

30p

# What's Doing

FEBRUARY 2002



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## JUBILEE YEAR

When we gained a new monarch fifty years ago, the nation had a fair number of breweries and pubs of every description. Real ale was everywhere, although some of it was rather iffy. By the time of the Silver Jubilee in 1977 we had keg beer and some breweries were knocking their pubs about with a vengeance. CAMRA and *What's Doing* were around by then, so this issue contains a look back at what was happening in 1977.



*The Wheatsheaf in Altrincham fifty years ago. Now a free house - see inside.*





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## Jubilee

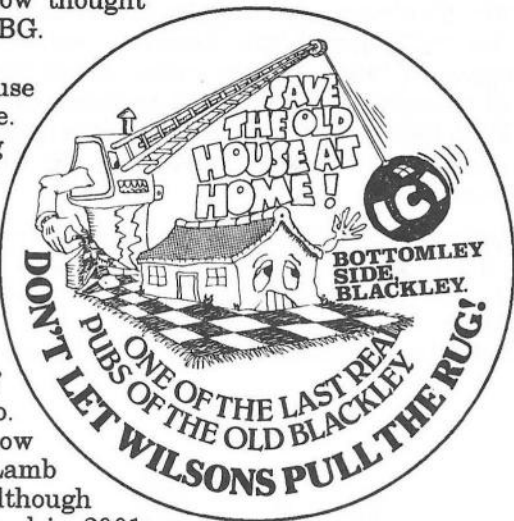
Roger Hall

In 1977 *What's Doing* largely ignored the Silver Jubilee, apart from an enigmatic comment on a Manchester Evening News placard. Nonetheless, it is interesting to look back on what was happening in 1977. There were 29 entries for North Manchester and Salford in the Good Beer Guide for that year. Of these, two have been demolished and three have been closed or converted to other uses. Only five of the original 29 are in the current GBG.

In Blackley, the Old House at Home and the Pleasant in Crab Village were included. The Old House was the subject of a hard-fought campaign against Grand Met and ICI, who wanted to knock it down. The Pleasant was a regular GBG entry for many years. Sadly, there are no pubs in Blackley now thought worthy of inclusion in the GBG.

In Cheetham, the Mile House was the sole representative. It has been keg for a long time and its place in the Guide has been taken by the Queens Arms just down the road.

The Crown & Volunteer, the Egerton, the Queens and the Lamb were Eccles' representations 25 years ago. The Crown & Volunteer is now a solicitor's office, but the Lamb is still in the guide, although landlord Barry Cowley retired in 2001 after nearly 30 years at the pub. The Egerton seems to have lost much of the appeal it had in 1977.



The Queens has not lost its appeal. It is still one of the finest pubs in Greater Manchester. The North Manchester branch of CAMRA was successful in having the pub listed by English Heritage and is resisting Greenalls' attempts to knock all the walls down. This campaign did not go down too well with some pub regulars, but the Queens continues to thrive as a convivial local as it has done for over 170 years. I suppose it is the restricted beer range which has kept the Queens out of this year's guide. Recently, Grays has been on sale as a guest, so perhaps it may reappear in 2003.

*What's Doing* had already indicated in 1976 that the Boat House in Irlam was due to be done up. This was something of an



understatement; the pub was virtually demolished and rebuilt and the original, idiosyncratic layout was lost. Nevertheless, it was thought worthy of inclusion for several years. Now there are no Irlam and Cadishead pubs in the guide.

The White Lion, a Boddies pub in Little Hulton, was never much to write home about. It was probably only ever included as a sop to geographical coverage. Today the only pubs in the guide for the whole of Worsley, Walkden and Little Hulton are the upmarket John Gilbert and the Morning Star.

There were six North Manchester entries in the City Centre in 1977. The Burton Arms has gone through a decline and a renaissance since then. It may well be a contender for 2003. The Crown & Kettle has been closed for a long time. Hopes are that it might one day reopen. The Castle and the Jolly Angler are in the 2002 guide, as they were in the 1977 one. Much deserved, too. The Harp & Shamrock has appeared fairly recently under its new name the Pot of Beer, but lack of stability of licensees has perhaps prevented its appearance in the 2002 guide. The King has been keg for ages and has often vied with one or two other establishments for the worst pub in Manchester award.

Only one of Salford's ten 1977 entries is in the 2002 guide - the Union on Liverpool Street, an excellent long-standing entry. The Greyhound in Ordsall was knocked down over twenty years ago and the little Prince of Wales on Oldfield Road has been a chippy for almost as long. The Braziers, the Church on Hilton Street and the Priory are all



former Boddies houses which have lost the character they had in the seventies. The Priory was saved from a CPO by Branch action. Whether that has proved worthwhile may be debatable. The King William IV, off Trinity Way, and the Star in Higher Broughton have also lost both popularity and character over the years, notwithstanding the closure of many other pubs in those areas.

