

30p

What's Doing

SEPTEMBER 2002



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

NEW PUB FOR HOLTS

Wyldes, the new Holts pub on the corner of the Market Place and Bolton Street in Bury, is due to open on 12th September. The former bank building has been fitted out in expensive style, like the Pepper Alley in Bolton, so beer prices are expected to be higher than normal.

Holts have returned to this part of town after an absence of over fifty years. They once owned the Masons Arms on Bolton Street, in what is now the depopulated zone between the East Lancs Railway Station and Bury Bridge.



CAMRA Prices Survey

The average price of a pint of real ale in a UK pub in 2002 is £1.92. The average price of a pint of lager is £2.11. The North West is still the cheapest place to drink - £1.69 a pint on average, 23p less than the national average. The most expensive pint is in London (surprise, surprise) - £2.12 for real ale and £2.31 for lager.

Real ale: average prices, cheapest and priciest

	2002	2001	% change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	192	186	3.33%	100	280
<i>By region</i>					
North West	169	165	2.01%	100	270
Yorkshire	176	176	0.28%	109	225
North	181	182	-0.88%	109	220
West Midlands	183	177	3.15%	110	230
Wales	185	180	2.62%	109	225
East Midlands	187	173	8.35%	105	235
South West	199	195	2.43%	155	240
Scotland	200	203	-1.07%	100	240
South East	205	202	1.41%	120	250
East Anglia	206	200	3.01%	135	255
London	212	206	3.00%	109	280

Porter's prices

Beer prices at the **Arthur Inn** on Bolton Road, Bury, were reduced by 10p at the beginning of August. Until further notice, the Porter's mild is £1.10, the bitter £1.20 and Sunshine (5.3%) £1.60.

The Arthur was recently selling Forever Bury (4.5%) from Leyden Brewery at a bargain £1.30 and manager Sue Hitchens is asking regulars for ideas for future guests.

Wrenbury Beer Festival

The **Paradise Brewery** is having an Oktoberfest on Friday and Saturday 11th-12th October. Opening hours are 12noon to 11pm. As usual, the Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers' Association is arranging for the 1133 Piccadilly to Cardiff express to make a special stop at Wrenbury on the Saturday. The express will stop at Wrenbury at 1705 for festival-goers returning to Manchester.

Outdoor Imbibing

The prohibition of outdoor drinking in Manchester was mentioned in last month's WD. There are, of course, a few areas where ale can still be supped al fresco, weather permitting. Dave Crookell notes some of them...

On the corner of Exchange Square, adjacent to the **Old Wellington** and **Sinclairs**, one can also drink Joey's from the **Crown & Anchor**,



albeit in plastic glasses. Two glasses are usually provided for greater rigidity, but then there is the problem of the double rim and the drinker has to be careful not to dribble. Three glasses are even worse. When I visited Exchange Square during the Commonwealth Games there were metal barriers around the designated drinking area to prevent drinkers from obtaining a better view of the big screen, and police were standing by, presumably to ensure that no one strayed.

The **Ox**, the **White Lion** and **Dukes 92** in Castlefield, and the **Old Grapes** and the **Peveril of the Peak** all have beer patios and then there is the Parisian-like atmosphere of Deansgate from **Café Rouge** to **RSVP**, including the **Moon under Water**.

The bye-law is to prevent revellers from drinking while wandering the streets - and on a Friday or Saturday night in Manchester this is probably a good idea.

Ellenbrook

The Woodside at Ellenbrook, a newish, food orientated pub near the East Lancs Road, is selling handpumped Tetley and Draught Bass (£1.85).

Eccles

The **Duke of York** on Church Street, Eccles, was closed for refurbishment recently. The work did not extend to the removal of the signs outside, which proclaim that a large selection of cask ales is available. This once fine establishment remains keg only.

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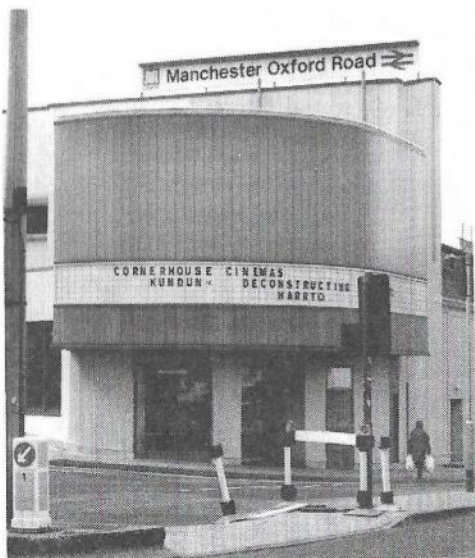
A Different Crawl

Despite a train strike, there was a good turnout for the Genuine Continental Beers Crawl in August. Dave Hallows was there...

First off was the **Sand Bar**, Grosvenor Street, off All Saints. These former offices in a nineteenth century building have been renovated to provide a modern retro café bar, which has real ale and a huge selection of continental beers: San Miguel, Krombacher, Budweiser Budvar, Dortmunder Union (which is a mere 3.5%), Erdinger Weissbrau and Dentegems Wit Blond are all on draught. The guest lager was Warsteiner, though the guest can be far more interesting and rarer than this, as I know from my previous visits. The Sand Bar has a large range of bottled beers - 50-plus - and all perfectly chilled.

