

30p

What's Doing

JANUARY 2002



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

NEW PUB FOR HOLTS

The Pepper Alley opened in Bolton on 29th November. The former Millstone on Crown Street has been enlarged by knocking through into next door and into a building at the back on Bank Street. The Crown Street side has tables intended for diners and the menu is quite extensive for Holts, with most main meals costing £3 - £4.

A flight of steps leads to a second bar on the lower, Bank Street level. Further back are the food bar and more drinking areas, including one for





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non-smokers. Another door leads out to Bank Street. Each level has its own set of toilets and the lower one also has a cash dispenser. The beer garden to one side of the pub is similarly on two levels, and its outer wall is one side of Bank Street Chapel.

The Pepper Alley is a well-lit, airy place, decorated with eighteenth and nineteenth century portraits on the walls and televisions suspended from the ceilings. Beer prices are higher than usual for Holts: £1.32 and £1.39 at peak times for mild and bitter. However, from 2pm to 8pm, these reduce to £1.24 and £1.30, which is cheap for Bolton centre.

My first drink was 'Traditional Blonde Bier' served via handpump at 78p a half. It doesn't claim to be a lager, but the spelling of 'bier' and the pale colour and low hop rate put it close to that style. I understand that the handpump is temporary, because although cask-conditioned, Blonde Bier undergoes Holts' 'smooth' (mixed gas) treatment on its way to the glass.

Although it is against CAMRA policy to accept such beers as 'real', or to approve such hybrid dispense systems, I could not detect any excessive gassiness in the product. Smooth mild is also available, but here there is no confusion in the dispensers.

The only criticism of the Pepper Alley (a minor one) is that on the opening day there were no beermats on any of the tables; I hope this is a temporary oversight and not a matter of policy!

Pete Cash

Harvest Ale

John Willie Lees' limited edition Harvest Ale went on sale last month. This special brew is produced in October and November each year from the first crops of the finest of the season's barley, malt and hops. The character of the beer varies from year to year according to growing and harvesting conditions, and each vintage will mature differently over the years.

The 11.5% Harvest Ale was first produced in 1986 and has gained an international reputation; it sells in specialist outlets in New York for up to \$55 a bottle. In Manchester, the beer is available for a more modest £2.20 per 275ml bottle. It can be bought by the bottle or the case from Willoughby's in Manchester (0161 834 6850) or by contacting J W Lees direct (0161 643 2487).



Daddy Bell's Drinking Diary

Friday, November 23rd: Being unable to get up to Foxfield, I content myself with a visit to the **Bury Beer Festival**. The Met hall is extraordinarily cold, and the few tickers present find so little to interest them that they soon seek solace elsewhere. I have no difficulty in identifying at least ten beers I expect to enjoy, and I am not disappointed, Brakspear's OBJ, B&T's Black Bat, and Crouch Vale's Anchor Street Porter being among my flavoursome favourites.

Tuesday, December 11th: One of the advantages of the new Marble/Fringe synergy is the appearance of Marble beers in the **Knott Fringe Bar**, alongside Boggart and Phoenix beers (and Tetley bitter). The handpumps are now all grouped together, there are brewery and other posters pasted on the walls and new furniture has appeared, including a leather(ette?) three-piece suite around a stylish oval table. Last Saturday, I had deemed the Swedish Pripps Bla lager to be kinder to my sore throat than any raspingly hoppy English beer; and today I opt for Cloudy Marble, which nowadays is without even a smidgeon of cloudiness.

Friday, December 14th: Having unaccountably missed Jennifer's Lancashire Festival at the **Smithfield**, I try to atone for this omission by putting in an appearance at her Christmas Special. Terry has made a trip to collect some Scottish beers (from Black Isle, Moulin and McCowan's), and I manage a few halves (all good) from a representative selection. The star of the festival is a Smithfield 5th anniversary beer from Black Isle.

