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# What's Doing

OCTOBER 2001

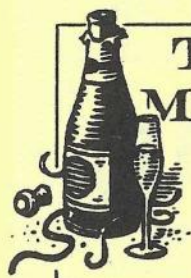


The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## CASK ALE WEEK

In an unprecedented show of unity, the top management and head brewers of Manchester's four major independent breweries came together at the Rain Bar on Great Bridgewater Street in September to host a special beer tasting event. Colour and spectacle were provided by Robinsons' horse-drawn dray, which left the Rain Bar to make symbolic visits to the Old Monkey (Holts), Grey Horse (Hydes) and Castle (Robinsons)





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## Cask Ale Week

Cask Ale Week is a new initiative organised by the Independent Family Brewers of Britain to promote cask conditioned ale with special brews, tutored tastings, 'try before you buy' schemes and beer-related competitions and quizzes.

The Rain Bar event was opened by William Lees-Jones and each of the head brewers introduced the beer he had selected for the occasion. Giles Dennis for Lees presented Red Dragon, a pale bitter brewed with Welsh honey. To offset the sweetness of the honey, Giles had opted for Styrian hops, which he said had a 'light and peppery character, but not too hoppy'. The supply of Welsh honey from Anglesey (Llanddeusant?) had been used up and fresh supplies were being sought!

Chris Hellin from Robinsons, after thanking CAMRA for its support, introduced Cooper's Bell, an all-malt bitter which included 10% wheat malt and 20% copper hops. Holts' Keith Sheard presented Holts Bitter, which used pale ale malt together with some black malt. None of Holts beers used caramel and 'never will'. Keith also pointed out that Tetleys bitter, which was supposed to be renowned for its bitterness, was 33% less bitter than Holts. We had expected to taste a special brew from Holts, but trials were still going on.

Finally, Paul Jefferies from Hydes offered Jekyll's Gold, which was made from Maris Otter pale malt with no colouring. Hops came in three stages: Fuggles, then Styrian Goldings and finally dry-hopping with more Styrian Goldings. The resulting beer was 'very light and refreshing'.

Considering the number of family breweries which have succumbed to takeover and closure in recent years, the sight of the four Manchester breweries' pump-clips side by side on the bar made us realise how fortunate we are to have so many long-established brewers supplying this area with their excellent beers.



*Footnote:* The new Holts beer (available early October, all being well) will be paler and stronger (4.4-4.5%) than the standard bitter. Contrary to some reports, it will not be using Maris Otter malt. Neither would it be named after a malt variety. Fuggles hops had been considered but proved too resinous. It is likely that Challenger hops will be chosen, but at a modest hop rate.

## Flexible Hours

Pete Cash

A change in licensing laws which would allow pubs to apply for an extra one or two hours' opening on days of their choice was supported by 91% of pub customers in a recent central Manchester survey. Such a change was foreshadowed in a government White Paper published last year, but following the General Election there was no mention of this in the Queen's Speech. It is now likely to be next year at the earliest before anything emerges, but in an effort to keep up the pressure, CAMRA launched a national campaign during the second week of September. As part of this campaign, North Manchester members produced a questionnaire and interviewed 72 customers in six pubs on or near Deansgate, as well as bar staff and licensees.

A common misconception amongst many was that the changes would force pubs to open 24 hours a day every day. It was explained that this was not the case; whilst in theory some busy premises in major cities might just wish for this, all pubs seeking an extension must apply for specific hours as part of a business plan. The police and local residents would have an input and CAMRA believes that most applying would seek only an extra hour or two at weekends.

When this was explained to them, most people felt that this was a sensible way forward. Even a majority of bar staff (85%) were in favour in principle, though they were naturally anxious that there should be public transport for them to get home and that they were adequately paid for the extra hours. Licensees and managers were more equally divided; only 50% wished to see any change, and some, whilst not opposed, felt that they personally would not apply.

A number of customers of other nationalities were interviewed, notably Scots, who found our hours restrictive, and Norwegians, who can drink until 2am back home, although they have to pay something like £5 a pint for their beer!

The pub hours hotline is 0845 60 30 20 8 (local rate)  
or log on to [www.camra.org.uk/vote.html](http://www.camra.org.uk/vote.html)

## 20th Bury Beer Festival

Met Arts Centre, Bury

Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th November

60 different real ales

Selection of foreign bottled beers

Food available at all times

*Live entertainment Saturday night*

Friday 12-3pm 50p; 5-11pm £2

Saturday 12-4pm £1; 6-11pm £1.50

## Inner City Pubs

*Roger Hall's article on the demise of Salford's inner city pubs (WD July) prompts a letter from Ian Walker...*

I spent the early seventies in Manchester, and Oldfield Road and Lower Broughton Road were two of the crawls often undertaken. The Spinners on Oldfield Road was certainly lively; so were the Bee Hive and the Poets Corner on Lower Broughton Road - they were heaving on Saturday nights for the piano singalongs.

