

30p

# What's Doing

JUNE 2004



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## SALLY IS BETTER

The Salutation (affectionately known as the Sally, or Sal) on Higher Chatham Street, just off All Saints, has been under new management for the last three months and is much improved. On my last visit (*March WD*) the pub was selling undrinkable Tetley bitter. Now, in the words of the barmaid, 'There are some decent ales to drink.'

At the helm are Danny and Eric, who have taken off the Tetley and replaced it with four real ales. On my last visit these were Taylors Landlord, Old Speckled Hen, Marstons Pedigree and Flowers IPA. I tried the first three and found them on good form - the Landlord was especially tasty! Back on the circuit, I'd say.

*Staggerin' Man*





## Pubs gone

The Royal Hotel (*below*) on Eccles New Road, Weaste, was demolished on 23rd April. The pub closed in 1999 and had been abandoned and roofless for the last few years. It was built in the 1930s for Hardy & Co, a Hulme brewery, and was latterly a Bass pub. The location, on the corner of Cemetery Road and near Weaste Cemetery, resulted in the nickname, 'the Widow's Rest.'



Over on Greengate, demolition of the Three Legs of Man (more recently known as the Cornerhouse) was begun months ago, but the ground floor walls are still standing.

## Gong for Local Campaigner

North Manchester CAMRA member Dave Hallows, a regular contributor to this magazine, was given a National Award at CAMRA's Annual Conference in Southport this year. A certificate was presented, recognising his efforts in Greater Manchester Region in promoting the benefits of real ale amongst the youth of the county. Dave played a major part in getting the Salford University Real Ale Society established last year, and as well as continuing with more than a passing interest in their activities, he also organises regular regional events for CAMRA Under-26 members.

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*Contributors to this issue:* Paul Warbrick, Neil Worthington, Tony Flynn, John Cresswell, Alan Gall, Stewart Revell, Dave Hallows, Ian Kenny, Dave White, Alan Gall, Roger Hall

## Ashton

The **Witchwood** in Ashton under Lyne is threatened with closure to make way for road widening at the end of Old Street. This lively real ale pub is a thriving music venue. Why is it that so much that is viable and in the public interest has to be knocked down to provide a car park or enlarge a road?



## Bar news

Yet another new bar has opened in the Northern Quarter, this time on Thomas Street, near the Craft Market. Part of the Fat Cat Group, it's called **Bluu** and rather surprisingly sells real ale, albeit at a premium price. Ales available are Theakstons XB and Marstons Pedigree, both at £2.30, with bottled Czech Budvar from the cooler.

The manager is a real ale drinker, which bodes well. Opening hours are 11.00am to midnight Sunday - Tuesday; until 1.00am Wednesday and Thursday, and until 2.00am Friday and Saturday. Food is available noon to 6.00pm Monday to Saturday, and Sunday lunch is also available.

The **Retro Bar** on Sackville Street in the City Centre has applied for a licence extension to allow the place to open from 11.00am to 4.00am Fridays and Saturdays and until 2.00am Mondays to Thursdays.

**WHAT'S DOING** contributions should be sent to the editor c/o 88 Ringley Road, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 1ET, to arrive no later than first post on the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

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

## Holts briefly

*Stewart Revell*

The first batch of **Humdinger** should by now be on sale in all 200 Tesco stores throughout the UK. A label around the neck of the 500ml bottle says it is the winner of the Tesco 2004 Challenge (out of over 80 entries). It's a 3.5% brew, with Mexican honey as one of the ingredients, but sadly it's not bottled conditioned.

Holts are still hoping to save the **Church Inn** at Whitefield, which Bury MBC want to knock down to make room for road improvements and a superstore. (No, not a Tesco superstore.) The local CAMRA branch doesn't seem to want to help save the building and the odds do seem to be against preserving this fine old, classic pub.

## Poor Dick's

The Antelope (aka Poor Dick's) on the A6 at Little Hulton is still boarded up. Three months ago it was reported that the building had been sold, but nothing has happened of late. Planning applications are being monitored, in case there is a 'change of use' application. The Antelope was one of the few remaining pubs with an etched window bearing the name 'George Shaw', a previous owner and brewer of many years ago.