Sunday, December 16th: A jolly jaunt by coach to Haworth, and lunch at the **Old Hall**. This has been in Jennings' hands for a year now. It's in the 2002 GBG, and Keighley & Craven CAMRA have voted it their 'most improved pub' of 2001. There's still room for improvement, however: our meal takes about an hour to appear from ordering to serving. Had the delay been any longer, I should have

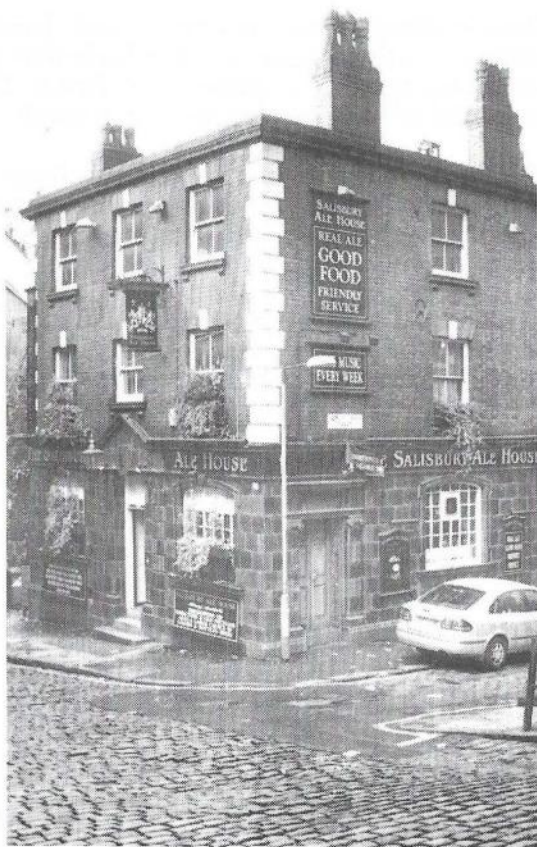


required a third pint of the excellent 6.5% La'al Cockle Warmer. (The food was very good as well.)

Monday, December 17th: An appointment at UMIST suggests a visit to the **Sandbar** for a pint of Fruh Kölsch, and a foray into the refurbished **Salisbury** (where Baby Bell is now a weekend barmaid) for Jennings' Cocker Hoop. En route home, a call into the **Ape and Apple** finds Holts' Blonde Bier on handpump at £1.55. It is a very clear, rich gold beer with a good white head, but too phenolic; indeed, there seems to be an oddly phenolic aroma throughout the pub.

Tuesday, December 18th: Via the Knott Fringe Bar (Marble Chocolate Heavy on very good form) to the **Marble Arch** itself, where guest beers (not necessarily organic) have rejoined the regular Marble range. Pictish Rudolph's Rocket Fuel (7.3%) is on, and proves to be another triumph for Richard Sutton. (It is also available the same day in the **Beer House** and the **Crescent**.) I am joined by James Campbell, the Marble brewer, fresh from tweaking

his Uncut Amber recipe, and offering a sample which shows new depths of flavour. Then he gives me exciting news of a forthcoming Marble beer, a 4.2% Manchester Bitter which will be launched at the Knott Fringe Bar during the National Winter Ales Festival. It is intended to be stunning: don't miss it. And in 2002 further varieties of organic hops will become available, greatly extending the range of flavour and aroma possibilities: besides Hallertau Traditional, we should be able to detect the presence of Belgian Goldings, Spalt Select, Herzbrucker and Perle hops in Marble recipes.



Dry times in Oldham

Grognaard

In Oldham centre, the 'Real Ale Trail' has been like the settings of a cheap brooch with bits dropping off. First to go was the **Bath Hotel** on Union Street, opened - or reopened, I should say - by John (formerly of Porter's Ashton Arms) as an outlet for local brews such as Pictish and Boggart. John had an arrangement with Tony Goddard (formerly of the Pot of Beer in Manchester) and at that time running the Buck and Union, also on Union Street.

Then suddenly Tony packed up and decamped without a leaving party and a few weeks later the Bath shut its doors. John is still in residence, pending a decision by Punch Taverns, but there is no guarantee of real ale when the pub reopens.

Next to go was the **Bank Top**, just off King Street, a Lees tied house. Andy went through the usual crowd-pullers such as disco evenings, quizzes, etc, but the place wasn't paying, I am told, so he decided to move on to new pastures.

Misfortune tends to go in threes, so the **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street will no longer be a Porters house after the New Year. David Porter has been disappointed with the returns over the last two years and negotiations with Oldham Municipality over the rent reached an impasse. The original figure of £10,000 a year was unacceptable; David suggested £5,000 but Oldham, cash-strapped as per usual, would not go below £7,500, so that was it. David is planning a

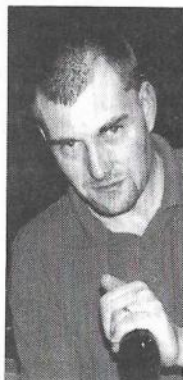


pub/restaurant in Derbyshire and Mark, the manager, will be doing a short term at the Railway in Stockport. Interesting, when you consider that John at the Bath had to pay £500 a week rent to Punch Taverns.

