

What's Doing

JUNE 2002



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

NATIONAL MILD DAY

Saturday 11th May was CAMRA's National Mild Day and the North Manchester branch held its annual crawl...

We started at the **Smithfield** at 12 noon, where Greene King XX and Phoenix Black Shadow were available. Then on to the **Beer House** for

Pictish Black Diamond and Goose Eye Black Goose. Next, round the corner for Robinsons Dark at the **Pot of Beer**, where we were assured that, despite rumours, the pub will not be sold, closed or pulled down. If the number of customers on this Saturday lunchtime is anything to go by, the future looks quite rosy.



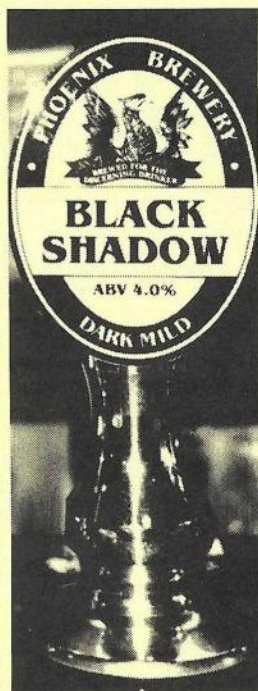
We then made the trek across the River Irk and up Red Bank to the **Queens Arms**, which had Beowulf Cimmerian and the powerful 6% Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby on offer. Next, back across the Irk and up to the **Marble Arch**, where Marble's own kitchen ale, the 4.7% Uncut Amber, was joined by Highgate Dark and Coach House Gunpowder.

Heading into the city centre, our next stop was **Gullivers** for Lees GB Mild. Across Oldham Street, the **Castle** had Robinsons Hatters and Robinsons Dark for anyone who had missed it earlier. Then it was down through Piccadilly to the **Grey Horse** for Hydes Traditional.

Our next port of call was due to be the **Paramount** for Batemans DM. In typical Wetherspoons style, the beer was not available, in spite of a full page advert in May's *What's Brewing* and a promise from the pub that it would be. This is the third year in succession that Wetherspoons have failed to fulfil their promises on Mild Day.

So, cursing Wetherspoons' ineptitude, we made our way to the more reliable **Ape & Apple** for Holts. It was nice to see the barmaid go direct to the handpump and not to the smooth, as is becoming more prevalent in Holts houses.

Finally, we moved on to Salford, where the **Crescent** had the excellent Phoenix Monkey Town. We had tasted fifteen different milds, each with its own character and flavour - surely this beer style must be allowed to survive.



Phil Stout



Around and about

with Daddy Bell

For once, I participated in the whole crawl on National Mild Day (11th May), though I cheated now and again by deviating from my own prepared menu and drinking beers I deemed to be at least mildish in flavour or idiom - John Joule's Black Canon's Brew in the **Marble Arch**, and Salamander Mud Puppy in **Bar Fringe**. I had already spent much time, and consumed numerous pints or halves of mild, in reconnoitring the route, but that was in itself a worthwhile experience, not least for meeting Paul and Sue at the end of their first week managing the now Boddiesless **Pot of Beer**; and for renewing acquaintance with the **Hat and Feathers**, where Ian and Tracy (ex-Parrs Wood, Didsbury) are now in situ, selling Holts bitter as their standard real ale, but expecting to stock Black Cat mild during the Whit Walks.

In any case, I thought I had already done my bit for the mild cause by attending the Mild Only Weekend at the **Prince of Wales** at Foxfield on 4th May. I concentrated on beers from their own brewery, or its Tigertops sister in Wakefield; but I did intercalate a stroll into Broughton-in-Furness, for the sake of a pint of Yates' Spring Fever at the **Manor Arms**.

With my exodus to Odborough but a few months away, I have tried to visit places for which in future I may be less conveniently or comfortably situated. So on 10th May I headed for Wakefield, intending to spend a leisurely session in the **Fernandes Brewery Tap**, ideally accompanied by an equally refreshing swim at Lightwaves. But on the train I encountered the prevenient presence of three incorrigible tickers, en route to the **Red Shed Beer Festival** at Wakefield Labour Club.

I submitted willingly to the benign captivity of their company, and enjoyed a brisk visit to the festival, where about twenty new brews, specials and old favourites were awaiting us on handpump. Particularly notable were the very bitter and yet fruity Fernandes Special (4.3%) and Cropton Voluptuous (4.5%), a very dark red ale with a smooth toffee address and a burnt caramel kick in the aftertaste. I did eventually get round to the Brewery Tap in Avison Yard, for a pint of Fernandes Empress of India, a sheer gold 6% IPA.