Newton Heath was sufficiently endowed with high quality boozers in 1977 to boast two entries in the GBG - the Grosvenor (*below*) and Holts' Railway. Apparently that's no longer true. Apart from an entry in the 'Inn Brief' section for the New Moston, there are no entries at all for North Manchester (Blackley, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Moston, Newton Heath, Miles Platting, Collyhurst, Ancoats). Can it possibly be true that someone stranded in this neck of the woods would not be able to find a decent pint anywhere?



Of the four Swinton entries, only the Farmers remains today - and that in the 'Inn Brief' section. The Football, the White Horse and the White Swan have never been the same since their licensees - Sid Benion, Mrs Paget and George Fildes - left. Nostalgia ain't what it used to be.

So that's the Beer Guide. What else was What's Doing banging on about 25 years ago?

Well, Boddingtons were desecrating pubs like the Three Arrows in Rhodes and Whitbread were flogging off some of their pubs. CAMRA North Manchester was fighting pub closures like the Derby and the Welcome and we were moaning about moving the Shambles. Not much change there, then. The St James Hotel in Ordsall was knocked down and the Jubilee built.

Road schemes threatened eleven Greenalls pubs in Salford and two Holts pubs in Eccles. The branch took the piss out of CAMRA books, HQ and the Beer Guide. Not much change there, either. It was reported that Holts were to spend £20,000 refurbishing the Egerton in Crumpsall. Some Greenalls pubs went over to real ale. Mild was disappearing fast. The first Manchester Beer Festival was held in the Royal Exchange. Rupert wrote his first letter to *What's Doing*.



Weaste pubs were threatened with CPOs and the Little Derby was knocked down. There were rumours that the Red Dragon on the Crescent (*below*) was soon to open as a free house. The Britannia was built at Irlam's o'th'Height and people started writing about what they drank on their holidays. There was a real ale breakthrough at Whitbreads and Paul Roberts began his famous series of Beinlos at Oktoberfest reports. Robin Bence became Chairman of the North Manchester Branch. What's Doing's in-depth historical articles about pubs began.

Since 1977 we've had the real ale success story followed by its rapid fall of fortune with the advent of nitrokeg. The pubs gained to real ale in the eighties and nineties were early casualties at the turn of the century. We've seen the fall out of the Beer Orders with the growth of pub-owning groups and the continued concentration in brewing among fewer and fewer global players. Alongside that, there has been a mushrooming of microbrewers and a growth of free houses which serve their wares. In Manchester, we've lost breweries like Oldham, Pollards, Wilsons and Whitbread and further afield Burtonwood, Matthew Brown, Greenalls and Tetleys. We've gained breweries which include Bank Top, Marble, McGuinness and Phoenix.

There may be a swath of North Manchester devoid of a decent pint, but the city centre's thriving. So it's not all bad, at least not as bad as the journey from silver to gold has been for the Royal Family. Will there be a Diamond Jubilee? Will CAMRA survive? Will *What's Doing* still be around?



## Around and about

*with Daddy Bell*

Since Christmas, many drinkers have been getting into practice for the National Winter Ales Festival, and nowhere has provided better training opportunities than the **Crescent**. On New Year's Eve I enjoyed two St George's (Callow End) beers, the 5% Festive Porter and the slightly weaker Nimrod, along with a Wassail Warmer (5%) from the ever reliable Brown Cow brewery near Selby. A few days after, the real challenge was issued, with the advent of Thomas Sykes Old Ale, a seriously addictive beer whose 10% strength you would scarcely suspect.

For those who expect such potions to have the consistency and clarity of tar, this is a revelation and a joy to which I have returned (albeit prudently in half measures) time and again. One fellow drinker, a most engaging hydrophile, vowed that henceforth he would drink only 10% and more beers, but circumspection and the attractions of other fine ales have since persuaded him otherwise. After all, who could resist two six percenters, the Festive Paddy from Dwan (sometimes somewhat sulphury, always brown, bitter, dry and woody) or the exemplary De Koninck Antoon, with its honeyed aroma and a strong hint of mango?



As promised, Archers Golden made a welcome return to the **Kings Arms** in Bloom Street, though the first cask was exhausted in four hours. Mike offered me a generous taste of Saxon Midnight Hour cider (8.2%), a beautifully smooth and clear drink with the aroma and flavour of spice-studded baked apples. It's also worth mentioning that the **Beer House** is again stocking two ciders at a time, from smaller and interesting producers.

