

30p

# What's Doing

JANUARY 2004



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## ASHTON OPEN AGAIN

The Ashton Arms, the former Porter Brewing Company pub on Clegg Street in Oldham, has reopened. It is now a free house, selling ales from Greenfield and Phoenix breweries alongside the likes of Cains, Greene King IPA and Hydes Jekyll's Gold.

The new licensee is Jo Potter, who has run a few pubs in the Hogshead chain, in Oldham, Liverpool, Lancaster, Lichfield and Newcastle under Lyme.



*Andy and Lynn welcome you to*

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Cask Ale Pub of the Year 2003**



The renovations at the **Jolly Carter** (Lees) in Winton are complete. New windows and toilets have been installed and the whole pub recarpeted, except for wooden floorboards in the vault. Here there are prints and photos of sporting figures from the past, whilst the rest of the pub has old local transport pictures - canals, trams, trains, etc - and a photo of the Carter in its 1957 Wilsons livery.



There is a comprehensive food menu, including appetisers, grills, main dishes, breakfasts, curries, burgers, jacket potatoes and hot baguettes, all cooked to order. On Sundays there is a traditional roast. The pub is very child friendly, with high chairs provided and half a dozen slot machines dispensing sweets and toys. One of the raised, fenced areas in the large lounge is reserved for non-smokers.

Although there are three handpumps on the bar, just Lees bitter and mild are sold at the moment. A decision on seasonal beers is still pending. 'Happy hour' type offers are comprehensive - 20p off all draught after 9pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and 20p off Lees draught between 5 and 7pm Monday to Thursday.

Down in Patricroft, the **Ellesmere** (Innspired) is open again at lunchtime with new landlady Vicky Lomax in charge. Vicky has done a professional job in redecorating the whole pub, which now looks very smart. Although real ale has not returned, it is good to see the Ellesmere given a new lease of life, and *What's Doing* is back on sale.

Across the road, the **Diamond XX** has reopened. There is a small D-shaped bar serving both the small front room and the large lounge at the back. Again, no real ale, but another Eccles pub still in business. One of the fonts was offering 'Manns Chestnut' - presumably a mild. Could this be a cross between Manns Brown Ale and John Smith's Chestnut Mild?

In Eccles centre, the **Lamb** (Holts) is being redecorated room by room, with customers concentrated in the remaining areas. The nearby **Albert Edward** (Sam Smiths) is still far from ready to reopen. New roof timbers have been installed and the new tiles stacked ready to complete the job, but this has been the case for a month now. A peep inside the downstairs area revealed it still in a very raw state, with builders' materials scattered about. Predictions of a New Year reopening look very optimistic. Let us hope it won't be too far into 2004, because the pub is in the new *Good Beer Guide*.

Up in Monton, the **Drop Inn** (John Smiths) was displaying some tasteful flashing lights on the upper outside wall, outlining various Christmas themes.

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## Salford Brewery Syndicate

*Pete Cash*

**Bazens'** brewery's **Centaur** (Sagittarius) has come to an end; I got the last pint in the Marble Arch. This medium tan 4.2% bitter was extremely hoppy (Northdown) with a dry finish. The next Zodiac beer will be **Goatee Beer** (Capricorn) at 4.9%. The seasonal **Wass Ale** (4.5%) started at Christmas. The Bazens' Porter has undergone a recipe and name change. It now uses David Facer's smoked malt (*see below*) and will be called **Knowle Street Porter**, still at 5.2%.

**Facer's** brewery arranged for a sack of malt to be smoked at the Cheshire Smoke House in Wilmslow. Some of this was used in the Bonfire Night Special, **Smoky Guy**, which David now admits was 'over-the-top smoky'. The smokiness has been reduced for **Smoked Ale** (4.1%), which surprisingly is very pale. Christmas beer **Scrooge** (with cinnamon & cloves), medium coloured at 4.1% was very well received. There is a very limited New Year beer - only one cask each in selected outlets - called **Resolution** (5.5%), an extra strong version of Landslide which retains that beer's smoothness and quaffability.

## Boggart Bulletin

There was no new Christmas beer as such from Boggart Hole Clough, but there was a ruby red beer **North Star** (4.6%) and **Bog Sleigh** (5.3%). This copper coloured beer has an initial sweetness that gives way to subtlety and a pleasant bitterness. *Opening Times* reported that **Rocket Fuel**, at 14%, would be making another appearance over the festive season.

## About Bolton

*Dave Crookell took a brief midweek, pre-Christmas stroll around Bolton town centre...*

We began at **Ye Old Man & Scythe**, where well kept Holts bitter is still a regular at a reasonable £1.50 a pint. There was also Deuchars IPA, London Pride, old style Boddies and 'new improved' Boddies in the cellar, waiting to come on. Occasionally there is also Old Speckled Hen. Incidentally, John, the landlord of 'th'Man,' allows customers to bring food into the pub, and the policy is even mentioned on the menu. You can nip out to one of the many take-aways in the area for a kebab or a pizza and then wash it down with pints of Holts. Or you can order a meal from the Hong Kong Chinese restaurant next door and have it delivered. I have often wondered if there is a reciprocal agreement whereby you can eat in the Hong Kong and have Joey's delivered to your table.

