

30p

What's Doing

JULY 2003



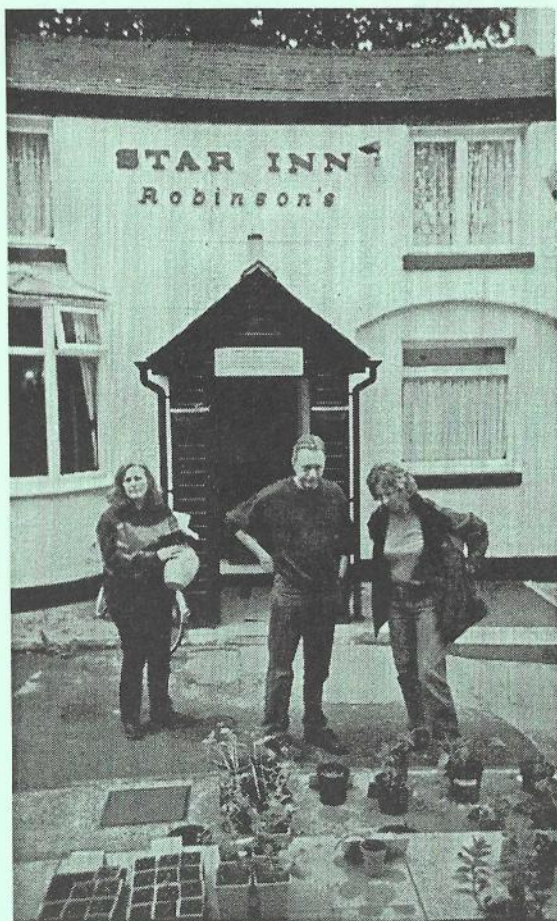
The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

A STAR IN THE COMMUNITY

The Star Inn on Back Hope Street, Higher Broughton, hosted The Cliff Residents' Association Summer Fayre during the last bank holiday weekend.

Plants, novel garden bird-feeders and bric-à-brac were on sale inside and outside the old pub. The Star is in a conservation area and proceeds of the fayre went towards preserving The Cliff district.

Local brewer Dave Facer (pictured) and his wife, Annette, are both on the Association committee. Landlord Jim Crank and his wife Cath had Robbies Best Bitter, Mild and seasonal Young Tom (4%) all on song.



Andy and Lynn welcome you to

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In the City Part One

Arthur Dent, the city gent, begins a tour of real ale pubs and bars...

The **Hogshead** on Deansgate, next to the John Rylands Library, is a spacious open-plan pub with pastel-coloured walls and leather sofas, but it still has some of the traditional Hogshead pub style. More important is the ale: well kept Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Adnams bitter. When I visit, early on Friday evenings, there is a lively atmosphere with a mixed clientele chatting away, making the music barely audible, for once. The pub is frequented by office workers during the day and reasonably priced meals are available.

The **Rising Sun** is across the road in Queen Street, with the front entrance facing Lincoln Square and its statue. The bar is at the far end of this long pub and on my visit the three real ales were Bombardier, Black Sheep Bitter and good old Tetleys. The walls are adorned with photos of Manchester's historic buildings, and this is a pub where one can chill out for an hour or so after work. I noticed a sign at the side of the bar stating that 5p was being added to the price of a pint owing to the Budget. Still, when it's a good, drinkable pint, who cares?



The back door of the Rising Sun opens on to Lloyd Street and across the street is the **Old Nags Head**. Now this is what I call a traditional, side-street pub. The impressive entrance opens on to the lounge area, and for drinkers who want a little privacy there are several booths. Beautiful chandeliers and stained glass panels around the bar make this a pub worth visiting. Also note the fish tank set into the wall beside the door. There is a choice of two beers, Theakstons Best and Boddingtons.

Leaving by the Jacksons Row door and going round to Bootle Street, I came to the **Sir Ralph Abercrombie**, next to the police

station. There was a reasonable selection of real ales on the bar - Abbot Ale, Castle Eden, Wadworth 6X and two handpumps serving Boddingtons. Sir Ralph attracts a business-type clientele during the day and it can be rather busy, so it was puzzling why my 6X was slightly warm and soon went flat.

Next it was up to Albert Square and into the **Square Albert**, an open-aspect pub with a long bar down one side and an elevated, large drinking area. On a rather wet Wednesday evening, the pub was fairly quiet. The ales were Tetleys and Abbot Ale.

Love 'em or loathe 'em, there are plenty of Wetherspoon pubs in the city. The **Waterhouse** on Princess Street, beside the Town Hall, was the next pub on the agenda, and I think this is one of the better 'Spoons, even if the bar is compact. An unusual feature in one of the rooms is the glass panel in the floor, through which can be seen the steps that lead to the former vaults of the building. My visit coincided with one of the company's beer festivals and the ales sampled were Youngs Chocolate Stout, Hall & Woodhouse Fursty Ferret and Wadworths Summersault.

I had hoped to call into **Rothwells**, one of my favourite places to drink Banks's bitter, but sadly it is now closed. The pub was featured in the last series of *Cold Feet*, when John Thompson's character knocked Rachel's ashes over.

Therefore I popped into **All Bar One** at the top of King Street. This is more of a food place, with a mix of sofas and long bench tables. It has a wide selection of wines racked up behind the bar, but only one real ale, Worthington bitter.

