience and no coverage of Rusholme. Supported by advertisers who appear in the text, *Best of Manchester* produced by the Not-so-Independent.

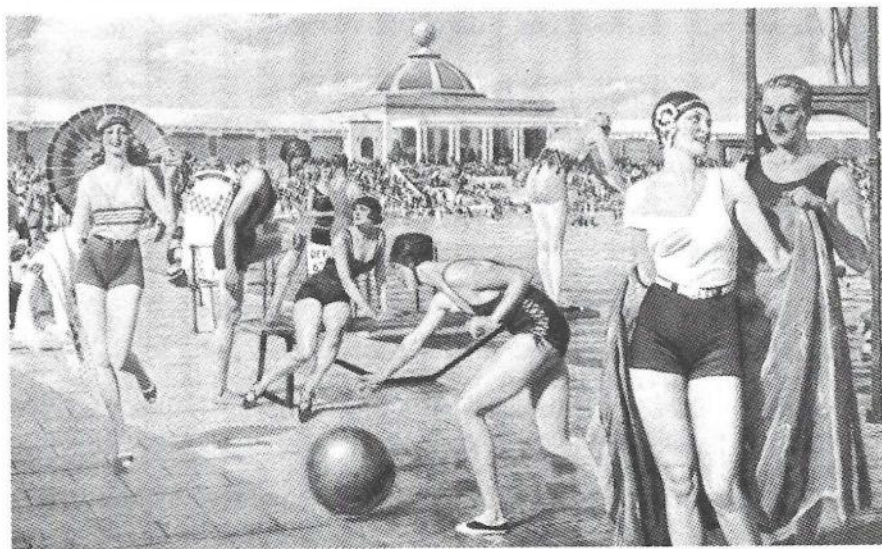
## Sun, no sea and Sandgrounder

*The sun was out, the sky was blue, so on a glorious May weekend Paul Warbrick caught the train to Southport for the Second Sandgrounder Beer Festival at the Arts Centre...*

After signing-in, collecting the essentials (beer tokens, glass, etc) and meeting up with Steve Larkin, I tried the Merlins Magic, a 4.3% full bodied ale from Moor Beer Co in Bridgewater, Somerset. Perusing the beer list in the centre of the programme (which included prices per pint), I spotted a couple of blondes, so I tried Genuine Blonde (4.2%) by Passageway. It was described as a naturally cloudy wheat beer, but on this occasion it was crystal clear, though it still had its fruit/hoppy flavours. The other blonde was from Arran and similar in taste to the Passageway variety, though slightly stronger.

Further down the bar were two interestingly titled ales from SP Sporting Ales (Leominster), Joust Bootiful (4.2%) and Joust Perfic (4.9%), an amber brew with a rich flavour. After a few more beers we left the Sandgrounder Festival, went out into the dazzling sunshine and set off on a short pub crawl of the town.

First stop was the **Old Ship**, described in the programme as a Tetley Heritage pub. The interior is predominantly open plan and there is the usual Tetley range of ales, but it's worth a visit. Next was the **Guest House**, a regular Good Beer Guide entry and arguably Southport's most classic pub. This former Higsons house has the traditional multi-room layout, lots of brass ornaments and a compact cobbled drinking area at the rear. The beers were Boddies, Cains,





Pedigree and Bombardier. On our way out we stumbled upon festival stalwarts Rock Chick and Old Dick.

To end our tour, we went back on to Houghton Street and headed for a hidden haven for lovers of real ale, the **Berkeley Arms** (formerly Blake's Hotel and Pizza Pub). There are several drinking areas off the main bar, including a family room, and a small beer garden at the side of the pub where we sat in the sun for an hour and sampled some of the nine ales available. I tried Old Puck (a new one on me) and Pendle Witch. The others were Moorhouses mild and Pride of Pendle, Adnams bitter, Camerons Strongarm, Mansfield bitter, Landlord and London Pride.