On Oxford Street, by the Mancunian Way flyover, there's **Kro Bar 2**. What was once the reception area of the National Computer Centre is now a pleasant Danish-style café bar, functional and very well laid out, with plain white walls, bright lights and lots of glass and marble. It has five handpumps and Budweiser Budvar, Erdinger Weiss, Becks (soon to be brewed all over Europe, sadly) and the interesting Kirin (from Japan) on draught. There is a large, welcoming, outside seating area covered by enormous parasols amongst the trees.

Further up Oxford Street, there is **Cornerhouse**, with the cinema bar on the ground floor. It's a modern bar with steel chairs, stools and glass tables. Though there is no real ale (why not? The building has got a cellar) there's La Chouffe (8%), Erdinger Weiss, Bitburger (a favourite German lager of mine), Leffe Blond, Budweiser Budvar (not the American-type Euro brew, but the real Czech lager), San Miguel, De Koninck Anton and Becks. One of my companions said they show continental films here. I thought he might be harking back to the former Tatler cinema over the road, but maybe he meant 'Art Films' - same thing, really!



Going into the Northern Quarter, we entered **Bar Centro** on Tib Street. Amongst the real ales, Budvar, Lindeboom, Belle Vue Kriek, Hoegaarden Wheat Beer and

Leffe Blond were on draught and there were 15-plus bottle beers. The Centro is laid-back, with subdued lighting giving the atmosphere a friendly, relaxed retro feel. And it stays open late!

I wandered over the road to investigate the **Cord** on Dorsey Street and I was caught by the others having their one real ale, Phoenix Pole-Vaulter, which was cloudy and £2.20 a pint! This bar is even more retro than Centro, with a late-night feel - big brown seating, plain off-white bare walls, tiled floor and a marble bar. On offer were Leffe Blond and Hoegaarden on draught. More than ten bottled beers, too!

Everyone was getting merry when we arrived at the **Bar Fringe** on Swan Street. This pleasant Belgian-style bar specializing in Belgian beers can be laid-back and it can be a roar at weekends. St Louis Kriek, Hoegaarden, Leffe Blond, De Koninck Cuvée (8.8%), Timmerman's peach fruit beer and German Krombacher are on handpump and there are forty varieties of continental bottled beers. The bar is managed by Charlie McBanas Contrary, who delights in giving customers the Bar Fringe experience - friendly and robust. There's a secluded outside seating area festooned with red lights in the back alley. Umm...

Over the road, we checked out the new German lager at the **Smithfield** - Hasseroder Premium Pils (4.8%).

The crawl proved that genuine continental beers can be excellent, a bit pricey, but widely available, varied in style and strong in alcohol.



Holts corner

Stewart Revell

On 19th August work began on converting the newly acquired **Broadway** at New Moston. The intention is to alter the bar arrangements and spend considerable sums of money on transforming the place back into a traditional pub. The work will take about a month and the pub is not expected to close.

The latest seasonal brew from the Derby Brewery, **ThunderHolt** (around 5%), is expected to be on sale at the launch of Real Beer Week on 30th September.

The brewery is considering producing a new bottled beer to complement the '1849'.

The **Winston**, Salford Precinct, was sold some time ago and the **Pack Horse**, Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, has not been a Holts pub for quite a long time. The building is boarded up and it is not known when or if it will reopen. The **Seven Stars**, lower down Ashton Old Road at Beswick, is a free trade outlet under a lease from Holts. The **Blue Bell** at the back of Edgeley Station, Stockport, has Holts signage, but it is also a free trade account.

Pubs that were dispensing smooth mild in favour of cask mild have now ceased this practice as a result of 'strong' instructions from the brewery.

The annual price increase - 3p or 4p on a pint - is expected to take place in October or maybe November.

Real Beer Week

The Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) is holding a Real Beer Week in September/October, aimed at introducing more drinkers to the delights of real beer. Formed in 1993, the IFBB is made up of the 33 remaining family-owned and run UK brewers and pub retailers. They account for just 5% of the UK's beer production but brew half of all the UK's real beer. The IFBB's activities include lobbying government on pertinent issues and raising awareness of and for real beer.

Real Beer Week will run from 30th September to 6th October, and follows on from the success of Cask Ale Week last year. The IFBB promotions will include 'Try Before You Buy' in their pubs, and competitions to win brewery tours or beer for a year.

In Manchester, the week will be launched in the Ape & Apple by Holts, Lees, Robinsons, Hydes and, making their first appearance, Thwaites.

Wigan and district

Dave White

The word is out that a huge housing scheme is planned for the site of the former bleachworks at Standish, close to the Mayflower Brewery. The bleachworks, alongside Chorley Road, is part of an industrial heritage and conservation area, as well as being home to a rare species of bat. There should be no threat to Mayflower, however, as the brewery is in a protected building. Still, watch this space.

Harking back to last month's reports, I can confirm that the **Forresters Arms**, Main Street, Billinge, has retained real ale, namely Burtonwood bitter and a guest beer. Meanwhile, in Hindley Green, the **Swan Hotel** on the corner of Atherton Road and Swan Lane was only closed for a few weeks before it bounced back, but remains keg. Further down Swan Lane, the **Alexandra Hotel** has reopened. The freak floods of one Friday in June led to the Alex being submerged. The pub has been tastefully refurbished, and Tetley bitter is still available, plus a guest.



