

What's Doing

MAY 2003



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

SALFORD BREWERS' SYNDICATE

The Bazens' and Facer's breweries are now firmly installed in their new Knoll Street site in Salford, close to Robinson's Star Inn on Back Hope Street.

David Facer, former head brewer at Strangeways (Boddingtons), has joined Richard Bazen to form the Salford Brewers' Syndicate. Sharing the Knoll Street site, the two brewers are taking it in turn to brew, each producing his own distinctive range of beers.

Jude, Richard and David (*below*) were recently hard at work putting the finishing touches to their new home. The most striking change since they moved from the Agecroft site has been the doubling in size of two of the fermenters. The shiny stainless steel cylinders, about ten feet tall and



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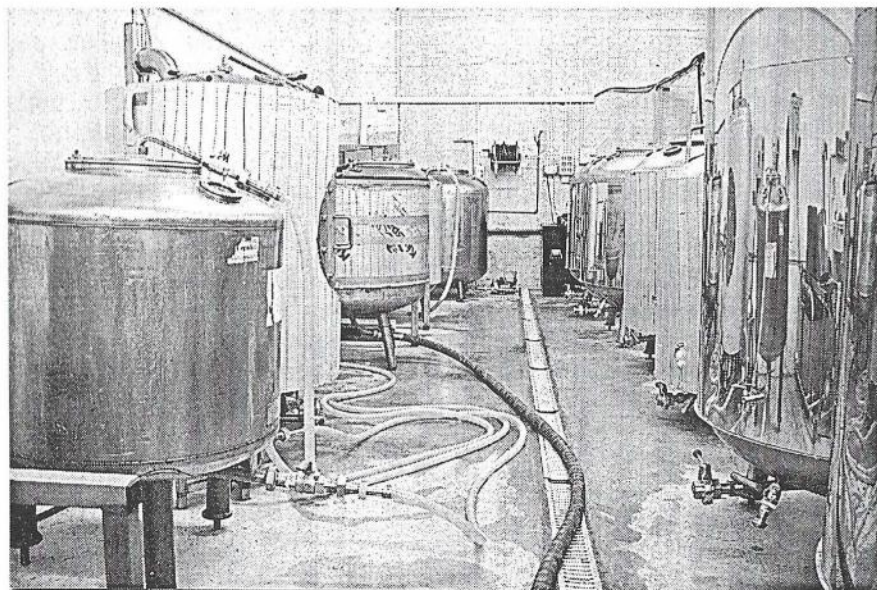
Salford Brewers' Syndicate continued....

capable of holding ten barrels each, dominate the roomy premises. Also new is the cold liquor tank towards the back, which was installed to compensate for low mains water pressure.

The rest of the plant is much the same as before, with four five-barrel fermenters, hot liquor tank, copper, etc, except that it is more neatly and spaciouly laid out in two long rows, with a floor drain running full length in between. A series of separate rooms - dry store, toilet, offices, galley kitchen and cold room - occupies the right hand wall. Jude pointed out that the green chosen for the walls of the Bazens' office (a sort of *eau de Nil*) is a close match to one of the green bands used to code their casks! These rooms are lower than the main ceiling, so their flat roofs afford valuable storage space.

Although the new fermenters can hold ten barrels each, in practice the brew length is determined by the mash tun; seven barrels is about the maximum, with six barrels at an ABV of 4.5% being typical. The cold room was packed with full casks which were conditioning at a steady temperature of 12°C. Outside, three neat four-and-a-half gallon metal 'pins', which David had bought when he was at Chesters, were stillaged, vented and tapped, ready to dispense their delicious contents.

Bazens' have renamed their Knowles Porter as Knoll's Porter. There is also a new seasonal beer - Goldings Fleece (4.4%), which is based on the Zodiac sign of Aries the Ram. It is a single variety hop beer



(Goldings) with the description 'Rammed Full of Goldings'. The small amount of torrefied wheat previously used in Flatbac has been withdrawn as there have been some clarity issues.

Facer's, after producing Facer's First Draught at the old Agecroft site, repeated the brew at Knoll Street. However, whilst the first batch was quite tasty, the hopping rate on the new brew was increased to such an extent that it resulted in a change of name to Hopping Mad. It is described as using Optic Pale and Crystal Rye malts, with Jenny hops for bittering and Bramling Cross for aroma. For the next brew, Rhapsody (4.0%), the hop rate was pulled back slightly and we were offered a sample - hoppy and fruity with a dry finish. David has also produced Landslide at 4.7%.

It is likely that a Facer's Dark Mild will appear in May. Using Halcyon malt (Bazens' use Maris Otter) and Crystal and Roast Rye malts, the name has not been finalised but one idea is Rye Smile. Look out for it on CAMRA North Manchester's Mild Day Crawl (see elsewhere in this issue) on May 10th.

Beer Festivals

Halifax

Mayfest 2003 - the Halifax & Calderdale CAMRA Beer Festival - is on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th May. The venue is the Square Chapel Arts Centre, Square Road, about 100 yards from the rail station.