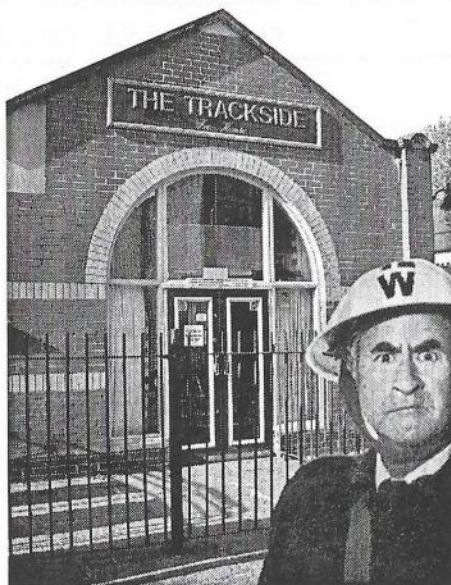


Trackside Alert

Dave Hallows

Wartime Bury was recreated at the **Trackside** on the East Lancs Railway during the last bank holiday. All armed services were represented, as were our allies such as the US and Australia. There was a number of Germans, carefully watched by handpicked Russian troops. Civilians were out in force, along with gold-digging Diamond Lils, no doubt looking for a loaded American serviceman. The Trackside had allied flags festooned in the pub. All windows were taped-up in case of air raids and bar staff were in army uniform.

Thankfully, the beer was not on ration, but going fast. On the Saturday there was Skinners Keel Over and Cornish Blonde, Hanby Draw Well, Keltek Magik and King, Ring o'Bells Surf Boar, a special from Bazens' (Bomber Ale) and an interesting one from Sweden called Bedaro (4.5%).



Meanwhile, at the **Arthur Inn**, Bolton Street, there was Leek Brewery St Edwards Ale. This is a stunning beer - pleasingly brown in colour and with a lovely smokey, moreish taste. The new special Porter's beer is FFD at 4.4%. Billed as a stronger Floral Dance, there is a competition to identify what FFD actually stands for. Fighting Fit and Dangerous, I'd say!

Boggart Bulletin

Last month it was reported that Boggart Hole Clough Brewery's Rocket Fuel would be an astonishing 15%. Well, the Boggart brewed and his elves beavered away, but could only reach 14%. Ruby red in colour, Rocket Fuel drank like old ale rather than a barley wine. Apples and a smoky, roasted taste almost came together. A warming finish to an apple nose, though not sweet. More hardened descriptions were 'notes of balsam' and 'like a fortified wine'.

New brews are '52' at 5.7% (golden with a warming, smoky, slightly roasted taste and dangerously moreish) and Silver Ale (4.5%), billed as a pale beer.

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Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

The Joseph Holt Group plc held its third Annual General Meeting at the Roebuck Hotel in Flixton on 11th June. The assembled shareholders were those who had retained some or all of their shares after the company was de-listed from the Stock Exchange.

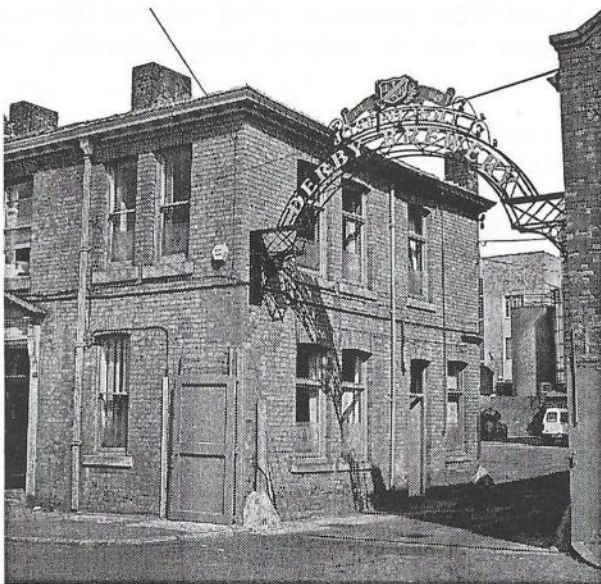
Chairman David Tully gave details of the pubs opened during the year: **Wylde**s in Bury, the **Broadway** in New Moston and the **Silver Birch** at Wythenshawe. All three were trading above expectations. Mr Tully acknowledged the presentation of the Joe Goodwin Award to the **Railway** in Didsbury by CAMRA and English Heritage.

More outlets are being sought in all areas, so if you know of a building that could be converted into a Holts pub, do get in touch! Many pubs on the market are just not suitable. They are either in the wrong place or near an established Holts outlet.

The Company Secretary, Tim Page, is retiring and I would like to acknowledge the courteous attention he has given to my enquiries over many years. The new Company Secretary is Tim Rowan.

Alterations are planned for the **Cheadle Hulme**, but details are not yet finalised. Nothing drastic is being contemplated and the basic traditional feel of a

Holts pub will be retained. The newly refurbished **Crown & Anchor** in Manchester is due to reopen at the end of June. Expect increased prices. The new-look C&A will be on similar lines to the Pepper Alley or Wylde



The next guest beer still hasn't got a name, but it is believed that the name will be chosen to highlight the association Holts have with the Holt Radium Institute, Christie's Hospital and the Patterson Institute at Withington.

stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk

Salford Brewery Syndicate

Bazens

The new beer on the Signs of the Zodiac theme relates to Gemini. It is called **Dilemma** (geddit?) and is 4.1%. The brew uses Jayne hops, which are described as having a honey flavour.



Flatbac won the Beer of the Festival at Stockport's recent annual beer bash.

Facers

David Facer reports that his first two months of trading have gone very well and the new syndicate is working admirably.

Crabtree 1639 (4.3%) is named after a local astronomer and the year in which he first recorded the transit of Venus across the sun. **Landslide**, currently 4.7%, may be increased to 4.9% with more copper hops to make it more distinctive. **Rhapsody** continues as before.

As well as the three regulars, the last batch of **Spring Loaded** has been brewed and should be in the pubs now.