## Patricroft

Plans are afoot to mess about with the **Packet House** on Liverpool Road, Patricroft. The pub lost its original internal layout many moons ago, and now the owners want to make more alterations, install two roof lights and build a new canopy over the rear entrance.





## Wigan and District

Dave White

Wigan has been a town without a brewery for over thirty years, but now looks set to have two. Stewart Thompson's Mayflower Brewery will have reopened by the time you read this (*see last month's WD*), and now Wigan Council have granted a planning application to transform a listed building at the back of **Last Orders** on Wallgate into a brewery.

According to that esteemed organ, *Swiggin in Wiggin*, the plant will have a 7.5 to 10 barrel brewing capacity and brewster Jenny Burrows hopes to get the ball rolling in the autumn. The building in which the brewery is to be based has been disused for several years and is on the site of the former Jackson's Brewery. Jackson's is a new one on me. Norman Barber's excellent *Where Have All The Brewerles Gone?* (1981) made no mention of it, so if anyone can shed any light on the brewery, feel free.



It seems that the sale of the **Hare & Hounds**, Ladies Lane, Hindley, to Beartown Brewery will not now go ahead (apologies for not mentioning this sooner). Co-owners Ian and Donna of the **Anvil** in the centre of Wigan have bought the pub outright and leased it. The Hare & Hounds is now free of tie. As for Beartown, there are several pubs in Hindley which used to sell a good pint, so I hope that those ursine Congletonians will continue to sniff around the area and rescue one of them.

Still with Ian, Donna and the **Anvil**, the Dorning Street pub has just been voted Wigan CAMRA Pub of the Year, beating the **Royal Oak**, Swinley, in a close contest. This is the second time in three years that the pub has won the Alan Ball award, so congratulations to Ian, Donna and all at the **Anvil**. The pub sells a range of ales from Hydes, plus several guests and foreign beers.

It was Alan Ball who remarked that 'almost anything they did to this pub would be an improvement,' when writing about a watering hole in Standish many years ago. The expression springs to mind when describing the **Black Bull**, another Standish pub, on Church Street, which has just closed for renovation. So come on, Burtonwood, restore the Bull to its former glory, and get some real ale on while you're at it.

## National Mild Day

*Pete Cash*

On 8th May a group of North Manchester and Trafford & Hulme CAMRA members set off on what has become an annual event: a trawl of all the milds available on one day in Manchester centre and Salford. (Well, nearly all, because although the **Mitchell Arms** on Every Street in Ancoats is now selling a well-kept pint of Banks's Original, it was too far off the route to be included within a sensible timescale.)

We started at the **Queens Arms** on Honey Street, where we were the first to sample the new cask of **Shaws Dark Mild** (3.3%), a pleasantly dry beer. We were also impressed by the **Dark Star Espresso Stout** at 4.2% - it's not a mild, but it is black! The **Marble Arch** on Rochdale





rumoured to be a caramelised version of the standard Hatters.

**Boggart Brewery** is now making a dark mild, but we had to content ourselves with **Boggart Brown Ale** (3.7%) at the **Bar Fringe** further down the street. Round the corner at the **Castle** on Oldham Street, we enjoyed the **Robinsons Hatters** (3.3%). This pub also sells the dark mild, as well as every other Robinsons beer.

Across the road, our normal port of call, **Gullivers**, has stopped selling **Lees GB Mild** (3.5%), but with excellent timing, the brewery has taken over the **Millstone** on Thomas Street, where it is

Road had two milds on for the occasion: **Moorhouse Black Cat** (3.4%) and **Phoenix Black Shadow** (4.0%). The next visit was to the **Pot of Beer**. We knew there wouldn't be any mild, but this was the last full day of trading, so it couldn't be missed. I got the last half of **Glastonbury's Lady of the Lake** (4.2%).

Our next call was the **Beer House**, where Paul and Sue from the Pot would soon be taking over. Here we sampled **Highgate Dark** (3.4%). The **Smithfield** on Swan Street provided **Robinsons Dark Hatters** (3.3%). At last there's an official pump clip for this beer - for years the brewery was reluctant to admit it existed, though it is





still available. This tasty mild is much darker than it was a couple of years ago; some say it has been darkened by 'stealth'. Another of Manchester's family brewers, Hydes, provided us with **Traditional Mild** (3.5%) at the **Grey Horse** on Portland Street. According to the Good Beer Guide, this brewery now makes four milds including the seasonal **XXXX Dark**.