It is some comfort to report that the **Buck and Union** is still open and supplying five or six real ales in excellent condition. There are grumbles over its pricing policy, but I should mention that at the time of writing it has a bargain in Rudolph's Sleigh, 7.3% and £1.99.

Meanwhile, John Willies are hoping for big things with the redeveloped **Boat and Horses** on Broadway, Chadderton, a spacious edifice with a tower and large car park near the Rochdale Canal. It is broadly divided into a lounge, vault and restaurant, although numerous nooks and crannies have been created with the use of wooden partitions in various styles. It seems a pleasant enough place for a drink or a meal, although at £1.60 for bitter and £1.55 for mild, a bit pricey. The vault has a variety of pub games on offer for those who want more than conversation.

Finally, all the best for the New Year to Alan and Lynne at the **Beer House** in Manchester - keep the beers rolling in. I must congratulate Alan on his amazing impersonation of Vinny Jones on the cover of last month's *What's Doing*. Let's hope we don't have any 'smoking barrels' in the pub! Oh well, please yourselves.



Progressive Beer Duty

Last March the government announced that it was considering a system of progressive beer duty to help Britain's small brewers, but there was no mention of this in Gordon Brown's pre-Budget speech at the end of November. CAMRA is now urging the government to introduce the system in this year's March Budget.

With progressive beer duty, very small companies would pay a lower rate of beer tax. The system would cost the Treasury very little, but could be the difference between life and death for many of Britain's 400 small breweries. They have less than 2% of the beer market, but produce some 2,000 real ales to match local tastes. The three biggest companies have around 85% of the market.

A lower tax rate would lead to increased investment in small breweries, improve cash flow (one of the biggest problems facing small businesses), create local jobs and, of course, promote choice and diversity for beer drinkers.

New Goose

The **Goose on Deansgate** recently opened in the old Whitehead's shop in Bolton (next to the Pepper Alley). It is a spacious Bass pub on two floors, with views of Bradshawgate and Deansgate from the upstairs bar. The real ales on offer were Highgate Special (£1 a pint), Draught Bass (£1.50), Pedigree, Adnams bitter and Taylors Landlord (which was popular). The Goose has a no-music policy and there are no-smoking zones.



Liverpool

Trotter takes the train to Liverpool...

First stop was **Dr Duncans** on St John's Lane, a short walk from Lime Street Station. This is a friendly, multi-room pub occupying part of the old Pearl insurance offices. The full range of Cains ales is available, as well as four guest ales. I sampled a pint of Grey Stone, a limited edition beer from Roosters of Harrogate.

Next stop was the quaint **Globe** on Cases Street, opposite Central Station and adjacent to Clayton Square. It is better to begin a Liverpool pub crawl here, rather than visit the place after having had a few, since the sloping floor can have an adverse effect on one's sense of balance. The beers were Cains Bitter, FA and mild, plus Tetley bitter and Dogs Bollocks.

Before catching the train, I had a pint of Our Ken (one of the Cottage Brewery seasonal ales) in the **Head of Steam** at Lime Street Station. Here, up to fourteen real ales are available in the Grand Hall.

The City Gates

Dave Crookell

Last year saw the unfortunate demolition of several public houses including two associated with our favourite football teams, one geographically and the other historically. In Old Trafford, the bricks and mortar are no longer united at one of the pubs closest to the home of the Stretford Rangers, the **Dog and Partridge**, but perhaps of more significance for football fans from the Manchester area was the final whistle for the **City Gates** on Hyde Road in Ardwick.

Originally known as the **Hyde Road Hotel**, this Chesters pub played a leading role in the life of Manchester City FC for thirty-six years. The first meeting of Ardwick FC was held in the hotel on 23rd August 1887 and seven years later the meetings to re-form as Manchester City took place. The team often changed in the hotel and for a while a sign proudly proclaimed, 'The Headquarters of Manchester City Football Club'. The impressive building provided a prestigious façade to what was a cramped, drab football ground lying alongside the viaduct carrying the tracks of the L&NW Railway out of what was then London Road Station.

