

30p

What's Doing

DECEMBER 2002



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

GOOD BEER GUIDE AWARD

The publication of the 2003 Good Beer Guide this October marked the 16th consecutive appearance in the guide of the Crescent pub in Salford. To celebrate the event, CAMRA North Manchester held a social in the pub and chairman Phil Stout presented a special certificate. He explained that we had waited for 16 years (rather than 15) so that it would be easier to alter the '0' to a '6' on the large banner outside the pub, proclaiming '10 Years in the Good Beer Guide'. This has since been done!



Andy and Lynn welcome you to

The Hare & Hounds

400 Bolton Road West,
Holcombe Brook, Ramsbottom,
Bury, Lancs.
BL0 9RY
Tel 01706 822107

Quite Simply REAL ALE AT ITS BEST

From brewers all over the country

Food

Our FULL menu is served 7 days a week 12-9.00

If that's not enough

We offer a no smoking area, Two real fires,
Thurs & Sun Quizzes starting at 9.30pm,
Beer Garden & Patio Area

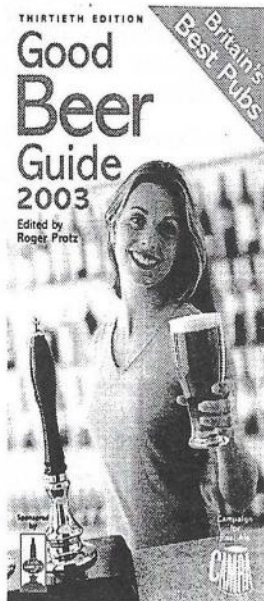
Opening Times

Open 12 noon - 11.00pm Monday - Saturday
12 noon - 10.30pm Sunday

Crescent award continued

To receive the award, four licensees from the sixteen year period were present: Andy and Jo Davies, the original joint licensees and still the owners; Ruth Broomfield, who took over as licensee manager for a few years, and current tenant Idy Phillips and her partner, Sal. Andy pointed out that they had in fact been there for seventeen years, but being a cautious lot, the local branch would not put the Crescent in the guide until they had proved themselves for a full year.

After the presentation we were treated to a buffet, and the Hydes Bitter (at a special price for the evening of 90p a pint) accompanied some more informal reminiscences about Andy and Jo's first appearance on the Salford scene, when the Red Dragon, as it was then known, was closed and was just one of several pubs which they considered buying.



Bent & Bongs Beerfest

There may be no Manchester Winter Ales Festival in January, but the Bent & Bongs event goes on as usual. The venue is the Formby Hall, Atherton (*below*), and the festival takes place on 30th January - 1st February. Eighty beers are promised, including thirty winter warmers, plus ciders. Full details next month.



North Report Part Two

Last month Dave Hallows reported some promising progress on the pub scene in and around Harpurhey. This month he heads for Blackley...

The **Grove Inn** on Rochdale Road (by Boggart Hole Clough Park) is an attractive cottage-style building, containing one large, well-appointed room with a corner bar. Being a Burtonwood house, there is just one real ale - the bitter. After the bar staff failed to cajole me into having the smooth, I got a fair sample of the cask bitter: tangy at first, giving way to a pleasant bitterness taste.



Passing the **New White Lion** on Middleton Old Road - refurbished, now a hotel and, sadly, keg - I paid a visit to the **Golden Lion** on Old Market Street. Manager Bob Jarsinski (who made his name at the Lord Nelson, Pendlebury) has turned the pub into a noted Holts house (Good Beer Guide 2003). During the summer the Silver Baton Bitter was well received at a CAMRA social at the pub and when I called the mild and bitter were on excellent form.

At the **Fox Inn**, a stone's throw away from the Golden Lion, handpumped mild is now available alongside the bitter and the pub is better for it. The pub is worth a visit just to sit and sup in the comfortable vault.

The **Millstone** (Burtonwood) on Blackley New Road serves just the bitter: tangy at first, but certainly fresh.

The **Old House at Home** on Bottomley Side, a former Wilsons house,

was a CAMRA favourite many moons ago. In fact, the pub was saved by a campaign when the then nearby ICI wanted it demolished. Sadly, there is now just one real ale, Websters Yorkshire Bitter.

Back on Delaunays Road, I called in at the **Imperial** (Lees). This is the former social club of the nearby North Manchester General Hospital and it is still frequented by hospital staff. It has a good sized, but spartan vault, reception lounge and long dance hall. There was a holiday camp atmosphere, with the new landlord singing on stage and customers dancing! Both Lees bitter and mild were on offer. The pub is well worth a visit, especially for those looking for a 1950s atmosphere!

