

30p

What's Doing

JULY 2005



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

CLOUDY'S GONE

The **Golden Cross** on Liverpool Road in Eccles was demolished last month. The pub was one of the oldest buildings in the town and it closed a few years ago, when Holts sold it to developers. The best-known landlord was Duggie 'Cloudy' Brown, who used to kick the barrels in the cellar if he thought the beer was too clear when it came through the pumps. Allegedly.



Higginson Taverns at the Beer House

Pete Cash

A new pub company, financed by its customers, has emerged in Manchester, largely as a result of the convolutions surrounding the **Beer House** on Angel Street. The story of the Beer House as a free house offering a range of beers from microbreweries began in the late eighties with Simon Finch. Later, Idy Philips and her partner Sal (now at Salford's Crescent) took over, followed by Ian Casson. After Ian's departure the pub was sold and went through a time of mixed fortunes and identity changes.

More recently, when the nearby Pot of Beer closed its doors, licensees Paul and Sue Higginson moved in. The colour clash decor was toned down and real ales once again took centre stage. At first, they were employed by *InnControl*, a holding company who specialise in finding licensees at short notice until more permanent tenants are installed. At this stage, the pub itself was owned by *Innspired*. Soon afterwards,

Innspired was bought by *Punch Taverns*, who then decided to sell half the estate, including the Beer House, to a property company. *Pub Folio Ltd*.

Although at present they supply beer, their main interest is property and the collecting of rent. They have announced that within six months all their pubs are to be converted to free-of-tie leases. Then *InnControl*, who do not handle long term leases, decided to pull out and the pub was offered to Paul and Sue. As an automatic part of the process, a 'To Let'



sign went up outside the pub, and was misinterpreted by some people as a 'For Sale' sign.

Paul and Sue, with investment from their customers, formed a company, **Higginson Taverns**, who are now the tenants of *Pub Folio*. The present lease is for six months until the free-of-tie leases become available. In the interim, an effective freeing of the tie has been secured by paying extra rent. The regular beers are Moorhouses Premier, Black Cat and Pendle Witch, together with the house beer, Premium Blonde from Phoenix. On a recent visit there were also Shaws Best Bitter, Holdens Old Nick, Archers Station Masters Tipple, Hampshire Trappish and Moorhouse IPA beers, together with two real ciders and an 11% mead just delivered by Merrylegs.

When the free-of-tie lease kicks in, expect to see quality foreign lagers and Belgian beers, etc, joining the cask ales. Paul would also like to do festivals, but with a difference, such as draught German beers. The rock juke box, which was once a famous feature, has been restored. A darts board has been installed in the upstairs room, as has a pool table which can be moved around to allow the room to continue to be offered for meetings (at present CAMRA and the board games enthusiasts use the room). Attention will shortly be given to the range of food, with lighter snacks featuring more prominently. The **Beer House** has regained its position in the **Good Beer Guide** (2006) after several years' absence and is well worth including in any visit to the pubs of the Northern Quarter.

Beer Miles?

Shaw's Brewery (Park Road, Dukinfield) has a new regular, if somewhat remote, outlet. The Good Beer Guide listed **Yarcombe Angel** in Yarcombe, Devon, is taking Shaw's beers. The pub recently changed ownership and former Mossley resident Victoria Hay is the new licensee. Not many pubs in the South West take beers from Northern microbreweries and there is a link in this case. Victoria's dad, Neil, is joint owner of Shaw's.

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Dave Hallows, Bill Collier, D Busman, Tony Flynn, Dominic Driscoll, Stewart Revell, Leo King, Alan Gall, Roger Hall, Ian Kenny, Dave White

Photos: Phil Stout, Margaret Balham

Pub of the Season

Dominic Driscoll

Trafford & Hulme CAMRA's Pub of the Season for Summer 2005 is the Peveril of the Peak on Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester. Situated in an area dominated by loft apartments and office developments, the Pev is instantly recognisable by its yellow and green tiled exterior and classic signage. Inside, the stained glass and woodwork has earned the pub a place in CAMRA's list of Historic Interiors.

The three separate drinking rooms and lobby help give the pub a 'local' atmosphere. Entry into the Good Beer Guide was secured in at least 1981, a position it holds to this day. Teresa Swannick, the landlady of thirty - four years, has done a terrific job of preserving the pub's character, ably assisted by a welcoming bar team including her son, Maurice. The pub is a favourite with local office workers and students. Pictures of distinguished and famous patrons adorn the walls, which shows that not all celebrities prefer lifeless and pretentious bars.