My major expedition was on 14th

May, to Liverpool, where in my Birkenonian days, twenty years and more ago, I used to look in the **Swan** in Wood Street for a pint of Marstons Merrie Monk, or in the **Poste House** (then a keg Higsons pub) for a pint of excellent Draught Bass. (Both pubs are still worth a visit, though not for those beers of yesteryear.) On this occasion I headed down Hanover Street towards the **Baltic Fleet**, and a pint of Wapping Summer Ale (4.2%), brewed on the premises using the former Passageway kit. A further local pint, of Wild George, had the familiar Cambrinus tang. It was hard to leave, but I was determined to get to the former Grapes Inn, better known now simply as **Cain's Brewery Tap**, where I opted for FA rather than the mild or bitter or one of three guests.



Thence it was uphill to the **Belvedere**, a GBG 2002 entry which I had never previously visited, an amazing little two-roomer with a choice of two real ales, Brakspears Special and Elgoods Cambridge Bitter being the offerings of the moment. From there it was a matter



of heading back towards the city centre, calling first in the **Philharmonic Dining Rooms** to marvel at its architectural splendours. Its unique Gents has been much praised and photographed, but the whole interior is an almost indescribable extravaganza of mosaic and marquetry, for which the outside (with too many windows replaced with wired glass) has scarcely prepared one. Bass, Tetley and Cains are the regular bitters, with three guests: I cannot remember having Summer Lightning on better form than today's half in the Philharmonic.

There was just time to look in the **Brewery**, home of the Liverpool Brewing Company: three of their own brews were on, the most tempting being the Berry Street Mild, on offer in May at £1 a pint. I could hardly leave Liverpool without calling at another Cains pub, but in the **Dispensary** in Renshaw Street I could not resist the Roosters Cream.

The **Crescent** in Salford put on yet another worthwhile festival at the start of May: I managed at least a half of most of the beers, of which the 'I can't believe it's not bitter' lager from Oakleaf stood out as immensely flavoursome, and the Hop Back Spring Zing as very attractively citric. But one of the Crescent's permanent gifts to

civilisation has been its championing of Roosters beers, so it was appropriate that Idy Phillips should organise a visit by rail to the brewery's new home (since 11th September 2001) in an industrial unit in Knaresborough likened by its owner, Sean Franklin, to a silver armadillo.

The new premises are about five times the size of the old, and accommodate not only the previous eight-barrel plant, but a 25-barrel kit from the Crooked River Brewery in Cleveland (USA), which gives scope for lager as well as ale brewing. We tasted first some of the ingredients (malts from Fawcetts of Castleford, and a new American hop, Simcoe) before being



Cain's Brewery and George Inn

refreshed with pints of one of Sean's regular beers. Some of us also savoured his Sharpshooter, a Commonwealth Games special, straight from the fermenter, in which he has used Simcoe and (for the first time) Mount Hood hops. This had mint and orange flavours, but I would not be persuaded that it also recalled Elastoplast, even though the first-aid kit was raided in an attempt to convince me.

Before the brewery tour we had slaked our thirst at the **Mitre Hotel** just across the yard from the station, an excellent pub with Tetley bitter and dark mild, as well as beers from Daleside, Roosters and other Yorkshire sources, Rudgate's Erik the Red being a popular choice. From the brewery we went back to the Mitre for a lavish spread of food, and had time to seek out other Knaresborough hostelries (I remembered the way to Sam Smith's **Marquis of Granby**) before returning home by train. I think fourteen of us took part in the trip, for which our thanks go to Idy, to Sean and his staff, to our very welcoming hosts at the Mitre, and to Arriva trains for running to time.

If I'm in Wigan, I usually call in the **Tudor House Hotel** (*below*) in New Market Street, behind the bus station. It's a student-dominated pub which always had an air of studied seediness: but now almost all has changed, thanks to a makeover just before Christmas 2001.

Externally, it looks no different - but once you're through the door you notice that the bar has been swung round ninety degrees and extended and new areas have apparently been opened up. There is still something of the old atmosphere to the left, including photographs of past party excesses; but the stable-like alcoved stalls have been modified or removed. To the right, the transformation is more



radical, with sofas, high stools at the bar, and deep upholstered chairs. Illuminated bar fittings dominate the bar counter, with the tap fitting for GB lager, but there are still four handpumps, dispensing Saxon Gold Digger cider and such standard beers as Pendle Witches and Old Speckled Hen.

Firm favourite

Paul Roberts

The Racecourse Hotel on Littleton Road, Salford, reopened a few months ago after a complete refurbishment (WD May). The former Greenalls pub closed several years ago and it has taken many months and a huge investment to restore this hostelry to its former glory.