I lived in Moss Side before the dire rebuilding schemes and used all the pubs - often after dark, on my own - quite safely. I also went in the remnants of the Hulme pubs - I was in the Tamworth House the night 'time was called for all time'.

Then I moved away but started revisiting the city around ten years ago, usually three or four times a year. I was surprised then to discover how many old haunts remained - I thought there would be nothing - along with the 'new' real ale free houses. But the losses during the last decade have been grievous and, as Roger says, it makes you wonder when there will be nothing left but café bars, estate pubs and the Crescent!

Inner city pubs, especially in Salford, have certainly suffered from road schemes and clearance orders, but I think there are other factors that should be mentioned when considering their decline.

First, the demise of the traditional street-corner 'beer-off' and its replacement by lager-laden supermarkets, out of town malls and convenience chains with ghastly names like Rhythm & Booze! This has made it the easy option to buy in bulk and sup at home and, aided by under-investment in most inner city pubs, it has turned us into a nation of TV addicted couch potatoes - 'remote' in one hand, 'tinny' in the other.

Secondly, there has been the erosion of the tied house system and its replacement by pub-owning groups run from God-knows-where. OK, the tied house system was restrictive and paternalistic, but tenants had a stake in the place and punters knew where to go for their





preferred pint. Uneconomic pubs were kept on to retain a brewery's presence in the area. Now we have organisations which are solely profit, market share, turnover and 'throughput' driven; where the accountant is master and the punter and his community are patronised, if thought about at all.

The social revolution, for which the media and advertising should admit responsibility if they had any conscience, has turned us into a nation of lager and alcopop guzzling teens and twenties. Other age groups do not exist. When did you last see an advert exhorting you to 'Drink Mild - it's grand and you can sup loads without turning into a moron!'

The chief functions of inner city pubs were social and educational. They did something other pubs didn't - and don't - do. They taught young people **how** to drink and how to behave when drinking. The pubs were invariably full of people from eighteen to eighty and therefore the novice drinker was subliminally encouraged to acquire social skills, alongside his ability to 'Get it down thi, kid!' Nowadays we seem to have either licensed restaurants-cum-pubs or town centre 'get pissed in ten minutes, under 25's only.' God help us!

I agree with Roger's view that in years to come 'pubs' may have vanished. The changes in society, the slippery slope that 'pub culture' is already on, will in my opinion only accelerate the trend.



## Paramount

*Ian Kenny*

Tim Martin's fourth city centre Wetherspoons venture, the Paramount, opened on the corner of Oxford Road and Portland Street on 18th July, and in my opinion it is the most consistent of his local outlets for real ale. On a recent visit the standard beers - Boddingtons bitter, Courage Directors and Theakstons Best Bitter - were augmented by regular 'guests' Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Hop Back Summer Lightning, together with true guest ales Greene King Abbot Ale, Tomas Watkins OSB, Elgoods Barley Mead, Rebellion Money Grabber and Cotleigh Tawny Bitter. The last four were available as 'try before you buy', with tasting notes on offer at the bar, and all were very reasonably priced at no more than £1.49.

Recent criticisms of the non-availability of particular beers in Wetherspoon pubs do not appear to apply here. Between now and the end of November there will be guest beers from Arundel, Caledonian, Freeminer, Heather, Inveralmond, Mordue, Ringwood, Tring, Triple FFF, York and others.

Open all available hours and managed by Alan and Barbara Marples, ably assisted by Pete Burns, the pub has a 1930s feel. It struck me as similar to the 'Sports' concept of the 1980s, albeit vastly improved. There are large open areas of simple colours, primarily dark red, lilac and sky blue, together with polished chrome, on two levels, including a welcome non-smoking section at the rear. The ceiling consists of triangular insets complemented by triangular lighting frames with pin-point blue and yellow lights. Wall displays depict Peterloo and the Free Trade Hall, Manchester's Theatreland, the old and current Town Halls, the Bridgewater Canal and John Brindley, and the old Paramount Cinema.



# **THE CRESCENT**

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*Free party room available*

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**Food served every lunchtime from 11.30am**

**Free Chip Barms** every Monday 5-6pm

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

**Function/Party Room** available for free hire

*Buffets or hot meals provided on request*

**T.V. and Games Room** open for darts and table football

*Beer Garden*



## Bolton Beer Festival

The 8th Bolton Beer Festival at the Howcroft Inn will be held between Wednesday 10th and Sunday 14th October. This is the biggest pub beer festival in the country, housed in a marquee on the bowling green at the back of the pub.