Since everyone seems to be flocking to the **Pepper Alley** in Bolton, I thought I had better look in to see what all the fuss was about. I find it hard to cope with this new genre of Holts pubs - the split levels,

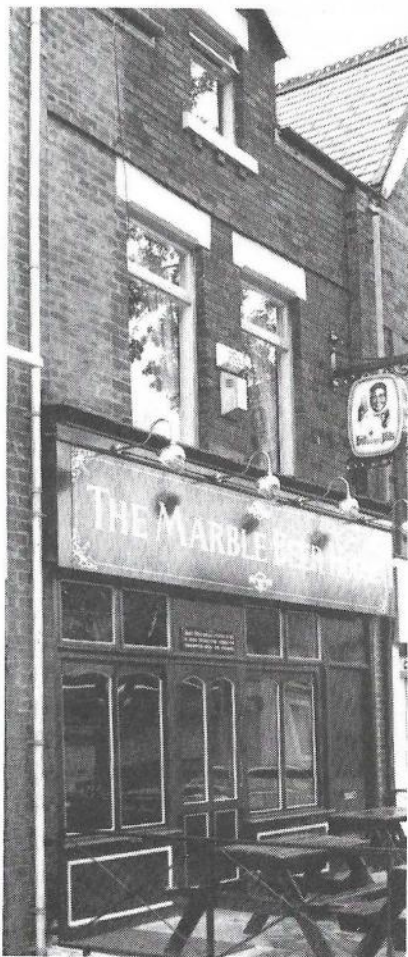


television screens, prominent ranks of silvery keg fonts, a brass luggage rack between two seating bays, and odd bits of wood panelling that one might think had been left over from other pubs or salvaged from elsewhere. But the pub is not unimpressive, especially its Bank Street frontage, next door to the Unitarian Chapel, with 'H Rigby & Co' still atop the facade as evidence of previous ownership of the premises.

I had a pint of the naughty Blonde Bier, which is refreshing enough, but too inoffensive to any taste to be a truly convincing Holtsian beer. (Some of the customers, however, were utterly authentic Holts habitués of an older generation.)

Wearing my BLO hat, I have tried to be diligent in visiting all the outlets of the Marble/Fringe empire. Returning from a pastoral visit to Newton Heath on Boxing Day, I was delighted to find the **Marble Arch** open, and James Campbell brewing N/4 bitter and preparing to brew the new Manchester Bitter the next day. (The **Smithfield** was also gratifyingly open, so I called in for a pint of Slaters Grand 'Un ('celebrating 1,000 brews of prizewinning beers'), which at 3.8% had all the hoppy flavour and aroma one has come to expect from a Slaters beer.)

On January 2nd I betook myself to the **Knott Fringe Bar** for the first of many enjoyable pints of Carls Jul (5.6%). I had never expected to hear myself call for a Carlsberg, but this was well worth it - a dark orangey gold, chilled but almost brim measure, raisiny with a lingering bitterness. (It was also available in other Marble/Fringe outlets.) Ten days later, I was in the **Bar Fringe** for a pint of Boggart Pitch Black (4.1%), one of Mark Dade's best productions to date. You could interpret it as an unassertive stout, or as something of a porter: despite its name, it has the





requisite reddish hue at bottom and a bittersweet aftertaste. Best of all, it is redolent in some ways of Brendan Dobbin's Guiltless Stout, which is a recommendation in itself.

For the first time in ages, I was also able to visit **The Bar** and the **Marble Beer House** in Chorlton, the former busier with eating as well as drinking, and its piano tucked neatly in an alcove. The latter was quieter but equally comfortable: a full range of Marble beers was available, together with a brace of Oakham ales. It's a pity it no longer does food: I seem to remember an appetising open sandwich there a few years ago, prepared and served by a no less appealing barmaid.

My most recent visit to the Knott Fringe induced me to have a lunchtime pint of Phoenix Humbug. How did this 'discerning drinker' find this 7% achievement of Tony and Richard? It is extraordinary - reminiscent of brown sherry and Three Kings incense. A further pint is obviously necessary to explore and appreciate it further.

The **Station Buffet Bar** at Stalybridge is too good a pub to be just a once-in-a-blue-moon destination. One Friday I made a quick call there for a pint of Beowulf Grendel's Winter Ale (5.8%), a thickly spicy warmer which was well worth meeting again.

My one excursion further afield lately was to Wakefield, to Avison Yard, a short distance from Kirkgate station, where I first stocked up on some home-brewing supplies and then went upstairs for an hour or so in the **Fernandes Brewery Tap**. If you don't know this establishment and its wares, shame on you! Six draught beers were available, together with Biddendens dry cider and many bottles of fruit wines and fruit spirits.

Two of the beers were of Fernandes' own brewing: TBJ (To Be Joyful), a fine sweetish gold with a perfumy aftertaste (4.3%) not unlike Bathams bitter; and a 5.9% Victorian Stout, utterly opaque, with a dark oatmeal head, soft and ultrasmooth, fudgy - rather like the original Caramac. I finished with one of Derwent's Whitwell, Mark recreations, the 5.7% Auld Kendal (which I had just missed earlier at the Beer House in Manchester). It was a fine dark red, with an alcohol-rich aroma, the sort of full-bodied strong stuff I find it hard to judge, except to say that it would make a very satisfying, leisurely end-of-session drink.

And that's quite enough beers for me for the moment!