The exterior has been cleaned and the name of the pub appears only in the masonry and on a flag on the roof. There are no bright neon signs and there is no mention of a brewery. I had heard that the pub was owned by an independent Yorkshire brewery and so naturally assumed this to be Sam Smiths. In fact, the Racecourse is a tied house of Barnsley Brewery. The traditional beers are Barnsley Bitter (£1.20) and Old Tom, which is advertised at the same 3.8% but is dark in colour and described as a mild. Barnsley's own lager (£1.30) and a 5% premium lager at £1.50 complete the range. It is hoped to begin serving meals in late summer.

The pub interior is dominated by a huge rectangular central bar, above which is a large skylight. There are several rooms off the main drinking area and all are extremely comfortably furnished. As one

would expect, there is a racehorse theme and a large plaque on the wall lists all the winners of the Manchester Cup up to the last race in 1963.



I visited on a Friday evening and the place was quite full, with a good mixture of young and old. The 93 First Manchester service stops outside, but the last departure from Manchester is 7.30pm. The 91 and 92 also stop outside, but since these routes operate from

Trafford to Bury, it is easier in the evening to get there from Prestwich and Bury than from Manchester. Lancashire United's M9-M11 services stop on Cromwell Road and operate every thirty minutes throughout the evening.

I am still puzzled why a small brewery from so far away chose to invest such a huge amount of money in what had been a derelict pub in Salford. However, the fact that they have done so has greatly benefited the local community and I would definitely recommend a visit.

Andy and Lynn welcome you to

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Wigan in brief

Dave White

Plans are afoot to turn the former site of the Royal Bank of Scotland on Wallgate into a pub called the **Baa Bar**. That's all you need to know.

In Hindley, the flirtation with cask ale at the **Royal Hotel**, Castle Hill Road, appears to be over. Nearby, on Ladies Lane, the solitary handpump at the **Red Lion** stood idle on a visit over Eastertide.

The **Britannia Hotel**, Wigan Road, Bryn, is closed and boarded up, with some evidence of fire damage. Situated alongside the railway station, this once fine pub has resembled the Last Chance Saloon in recent years and its demise was perhaps inevitable.

The **Stocks Hotel**, Alder Lane, Parbold, now sells guest beers. On a busy Saturday night a few weeks ago I was served a rather warm pint of Moorhouses Premier, which doesn't bode well, but these days the pub is big on food, not beer. Handpulled Tetley bitter remains for the unadventurous.

In Billinge, the **Masons Arms** on Carr Mill Lane, Chadwick Green, has replaced traditional Greenalls bitter with cask John Smiths and Theakstons Best, fuelling speculation that the end is nigh for the ex-Wilderspool brew. The word 'unmourned' springs to mind.

Finally, Wigan CAMRA branch has voted the **Anvil**, Dorning Street, Wigan, Pub of the Year for 2001-2. Immaculate Hydes beers are always available, plus a guest. The accolade of Best New Cask Ale Outlet goes to the **Jarvis Bar**, Main Street Billinge. Presentations are imminent. Congratulations to Ian and Donna (Anvil) and Ken at the Jarvis.

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Shaws Brewery

Duncan Busman

The new Shaws Brewery nestles behind Windsor Fabrications on Park Road, Dukinfield. It is the brainchild of its proprietor Neil Hey, a former test engineer with Ferranti. Neil has been helped in the project by his old friend and partner Phil Windsor (of the firm next door) and consultant Baz Parish of Summerby in Leicestershire.

Windsor Fabrications and the new brewery occupy part of the site of the original Shaws Dukinfield Brewery (*below*), built in the 1850s. This company sold out in 1939 and the brewery and sixty pubs passed to John Smiths. Brewing ceased in 1941.

The new Shaws Brewery was designed and built in January and February this year. The plant has a 5-barrel brew length, with two 5-barrel fermenters. Production began in March. Neil intends to produce session beers, rather than those with seriously daft strengths. The first two brews were good, straightforward bitters of 4% and 4.3%. Challenger hops and Maris Otter malt are the preferred ingredients.

The following pubs are amongst those that have taken the new beers: Stalybridge Station Buffet; The Station, Ashton; Kinder Lodge, Hayfield; Royal Hotel, Hayfield; Church Inn, Mossley; Rising Sun, Mossley and the Old Original, Scouthead.

Shaws Brewery, Old Stables, Park Road, Dukinfield SK16 5LX.
07958 469258.



Lees Brewery

Pete Cash

Late in April, a busload of CAMRA North Manchester members went to Lees Brewery in Middleton Junction. This was only the second branch visit in twenty-odd years and for many of us it was our first. We were greeted in the hospitality bar by head brewer Giles Dennis, who gave us a brief history of the Lees and their brewery, which is still very much a family concern today.

Our guide for the tour was second brewer Paul Wood. Out in the yard, Paul pointed out the gently curving chimney - for safety reasons three metres had been taken off the top. The brewery had been built on wet sand and a geological fault. However it was now supported on a concrete raft installed twenty years ago.