Moving on to the **Hen and Chickens**, there was Pedigree and Broadside, both in good condition but at £2.03 and £2.13 respectively - how do they arrive at these prices? Also available was Davenports Bitter at 3.9%, which we declined. It is probably a well crafted session bitter and I suspect we were put off by the name - Davenports and the Beer at Home service - what was that all about? I can recall the TV ads but not much else. It conjured up images of an era when we had to suffer Brew Ten, Long Life and Party Sevens.

Next we headed for Nelson Square and Wetherspoon's **Spinning Mule**, somewhat disappointing of late but still usually one of the best bets for a choice of real ales. It was even more disappointing on this occasion, as the place was closed for a minor refurbishment.



Time was now pressing and a quick decision had to be made. Either a trek to the **Sweet Green Tavern** for the eponymous Special bitter or take a gamble on the availability of real ale and risk the karaoke in the **Clifton** or the **York**. We hummed and hawed and suspected that closer to hand there would be draught Bass available, but in the dismal **Anchor**. Once upon a time the **Swan Hotel** had cask Boddies and Stones, but it was now closed and firmly shuttered, to be reopened in 2004 as a Walkabout-type fun pub. So the choice was between Holts' **Pepper Alley** for cold bitter and unreliable Patersons, or a return to **th'Man** with the hope of finishing on Old Speckled Hen. It was no contest really. Resisting the temptation to pick up a chicken rogan josh on the way, we went back to the **th'Man**, where to our chagrin we discovered that Old Speckled Hen had been discontinued because of poor sales. But at £2.30 a pint this was hardly surprising.

### More about Bolton

*Frank Booth also has a look round*

I hadn't been in the **Sweet Green Tavern** since licensee Lilian Longmire retired, so I paid a visit recently. The pub itself is still the same, with several rooms and as it was a cold, damp, winter evening, the real fire roaring away.

Tetley bitter is always available and the guest ales listed on the blackboard were Taylors Landlord, Adnams Broadside and Sweet Green Special from Moorhouses, the house beer of several years' standing. I tried the Broadside, at 4.7% the strongest of the regularly brewed Adnams ales.

My only gripe about the Sweet Green Tavern concerns the prices of the guest beers. These have now been nudged up to the £2 a pint mark and the Broadside is £2.20.

The **Alma Inn** is a short walk away, next to the large JJB Sports shop on Bradshawgate. This is now essentially a rockers' pub. I visited one Saturday night and the solitary handpump was serving the 4.8% Bateman XXXB. I called again a week later, and this time Pendle Witch was available. Both beers were in excellent condition. The Alma is worth a visit for the brilliant rock jukebox, if you're an old rocker at heart like me.

The rest of Bradshawgate these days is a ghastly mix of late-licence bars that cater for lager lads and alcopop babes, and sadly there is not a drop of real ale to be found.

And so to the **Pepper Alley** on Crown Street, formerly the Millstone Hotel. When the beer is on form, a decent pint of Holts bitter can be had. The pub's name, incidentally, derives from the address of the original Old Millstone. This stood on the corner of Deansgate and Pepper Alley, which was widened and renamed Crown Street.

Back in 1996 and long before the Pole Dancing Bar opened on nearby Bank Street, the Millstone made headline news in the local paper after introducing topless barmaids to boost trade.

## Holts in 2003

*Stewart Revell*

Over the last twelve months Holts have been consolidating their position as one of the foremost independent family brewers in the region. Rather than acquiring more pubs for their estate, they have been funding refurbishments to their stock of outlets.

During the latter half of 2003 the **Crown & Anchor** in the centre of Manchester was given an upgrade to fit in with the new surroundings. Work on improving other pubs is expected to continue in 2004, where and when necessary.

During 2003 the brewery produced four 'seasonal' beers. At the start of the year there was **ThunderHolt**, a quite strong, full bodied beer, slightly more expensive than the bitter. This is still available in 500ml bottles, though it is not bottle conditioned.

This was followed by **Blackwell**, named after Sir Edward Holt's residence in the Lake District. Again, a distinctive beer. Next came **Edwards**, brewed with honey to produce a refreshing taste. And finally there was **Patersons**, which is still available. This was named after the founder of the Paterson Institute at Christie Hospital. For each pint sold, 20p is donated to the Hospital.

ThunderHolt will return in 2004 to follow Patersons, but nothing has been decided about the other three. I'm told that Holts will be studying sales figures and may drop one or more of them and try something new.