After City moved to Maine Road in 1923, the importance of the Hyde Road Hotel diminished and as the industry and population of the area declined so did the public house. In 1983 the building was given a new lease of life when it was renamed the City Gates under landlord and former Blues centre half George Heslop. The interior was decorated in sky blue and white, with many photographs of modern-



day City players adorning the walls. A wall of mock graffiti was installed, while a corner near the bar was fitted with a cabinet containing fairly unimpressive copies of the game's major trophies.

The refurbishment was in reality a rather tasteless attempt at cashing in on football. Had the building been fitted out to provide a true history of the club -

or even some reference to the club's Hyde Road days - rather than a 1980s view of City, then it might have proved successful. As it was, the City Gates closed for the last time in 1988 and remained derelict for almost as long as the laser blue heroes have been without a trophy. The building was demolished in 2001.



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Real Ale in Monton

Pete Cash

Monton, although sharing an Eccles postcode, has a distinct identity, a 'village' with a good selection of shops, a post office, restaurants and its own Christmas illuminations. So what is there for the real ale drinker? A few years ago Monton boasted four real ale pubs, but sadly the Blue Bell (the oldest original pub) and the Barge Inn (Banks's, by the side of the Bridgewater Canal) now only offer the smoothflow variety.

Holts' **Park Hotel** on Monton Road is the third building on the site, a 1970 replacement for the 1902 pub which had become unsafe owing to mining subsidence, and itself a rebuild of a pub they acquired in 1867. The main lounge of the Park was enlarged a few years ago and it has just received a new consignment of furniture.

The **Drop Inn** is just a couple of minutes up the road. This has a much shorter history as licensed premises. It started as a wine bar, was converted to a pub by owner John Edington and extended into next door, then John Smiths made him an offer he couldn't refuse. He left and bought another pub - the Edington Arms - next to Hindley station.

The Drop Inn was offering Boddingtons Bitter and a guest, Charles Wells Bombardier. I bought a pint of the latter and took my seat. My companions were a long time joining me and a worried looking landlord came over and asked me if the beer was all right as it was the last pint from the cask. It was fine, and it is good to see such concern for customers!

The replacement guest was Barnsley Black Heart Stout; very hoppy for this style of beer. We enjoyed this for the rest of the evening and stayed until last orders, because being Wednesday, it was Jazz Night with regular musicians the Jazz Bandits (0161 761 7348). I was particularly impressed by the guitar of leader Frank and the singing of Shirley Williams.



Wigan and district

Dave White

On 13th December 2001, the worthies of Wigan CAMRA held a branch meeting/Christmas social at the **Mayflower Brewery**, Standish. I was going to write an article about the brewery, but decided that I could add little to Alan Gall's informative piece on the subject in September's *What's Doing*.

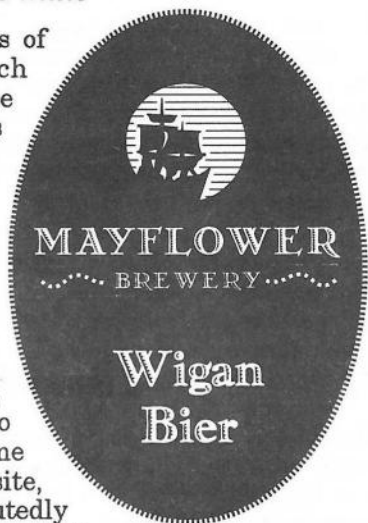
For the record, however, mine host Stewart Thompson now produces a 3.4% dark ale called Black Diamond, and the 5% brew that Alan referred to is probably Hic Bibi. The name commemorates a local ancient well site, from which Oliver Cromwell reputedly drank in 1648. (Look it up in your Latin primer.) Many thanks to Stewart and the team for their hospitality.

Mayflower Black Diamond is now a permanent fixture at the **Black Diamond**, Warrington Road, Lower Ince. This pub would be well worth a visit even if it wasn't the only real ale outlet in Ince, which it is, as the **Park** on Manchester Road, Higher Ince, is presently closed and up for sale or to let.

It's been all go in South West Lancs recently, as the landlord of the **Red Lion**, Ash Brow, Newburgh, has moved to the **Stocks Tavern**,

Alder Lane, Parbold. The licensee of the **Farmers Arms**, Chorley Road, Bispham Green, has in turn gone to the Red Lion. All three pubs sold cask conditioned beer before the moves.

News in brief: real ale returns to the **Tavern** on Mesnes Street, Wigan - older readers and toppers may remember the pub as the **Market** (left) - and the beer on sale is Courage Directors at £1.90 a pint.