The summer ale will be **Jas** at 3.8%. This is an acronym for July-August-September, which is when it will be available.

Joint Syndicate Brew

The two breweries have co-operated to produce a cask conditioned lager, **Cliff Beer** (5.2%). This has been so well received that it may be repeated.

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.

Wigan and District

Dave White

The **Prince of Wales**, Market Street, Hindley, has reopened after months of closure and threats of demolition. I haven't been in the pub yet, but a glimpse through the window revealed handpumps for Draught Bass and Marstons Pedigree. A recent crawl of Hindley proved a depressing experience, with three more pubs having lost cask ale since the Wigan beer guide of 2001. For the record, these are:- **Banners**, Castle Street; **Bonnie Lassies** and the **Hindley Arms**, both Market Street. The Hindley Arms still boasts an advertisement for 'a selection of cask ales' at the back of the pub. Thank God for the Hare & Hounds!

The **New Seven Stars**, Preston Road, Standish, was in the Good Beer Guide a long time ago, but for several years has been on keg Burtonwood. Now, however, the pub has been transformed into the Tapiero Tapas Bar; real ale-free, of course, though I'm told that there were some yummy aromas wafting from the kitchen when we called in.

The **Foresters Arms**, Main Street, Billinge, has featured in this column quite regularly lately, seemingly closing one month and reopening the next. The pub is still open, but, alas, no longer sells traditional Burtonwood bitter. A recent visit to Billinge revealed Main Street to be as dry as the Kalahari desert - there are five pubs - with even the **Jarvis Bar** out of real ale: and on a Friday evening, at that. (The Jarvis won an award for being Wigan CAMRA's New Cask Beer Outlet in 2002.)



Elsewhere in town, the **Bispham Lodge**, a wretched keg emporium on Upholland Road, has been demolished and houses built upon the site.

An unsubstantiated rumour has it that the **Bricklayers Arms** on Hallgate in the town centre (*left*) has been de-licensed and could be converted into offices. This pub has been closed for about twelve months. The **Engineers Arms**, a long-closed boozer in Belle Green Lane, Higher Ince, is being turned into a house.

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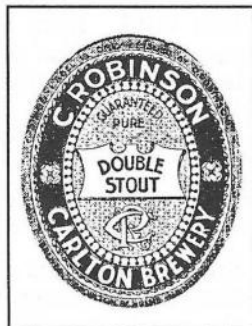
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The Chorlton Road Brewery

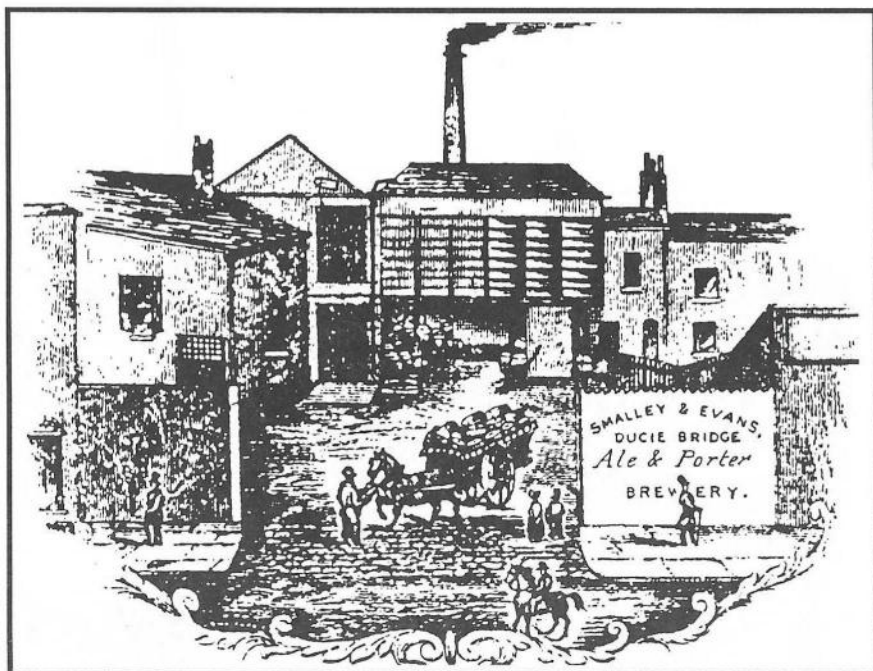
Alan Gall

As the Second World War came to an end, Manchester's immediate pre-war breweries were still in business, with one exception. Unlike the survivors, this company had sold off its tied estate, making it entirely dependent on the club and free trade. When larger breweries, with the money to 'buy their way in', started taking an interest in the region, these outlets became too few to provide the necessary sales. So the gates of Robinson's Carlton Brewery on Chorlton Road were closed after nearly one hundred years of operation.