Readers with views on the subject of retaining/replacing the Holts seasonals are invited to comment...

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## Wigan and district

Dave White

No sooner had I completed last month's article than the **Crawford Arms**, Red Rock Lane, Haigh, reopened. The interior of the pub has had a much needed makeover and it is all the better for it. Real ale has been retained - two rotating guest beers, as before - but it'll cost you. £2.17 for a pint of Thwaites bitter and £2.36 for Marstons Pedigree on a recent visit. And to think I once vowed I'd stop drinking the stuff when it got to 40p a pint.

The **Running Horses**, Bolton Road, Aspull, has also reopened, but it is a real ale-free zone, as before.

Staying in the Aspull/Haigh area, it's been a while since I checked out the **Kirkless Hall Inn** on Albion Drive, New Springs. The house bitter at this Burtonwood pub used to be keg, but it sold a guest ale and I wondered if this was still the case. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I got to the pub on a Saturday evening, to find it closed. A notice on the door advertised 'Winter Opening Hours' of 12 noon to 8 or 9pm, depending on the day of the week. So if anyone happens to be passing this picturesque little boozer during the day, pop in and let us know what's on the bar!

The **Prince of Wales**, Woodhouse Lane, Springfield (*below*), is closed and boarded up. This was a cracking inn when Tetleys ran it, but real ale didn't long survive the change to Burtonwood, and in recent years the pub looked sorely neglected. The PoW's closure became inevitable, and with two other pubs on the doorstep, it is unlikely to reopen. Sad and shameful.





A pub crawl of Skelmersdale revealed a couple of changes, both of them unfortunate. Cask conditioned beer has disappeared from the **Horseshoe** on Liverpool Road and the **Roundabout** on Ormskirk Road. This is a pity, as these were two of the better pubs in Skem. If you happen to be in the Old Town, then the Tetley dark and bitter at the **Victoria** on Sandy Lane are well worth trying.

Finally, the **Last Orders** on Wallgate, Wigan, has gone the same way as its sister pub in Standish and is now keg only.

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## Session in the White House

*Dave Hallows*

Jenny and John Connolly have been at the White House on Great Ancoats Street, opposite Central Retail Park, for over eighteen years and the pub continues to be listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2004. Last month I visited the pub for the first time for ages.

The White House is well known for having one of the best free trade pints of Holts bitter in Manchester, but I decided to have a few pints of their guest beer. I was pleasantly surprised to find this was Facer's Christmas special, Scrooge (4.1%). The pump clip promised 'a hint of cinnamon and cloves. A Dickens of a beer.' Too true! Scrooge is a welcoming, golden beer with a good spice aroma and a pleasant, dry, spicy and easy drinking taste. And made in Salford as well!

As the session continued, I learned that I had made a mistake. Contrary to what it says in this year's Good Beer Guide, Jenny and John are not tenants; they own the pub. My apologies to both! I ordered another pint of Scrooge in order to reflect upon my mistake. Perhaps it was another aspect of session drinking?



## Heaton Park

*On a November evening members of CAMRA North Manchester took a look at the pubs along Bury Old Road near Heaton Park. Staggerin' Man was one of their number...*

First call was at the **Royal Oak** on Whittaker Lane, not far from the tram station. It's a Hydes pub, with both bitter and mild on handpull. The mild was malty and fruity and well received, while the bitter was also high quality. The mild is sold at £1.20 a pint in the afternoons until 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday.

The pub's three rooms have been opened out to make the lounge, and the central bar also serves a vault or games room. Darts is popular and photos of professionals adorn the walls of the vault. In the lounge there are interesting prints of the brewery in its infancy, together with a photo of the brewery offices as they were. There is also a vintage print of the pub with a list of past landlords and landladies.

We had a look in at the **Turf Tavern** (Banks's) on Bury Old Road, but it turned out to be keg and empty. We didn't fare much better at the **Commercial**, where the Theakstons Best Bitter handpump was not in use. I was told they did the real stuff at times. Further along the road, the **Parkside** had six handpumps, but not one pulling the new Boddies Bitter.

Trailing back towards Manchester, we visited the **Ostrich** (Holts). This pleasantly opened out old pub serves both bitter and mild; the bitter was preferred to the mild. The pub has a separate dining room and a TV room, and the large beer garden is good in summer. The loos are of very high quality and super clean!

We paid a final homage to the Derby Brewery by visiting Edward Holt's former home



- the **Woodthorpe Hotel** (above). The beer quality was excellent, service was good and the pub has four separate palatial rooms (including a non-smoker) to enjoy. The Woodthorpe usually has a seasonal beer, which is rare for a Holts pub in this part of the world, so it is well worth a gander.