The tiny pub was very crowded even before we arrived. Standing right at the back, in view of the gate into the back alley (Reyner Street), it struck me that here was a short extension to Ken Birch's Ginnels and Alleys Crawl (*WD last month*). It would need prior





arrangement with the pubs, as the Reyner Street gates are locked these days, but you could go in the front door of the Grey Horse, out of the back and in through the back of the Circus Tavern for Tetleys Bitter, then out of its front door and into the Old Monkey for Holts!

We were not quite ready for Holts, so our next call was at the **City Arms** on Kennedy Street for **Tetley Dark Mild** (3.2%). Next it was **Holts Mild** (3.2%) at the **Ape and Apple** on John Dalton Street. Continuing down to Bridge Street and across the river into Salford, we eventually came to the **Kings Arms** on Bloom Street. Here the award winning **Bazens' Black Pig Mild** (3.6%) was available, and here too we were joined by members of Surrey & Hampshire Borders CAMRA, who had been making a presentation for the champion beer at Woking Beer Festival - Black Pig Mild.

As a diversion, we took our southern colleagues back to the **Albert Vaults**. No mild, but they were so impressed by the no-frills atmosphere and amazing value for money that we had to leave without them.

There was yet more **Black Pig** at the **Crescent**, where it is a regular, and we also had **Rex Valley DSM** (3.9%). The Surrey & Hampshire lot eventually caught up, then Richard and Jude Bazen joined us and landlady Idy generously provided sandwiches for all. Having started the day at noon, I had sampled twelve different milds, a stout, a brown ale and about four bitters, before finally rolling out of the Crescent at 10.00pm.



## And one for yourself

*Neil Worthington*

Tipping in pubs is something of a Manchester institution. It's not common in other parts of the country; indeed, it is something of a rarity in Britain, though widespread in bars abroad.

The theory goes that it's a hangover from the days of waiter service, when drinks were brought to your table after you had summoned the waiter by means of the bell push on the wall. This system seems to have survived longer in the North West than elsewhere, and in some places it is undergoing a bit of a revival, as in the revamped Hog's Head on Deansgate, Manchester.

I still have fond memories of the fabulous Park Hotel in Wigan, where you didn't even have to ring the bell. You'd be greeted at the door by Mrs Brown, the landlady, who'd then speak briskly to one of the staff: 'Ethel! Three pints of Bass for these gentlemen!' Mrs Brown didn't actually handle items like cash or beer herself, you understand.

Anyway, the thing that strikes me is the modest amount that bar staff take. For as long as I can remember, and I've been drinking around Manchester since 1985, it's been 20p. You buy a drink, or a round of drinks, and say, 'Take one for yourself,' and they take just 20p out of the change. 20p won't even buy a second class postage stamp these days! Who decides on that amount? It doesn't seem to have varied at all over the years. Who lets the bar staff know if it's gone up? (At a few pubs, like the Quarry Bank in Timperley, they still only take 10p.)

But if you go down south and make the same offer, you'll end up paying for a half pint of something, usually lager. Some recent experiment-ation resulted in my paying £1.44 by way of a tip in a Youngs house in London. (It equated to a half of Fosters lagerade.)

In a very, very few local pubs the tip



has definitely gone up. Further experimentation has established that the going rate in Sam's Chop House and Kro Bar 2 is now 50p. (That's ten bob in old money!) But I suspect that these are not the kind of pubs where people offer to tip that often, unless they're eating.

Why do we continue to tip? My view, as someone born and weaned on ale outside the Mancunian metropolis, is simple. If one of the staff has fetched the drinks to my table, or if it's been a very complicated round, or if I've mucked them about in some way (yes, they want ice; no they don't want lemon; oh, that's too much tonic!), then I think a tip is in order. If I'm just standing at the bar and queuing along with the rest for a pint of bitter, then I'd no more think of tipping the bar staff than I'd think of tipping the milkman for a pint of Gold Top. But that's clearly not the Mancunian way.