The story begins with the partnership of William Smalley and Joseph Evans, who ran the Ducie Bridge Brewery close to the banks of the River Irk. These gentlemen may have produced good, wholesome beer in hygienic conditions, but they had chosen a rather unpleasant location. Friedrich Engels described the outlook from Ducie Bridge in his 1844 book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*:

"The view from this bridge, mercifully concealed from mortals of small stature by a parapet as high as a man, is characteristic for the whole district. At the bottom flows, or rather stagnates, the Irk, a narrow, coal-black, foul-smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it

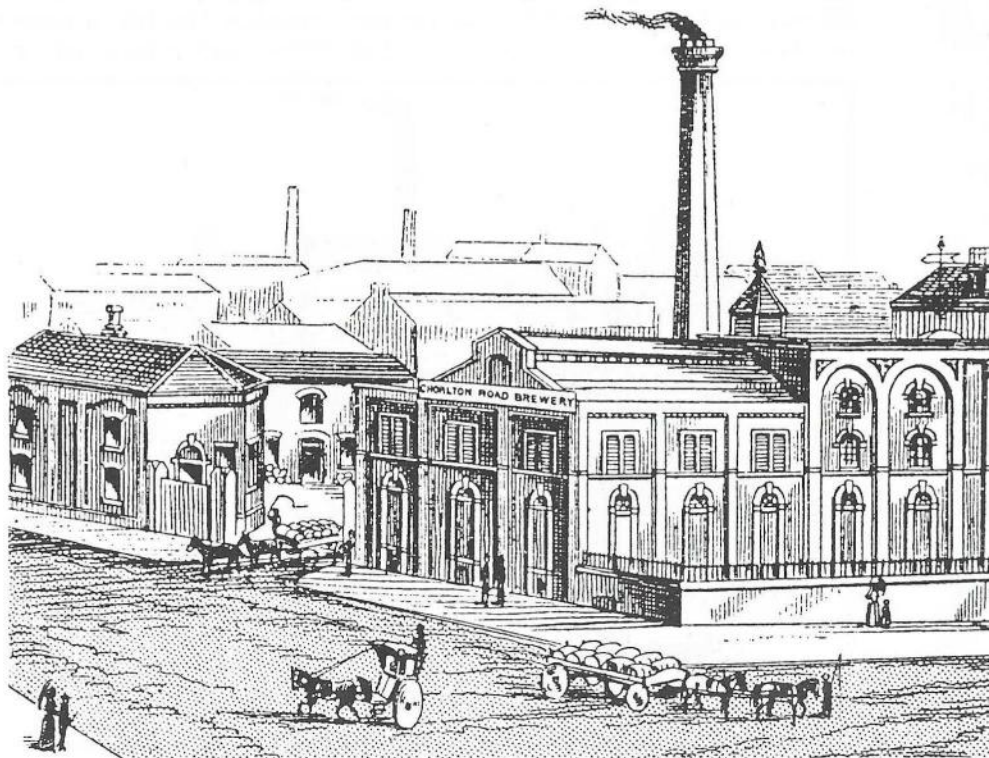


deposits on the shallower right bank. In dry weather, a long string of the most disgusting, blackish-green, slime pools are left standing on this bank, from the depths of which bubbles of miasmatic gas constantly arise and give forth a stench unendurable even on the bridge forty or fifty feet above the surface of the stream.'

A definition of miasmatic gas is to be found in *A Dictionary of the Art of Brewing* (1881): 'Miasmatic air is fatal to beer; for miasms are the effluvia of putrefying organic bodies. Manure, closets, and filth of any kind engender miasms.'

Smalley & Evans must have had some measure of success, despite the dangers of miasms, as they were able to relocate and by 1855 were at the much larger Chorlton Road Brewery on the corner of Denton Street and Chorlton Road in Hulme. The Ducie Bridge Brewery was then taken over by Joseph Holt before he moved on to the present site in Cheetham. Joseph Evans died on 28th January 1858 and William Smalley was succeeded by Titus Smalley shortly afterwards. By 1867 Titus had also died, at his home in Lymm, leaving his trustees to look after the business.

Titus Smalley's daughters, Hannah and Ellen, were the executrixes of his will and they were also the wives of William Dockray and William Henry Willcocks, respectively. At this time, Dockray described himself



as a brewer, but Willcocks does not seem to have been involved in the trade. In 1873 Willcocks & Dockray formed a partnership as calico merchants, but Dockray also managed the Chorlton Road Brewery.

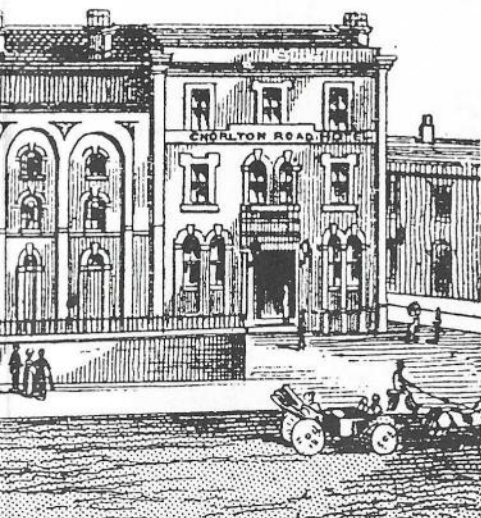
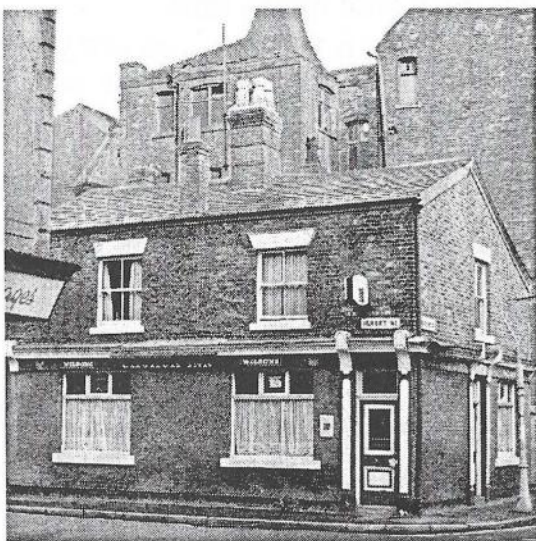
The Century's Progress, published in 1892, reported 'No detailed account of the brewing industries of Manchester would be complete without reference to the Chorlton Road Brewery, Hulme. The beer brewed here is of superior flavour and excellence, and is preferred in many cases to any beer brewed in Manchester.' It also gives the foundation date as 1850 and the size of the plant as 8

quarters, referring to the weight of malt that could be processed in the mash tun. An 8-quarter plant might be capable of producing up to about 50 barrels per brew of a light ale using added sugar. For comparison, Holts had a 25-quarter plant at this time.