Next, I went back to some old haunts of mine in Higher Blackley/Crab Village. I called in at the **Pleasant** (Robinsons) on Chapel Lane, where well kept Best Bitter and Hatters Mild were on handpump. The decor is loud and striking. The traditional vault has deep green walls, while the lounge has green and peach speckled walls.

The **Flying Horse** on Crab Lane, a former Boddingtons house which once sold Greenalls bitter and Festival bitter, had no real ale available on any of the four handpumps. One hopes this is merely a temporary situation.

In contrast, I visited the **Duke of Wellington** (Holts) on Weardale Road - always reliable, lively and busy. The bitter and mild are always on good form. A feature of the pub is the small Edwardian bar with etched glass - almost as good as the Lamb in Eccles and the Griffin in Heaton Mersey.



THE CRESCENT

SALFORD **0161 736 5600**

OPEN ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

10 cask ales always available

**HYDES BITTER - MOORHOUSE PENDLE WITCH
ROOSTERS SPECIAL - PHOENIX THIRSTY MOON**

Plus 8 guests including a Mild

**Erdinger on draught, Liefmans Kriek + Quality Doubles Bar
Regularly Changing BELGIAN Guest Beer**

FOOTBALL on SKY TV

Food served every lunchtime from 11.30am (12.00 on Sundays)

Free Chip Barms Mondays 5-6pm

Weds 5-8pm Choice of Six Curries (Veg & Meat) + Rice - £3.20

WINTER BEER FESTIVAL

Including Winter Warmers

Thursday 28th Nov - Saturday 30th Nov

40 NEW BEERS

Served from the Bar and the Cellar

Food available all day until 7pm

NOW TAKING BOOKINGS FOR CHRISTMAS

£7.50 - Two Courses - Vegetarian Option

Function/Party Room available for free hire

Buffets or hot meals provided on request

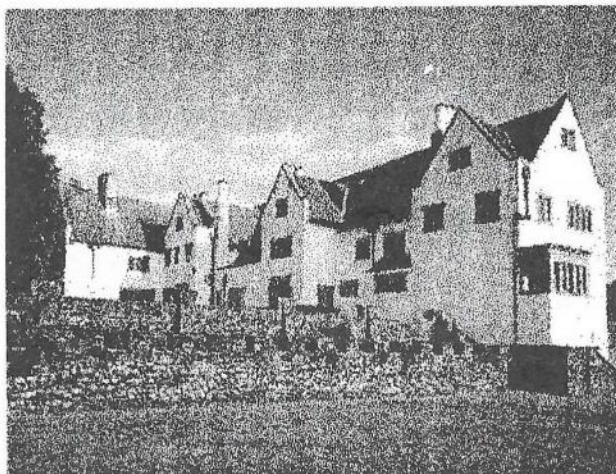
T.V. and Games Room.

Open for darts and table football

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

The next seasonal beer to emerge from the Derby Brewery will be called **Blackwell** and it will be available at the end of January. Production of ThunderHolt will cease, but it will be brewed again next October.



'Blackwell' was the name of Sir Edward Holt's weekend retreat in Bowness-in-Windermere, built in the 1890s. The building (*above*), fully restored, is now an Arts and Crafts Centre. There is a really good account of the place at:

<http://www.blackwell.org.uk/history.shtml>



The new beer will be quite different in style from Thunderholt, with an ABV of 4.4%. The fourth Holts seasonal beer (following Baton, ThunderHolt and Blackwell), will be produced in the early summer. It will be called Edward, after Sir Edward Holt, son of Joseph.

You know, it's quite remarkable just what can be obtained in a pub. Apart from beer, that is. On my travels I try to call in at a Holts outlet if there's one in the area and in November I visited a pub which Holts have been running for ten years or so.

It was about 2.30pm and there was a sale of high quality men's jumpers taking place. I think they were going for between £10 and £20 each; quite a saving on the usual retail price. There was a selection of large, medium, small, etc, with different patterns and styles. This was followed by a chap selling good quality bed quilts, king size or double, a bargain at £10 each. And he had quite a few takers. Forty minutes later, in popped a man selling selections of meat cuts, freshly, and I must say, hygienically wrapped, for either £5 or £10 a tray. I chose the £5 tray, which included chops, a joint of meat and other things.

stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk

Letters

East Manchester

Sir - I think Leo King needs to get out more. Whilst he is sadly correct to say (*WD, last month*) that much of East Manchester is devoid of real ale, it is a travesty to add that the alternative is 'little real ale in dismal pubs'.