## Swinton Crawl

Pete Cash

Much of my late teens and early twenties were spent in the vault of Boddington's **White Horse** on Worsley Road. In those days Boddies brewed four real ales: Dark Mild, Best Mild, Old Ale (in winter) and the famous Bitter. This last beer was much respected; only two or three of the thirty-odd hardened vault drinkers would take it 'neat' all night. Most would settle for 'Best Mixed' or Best Mild, with a few of the older chaps sticking to the Dark. Then things started to go wrong. The bitter lost its magic over the years, the Dark and the Old were phased out and I drifted away to the charms of the recently improved Holts and a new set-up called CAMRA.

So, with the rebirth of Boddies Bitter (*WD last month*) it was with pleasure that I looked forward to revisiting my old haunt at the start of the crawl. I was not disappointed. The new bitter was 'on', with a respectable amount of promotional material on the bar and an unmissable cardboard surround hanging on the pump clip proclaiming 'Better Boddies Bitter'. It was on good form, too, at £2.50 for one-and-a-half pints. Also on handpumps were Lees Bitter, Youngs Winter Warmer (a guest, I think) and 'Theakston's Refreshing Cask Beer', sold with the bronze clip which used to dispense a chilled version, though I could see no reference to this.

It was then up Moorside Road and across the East Lancs Road to Banks's **Moorside Farm**. Despite six handpumps, there was only one cask beer - Banks's Bitter at £1.65, or 93p a half! It was in good condition but unexciting. Both here and in the White Horse there were 'No Smoking' areas. Along the Lancs towards Manchester is the

**New Ellesmere**, a Miller's Kitchen style eating house with a real ale bar. Here was Courage Directors at £1.97 and 'Old' Boddies. The manager hadn't heard of the impending change, so we left him a *What's Doing* to read all about it.

Back across the Lancs and on

Worsley Road again, we called at Burtonwood's **Staff of Life** (*above*). This former Walkers house had just Burtonwood Bitter on cask at £1.70. It was in good condition, but rather bland. Finally, we crossed to Holt's **White Swan**, where excellent Mild, Bitter and the seasonal Patersons were on sale.



## Now and then

*Rob Magee*

No.122

### Cross Keys

Oldham Road, Delph

The Cross Keys on Oldham Road, Delph, closed at the end of last year and in January it is due to reopen as a Chinese restaurant.

The pub was just over two hundred years old, having opened a few years after the Wakefield to Austerlands turnpike was completed. The earliest recorded licensees were the Wood family; James, Hannah, Maria and then Milly, who was there in the 1830s.

Robert Shaw took over in 1852, but a few years later he was dead and his widow, Anna, was in charge. She got into trouble in December 1858 when a policeman found some men drinking in the house on a Sunday morning. In court, she said she thought it was all right to sell beer to the men when they had come in to read the papers. She also said that it was hard to deny a customer when she did not sell 'half a load' a month and had three children to support. Unfortunately it was her second offence and she was fined £1.

Another licensee who fell foul of the law was Joseph Lees. On Christmas Day 1875 a constable was watching the pub and he saw a man called David Baxter go in and then leave with a bottle of rum in his pocket. In court, Baxter said he was taking a pigeon back to the





landlord and the bottle contained whisky, not rum, and it had been in his pocket all day. The magistrates decided that it hadn't been proven that Joseph Lees had sold Baxter any drink, but they fined Baxter anyway for being on licensed premises outside permitted hours.

The next recorded licensee was called Hinchcliffe Kaye and during his tenancy the Cross Keys was owned by a Dr Robert Linfitt. Gartsides Brewery of Ashton bought the property in 1903 and Mr Kay remained their tenant until 1905, when he was 71 years old. John Kaye took over from his father and ran the pub until 1928.

The Cross Keys became a Bents Gartsides house in 1939, following the merger of the Ashton firm with Bents Brewery of Liverpool. Bass Charrington took over in 1967, around the same time that the pub became a Grade II listed building.

In 1980 Bass North West sold the Cross Keys to Norman Waterworth (who became the licensee) and his cousin, John Netherwood of the White Lion, Upholland. Norman moved to the Roebuck at Strines in 1983 and Serge Marlot took over at the Cross Keys until the early 1990s. Trust Inns of Chorley purchased the pub/restaurant in 1993.

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## Letters

### Thank you

Sir - On behalf of myself and my colleagues, I would like to convey a message of thanks to the Rochdale, Oldham and Bury branch members who made us feel welcome at the Bury Beer Festival on 21st and 22nd November.

In particular I would like to thank Peter Alexander for giving us the opportunity to introduce the new, stronger Boddingtons Bitter and for arranging for us to run our own bar.

The team running the bar enjoyed the event, during which, thanks to customer donations, we collected £115.00 for the Christie Hospital Charity Fund.

*Mark Barrow, Boddingtons Brewery*

### Bolton Arms

Sir - Regarding the item about the Bolton Arms on New Bridge Street, Manchester (*WD Oct 2003*). This particular pensioner was a regular customer between May and October 1983. IPA and Youngers bitter were available and afternoon lock-ins were a regular feature. Margaret was behind the bar and the licensee was an Asian gentleman who prepared curries in the upstairs kitchen.