Wigan town centre now, and the **Bricklayers Arms** on Hallgate (*left*) is closed and boarded up. This spartan boozer had not sold real ale for some time. On the other hand, the **Moon Under Water**, Market Square, sells several cask bitters, but no mild. Wetherspoons recently replaced the popular Cains mild with Theakstons keg. Other JDW outlets in the area offer traditional Thwaites mild; so what's the problem at the Moon?

There are two pubs in the Wigan area called the **Britannia Inn**. The one at Hall Green, Up Holland sold traditional Greenalls bitter until recently, but John Smiths keg now rules the roost. The handpumps remain, though, so one can hope. The situation is somewhat bleaker at the **Britannia Inn** on Wigan Road, Bryn. Fires have been started at this pub (also ex-Greenalls) six times within two months, though the building is apparently safe for the moment.

News in brief ... the **Conquering Hero** at the Grove, Higher Ince, is now in a dilapidated condition and could face demolition, if Wigan Council and local residents have anything to do with it ... the **Famous Pagefield** (it has a renowned revolving door) on Park Road, Springfield, now sells Tetley bitter alongside Greenalls bitter.

Bury News

Alex Koval

Change has been the name of the game as far as Bury has been concerned recently. Most notably, at the GBG-listed **Rose & Crown**, Martin finally said goodbye on 3rd August with an excellent leaving party. I know everyone wishes him all the best for the future. The future of the **Rose & Crown**, left to the tender mercies of Pubmaster, is once again uncertain.

There are new faces in both the **Hark to Towler** and **New Inn** on Walmersley Road. Both retain cask ale and the Towler is now offering lunchtime and early evening food. Also now offering food and a guest beer is the **Brown Cow** on Woodhill Road. The new incumbents have given the place a lick of paint and are to be congratulated on restoring the fortunes of a pub that had been in steady decline for some time. I enjoyed an excellent pint of Badger IPA here recently. The nearby **Garsdale** is still rotating its single beer choice, by the way. Back on Walmersley Road, the **Cricketers** has also got a new landlord. However, as the pub's always closed when I call, I am unable to verify what, if anything, it sells. Perhaps they saw me coming?

The **Claybank** on Rochdale Road has shut up shop for good. The pub didn't have a noticeable presence on the local real ale scene in recent times and like many others, it could boast of a brighter past than future. Rumours are rife that the whole block is destined for an Asda-Walmart superstore. If so, any chance of a pint at the checkout, please? Another pub with something of a past and now closed for good



is the **Masons Arms** in Whitefield. This ex-Whitbread, ex-Duttons, ex-Radcliffe Brewery hostelry is a grand building and should be celebrating its centenary this year. In 1910, the Prestwich Nurses' Union, later to become COHSE, the health care workers' union, held its inaugural meeting here. However, the pub has been something of a dive for many years now. It's hard to believe that people were once barred for wearing jeans in there. With the **Wheatsheaf** also closed, the real ale drinker in Whitefield must give thanks every day to Uncle Joe and his nourishing black nectar.

Someone has found an interesting use for one of Bury's ex-hostelries. There are plans to convert the **Golden Fleece** on Bell Lane into a members-only health club, complete with sauna, etc. Any chance of a pint with that massage, please? Even more surprising is what has happened at the **Eagle & Child** on Bolton Road. The pub had been on keg beer for so long that it was believed that Fred Flintstone was the last person to drink real ale there. However, the real stuff recently appeared on the bar. The Eagle & Child now completes a nice little triangle with the **Dusty Miller** and the **Arthur**, where a guest ale has joined the already impressive Porter portfolio.

Cask mild has gone from the **Black Bull** on Ainsworth Road, but cask bitter remains. As far as I'm aware, this now means Bury is a Thwaites cask mild free zone. Apart from, allegedly, the **Robert Peel**, that establishment that J D Wetherspoon insist on calling a public house. Having, on recent visits, being unable to acquire a drink there, I think it would be better to convert the premises back to its former use as a public toilet. Certainly, Bury town centre is in dire need of one. Better news next door in the **Two Tubs**, where Lancaster Bomber is now a permanent fixture. Not content with serving Lees mild and bitter, **Elton Fold Working Men's Club**, known affectionately as the Klondike, is now selling Hydes bitter. All in the largest lined glasses in town.

Bury could soon be home to a second microbrewery. Plans are well in hand for the 5-barrel plant to begin production at a secret location in Ramsbottom. Built by the legendary Brian Farmworth, the man who brought us Leyden, this could be the first step towards Bury becoming the Burton-on-Trent of the North. Well, we can all dream.

Rainsough

On Rainsough Brow, work appears to be taking place at the long closed **Plough**. The old Wilsons signage has disappeared, wooden shutters are attached to the upstairs windows and the outside is being painted. But the pub name remains, which augurs well for the future. Nearby at the **Kersal** on Moor Lane, the Boddingtons bitter is smooth, but the handpumps now dispense a fine pint of Holts bitter for £1.35.

Out and about

with Trotter

The **Mark Addy** pub next to the Irwell in Salford has been refurbished. It has a new carpet, a shiny laminate wood floor and a brighter paint job in the lobby, although the old photos depicting the history of the area have gone. In the pub itself, on one side are the partitioned booths next to the exposed stone wall, set under original brick arches, and on the other side, the lounge-style seating affords views of the river through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

The long bar was serving three real ales on my visit - Cottage Champflower, Pendle Witch and the interestingly titled Spank'n'Hide, which the bartender told me was 'specially brewed for us by Hydes'. With a 3.5% ABV, Spank'n'Hide looked and tasted very much like Hydes Light. The Mark Addy is worth a visit for the variety of beers and also to sample the cheese counter.