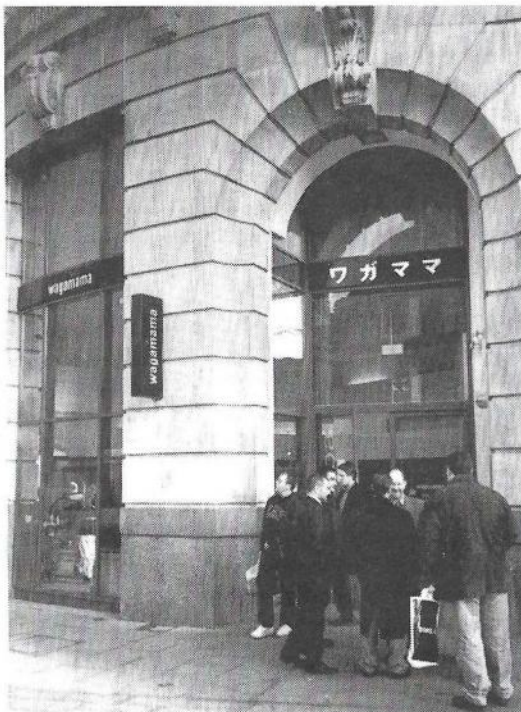


Ah, so!

Ebi Katsu

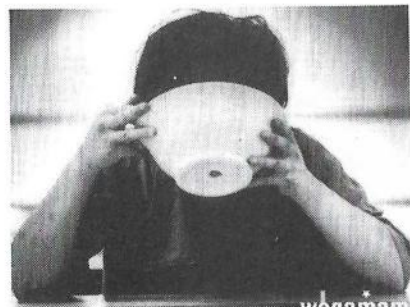
Down a couple of flights of stairs at the other end of the Printworks from Wetherspoons is Wagamama.

This is a Japanese noodle bar with minimalist decor and twelve huge, twelve-seater tables, monks' refectory style. It serves the full range of Japanese noodles - Ramen, Soba, Udon and Somen - in a wide variety of dishes. All the food is freshly cooked to order from quality ingredients. It arrives when it is ready, so a group of people can receive meals at different times.



The place is no smoking.

Beer is available - Asahi, Kirin, Sapporo and Tiger at around £3.50 for half a litre. The food is not as expensive; a main course and a side dish comes to about £11. There's a fair range of vegetarian options in each of the main styles.



Wagamama is open 12-11 Monday to Saturday and 12-10 Sunday. You can't book because 'Wagamama was conceived as a non-destinational food station.' No plain English prizes there, then, but the food's good.

Foresters

The Foresters Arms on Chorley Road, Swinton, reopened as Roscoe's in November. The pub has been redecorated, but the internal layout remains the same, as does the absence of real ale.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Dave Crookell, Steve Smith, Roger Hall, Dave White, Pete Cash, Stewart Revell, Michael Lynn

Marsden Meander

This year's Marsden article has been provided by Countryman...

The first pub in Marsden is just across the Greater Manchester boundary - the **Great Western**, opposite Redbrook Reservoir on Manchester Road. This pleasant little place, named after the steamship, has comfortable rooms and a bar area dispensing John Smiths Bitter, Tetley Bitter, Theakston Cask Ale, Worthington Best Bitter and a guest beer. Some outside seats and a busy food operation complete the picture.

A couple of hundred yards along the road is the **Carriage House**, a moorland hostelry and Boddingtons free house where the real ales these days tend to be Taylors Landlord and Tetley Bitter. There is a centralised bar with a long, low room and a separate dining area. The building appears to have had an extension added.

With only a grass verge to walk on, and mindful of sheep droppings, I continued along the road, lamenting the loss of the **Coach & Horses** (*below*), now the Rawson community centre, and passing the **Hey Green Hotel** on Waters Road, which has a residents-only bar. I went instead to the **Tunnel End Inn** on Reddisher Road, adjacent to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, newly restored and reopened with a



visitor centre. The pub had one real ale on offer - Old Mill Bitter - and there was a noticeable lack of customers for a Saturday evening. The exterior was faded and the interior careworn, but it must have some potential, what with the thriving **Diggle Hotel** at the opposite end of the Standedge tunnel.

The reopening of the canal prompted the opening of a new canalside pub, the **Waters Edge**, but only keg beers are sold.