There are four handpumps and all of them are usually working all week long. Bombardier and Taylors Landlord are almost always available, with either Black Sheep Best Bitter or Wychwood Hobgoblin Dark Ale on another pump. Recent guests have included beers from York Brewery and an entire showcase of Moorhouses' fine beers from Burnley.

The entertainment is kept simple - a jukebox, with many of Manchester's finest recent recording artists included in the vast selection - and the volume is certainly not intrusive on conversation.

The award presentation will take place on Wednesday 27th July, at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

Letters

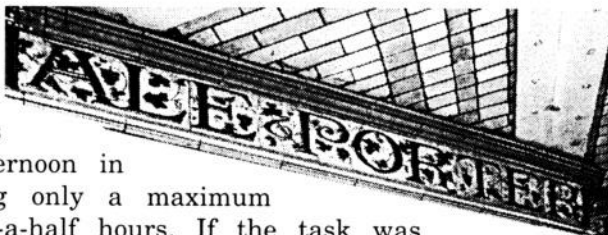
Doing the Frieze

Sir - Steve Smith's potted history of the Marble Arch (*WD last month*) brought back many warm memories of time spent in one of Manchester's more interesting pubs. However, Steve neglected to mention the darker side of John Worthington's marketing strategy. Drink the frieze!

This required willing punters to enter into a brief verbal contract with mine host to endeavour to drink each variety of alcoholic beverage named on the frieze, starting at any point they wished and working 360 degrees around the room.

Where the description was in the singular, only a single measure needed to be drunk, but where it was in the plural, as in the 'Whiskies', a double measure was required. Where the description was vague, such as 'Ale & Porter', then the landlord chose which of his stock of beverages matched the description most closely. One killer item was the 'wine' - John insisted a bottle of Bull's Blood had to be sunk before moving on.

This all had to be achieved in any one drinking period, and pubs closed in the afternoon in those days, giving only a maximum period of five-and-a-half hours. If the task was completed without the imbiber vomiting, all monies were refunded.



Needless to say, I am not aware of anyone who achieved the Herculean task!

Peter Wadsworth

Matters of Health

Sir - There seems to be much debate about the hazards associated with cigarette smoke in pubs. Has anybody assessed objectively how much harm I, as a non-smoker, will suffer by being exposed to diluted cigarette smoke for just a few hours every week?

Last month I visited an ordinary local in Manchester. This is not a place that seeks hordes of noisy youngsters for its customers. Nevertheless, thanks to a particularly loud jukebox, I left after two hours with my ears ringing.

I would suggest that the average non-smoker would not have years removed from his/her life expectancy by having the odd pint in a pub where smoking is permitted. I do believe she/he might well suffer permanent hearing damage by just one visit to a pub with overly loud music. Are there any plans to limit noise levels in pubs?

Tinnitus Tim

Redevelopments

A compulsory purchase order has been placed on Holts' Seven Stars on Ashton Old Road in Beswick. Further south, in Northenden, what was once the Church Inn on Church Road is being considered for redevelopment as the obligatory apartments.

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Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Joseph Holt has taken on a big contract to supply Parfitt's stores with six types of 500ml bottled beers. (None is bottle conditioned.) The beers are:

1849	4.5%	Thunderholt	5.0%
Fifthsense	5.5%		
Maplemoon	4.8%	(Made with maple syrup!)	
Touchwood	4.5%		
Humdinger	4.1%	(Up 0.6% on the Tesco version)	
(There are no known Parfitt's stores in the <i>What's Doing</i> area.)			

The brewery has also had an order from Scottish Courage for an undisclosed number of casks of traditional Humdinger. At the end of the initial contract (about four weeks) we may get the opportunity to sample the new Humdinger in the brewery's own pubs. The price is not known at the moment.

A beer named Real Humdinger was spotted in a well known free house recently. My source at the brewery informs me that Holts have registered 'Humdinger' and so have exclusive use of the name. Any other brewer using it will be asked to stop. Or else.

At the present time, Lightning Holt is the seasonal beer in a few selected Holts pubs.

Joseph Holt PLC held its AGM on June 23rd. There was a break from tradition this year and the venue was the Woodthorpe, Prestwich, instead of the Roebuck in Urmston.