*Phil Levison*

## Good Beer Guide 2005

On 7th January the North Manchester branch of CAMRA will be holding a meeting to draw up a shortlist of pubs for inclusion in the 2005 Good Beer Guide. CAMRA members wishing to have a say in the selection are welcome. The venue is the Kings Arms on Bloom Street, Salford, and the meeting starts at 8.00pm prompt.

### Co-op Ale

Last year the Co-op launched a range of products under the 'Truly Irresistible' label - farmhouse cheeses, ethical veal and bunny rabbit sausages, that sort of thing. The range includes a bottled conditioned ale from Freeminer Brewery called Gold Miner, which recently won a 'Q' Award in the annual competition organised by *Checkout* magazine and *Independent Retail News*.

The 5% Gold Miner is CAMRA-approved, comes in 500ml bottles and retails at £1.79. It is described as having a 'well balanced bitterness with fruity, slightly spicy, orange and citrus notes.'

Gold Miner ale is available in 2,500 Co-op stores or can be ordered via [www.co-opdrinks2u.com](http://www.co-opdrinks2u.com) - the Co-op's online off-licence for home deliveries.

## Standish Crawl

Valerie Hollows

Standish has many pubs serving real ale, with some of them featuring in the Good Beer Guide. Approaching the town from Wigan, the first pub is the **Boars Head**, which serves Burtonwood bitter plus the monthly and quarterly Burtonwood guests. This year the Boars Head has again won the Wigan Pubs in Bloom competition.

Further along Wigan Lane is the **Horseshoe**, a Burtonwood pub serving three cask ales. The best thing about the Horseshoe is the excellent, value for money food, served until 8pm.

From here it is just a short walk to the **Globe**, opposite the cenotaph. This is a free house serving two cask ales from Coach House or Archers. From the Globe, walk along the back road to the **Lychgate** which, as the name suggests, is next door to St Wilfrid's Church. A picture of an owl above the door is reminiscent of the Standish town crest. It's Boddingtons bitter or Websters Green Label here.

Leaving the Lychgate, continue past St Wilf's, turn right on to Rectory Lane, cross over Wigan Lane and on to School Lane for the **Dog & Partridge** (right). This is one of my favourite pubs. Six cask ales are on offer - Tetley bitter and mild, plus four guests, usually from microbreweries. For the past two years, the weekend after Easter, the pub has held a beer festival in a marquee on the car park. It has been CAMRA's Pub of the Season twice recently.



Visitors to Standish who fancy eating could try **The Beeches**, also on School Lane. There are two cask ales to accompany the meals. Non-diners can purchase drinks and take them into the lounge area.

Another eatery is **Chadwick's Emporium** on Wigan Lane. A large conservatory fronts a butcher's and delicatessen shop serving snacks and meals. There is no draught beer, but the drinks list boasts a good range of bottled British beers.

The **Crown Hotel** is in Worthington, on the far side of Standish. The hotel has around ten bedrooms and a medium sized function room. Food is served either in the bar area or the restaurant and conservatory. Two cask ales are usually available. Moorhouses Black Cat seems to be on the bar permanently and the other beer changes regularly.

Another GBG-listed pub in Worthington is the **White Crow**, to be found on Chorley Road, the A5102. Food is also served here. The bar holds four handpumps and the beer range is ever changing.

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## Rossendale Ales

*Dave Hallows talks to brewer Dave Porter*

When you go into a Rossendale Brewery hostelry you are greeted by a long row of handpumps offering a variety of Porters ales - bitter, dark mild, Rossendale Ale, Porter, Sunshine, Floral Dance and seasonals. All are brewed in the cellar of the **Griffin Inn**, Hud Rake, Haslingden, and all are in the price range of £1.20 to £1.70 a pint.

Dave Porter opened his brewery in 1994 and since then has won many CAMRA awards and accolades in the Lancashire press. News cuttings can be seen on a large notice board in the Griffin. His dark mild is £1.20 and his bitter £1.30, making them cheaper than Holts beers (£1.27 and £1.34). Dave was one of the few brewers to pass on the Chancellor's 10p beer duty reduction for micros last year, in the Arthur Inn, Bury.

Since 1994, he has produced many brews; the 6.4% Silly Sunshine was the 1,000th. A lot of Porter's drinkers have their own preferred drinks. The bitter and mild are popular with railwaymen at the **Arthur Inn**, Floral Dance goes down well at the **Railway** in Stockport and the Sunshine is favoured at the Griffin. When I ordered Sunshine there, a local jokingly said, 'That's my barrel!'



In the last year, Dave has helped to set up breweries in Staffordshire, Mossley, Edale and Greenfield. New micros in Scotland, North Wales and Somerset were due to start production at the end of 2003.