Clifton

After a pleasant Sunday afternoon walk around Clifton Country Park, I stopped off at the **Clifton Park Hotel**, where the guest beer was Tribute, a 4.2% pale amber ale from St Austell. A few days later the hotel was selling a seasonal ale from Batemans, the 3.9% Summer Swallow.

Bolton

Getting away from the increasingly busy Bolton town centre Saturday night scene, I paid a visit to the **Kings Head**, Junction

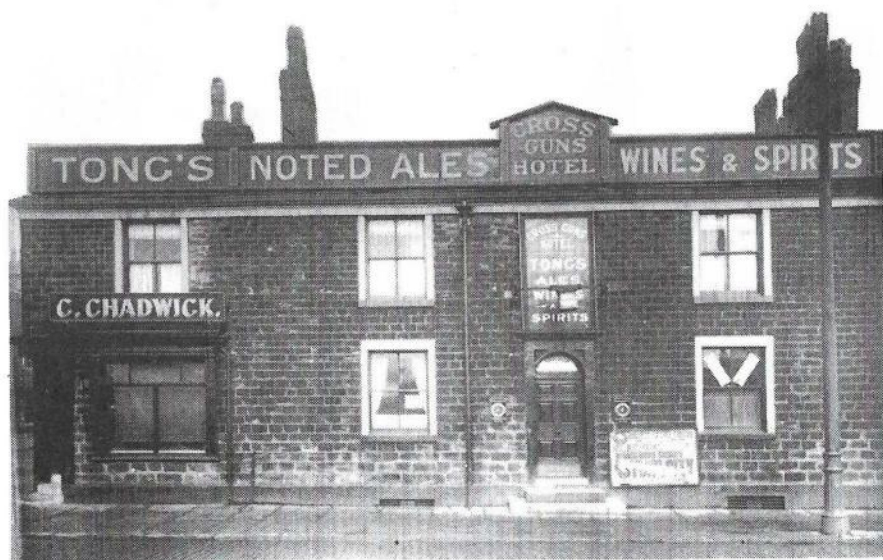


Road, Deane. This is a 300-year-old, Grade II listed pub, refurbished in 1991 to provide three drinking areas served from one long, wood panelled bar. Up to six real ales are available and on my visit these were Tetley mild and bitter, Cottage Pride, Taylors Landlord, Pride of Pendle (£1.45 a pint), and Executioner, a Bank Top beer brewed exclusively for the pub.

Three minutes' walk away on Wigan Road is the large, imposing **Rumworth**, a Joey Holts establishment. I asked for a pint of the Baton Bitter but it was sour, so I returned it and decided to head towards town.

I stopped off at the **Cross Guns** on Deane Road, which years ago was a Tongs pub and more recently Walkers, where I had a pint of Hydes bitter (£1.25). Back in the town centre, I ended the evening in the **Hen & Chickens**. There is a choice of three guest ales, plus Greenalls bitter and Cains mild; my choice was a pint of Ridleys Prospect.

Finally, for once, some praise for Boddingtons. I managed to sample their Commonwealth Games beer in the **Britannia** in Farnworth. It was a deceptive brew with an added ingredient to give it an extra kick and, at 5%, a couple of pints made me feel light-headed. If Boddingtons can make an excellent 5% one-off cask ale, why not brew it regularly? And less of the nitrokeg!



Leigh - the First Leg

Dave White

A 658 bus took us to Leigh bus station, which was handy for our first pub, the **Goose at the Spinning Jenny** on Spinning Jenny Way. This is a large, open-plan, split-level tavern with a curved bar and walls to match. There is much dark wood, books by the yard and a Chesterfield on the top level. Newspapers are available, the lighting is subdued, and even the fruit machine is unobtrusive. Framed prints of Leigh locations can be seen on the wall, the windows are airy and there is a no smoking area. Food is served. There is an outside drinking area, and the exterior of the pub boasts a replica of the Spinning Jenny ceramic, the original of which can be seen in the town hall nearby. The cask ales on offer were Tetley bitter, Draught Bass and Fullers London Pride. We plumped for the latter, but agreed that it tasted like Bass.

A brace of keg pubs followed (is there a collective noun for keg pubs, I wonder?), namely the **Moonraker**, down Wild's Passage, then the **Bridge Inn**, the **Bridgewater Arms**, the **Britannia** and the **Ellesmere**, all on St Helens Road. The demise of the Bridge was sad, the pub having been one of my favourite watering holes in the 1980s - but worse was to follow. Less surprisingly, **Edison's** and the **Leigh Arms** back on King Street were also fizz only. By now we were back outside the bus station.

We nearly walked out of the **George & Dragon**, but then discovered handpumps on the back bar. The pub has a pleasant, cosmopolitan feel to it, with a split-level conservatory at the back. Lots of modern artwork, fancy wrought-iron lights and a collection of pottery and glass. The main bar has a slate floor, which changes to dark wood in the back bar, while the conservatory is carpeted. Food is served and there is an outside drinking area. There is an eclectic mix of chairs, and drinks, including Brain Haemorrhage, Slippery Nipple and Quick F**k. We settled for Courage Directors. Greenalls bitter and Wells Bombardier were also available,

We went down Twist Lane because the last bus back to Wigan (593) follows this route. On then to the **Waterside**, an old canalside wharf pleasantly refurbished in a traditional manner. The interior has whitewashed stone walls, oak beams and Victorian prints, and the seats are tastefully upholstered. Newspapers are available to read, and the pub holds several events during the week, including a disco on a Saturday night. We sat in the no smoking room at the back of the pub, where the music wasn't too loud, and admired the iron flue. The outside drinking area overlooks the Leeds & Liverpool canal. The food served is pretty mainstream, but there is a Pensioner's Choice on offer as well. The real ales were Boddingtons bitter and Hardy & Hanson Kimberley bitter.