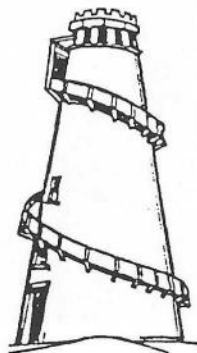
The organisers promise over 45 interesting real ales, including a good range of milds (May being Mild Month), and a festival special from local brewers Eastwood & Sanders. Opening hours are 12 noon to 11pm Friday and 11am to 11pm Saturday. Admission is £1 on both days before 6pm and £2.50 after. (50p and £1 for CAMRA members).

The branch website is: www.hxcalderdalecamra.org.uk

Frodsham

The Eleventh Frodsham Beer Festival is on Friday 23rd (6 to 11pm) and Saturday 24th (12 noon - 11pm) May. As usual, the event is organised by Frodsham Care in association with CAMRA, and the venue is the Community Centre, Fluin Lane. There will be a selection of new brews, old favourites, farmhouse ciders and fruit wines.

Tickets are £4 for all sessions (£1 refund on the door for CAMRA members). They can be obtained in advance from Dave Brown, Joiners Cottage, off High Street, Frodsham WA6 7AN



Roads Out

Roger Hall

As I drew up at the lights on Trinity Way, I could see the boarded up shell of the Black Friar on my left and the For Sale signs on the boarded up Braziers Arms on my right. I began to reflect on the gradual demise of pubs on the roads out of City Centre Manchester. On Blackfriars Road/Great Clowes Street there was no pub between the Black Lion and the Albert Park.

The road down the Irk valley was the first to lose all its pubs. It's a three-mile stretch from the Crown & Cushion on Corporation Street, down Dantzic Street, Collyhurst Road, Smedley Road, Hazelbottom Road, Waterloo Street and Slack Road to the Golden Lion in Blackley village. Cheetham Hill Road is not much better. From the Derby Brewery Arms you don't see another pub until you're in Cheetham Hill village. On the A56 (Great Ducie Street/Bury New Road) there's nothing between the Strangeways Brewery Tap and Jack's in Higher Broughton.

The A6 still has a number of pubs between the Black Lion and Irlams o'th'Height, but we've also lost a few gems like the Griffin and the Peel Park. There are two pubs (both Holts) on Liverpool Street between the Manchester border and Eccles Old Road, but only one on the A57 between Manchester and Stowell. On Rochdale Road, there's



nothing between the Marble Arch and Queens Road and on Oldham Road only the Ace of Diamonds remains between the Wheatsheaf and Failsworth.

I don't suppose we should be surprised by the continued demise of pubs in the inner city. After all, the areas were over-pubbed and the population has continued to decline. But the process seems relentless. *What's Doing* has catalogued the loss of traditional pubs for almost three decades, but the attrition continues. Closures continue. The Mile House on Red Bank (*below*) is about to be knocked down and huge areas of North Manchester and Salford are publess. Many others have little choice and real ale is becoming increasingly rare in many areas.

Of course, the City Centre still has plenty of licensed premises, but few of these can compare with the street corner locals which have disappeared by the score. The few new pubs we have seen (the John Gilbert, the Eccles Cross, the Barton Arms) hardly compensate for those we have lost in the suburbs (the Station, Halligan's, Cloudy's, the Church, Crown & Volunteer, Red Lion), let alone those that have vanished in the inner city.

What may now be at threat is not just the odd building of character, but an institution and a way of life grounded in our industrial past. Nostalgia will not guarantee their survival; only people making sure that their locals are used can do that.



National Mild Day

Saturday 10th May is CAMRA's National Mild Day this year, with the month of May dedicated to mild-related activities. The Stockport and South Manchester Branch is running their annual Mild Challenge, which actually started in April and will continue in May. This involves visiting as many as you can of the pubs in a specially produced booklet, sampling the mild, then receiving a rubber stamped certification in the appropriate box.

The North Manchester Branch is concentrating its efforts on Mild Day itself. This is a pub crawl starting at the Queens Arms in Cheetham, going around the Northern Quarter and the rest of Manchester, then heading for Salford and finishing at the Crescent. The aim is to sample as many different milds as possible in one day. In recent years between 15 and 22 milds have been available.

The complete itinerary is as follows:

- 12 noon Queens Arms: guest beer
- 12.30 Marble Arch: up to six guests
- 1.10 Pot of Beer: Robinsons Dark
- 1.30 Smithfield: Greene King XX
- 2.00 Bar Fringe: guest (maybe 2)
- 2.20 Gullivers: Lees GB
- 2.40 Castle: Robinsons Hatters & Dark
- 3.00 Grey Horse: Hydes Traditional
- 3.45 Ape & Apple: Holts
- 4.15 Albert Vaults: Bazens' Black Pig
- 4.35 Kings Arms: guest
- 5.00 Crescent: guests (2 or 3)



Lees in Winton

John Willie Lees have bought the **Jolly Carter** in Winton. For the last few years this was a Magic Pub Company house and was later designated a 'Hungry Horse', with the emphasis very much on food. Greene King beers made an appearance towards the end of the franchise. There was quite a high turnover of licensees during this period.

The pub is now selling Lees GB Mild and Lees Bitter, and will eventually be featuring Lees' seasonal beers. Landlord Stephen Fernley explained that it will be undergoing a major refit in June, the idea being to turn it back into a traditional locals' pub. Opening hours are 12-11 and 12-10.30 on Sundays.