Landlord Clive Nightingale began hosting festivals at the Howcroft following the demise of the Great North Western Beer & Cider Festival, the northern equivalent of the GBBF, which was held at Silverwell Street Sports Centre and for two rather unsuccessful years at the Excel Centre.

Over 200 beers will be available this year, with a festival brew from the nearby Bank Top Brewery. Bottles, ciders and soft drinks will also be sold. Once again the event is in aid of Bolton Lads and Girls Club; last year £20,000 was raised.

The Howcroft is on Pool Street, off Vernon Street and St Georges Road, and is 15 minutes from the train station and 10 minutes from the bus station. Opening times and admission prices are:

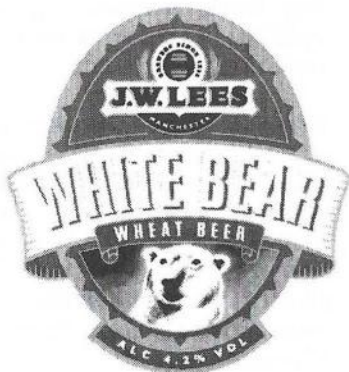
Weds 7-11pm £3: Thurs 7-11pm £3: Fri 7-12pm £4  
Sat 12-6pm £2, 7-12pm £4: Sun 12-4pm free

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## Lees Seasonal

John Willie's seasonal ale for November-December is a wheat beer called White Bear. According to the publicity material, this is 'A pale crystal clear beer brewed with a high percentage of Wheat malt. At 4.2% it has a smooth, nutty taste, balanced with the subtle flavours of Saaz hops. Drinking White Bear is akin to sipping from the sweet, pure waters of ice encrusted streams.'

Does Middleton Junction have a twinning arrangement with Reykjavik? Meanwhile, Moonraker should now be available at the Rain Bar on Great Bridgewater Street.



## Pub no more

The Brewery Tavern on Adelphi Street, Salford, is for sale as a 'residential development opportunity'.

## In the City

### *Stage Eight of Trotter's tour...*

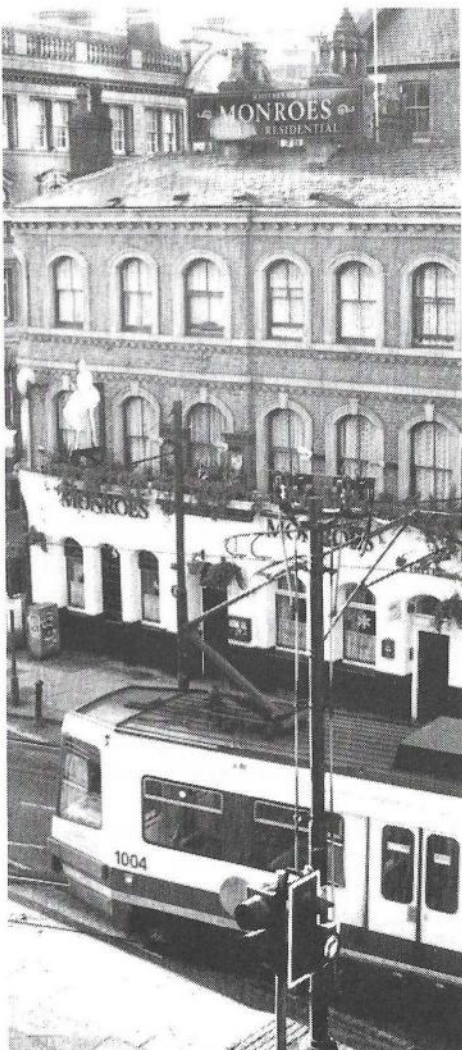
First stop on an overcast, late August evening was **Rothwells**. The pub was fairly busy and selling Banks's bitter at the promo price of £1.39 (normally £1.60). The other ale was Pedigree at £1.95.

From here it was over to Portland Street and the **Grey Horse**, where three real ales are available - Hydes bitter (£1.65), mild (£1.55) and Jekylls Gold (£1.78). The Grey Horse is a one-room pub with a mature clientele, where one can enjoy a good pint and interesting conversation.

Next, towards Oxford Street via the **Fab Café**, the sci-fi themed bar. Sadly there was no real ale - the bartender informed me that they had a dispute with Hydes, who supply the Gold. So to the **Paramount**, next to the Odeon Cinema, a purpose-built Wetherspoons outlet. The pub stands on the site of the Plaza Ballroom and recalls the old name of the Odeon, the luxury super-cinema which opened in 1930. The selection of ales was Guinea Gold Summer Ale, Cains FA, Directors, Abbot, Hop Back Summer Lightning, Spitfire, Theakstons bitter and Boddies.