In discussing the subject with bar staff, I find that tips are something they greatly appreciate and in many cases rely on. A lot are on the minimum wage and the only time they get a pay rise is when the minimum wage goes up. And often they are not full time workers. They work anti-social hours almost by definition, because they're only needed when the rest of us are wanting to socialise. They don't often get sick pay and they're told to knock off early if the pub's quiet. Tips, even 20p tips, soon mount up and can mean an extra tenner or more over the course of a busy evening.

So what do the drinkers get in return? This is the really interesting bit. They get special treatment, but very rarely is this to the detriment of others. The regular tippers are also regular drinkers of a specific beer, and a good barmaid (there still aren't that many fellows behind the bar) will remember what that is. They can spot a regular out of the corner of their eye and, while they're pouring a pint of Guinness, or waiting for the head to settle on the Boddies, they can get a glass and start pulling his pint. The first customer doesn't have to wait any longer for his drink; it arrives when it's ready. And the second chap just leaves his beer money, plus the tip, ready on the bar, speeding up the process for all concerned.

So consider offering the staff a tip. It'll be appreciated, and the cost of a round of drinks will still be well below London prices!





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## Beerienteering

Saturday 12th June sees the birth of a new sport - Beerienteering - the competitive pub crawl based on Orienteering and run by the Regional CAMRA under 26 social group.

Members and their guests are invited to check in at the Knott Bar, Deansgate, Manchester, opposite Deansgate and G-MEX stations between 1.00pm and 2.00pm on the day. They will then navigate the course of six pubs, moving in the general direction of south.

Each team gets a map, clues, timetables, score sheet, etc, to help guide them through the course using only public transport (that's buses, trams or trains) or on foot. Teams (from one to four persons) need a name and should come in sports gear or fancy dress - anything that'll identify them to the marshals on the course. The entry fee is £1 per person and proceeds will go to charity.

Participants are advised to buy a System One Any Bus Day Saver at £2.95. There will be various ordeals and surprises around the course. The final pub will be reached around teatime. The team with the least penalties or most awards will win a commemorative plaque; the worst team will get a wooden spoon.

For a copy of the rules and other details, contact Dave Hallows on 0161 708 9151 or davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk. Good weather has been booked!

## Salford Syndicate News

Pete Cash

Bottled conditioned **Bazens' eXSB** will be arriving back at the brewery for distribution soon. Meanwhile, Richard and Jude will be receiving their award for Flatbac (*WD last month*). Stockport & South Manchester's *Opening Times* is twenty years old in its current form and to celebrate this has commissioned Bazens' to produce **Twenty Not Out** (4.1%), described as 'blond and hoppy'. The beer will be launched at the Stockport Beer Festival and will be available for a short time in the free trade thereafter. (*What's Doing* celebrates thirty years of continuous production in November next year - any suggestions?)

**David Facer's** new English literature seasonal is **Chatterley** (3.9%). I haven't seen the pump clip yet, but the beer is said to have a hoppy palate and carry subtle hints of ginger and aniseed.

## Oaks chopped?

The future of the **Oaks** on Oakwood Road, Walkden, is in doubt. Planning permission is being sought to demolish the building and erect a new dwelling, together with the obligatory apartments, and create a new access road. The pub had a brief flirtation with real ale (Banks's) about ten years ago.

## Doing the Card

*Staggerin' Man*

### Rose & Crown

These days, there is an immense variety of British beer and new brews are being produced all the time. The Rose & Crown on Manchester Old Road, Bury, is one of many CAMRA-recommended pubs selling several real ales and so it is an ideal venue for working through the card. Starting with the weakest and finishing with the strongest beer is a good way of doing it...

**Caledonian Deuchars IPA (3.8%):** A regular at the R&C. Golden, with a lingering mellow bitterness. Former CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain and on champion form here.



**Jennings Cumberland Ale (4%):** Golden with good body. Mellow with a refreshing fruitiness.

**Youngs Special Premium Ale (4.5%):** Amber. A malt taste with citrus notes gives way to a mellow bitterness. Moreish strength.

**Hook Norton Old Hooky (4.6%):** Mid-brown with a good body. More maltiness in this brew than I remember, though it still has fruitiness.