Stephen was previously nine years at Lees' Jolly Butcher in Baguley. The Jolly Carter is on Worsley Road (B5211), at its junction with New Lane. It has an interesting history, having been the scene of a murder, and is reputed to have a ghost - though neither the Fernleys nor their dog and cat have yet seen it.

Letters

North-South Divide

Sir - I am proud of being a Northerner, born in the Lancashire City of Salford, once the pub capital of Britain, but I do like all parts of the country. Is 'Uncle Mort's South Country Ale' (*WD April*) an example of that hideous, antisocial North-South divide? Why do we continually hear and read of drab beer down south and the best ever beer up here in the North? There are some great beers down yonder! What's wrong with Fullers, Gales, Youngs and others?

Don't forget there is rubbish up North. Greenalls, John Smiths and, dare I say it, Boddingtons! Why is Boddingtons splash-advertised in the Manchester Evening News night after night? Let's face it, the beer has had its day.

OK, so up North we like our beer with a head on it, but whether it's brewed in the North or the South, it is made from the same ingredients. Incidentally, we always hear about beers brewed North and South, but never East and West. In the East there is the excellent Batemans and Greene King. In the West, we have Hop Back Summer Lightning from Salisbury. We also have great beers from the Midlands. And deep, deep down South West, there are fine ales from St Austell, Cornwall.

Leo King

Real ale and real people

Sir - During my career as a member of bar staff, people associated with CAMRA with whom I have come into contact have always seemed very courteous and fair minded, unlike some of the small brewery firms that they and you support.

Until September of last year I was employed for four years as a barmaid in a free house, working approximately 29 hours a week. The free house was purchased by a small real ale brewery which has been given widespread coverage by your publication, and I was sacked with no notice or warning.

As a consequence, I lodged a claim for unfair dismissal at an Industrial Tribunal. I won that case earlier this year and was awarded just over £1,200 in compensation. The brewery was given until March 17th to pay this amount. Not only have they not done so, they now have the audacity to countersue for the same amount in the County Court. Yet another delaying tactic.

There is no doubt they will have to pay eventually, with interest and costs, but I do think it would be good if CAMRA members would give some thought not only to the quality of the beer these people produce but also to the treatment meted out to their staff. Perhaps they could use their influence on their travels to educate these newcomers into the trade on not only investing in real ale but in real people as well.

Sue Orton

Discipline

Sir - Among the motions for debate at this year's CAMRA AGM is the following item: 'This Conference instructs the National Executive to refer newsletter editors who publish articles critical of CAMRA to the Disciplinary Committee.'

Now, I know that What's Doing is a model of discretion, decorum and sobriety, and would never criticise the leadership, so the motion is largely irrelevant in this neck of the woods. But what bothers me is the fact that CAMRA has a Disciplinary Committee at all. Is that discipline as in stern young ladies in leather outfits, carrying whips and handcuffs?

Puzzled Pete

Cosh point

Sir - In reply to Rupert (*WD April*) who has, using irony, cast doubt on the qualifications of my friend Nora to be the new Bossperson of the Campaign, I have only one word to say - 'Stellenbosch'.

Billy Cosh

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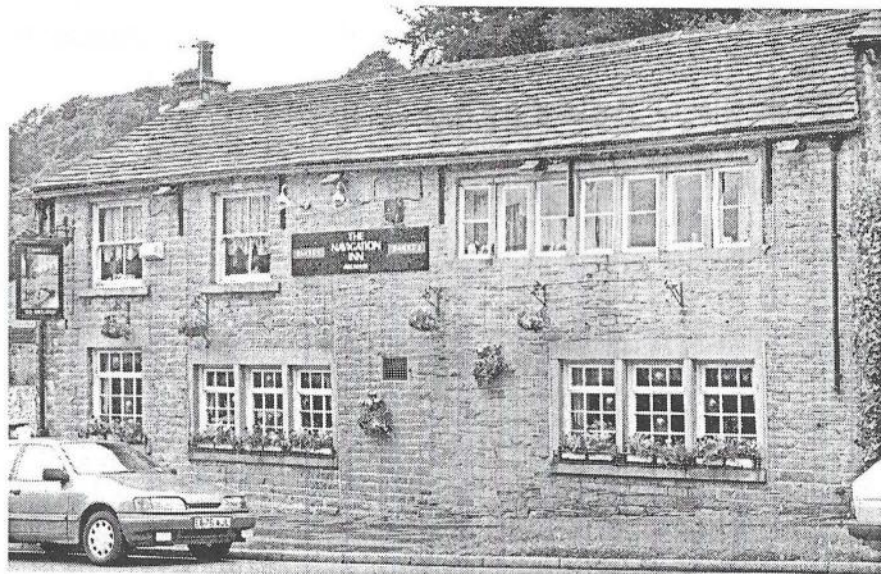
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The Dobcross Double

Dave Hallows

The first of the duo was easily reached. I just got off the 183 bus at the Dobcross New Road and Wool Road junction and went into the **Navigation Inn**. The pub is an attractive stone cottage that was once a Banks's house and is now owned by Enterprise Inns. I found three handpumped beers on - Black Sheep Special Ale, Wells' Bombardier and Tetley Bitter. The Black Sheep was full-bodied and malty and the Tetley Bitter was bang on form - amber in colour and with a dry, bitter taste. The beer, in my view, is a brewer's labour of love, as are the ordinary and dark milds.