We considered going to the **Up Steps** in Birkdale, but it was getting late and so we decided to catch the train home.

*Beer note.* There was a lack of beers available on handpull at the Sandgrounder Festival and maybe this can be rectified next time around. I quite like a well pulled ale.

# THE CRESCENT

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*Beer Garden*

## Letters

### Millennium moan

Sir - So the Dray Twins are at it again on another Millennium Trail, armed with their GBG 2001 and seeking out additions and variations.

Why don't they leave the Good Beer Guide at home and seek out alternatives that may serve excellent ales but have never been included in the guide? Each year the same pubs are nominated for the guide and there is only the odd new entry. So come on, Twins, get off your Dray and look around that corner, or go down the side street - you may find a gem of a pub.

*Ray Batty*

### Circus

Sir - I have enjoyed many Sunday afternoons in the Circus Tavern on Portland Street in Manchester over the past fifteen years. Landlord Terry Corless always offered a warm welcome to both regulars and strangers and although I was sorry to see him retire in April, I looked forward to more enjoyable Sunday afternoons in the pub. My optimism was thwarted on Sunday 22nd April, when I was met with a note on the door stating that the Circus will no longer be opening on Sunday afternoons. There had been no mention of this to the regulars and I think it is typical of the way multinational companies treat their customers. Bring back Terry!

*Gary Page*



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## Wigan and district

*Dave White*

The town centre has another addition to the Wallgate/King Street circuit popular with the young and scantily clad. The **Stage Door** in nearby Arcade Street has, unsurprisingly, nothing on offer to tempt the real ale drinker, but arcadophiles may be interested to learn that the Stage Door is close to Grimes Arcade, the shortest arcade, I am told, in the country. Because of the odours usually emanating from this passageway, they may consider that to be no bad thing.

Just a stone's throw away from the Stage Door stands **O'Neill's** on the corner of King Street. The Irish theme pub never really caught on in the Wigan area, and now there appears to be one less, as **Bridie Donnelly's**, Warrington Road, Lower Ince, was closed and boarded up when I passed by recently. This wretched edifice, formerly the **Rock Hotel**, has been known as the **Rock Rock Café** and **Madisons** in recent years. They say that what goes around, comes around; if so, it is about time that the 'Big Rock' reopened as a traditional real ale local. In the meantime, stick to the **Black Diamond** up the road.

In Orrell, the **Abbey Lakes Hotel**, Orrell Road, was shut for refurbishment at the time of writing. Before the closure, this once fine watering-hole had not sold cask beer for a couple of years, and had declined steadily; so fingers crossed, as they say.

On the subject of refurbis, the word is out that J D Wetherspoons plan to turn the **Brocket Arms Hotel** on Mesnes Road, Wigan, into a Wetherlodge. The Brocket was a residential hotel in years gone by, and it's situated in a pleasant part of town, so it should do well.

It's the end of an era at the **Bold Hotel**, Poolstock Lane, Worsley Mesnes, as Lawrence Owens, the long-serving licensee, is moving on to pastures new. The beer was always spot-on (Burtonwood bitter and a guest) and the Bold was Wigan CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 1999/2000. We wish Lawrence all the best for the future.



## The Millennium Pub Trail

Steve Smith & Mark McConachie

### Part Fourteen: And so to Bury

GBG pubs in the Bury area are mostly to be found in the countryside, so we began at the **Duke William** on Wells Street, Ainsworth, between Bury and Bolton. The eighteenth-century pub is in a delightful setting behind the church and off the main B6196 road. It is neatly furnished, with rich colours purveying a warmth about the place. The bar in one corner oversees the opened-out rooms, divided by pillars into intimate pockets for drinking and dining. Although the pub may appear more 'foody' than 'boozy' at times, it nevertheless offers a welcome retreat with Boddingtons and Lees bitters plus Taylors Landlord.