A visit to the **Riverhead Brewery Tap** on Peel Street proved to be a more rewarding experience. All the beers are named after local reservoirs and I opted as usual for the Black Moss Stout, Deer Hill Porter and Sparth Mild. Butterley Bitter, Cupwith Special Bitter, March Haigh Bitter and Redbrook Premium are just as good and there is usually a cask cider as well. As my visit was near to the time of the annual jazz festival, a fruity, hoppy special called Jazz (3.8%) was also on offer. Needless to say, I lingered longer here. If you only ever visit Marsden once in your lifetime, make sure you go to this pub.

On the opposite side of the river is the **Swan**, a former free house on Station Road, now a comfortable Thwaites pub selling mild, bitter and Daniels Hammer.

Visitors to Marsden arriving or departing by train will encounter the **Railway**, also on Station Road, a Burtonwood house selling bitter and a guest beer. On my visit this was Thwaites Reward (£1.82 a pint), but I didn't care much for the taste, as I found it reminiscent of a medicinal concoction forced down me in childhood. The opened-out pub has an L-shaped bar and area for pool, together with two further side rooms.

The **Shakespeare** on Peel Street sells Tetley bitter and mild on handpump. Back on Manchester Road there is the **New Inn**, but the lone handpump was turned about face. Further along the same road in the direction of Slaithwaite is the **Olive Branch**, a one time real ale outlet. Despite the show of handpumps, only keg beers are sold and the place is now more of a licensed restaurant than a pub.

Going via Fall Lane one comes to the **Hare & Hounds** on Mount Road. This is a stone-built, hillside local with two comfortable front rooms, one with a pool table and the other with a large stone fireplace and a television set on the floor in front of it. The bar has two areas which are mostly patronised by diners, and although there are five or so handpumps, the only real ale is Tetley bitter.

The **Old New Inn** on Carrs Road is now in the hands of Enterprise Inns. Tetley Bitter is the real ale, and I found this to be superior in

quality and taste (and a few pennies cheaper) than at the previous pub. There is a bar-cum-lounge area and a section for those wishing to indulge in pool or watch television.

Next, to **Marsden Conservative Club** on Victoria Street, where the town's first ever beer festival was in progress. A fiver to get in seems extortionate (and no discount for CAMRA members), but the fee did include a souvenir programme, a commemorative glass and two half pint beer tokens. The proceeds went to help the Colne Valley Lions charity appeal. Casks were racked on stillages and the beers came from local brewers like Riverhead (whose 3.8% Coffin Ale was brewed especially for the festival), Anglo Dutch, Linfit, Ossett, Ryburn and West Yorkshire. J W Lees was also available. This was the Marsden's first beer festival and I was told it wouldn't be the last. I'll certainly look out for the next one.

Marsden can be reached by bus from Oldham (365) or train from Manchester Victoria via Greenfield.

Swinton Blues

Roger Hall

In the late 1970s those who joined Swinton Conservative Club did so not so much from deeply-held Thatcherite convictions as because of the facilities - four snooker tables and cask conditioned beer. The club withstood the keg revolution and sold cask Tetleys mild and bitter for many years. Indeed, at one time in the early nineties, the Tetleys beers were accompanied by handpumped Boddingtons and Holts - excellent choice whilst playing on the green baize. There were even guest beers, a different one each week, albeit limited to the wider Whitbread range.

The rot set in with the arrival of nitrokeg. Gradually, smooth beers were introduced alongside the cask and, one by one, the cask beers vanished. In November 2001 the last cask beer - Marstons Pedigree - disappeared, a testimony to Conservative taste.

At one time you would have been able to seek refuge in the two pubs across the car park. Sadly, the only handpump in the Weavers was clipless in early December and only the Tetleys and Boddingtons smooth pumps were in use. If the Weavers was noisy, the Football next door was deafening. The pub does, however, serve cask beer, Tetleys mild and a lacklustre pint of Boddies. It's not so long ago that the Football appeared in the Good Beer Guide. Swinton centre's no real ale Mecca and it's a long walk to the White Lion between games of snooker.

Holts corner

Stewart Revell

The new **Pepper Alley** in Bolton opened last month, a remarkable transformation from the old Millstone and adjoining property. Holts bought the Millstone some eighteen months ago, but conversion work didn't begin until the latter part of 2001, when the brewery bought the building which now forms the Bank Street side of the pub. As with the Railway in Didsbury (opened March 2001), the Holts name doesn't appear on the outside of the building and prices are higher than normal.

During December the exterior signs at the **Dukes Gate**, Little Hulton, were spruced up somewhat and the pub is due for a redecoration around April.