The decor of the Navigation is pleasant - a comfortable U-shaped lounge and central bar in cottage style, comfy alcoves and scatter cushions. The brasses have gone, but the brass band photos remain. Hot and cold food is available at lunchtimes and early evenings from 6.00pm.

Leaving the pub by the car park, I went up the short but very steep half-cobbled footpath, turned left and walked up the lane to The Square, the heart of Dobcross. I had a big surprise at the **Swan Inn** (Top House) - the pub changed hands in September of last year and is now a Jennings house. There were seven handpumped beers from the Cumberland brewery (Dark Mild, Bitter, Cockerhoop, Cumberland Ale, Sneck Lifter, 1828 (3.8%) and the seasonal JJ No.1 (4.3%)) and one guest, Greene King Abbot Ale.

The beers I tried were in very good nick. As Jennings is such a good brewery, they haven't changed a thing in the magnificent old pub.



There are still three separate rooms overlooking the village square. I was there at Friday teatime and the hot and cold food is popular here. Booking is advisable at weekends.

Back in the late seventies, Richard Gere was a regular at the Swan. Well, for as long as it took the Hollywood actor to shoot some scenes for the film 'Yanks' involving a shop over the road.

Discipline

A motion at CAMRA's Annual Conference, moved by Ted Bruning and Roger Protz, was heavily defeated. The motion sought to 'discipline' editors of newsletters which were critical of CAMRA. (*See Letters and Rupert in this issue.*) If carried, it would have forced What's Doing and other independently-minded CAMRA newsletters always to toe the official line.

It appears to have been triggered by two publications which carried features far more heterodoxical than anything which has appeared in these pages. One advised readers to avoid a CAMRA London Pubs Guide 'like the plague', and the other was a vitriolic anti-CAMRA diatribe from a retiring editor calling himself 'Gobshite'. By comparison, What's Doing is viewed as largely benign!

Chinatown comes to Cheetham Hill

Hoi Sin

Pubs these days offer a frighteningly wide range of food, anything from pie and chips to gazpacho, baby octopus and truffle shavings. Thai food is popular with the sort of pubs that would rather be restaurants. But not many offer authentic Chinese food.

Since the Berwick Arms on Carnarvon Street changed hands last year, it's started doing exactly that. Along with a fine pint of Lees bitter, one can now enjoy typical Cantonese recipes like lemon chicken at almost any time. If the chef's in the kitchen, you can be scoffing a Special Curry at ten o'clock at night. The Berwick is hidden away behind Strangeways gaol and Boddies' brewery but it's still less than ten minutes' walk from Victoria Station.

Along with the nearby Dutton (Hydes) and the Queens Arms (various micros), it makes an interesting mini-crawl for lovers of Mancunian beers.



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The Last Temperance Bar

Dave Hallows

Pub closures are often reported in these pages. It is nearly always sad to read about the loss of a pub, even if it had been serving keg beer for a long time. For a change, I took a trip to Rawtenstall, in the wilds of Rossendale, to see the 'other side' - a product of the Temperance Movement!

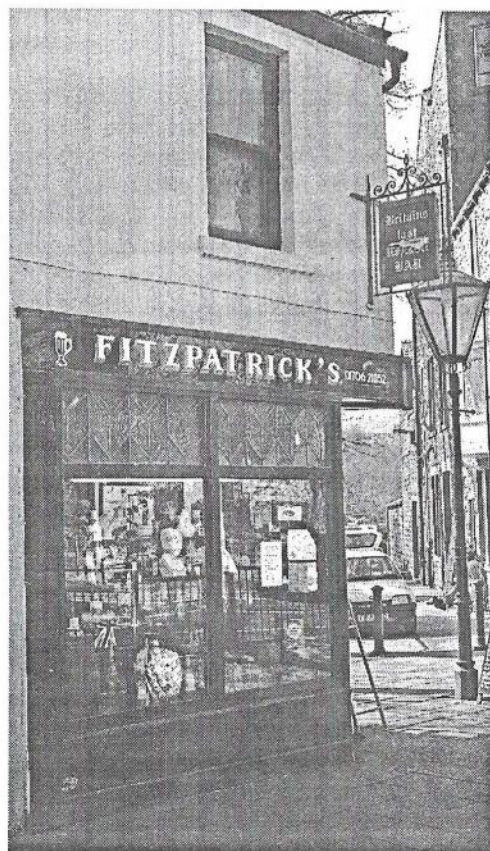
Fitzpatricks once had twelve temperance bars dotted around the industrial towns of Lancashire, providing an alternative to the evils of drink. Sadly, there is only one of these left - Britain's Last Temperance Bar on Bank Street. Opened in 1890, the bar is largely unspoiled and is a living and working museum.

On the attractive, marble-topped corner bar there is a large copper urn, a dispenser for 'Borden's Malted Milk', and a multitude of jars containing wondrous ingredients. On the drinks menu (both hot and cold) was Black Beer with raisin, lemon or orange; Dandelion & Burdock, Blood Tonic, Cream Soda, Lemon & Ginger, Lemon Ginseng, Peppermint, Blood Tonic Ginseng and Turkish Apple Tea.