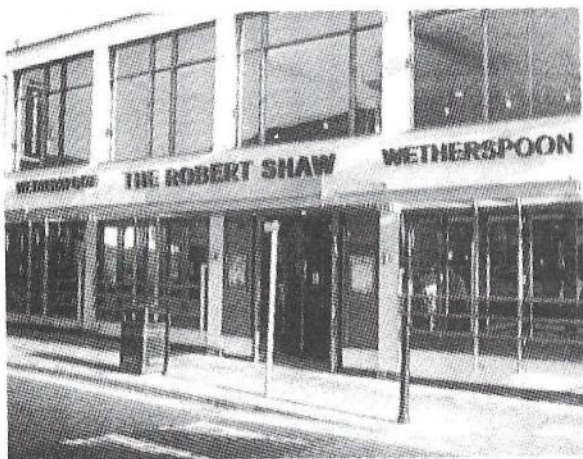
Further down Twist Lane, the **Red Brick Inn** offered nothing but fizz, the **Atherleigh Way** by the road of the same name was no different and, saddest of all, the **Railway** on the corner of Findlay Street (yes, Pete Richardson's old pub) had gone keg, though the handpumps remain.

The **Sportsman Hotel** sold no cask beer, so we repaired to the **Waggon & Horses** on Wigan Road. This is a very traditional boozer which has retained a snug and games room. A brick stack open fire separates a long lounge from the bar. The lounge has anaglypta wallpaper, beige velour upholstery and etched windows. Push-button ringers were on the backs of the seats, though we didn't check to see if they work. Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse and Manet prints, among others, adorn the walls. This is a Hydes inn and the beers - mild, bitter and light - were on sparkling form. Pub of the night.

The pubs described catered for drinkers of all ages, the beer was good, and the centre of Leigh certainly seemed less intimidating than Wigan on a Saturday night.

Westhoughton Wetherspools

The **Robert Shaw**, the new Wetherspools pub in a former supermarket building (*WD last month*) is proving popular and attracting customers from nearby Lostock and Horwich. The regular beers are Theakstons bitter, Cains mild, Spitfire, Directors, Abbot Ale and Hopback Summer Lightning. Robert Shaw was the local lad who went to Hollywood and was in Jaws. But hands up anybody who remembers him as Cap'n Tempest in that live action Pugwash - type programme on teatime telly about 1960.



Shut

The Black Friar on Blackfriars Road in Salford was closed and boarded up in August after a fire.

Home Brewing Revisited

Humulus Lupulus

Part 27: New Rupert

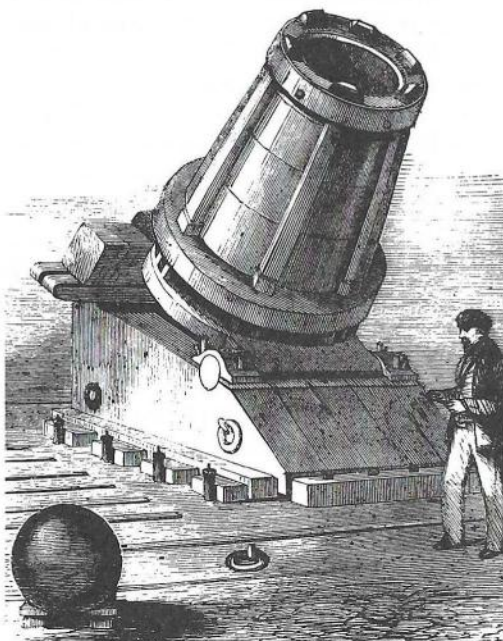
I have been very lazy on the home-brewed beer front in the last couple of years. With the exception of a large annual brew using straight-from-the-bine hops, my output has been very low, though winemaking has continued apace. Then, recently, the failure of the thermostat on my fridge jolted me out of my torpor.

As well as milk, cheese, salad etc, I keep isinglas finings and brewery yeast in my fridge. The finings are used only occasionally and the yeast sample, stored in a large plastic bottle with a couple of inches of beer covering the creamy deposit, was placed there some eighteen months earlier. It had been used to make one brew after being supplied by one of Manchester's family brewers early in 2001. I won't name the brewery; suffice to say I have been using their yeast for several years now and always found it reliable. Those who seek the name should be able to work it out!

Would it still be viable after this extended hibernation? It had already started to warm up slowly whilst still in the fridge, due to the broken thermostat. Now this is no bad thing, according to brewing experts. Yeasts do not like the shock of sudden temperature changes, apparently. I took it out and left it (still sealed) to acclimatize to the warm August weather.

Meanwhile, I boiled up some powdered malt extract (which I keep just for this purpose) with a little sugar, water and a handful of hops, to make a couple of pints of 'wort'. After cooling, it was strained through a sieve into a half-gallon bottle and a generous tablespoonful of the yeast was added.