After a long walk across the city to London Road, I stopped off at **Monroes**. As the name suggests, about thirty photos/prints of the lady adorn the walls and ceiling of the plush lounge bar. Cask ales were Boddies, Lees bitter and Flowers IPA.

Whilst in this part of the city I decided to see what was on offer at the **Star and Garter** on Fairfield Street, near to





what will be the new main entrance of Piccadilly Station. There were four handpumps around the bar, but two were not in use and the Thwaites and Boddies pumpclips on the other two were turned. Only keg Tetley bitter was on offer, so I left.

I rounded off the evening by checking out the large **Hogshead** on High Street. It was 10.20pm and it was sad to see only four people in the place, on what had been a busy evening in the other pubs visited. I shunned the Moorhouses Pendle Witch and Black Cat Mild, Weltons Beach Babe Bitter (nice pumpclip), Wild Fox from Nethergate and Pedigree in favour of some 5% Old Growler at £2.10 a pint.

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## Bricklayers Arms

The 'Brickies' on Moston Lane, Harpurhey, is now a free house, acquired by the licensees of the last few years, Barry and Steve.

The pub is virtually a stone's throw from the Boggart Hole Clough Brewery, and they have had a handpump installed to dispense one of the beers, which was due to go on sale in September. Moston Lane is an area of mostly keg pubs, so the Brickies should do well.

## Hat & Feathers

The Hat & Feathers on Mason Street, a friendly pub in Manchester's Northern Quarter, is now open all permitted hours after a brief period of uncertainty. Licensee Ged (ex-Blob Shop on High Street), who is in partnership with ex-boxer Eric Mason, is welcoming customers old and new with pub entertainment such as old-style piano singalongs.

On the beer front, Holts bitter is available at the moment (£1.25p per pint) and is proving very popular. Other guest ales, including Cains dark mild, may feature soon.



## Asian Corner

*Tarka Dhal*

New Indian restaurants seem to open daily, which is no bad thing. However, most seem to adopt very similar menus and presentations with just the price and the ambience distinguishing one from t'other.

The Saffron, a new restaurant on Cheetham Hill Road in the erstwhile Cheetham Town Hall, is different. Whatever you eat and no matter how large your appetite, you pay £9.95. The Saffron operates as a buffet. The staff direct you to a table and give you a plate. Then you stroll up to the counter and get your starters. Papadums, bhajis, samosas, kebabs etc, are all available - as are some delightful raitas, chutneys and pickles. Go and eat. Return for the main course and you can choose from a selection of meat and vegetarian dishes (a good 30% of the dishes are vegetarian) that on my visits included a pilau, rogan joshes, a jalfriezi, bhunas, saag, two kinds of rice, naan, and much more, including (I am pleased to note) a tarka dhal. I was positively encouraged to eat my fill.

Drinks are the only extras. The Saffron is alcohol-free, but mineral waters, tea, coffee and some excellent lassis are available. On my visit on 16th September the place was 'trading well' as the late Peter Kershaw would have said, with a healthy mix of clientele.



The premises have been fitted and decorated to a high standard. On the ground floor the high ceilings and semi-open plan layout give a sweet and airy ambience but retain a sense of discrete areas. On the first floor there are a number of rooms, which could easily be used for receptions. One room still retained the exposed roof trusses of what I assumed had been the former Council Chamber.

The Saffron is the brainchild of a group of local



lads who have not ventured into catering before - and possibly had no preconceived ideas about how a restaurant should be organised, or perhaps were more willing to try something different. It opens from 4pm until late evening, seven days a week. Lunchtime opening will follow, I am told, as trade picks up. The lunchtime menu may well comprise meals rather than be a buffet.

Saffron Restaurant & Banquet Hall, 107 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 8PY. Tel. 834 1222. saffronbuffet@hotmail.com

The Saffron is within threequarters of a mile of Victoria. All Cheetham Hill Road bus services pass the door. There's a car park to the rear. The nearest pubs are the Berwick Arms at the junction of Carnarvon Street and Pimblett Street, the Derby Brewery Arms on Cheetham Hill Road, the Queens Arms on Honey Street and the Mile House on Red Bank.

Bon appetit!

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## N/4 Beer Fest - the A-Z Tour

*Mark McConachie*

This year's event is scheduled for 15th-18th November. All the pubs that took part last year will be participating once again, bar the Beer House. Joining for the first time are **Cord**, off Tib Street, and the **Hat & Feathers** on Mason Street. As in previous years, a variety of food and entertainment will be provided for those who trek round, sampling different ales and foreign beers. A free bus will be laid on for the Saturday.

If all goes to plan, Boggart Hole will be producing a special bottled beer for the event. A commemorative T-shirt can be purchased for a nominal sum.