## Altrincham

Dave Ward

Twelve months ago Altrincham's longest serving licensee, Peter Foster, left the Orange Tree, Old Market Place, after over 21 years. For most of that time the pub was in the Good Beer Guide and it received three awards from Trafford & Hulme CAMRA, including the very first to be presented by the branch in April 1982. Peter was quick to take advantage of the guest beer law - day one, or was it earlier? - but he were forced to leave the business after being head-to-head with Innentrepreneur for many years.

The good news is that Peter is back and managing the Wheatsheaf, Church Street, Altrincham. This recently renovated ex-Wilsons pub is now free of brewer, but selling Tetley and Theakstons national bland. Let's hope the owners can be persuaded to put on a more attractive beer range to celebrate the rebirth of a good community pub.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Contributors to this issue:* Roger Hall, Pete Cash, Dave Ward, Stewart Revell, Paul Warbrick, Daddy Bell, Steve Smith, Ian Kenny, Alex Koval

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## Trotter's Trail

### Little Lever

Approaching Little Lever from Moses Gate, first stop was the **Jolly Carter** on Church Street. This is a bright, friendly pub with elevated lounge, games room/vault and a separate dining area. The real ales are Taylors Landlord, Old Speckled Hen, Boddies, Tetleys Dark Mild and one from Bank Top (Sam Crompton when I called).

Passing the **Ring o'Bells** (closed for refurbishment) and turning left into Lever Street, I came to the **Horse Shoe**, a traditional pub with basic vault and large lounge. Hydes bitter is served via handpull; the mild is on electric pump.

Following the winding road (not too long!) brings one to the **Seven Stars** on Dove Bank Road. Unfortunately there is no real ale here, but the pub is worth a visit to see the collection of soccer shirts and the 'Wanderers Wall' in the vault.

Next, the **Canary Tavern** in the town centre, a community pub serving Holts bitter and the occasional guest beer, and finally the **Queen Anne**, a little further down High Street. This is a large Thwaites pub selling the bitter on handpump. Note the collection of Laurel and Hardy pot figures.



*Andy and Lynn welcome you to*

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## Bury News

Alex Koval

What will 2002 bring for Bury's drinkers? Better news than of recent times, we hope. On Bell Lane, the **Golden Fleece** is shut and boarded up. Considering its recent poor history, it may be that time has been called here permanently. The **Victoria** on Buckley Street is in a similar position. This ex-Vaux pub is being advertised as 'an exciting business opportunity'. Take a look at its location and you just might think this equates to 'not much trade'. However, it would be a shame to lose yet another of Bury's side street boozers, so fingers crossed on that one.

Up on Walmersley Road, the **Cricketers** is for sale. This used to be a good community local and the removal of real ale rankled with me; I fear the recent approach was ill-conceived. Over the road, the **Towler** is down to just Holts Bitter, but the beer is still in good form.

There was a surprise loss of real ale in Bury town centre, with the **Knowsley** no longer selling cask Boddingtons. Being located opposite the bus station, the pub has a guaranteed clientele and has always sold its fair share of cask. I can only put the change down to the general atrophy in the ex-Whitbread estate. Also suffering from this malady is the **White Lion** on Bolton Street, where the departure of Boddingtons has left Bentleys as the only cask beer. However, there are plans for a **Litten Tree** pub on Silver Street and hopes are high that it will be a cask addition to central Bury. The nearby **Sir Robert Peel** (*below*) has really mopped up town centre trade over the last



few years. I've been told the premises are due for refurbishment and it's not before time.

Over the border in Radcliffe, the **Lock Keeper** has joined a not very exclusive club by giving up on cask altogether. Another new member of this club is the **Farmers Arms**. Considering the remote location, I can't say it is a big shock. Better news at the **Swan & Railway**, which is now selling Grays bitter.

Most worrying news recently has been Jennings' decision to sell the **Red Lion** in Hawkshaw. Over the last few years, the pub has built up a well-deserved reputation for both its food and its beer. Grown men will be seen weeping in the streets if Cumberland, etc, are removed from the bar and replaced with the likes of Boddingtons. There have been a few enquiries, but the asking price of £1,350,000 may put some people off. If only our branch chairman hadn't already bought his Christmas presents...

I hate to finish on a pessimistic note, so I have saved some good news for last. The **Garsdale** on Woodhill Road is now offering a weekly guest beer. Leydens Heavy Brigade was on when I called. Meanwhile, the **Trafalgar** on Manchester Old Road has had a complete refurbishment. Burtonwood have obviously spent a lot of money here and, it has to be said, they've done a good job. There is now comfortable seating, a separate pool room and ITV Digital available on a big screen. On the bar, a monthly guest beer has joined Burtonwood bitter. The beer was always good here and, I'm glad to report, it still is. So, there's hope for Bury yet.

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## **Wigan in brief**

*Dave White*

Dave Dobson, licensee at the **Prince of Wales**, Market Street, Hindley, has moved further along the A58 to the **Royal Hotel** on Castle Hill Road. The sole real ale on offer comes from the S&N range (Theakstons/Websters bitter or Courage Directors). The Prince of Wales, which only sold cask beer at weekends, has reverted to keg.