A recent Stockport & South Manchester Branch trip in these parts found good beer in Openshaw (Oddfellows, Albion, Railway), Clayton (Strawberry Duck, Grove) and Ardwick (Seven Stars), all served in well maintained and often thriving pubs. Another half-dozen or so could easily be added to that list.



If Leo wants more proof, perhaps he'd like to come along to the Branch Pub of the Month presentation at the Plough in Gorton on Thursday 28th. A classic (Grade 2 and National Inventory listed, *above*), popular pub selling top quality (potential Good Beer Guide, in fact) Robinsons. I'd rather drink there than in Wetherspoons any day of the week!

John Clarke

Wetherspoons

Sir - I read with great interest the controversy raging in *What's Doing* concerning J D Wetherspoon pubs, and I imagine the pros and cons to be views typical of most CAMRA members.

I am nudging up to 60, which gives me 'old gimmer' status, and I have to say that I find Wetherspoons staff at least friendly and some are even capable of carrying out a pleasant conversation. Absent is, 'Isn't it past your bedtime, grandad?', 'Where's your Zimmer?' and, worst of all, 'Do I have to serve you? I'm chatting to my boyfriend' - yes, young women are the worst!

Wetherspoons presumably send their staff on a course to learn how to be polite to customers. A good many of our beloved, more traditional pubs could do with sending their staff on the very same course.

Robert W Anderson

Open and Shut in Oldham

Groggnard

The **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street has reopened - on the Eve of All Hallows, to be exact. Formerly a Porters house, it was closed at the beginning of the year by order of Mr Porter himself, who decided the pub was not viable owing to the low volume of trade. Closed at around the same time was the **Bath Hotel** on the corner of Union Street and Clegg Street (though for a more complex series of reasons, which I won't go into).

So Mark, the ex-Ashton landlord, is now managing the Porters brewery tap, the **Griffin** in the middle of the Rossendale Fells, while John, the ex-Bath and ex-Ashton landlord, went into relief management and was last spotted at the **Mare & Foal** on Ashton Road. The last time I went past the Mare it appeared to be shut as well.

Anyway, the Bath was reopened several months ago, although I wasn't enthusiastic about the real ale selection (Boddies and Tetleys). The Bath management decided to run the Ashton as well, putting more emphasis on real ale and a relaxed, 'homely' atmosphere, with log fire and decent food to attract a more mature clientele, to whom the raucous pleasures of 'The Strip' (aka Yorkshire Street) do not appeal.

Incidentally, our local MP was recently moved to express the opinion that Yorkshire Street was giving the town a Wild West reputation



and that local entrepreneurs should be providing more town centre watering holes for the 25+ age groups, an opinion which I cannot argue with.

So anyway, the Ashton reopened, complicated by the collapse of the pavement outside, which invited the careless passer-by to visit the cellar beneath. Unfortunately the real ales consisted of a quartet of the usual suspects - Castle Eden, 6X, Flowers IPA and Speckled Hen. Now, however, the beer menu includes Moorhouses Pendle Witch and Taylors Landlord at £1.95 and £1.60, while either the IPA or the 6X is sold at 99p, so things are on the up.

But sadly, as one door opens, another one shuts. The **Bank Top** (Lees), off King Street, has closed, temporarily, one hopes. Its policy was to attract the students from the college on Rochdale Road, but competition is fierce and, contrary to received knowledge, most of them aren't especially flush with cash (not at the end of term, anyway).

Most serious, or could I use the word tragic, is the closure of the **Buck and Union** on Union Street. The last landlord, Martin Von Mittelsburg, irritated his 'suits' at head office by daring to select ales



not on the approved list - Pictish and Salamander being notable as regular offenders - and keeping prices in the £1.70s/80s. Anyway, the accountants did their scratchings, squinted at the bottom line and said, 'Sell!' So the Buck & Union is closed for 'renovation' and when it reopens at the beginning of December, will all those knackered old job lots of furnishings have been replaced by IKEA open space simplicity and conceptualistic minimalism? That's one possibility.

The trouble is that the new gauleiters are running a trendy little joint on The Strip known as 'Walkout' - sorry, 'Walkabout', supposedly an Oz theme bar. Perhaps their fare includes vegemite on toast, meat pie floaters and barbie'd tiger prawns. But theme bars have their limitations where authenticity is concerned. For example, how many 'Scabby Paddy' bars do colcannon and corned beef?