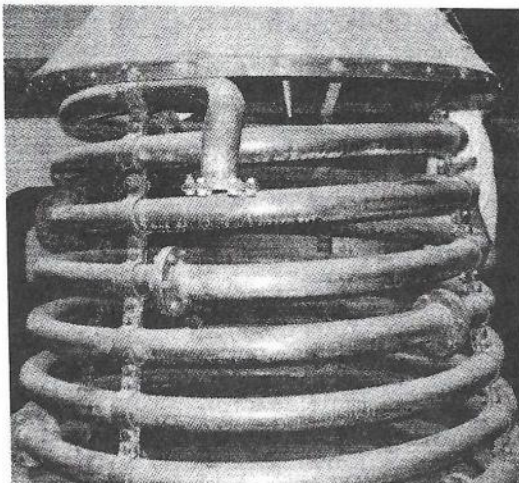
Because the brewery was originally powered by a steam engine installed by a former cotton mill technician, it doesn't follow the traditional gravity system of most old breweries. Nevertheless, it is a rabbit warren of narrow, brick-walled alleyways, immaculately whitewashed, and steep, worn wooden staircases.

At odds with all this was a modern control panel for bulk grain handling. It connects to four malt silos (two each, ale and lager) and two for adjuncts. There is also a 'reject' route for duff malt, though this has never been used for ale malt. Lees beers use all-British malt - 100% except the mild, which has a little sugar added. The brewery capacity is 400 barrels a day, which equates to nine tonnes of 'dry goods'. These are automatically routed to the screens before going to the mill. Paul explained that before this system was installed twenty years ago, a lot of barley syrup was used and there was much



inconsistency in the beers.

The original malt-crushing mill was a modified flour mill, but this had to be retired and a replacement sought. New mills are about £150,000, but a reconditioned one from a Scottish distillery was found for a sixth of the cost. Part of a wall had to be removed to install it - new brickwork was evident beneath the whitewash. The grist is conveyed along square mahogany ducting.



Two stainless steel mash tuns hold up to four and a half tonnes (500 barrels). Minimum capacity is 100 barrels, so there is no room for error in the 'low' barrelage seasonal ales. All beers (and lagers) use an infusion mash at 67°C, with a one and a half to two hour stand and a three hour sparge. Spent grain goes to local farms. Experiments have been tried with high temperature mashes followed by controlled fermentation, but proved inefficient. Once, an odd aroma was noted from a mash tun; a batch of heavily peated whisky malt had been delivered by mistake.



We passed the hop store without halting, though looking in a small open sack I noted that it contained pellets. In fact, no whole hops are used; the two modern stainless steel 'coppers' have whirlpools built in. Bitter uses a mix of Northdown and Goldings. First Gold (dwarf) and a few other varieties are also used, and for the recent Brooklyn Best (*March WD*) a large amount of American hops. This beer, which we enjoyed in the hospitality bar, has a bitterness of 44 EBU, compared with Lees Bitter at 26 EBU, and has proved very popular - so much so that Giles admitted it has caused Lees to re-examine their attitude to hopping rates.

In between the two coppers is a relic of the past - the boiling coil from the old Braithwaite copper (*above*) which was retired because it was in a dangerous condition. The diameter of the tubing

is about three and a half inches. After a one and a half to two hour boil, the hop powder and protein break are removed by the whirlpools, cooled and sent to the fermenting room. This contains mainly stainless, rectangular closed fermenters - 1,200 barrels in total for ales and 1,500 barrels for lager. Paul said brewing volume could be doubled for very little extra cost. There are also three circular, copper-lined, 1888 vintage open fermenters. Two are still in use for mild and seasonal beers; the other one leaks.

Before pitching the yeast, the wort is oxygenated; not with air, but with bottled oxygen. This apparently causes fewer problems with foaming. Up to now, oxygenation has been applied to the hot wort but they are about to go over to cold treatment. (My old chemistry textbook says the absorption coefficient of oxygen at 15°C is some 1.7 times greater than at 60°C). The only other treatment is to radiate the supplied Lakes water with UV and add two salts.

Fermentation takes 30-36 hours. The same yeast (a mix of one flocculent and two non-flocculent strains) has been in use for forty years and is some 3,500 generations old. It is now recycled with the aid of ex-Morrells Brewery yeast recovery tanks. As a home brewer, I was interested in the collection of hydrometers; one, with a very slender neck, had a full scale range of only 10° and divisions of one tenth of a degree.

The tour ended with the casking plant. Washing, rinsing, filling and fining are all carried out automatically. There used to be an on-site cooper and I noticed four or five wooden casks in good condition, though they didn't appear to be in routine use. Finally we were treated to an excellent buffet and more good beers back in the bar.