Pubs that sold beer from the brewery under William Dockray included the following in the Rochdale Road/Oldham Road area of the city: Three Arrows on Irk Street, Blue Bell on Melbourne Street, City Arms on Oldham Road, Barley Mow on Silver Street and Church Inn on Jersey Street (*above*).

William Dockray sold most of the brewery's pubs to Groves & Whitnall of Salford in 1899 and retired. Percy (William's son) subsequently worked for Groves & Whitnall until his own retirement in 1947. The brewery on Chorlton Road now came under the control of Charles Robinson.

To be concluded next month



Orange Tree bears fruit

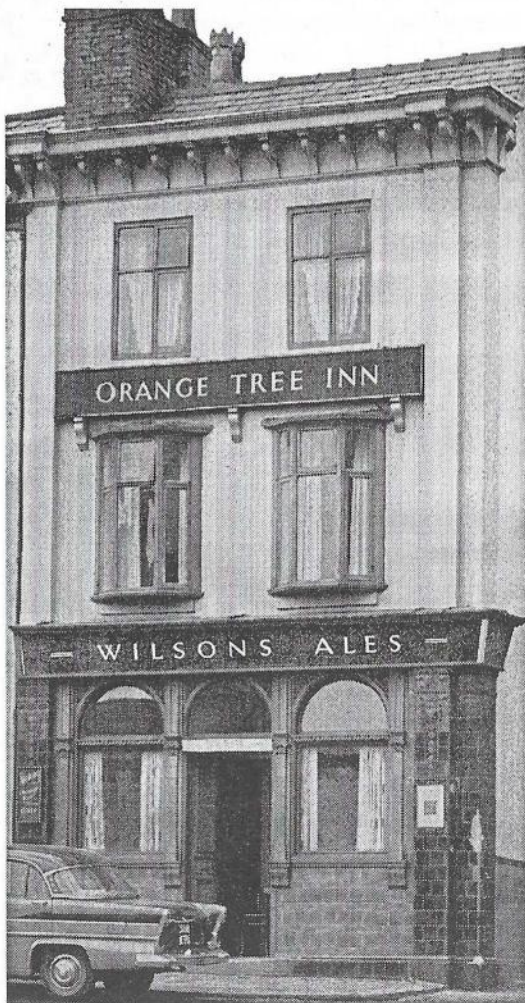
Neil Worthington

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA is promoting a Pub of the Season award for the first time in many years. A recent branch meeting decided that the most worthy recipient of the inaugural award, for Summer 2003, will be the **Orange Tree** in Altrincham.

The award is in recognition of the exemplary efforts made by licensees Andy and Sue to promote cask ale, most notably in staging their first ever Beer Festival last March. Beer festivals are not unknown in pubs and some, like the Crescent in Salford, make a habit of running them several times a year. But they are risky in financial terms, they make extra demands on staff, and they take a lot of the licensee's time to plan and organise. In fact, it's so much easier for pubs to keep doing the same old thing, that we felt we couldn't let the achievement go unrecognised.

Andy and Sue have been at the Orange Tree for nearly three years. Cask ale isn't something new there, but it is something they've been promoting and beer sales are up as a result. This is despite the handicap of a tiny cellar - the pub we see now comprises several eighteenth century buildings joined up and adapted over many years. There is also the alleged presence of two ghosts - one in the cellar and one upstairs - described in a newspaper article displayed by the bar.

Also on display is the Wilsons Brewery Shrine. This is a glazed alcove near the main entrance featuring handpumps, bar towels, beermats, ashtrays and all kinds of memorabilia with the famous chequerboard logo of this late lamented Manchester brewery. The pub now belongs to the



Unique Pub Company (part of Scottish & Newcastle) but is leased to a much smaller operator, Back Tracks UK, who also have the Bowling Green in Stockport.

Beer supply is tied to S&N but there is a very wide ranging list to choose from. Drawn up in partnership with SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers), the 'Quarterly Ales Selector' offers three dozen beers each quarter. The current list covers most of Britain with the likes of Hexhamshire Devil's Elbow and Kelham Island Pale Rider. The Orange Tree usually has three cask ales: Tetley Bitter as the 'house' beer and two guests. (Charles Wells Bombardier is a particular favourite of the regulars.)

It's not an especially Quiet pub, but it certainly doesn't go in for loud, booming music. The cheerful atmosphere and the uncommon smoke-free back room make it an attractive meeting place for all sorts of people. And it's also the home of the 'Ticker Club' - not collectors of novelty beers, as one might suppose, but a bunch of people raising funds for heart transplant patients. Food is served at lunchtimes (12 till 3 on weekdays, 12 till 5 on Sundays).

The Pub of the Season award will be presented during the evening of Wednesday 30th July. We will be assembling at the Orange Tree from about 8 o'clock onwards - do join us if you can!

And there's going to be another Beer Festival very soon. Andy and Sue hope to make it a regular event.

Ordinations while-you-sup

Reverend Dave

Paul Higginson, manager of the **Pot of Beer** on New Mount Street, Manchester, has recently been ordained as a Minister of the Universal Life Church, Modesto, California. He needs more customers of his Good Beer Guide listed and award winning pub to agree to become vicars, completely free of charge, so that he can be canonised! Word is spreading fast as there are a number of new followers at the Castle on Oldham Street.