Millstone Edge (4.5%) from Millstone Brewery in Mossley made an appearance at the Bury Beer Festival in November. I just missed out on trying their Three Shires (4%) at the Arthur - it had already been supped when I got there! What I did catch was the first beer from the Somerset Brewery, Mark I (3.9%), a good session bitter, well-balanced with bitterness and fruits. Maturing in the cellar was Way-Lade (4.5%) from the new Callander Brewery in Scotland.

Dave doesn't like bland beers - they should be flavoursome - so I asked him which beer had impressed him, of all the breweries he had helped to set up. 'Greenfield Dobcross Bitter was one of the better ones.'

We talked about the Porter's beers and I was interested that he had tried the Wheat Beer again. 'It took me two or three years to talk myself into it, and I thought it was good this time round, but it didn't sell very well.' He won't be doing the No.4 Raspberry Ale again, as cleaning the equipment afterwards proved too difficult. One brew that was planned and never happened was JSB - Jolly Strong Bitter. But the 'beer tickers' keep asking for it.



There was no Sleighed this Christmas, as Dave had barrels of Celebration and Silly Sunshine for the Arthur and the Railway. I asked what 'FFD' stood for. 'Anything you like,' was the reply. The best suggestion was Fortified Floral Dance, but you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to work out that FFD was a stronger version of Floral Dance.



I asked if there were any new beers planned. 'Not for the time being. I'm not doing beers just for the sake of it; that is just quirky.' My last question was about trying a really strong beer, and what did he think of them? 'I can't see how you can get above 13%. Yeast can't take it. The only way you can get above 13% is by fortifying the beer with a spirit like gin.'

Before I left, Dave told me of the time he was in a brewpub and they tested his mild against Tetley Bitter for bitterness. 'It turned out that my mild was bitterer than Tetley Bitter! That I find very funny.'

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## Little Hulton

Apparently an offer has been made for the **Antelope**, aka Poor Dick's, the boarded-up ex-Tetley pub on Manchester Road West, Little Hulton (*WD last month*). Another 'For Sale/Lease' poster has appeared on the **New Inn** (still trading, but keg) on the A6, closer to Walkden.

The **Dun Mare** (Tetley) reopened on 6th December after an enormous refurbishment. Some 10 or 12 years ago the pub sold the distinctive Walkers bitter along with Tetley mild and bitter on handpumps, but there was a change to all keg beers in more recent times. No handpumps could be seen through the windows prior to the reopening, so it is probably still an all keg pub. All visible signs of the building's history as a Walkers and, before that, Sharmans of Bolton, pub have gone forever.

## Cooking with Ken

Ken Birch, former chef at the Kings Arms, Salford, and author of the *Ken's Kitchen* column in *Opening Times*, will be running a Cooking with Beer course, beginning in February.

Before the course begins, there will be a Taster Session at the Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford, on Tuesday, 13th January, at 7.30pm. All are welcome. A charge of £3.50 will be made to cover the cost of ingredients and some sample accompanying beers.

It would help with the organising of the event if those planning to attend would confirm with Ken on 0161 705 0836.

## Chorley choice

*The Malt 'n' Hops is one of Chorley's finest free houses and a convenient place to wait for a homebound train. The pub is on Friday Street, just behind the station and so it is handy for the Manchester-bound platform. Neil Worthington decided to miss a train and spent a couple of hours in there...*

My scribbled notes say, 'trad. pub - 100 yrs old??' but as the *Good Beer Guide* informs me, it's only been a pub for the past fourteen years. Before that, the building was used as shops. But it certainly looks as though it had been dispensing ale for generations. There is one big room, but with a corner bar and cosy, separate seating areas, giving a greater degree of privacy than, say, a Wetherspoons. The clientele was varied: all ages and all sorts of drinkers.

The house beer is Taylors Landlord and there are eight handpumps in all, offering a quickly changing selection of guest beers. On this occasion they were mostly stronger ones - certainly nothing under 4.2% - and a very eclectic bunch: Archers City of Truro, Moorhouses Black Panther, Slaters Top Totty, Marston Moor Scorpio, Hanby Ales Cherry Bomb, Derwent Hansi's Oktober Fest and Barnsley IPA. Prices ranged from £1.95 a pint to £2.30. They don't do any food, but they do have Seabrook's crinkly crisps.

The decoration includes a multiplicity of pump clips, big mirrors, a 'yard of ale' glass and old copies of the *Chorley Advertiser*. (One features a 'Singlular Accident on the Railway' in 1892, when a train passing through Chorley was derailed by 'a parcel of paper bags' falling out of a wagon.)