Still with Scottish & Newcastle, Theakstons best bitter joins Courage Directors on the bar of the **Tavern**, Mesnes Street, Wigan (*see WD Jan*).

In Skelmersdale, the **Knowl Brow Inn** on Liverpool Road has long been a bastion of keg, much to the disgruntlement of thirsty travellers taken in by the sign outside, advertising real ales. Well, the beer is still fizzy, but at least the offending sign has been removed.

Over in Parbold, all five pubs now sell real ale, following the appearance of Castle Eden Ale at the **Wiggin Tree** on Parbold Hill.



## Horwich

*Dave White takes the 617 bus from Wigan...*

First, the **Squirrel** on the Horwich/Chorley boundary, an open-plan pub with several drinking areas, a no-smoking room, a family room, several shelves of china and an interesting menu. The Squirrel has an annual beer festival, and the guest ales were better-than-average when we called in: Leyden Light Brigade (4.2%) and Squirrels Hoard, a 4% brew from Hart. The Tetley mild and bitter are keg.

From the Squirrel we backtracked to Horwich proper, and the **Queens Head** on Lee Lane. We left this raucous keg boozier double-quick and went to the **Original Bay Horse** up the road. This two-roomed local has gone for the country cottage look, the artexed beams notwithstanding. It is popular with all age groups and the cask beers on sale were Flowers Original, Lees bitter and Black Sheep bitter.

Further up Lee Lane, and on to the **Bowling Green**. This is a bigger pub than it looks from the outside, with two rooms that open out at the back of the bar. The carpet has seen better days, but the pub has several points of note, including interesting tiles, wood-panelling and etched glass, limited edition prints, and baps. One traditional ale - Tetley bitter.

Next came the **Bay Horse**, an open-plan Greenalls pub with a 1960s feel to it; red plush velvet upholstery, artexed walls and those renowned mock beaten copper tables from a generation ago. Near the bar hangs a clock, bearing the inscription, 'Greenall Whitley - Brewers since 1762'. We found the pub pleasant, clean and welcoming, although it was a bit rum to see a fake stone bar in a town that has so much of the real stuff. Greenalls bitter was the sole cask beer.

Leaving Lee Lane, we returned to Chorley New Road. Here we found the **Toll Bar**, a sepulchral Thwaites pub with nothing but smoothflow on offer. We ended the night at the **Crown Hotel**, an open-plan, spacious boozier. Rural prints adorn the walls. The decor is a little florid, but the pub is big enough to carry it. Holts mild and bitter were on offer, and although the Crown is the only entry for Horwich in the 2002 Good Beer Guide, we found the beer in all the pubs we supped at to be very good.

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## Willie's warmers

The first of this year's seasonal ales from J W Lees is a 'warmer' - a full flavoured dark mild called **Moonlight Oak** (3.8%). It will be followed in March and April by **Brooklyn Best** (5.0%), an American-style bitter brewed in conjunction with Garrett Oliver of the Brooklyn Brewery in New York.

## Holts Corner

*Stewart Revell*

The brewers at Joeys are working themselves up to fever pitch to produce a really wonderful first brew for the promised series of specials. Twelve different types of malted barley have been ordered so they can select a suitable combination for the trials.

The strength and name of the new brew is not yet known. It may appear in March, or then again, it could be later. Details of how the beer will be marketed or advertised(!) are also not known. As usual, it will probably be word of mouth and perhaps a poster in the pub.

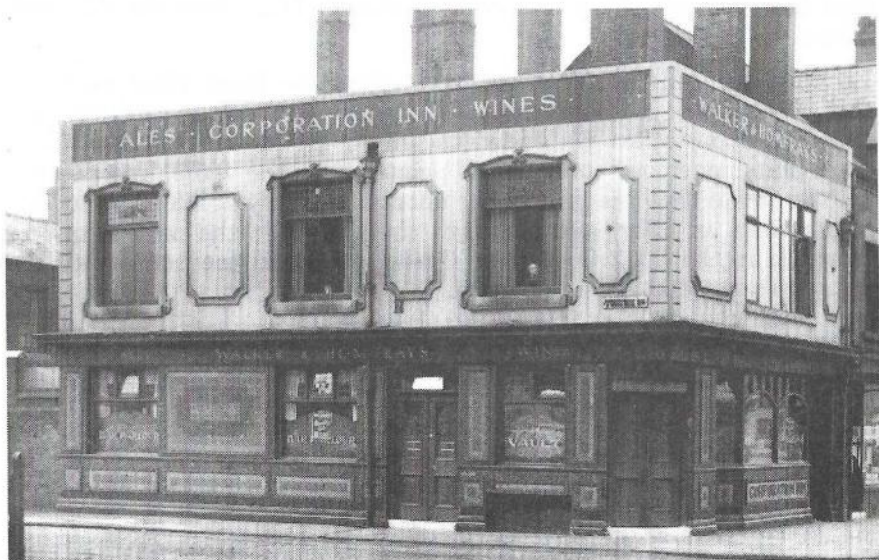
If readers have suitable (and printable) names for the forthcoming beers, I would be pleased to pass them on to those involved.