So we bite our nails and wait in cynical anticipation for the worst, while hoping that the new broom will not do a clean sweep, especially of our beloved ale.

Meanwhile, Martin will be presiding at the **White Hart**, a smartish eatery pub in Lydgate, with real ale and panoramic views over Greater Manchester.



O'er t'Moors

At the end of October there was a staff trip for CAMRA members who had worked at the Bury and Oldham beer festivals. Paul Warbrick went with them...

The **White House** (original name the Coach & Horses) straddles the Lancashire/Yorkshire border at Blackstone Edge. Situated some 1,300 feet above sea level, the pub affords panoramic views of the surrounding moors and it was our first stop for a few beers and lunch.

The White House has a fine selection of real ales and most went for the Nettlethrasher from Eastwood & Sanders of Elland, West Yorkshire. This premium bitter is brewed with three different malts and English and American hops. I also had the Black Sheep Best Bitter. The other ales were Theakstons bitter, Timothy Taylors Landlord and Black Sheep Special.

From the White House, the coach headed for Ripponden and the next stop was the **Old Bridge Inn**, which nestles by the ancient pack horse bridge across the River Ryburn. No smooth beers or bland lagers here - just a fine selection of real ales from independent brewers, imported Pilsner from Holland and Germany on draught, plus real cider. Three Taylors beers were available - Golden Best, Best Bitter and Landlord - alongside Black Sheep and Barnsley



Bitter. Antique furnishings, real fires and the magnificent cruck-frame construction add to the ambience of the three-roomed pub.

After an hour and a half at the Old Bridge Inn it was time to move on and our final destination was the **Fox & Goose** in Hebden Bridge, which is celebrating thirteen consecutive years in the Good Beer Guide. It is a traditional, sociable pub with an ever-changing range of ales and no juke box or gaming machines.

There are three rooms, with the compact bar in the middle room and a pool table in the room on the left. The permanent ale is Daleside Blonde and on our visit one of Pictish Brewery's ales was on handpull, which suited quite a few. I sampled Rampant Gryphon, a strong (6.2%), well-balanced ale brewed by Wentworth. I also tried Winters Revenge, a golden-coloured ale from Norwich brewer Dave Winter.

So that was it. Three very distinctive and original pubs visited and a good time had by all.

On Track

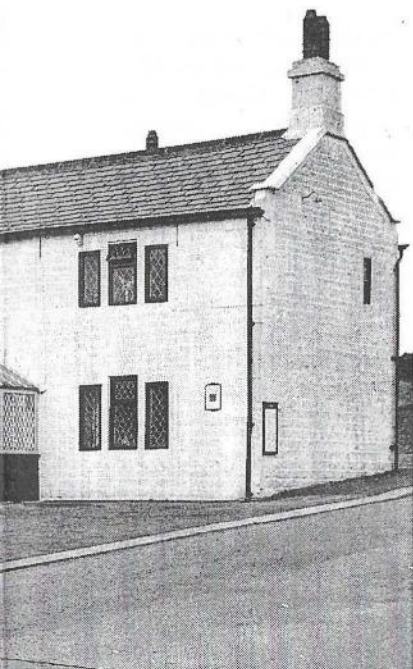
From early December (subject to licensing approval) there will be a new real ale venue in Bury. Martin Jones, currently landlord at the Rose & Crown, Manchester Old Road, is taking over at the **Trackside**, a bar situated on the platform at Bolton Street Station, home of the East Lancs Railway.

The ELR venture is reported to be completely free of tie and promises to bring an unrestricted choice of quality real ale to Bury town centre. The bar will also stock a range of continental bottled beers.

Strangeways saved?

News that Interbrew will not shift capacity from Boddingtons may seem like good news.

Those with long memories of brewers' promises may be forgiven for treating the announcement with some scepticism. How else will they tackle overcapacity?