News of the above came from Carmen at the **Fringe**, who reports that the pub now has four cask ales on - a Bank Top, a Boggart, Hydes Jekyll's Gold and a changing guest. The sawdust has reappeared on the floor (why?) and guest crisps are Pickled Onion this month. On the staff front, Jo from the Sand Bar joins the crew of Suzette, Wendy and Mark. Carmen says that if

anyone is thinking of stealing one of her nice foreign beer glasses now or during the festival, watch out! (And she means it, too.)

## Bilko's

The opening of the Pepper Alley, the new Holts pub in Bolton (ex-Millstone), has been provisionally set for 23rd November.

N/4  
A/Z

## Ave Atque Vale

*Daddy Bell*

On St Bartholomew's Eve I concluded a day of aquatic and Yatesian bliss (at Allonby), by joining the throng for the opening night of John Henley's new venture, the **Knott Fringe Bar** (*below*). It was a noisy occasion, graced by many bibulous persons of note or notoriety. Subsequent visits have found it unsurprisingly quieter, but it promises to be a valuable addition to the Mancunian drinking scene, and possibly a key element in the creation of a Southern Quarter to rival or complement N/4. It is a brave enterprise, very different in scale and atmosphere from the original Bar Fringe. All five handpumps have been in use, the Boggart Sun Dial and the Phoenix Arizona proving more popular in the initial quintet than Tetley Bitter.

In the Northern Quarter there have been much-reported and much-regretted changes in the ownership and management of what for many is its pivotal pub, the **Beer House**. I do not claim to understand exactly what has prompted Ian Casson to move on or Graham Rawlinson to sell the place to a localish pubco. I do know that, whatever commitment the new owners make to real ale in variety and quality, the pub will never be the same again.

Like the Beer Monster™ I have relatively distinct memories of the Beer House from the days of Simon Finch onwards. I am not going to try to compete with the elegiac evocation of those years which he has





published elsewhere, except to say that much of it deserves reproduction in any anthology of beer writing. Those of us who like our pubs (and our churches) to exhibit, or retain traces of, a 'seedy splendour' will always put the Beer House in the front rank. Those of us who enjoy an ever-changing succession of different beers from different breweries, painstakingly procured, well kept and well presented, will continue to be grateful for Ian's unstinting work, as we have been for that of his predecessors. But it is disturbing if major changes in ownership or running are precipitated by ingratitude or worse on the part of CAMRA members or others who might reasonably have been expected to be champions of such a widely celebrated pub as the Beer House. Badmouthing of pubs or publicans, whether orally or in print or on the internet, discredits both its perpetrators and the real ale cause as a whole.

As is often said, there are lessons to be learned, and not just that 'you don't know what you've got till it's gone.' Another is that it is worth the effort of getting to know your landlord. Not everyone has a ready wit or an infectious bonhomie, any more than everyone can be a Scouser or a Salfordian or even a Grimbarian. There are merits in taciturnity or reserve, even within the licensed trade. But there is scope for development of trust and a more relaxed relationship - if you work at it. So I for one wish well to Ian in whatever he moves on to, as to Graham in the development of his continuing business, with thanks to them and all who have worked with them for our benefit as customers, and in the hope that we may yet find it worth our while to include the Beer House in our peregrinations.

What about the beer, then? I didn't attempt to down all twelve Titanic beers at the **Beer House** in early September, deeming Black Ice and Triple Screw sufficiently satisfying. I shall try not to embark on a third lengthy instalment of Cumbrian reminiscences, except to say that I did at last get round to visiting the **Eagle and Child** at Staveley and the **Watermill** at Ings, both of which had been often mentioned favourably to me, a recommendation I can now endorse.

Yet again, I didn't get to festivals at Shrewsbury or Tamworth or Saddleworth or even at the **Kro Bar**, though I did join the trickle of customers at the East Lancs Beer Festival



in Blackburn, where the Outlaw Norton (Commando) had an attractively spicy undertone which some of us attributed to coriander. The Furness Beer Festival made a visit to Ulverston well worth the journey on September 1st; though the three Tigertops beers had already gone, the Eden Trespass from Foxfield proved a soft and honeyed bitter. Beforehand, I enjoyed a pint of the 'Hartleys' Cumbria Way (brewed for the local Ale Trail) in the **Globe**, and afterwards took the bus over to Broughton, where the Yates Bitter in the **Manor Arms** was on fine form, rounding off the day with a visit to one of my favourite nurseries and to the **Prince of Wales** at Foxfield.