It is possible that Holts are still preparing to replace the Blonde Bier handpumps at the **Pepper Alley** and the **Ape and Apple** with something more appropriate. I was told when the Pepper Alley opened that this would take a few weeks to arrange. They say Blonde Bier is more real ale than not, so a keg font is not appropriate.

[stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk](mailto:stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk)

## Shut

The **Packet House** at Patricroft was shut from January 8th 'due to building works.' The **Corporation** on Cross Lane, Salford, is now the Eastern Spice takeaway. There has been no activity for several months in the **Black Lion** on the corner of Chapel Street and Blackfriars Street and just up the road, building work is well advanced on both sides of the closed **Crown**.





## Letters

### Ashton Arms

Sir - It was with amazement that I read Grognaard's contribution to January's *What's Doing* (why are people frightened of using their real names?) and feel it necessary to put certain inaccuracies straight.

The private landlords (not the Municipality) and I entered into brief negotiations with regard to the continuation of the Ashton Arms on a further short term lease. The figures of £7,500 or £5,000 were never discussed; indeed, we only mentioned a small decrease, and as far as I am aware there were only two people party to the true information. Porter Brewing Company Ltd owns the fixtures and fittings and could have used this as a lever to negotiate a significantly lower rent, but I felt it was not fair to do so, therefore we removed the f&f and closed the pub. I did make a few phone calls to try and get new occupiers and was willing to offer the f&f at a reasonable price, but I had no takers. With regard to a 'pub/restaurant in Derbyshire', this was one of about twenty options that I have been exploring to take the company forward, none of which will probably see fruition next year.

Hearsay and second hand information is not a good source of the truth, but the truth is obviously not as interesting as fiction!

*Dave Porter, Porter Brewing Co Ltd*

### Cash Question

Sir - A cash dispenser in a Holts pub (*Pepper Alley, WD Jan*)? Now the world really has gone mad! I trust it dispenses ten bob notes.

*Rhys P Jones*

### Smartarse

Sir - Mycroft and his daughter Miranda were marginally slower than the google search engine (0.10 seconds) in identifying the source of Robina's poem (*WD Letters, last month*) as 'Winnie Ille Pu'. They were, however, much quicker to challenge her scholarship.

Mycroft was of the opinion that it could only be a self-parody, as Robina had failed to quote from the definitive version by Lénárd Sándor. Sándor's second line reads, 'Cur adeo mel amat.' Miranda thought that rather than being from an inferior translation ('After all, Alexandro Lenardo was Hungarian!') the use of 'fermentum' was from a mead lover and herein lay the parody. Unusually, they agree that the misspelling of 'causae' was due to editorial inattention rather than Robina's lack of erudition.

All this pedantry is beyond me. Just send the Drabs to Mycroft and Miranda; I'm sure they'll give me some.

*Rupert Periwinkle*

## The Millennium Pub Trail

### Part 21: Bypassing Trafford for the Wonders of Wigan.

*As there were no new GBG entries for Trafford, the Dray Twins headed towards the land of the pier and the pie eaters...*

We started at Atherton, which has a frequent rail service passing close to the town centre. The **Pendle Witch** in Warburton Place is reached from an alley off Market Street, close to the church, and is one of only two Moorhouses tied pubs in Greater Manchester. This hidden gem is a one-bar, split-level room; a brick pillar in the centre divides the proceedings and the toilets are upstairs. The beers are Black Cat, Pendle Witches Brew, Premier Bitter, a seasonal ale and there are one or two guest beers. The pub has regular Rock Nights and there are plans to turn a disused building at the side into a games room.

The next pub was the **Wiganer** in Hindley, a Whitbread establishment on the A577 Wigan Road, near the parish church and close to the southern end of Market Street. This is a pub for the lover of the game played with thirteen men. Nigh on every inch of wall (and ceiling) space is given over to framed shirts, photos and anecdotes about Rugby League. The real ales are Boddingtons bitter, Lees bitter and Wadworth 6X.

Tyldesley has the **Mort Arms** on Elliott Street as its new GBG entry. This is one of Joseph Holts finest houses - well kept, welcoming and with damn fine bitter and mild. There are three rooms - the two to





the right forming a large lounge, the one on the left the vault. Dividing the two is a sash-windowed, hexagon-shaped bar.

Standish, north of Wigan, borders the countryside and the Greater Manchester/Lancashire boundary. Our first stop here was at the **Dog & Partridge** on School Lane (A5209). This is a good community local, neatly furnished, with a central bar and seating on three sides. Tetley bitter is supplemented by up to three guest beers and cask Addlestons Cider on handpump.