Westhoughton - the Second Leg

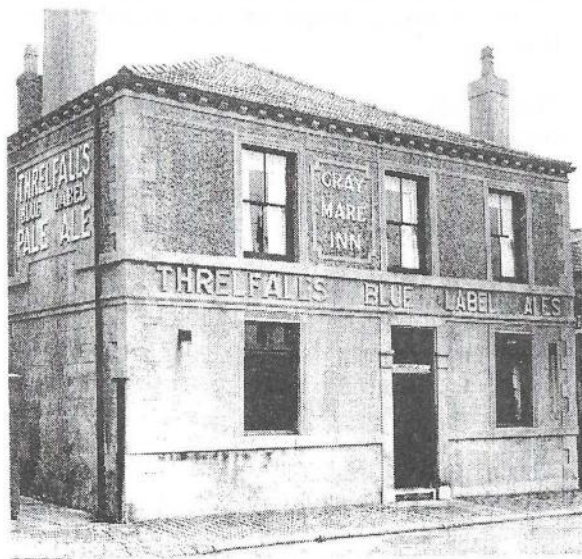
Dave White

A train took us to Westhoughton Station, not far from our first watering hole, the **Commercial** on Church Street. A friendly local, comprising pool room, vault, side room and lounge, plus a beer garden and big-screen TV. Mock-ups of bygone issues of the *London Herald* adorn the walls and local newspapers are available for those who want to read the real thing. Much tongue-and-groove panelling. Some of the carpets and upholstery have seen better days, but the colour scheme in the pub is pleasant. The cask beer - Tetley bitter - was a little on the cool side, but otherwise okay.

We then backtracked past the railway station. A brisk walk along the A6 brought us to the next pub, the **White Horse** on the corner of Manchester Road and Bolton Road. The handpumps here are redundant, however, so we called at the **Howfener** nearby. The pub was known as the **Rose & Crown** until recently, and the old name can still be seen beneath the sign outside. Whatever the monicker, the inn has served keg beer for as long as I can remember; so it was something of a surprise to find handpulls on this particular night, serving Tetley bitter and Imperial. The interior has an olde-worlde feel to it, with low beams and a timbered bar. There is also a lower level bar, handy for the Saturday night disco. The pub has several cosy nooks and is popular with all ages, though the disabled should note that there are steps leading to the main entrance, and to the toilets. The beer was fair.

A pint in the Howfener wasn't the only surprise of the night. Our next pub, the **Grey Mare**, wasn't there any more! We repaired to the

Cross Guns, a deceptively roomy boozier. There is much to catch the eye on the walls, including paintings of waterbirds, trophies and a framed pistol, complete with powder bag. Tastefully muted decor all round. The pub has a pool room, and another room at the back, possibly useful for meetings. Real ales were Tetley mild and bitter.



By now we were slightly ahead of

ourselves, and even though we'd covered it before (WD 10/02), there was time for a quick one in Holts' **White Lion** on the corner of Bolton Road and Market Street. Great pub - shame about the mild!

On, then, to the **Rose Hill Tavern** on Leigh Road, in time for 'Last orders'. The 'Bug', as the pub is known, is an open-plan Holts house with a lively clientele. The decor and upholstery are florid, but the pub is big enough to take it. Games room. The juke box was on the loud side, but the Drabs bitter was in fine fettle, making the Bug the pub of the night... and situated so close to Daisy Hill Station, it was convenient for the last train back to Wigan, too.

U-26

Dave Hallows

There was a good turnout for CAMRA's first under-26 social at the Bar Centro, Tib Street, Manchester, on 1st November. The social provided an opportunity for young CAMRA members from throughout Greater Manchester to meet and talk beer.

The newly-formed Salford University Real Ale Society was well represented and also present were James Campbell (young brewer from the Marble) and Andrea Ku (young manager of the Centro). Beers on the night were Phoenix Wobbly Bob and Uncle Fester, Pictish Celtic Warrior and the excellent Flannery's Aberystwyth Harvest Moon.

Forthcoming attractions at the Centro (late November to December) include the new Pictish Z-Rod, Wentworth Black Zac and two from Skinners (Cornwall) - Spriggan Ale and Cornish Knocker.

Another CAMRA U-26 is planned for February next year, followed by a crawl in March.



Thomas Hardy Burtonwood

Brian Gleave

After eighteen years at Burtonwood, brewer Stuart Main is moving to Hook Norton, where he will be taking over as head brewer on 12th December. The present head brewer at Hook Norton (a member of the Clark family) is taking over from his father as managing director. Stuart will be replaced by Mark Leedham, who has been at Burtonwood for the last twelve months and previously brewed at Ringwood, Guinness and Mansfield, and I believe he also had a spell at J D Wetherspoons.

On the production side, Burtonwood is currently brewing Brakspear's bitter and Special, which is being blended 50/50 with the Henley brewery output. The beer is being brewed using Brakspear's own hops and fermented in the traditional open square vessels used for all ale production. Eventually I think the hops will be pelletized, but they will be the same hops that Brakspears have used. Brakspear's yeast is also used, which makes it the third ale yeast at Burtonwood.