The monthly themed festivals at the **Smithfield** in Swan Street have been successful: of the wheat beers featured there in early September, I found the Isle of Arran Blonde Premium Ale (5%) and the Abbeydale Wheat Beer (4.5%) both exceptionally good, the latter silvery gold and with a grainier aftertaste. There were no disappointments either at the **Crescent** festival in late August: I worked my way through most of the list, but reserved my ultimate approbation for Yates Summer Fever and the two offerings (Bravo and the Peterborough Festival Ale) from Sean Franklin at Roosters.

There remains only to note that the seasonal ale from J W Lees, Red Dragon, is now on sale at £1.72 in the new café-bar atmosphere of the **Welcome** on Robert Hall Street in Salford 5. It seems to be expected that I will drink most of it; and as I enjoy beers made with honey (Welsh in this case) that should not be too difficult.

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## **Boggart Hole Brewery**

*Steve Smith*

Mark Dade is being kept busy with demands for his brews, recently from festivals in West Yorkshire, at Keighley and Wakefield. Over the last few months there have been sightings locally of Log End (4.0%), Sun Dial (4.7%) - a regular in Knott Bar Fringe on Deansgate - and Boggarts Punnet, a strawberry flavoured concoction at 3.6%.

Brewing capacity is being increased, with 8-barrel containers replacing the original 3-barrel ones. Eventually Mark will be offering reasonably priced 'Brewery Workshop' and 'A Day With A Brewer' seminars.

A new brew, Bog Standard Bitter (possibly 3.6%) is due to appear.

## **Newmarket**

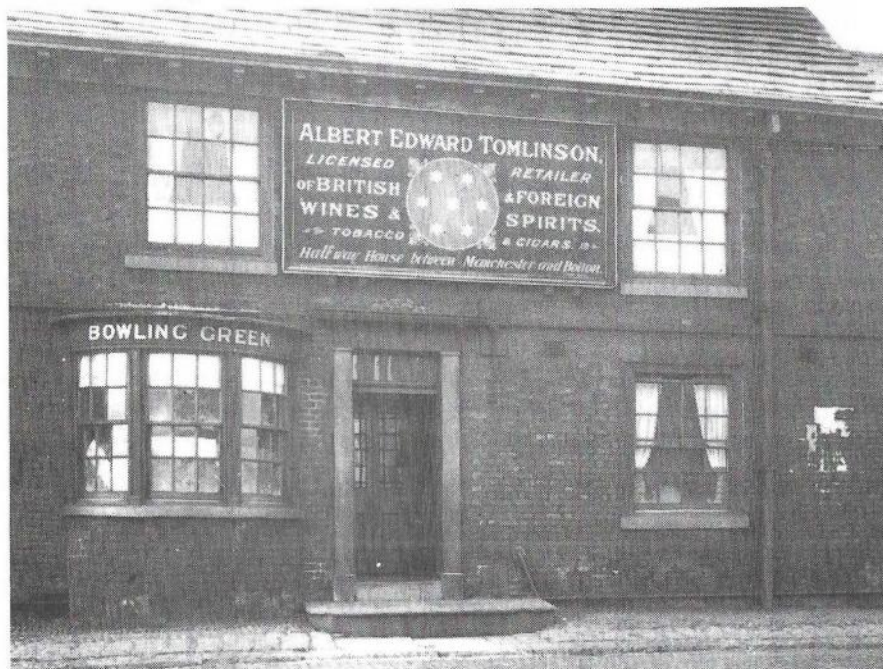
The Newmarket in Pendlebury is currently being redecorated in what is hoped will be an improvement on the old drab colour scheme.



## Letter

### Bowling Greens

Sir - Pete Cash (*WD September*) states that I don't say in 'The Pubs of Swinton and Pendlebury' whether the Chloride Recreation Club inherited its bowling greens from the Seven Stars. Well, the book was jointly written by Neil and me, so, if we hadn't, I was going to blame it on Neil. But we did; it says, 'In fact the Social Club still uses the bowling green of the old pub.' So there.



As the sign over the bay window of the pub in this 1920s photo reads 'Bowling Green' (in the singular) we can assume there was only one. In June 1872 a subscription bowling green (five shillings a year) opened adjoining Clifton cricket ground. Could this have been the other one?

*Roger Hall*

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### John Willie sows seeds

Lees have acquired the landmark Gardeners Arms (ex Boddies) at Chain Bar in Moston. The once highly-rated pub seems to have declined somewhat over the years and even a major refurbishment didn't help. The pub already sold Lees as well as Boddies, so there will not be too much of a change. We'll have to wait and see what Lees do with it.

## Mayflower Brewery

*Stewart Revell*

The Mayflower Brewery at Standish (*WD last month*) has only recently gone into production, although the planning and organising had been in progress for over twelve months. It took quite a while to find suitable premises - a building not too big, but suitable for expansion when volume builds up as sales increase.