The **Horseshoe** on Wigan Road (A49) sells Burtonwood Bitter and a guest beer. There was a makeover here some months ago, resulting in light wood around entrance and bar and the interior segmented into three; television lounge, lounge bar and pool room. Photographs of old Wigan adorn the walls and there is an emphasis on food. All seems well in Standish.

The two new pubs listed under Wigan in the GBG are on the north side of the town. The **Millstone** on Wigan Lane is a friendly local which has been opened out into a one-room pub divided into separate areas. There is carpeting throughout, country style furnishings, a floral pattern theme and pictures of fruit and flowers on the walls. Thwaites bitter is on sale here.

Our GBG adventure concluded with a visit to Wetherspoons' **Brocket Arms** on Mesnes Road. It's no surprise to see more of this chain's pubs in the GBG and getting 'Cask Marque' accreditations. The Brocket was closed for refurbishment for a couple of months, and is now a 'Wetherlodge' residential hotel. It was as busy as ever - the place seems to pack them in, despite the obvious attractions of Wigan town centre. The beers included Courage Directors, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Tetley bitter, Theakston Best Bitter, Thwaites mild and one or two guests.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Swinton

After eight years, Bob Jasinski has left the GBG 2002 listed **Lord Nelson** on Bolton Road, Pendlebury, to take over at Holts' **Golden Lion** on Old Market Street, Blackley. Harry and Diane, the new managers at the Lord Nelson, are natives of Swinton and their last pub was the Britannia in Castleford, West Yorkshire.

The GBG 2002 listed **White Lion** on Worsley Road, Swinton, is selling the new beer from Robinsons - 'Hartleys' Cumbria Ale. However, the seasonal beer Samuel Oldknow will not be available.

## Home Brewing Revisited

*Humulus Lupulus*

### Part 26: The Golden Jubilee (ii)

This month sees the Queen's Golden Jubilee. In January's *What's Doing* I described how, in 1977, I made a Silver Jubilee Ale: two-and-a-quarter gallons at og 1099 and fg 1021, primed and sealed in half pint bottles.

Early in December last year, the *What's Doing* tasting panel (*below*) met in one of its favourite hostelrys to sample this and several other home brews. These are listed in chronological order.

Year	Brew	og	Brewer
1977	Jubilee Ale	1099	Humulus Lupulus
1979	Casterbridge Ale	1100	Humulus Lupulus
1993	T.T. Ale	1050	Daddy Bell
1993	Saint Frideswide	1043	Daddy Bell
1993	Little Gidding	1055	Daddy Bell
1996	Old Rupert	1055	Humulus Lupulus
1999	Eccles Fields Cider	~ 8%	Humulus Lupulus
1999	Total Eclipse	1038	Humulus Lupulus
2001	Longborough Hops	1044	Humulus Lupulus

### Longborough Hops

*'Like eating a hop-bine'. 'A honey flavour'. 'The malt makes the best of the hops and vice-versa'. 'A good session beer'.*

This was a very simple pale ale made only from Halcyon pale malt and fresh 'green' hops (2001 crop) at a very generous rate - 19oz equivalent dry weight in 10 gallons, and no honey! Hydes yeast.

### Little Gidding

*'Peppery first impression'. 'Very pale and in good condition'. 'Slightly medicinal'. 'A continental flavour'.*





This beer had included 'Traidcraft' Honey (17% of fermentables). Lees yeast.

### **Old Rupert**

*'Strongly reminiscent of rotten fruit'. 'Not quite as vile as last time!'*

A strong stout using chalky water, made for the *What's Doing* 21st Birthday bash. (This was Bogbrush's personal bottle - he never made the party.) I have written previously why I blame the chalky water, but it was generally agreed the beer was starting to improve again. Hydes yeast, ex-brewery.

### **Total Eclipse**

*'Characterful'. 'More like a mild than a stout'. 'Can't classify'. 'Slight Gueuze quality?' 'An individual Brown Ale'.*

A low gravity stout using gypseous water, which should avoid the problems of Old Rupert over the years. Hydes yeast 6th generation.

### **St Frideswide**

*'A fruity tartness'. 'Cream Soda'. 'A warming effect'. 'No lingering aftertaste'.*

Mainly pale and Cerapils malts, with some malted wheat, flaked barley and demerara sugar. Hallertau and Fuggles hops with Burtonbidge Porter Yeast.

### **Eccles Fields Cider**

*'More like alcoholic apple juice'. 'OK'.*

I have described this in WD. Unusually it used a beer yeast (Hydes) which continues to throw up a surface film, like a sherry flor, as though struggling to breathe. It is still viable two years after leaving the brewery; does anybody want to try it for making beer again?

### **T.T. Ale**

*'An elusive aftertaste'. 'Almond or marzipan?'.*

Tasmanian Honey (25%) with mostly pale malt, some malted wheat and flaked barley. Tettnang hops and Hanseatic IPA Yeast.