And there are back copies of *The Publican* to read, from which I learned that pubs will have to display the prices of soft drinks from next March; that Glasgow's licensing board wants pubs to use only plastic glasses and bottles; that Interbrew are returning to the Czech Republic next year to brew Staropramen (it's currently brewed in their mega-keggery at Salmesbury, outside Preston); that Jennings have done a deal to brew Wards Bitter again ('under licence from brand owner A+T Leisure'); and that operators of cash machines pay a 'bounty' of £100 to get their machines sited in pubs (no wonder they charge you to get money out). Oh, and a pub looking very like the **Throstle Nest** in Old Trafford is up for sale - 'leasehold and contents' for just £90,000.

Visitors to Chorley who decide to miss another train could try the **Albion** (Tetley) and the **Potters Arms** (free house). Both offer good ale and are within walking distance of the station and the new bus interchange.

## Home Brewing Revisited

*Humulus Lupulus*

### Part 30: Cider Making (continued)

On National Apple Day (October 21st), the Bull held an apple-related quiz organised by landlord Sid Perks, and a couple of weeks later, Eddie Grundy had to conscript the Ambridge cricket team to help him press the Grange Farm cider apples. Commercial growers have experienced the same bumper harvests as I have. Thanks to ideal conditions in England, coupled with a drought in France, they have actually been exporting Coxes and other varieties to Europe.

By early October, only one of my trees was still carrying fruit. In past years I have dismissed this as a crabapple, with hard, small, green fruits, not capable alone of making a decent cider. However, the exceptionally fine weather during late October and early November had produced a transformation. The thousands of fruits had increased in size and ripened to a soft yellow-green with a red blush on one side. This tree has given the heaviest crop of all. My last apple picking day was November 8th and there were still lots of apples. I managed to induce a lot of 'windfalls' from the tops of the tree, where the largest and ripest fruit was, by climbing up to about 12 feet and then using a 14-foot cane with a hook on the end to shake the highest branches. When I finally left, there were still plenty on the tree for the blackbirds and squirrels which have been enjoying a daily feast over the past couple of months.

My method of juice extraction is unconventional and has caused arguments with cider producers and aficionados who do not approve. Apples have quite a hard flesh and would yield little juice if pressed whole. The traditional method is to chop or crush the apples prior to putting them in the press. However, as soon as you break the skin they start to brown, due to enzyme and oxygen reactions, and need to be processed quickly before this spoilage mechanism goes too far. For twenty years now, I have been putting not just apples, but perry pears, quinces, sloes, plums, blackberries and raspberries intended for cider, perry or wine making, into my freezer. The principle is that slow freezing breaks down the cell walls in the fruit, which when thawed releases its juice with ease. I learnt this technique from an *Amateur Winemaker* article. Written by Gladys Blacklock in October 1983, it also claimed the benefit of pectin reduction





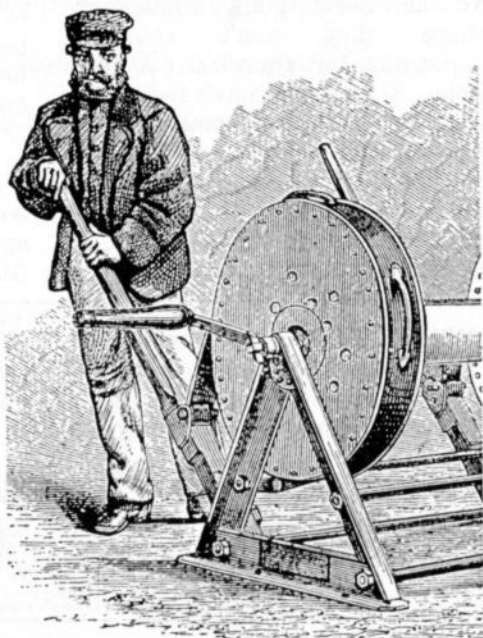
(pectin can cause clarity problems in finished ferments). On the negative side, there are slight reductions in tannin and loss of ascorbic acid.

My apples were washed whole in a citric acid/sodium metabisulphite solution, to deactivate any wild yeasts and spoilage organisms, drained and bagged in 8-pound lots, and put in the freezer. After a minimum of three days, they were removed, thawed for a couple of days, halved with a stainless steel knife and put in a Walker Desmond press. I did not use any form of mesh bag to contain the pomace, but managed to extract a clear juice from all three varieties. The average weight of apples to make one gallon of juice was 13.2, 13.7 and 13.4 pounds for the Bulmer's Norman, Bloody Turk and 'Unknown'. The fresh juice was quickly measured for sugar content, then put on to active Champagne yeast.

Home cider maker and author Jo Deal gets one gallon of juice from 18 to 20 pounds of apples, by traditional crushing and then using an identical press to mine. So by freezing, I am getting some 40% more juice than with the 'traditional' method. This may not be practical for large scale production, but it suits me and I have just about coped with this year's record crop. My small chest freezer (all food removed) holds about 90 pounds of apples at a time. Whilst going through back numbers of *Amateur Winemaker* to find the freezing article, I found several pieces by Jo Deal.