Sarsaparilla and Sarsaparilla with Chinese Liquorice were temporarily off the drinks list owing to a European directive concerning one of the ingredients. This will be taken out and the 'Natural Viagra' will again be supped!

The drinks are cheap - 50p a half or 86-90p a pint. More exotic beverages are just 80p a half. I tried most, taking one of the two small tables, and later I sat on the bench just by the door.

Memorable were the Dandelion & Burdock (an old childhood favourite of mine), Lemon & Ginseng, Blood Tonic (like a red-currant Vimto) and the wonderfully biting Peppermint, which is not for the faint of heart! All drinks are cordials, so no 'fizz', though the Black Beer had a pleasing head and pleasant body.



The bar is also a shop and there are original fittings and glass cabinets. One can gaze at the jars of herbs - Elderflower, Marshmallow Root, Wormwood or Yarrow, to mention a few. There are packets of herbal teas - Mandarin & Lychee, Hawthorn Herb Tea, Throat Comfort Tea, etc. There is a vast array of vitamins and other potions to improve the human condition. For hangovers, Mr Fitzpatrick's Original Vitalo orange flavoured tonic is recommended. I was surprised to see 'medicinal charcoal biscuits' on display in a glass cabinet.

Opening times are 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Saturday, with Tuesday early closing at 12.30pm. Go there!

Leigh - the Third Leg

Dave White

The first part of the crawl was covered by car, and our first stop was at the **Royal Oak** on Wigan Road. Nothing but keg beer here, however, so we went on to the **Waggon & Horses** further down the A578. This Hydes pub was covered in an earlier survey (Sept 2002), but was well worth a return visit, with the light mild and bitter receiving a unanimous 'thumbs up'.

We then drove on to Kirkhall Lane and the **Victoria Inn**. I hadn't been in this pub for some time and it had changed beyond recognition. The bar area is near the entrance, with some seating and a disco zone further down some steps. There is a large lounge to the left of the bar, with tongue-and-groove backed seating, flagged floors and big-screen TV. Several interesting grotesque wooden carvings can be found around the pub, plus brass plaques for trains and steam rallies near the bar. The sole cask ale offering, Lees bitter, was rather cold.

At least the Vic still sells real ale. Our lift left at this point, and the rest of us walked into town in search of a pint. It wasn't to be, alas, with **Our House** and the **Avenue**, both Leigh Road, on keg beer. The **Ale House** (formerly the **Grove**) on Henrietta Street was no better, while on Market Street the **White Lion** and the **Boars Head** - the latter a once-mighty Walkers house - served nothing but fizz. The nearby Labour and Liberal clubs were the same. Our survey complete, we caught the 658 bus back to Wigan.

Boggart Bulletin

Boggart Hole Clough Brewery has been extra busy lately, producing Hoppy Ale (4.1% and bursting with hops), Sunrise (a pale 3.7% session ale) and Dirk (3.9%). This is a hoppy bitter with a reddish tint, as the Boggart's elves have been working overtime at the brewery! Dirk is named after the actor Dirk Bogarde, of course.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

The number of free trade outlets for Joey's beers continues to increase. Recent additions to the free trade list are the **Old Rams Head**, Radcliffe (mild and bitter), and the **Cricketers**, Walmersley Road, Bury (bitter). And once again under new management, welcome back to the **Pack Horse** on Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw (bitter).



Sales of Blackwell, the seasonal beer, have been better than anticipated. One of the unusual ingredients of the next seasonal, Edwards, will be honey. This beer is due out towards the end of May.

stewart@revell62.freereserve.co.uk

Family Brewers

At its Exeter Conference, CAMRA recognised the importance of regional family brewers (ours are Holts, Hydes, Lees and Robinsons) and called on their shareholders to maintain them as working breweries and not sell out for short term gains.

Recently, Brakspears and King & Barnes have closed, and the future of McMullens is in doubt. CAMRA will continue to support the Family Brewers' Week which is held in the autumn each year.

The Trans Pennine Rail Ale Trail

Paul Warbrick

I left Manchester Victoria on a fine, sunny April Saturday and at 11.37 arrived at the legendary **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar**. The centrepiece of this multi-roomed Victorian gem is the marble-topped bar, from where I first had a pint of Over the Moon, a malty, dark red ale from Dark Star Brewery, West Sussex. This was followed by a half of Bunny Hop, a straw-coloured 3.9% ale, but I didn't get the brewery name. The other guest ales were Golden Salamander and the interestingly titled What's Yours (Brewers Choice).

It was then aboard the 12.45 train to Huddersfield, where the station is blessed with not one, but two pubs. First stop was the **Station Tavern**, where I had a pint of the Kletswater (4%) from the Anglo Dutch Brewery, Dewsbury. On Sundays, all cask beers are from 4p to 8p cheaper, and between 4.30pm and 7.30pm Monday to Friday, all beers are £1.80 a pint. (Pre-budget prices.)

It was then up to the other end of the station and the **Head of Steam**. This is a typical HoS pub, full of memorabilia, signs and, of course, real ale. Sitting outside and watching the rugby fans heading for the match, I sampled the Coach House Dick Turpin.