I would not claim to be an expert on Brakspear, but the wholly Burtonwood-brewed Special I tried was superb and nothing like the other beers from Burtonwood. Brakspear's head brewer visits Burtonwood weekly to taste the beer. Burtonwood has brewed the next Brakspear's seasonal ale, Hop Demon (4.2%), but future seasonals will probably go to Wychwood. It is interesting to note that Refresh, who now own Wychwood, also look after the brands Lowenbräu Pilsner and Mann's Brown, both brewed at Burtonwood. Lowenbräu Original is brewed in Germany and kegged at Burtonwood.

I also believe that Burtonwood have trial brewed Morrells ahead of an expected closure of the Dorchester brewery, but it is now thought that Thomas Hardy have won a contract that will ensure the continuation of brewing in Dorchester.

Room for one more?

Ted and Ade, renowned patrons of the Pot of Beer, New Mount Street, Manchester, have given the pub a certificate for 'Best Small Toilet 2003'. This coveted award is qualified by the statement: 'Our knackered livers are your guarantee of a fair and thorough test.'



Out in Bolton

Trotter

On a mild Saturday in November, I took a bus (the 519) out of town to the **Hope & Anchor** on Chorley Old Road, Doffcocker. A corner bar serves the main drinking area and two snugs, whose walls are adorned with framed photos of Bolton in a bygone era. There are four real ales - Tetleys mild and bitter, plus guests Taylors Landlord and Lees bitter (£1.46). Both guests were in good condition.

After a brief walk around Doffcocker Lodge, it was back on the bus for a visit to the **Howcroft Inn**, home of the recent Bolton Beer Festival. A Bank Top beer continues to be available here, although the brewery has moved from the unit near the pub to new premises on Ainsworth Lane in the Bank Top area of town. I tried one of the guests, Wentworth Best Bitter.

From the Howcroft, I walked across to the **Hen & Chickens**, a welcoming pub on the fringe of the town centre circuit. On Saturday nights there are always three guest beers alongside the Greenalls bitter and Cains mild. I had the Thwaites Thoroughbred.



Toby's Top Ten Transport Tips

Drinking and driving are not activities that go together, so those of us who like a drink tend to be great patrons of public transport. And autumn has brought a brand new freefreefree! bus service along Deansgate. Toby the Tram Engine provides a round-up of some of the best deals on offer for the discerning drinker...

1. Yes, a new free bus service around Manchester city centre. Old route 4 from Piccadilly to Deansgate and back is rebranded *Metroshuttle 1* and sports a bright orange livery. It runs every five minutes up till 1900 (1800 on Sundays). And it's been joined by *Metroshuttle 2* in a green livery - every ten minutes up till 1900 (1800 on Sundays). This links Victoria Station with Oxford Road and Deansgate Stations, by way of Deansgate and a complicated route round Albert Square, Princess Street and Whitworth Street.
2. There are even free buses from Salford Central, too. If you've got a valid rail ticket, you can use any First Manchester bus to travel into Manchester city centre.
3. And you can still use a rail ticket on the trams within the city centre. Any rail ticket to Manchester 'central zone' is valid on Metrolink as far as Victoria, Piccadilly or G-Mex (for Deansgate) at no extra charge.
4. Rail tickets in Greater Manchester are quite a bargain - off peak, at any rate. A Day Ranger is just £2.50. And after 1830 you can get it for half price.



5. There are evening discounts on Cheap Day Returns. Buy these between 1830 and 2100 and you only pay half the normal fare. This offer is not restricted to stations in Greater Manchester - it includes 'the immediate surrounding area,' out as far as Macclesfield, Earlestown, Burscough Bridge, Blackburn and even Buxton.

6. Bus tickets also offer good value. But don't assume that the only day tickets on the buses are the ones advertised by Stagecoach, First Manchester, Arriva and so on. Day Riders/Savers/Trippers/whatever are only valid on the buses of one company. For only a few bob more you can buy a Daysaver that's valid on **all** the buses. This means that a pub crawl doesn't have to depend on the times of a particular company's buses. You can travel with any bus company. And you can change from one route to another without paying extra. This ticket is £3.30.

7. Throw in another ten bob and you can get all the buses and all the trains for just £3.80 (after 0930 Monday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday). And for the flush with cash, £6.50 gets you trains, buses and trams, too.

8. Have you got a railway season ticket? If it's valid between any two stations within Greater Manchester, then you get the freedom of the GM network at weekends. A season from, say, Urmston to Manchester can be used to reach the Stalybridge Buffet Bar or the Swan & Railway in Wigan or Le Trappiste in Altrincham (as long as you travel via Stockport on the train, not on the tram).