It was interesting to note the quality of the apple seasons around that time. 1978 was very good, 1979 dreadful, 1980 a bumper year, 1981 poor (the Franklin Days, May 19th to 21st, when the bees pollinate the blossom, had been wet and windy), 1982 very good and 1983 middling. In all these Jo Deal articles, she consistently stated that, '18 to 20 pounds of apples were needed to produce 1 gallon of juice.'

Finally, I must thank Dawn Geddes for her part in identifying two of my apple types (see last month). Next time I will reveal the quantities of apples, volumes and gravities of juice and the progress of the fermentations.



# Rupert

Well, Christmas is over once again and we start another new year. Thank God it's over. It's the same every year. Hostelries jammed to the gunwales with amateur imbibers who wouldn't know a Fuggle from a Golding.

It's been even worse this time because employers have not been having parties at work in case people get hopelessly inebriated, photocopy their naughty parts, insult one another, have sex in cupboards à la Becher and then sue the company for damages, libel and so on. So they all pour out into the public houses where the boss can't be responsible for them, spend their bonuses like tomorrow won't happen and carry out lewd and lascivious acts at the tops of their voices, to the serious discomfiture of everyone else.

We considered going somewhere where they don't celebrate Christmas, but there's not a lot of choice. Either everyone's teetotal or the beer is so crap you wouldn't want to wash your feet in it. In the end, at Bunt's suggestion, next year, as we can't beat them, we're going to join them. We will, of course, need to practise. We've

more or less finished touring all the social-economic group Z taverns frequented by social lepers in places like Grungehurst, Vile Splatting and Slumley, and can safely embark on a fact-finding visit to venues which are more upmarket and chic.

We may have to forgo our beloved amber nectar from the wickets from time to time and drink straight from the bottle, but it'll be worth it if we can begin to share in the spirit of Christmas instead of skulking at the back of our favourite hostelries like curmudgeonly misanthropists. Mind you, the commitment of Brobdingnags and other mega ale purveyors to cask conditioning has had a bit of a fillip recently, so we may find palatable quaffs in the most unlikely places. What could be nicer than a pleasant atmosphere, quality furnishings and good food, complemented by excellent real ales? We're almost positively looking forward to our new, exciting social lives and our new personae that will go with the change.

Mind you, it could have been worse. At least we didn't have to spend Hogmanay in Jockley with Alastair and his clan.

**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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# Branch Diary

## **Regional Meeting**

Wed 14 Jan 8pm: Waldorf, Gore Street, Manchester

## **Regional CAMRA U-26 social group**

Fri 9 Jan 8pm: Social in the Knott Bar, Deansgate (opposite Deansgate Station). Meet by CAMRA sign

## **North Manchester**

[www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester](http://www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester)

Wed 7 Jan 8pm, Good Beer Guide 2005 Shortlisting Meeting, Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford (upstairs room).

Wed 14 Jan 8pm, Regional Meeting, Waldorf, Gore Street, Manchester (Stockport & South Manchester hosting)

Wed 21 Jan 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Tues 27 Jan 3pm-7pm, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street

Wed 28 Jan, Irlams o'th'Height: Wagon & Horses 7.30, Wellington 8.00, Red Lion 9.00

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tues 6 Jan 8.30, Branch Meeting, Wishing Well, York Street, Heywood

Tues 20 Jan 8.30, Committee Meeting, Cemetery Hotel, Bury Road, Rochdale

Sat 24 Jan 8.30, GBG Selection Meeting, Old Boars Head, Long Street, Middleton

Sat 31 Jan. On Foot Social, Knott Mill area, Manchester. Details from Branch Contact

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

email: [p.alexander@virgin.net](mailto:p.alexander@virgin.net)

## **Trafford & Hulme**

[www.camra.org.uk/trafford](http://www.camra.org.uk/trafford)

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

## **Wigan**

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

email: [john@misltd.co.uk](mailto:john@misltd.co.uk)

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Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Valerie Hollows, Neil Worthington, Rob Magee, Dave Crookell, Paul Warbrick, Dave Hallows, Stewart Revell, Dave White

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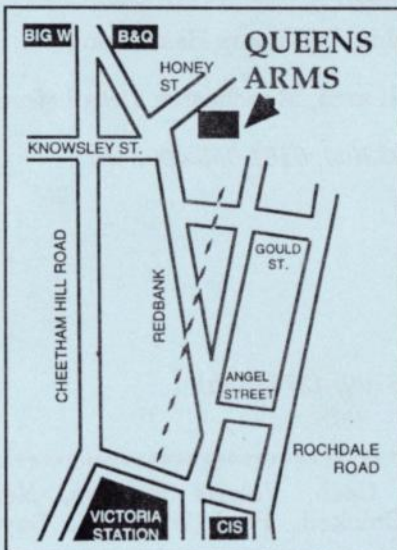
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