Scalar Change

Wetherspoons have plans to convert the old Scala Cinema at 494 Wilmslow Road, Withington, into a pub. The dictionary says Scalar means having magnitude but not direction.

Longsight moves

In the current Good Beer Guide, Longsight has been moved to Shaw on the map. Is this an indication that there are no decent pubs in Shaw, or an attempt to improve Longsight's image?

Contributors to this issue: Paul Roberts, Kevin McPhillips, Pete Cash, Brian Taylor, Phil Stout, Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, John Cresswell, Daddy Bell, Paul Warbrick, Duncan Busman, Dave White

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Loop the Loop

Kevin McPhillips

The loop line runs from Manchester Victoria Station as far as Rochdale. The trip can be done either clockwise or anticlockwise from Victoria and a Ranger ticket allows one to break the journey as often as one wishes. The current daytime price is £2.50 and it's cheaper after 6.30pm.

The modernisation of the rail system has extended to banishing traditional, 'old fashioned beer' from Victoria, so stock up before boarding the train. Holts is in abundance nearby. The **Crown and Anchor**, opposite M&S, has been refurbished and now has a cash dispenser, which is hardly necessary when the beer is about £1.20 a pint. On the other side of the station is Holts' **Crown and Cushion**.

Travelling clockwise, the first stop is Moston. The station is halfway between the **Whitegate Tavern**, to the right, and the **Gardeners Arms** to the left. The Whitegate has one real ale, usually Old Speckled Hen. The Gardeners is a Lees pub.

On to Mills Hill, deep in Lees country. Turn right for the **Rose of Lancaster**, with its beer garden on the banks of the Rochdale Canal. To the left is the **Old Cock**, which is another recently renovated pub and it also sells food.

Next stop is Castleton, where the choice is a little wider and there are several pubs within easy reach. To the right is the **Midland Beer Company**, a theme bar selling John Smiths bitter. A few doors along is the **New Inn**, selling Robinsons. Oak-decorated, the pub has a relaxing atmosphere. To the left of the station is a Thwaites house,

the **Bridge Inn**, with draught bitter. There is a large screen for sports fans and a pool table.



Rochdale is the next stop. The traditional pubs here are further from the station but the extra walk is worthwhile. Towards the town centre there is the **Navigation** (Holts), while almost opposite is the **Cask and Feather**, with several beers at reasonable prices from its own brewery situated at the back.

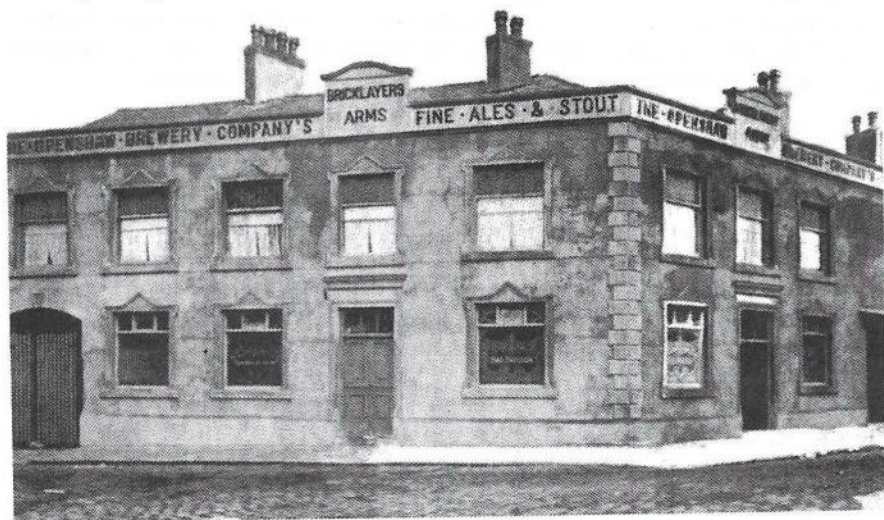
Continuing along the loop to Milnrow, the **Freemasons Arms** with draught Lees is to the left of the station. Next after Milnrow is New Hey. There is no problem finding the **Newhey Lodge** (Lees again). For the bird fancier, or Hitchcock fan, the **Bird in Hand** to the right of the station is worth a visit to see the collection of bird photos.

Next is Shaw, where there is a variety of beers. The **Pineapple** has Holts, the **Bluebell** is a Robinsons pub and if you fancy Lees again, try the **Coach and Horses**. All are close together in Shaw centre.

Unfortunately there are some stations on the route where real ale is not available nearby and this is the case at Derker. However, Oldham Mumps is just a few minutes further on. The nearest traditional beer is in the **Royal Oak** towards the town centre. This is a busy Robinsons pub with mild and bitter. There is a spacious separate pool room and a snug bar.