On a recent visit I was lucky enough to witness a mass Ordination in the Pot. The next time you visit the pub, order beer and then an ordination. Participants receive a free full-colour Certificate. Remember - it's not just eternal but the universe!

Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Alan Gall, Dave Hallows, Steve Holt, Stewart Revell, Pete Cash, Phil Stout, Neil Worthington, Roy Bullock, Dave White

Stockport Pubs Guide

Pete Cash

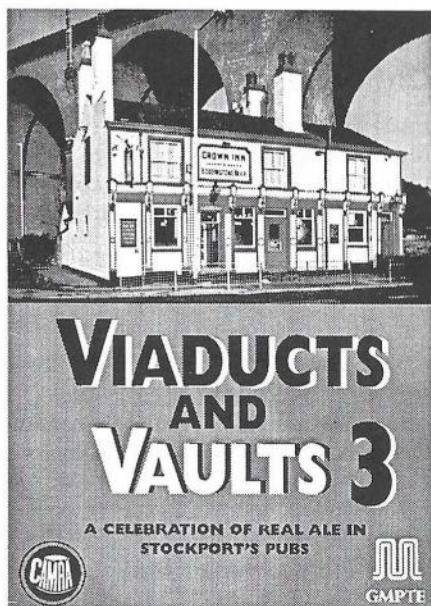
The award winning *Viaducts and Vaults* guide to pubs and real ale in Metropolitan Stockport, produced by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA, has just appeared in its third edition. Edited by Alastair Walker and subtitled *A Celebration of Stockport Pubs*, this version comes wrapped in a tasteful glossy cover with high quality colour photos of the Crown Inn on the front and Robinsons dray on the back.

All pubs are listed, whatever they sell. Non-real ale outlets are given a three-line entry (pub name, address and NO REAL ALE warning). The bulk of real ale outlets earn a two- to four-line description plus details such as opening hours and beers sold. Those pubs which are highly recommended, and which number some 74, are given an extensive description and are accompanied by a quality black-and-white photograph or the occasional line drawing.

Each of these 'top' pubs is given a letter/number code, which locates it on one of the twenty maps which are dispersed throughout the guide. Another useful feature is a list of pub names and codes within each map, making pub crawling simplicity itself. In line with the title, major viaducts are also shown, and Mark McConachie has written little descriptions and histories of these, peppered throughout the guide. An overall map near the front shows the area covered, with towns, roads, railways and canals, whilst at the back is a comprehensive index enabling any pub to be quickly located.

In addition to all the above, there is a wealth of features covering public transport, mild, Robinsons Brewery, the annual branch festival, cider, brewing in Stockport (a detailed and fascinating history), Alastair's timely warning about bland mass beer brands and a pub crawl of Stockport centre. CAMRA is well covered, with the National Inventory, an introduction to the Campaign and a membership application form. Quotations and folklore about beer and pubs fill in the odd corner and lend to the overall enjoyment of the guide.

Viaducts & Vaults is available by post from Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG. Price £4.95 inc. p&p. Cheques payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester.



Shut

Thwaites closed the **Elton View** on Eagley Drive, Bury, at the end of May. The pub (*below*), which was built in the middle of a housing estate in the 1960s, will be demolished and houses built on the site.



Salford

The **King William IV** on Springfield Lane, subject to a change of use planning application (*WD June*) was boarded up last month.

On Broughton Road, Pendleton, the **Railway** (Boddingtons) was boarded up recently.

Salford Quays seems to have lost one of its bars. The **Waterside** was knocked down last month. This opened as the **Pier Six** Café Bar and Grill in March 1989.

Finding their Marbles

There was a good turnout of CAMRA U-26 members and guests for the Marble Brewery visit at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, Manchester. Brewer James Campbell gave a guided tour of a brewery that is bigger than what one can see from the pub's back room. Brewery visits are available during the week by arrangement. The cost is £2, including a pint and a half of Marble beers.



CAMRA Prices Survey 2003

The results of CAMRA's annual survey show that both real ale and lager prices are moving roughly in line with inflation. The national average price for real ale is £1.98 and for lager £2.17. The North West is still the cheapest region, with real ale averaging £1.75 a pint, and the South East is the most expensive, where the average is £2.15 a pint.

REAL ALE	2003	2002	% Change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	198	192	2.65%	99	295
<i>by region:</i>					
East Anglia	208	206	1.24%	130	260
East Midlands	190	187	1.17%	115	230
London	213	212	0.53%	110	300
North	190	181	5.45%	158	230
North West	175	169	3.52%	99	270
Scotland	205	200	2.51%	129	230
South East	215	205	4.60%	99	280
South West	202	199	1.14%	100	250
Wales	186	185	0.73%	99	225
West Midlands	187	183	2.63%	135	230
Yorkshire	183	176	3.85%	109	240

LAGER	2003	2002	% Change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	217	211	2.70%	100	300
<i>by region:</i>					
East Anglia	229	224	1.93%	170	290
East Midlands	209	202	3.48%	140	255
London	234	231	1.18%	129	290
North	212	204	4.09%	190	245
North West	198	190	3.93%	139	225
Scotland	203	202	0.73%	150	250
South East	235	226	3.94%	149	275
South West	218	215	1.42%	135	265
Wales	206	201	2.30%	130	275
West Midlands	211	204	3.56%	159	260
Yorkshire	212	198	6.87%	99	300

	2003	2002	%change
Real Ale prices for national brewers' beers	187	184	1.63%
Real Ale prices for independent brewers' beers	202	196	3.06%
Real Ale prices for microbrewers' beers	195	190	2.76%
Real Ale prices in national chain pubs	194	190	1.95%
Real Ale prices in independent brewers' pubs	202	196	2.74%
Real Ale prices in free houses	198	192	3.48%