Wigan and district

Dave White

Alcopop from the Mayflower brewery should now be on sale at the **Royal Oak**, Standishgate. Head brewer Stuart Thompson and landlord Chris Docherty are working on a dandelion-and-burdock brew of about 5%. Stuart also hopes to produce a cask lager of around the same strength.

Over by the parish church, work has finally started at Wigan's other brewery (well, brewery-to-be) **Allgates**. However, brewster Jenny has just moved to Bank Top, and it is uncertain exactly when Allgates will begin to roll 'em out.

When that time comes, there are three pubs that won't be selling the beer, for sure. The **Running Horses**, Bolton Road, Aspull, is to be demolished to make way for flats, and it is already fenced off. The pub has been open only sporadically over the past couple of years. In Hindley, the **Royal Hotel** on Castle Hill Road will be converted into apartments, along with the adjoining dwelling. This pub, too, has been closed for some years. Elsewhere, the **Cranberry Hotel**, Wigan Road, Landgate, had been pretty much bulldozed at the time of writing.

Pubs have been opening and closing up and down the region. To start the bad news in Hindley, the **Red Lion's** re-emergence as the **Pheasant Plucker** has been short-lived, as the Ladies Lane hostelry is closed. Whoever renamed the pub should have remembered that the phoenix has a better track record of arising from the ashes than the pheasant. The **Amberswood Hotel** on Manchester Road, Higher Ince, looks as if it's closed again, and over in Shevington, the **Plough & Harrow**, Broad o'th' Lane, has shut for refurbishment. With any luck, Thwaites will retain cask conditioned beer when the inn reopens. The slightly less bad news is that a couple of pubs have reopened, but still sell only keg beer: namely the **Wellfield Hotel**, Wellfield Road, Beech Hill, and the **Plough Hotel**, Atherton Road, Hindley.

There's good news over in Standish, though, as the **Shamrock** on Preston Road has reverted to real ale following a refurb. The pub is much brighter than before, and the villagers no longer stare at you when you walk in. Marstons Pedigree and Adnams Regatta were available on a recent visit to this W&D house.

The metal shutters have come down at the **New Inn**, Roman Road, Marus Bridge, but the pub is still fenced off.

Finally, but by no means fleetingly, the Alan Ball Pub of the Year Award has gone to the **Anvil**, Dorning Street, Wigan, for the third time in four years. Congratulations to Ian, Donna and all concerned with the pub. The presentation will be made, I believe, one Sunday in July.

For sale

The troubled Swinton free house (ex-Yates/Addisons) is up for sale.

Session in the Rose & Crown

Staggerin' Man

Session drinking is one of the joys of supporting a pub. Fortunately, Greater Manchester is blessed with four family brewers (Holts, Hydes, Lees and Robinsons) who have hundreds of pubs between them. So it is relatively easy to enjoy a session on a standard session bitter (3.8% to 4.2%). The Manchester drinker is also lucky in having a number of hostelryes selling a regular bitter from further afield.

As well as six guests in the **Rose & Crown** on Manchester Old Road in Bury, there is the regular Caledonian Deuchars IPA (3.8%) and what a session beer this is! The light amber IPA has a citrus fruit aroma and is extremely tasty and refreshing. In fact, CAMRA thought so highly of the beer that it was made CAMRA's National Champion/Beer of Britain for 2002.



During my session, landlord Ken Sumner told me that the Belhaven 80/- sold out in just over three hours. There was a real cider on handpump (Thatchers Heritage at 4.9%) and the other beers were Phoenix Monkey Town Mild, Bazens' Flatbac, Greene King IPA and Jennings Cumberland Ale. The cosy pub comprises a main bar area with side and back lounge areas, plus a side room for darts. It has been nicely redecorated outside, and recently featured on television as the **Smoking Dog** in *Mine All Mine*, starring Ruth Madoc.

Irlam Expedition

On a rainy night in early June, members of CAMRA North Manchester headed for the south-westerly extremes of their branch. Pete Cash was with them...

We started at the **Boat House**, a former Boddingtons pub, where we were joined by local guide William of Irlam. Backing on to the old course of the River Irwell, isolated when the Ship Canal and nearby Irlam Locks were built, this was once a friendly, tumble-down local (*below*) which was almost totally rebuilt in the eighties (there is a small piece of original wall incorporated into the present building which allowed the work to be classified as an 'improvement' rather than a new pub).