Of the two establishments at Huddersfield, I would opt for the Station Tavern, as this had the better selection of real ales - eight of them, including Daleside Resurrection Ale and Phoenix Arizona. The HoS list included Joseph Holts and Thwaites. How original!

It was time to move further along the line, so I boarded the 15.34 for the short journey to Dewsbury. Upon arrival, I crossed the bridge to the other platform and entered the **West Riding Licensed Refreshment Rooms** (aka real ale bar). This lively pub, part of the Grade Two listed station building, sells eight real ales and I sampled Beyond the Pale from Eastwood & Saunders, formerly brewed by West Yorkshire Brewery. I also tried one of the house beers, Imperial from Anglo Dutch, the brewery based at a nearby mill. The other ales were Black Sheep bitter and Riggwelter, Taylors Landlord and dark mild, Goose Eye bitter and Durham White Friar.

Before catching the 17.47 back to Manchester, I concluded my visit to West Yorkshire by calling in at the nearby Wetherspoons for some Brains SA.

More adventurous souls could extend the Rail Ale Trail by travelling up to the **Head of Steam** in Newcastle.



A Session in the Jolly

Dave Hallows

A *session beer* is usually taken to be a quaffable bitter ranging in strength from 3.6% to 3.9%, but it can be stronger. A *session* is when the same beer is drunk on the night and it makes the rounds easier all round, and equal. Often, in my travels as a CAMRA activist, my visits to pubs are of short duration, such as in a crawl. In a session, one can linger, though it is wise to organise public transport and not drink on an empty stomach.

The **Jolly Angler** on Ducie Street, by Piccadilly Station, is ideal for holding a session. It's basic, friendly and boisterous at times. Moreover, it is a regular in the Good Beer Guide and the Hydes Bitter (3.8%) is always on song. The reason is simple; there are two handpumps for the bitter - one in use and the other to come on. The beer is always served in the optimum condition, as the landlady knows it will be supped by legions of regulars. Sheila and Michael Reynolds have had the much-loved Jolly for over seventeen years.

There is often a seasonal beer and on my visit it was Copper Hopper (4.2%). When indulging in the excess of a session, a good atmosphere always helps. I was in the Jolly on a Sunday afternoon, watching the football on TV and soon the one-liners were flying around. Drinking stories are often astounding and badinage around the bar can frequently be heard. One customer is still being ribbed about his antics when Beckham scored THAT free-kick for England against Greece in the World Cup qualifier nearly two years ago. I know, because I was sitting next to him at the time.

The banter is often on the subject of beer. Apparently there is a practice among beer tickers of using laptop computers so that they keep track of themselves. On hearing about this, the comment from behind the bar was, 'So that would be *digital CAMRA* then?'



Organic bottled beers

Neil Worthington

The Unicorn Grocery in Chorlton (the co-op off Albany Road) has an interesting range of organic bottle conditioned beers - or 'real ales in bottles', as we must now learn to call them. There are two ranges, from Black Isle Brewery in the Highlands and from Pitfield Brewery in East London. As Ian Carmichael used to say in the Californian wine adverts, 'They're really jolly good!'

Currently available from Black Isle are Scotch Ale, Stout and Wheat Beer (all 4.5%). Also bottle conditioned, but not yet organic, are Pale Ale, Red Kite Ale and a lager, Black Isle Blonde. Pitfield offer Shoreditch Stout (4%), East Kent Goldings Light Ale (4.2%), Eco-Warrior (4.5%), Hoxton Best Bitter (4.8%), Black Eagle (5%) and Shoreditch Strong Ale (6%).

For the record, Black Isle's organic beers are brewed with barley and hops 'grown on organic farms, without using artificial fertilisers or herbicides.' And bottle conditioned means, 'naturally fermented for a second time in the bottle, in a similar way to the production of champagne,' resulting in 'a light sediment of yeast in the bottom of the bottle.'

Pitfield won the Champion Beer of Britain Award in 1987 and have recently decided to produce only organic beers.

Unicorn have other beers which are organic but not conditioned in the bottle: Batemans Yella Belly, Broughton Border Gold, Oko Krone Pilsner, and an assortment of offerings from Sam Smiths (a pity their cask range is so limited nowadays).

Sadly, we have lost 'Britain's Champion Organic Beer' with the closure of Brakspear's Brewery in Henley-on-Thames. This was Brakspear's Live Organic, also a real ale in a bottle. The good news is that the recipes may be resurrected by another brewery later this year.

Unicorn also stock some fine organic ciders and perries. (That's squashed apples and squashed pears, for those who believe only grain should be fermented.) These come mostly from Dunkerton's of Herefordshire, whose orchards date back over three centuries. Their top quality, single varietal ciders come in 'wine' bottles with proper cork stoppers and fully deserve the appreciation usually accorded to a fine wine.