9. Or think about getting a Countycard. It's valid on all buses and train services (but not trams) within Greater Manchester. For some journeys, e.g. Wigan to Manchester, it's cheaper than a rail season. Get the train to work, then use the bus to visit a few hostelryes on the way home.

10. Finally, the (almost) Unknown Bargain - the Wayfarer ticket! Not just valid in Greater Manchester but for the Peak District too, plus bits of Cheshire out as far as Warrington and Northwich. Like the Daysaver, it gives you all the buses all day, plus all the trains and all the trams after 0930 in the week (all day at weekend). But it gets you from Manchester to Matlock, Blackrod to Buxton, Holmes Chapel to Holmfirth, Greenfield to Grindleford, Timperley to Tideswell... for just £7.

Pay £10 and you get Saturday and Sunday. Pay £12 and two adults can travel on one ticket. For the full details, ask at any staffed rail station or the GMPTE Travelshop in bus stations. You can also buy the Wayfarer ticket at many Post Offices (though not on buses). Remember to check the small print before you travel!

Planning news

An application has been made to knock down the Swan with Two Necks on Withy Grove (*below*) and replace it with a multi-storey building with licensed premises on the ground floor.

M Khan proposes a change of use for the Mechanics Arms on Dudley Street, off Waterloo Road, Cheetham Hill. He wants to change it from a public house to a Community Resource Centre. Change of use?



Christmas in Paradise

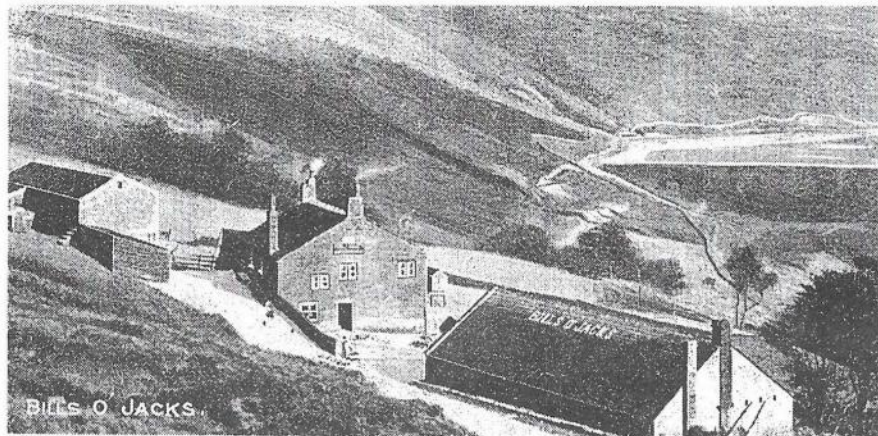
The Christmas Beer Festival at the Paradise Brewery, Wrenbury, will be held from Friday 27th to Sunday 29th December. A range of beers from other microbrewers will be available alongside regular Paradise beers and some seasonal specials.

The Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers' Association has arranged with Wales & Borders Trains for the 1133 ex-Manchester Piccadilly to stop at Wrenbury on the Friday and the Saturday. This train also calls at Stockport and Wilmslow. On the same days, they have arranged for a train to stop at Wrenbury at 1705 for the return journey.

Unfortunately the drivers of Wales & Borders Trains are planning to go on strike during December, so check with National Rail Enquiries to make sure the trains are running. Or ring John Cresswell of the Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers' Association on Boxing Day: 01743 358179.

Microbrewery News

Following feedback from various customers, the name of Bazens' famous **Navigator** bitter has changed to **Pacific**. The recipe remains exactly the same. Richard has noticed that Harviestoun Brewery is now selling a 'Navigator's' beer.



Over in Greenfield, the **Greenfield Brewery** has been set up by brewer Peter Percival (ex-Church at Uppermill) and colleagues Mark Atherton and Richard Hankinson. The 5-6 barrel plant was installed by David Porter of Porter Brewing Company. The first beer was produced on Saturday, 16th November. Initially there are two beers: Greenfield Ale at 3.8% and Bills o'Jacks (there is a local history connection) at 4.1%. There are about twenty outlets in Yorkshire and Saddleworth and a brewery launch in each area will be held soon. More details from: Greenfield Brewery, Waterside Mill, Greenfield, Saddleworth, Oldham OL3 7NH. Tel. 01457 879789.

Queens Award

We would like to thank everyone for their welcome support over the years, which enabled us to achieve the *City Life Manchester Food and Drink Festival* Pub of the Year award.