I hear that Holts may start brewing small batches of beer to different recipes during 2002. More news as and when.

stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk

Letter

A scholar writes

Sir - F.A.O. Daddy Bell, Rupert and other writers trying to recapture their lost youth by returning to the classics.

A poser:

a) What is this a parody of? *Cur ursus clamat?*
Cur fermentum amat?

b) What was the original?

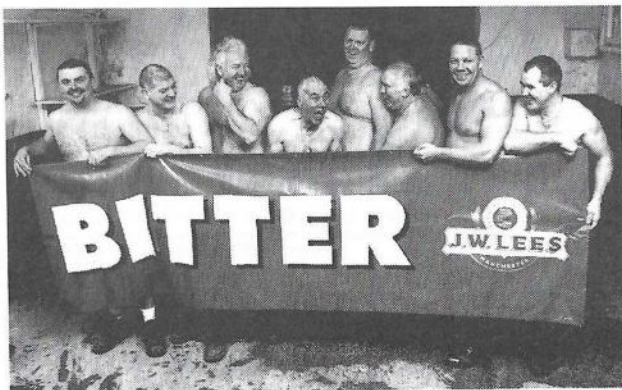
c) It might help to give the next two lines: *Burr, burr, burr*
Quid est casuae cur?

Usual dolium of Drabs to the winner.

Robina

Willies

Inspired by the Pirelli calendar, the ladies of the Womens Institute, etc, eight hunky draymen have posed as the November pin-ups for the 2002 J W Lees calendar.





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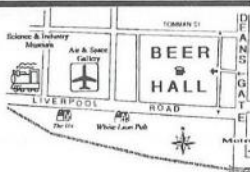
**MANCHESTER
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CAMRA 2002 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL



Festival Opening & Admission: (hours to be confirmed)

Thursday 24 January: 5.30 - 10.30pm (£2),

Friday 25 January: 12 - 4 (£2) & 5.30 - 10.30pm (£3),

Saturday 26 January: 12 - 4 (£2) & 5.30 - 10.30pm (£2).

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Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupulus

Part 25 - The Golden Jubilee (i)

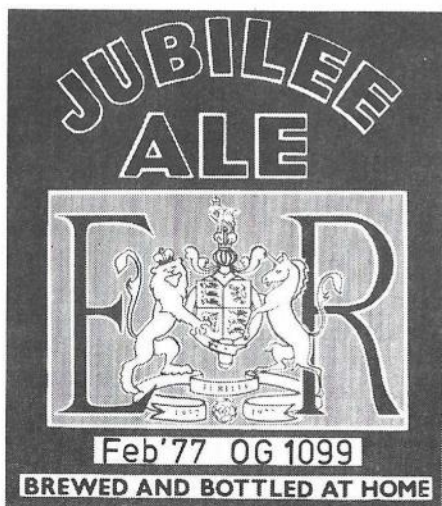
February sees the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The approach of this event reminded me of the Silver Jubilee in 1977, when most of the nation's brewers produced special commemorative beers with distinctive labels and closure foils. A common feature of these beers was their high strength, since they were designed for 'laying down', much in the manner of a vintage wine, to be enjoyed years later.

In those days, home brewers were kept informed of suppliers and developments in the hobby by the long established magazine *Amateur Winemaker & Home Brewer*. In May 1977, in co-operation with their regular contributor, Dave Line, they produced some 'Jubilee Ale' labels to go with Dave's recipe: 6lb pale malt, 2lb lager malt, 1lb brown sugar, 3oz Goldings and 1oz Styrian, to produce 2 gallons at og 1095. In the final paragraph Dave said, 'I wish I could turn the clock forward 25 years, so I might sample how this brew has "reigned".' Sadly he died a few short years later.

I had already anticipated Dave by some five months, for in January 1977 I made my own Silver Jubilee Ale: 8lb pale malt, 5oz crystal malt, 3oz flaked barley, 9oz flaked rice, 2oz Northern Brewer, 1oz Goldings, and a further ounce of Goldings and an ounce of Bramling Cross hop pellets from Bass brewery at the end of the boil.

This yielded two-and-a-quarter gallons at og 1099 and fg 1021, primed and sealed in half-pint bottles and topped with silver foil closures. For the finishing touch I ordered the AW labels (pictured) and stuck them, after trimming, to my bottles. Alcohol by volume was not a common measure in those days, but I recently calculated that it would have been 10.5% when bottled, and if all the sugars and starches have since been fermented, it could be a maximum 13%.