Back on the train and heading towards Manchester, there is no draught beer within easy reach of Oldham Werneth, but one can make up for this at Hollinwood. A stretch of the main Oldham-Manchester road is still rich with local pubs. Lees, Marstons and Burtonwood are all within easy reach. It's worth considering walking to the next station at Failsworth just to sample the dozen or so pubs on the way. Just outside Failsworth station is the **Bricklayers Arms** with draught Jennings, a lovely pint.

Finally, at Dean Lane there is more Holts in the **Railway**, close to the station. Then it's back to Victoria. With a Ranger ticket, the traveller can now decide, having worked hard at the research, where the favourites are and set off again in a more relaxed frame of mind, anticipating what lies ahead.



Holts corner

Stewart Revell

Dave Hallows (*WD last month*) is not the only person to have encountered the non-availability of handpumped Holts in several of their outlets, or at least a reluctance to serve it in preference to the smooth version.

As long ago as February 2000 the brewery stated: 'Where Mild is available the option of it being presented in its normal hand-pumped format should be available to all customers at all times. This directive to Managers has been passed on positively by our Tied Trade Managers...'

Again in August 2000: '...regarding Mild, let me again reiterate that our Managers are under clear instructions that where Smooth Mild is available it should always accompany Mild in its traditional form, and the customer should be offered a choice.'

I have again been in touch with senior management at the brewery and will publish the reply when it is forthcoming.

I recently heard that the **Eagle**, Collier Street, Salford, was selling only smooth mild. On checking this out, I found that a smooth dispenser had indeed been installed, but (and this is the bit the annoyed customer failed to establish), the disconnection of the handpump was temporary, because the installers had forgotten to bring a two-way adaptor.

This piece of equipment is essential because the smooth mild and the handpumped mild come via separate beer lines from the same barrel. Yes, I know, it would have been a lot better to have made the smooth mild wait for the adaptor, rather than the other way round.

Now for some good news. The **Dukes Gate** at Cleggs Lane, Little Hulton, has been given a long overdue facelift. New electrics have been fitted (to comply with the latest regulations) and the pub has been repainted, repapered and reupholstered throughout. Regulars who have known the Dukes Gate since it opened in 1986, have asked for a replacement of a framed map showing how the pub got its name from the area of a couple of centuries ago. The map shows Sod Hall close by, but they didn't go for that name!

If all goes according to plan, the new Baton Beer will be available in a few selected Holts pubs during the latter part of June. The newly installed 30-barrel plant has been tested with a trial brew (not for sale) and the recipe may be adjusted for the final brew.

In the City

Trotter's tour continues...

First stop is the **Square Albert** near the Town Hall, an open-aspect pub with a raised seating area. Tetley bitter and Greene King Abbot are usually available, but on my visit it was just the Tetleys. The pub does some good food deals, presumably in competition with the other eating places around Albert Square.

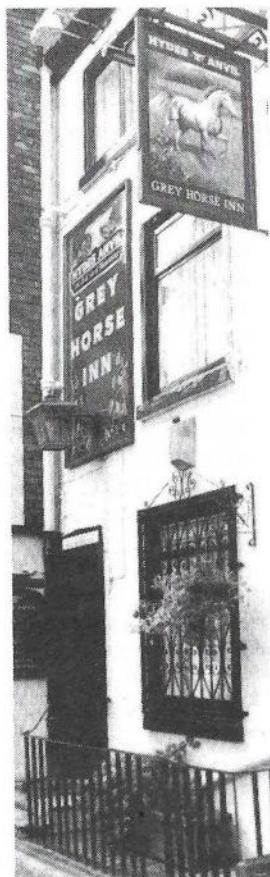
Next, across the Square and round into Tib Lane for the **Town Hall Tavern**. Over the years this has suffered several theme bar incarnations and most of the Victorian interior was ripped out by Bass. The current owners have turned the Tavern into a traditional pub and recreated some of the old features. It is split-level and has a cosy, partitioned 'snug' facing the bar. The three real ales are Lees bitter (£2.20 a pint), Pedigree (£2.40) and Boddies.

Up at the the **City Arms** on Kennedy Street, the first thing I noticed was that the blackboard displaying the names of the guest



ales had been removed. This was because the ales have such a quick turnover. The fine selection of real ales included Adnams bitter, Lees Scorchers, Everards Tiger and Smiles Heritage, as well as Tetleys and Bass. I got the last pint of Titanic Lifeboat before it was replaced by Thwaites Lancaster Bomber.