However, nostalgia isn't what it used to be, so we gave the new place the benefit of the doubt and entered hopefully. Two beers were on offer: Boddingtons Bitter (now brewed by Hydes) and Marstons Pedigree. We had just missed Adnams



Regatta, and Theakstons Mild was 'coming soon'. The beers were acceptable but not outstanding. The whole place is rather dark and gloomy inside, due in part to the design, but also to the surrounding trees which have grown enormously since they were planted.

It was then a long hike up to and across Liverpool Road, bypassing the White Lion and Nags Head, and into the Moss Vale estate where at the far side, just before the motorway, is the **Tiger Moth**, a former Wilsons house which sells Holts Bitter. It has a somewhat quirky seventies layout, but is essentially two large rooms: a vault and a large lounge with most of the seating around the walls. The first pint was a bit warm but the rest were OK. Our guide then led us via a series of back streets and alleyways back to Liverpool Road and Lower Irlam, where we just had time to follow up Sean Kilgarriff's recommendation and visit the **Irlam Steel Club**. Bar staff and customers made us feel welcome and the Lees Bitter was voted best of the evening by all except William, for whom this was also his first visit. The Tetley Bitter was also on form. Overall impressions were that the Irlam real ale scene has improved over the last couple of years.

Hope Hostelries

Hikin' Man

The guided walks along the Hope Valley railway line sometimes finish in Hope Village itself. The station is a half mile east of the village, so depending on the choice of pub, allowance must be made for the walking time when ordering one's final pint. In the centre of Hope are two real ale pubs; the small **Woodroffe Arms** and a large roadhouse nearby, the **Old Hall Hotel**. The beers on offer nowadays tend to be of the John Smiths variety, though others may put in an appearance. The choice of pub may, to an extent, be dictated by the available time and direction of the walk. If returning to Hope from the east, then the best bet may be the **Travellers Rest**, which is just less than a half mile south east of the station on the A6187, near the junction of the road to Brough.

In the 1970s this was a cider-only house owned by Bulmers. Today it is much extended, has a large beer garden and caters for families with children and customers requiring meals. On my last visit, three years ago, the beer was (I think) Black Sheep Bitter and the real cider had long since disappeared. The station can be reached by going up the back lane north of the main road then left through a small industrial estate.

Probably the best of all, and the obvious choice if coming in to Hope from the north, such as from Lose Hill, is the **Cheshire Cheese**, just



a quarter mile north on the Edale Road. This comfortable GBG-listed hostelry still has all its Wards Brewery signage on the exterior. It has three low-beamed rooms: a central bar with a large fireplace, which is half-opened into a second room on the same level, and a dining room down a few steps on the other side of the bar. We witnessed large meals being served on enormous plates. Black Sheep Bitter features regularly, and we enjoyed Cottage Golden Arrow and the somewhat blander Farmers Bitter from the new Bradfield Brewery near Sheffield. Barnsley Bitter was also on sale. Allow a good twenty minutes to be sure of the train.

Salford Brewery Syndicate

Both Salford brewers had their beers at **Stockport Beer Festival** in June. **David Facer** provided Blue Lagoon, a very pale and hoppy lager-style beer at 3.9%. It uses the same lager malt, hops and yeast as the 5.2% Cliff Bier (also at Stockport) and occupies the slot normally filled by the English Literature series. Northern County made up the complement. **Richard Bazen** had once again brewed the Festival Beer, Liberty Bell (4.2%), a name derived from the new season's Liberty hops. Also featured were Flatbac (4.2%) and Blue Bullet (4.5%). Liberty Bell created such interest that a second batch has been brewed for sale in the pubs.

Boggart Bulletin

Dave Hallows

News of no fewer than four beers from Moston's micro this month. **Bog Hut**, a 4.4% light hoppy bitter ale, was first off. **Spedo** (3.8%) is a light golden bitter, well hopped and with a lemon citrus edge, flavour and aroma. Sitting in its tank is a yet-to-be-named 4.1% pale summer beer with a fruity taste and strong hop aroma. The new regular **Standard Pioneer** was seen recently at the Knott Bar, Deansgate. And on great form it was, too.

Wally Marshall

The first Good Beer Guide compiled with the help of local CAMRA branches came out in 1975 and one of the pubs selected by the North Manchester branch was the Star in Higher Broughton. The pub appeared regularly in the early editions, thanks to the landlord of the time, Wally Marshall, who died in May. He was a Salford man and in the 1960s he ran the Grey Mare on Cannon Street, which was demolished for redevelopment when Blackfriars Road School was built. He moved to Blackpool when he retired.