A few bottles remain unopened to this day and it is planned, as a feature of the Golden Jubilee *What's Doing* next month, to sample some of these along with other landmark beers and report the findings.



Rupert

'Old Zimbabwe-Talbot's right, you know,' Ophelia began, 'You should get out more, Roop.' I said nothing as I was still in disguise and did not want to give away my identity to those outside my circle of trusted friends. 'It's not the same for him,' Bunty responded and took a long pull at a pint of foaming Drabs in the back room of Wedgies where we'd met for our usual Yuletide conviviality.

'I know that folk singers, much like morris dancers, can be intensely irritating, but I, for one, have never thumped one in anger and, if truth be known, I've thumped one or two people in my time.'

'Roop's in a different category. He needs to recognise (he said this as though I wasn't in the room) that if he must write about tavern keepers like he does, then they're likely to get upset and set up fatwa vendettas against him. They're a bunch of *prime donne* who see insults in everything and try to wear caps which not only don't fit but weren't intended for them in the first place. The blandest of bland remarks are as though Roop had referred to Al Capone and Mike Tyson as a pair of mincing nancy boys.

It's no wonder he had to spend the last two months holed up in the Satan's bowel cave complex in deepest Pique. I'm not always there to protect him from psychopathic reactions to his ill-judged comments. It would be far better if he just kept to the good news instead of spreading doom and gloom like he does. It only gets him into trouble and fuels his reclusiveness.'

'You're a fine one to talk, Bunty!' This from Fiona, who'd joined us from a party at Rattie's. 'It's not long since you were sent to Strangleways for rushing off down the East Lancs Road to duff up insolent Scousely persons. Now that they're in our midst, you accept what they say. Have you turned into a yellow nancy boy or what? Roop's a third-rate excuse for a human being and writes incoherent drivel, but we should defend to the death his right to do it.

I'm sick of smug Scouselytes - has anyone had a pretentious secular

Yuletide newsletter from Bogbrush yet?

The only decent thing I can think to say about Zimbabwe-Talbot is that I'm delighted that he's still capable of frightening the horses, not

something you'd be doing, eh Roop, at least not in front of the servants?' With that, she

kicked me in the groin and the tray of drinks went over.



Branch Diary

North Manchester

www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 2 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height Crawl: Waggon & Horses 7pm,
Wellington 7.30 pm, Red Lion 9 pm.

Sun 6 Jan 12.30pm, Winter Ales Meeting, Crescent.

Wed 9 Jan 8pm, Regional Meeting (Bolton Branch), Dog & Partridge,
Bank Street, Bolton

Wed 16 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent

Wed 23 Jan, Setting up of Winter Ales Festival, Campfield Market
Hall. Followed by Social: meet White Lion (over the road), then Knott
Fringe Bar at 10pm.

Tues 29 Jan 6pm onwards, What's Doing Golden Jubilee Edition
collation. Queens Arms.

Wed 30 Jan 8pm, Social, Eagle, Collier Street, Salford.

Wed 6 Feb 8pm, GBG 2003 Shortlisting and Annual Price Survey.
Beer House, Angel Street.

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 8 Jan 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Wishing Well, York Street,
Heywood

Fri 25 Jan, Evening Social, CAMRA Winter Ales Festival, Castlefield
Market, Manchester. Branch contact has details.

Tues 29 Jan 8.30pm, Committee/What's Doing Collation, Albion,
Whitworth Road, Rochdale

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

Wigan

Wed 9 January 8pm, Branch Meeting, Colliers Arms, Wigan Road,
New Springs.

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 428016 (w), 427595 (h)
email john@misltd.co.uk

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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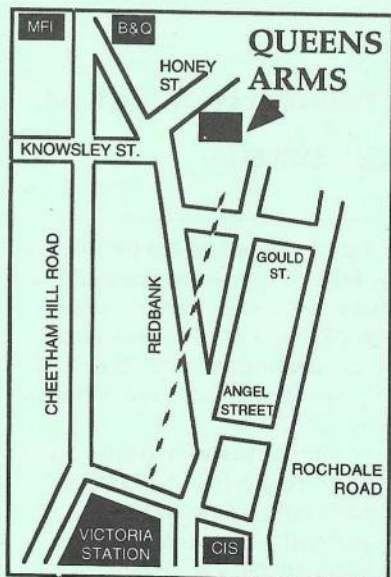
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