Kitchen clingfilm makes a good closure in this case. Stretched across the top of the bottle it keeps air and flies out, and when fermentation starts, it bulges slightly and allows the CO₂ to escape. This happened within 24 hours



and by day three I had a vigorous fermentation going. This was a cue to dump the rest of the original yeast; this newly active brew would be my starter for the next beer which would be..... ??

Although I keep detailed records of all my brews, I rarely repeat recipes exactly. However, a few years ago, I had brewed a strong stout/porter, Old Rupert, to commemorate the 21st anniversary of *What's Doing*. I still have a dozen or so bottles of this, and as reported previously, it has 'gone off' - due, I believe, to the use of chalky water in line with the received wisdom of the time - this too, has been discussed in these pages.

So I decided to repeat the recipe as closely as possible, with the one exception of using permanently hard (gypseous) water in place of the chalk. In chemistry speak, I used calcium and magnesium sulphates instead of calcium and magnesium carbonates. I halved the original quantities of everything, as the original brew was over eight gallons, which at this strength pushes my mash tun to its limit. For the record, the ingredients were as follows:

Pale Ale Malt: 8 pounds	Flaked Barley: 17 ounces
Roasted Barley: 12 ounces	Crystal Malt: 8 ounces
Fuggles Hops (α 6.0): 2 ounces	Target Hops (α ?): 2 ounces
Gypsum: to saturation	Epsom Salts: 1 teaspoon

The original gravity was 1057 (compared to 1055 for 'Old' Rupert). It has fermented to a gravity of 1011 - I used a high mash temperature to obtain residual body - giving an alcohol content of $[57 - 11] \div 7.46 = 6.2\%$ (6.0% before). It now needs bottling and a name. Rather than go the Old Tom/Young Tom route, I have chosen 'New Rupert'. There are still 36 unused labels from 1996; it may be amusing to overprint these and use them on the new brew. The real test will come in a few years - will this upstart outlive his progenitor? Only time will tell.

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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To join CAMRA send £16 to Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.

Silver Jubilee

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA was established in October 1977, when the Queen was celebrating her Silver Jubilee. This year, therefore, sees the branch's own Silver Jubilee, which will be marked by a celebration party in the **Old Market Tavern**, Altrincham. This is where the branch held its inaugural meeting back in the days of kipper ties, Watney's Party Sevens and other horrors. The date of the celebration is Thursday 3rd October, starting around 8.00pm. All past and present members of the branch, and indeed of neighbouring branches, are invited to attend.

The branch was founded at a meeting held on the the third Thursday of October 1977. This anniversary will be celebrated on the third Thursday of October 2002 with a visit to the biggest brewery in the branch area - Hydes Anvil Brewery - thanks to the generosity of Tony Philips at Hydes.

The brewery can only accommodate 25 visitors, so CAMRA members living in the Trafford & Hulme branch area have priority. That's roughly the area bounded by the Irwell, Blackfriars, Market Street, Mosley Street and Oxford Street in Manchester city centre, plus Hulme (west of Princess Road) and of course the Borough of Trafford. There will be a charge of £2 per head in aid of branch funds. Contact branch chairman Neil Worthington on 0161 749 4882. The brewery is well served by several bus routes.

Trafford & Hulme has been a rather quiet branch in recent times, but it is now becoming much more active, with regular monthly meetings once again. In a very slight break with tradition, the meetings are now on the first Thursday of the month, usually at the Old Market Tavern and starting at 8pm. The branch contact is still Dave Ward (0161 980 1170). See Branch Diary for other dates.

Adrift

On Boothshall Way in Boothstown, the **Moorings**, which was a perfectly suitable name for a pub located on the towpath of the Bridgewater Canal, has become 'Millers'. Why?

Swinton

Halligans on Swinton Hall Road, Swinton, which is the subject of a planning application to convert it into residential use (*WD last month*), is closed and a notice in the window says the place is flooded. This looks ominous.

Letter

Guide pubs

Sir - Re 'Grime Gripe' (*Letters, WD Aug*). As seven of the city centre pubs on the 'Bar Trek' are in the current Good Beer Guide, I would not like to guess which one 'A Tyke' refers to. So I will defend them all.

For nearly twenty years I have been proud to be able to drink in such a splendid and diverse array of characterful pubs. All sell quality ales, the main criterion for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide.

Therefore I take 'Grime' to mean 'Great Real Interiors of Mancunian Excellence'. I am sure many other people enjoy drinking in all the Guide-listed pubs. It makes me wonder if A Tyke has a personal grievance, or is he a touch jealous of the treasures Manchester contains?

I am sorry they do not all reach the Howard Hughes standard, but I will continue to support them - and enjoy my beer in the process.

Mark Charnley

Pickerings Hotel

Dave Crookell

A recent invitation to a wedding reception revealed an unexpected array of cask conditioned ales at this privately owned twelve-bedroom, three-star hotel at Catterall near Garstang.

There was Theakstons bitter, locally brewed Shifting Sands bitter (3.8%), Old Mill bitter (3.9%), McEwans 60/- and Courage Directors, all on handpump and in excellent condition at £1.90 a pint. The proprietors, John and Anne Welsh, are real ale enthusiasts who have turned what was once a quiet residential hotel into a thriving oasis in an area that was something of a real ale desert. They host quiz nights on Tuesdays with beer prizes and there is live entertainment on Thursday nights.

Set in two acres of mature gardens, Pickerings has a children's adventure playground and a patio at the rear with views across farmland to the Trough of Bowland.