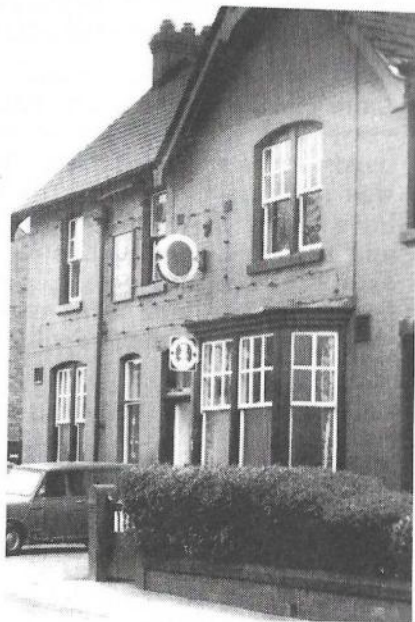
After strolling through Chinatown I rounded off the evening with a pint of Jekylls Gold in the **Grey Horse** on Portland Street. This one-room Hydes pub has a homely feel and you can sit and chat about the meaning of life, the universe and everything. The other ales were Hydes mild and bitter.



Golborne and Lowton

Dave White

After a journey on a 600 bus from Wigan best described as an ordeal, we alighted in Bank Street outside the **Royal Hotel**. Only keg beers here, alas, so we moved on to Harvey Lane and the **Millstone**. The name of the pub can be seen on the mosaic in the porch, and the doorways have retained the ribbed glass which was so popular in the 1960s. The layout is unusual: an open bar with three rooms leading off it. There is a Saturday night karaoke and the playlist is worth reading (from a safe distance), if only for the number of spelling mistakes contained therein. A former Greenalls house (*right*), the Millstone still sells the bitter, alongside Boddingtons bitter and Cains mild. 'Empty orchestra' aside, this is a pleasant pub, serving good beer.



Our next stop was the **Sir Charles Napier**, a Holts pub on High Street. It was disco night in the vault, so we retired to the smaller lounge. In contrast to the vault, this room was dead, apart from an old man with a frisky dog. The lounge had several points of interest, including a set of plates commemorating bygone collieries, and much Wigan/Manchester United memorabilia. A Kandinsky print can be found in the vault, and there is a small pool room just off the lounge. The pub, known locally as 'Tippin's', has seen better days. The bitter wasn't very good, and the mild wasn't on at all.

We headed out of the town centre to check the **Queen Anne** on Bridge Street. Nothing but keg here, however, so we retraced our steps down High Street until we came to the **Railway**, a celebrated brew-pub. This is a two-roomed boozer with a connecting passage between vault and lounge, and a dark wood bar. Tegestologists can admire the walls of the vault. The lounge had been given to a rock act, an improvement on the entertainment provided elsewhere in Golborne, and the Sarah's Chocolate Stout was voted Beer of the Night. Other ales on offer were Sarah's Hot Wheels, Gordon's Amber and Coach House bitter.

Church Street was dry, with the **Manor Arms** and **Sams** (formerly the **Sign i'th'Cellar**) serving nothing but fizz. The **Red Lion** on

Ashton Road was no better and the **Horns Inn**, Lowton Road, was also keg. There were two pubs at the bottom of Golborne Road in Lowton, and with bladders fit to bust, we tried out the **Rams Head** on the corner of Slag Lane.

The Rams Head has been opened out, but with separate drinking areas. An abundance of corn dollies, horse brasses and untreated wood strives to give the pub a rustic aspect, somewhat undermined by the presence of a tree with fairy lights. (There is a more interesting tree outside on Slag Lane.) Our corner of the room had more than its share of inebriates - reminiscent of our journey out here - and the sole cask ale, Greenalls bitter, wasn't very exciting. We supped up and went across the road.

The **Hare & Hounds** on the corner of Cross Lane was our last port of call. This is a rambling, open-plan pub, with low beams at the front (I suspect that the front is an extension) and this part of the pub has a more traditional feel to it. Food is served and there is a children's play area ('Thumper's Den'). There is a No Smoking area and, on a lower split level, an extra-large table for big groups, where one can view the William Morris 'Pomegranate' wallpaper. The Hare & Hounds has a beer garden and a table outside at the front. Tetley bitter is the standard cask offering, plus two guests, on this occasion Wadworth 6X and Greene King Abbot Ale. The latter was in very good condition, making the crawl seem quite worthwhile.

On the fast train to Paradise

The Paradise Brewery Beer Festival will be held on Friday 5th, Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th July. A range of over forty beers from microbrewers is promised: opening times are 12-11pm Friday and Saturday and 12 - 7pm Sunday.

For the benefit of visitors from the Manchester area, the Crewe and Shrewsbury Passengers' Association has arranged for the 11.33am Manchester - Cardiff express to stop at Wrenbury (at 12.25pm) on the Friday and Saturday. For the return journey, the Cardiff - Manchester express will stop at Wrenbury at 5.05pm.