**Adnams Broadside (4.7%):** A handsome copper-coloured beer. Bags of fruitiness with malty undertones.

**Courage Directors (4.8%):** A good national beer. Copper-coloured, with an initial fruitiness giving way to pleasant malty undertones.

The Rose & Crown has been run by Samantha and Ken Sumner since last autumn. They are expecting their first baby, so customers have been invited to enter a Guess the Baby's Weight competition. Monday night is the good value Curry Night (£2.95, with a vegetarian option).

### Pot of Beer

The Pot of Beer on New Mount Street, Manchester, fell to the developer's axe last month. Thankfully the managers, Paul and Sue Higginson, are now at the helm at the nearby Beer House, so they will continue to sell a range of real ales.



As a memorial, here is my last card from the Pot...

**Williams Gold** (3.9%): Yet another new brewery? Dry, light coloured, hoppy and bitter.

**Holdens Golden Glow** (4.4%): A drinker's favourite. A biting bitter taste with fantastic hop character.

**Ryburn Light Ale** (4.4%): In fact, it's amber in colour. Excellent fruity and citrus taste.

**Cheriton Beltane**: Light & fruity special.



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## Bhurtpore and more

Two beer festivals take place in Wrenbury in July.

The **Paradise Beer Festival** is on 1st - 3rd July. 30 beers are promised and the festival will be open from 11.00am to 11.00pm each day. The festival coincides with the famous Wrenbury Scarecrow Trail.

The **Bhurtpore Inn Beer Festival** is from 13th - 18th July. Around 100 real ales, plus 150 bottled beers. Opening times are 6.30pm-11.00pm on the 13th (Tuesday); 12 noon - 2.30pm and 6.30pm - 11.00pm Wednesday to Friday; 12 noon to 11.00pm Saturday and Sunday.

**Trains:** The Crewe & Shrewsbury Passengers' Association have arranged with Arriva Trains Wales for the 11.33am Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff express to stop at Wrenbury on Saturdays 3rd and 17th July.

On the same days a through train will leave Wrenbury at 5.05pm for Manchester.



## Beinlos Abroad

*Paul Roberts*

The number of German breweries continues to fall. At the end of 2003 there were 'only' 1,268 - 19 fewer than the previous year. However the majority of European breweries are still to be found in Germany, with most of them in Bavaria.

One notable closure so far this year was the Monheimer Brewery, which was famous for producing Peter's Kölsch as well as an unfiltered Pils. Peter's Brauhaus in Cologne is now selling Peter's Kölsch badge-brewed by the new parent group in Dortmund. An offer of €300 million proved too tempting for the sons who had inherited the brewery.

### 40th Frühlingfest in Munich

The 'little brother' of the Oktoberfest continues to grow in popularity and this year celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The Augustiner Festhalle was as popular as ever, with excellent beer from the wood. For the first time for many years the other beer tent (Paulaner) was also dispensing direct from the wooden barrel. However, there is no comparison between the two beers and the low attendance in the Paulaner tent confirmed this.

Worth a mention is an Andechs outlet close to the centre, but away from the crowds. Der Tannenbaum on Herzog Wilhelm Straße is two minutes' walk from Sendlinger Tor and sells Jever Pils in addition to the Andechs range. It has a small beer garden at the front. For night owls, the nearby Kaltenberg pub at Sendlinger Tor is open 24 hours a day and sells Augustiner Helles in addition to the Kaltenberg range. The food there is remarkably good value, with daily specials until 1700 at less than €5 for two courses.

### Getting there

There are some bargain fares on offer for visitors to Germany. New carrier V Bird, based in Maastricht, Holland, flies daily from Manchester to Niederrhein, a former RAF base about 60km north of Dusseldorf and just inside the German border. This airport opened on 1st May 2003 and celebrated its anniversary this year with a beer festival and display of vintage aircraft. V Bird offer through fares to Munich, changing at Niederrhein, and by booking 'Sunday Surprise', some very good bargains can be got. I travelled to Munich for £14 one way, including all taxes! These fares must be booked on line



between 2000-2300 on Sunday evenings. It is even possible to select one's seat when booking.