Contributors to this issue: Dave Hallows, Neil Worthington, Roger Hall, Paul Warbrick, Geoff Green, Pete Cash, Stewart Revell, Phil Stout

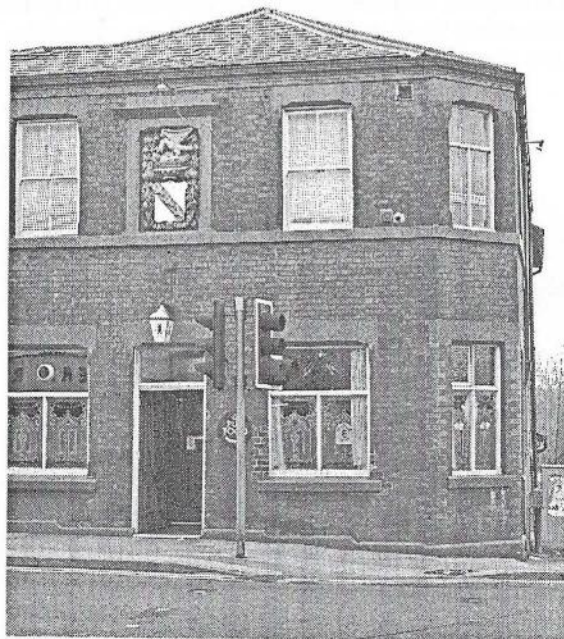
A Taste of South India

Al O'Matey

Just outside Bolton town centre, on the corner of College Way and Derby Street, stands the Surya. This was formerly a Whitbread pub, the Derby Arms (*below*), which sold real Castle Eden and other ales and actually made it to the 1990 Good Beer Guide. Although the real ale has long gone, the outside looks much the same and the bar has been retained. Most of the rest of the interior has been laid out 'café style', with Formica tables, and to the left of the entrance is a small take-away servery.

The Surya is unusual in offering an entirely vegetarian menu consisting largely of South Indian dishes. Meat consuming fans of the Balti/Madras/Vindaloo school will not feel comfortable here. Many of the dishes will have unfamiliar names, though the extensive menu describes exactly what goes into each. I started with Bhel at £2.50 - a large bowl containing a cold mixture of crispy puris, puffed rice, boiled potatoes, onions, chickpeas and sev (a deep fried vermicelli using spicy gram flour dough), with garlic, coriander and tamarind chutneys. Such was the amount, it was almost a meal in itself. For an extra 40p it comes with two roti (like chapattis).

In all, there are over twenty different starters ranging from £1.50 to £3.99 for the Mixed Chat - samosas, dahi wada (lentil balls in yoghurt with peanuts and spices), and chana bateta (chickpeas and potatoes in tamarind sauce).



My main dish was Masala Dosa at £3.50. Dosas are large, rolled pancakes which can be made with a rice flour batter or a lentil flour batter, or a mixture. The rice dosa are thin and crispy whilst the lentil ones can be quite chewy. Mine appeared to be a rice dosa and was served on a metal tray about 12" diameter. Even so, it overhung the edges of the tray and was filled with spicy potatoes and onions. Small bowls of

coconut chutney and sambar (spicy South Indian lentils) complement the dish.

Other South Indian specialities are Idli Sambar at £3.00 (steamed fermented rice and lentil loaves); Masala Uthappam at £3.50 (a sort of dosa using lentil flour) with chopped tomatoes, onions and coriander leaf, coconut chutney and sambar with optional chillies; Chilli Paneer at £4.50 (Indian cheese, spiced and fried with capsicum, onions and chillis), as well as Plain Dosa (£2.50) and Ragda Pattice (£3.00).

For the less adventurous, there are eleven vegetarian curry dishes and various side dishes. There is also a set meal - a Thali - which varies according to the day of the week and costs £6.99. Kids are also catered for with chips, pizza, pasta, vegetable burgers and mini-dosas all under £3. There is a 10% service charge and the Surya is open from 11.30am to midnight (11am weekends).

Not bouncing back

Next to Cornbrook Metro station, the former Railway pub is clad in scaffolding. The Mancunian Spring Company plans to turn it into five flats.

Lees moving into Chorlton

Hardys on Wilbraham Road, opposite the Spread Eagle, is closed for refurbishment. Previously known as Lloyds and briefly even as Edwards (*below*), it will be reopening shortly under a Lees banner. Word is that Lees will be hoping to reproduce the success of the city centre Rain Bar, with extensive food and wine lists along with their beers. The name is not yet certain but may well be Lloyds again (the building's original name).



Book review

Geoff Green

Good Beer Guide to Belgium & Holland

by Tim Webb (CAMRA Books)

The fourth edition of the guide has a new format and a more professional look, and it contains just about everything one needs to know about beer in Belgium and the Netherlands. It is also useful if you're drinking in the Alma at Cottonstones, or buying bottled beer from Czerwik's in Brighouse or the Oasis in Hebden Bridge.

There's a section explaining the different beer styles in the two countries - how to tell the difference between the krieks from Liefmans and Timmermans, or compare Trappist beers with abbey beers. Over 170 breweries are listed, with information about more than 1,100 beers. Each brewery has an introduction, plus



notes about each beer, from classics like Chimay and Duvel to dozens of lesser known but equally wonderful brews.

The best caf  s are listed by country and province. All types are included - from plain and simple locals' bars to grand hotels. Some specialist beer caf  s stock hundreds of different beers. Several are open 24 hours! Users of previous guides will see many old favourites, but there are plenty of new ones, too.

There is a small section on Belgian and Dutch beer in the UK, although this seems like an afterthought. Perhaps it will be expanded for the next edition.