### **Jubilee Ale**

*'Raisins'. 'Christmas Buns'. 'Vintage creosote'. 'Stilton aroma'. 'Like a rich fruit cake, but dry'. 'Slightly burnt Christmas Pudding'. 'Definitely not a session beer!'.*

This was the focus of the session and did not disappoint. One to sip slowly by an open fire on a cold winter evening. I was surprised by the rich deep red colour considering there was only about 3% crystal malt; it has surely darkened over the years. Boots yeast! It was suggested to give our Editor a bottle. (Good idea - Ed.)

### **Beer Casterbridge Ale**

*'Not as complex or assertive as the previous'. 'Raisin, as distinct from sultana, taste'.*

An unashamed attempt to copy Eldridge Pope's Thomas Hardy Ale using a recipe from Dave Line's *Making Beers Like Those You Buy*. CWE Wine Yeast - formula 67.

# Rupert

'So, there is a God, then!' Tish exclaimed, as she read out the news of the demise of Abel's beer factory in Scouseley. She seemed to see this as divine retribution for the effrontery of Zimbabwe-Talbot and the continued poseurship of Bogbrush. She was swiftly reminded that the bell tolls for all and the conversation moved on. Bunty was of the opinion that now I'd come out of hiding I should retire from my career as contributor to this fine organ. 'After all, it's twenty-five years since you sent your first stupid letter in. You've been sacked three times, in exile twice and the people you write about are mad or dead.'

I am getting used to being discussed as though I weren't there and I was unable to comment before Fiona joined in. 'The whole thing's going down the tubes. Every branch, not only Smarmford and Slutch, could meet in a telephone box and *What's Doing* contains no news of exciting new brews but has become a repository for soi-disant intellectuals prattling on about nursery rhymes in Latin. It might be all very well for Mycroft and his ilk, but it's pretty meaningless for your average Drabs-swilling punter in Slumley Parva. I suppose it was just about tolerable to have one

page of mindless drivel when the rest of it was full of up to the minute riveting news, but now the whole thing's an anthology of dross. Roop's contributions seem somewhat superfluous. I think he should resign as well.'

Ophelia Hampton went to the bar in the Nether Slumley Bloodtub, one of the few hosteleries not to have succumbed to gentrification. On her return with six pints of foaming Drabs, they took a vote. I wasn't allowed to take part and the outcome was 5-0 in favour of my retiring to the family estate in Wealthshire. I was able to get a word in. 'Sir Jimmy Young is 104 and he's still boring people to death, so why can't I? I'd rather be sacked than retire.'

'That can be arranged,' Bunty responded, 'Or perhaps it can't.'

What is it that you've got over Eddy that makes him continue to include your gubbins?' It was at this point that I began to sob uncontrollably, not because of my treatment at the hands of my so-called friends, but because I thought once again about my in-vitro love child Luke, who has deserted Grotley for the blandishments of Snobley and the company of Mary Poppins Charlie Super and his pals.

Under such circumstances perhaps we need to hold on to what we've got.





# Branch Diary

## North Manchester

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

Wed 6 Feb 8pm, GBG 2003 Shortlisting and Annual Price Survey.

Beer House, Angel Street

Wed 13 Feb, Two-pub Social: King's Arms, Bloom Street, Salford, 7.30. Then Albert Vaults later.

Wed 20 Feb 20th 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent

Wed 27 Feb 8pm, GBG City Centre Selection, Old Nelson, Salford

Wed 6 Mar 8pm prompt: GBG non-City Selection, Beer House

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Sat 2nd Feb 8.30pm, GBG Selection Meeting, Beer House, Angel Street, Manchester

Tues 5th Feb 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Hunt Lane Tavern, Chadderton

Sat 23rd Feb, Train Trip to Liverpool. Branch contact has details.

Tues 26th Feb 8.30pm, Committee/What's Doing Collation, Horton Arms, Streetbridge, Oldham

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

email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

## Wigan

Wed 13 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Anvil, Dorning Street, Wigan. The meeting will include a sifting exercise for the 2003 Good Beer Guide.

Wed 20 Feb, lunchtime: Launch of the Fifteenth Beer at the Pier, Orwell, Wigan Pier.

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 428016 (w), 427595 (h)

email [john@misltd.co.uk](mailto: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.

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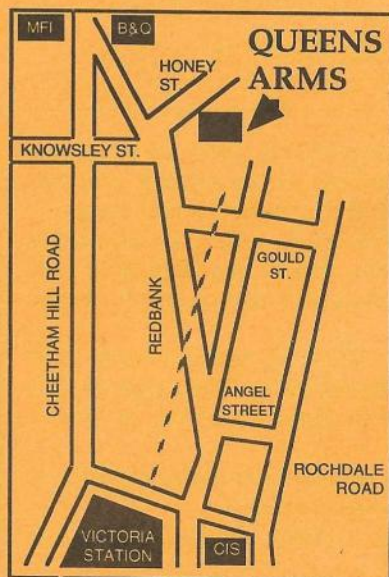
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