NITROKEG	2003	2002	% Change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	196	192	2.00%	100	280
<i>by region:</i>					
East Anglia	207	206	0.90%	145	255
East Midlands	191	184	3.89%	115	230
London	204	212	-3.38%	140	280
North	187	179	4.31%	170	208
North West	171	174	-1.96%	100	205
Scotland	200	200	-0.28%	140	240
South East	217	210	3.55%	129	270
South West	204	196	3.83%	140	250
Wales	184	183	0.26%	120	220
West Midlands	198	191	3.59%	140	240
Yorkshire	182	174	4.32%	109	240

KEG STOUT	2003	2002	% Change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	232	227	2.43%	135	290
<i>by region:</i>					
East Anglia	240	237	1.53%	179	270
East Midlands	226	221	2.03%	145	255
London	245	245	0.08%	149	290
North	224	215	3.94%	200	240
North West	220	213	3.17%	150	250
Scotland	220	214	3.04%	179	250
South East	248	239	3.78%	169	280
South West	236	233	1.65%	169	270
Wales	212	221	-3.95%	165	245
West Midlands	227	220	3.10%	150	260
Yorkshire	223	214	4.34%	135	245

REAL CIDER	2003	2002	% Change	Cheapest	Priciest
UK	205	203	1.09%	130	266
<i>by region:</i>					
East Anglia	236	228	3.75%	200	266
East Midlands	210	217	-2.97%	180	250
London	199	245	-18.66%	180	230
North	218	209	4.23%	205	225
North West	195	184	5.90%	150	220
Scotland	228	215	5.81%	225	230
South East	223	217	3.20%	190	250
South West	183	178	3.13%	130	230
Wales	187	203	-7.82%	150	210
West Midlands	202	195	3.79%	160	236
Yorkshire	212	198	6.72%	180	250

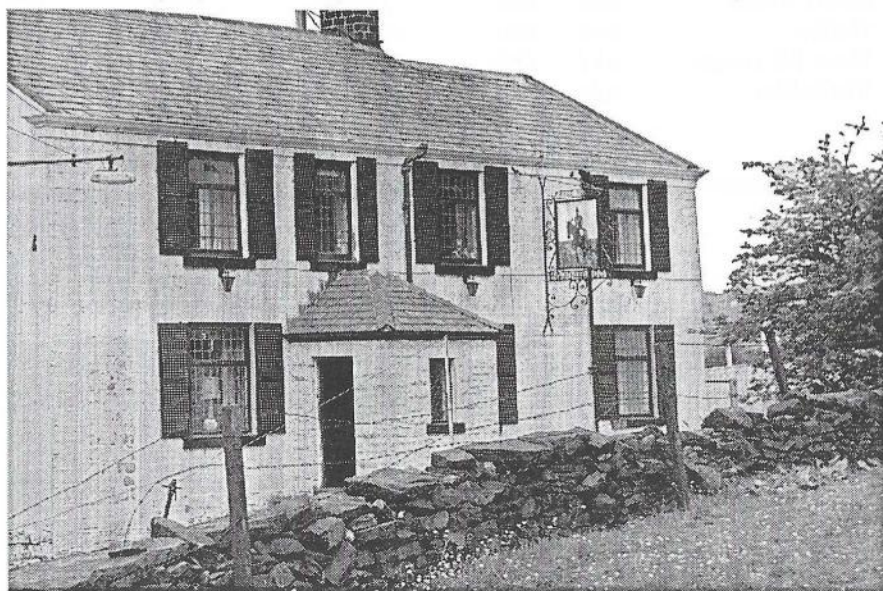
Micro U-26

On a sunny Saturday a baker's dozen of CAMRA U-26 members and guests from Wigan, Bury, Hyde, Stockport, Salford and Manchester gathered for the Microbrewery Tap Minibus Crawl. Dave Hallows was with them...

First call was the **Lord Raglan** in Nangreaves (*below*), the home of Leyden beers. Along with Light Brigade, Nanny Flyer, Forever Bury and Crowning Glory, there was Picador. This drank like a stout - dark and only 3.6%. Bar food was ordered: Cumberland sausage or steak and onions on a barm, prawn sandwiches, chillies, etc, all served with chips and side salad. Big portions for £4.45 to just over a fiver. We sat outside at the back in order to contemplate the view over to Pendle. Terry Leyden gave us a whistle stop tour of the two small rooms of the tiny brewhouse at the back of the pub. It had to be a quick visit, as we were behind time and the pub was busy!

I was trip organiser, so there was no way we weren't going to the **Griffin Inn** (Porter) in Haslingden. This is my favourite brewery and it was no surprise to me that I had to wrench everyone out of the pub. After all, this is the home of beers such as Sunshine, Rossendale Ale and Porter's Porter, to name a few. Dave Porter's creations never taste finer than in the Griffin.

Time was pressing and we had to get to the **Cask and Feather** (McGuinness) in the centre of Rochdale. Between us we tried all of the card - Feather Plucker Mild, Best Bitter, Junction Bitter and Tommy Todd's Porter.



Some of the party would clearly have been happy to stay at the McGuinness Brewery tap, but we had to set off for Uppermill and the **Church Inn**, home of Saddleworth Brewery. Inside and out, the pub was very busy, with others like us taking advantage of the fine weather.