To help us celebrate, just bring this article along to the Queens during the month of December to claim a free pint of beer (only one per person.)

The Queens will be part of the **Four Corners Beer Festival** on 27th, 28th February and 1st, 2nd March. Other participating pubs (so far) will be the Pot of Beer, the Marble Arch and the Beer House.

Sue and Dave

Rupert

I left Wedgies the other night not inconsiderably demoralised and incandescent with rage at the demeanour of my so-called friends. They had spent the whole evening making mock of every single opinion I had ventured. I had begun by asking people to raise their glasses and toast the survival of Brobdingnags and the continued presence of their distinctive chimney alongside the Strangeways penis on the Grotley skyline.

'You stupid boy,' Fiona retorted. 'The beer is crap and they'll shut the place anyway as soon as our attention is diverted. Their tactics were pretty poor this time in alerting everyone, but they'll learn and succeed next time round.'

I then switched the conversation and suggested that putting thiamine in beer was an excellent idea if it prevented brain damage. I was hit on all sides. Someone showed me Boris Pratt's letter to the Grauniad, I was accused of promoting adulteration of ale and a nanny state. Bunty took a different tack. He said that St Allballs had lived up to their name by talking bollocks yet again.

Apparently a spokesman had said that putting thiamine in beer might encourage people to drink six or seven pints. 'Presumably,' said Bunty, 'these wimps would

only normally drink three pints in case they suffered irreversible brain damage. Well, I've been drinking twelve pints a night and there's nothing wrong with my brain, is there?' Nobody said a word.

I broke the silence by welcoming the Government's proposal to introduce 24 hour drinking, thereby turning the clock back to before the 1828 Alehouse Act and subsequent legislation. 'You pretentious arse, Roop,' Ophelia Hampton rejoined. 'That's hypocrisy writ large. The Campaign tries to promote sensible drinking when it knows full well that most of its members just want to get as hammered as possible to forget their dreary lives.'

You hardly get out, Roop, and you're in bed way before closing time most nights. Are you seriously suggesting that 24 hour drinking would improve the availability of real ale? Prices would just go up and all we'd get is more nitrosmooth. No thank you.'

I then mentioned unconfirmed sightings of Charlie Bass in Manxley and suggested that he had become so wealthy that he was now a tax exile. 'You demented moon puff,' Alistair exploded. 'If he is there, he's more likely to be hiding from his creditors than burying bullion. Everything you say is total twaddle. Why don't you go home?' So I did.

Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Pete Cash, Bob Balham, Alan Ainsworth, Dave Hallows, Neil Worthington, Roger Hall, Stewart Revell, Brian Gleave, John Cresswell, Michael Lynn

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Dec 8.30pm: Branch Meeting, Eagle & Child, Higher Lane, Whitefield

Tues 10 Dec 8.30pm: Christmas Social, Swan Inn (Top House), The Square, Dobcross

Mon 30 Dec: Drown the Turkey Social/ What's Doing Collation/Mail Out, Rochdale. Details from Branch Contact

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 Dec, Winton Crawl: Ellesmere 7.30pm. Egerton 8.30pm. Brown Cow 9pm.

Wed 11 Dec 8pm, Social: Junction (Beartown Brewery), Queens Road, Collyhurst

Wed 18 Dec 8pm, Branch Meeting: White Swan, Swinton

Sat 28 Dec 12 noon: What's Doing collation, Queens Arms. Then Northern Quarter Crawl & Early Evening Curry at Saffron, Cheetham Hill Road.

Wed 8 Jan 8pm, Regional Meeting, Vine, Kennedy Street, Manchester.

Wed 15 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting: Crescent, Salford

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Trafford & Hulme

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

Wigan

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 478816 (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.

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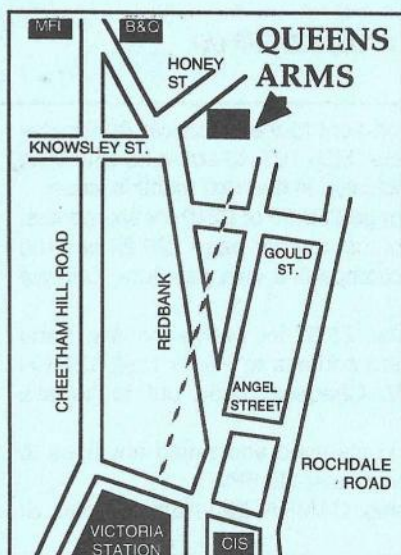
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