Normal fares are around £45 return, all inclusive. HLX (Hapag Lloyd) are now operating Manchester to Stuttgart in addition to Cologne, and their offers are usually featured on the web on Wednesdays. Again, returns can be had for well under £50. Easy Jet is launching a Liverpool to Berlin service, with lead-in fares of around £65 return. BA and Lufthansa are offering fares from under £80 return to Düsseldorf and Frankfurt, but the airport taxes add another £40 or so to the total. Excellent value hotels throughout Germany can be booked on the HRS website: [www.hrs.com](http://www.hrs.com).

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## Rail Ale Trail

On Saturday 19th June there will be a Rail Ale Trail organised by the North Manchester branch of CAMRA

The day will start at 12 noon at Manchester Victoria, for the train out to Greenfield Station and visits to the King William IV and the Railway.

The rest of the itinerary involves stop-offs at Mossley, Stalybridge and Ashton-under-Lyne, visiting pubs adjacent to, or within ten minutes' walk of each station. The estimated time of arrival at the Stalybridge Buffet Bar is 3.40pm.

A train-only ticket is £2.60 (ask for a GM Rail Ranger) or an all-day bus and train ticket costs £3.80.





## Brown brand

*Marshall Magee*

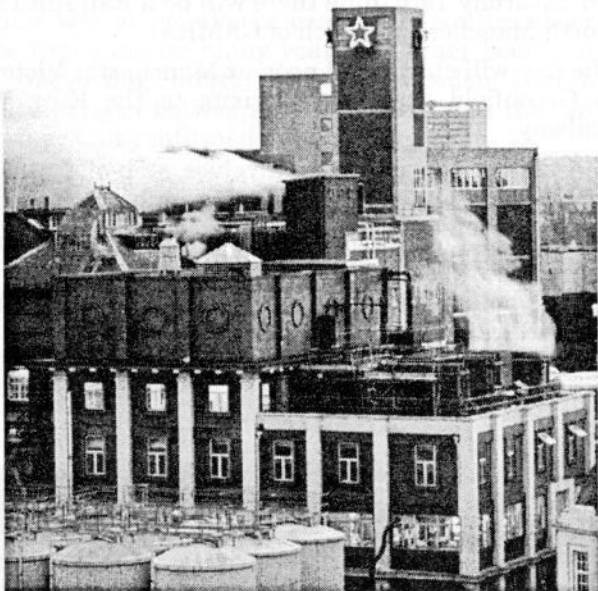
News that Scottish Courage is to close the Tyne Brewery is yet another nail in the coffin for the brewing heritage of Britain. Most alarming is the fact that the Geordie's favourite bottled beer, Newcastle Brown Ale, will be produced at the Northern Clubs Federation Brewery in Dunston. This has caused outrage among drinkers, especially Sid the Sexist in *Viz*, who has always drunk the ale, known in Sunderland as rocket fuel, because 'it sends you into orbit.'

Scottish Courage say that the Tyne Brewery is no longer commercially viable (where have we heard that before?) owing to its city centre location. What! Manchester has the Boddingtons Brewery and Liverpool has Cains, both in city locations, and production has increased at both recently.

Forty countries worldwide import Newcastle Brown. Traditionally, it was served warm in a schooner, which would be topped up regularly to maintain a gassy head. It has been included in locally produced ice cream, as well as sausages sold on match days at St James Park.

So Newcastle Brown has become just another brand name and the beer will be brewed wherever Courage want.

Anyone for a bottle of Dunston Brown Ale? Not quite the same as asking for a bottle of Newky!



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## Boggart Bulletin

*Dave Hallows*

At the dependable Bar Fringe on Swan Street, Manchester, I had a taste of Boggart Brown Ale (3.7%). Dark brown in colour, with ruby hues, it had a lovely maltiness and a roasted flavour, with hints of chocolate and coffee. The month's special is Arnhem Bridge (4.6%), which made an appearance at CAMRA's Cambridge Beer Festival. Rocket Fuel, at a sedate 14%, also made an appearance.