The Wrenbury Scarecrow Trail will be running at the same time as the Beer Festival, so visitors have the added attraction of wandering around the Wrenbury/Aston area, looking at the various themed scarecrows.

One of Wrenbury's other attractions, the Bhurtpore Inn, is holding its Beer Festival from 9th to 14th July. (For further details, phone the pub on 01270 780917.) The Passengers' Association has arranged for the same expresses - 11.33am from Manchester, 5.05pm for the return - to stop on the Friday and Saturday.

Rupert

Eddie has tried to hide the fact that his organ has not won an award in the twenty-six or so years that it has been going. It's hardly surprising, really. It's probably the only one that the punters have to pay for and it doesn't exactly toe the party line. Nonetheless, it must be a little galling for him to see freebie handouts supported by advertising win accolades year after year. Once again *Opining Tripe* was mentioned in despatches at the Annual Beanfeast and reported in the Campaign's organ of record.

Nor have any of the Slumley branch's myriad of topers' vademecums won any gongs, even though, just like WD, they've all been profitable and popular. I suppose, as in the luvvie industry, Eddie might one day be presented with a lifetime achievement award for consistent Oscar-winning failure just prior to popping his clogs.

One consolation to Slumley is their web page, which was highly commended at the Beanfeast. But is a pat on the back really a slap on the face to the soi-disant rebel?

Campaigning for mild has not brought any bouquets either. Twenty years of banging on about this darker than amber nectar and for what? Rumpledshirtscream runs off to deepest Taffyland and wins an award for campaigning for mild in Lladosyllaer, which doesn't have any. The brew pub in which the campaign was held has since

closed down, so that wasn't very effective, was it? Anyway, it was nice to see his toothy smile in our National organ.

In the same edition we see a large spread about Boringsods and their mild, with pretty pictures of the family, dray horses and nostalgia-involving advertisements. A pity we'd never see Drabs in the same kind of centrefold. For a start, they've always been camera-shy, their horses were turned into glue for the war effort and they've never produced an advert in their history. More damning, however, is what they're doing to their mild. Gong notwithstanding, it's a pound to a penny that the barperson will reach for the nitrofont as soon as the word is mentioned. If you see this happening, write and tell Perry Drab. He'll probably foam and seethe, make all mild keg and then the Slumley campaigners will win an award.



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 4 June 8.30pm, Branch AGM, Buck & Union, Union St, Oldham

Sat 22 June, Coach Trip to Chester. Branch contact has details.

Tues 25 June 8.30pm, Committee/What's Doing Collation, Pack Horse, Affetside

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

email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

North Manchester

www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 5 June: Royal Jubilee Crawl - Queens Arms, Patricroft (next to Station) 7.30pm, then Royal Progress to meet Prince Albert Edward, Eccles Centre, at 9pm.

Wed 12 June: Ringley Social; Lord Nelson (birthplace of the Branch) 8pm. Horseshoe (across the footbridge) 8.30 onwards. Buses 8 & 22 - alight at Spread Eagle (A666) and walk down the hill.

Wed 19 June 8pm: Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford.

Tues 25 June: What's Doing collation - Queens Arms, Honey St, 6pm onwards.

Wed 26 June: Midsummer Crawl and Curry - Smithfield, Swan Street, 7.30; Marble Arch 8.30, Queens Arms, Honey St, 9pm approx. Saffron Restaurant (closes doors 10pm) Cheetham Hill Rd to finish.

Wed 10 July: Regional Meeting at the Crescent, 8pm. Guest speakers from three microbreweries.

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Wigan

Sat 1st June. May Mild Crawl (well, nearly!) Begins at the Anvil, Dorning Street (near the bus station) at 1.00pm

Weds 12th June 8pm, Branch Meeting/Pub of the Season presentation. Robin Hood, Sandy Lane, Orrell

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 4788161 (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'.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: £3.30 for six months, £5.80 for twelve months. Send cheque/PO together with your name and address to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW. Cheques made out to 'What's Doing'.

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Dave and Sue welcome you to

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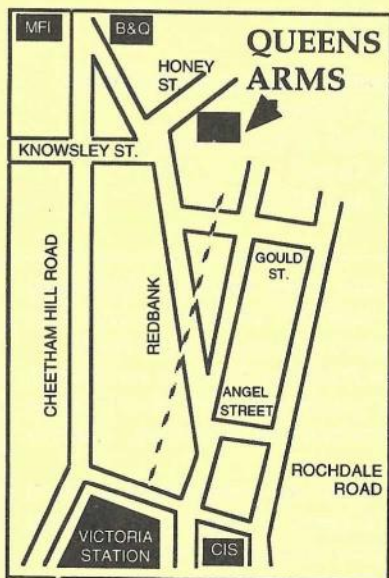
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