Holiday time

with Daddy Bell

I'm glad to report that real ale is alive and living in Cumbria, though some of its most ardent resident imbibers (such as the 'other' Beer Monster - the one without a TM) seem to spend much time seeking it out in Salford and Manchester - and we are glad to see them in these parts. It might be expected that I would admit to consuming copious amounts of Yates, and not inconsiderable quantities of Jennings, and so I did, on holiday and since. Yates bitter was in predominantly smoky mode wherever I encountered it; but the real joy was Summer Fever, a clear pale gold beer which in its present form was launched as Carlisleberg, and does indeed betray its lagery origins and yet is unmistakably a Yates production. As for Jennings, I tended to concentrate on Cocker Hoop wherever I found it available, most regularly at the **Bridge Inn** at Santon Bridge. I also had a memorable pint of Snecklifter there, memorable first for its very appealing flavour (a strong hint of amaretto) and second for the fact that its price increased after I commented favourably upon its comparative cheapness (£2).

In many Jennings outlets, it's hard to find anything other than the ordinary (nowadays, all too ordinary) bitter. This is certainly the case in Whitehaven, which is awash with Jennings houses and offers little scope for finding any other real ale, especially after the deletion of the **John Paul Jones** from the current GBG. The best alternative is the **Welsh Arms** in Tangier Street, a 'Hartleys' house where I found Robinsons Stadium, Snowdon and Old Stockport. With its lounge bar, pool room and lunchtime food, and handiness for the railway station, it is well worth a visit. It will face daunting competition, however, if J D Wetherspoon follow through with the planning permission they have obtained for the conversion of the nearby bus station. And one wonders what impact the same chain will have in Kendal, if their plans for the old public baths there come to fruition.

I don't think Wetherspoons are likely to be opening a pub in Gosforth. Here the **Gosforth Hall Hotel** has changed hands yet again. Its new owners have ambitious plans - chalets in the grounds, an indoor swimming pool - but happily real ale still figures: I found Black Sheep Bitter (the most common non-Cumbrian real ale in the area) on handpump alongside Ruddles Best and Theakston Best. The most notable improvement in Gosforth is that



Mary Ellens has reverted to its old name of the **Globe**, and is now owned by Lesley Rhodes and John Morrow, as a freehouse venture of their own in addition to their running of Jennings' **Bridge Inn** a couple of miles away. This means that all three pubs in the Square (the others being the **Lion and Lamb** and the **Wheatsheaf**) are competing for trade as sources of real ale and appetising food: perhaps they could co-operate in a mini-festival, as the three pubs at **Boot** (the **Burnmoor**, the **Brook House**, and the **Woolpack**) have successfully done. I did find one day that the Gosforth trio were all selling Jennings Cumberland Ale, but the **Globe** is a sound choice for other Jennings beers, and for those of the Great Gable Brewing Co.

The Great Gable Brewing Co. is not Cumbria's newest brewery (the Hawkshead Brewery launched its beers in mid-July) but it is remarkable for the remoteness and grandeur of its location, at the **Wasdale Head Inn**, and for the promise of its beers. Last year I had a tour of the unfinished brewhouse, and this year the pleasure and the benefit of conversations with the enterprise's owner, Howard Christie, and the brewer, a fellow-cyclist, Giles Holiday. Two beers had appeared by the time of my visits - Great Gable and Wasd'Ale (abv's not declared on pumpclips but thought to be 3.7% and 4.4% respectively). I met the Great Gable first at the **Screes** at Nether Wasdale on 13th July: it was orangey-brown in colour, its condition and clarity good, and with a taste I found it hard to assess, but I detected a hint of pepper at the back of the throat. I found one or other of the beers on almost every visit to the best freehouses of Eskdale and Wasdale; but, not surprisingly, they were on their finest



form at the **Wasdale Head Inn** itself, where the softness of the Wasd'Ale (which is a light chestnut in colour) was particularly pronounced. They are appealingly malty beers, brewed with Fawcett's Maris Otter malt, the Great Gable being the more hop-accented. Traditional English hops are used, chosen for bitterness rather than aroma, but others, such as Saaz, may be experimented with later. Fresh yeast is used for each brew. The all-important liquor comes from a spring on the fell, and whereas domestic supplies at Wasdale Head go through a treatment process, the brewery uses the water neat. It would apparently be ideal for a Kölsch, but the next beers are Wrynose (a 30% rye beer in which the brewer detects lemon and marmalade notes) which should be available by now, and a 6.5% porter for the winter. Owner and brewer are concentrating on supplying local outlets, so you will probably have to venture along or at least towards Wastwater if you want to taste their beers.

Mind you, many folk from Greater Manchester regularly make the pilgrimage to that homely and welcoming real ale shrine, the **Prince of Wales** at Foxfield. It would be remiss of me not to commend it here, since I have enjoyed its unique ambience several times recently, not least at its Summer Beer Festival. Stuart and Lynda had two of their own beers on then, Foxfield Nettlepole and Tigertops Legbreak, but it was also the occasion for my introduction to Hawkshead Best Bitter (4.2%), straight from the cellar. It was the colour of Holts bitter, perhaps too thin, and with a hint of treacle; the aroma was quite marked, and reminded me both of some Belgian beers and of those of Barnegates, another Cumbrian micro.