To the hamlet of Birtle next, for the **Pack Horse** on Elbut Lane, off the main Bury and Rochdale Old Road (B6222), close to Jericho and the ever-expanding Fairfield Hospital. The pleasant hostelry can be found as the lane rises and narrows beyond the Wills Fabrics factory. It's another eighteenth-century building, with three substantial rooms - a lounge, restaurant and conservatory, decorated as one would expect - exposed stonework, copper kettles, horns and a long case clock. The ales are Lees bitter, GB Mild and their seasonal beer.

*The Pack Horse is the J W Lees Pub of the Year: the photo shows the Lees-Joneses with Veronica Warburton, who took over as manager at the pub in 1999.*





Not too far from Bury town centre on Bolton Road (A58), at the corner of Arthur Street, is one of the Rossendale Brewery Company's renowned establishments, the **Arthur Inn**.

This ex-Thwaites pub was somewhat run-down when it was acquired earlier last year. A swift and neat refurbishment resulted in a



pleasant bar room-cum-vault, a games area and split-level side room. As demand dictates there is Porters bitter, dark mild, Rossendale, Sunshine and Young Tom (a dark 4.6% brew of some potency, which gives off a fruity and roasted aftertaste in its finish). There is usually a real cider on offer as well.

Back into the countryside next, for the popular **Lord Raglan** by Mount Pleasant village at Nangreaves. Infrequent public transport often necessitates a trek from Walmersley Road (A56), but the

exhilarating twenty-minute climb is well worth it. From the pub on the Bury/Lancashire border there are good moorland views across to Peel Monument and the Winter Hill area. Beers from the Lord Raglan micro brewery are appearing more regularly in the Greater Manchester area, in pubs such as the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport, and at some of the region's beer festivals. Some brews which have featured include Nanny Flyer (named after a local bus), Black Pudding Mild, Raglan Sleeve and Light and Heavy Brigade.

One-off brews have been seen at recent local festivals, such as the dark 4% Picador and the 3.9% Chameleon. Theakstons Best Bitter or Old Peculier may feature at the pub, along with a reasonable selection of Belgian beers. Excellent home cooked food can be had and there are some outside seats.

For the energetic, a further two-mile hike takes you into Lancashire and the next pub, the Fishermans Retreat, but that's another story.



## Holts corner

*Stewart Revell*

It is now over twelve months since Holts was de-listed from the Stock Exchange and brought back under family control as a private limited company. The first AGM of the new company will be held on 7th June (polling day) and the few remaining shareholders who have retained an interest in the brewery will be able to attend. Early last year, most took advantage of the company's £23-a-share buyback. Many CAMRA members, with only a handful of shares each, could not resist the offer. Provisions are in hand for those who wish to sell or buy extra shares privately and it will be very interesting to find out what they will be going for.

The **Blue Bell** opposite Edgeley Station in Stockport has the Joseph Holt livery on the outside, but I am informed by the brewery that the pub is a free trade account and not one of theirs.

Further to the articles in April and May, on checking at the **Railway** in West Didsbury (on Sunday 20th May) I found four handpumps supplying bitter and mild in the usual way, with pump clips displayed. At the rear of the bar there is a sign saying that smooth bitter and mild are available at a higher price, the bitter being £1.40.

There are two separate handpumps, without pump clips, for these at the end of the bar. There is also a handpump for so-called cask conditioned Blonde Bier (lager) at £1.53 a pint. Customers have to ask specially for the smooth beer, otherwise you get the normal handpumped version.



So I don't think there is any misrepresentation going on (misuse maybe) and it would, of course, be much better to have a dedicated dispense system for the gassy products. Other Holts outlets have a separate tap for smooth mild to show that it is different from the cask version.

## Salford

In an attempt to avoid the trouble of previous weekends, believed to have been caused by outsiders, all four Irlams o'th'Height pubs closed at 5.00pm on Sunday 22nd April. Unfortunately the measure did not overcome the problem and all four pubs continue to close early on Sundays.