## Police State Pubs

*'Desert Island Beers', where guest writers are invited to witter on about their favourite ten beers of all time, is an oft-used theme employed by certain beer-related publications when they have to fill up the spaces between adverts. Naturally, it isn't the sort of thing that What's Doing would ever contemplate. Instead, Neil Worthington has elected to witter on about his favourite five pubs...*

It is the year 2084. The Provisional Wing of the National Temperance League is elected to govern Britain. They manage this by a combination of political chicanery, promises to clear the streets of yobs and vomit, and general rabble rousing amongst otherwise decent people whose priest, doctor, lover or liver forbids them to drink alcohol. (The electorate has forgotten the aborted coup that followed a mass rally in Fitzpatrick's Temperance Bar.)

The League's instincts are, of course, to ban liquor altogether. But Prohibition has been tried before; it didn't work then and it won't work now. Instead, they pass the Licensing (People) Act 2084. This limits the amount people can drink and the number of places where they can enjoy same.

Drinkers must be licensed by the State Sobriety Police - SS for short - who issue them with papers stating what and where they can imbibe. You can opt for Beer, Cider, Wine or Spirits. And you can name five



pubs - the only ones where you will be allowed to drink from now on. No other pub can serve you or even admit you on to the premises.

Obviously, I'll be opting to drink Beer, assuming I live this long (I'll be 126). But where? Which pubs offer the best quality beer, the best range of beer and the best atmosphere? Price no longer matters, of course - I'm a desperate man!

First on my list will be the **Castle** on Oldham Street. It's been there for donkey's years and it will still be there in 2084 (though the plumbing still won't work). Where else can you get such a classic range of beers? Mild, Bitter and Legless, with several variations in between, and that wonderful nightcap, Robinsons Old Tom. All served by sensible people who treat beer with the respect it deserves.

Second will have to be the **Knott** on Castle Street, just by Deansgate Station. It does great beer, with a choice of old favourites from Marble and unpredictable guest beers from a range of micros. Plus food for most of the day. The staff are friendly; they've got a decent jukebox, and the light is bright enough to read your paper by. And there are buses, trains and taxis passing the door. Could it be improved? Only by relocating it over the railway viaduct, so that I could fall down the steps for my train instead of having to climb up them.

The third pub might be less predictable: the **Welcome** on Robert Hall Street in Ordsall. It's not that easy to find, but there's a handy footbridge over the Irwell for those trekking from Chester Road. This





is a classic estate pub, with - in my opinion - the best pint of Lees GB Mild for miles. I believe they also do bitter, but I've never felt the need to drink it. Ordsall is considered as a bit of a rough and ready place, but you really feel welcome in the Welcome.

Now, the fourth pub. Staying on the civilised side of the Irwell, this is the **Albert Vaults** on Chapel Street. The ale is from micros, usually Phoenix and Bazens, though sometimes Robinsons bitter turns up, and the pub's got the keenest prices outside Holtenland. I'm always ambivalent about food in pubs. (If God had wanted us to eat in pubs, He wouldn't have given us the chip shop.) But hey! A pint and a pie for less than two quid? Plus the Mega-Toastie - ham, cheese, onion, and anything else that comes to hand and can be squashed between two rounds of toast.

Finally, I'd be mad not to include the **Lord Nelson** in Urmston in my list. It's the nearest pub to where I live and it would be my local, if CAMRA activists had such things. (We can't. We're always out and about, visiting different pubs here and yon.) It's an archetypal community pub, a bit smoky perhaps, but full of life and activity. The beers are from Joe Holts and include the seasonal ale as well as the standard mild, bitter and mixed. It's famous for its Quiz Night, once run by Mick Seddon, who sadly passed on recently, but a new chap called Colin is in charge now and keeping up the standards.

If there's a common aspect to all these pubs, apart from good ale, it's probably the lighting. I hate pubs where it's too dim to read the paper properly!



# Rupert

It's good to look for stability when, in a turbulent world, the only constant is change. In a way, I suppose, that change is sameness. The Slumley Branch of the Campaign has just passed its 30th birthday and this venerable organ is into its 344th edition. Under the blue pencilship of Eddy Nestfeather, it has changed but remained much the same. No Piers Moron for him.

In the last thirty years, marginal pubs have continued to close, breweries have continued to merge and close, inner city areas have been depubbed and pub owners have carried on screwing their licensees and wrecking their pubs. At times we thought we'd seen the end of it. Were there any taverns to close down? Were there any more ale manufacturers to merge with? Yes, there were, and brewing got global.