There is advice on how to get there, hotel tips and information about travelling around. There are brief biographies of 36 famous Belgians. Overall, I've got to say the guide seems to be just about right. It is objectively written, but with a strong personal element. It is the sort of book that you could enjoy reading for its own sake, written by someone who obviously cares about his subject.

The Good Beer Guide to Belgium & Holland is available from bookshops for £11.99 or directly from CAMRA (www.camra.org.uk).

Rupert

Motion for Debate:

This Conference instructs the National Executive to refer newsletter editors who publish articles critical of CAMRA to the Disciplinary Committee. (signed) Ted Bruning, Roger Protz.

So there you are, then. By the time you read this, it may be cushioned in law and Eddie strung up on a lamppost.

I dare not even report the dark mutterings of my pals, even when I disagree vociferously with them, lest this be construed as critical commentary. If, for example, the irrepressible Fiona had said (and I emphasise that she hasn't, that this is purely hypothetical), 'It's obviously Boris's communist past. All dictators are frightened of free speech and find ways to prevent their opponents airing their views. I need only mention Attila, Mussolini, Robert Maxwell, Lord Archer, Mugabe, McCarthy, Stalin, Amin, Bokassa, Duvalier, Franco, Peron and Pinochet for you to get the picture. Is the Campaign for which I've fought girl and woman

so afraid of its own shadow that it can't brook constructive criticism?' If, as I say, she had said that, which she didn't, then I couldn't possibly report it.

In this imaginary conversation, Bunty then said, 'Look, Roop, you're pretty crap at making convincing arguments. People usually end up believing the opposite of what you're trying to advocate. You could always argue in favour of Boris and Nora so piss-poorly that everyone believed that they were a pair of precious tossers with the robust self assurance of a unidexter at an arse-kicking party.'

I find it difficult to know what to say. If I say that Boris and Nora are fine upstanding people, then people may well not believe me and I'll be shot for bringing it up. So I'll have to play it cool and not mention anything at all.

There will be no pulling down of bronze statues of Nora on Horseback for me and as Bunty might have said (but certainly didn't), 'At least we'll see an end to all those whingers in the letters page of *What's Brewing*, thank God.'

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'.

BACK NUMBERS: 15p per copy. Send stamped addressed envelope to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW.

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

Branch Diary

CAMRA U-26 Events

Thur 22 May 8pm, Marble Brewery Tour. Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, Manchester. £2 on night. Includes pint and a half of Marble beers. To book ring Ian Kenny on 0161 728 3642

Sat 7 June. Microbrewery Tap Crawl. Meet Rain Bar, Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, at 11.15am. £4 for bus. To book, and for details, ring Ric Yates on 0161 282 7447 or 0776 242 7552 davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 6 May 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Railway, Shaw Hall Bank Road, Greenfield

Weekend 9-11 May, Possible trip to Germany, Dusseldorf area. For more information contact Bob Critchley 0161 678 1347

Wed 21 May, Evening Coach Social to Roosters Brewery, Knaresborough. Details from Branch Contact

Tue 27 May 8.30pm, Committee/What's Doing Collation, Bowling Green, Manchester Road, Hollinwood

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

Trafford & Hulme www.camra.org.uk/trafford

Thur 1 May 8pm, Branch Meeting, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Sat 10 May: Join up with North Manchester on the **National Mild Day Crawl**. See article for details.

Thur 15 May, 8.00pm: Social in Sale, meeting at the Kings Ransom

Sat 24 May: Urmston/Flixton afternoon crawl, starting at the Railway, Irlam Road, Flixton, between 1pm and 2pm

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

Wigan

Tues 27 May 8pm, Branch/Annual Gen. Meeting, Orwell, Wigan Pier

Wed 25 June 8pm, Branch Meeting, Dog & Partridge, School Lane, Standish

Contact: John Barlow (01257) 478816 (w), 427595 (h)
email: john@misltd.co.uk

North Manchester www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Weds 7 May: Stalybridge Station Buffet and visit to nearby pubs. Trains from Victoria 18.56 and 19.56 or Piccadilly 19.12.

Sat 10 May: **National Mild Day Crawl**. See article for details.

Weds 14 May 8pm: Social at the Jolly Carter, Worsley Road, Winton.

Weds 21 May 8pm: Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford.

Tues 27 May 3pm to 7pm: What's Doing Collation, Queens, Honey St.

Weds 28 May 8pm: Social at the Greyhound, Leigh Road, Boothstown, 8pm. Also visiting Royal Oak.

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

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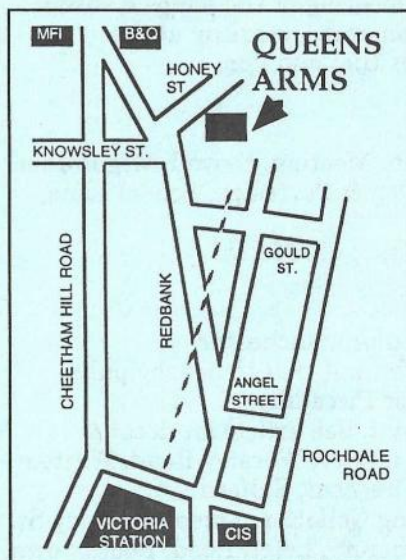
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