The **Railway** on Broughton Road in Pendleton was closed and boarded up after the manager decided to quit following a robbery during opening hours.

The **Oxford** in Bexley Square has had its licence revoked by the magistrates for a number of reasons. Owners Pubmaster are believed to be applying for a protection order so that they can open it again.

## Best Beer

SIBA (The Small Independent Brewers' Association) recently held its Northern Beer Competition in Leeds and from an entry of 63 beers in 5 categories, Sarah's Hophouse Bitter from the GBG 2001 listed **Railway** in Golborne was voted Supreme Champion.

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## CAMRA Membership gives:

- \* Monthly copies of *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's entertaining and highly-regarded newspaper.
- \* Discounts on CAMRA products and publications (including the best-selling *Good Beer Guide*).
- \* Advance warning of beer festivals throughout the U.K. and Europe - and discounts when you get there.
- \* An invitation to join CAMRA's activities such as brewery trips, meetings and socials.
- \* **ABOVE ALL**, you will belong to a flourishing and successful consumer movement which is acting as a champion for beer drinkers and pub users.

## APPLICATION TO JOIN CAMRA

I/We wish to become members of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited and agree to abide by the Rules.

Name(s) .....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Signature.....Date.....

I/We enclose the remittance for:

Single £14 ☐ Joint £17 ☐ (at same address)

OAP Single £8 ☐ OAP Joint £11 ☐ (at same address)

Unemployed/ Disabled £8 ☐

Under 26 £8 ☐ date of birth:.....

For Life and Overseas rates contact CAMRA HQ (01727 867201)

Send your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to:

The Membership Secretary,  
CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road  
St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW





## Twenty-two milds in a day

Pete Cash

A dozen or so North Manchester members turned out on Saturday 5th May for the Annual May Mild Crawl, starting in the Northern Quarter and ending at the Crescent in Salford. With 14 or 15 pubs to visit and some five miles to be walked, the crawl needed a degree of

Smithfield Greene King XX  
Bar Fringe Boggart Hole Dark Side  
Hat & Feathers Cains Dark  
Marble Arch Uncut Amber  
Queens Arms Sarah's Hophouse

Black Mamba

Crown & Cushion Holts

Pot of Beer Robinsons Dark

Beer House Slaters Monkey

Magic, Taylors Dark,

Burton Bridge XL, Hart

Saigon, Pictish, Blackpool,

Taylors Golden Best

Hogshead Moorhouse Black Cat

Gullivers Lees GB

Castle Robinsons Hatters

Jolly Angler Hydes Dark

Lass o'Gowrie Highwood

TomWood Dark

Kings Arms Moorhouse Black Cat

Crescent Phoenix Black Shadow &

Wye Valley

advanced planning, in terms of arrival and leaving times. This left an average of about 14 minutes per half consumed, or it should have, except that landlord Ian Casson of the excellent Beer House had installed no fewer than seven milds (we had expected only two) all on sale together, which threw the middle part of the timetable into disarray!

Overall we found 22 different milds, all in good condition. The only disappointment was that Lees' Rain Bar, which was to have had the new Lees seasonal Moonlight Oak Dark Mild, had not sold all the previous special (Cereal Filler) and therefore would not put it on sale.



## Rupert

I suppose we had become as bored with the forthcoming election as everyone else until the fisticuffs in Taffyland episode. This got us talking over our foaming pints of Drabs, not only about pugilism, but about a whole range of issues. Much of it was lighthearted. We agreed that drinking fourteen pints a night like wee Willy was sensible, inasmuch as it could transform the chief virgin, Ann Widdecombe into her deputy, Britney.

But there were some serious points to be made, not least how should an aficionado of the amber nectar vote? My own arguments were evidently so cogent and persuasive that both Fiona and Tish encouraged me to reproduce them for a wider audience than the unappreciative toppers of Wedgies, who told me to 'belt up, you shortarse mincing gobshite,' whatever that means.