The Campaign grew from strength to strength in terms of membership, beer festivals and micro scratchers, but from weakness to weakness in terms of active involvement, campaigning and strong regional brewers. Radical transformations like the Beer Orders resulted in much the same, except that the new villains were pub groups, not brewers. Nitrokeg might have achieved what 1960s keg failed to do, so

we're back to where we were there as well.

I suppose it's inevitable that campaigns run out of steam as the original pioneers grow old and weary and start popping their clogs. In a branch not far away, the members used to meet, assemble this organ and deliver it with fervour to their far-flung hostelrys for the delight of amber nectar imbibers throughout the district. As time went by, they wearied of this and decided that

WD was not for them. Unlike Nora Tackler in the past, they did not replace it with their own throbbing organ, but merely stopped assembling and delivering WD.

Some tavern keepers missed it and continued to acquire WD from the Slumley branch so they could give it away and

display it in their premises. All was well until a meeting of the branch which had stopped delivering WD took place in a hostelry which bought and displayed this fine organ. What do you think happened? Well, the members of the branch drank the fine ale and, instead of just reading WD, they took all the copies home with them, leaving the tavernkeeper bereft and somewhat angered. Unsurprisingly, he has now stopped buying them. It must be frustrating for Eddy and his contributors when people want to buy his organ and we can't get it to them. Perhaps it should be free.



# Branch Diary

## **Regional CAMRA Under-26 event**

Tues 1 June 8 pm: Beerienteering Marshals Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester.

Sat 12 June 1pm: Beerienteering. Knott Bar, Deansgate. See the article in this issue.

davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

## **North Manchester** [www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester](http://www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester)

Wed 2 June, Altrincham Crawl: Orange Tree, Old Market Place, 7.30pm. Trappiste, Greenwood Street (behind market), 9pm.

Wed 9 June, Pendleton Crawl: Flat Iron 7.30pm, Woolpack 8.30pm, Priory 9.15pm.

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

Sat 19 June, Rail Day Out. Meet Victoria Station 11.45am for 12.00 train to Greenfield. Also visiting Ashton-u-Lyne, Mossley and Stalybridge.

Wed 23 June 8pm, Social: Star, Back Hope St, Hr Broughton (98 bus)

Tues 29 June, What's Doing Collation: Queens, Honey St, 3pm-7pm

Wed 30 June 8pm, Social: Ace of Diamonds, Oldham Road, Miles Platting

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## **Wigan**

Contact: Valerie Hollows 0161 629 8243 (weekdays);

07889 898955 (eves/weekends).

email:vhollows@peel.co.uk

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tues 1 June 8.30pm, Branch AGM, Boars Head, Long Street, Middleton

Tues 15 June 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Arthur Inn, Bolton Road, Bury

Sat 19 June, Coach social to Shropshire and the Marshes. Branch

Contact has details.

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

email: p.alexander@virgin.net

## **Trafford & Hulme** [www.camra.org.uk/trafford](http://www.camra.org.uk/trafford)

Thurs 3 June 8.00pm. Branch meeting at the Orange Tree

Thurs 10 June. City Centre social. Meet City Arms at 7.30pm. A visit to the Salutation, Oxford Road, is to be made during the evening

Thurs 1 July 8.00pm. Branch meeting at the Wheatsheaf, Altrincham.

NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

Sat 3 July. Visit to Chester by train. Details at June Branch Meeting

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170



*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

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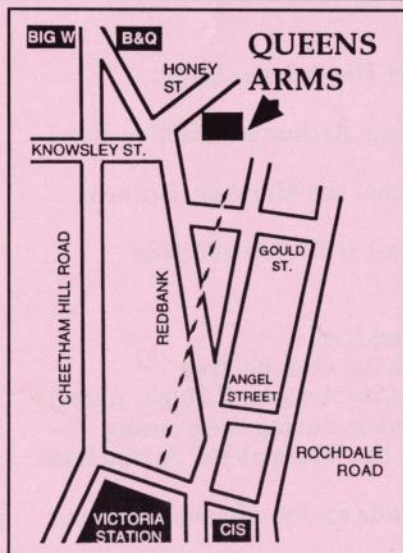
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