The bleachworks at Standish ceased trading some seven years ago and since then has been sub-divided into small industrial units. Three months ago Stewart Thompson (*below*) found that the former canteen was just the right place for his brewery. The building was in very poor condition, but with lots of help from friends and acquaintances it was transformed. A large quantity of stainless steel barrels was purchased from a firm in France and much of the brewing equipment came from St Helens College.

On September 4th I was one of a party invited by Stewart and Chris Thompson for a look round and to sample Mayflower bitter. This is a full-flavoured, 3.8% session beer, soft on the palate and with quite complex tastes - and difficult to compare with any other beers I have tried.

Stewart has brewed two other Mayflower beers - the 4.2% Wigan Bier and 5% Hic Bibi (Latin for drink here). These were sold in the Dog & Partridge, Standish, and the Gathurst Station Inn at Shevington.

The first delivery of Hic Bibi arrived at the Crescent in Salford in late September.





## North Manchester round-up

*Mark McConachie checks out Newton Heath, beginning in the Medlock Valley...*

The **Bay Horse** (Tetley) had gone over to keg and at the railway crossing the **Railway** was selling only Boddies. On Droylsden Road, the **Horse Shoe** (Bass) was keg, the **Robin Hood** (Marstons) was down to bitter only and the **Church** (Holts) was also bitter only, but it had been redecorated.

In the Old Church Street area, both Marstons' **New Crown** and the **White Lion** opposite were keg, whilst the **Soap Box** held a surprise - house beer Celebration Ale at 3.5% was on alongside Marstons bitter. The Celebration reminded me much of Banks's bitter. Sadly, Vaux' **Culcheth Gates** was closed and boarded.

On Briscoe Lane, the **Phoenix** (Lees) was fairly quiet and was only doing bitter. Around the main Oldham Road area, Holts' **Railway** seemed to be packing them in with both mild and bitter on the bar. The **Copenhagen** and **Gibraltar** (both Vaux) offered only smooth beers, as did Tetley's **Britannia** (although a couple of pump clips remained) and Marstons' **Clarendon** on the Monsall estate. The nearby **Queens** (ex-Chesters) was keg, too. We took solace in the fact that the **Grosvenor** (Lees), aka the Glue Pot, was still on fine form, dispensing both mild and bitter.

It was an interesting day, with a few surprises both bad and good. Next, a round-up of Ancoats, Cheetham and Crumpsall.



## The Millennium Pub Trail

### Part Eighteen: Scurrying through Salford

*The Dray Twins visit two pubs called the Wellington and another two called the Park. All but one of the 2001 GBG additions are Holts houses, selling Joeys handpulled bitter and mild...*

The first **Wellington** is on Church Street in Eccles, opposite the library and conveniently situated for the plethora of buses which ply their way to and from the rainy city. The pub has been refurbished recently and is quite roomy, with a separate vault and a split-level lounge. The acid-etched windows depicting battle scenes have gone.

The other **Wellington** is on Bolton Road (A6) at Irlams o'th'Height. This modern three-room pub is a focal point for the local community and blends in well with the other hostelrys nearby.

Next, to Monton, for the first **Park**. The **Park Hotel** on Monton Road (B5229) is not unlike the previous pub - brick built, with a substantial lounge, separate snug and vault. The present **Park** replaces two earlier pubs which were damaged by subsidence.

Travelling through Eccles and going west along the A57, one comes to the **White Lion** on Liverpool Road. Although not in the same class as its Edwardian siblings (Lamb, Grapes, etc), this excellent end-terrace house has style in abundance - etched glass, the pub's name carved in the masonry and a splendid interior. The clientele tends towards the middle-aged and the piano in the bar parlour is a popular focus.





There is a vault and a newish 'extension' lounge to the rear of the parlour. The White Lion is a must for the visitor to Eccles.

Next, the **Ellesmere** on King William Street, Winton. This nestles under the M602 motorway bridge, and is best approached by travelling along Worsley Road (B5211). Once a street corner pub and now standing alone, the Ellesmere is a pleasant hostelry in the brewery's traditional style, with comfortable lounge and vault.

The **Lord Nelson** on Bolton Road at Pendlebury (A666, the Devil's Highway?) is a detached modern structure fronting the main road. Inside, it is a comfortable retreat with a large lounge incorporating a stage and a basic vault.

Moving across Swinton and going via Station Road and Partington Lane (or the 22 bus), one reaches the second Park on Worsley Road (A572). The **Park Inn** has a cosy lounge, a smaller, boisterous vault and quieter side room.

The final pub of the tour is the one with a different brewery and beer. According to the GBG the **Pied Piper** is located on Eastham Way, Walkden, but it's actually in Little Hulton, not too far off Manchester Road East (A6). This large, sixties estate pub, with extended lounge and vault, belongs to Robinsons and sells Best Bitter and Hatters Mild. Between the two main rooms is a former outdoor licence shop.