Well, what we need to do is to look at the records of the major parties whilst in power. We can disregard promises and with them the Lib-Dems and other fringe nonentities who have never been in office and won't be for a long time to come, if ever. You might think that the party of global capitalism would have the worst record in presiding over brewery mergers and closures, the rape of the traditional boozier and the gradual demise of real ale.

But no. The Conservative Party is essentially conservative, conserving the time-honoured patterns of the British way of life. The Campaign had its best days during those 18 years of Tory rule from 1979 to 1998, when the gradual extinction of real ale was reversed and the enterprise economy flourished with the blooming of dozens of microbreweries.

Since 1997, the Reverend Blair has presided over the contagion of nitrokeg, more megamergers (with some token finger-wagging) and the decimation year by year of working class, street corner locals. I suppose that Tony's argument would be that there ain't no working class now - the blessed Margaret saw to that by sorting out Arthur NUMhead et al - so trendy, minimalist city centre bars are the order of the day.

Handpumps and cask conditioned beer don't somehow fit, being relics of a cloth cap image that New Labour is desperate to shun. So, it's tough on boozers and the causes of booze. Real ale, where it survives at all, is a niche product served in establishments targeting an increasingly affluent market of cognoscenti. Even Josiah Drab, last bastion of salt-of-the-earth, no frills, decent, value for money ale is having to flog off its pubs. There's only one answer: Vote Conservative; it's common sense.



# Branch Diary

## North Manchester

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

Wed 13 June. Riverside Brewery Tap, Marsden. Trains from Victoria at 1856 and 1956 (arrive 1927 and 2027)

Wed 20 June 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Tues 26 June 6pm, Whats Doing collation, Queens Arms, Cheetham

Wed 27 June, Blackfriars & Cheetham Crawl. Black Friar, Blackfriars Rd, 7pm; Dutton, Park St, 8pm; Derby Brewery Arms, finish Queens Arms, Honey Street, 9.30pm

Wed 4 July 8pm, Social and 'Ask for Cask Mild' event. Blue Bell, Moston Lane, Moston

Sat 7 July 12 noon. Independents' Day Treasure Hunt, Start at Beer House.

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 5 June 8.30pm, Branch AGM, Woodthorpe, Bury Old Road, Heaton Park

Sat 9 June, CAMRAmble, Saddleworth area. Details from Branch Contact

Tues 26 Jun 8.30pm, Committee Meeting/What's Doing Collation, Pack Horse, Watling Street, Affetside

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

email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

## Wigan

Thur 7th June, Trip to Pictish Brewery, Rochdale. Depart from the Orwell, Wigan Pier (Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Year 2000-01) at 7 pm. £10.00 in advance to Deano on 01942 323034

Wed 13th June 8pm, Branch meeting, Crown Hotel, Platt Lane, Worthington. Minibus leaves the Anvil, Dorning St, Wigan, at 7.45

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

email john@misltd.co.uk

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

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## Brewing no more

Both the breweries of West Yorkshire in Luddendenfoot and Kitchen in Huddersfield have ceased trading. For the latter, it was apparently caused by the lack of visiting trade in rural pubs resulting from Foot and Mouth Disease.



*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

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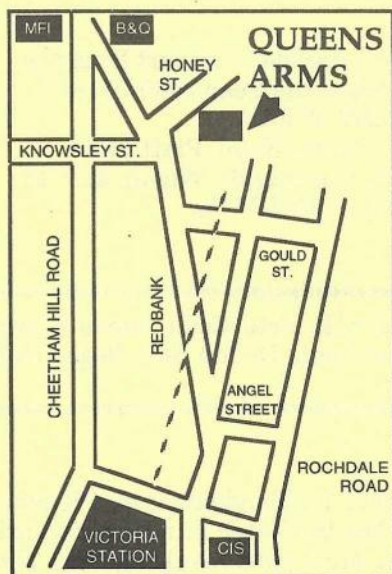
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