I hope I have not neglected my usual watering holes during the last weeks of my long sojourn in Salford. Many good beers have been on offer, but one that stands out in the memory is the 6.2% Rampant Gryphon from Wentworth, a sweet tempered beast with a residual bite which I several times imbibed in the **Crescent**.

Cask versus Smooth

In the May edition of What's Doing, Dave Hallows investigated the availability of cask mild in a variety of Holts pubs. Only four out of nine were selling the real stuff. In August he tried again...

As a result of the green cards campaign, highlighting the problem of cask mild not being on sale alongside the smooth version, I can report four successes. The **Duke of York**, Hightown; the **Crumpsall Hotel**, Cheetham Hill; the **Grove**, Ashton New Road, and the **Orion**, Burton Road, Withington, all now have cask mild available and the beer was on very good form when I called.

Rupert

Sid asked me to look up an article he'd written for WD back in 1984.

My, how it's changed. In addition to Sid's neo-Proustian exploits, there was plenty going on. Charlie Bass had opened Grotley's premier free house, not entirely to the gruntlement of the Noble Robin. Boringsods were excoriated for their hostelry destruction and, miracle of miracles, Fuddy's, now defunct, amber nectar factory had converted a hostelry to real ale. Drabs was 59p. Hammerstein was going on about DOGSHIT not being responsible for picking an establishment where a stuffed fox was smirking out of a bucket and Rumpleshirtscream was squawking about four letter words. He suggested that Eddy was capricious in preferring contributions from his pals to well-crafted masterpieces from Snoot Magna.

It was for this reason that *Opining Tripe* was phoenixed up to cater for those *auteurs manqués*. And it's been sweetness and light ever since. *Opining Tripe* has gone on from strength to strength, whilst WD seems to have lost its touch for gratuitous insults. It must be over a decade since Eddy received a solicitor's letter. The last one was about the Slumley Arms when it was suggested that hundreds of people were drinking before opening time. Trouble was, it was true. In the past WD couldn't prove the nasty things that were said and had to grovel. This time it had been before the beak, so Eddy was right.

As soon as you start to kowtow to received wisdom and write blandly, people take advantage. Only two months ago an article about a Friggin emporium likened the decor to that of Eunuchramforks. The manager was enraged and wrote using green ink, capital letters and exclamation marks!!!! to say so. If it had been suggested that he'd been running a brothel, selling crack, making snuff videos and abusing children in the cellar he could not have been more incensed.

Bollocks to him, I say (sorry, Rumpleshirtscream). We should get back to what we're good at, saying what we think and putting it into print with no holds barred. It's largely because of Eddy's softening up and namby-pamby tone that the world of real ale and honest-to-goodness boozers has fallen apart in Grotley. If we see any cretinous behaviour from any quarters, let's nail it straight away.



Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Sept 8.30pm: Branch Meeting, Arthur Inn, Bolton Road, Bury

Thurs 19 - Mon 23 Sept: Weekend Coach Social to Belgium. Details from Branch Contact

Thurs 26 Sept 8.30pm: Committee/What's Doing Collation, Rose & Crown, Manchester Old Road, Bury

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

email: P.Alexander@Virgin.net

North Manchester

www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 4 Sept 8pm, Social, White Swan, Worsley Road, Swinton

Wed 11 Sept 8pm, Social, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford

Wed 18 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Tues 24 Sept 6pm, What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street

Wed 25 Sept, Pub Crawl with Trafford & Hulme Branch. Malt Shovels, Altrincham, 7.30pm. Old Market Tavern 9pm.

Wed 2 Oct 8pm, Social, Pot of Beer, New Mount Street, Manchester

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Trafford & Hulme

Thurs 5 Sept 8pm, Branch Meeting and social, Volunteer, Cross Street, Sale

Mon 9 Sept 8pm, Social with East Cheshire Branch, Greyhound, Ashley

Wed 25 Sept, Pub Crawl with North Manchester Branch, starting at Malt Shovels, Altrincham, 7.30pm

Thurs 3 Oct 8pm, Branch Meeting and Jubilee Party, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Sat 5th Oct 8pm, Joint Meeting with Stockport Branch, Railway, Stockport

Thurs 17 Oct, Visit to Hydes Brewery. See elsewhere in this issue

Thurs 7 Nov 8pm, Branch Meeting, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

Wigan

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 478816 (w), 427595 (h)

email john@misltd.co.uk

Contributors to this issue: Neil Worthington, Roy Bullock, David Bridge, Dave Hallows, Dave Crookell, Paul Warbrick, Roger Hall, John Cresswell, Dave White, Daddy Bell, Pete Cash, Ian Kenny, Stewart Revell, Alex Koval

Dave and Sue welcome you to

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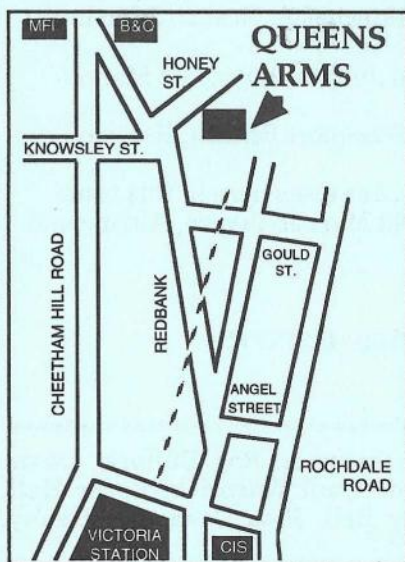
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