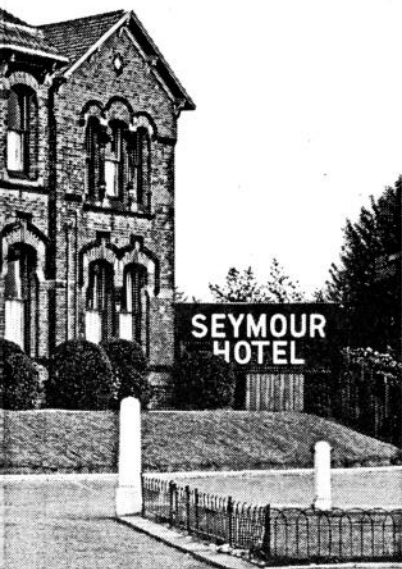
the wonderful **Birley Tree** in Hulme? Ah well! Maybe this promised real ale bar will help fill the gap.

Elsewhere in the area, the **Throstles Nest** on Seymour Grove appears to be doing very well, despite the seemingly always busy **Tollgate** (Banks's) opposite Old Trafford railway station.

The Royal Route

Many years ago there was a royal pub crawl route through Hulme and Moss Side. Starting on the Stretford side of Moss Lane East, there was the **Crown Inn** on Tamworth Street. Across the road was Hydes' Brewery tap, the **Queens Arms**. Next was the **Alexandra Park Inn** (also known as the Little Alex, *above*) on Alexandra Road. Turning left at Upper Moss Lane, then right at St Mary's Street, one came to the **Albert**, and finally it was left at Moss Lane West for the **Alexandra Hotel** (aka Big Alex) on the corner of Brayshaw Street (formerly Bradshaw Street).

Hulme used to be the pub capital of Manchester. I can recall 73 of them and there may have been more. Now the district has been degraded into a pub desert.



Wigan and district

Dave White

Saturday 29th May - Restoration Day, appropriately - saw the relaunch of the Mayflower Brewery at the back of the **Royal Oak**, Standishgate, Wigan (*see WD May*). The brewery was originally situated in a corner of the former bleachworks at Standish, but had to move because of the redevelopment of the site. Now head brewer Stewart Thompson is back, and Wigan has its first brewery since 1970.

The brewplant consists of four fermenting vessels, with a capacity to brew ten barrels per week, though the initial barrelage will be around 3.5 barrels per week. Stewart hopes to supply the Royal Oak with a house beer, and a few of the old Mayflower favourites should appear, as and when, including a mild.

At the moment there are four trial beers, two of which were on sale at the relaunch. Trial 1, a 4% brew, uses Challenger hops in the copper, with East Kent Goldings as the late hop. Maris Otter

constitutes 50% of the malt, the rest being made up of lager malt and a little wheat malt to produce a well rounded, eminently drinkable beer. Trial 2, at 3.7%, is a clean-tasting session bitter. Fuggles and Styrian hops go into the copper, with East Kent Goldings to follow. Maris Otter malt again accounts for about half of the malt content, with Chocolate Crystal and some wheat malt. A promising start.

In contrast to this, the reopening of the **Victoria Hotel** - or **Brunel's**, as the pub is now known - on Wallgate was a disappointment for amber nectar lovers. In spite of the reports in the local press (*WD Feb*) about the emphasis being on real ale, there is not a solitary handpump on the bar. The chap who printed the signs should have been told that there are two n's in Guinness as well.

I've been out and about around North Ashton and Bryn recently, and made a few discoveries. The good news is that cask-conditioned beer has made a comeback at the tastefully renovated **Railway Hotel**, opposite Garswood Station. Cains bitter and Wadworth 6X were on fine form when I called in. There are several steps to negotiate at the Railway, by the way, and anyone having to use a wheelchair would be advised to try the back entrance by the car park, where there is just one small step. You can't win 'em all, though, as the **Stag Hotel**



further down Station Road has converted to fizz. No doubt Burtonwood will have removed those handpumps by the time you read this.



Elsewhere in Ashton, it gets worse. The northbound A49 out of town is drier than a dead snake in a sack of sand, with only the **Bath Springs Hotel** on Wigan Road (*above*) offering a drop of the real stuff (Tetley bitter). The **Britannia Hotel** alongside Bryn railway station remains closed and boarded up, whilst in Landgate the **Cranberry Hotel** appears to have lost its public bar altogether. Things don't improve in WN3 either: all the pubs in the Goose Green/Marus Bridge area are on fizzy beer and one of them, the **Bulls Head** on Warrington Road, has closed. At this point I got off the A49 and went for a pint in Pemberton instead.