As we made our orders, the bar ran out of the special St Georges Bitter (4.4%) and the Saddleworth Bitter! The staff said that it would take half an hour to put some more on and they were up to their eyeballs with customers. Most of us had the Bert Corner Bitter (4%), which was excellent - straw coloured and with a surprising smoky taste. Each handpump is now bar coded and each member of the bar staff has a bar coding gun to mark up orders. The supermarket comes to the pub, so to speak. Will Wetherspoons catch on? The outside seating area at the back is actually a meadow, with a fine collection of wildfowl and peacocks in the adjoining enclosure.



Again, we had to wrench ourselves away to get to the last pub - the **Marble Arch**. Between us we sampled all the Marble Brewery beers. N4 was amusing, Lagonda was luscious, Ginger was biting dry, Cloudy Marble was again not cloudy and, once more, the Manchester Bitter was magnificent.

He Marched Them up to the Top...

Scaffolding extending to the height of the roof covered the whole of the **Duke of York** in Eccles recently. Whether this heralds significant changes to the interior and beer choice remains to be seen. A couple of decades ago this was a flagship Whitbread real ale pub under the management of Robin Bence (a former chairman of the local CAMRA branch and CAMRA's first life member). Since his departure the Duke of York has had a chequered history but has recently been offering two real ales on a regular basis.

Down Liverpool Road, there have been men at work in the **Diamond XX**. Will it reopen as a pub?

Rupert

First of all, my thanks are due to Eddy for printing the attractive photograph of our new leaderene. It may be a few years old, but it brightens things up and gets Billy Cosh all a-trembling.

As the gang had all promised, we met last week in a different hostelry before retiring to Ratties. We decided that one of Grotley's premier free houses would be a suitable place to start. Well, things didn't begin well and went worse.

Fiona and Tish criticised the ambience, the cleanliness and the 'geek, Johnnie-no-mates scrotes' who formed the majority of the clientele. Bunty complained that the vast array of ales supposedly on sale did not include one (such as Drabs) which was to his liking. Alistair said that his beer was lacklustre, that the jukebox was intrusive and the table sticky with a mixture of fag ash and stale cider. Ophelia chimed in with a vilification of the staff who 'looked as though they'd been clothed by the Japanese equivalent of Millett's and had a non-reversible interpersonal skills bypass.'

I did try to be the voice of reason. I suggested that the Drabs hostelrys we visited were not famous for their excellence on any of these dimensions, although they were cheaper. It would be quite easy to stereotype the customers as red pumice-nosed ale soaked inebriates or some such and make snide, snobby TV-makeover

critiques of the lack of aesthetic appeal of the decor. It was just that we were used to it and were afraid of anything new.

I am afraid that I was less than persuasive. Bunty began to point out the personality defects of the customers in a loud voice. He was particularly upset by a group of techie scratchers who were comparing notes on their palm tops. 'At least it stops them using their palm for anything else,' he shouted. They didn't look particularly aggressive, but this enraged them. Bunty was once again embroiled in a brouhaha and we were ejected from the said hostelry. We never got a chance to use our criteria to score the ales.

Later, as we reflected on our experience in Ratties, I was surprised that everyone had enjoyed the trip. 'Great idea, Roop, of yours,' Fiona concluded. 'Where are we off to next week?' I'll have to be careful, or we'll soon run out of taverns into which we're allowed.



Branch Diary

Regional Meeting

Weds 9 July 8pm, Crescent, Salford. Hosted by Wigan Branch

Regional CAMRA U-26 Event

Fri 4 July, 8pm. The SOS - 'Sit Outside Social'. Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Northern Quarter, Manchester.
davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

Wigan

Wed 16 July 8pm, Branch Meeting, Cross Keys, Golborne Road, Stubshaw Cross

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

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 1 July 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Sat 5 July, Independents' Day Coach Social. Details from Branch Contact

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

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

Thurs 3 July 8pm, Branch Meeting, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham
Thurs 10 July 7.30pm, Wythenshawe Social and Survey. Meet at the Jolly Butcher

Thurs 24 July 7.30pm, Social at Lloyds, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton (the recently opened J W Lees house)

Wed 30 July 8pm, **Pub of the Season** presentation at the Orange Tree, Altrincham. All branch members are asked to support this event.

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

North Manchester www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 2 July: Tyldesley and Atherton Crawl. Mort Arms, Tyldesley 7.30pm. Return from Atherton by train at 10.34 or 35 bus at 10.39.

Sat 5 July: **Independents' Day Treasure Hunt** - Starts 11.30am at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road.

Wed 9 July 8pm: Regional Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Wed 16 July 8pm: Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Wed 23 July: Castlefield Area. Meet 7.30pm, White Lion, Liverpool Road.

Wed 29 July: What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, 3pm to 7pm

Wed 30 July: Crown & Anchor Night: Start Crown & Anchor, Hilton Street at 7.30pm. Finish at Crown & Anchor, Cateaton Street

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

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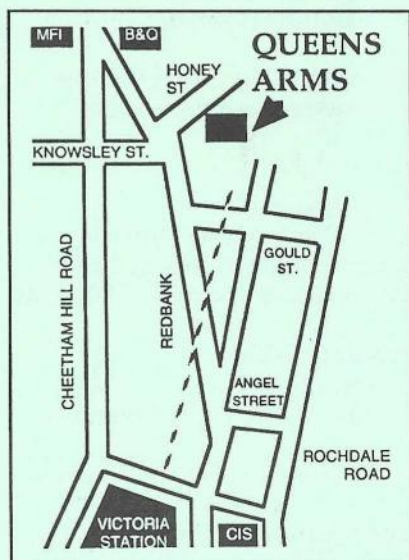
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City Life Manchester Food & Drink Festival

PUB OF THE YEAR 2002-3



PUB QUIZ

Tuesday, 9.30pm start

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with children's play area

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