*Next month, Stockport.*



## Rupert

Joint editorship is never easy. Eddy succeeds, with Glenys employing her Fowler/Partridge-programmed blue pencil to pedantic effect in the background, but reserving to himself the final sanction of omitting the most contentious of his contributors' pieces. Not so with Charlie Super and Tubs Caries, who vie with each other to permit or even encourage articles which may be destructive of the campaign. The Alefiend's polemic is a case in point. Although it is difficult to argue with its essential wisdom, it does little to promote harmony among branches.

It is said that Yalebridge graduates make you aware of their alma mater within one minute of meeting you. Alefiend leaves it until the third line of his piece about licensed premises which have influenced his health. It is clearly his physical health to which he refers, because the clarity of thought instilled by his seat of learning shines through what he says.

There are some, less privileged, observers who might have thought that for a hostelry to serve a range of high quality ale was a necessary but not sufficient condition for those premises to be considered excellent. I, for one, was with Bogbrush in contending that 'quality of pubness' depends as

much on the ambience created by layout, decor and the imprint of the licensee's personality as it does on beer quality and choice. I stand corrected.

The only criterion of excellence, although for some reason this is not reflected in the Regional Pub of the Year, is beer quality and choice. It seems to matter little whether the licensee is a welcoming host, full of bonhomie, or a mood-swinging curmudgeon, vacillating between suicidal depression and hyper-rudeness. And, whatever the ambience of the place, as long as it continues to serve a vast range of esoteric amber nectars, it should be praised to high heaven and supported by Campaign members, whose only *raison d'être* is to ensure the commercial success of those who meet its highest standards. It's certainly changed my view of what I should be admiring in our stock of taverns.

No longer shall I seek out a place where a generous welcome awaits all its customers or where I feel comfortable. Instead I shall encourage everyone to visit amber nectar nirvanas, even if the licensee has been a frequent runner-up in the Most Miserable Landlord in Britain competition.

*Next month:* rumour denials of adultery, philandering and drug addiction.

*Contributors to this issue:* Roger Hall, Pete Cash, Ian Walker, Stewart Revell, Paul Warbrick, Ian Kenny, Steve Smith, Mark McConachie, Duncan Busman, Daddy Bell



# Branch Diary

## 2002 National Winter Ales Festival Meetings

Sundays at the Crescent at 12.30pm:  
14th Oct, 11th Nov, 9th Dec.

### Regional Meeting

Wed 10th Oct 8pm,  
Crescent, Salford

### North Manchester

[www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester](http://www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester)

Wed 3rd Oct. Stalybridge Shuffle: Buffet Bar, Q Bar & White House.  
Trains 18.56 (Vic), 19.12 (Picc), 19.56 (Vic). Return 22.25 (Vic), 22.34 (Picc), 23.25 (Vic).

Wed 10th Oct 8pm, Regional Meeting, Crescent, Salford.

Wed 17th Oct, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford, 8pm.

Wed 24th Oct, Social, Morning Star, Manchester Rd. Wardley, 8pm.

Tue 30th Oct, What's Doing collation. Queens Arms, Honey St, 6pm.

Wed 31st Oct. Hallowe'en Social, Atherton. Train 18.28 (Vic) for Wheatsheaf, Market St, at 7.15pm, or 19.20 (Vic) for Pendle Witch, Warburton Place (off Market St) at 8.05pm.

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

### Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 2 Oct 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Cemetery Hotel, Bury Road, Rochdale

Sat 13/Sun 14 Oct, Weekend Coach Social, York & York Brewery.  
Details from Branch Contact

Sun 28 Oct, Tandle Hill 10k Fun Run. Details from Branch Contact

Tue 30 Oct 8.30pm, Committee/WD Collation, Britannia, Lomax Street, Rochdale

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

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

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

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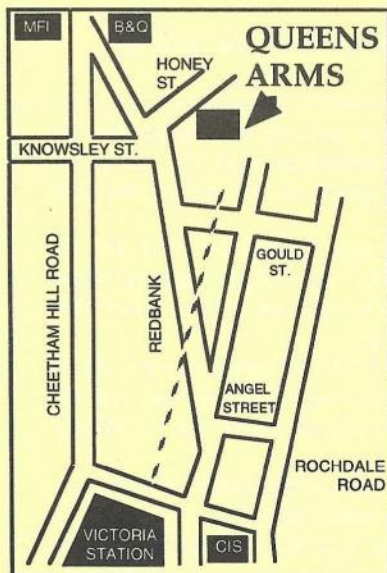
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