Finally, in Springfield, the **Famous Pagefield**, Park Road (you know - the one with the revolving door) has stopped selling real ale. Meanwhile the **Prince of Wales** on Woodhouse Lane (*WD Jan*) remains closed, boarded up and without a 'for sale' sign. File under 'ominous'...

New licence?

An on-licence application has been made for the premises at 92 Sutton Way (that's the west-facing side of Salford Shopping Centre, adjacent to the Rossall Way car park) in the name of Cool Village.

Salford Syndicate News

Pete Cash

Bazens' Flatbac has won a bronze medal in the Brewing Industry International Awards - the category being for cask conditioned beers in the range 3.9% to 4.5%. **Twenty Not Out** (4.1%), with a powerful hop character, proved very popular at the Stockport Beer Festival and is available for a short time in the free trade.

Facer's regular beers, **Landslide** and **Crabtree**, are to appear in summer clothes. David believes that by leaving out the crystal malt and rye malt, they will be more suited to the long hot days.

The Syndicate's lager-style joint brew, **Cliff Beer**, makes a new appearance at a few outlets, including the Marble Beer House, Chorlton, the Old Market Tavern, Altrincham, and the Smithfield, Manchester.

Boggart Bulletin

Dave Hallows

The warm weather is upon us (when it's not raining): we are wearing less clothing and love comes more into our thoughts as the sun shines. To help this along, Boggart have brought out **Potion** (3.7%), billed as a pale bitter. I'll be first in the queue.

Change of use

An application has been made to convert the Parkside (*below*) on Lloyd Street South, Fallowfield, into 22 self-contained flats.



Darwen Ale Trail

During the May Bank Holiday weekend, Paul Warbrick returned to Darwen for the Rare Beers Festival and Real Ale Trail...

On the Saturday afternoon I made my way up to the **Black Horse**, Redearth Road, for the Rare and New Beers Festival. My first ale was a new one from the Three B's Brewery - Hopstar. This was followed by the 3.8% Sandgrunder from the new Southport Brewery.

After another couple of halves and a late lunch, it was off on the Darwen Cask Ale Trail, beginning at the **Greenfield**, which had the last brewhouse to operate in Darwen. There was a fine choice of ales and I had a half of John Smiths Magnet, which is far superior to the normal Smiths bitter.

Next, the **Borough Hotel**, a large, imposing pub on Grimshaw Street. The Borough tried cask ale for the first time a few years ago and has kept it on ever since. I had the Flat Cap from Bank Top.

It was then down to the **Bowling Green** on Bolton Road, a community local noted for its Bombardier. I sampled the 3 B's Doffcocker, which seemed slightly off.

Moving swiftly along Bolton Road, we came to the **Britannia**, opposite the India Mill complex. This is a traditional Thwaites pub serving the mild and bitter, which were both on form.

Returning to Redearth Road, we entered the **Crown**, where four ales were available on handpull: Deuchars IPA, Directors, Tetley and Banks's Bitter, which I sampled and found in good condition.



The next two pubs on the list were in the town centre and both served Thwaites bitter. The **Millstone** is the largest town centre pub. It has a late licence and was hosting some of the bands performing at the Darwen Music Festival over the weekend.

The **White Lion** was a short walk away, but by now the Cask Ale Trail was becoming a stagger, so we decided on two more pubs on the list before calling it a day. The **New Inn** is under new management and the one handpull was dispensing Joey Holts. We ended the evening in **The Pub**, formerly known as the Greenway Arms, a large, open-aspect establishment that always has a good selection of guest ales. Boggart Bitter was selling at £1 a pint.

After a good night's sleep, it was back on t'Trail, taking in some of the groups performing at the Music Festival. We began with a couple of new beers (new to me, anyway) at the Black Horse Beer Festival - Conviction from Wellington and Star Trek from White Star. The festival also featured Cotteswold Gold from Stanway, Mischief and Rascal from McBrides, Pheasant Plucker from Bowland and Natterjack from Southport.

Back on the Trail to complete the 'card' and earn one of the coveted Cask Ale Trail T-shirts, I had the guest ale in the **Engineers** - St Austell Tribute. The two permanent beers here are Theakstons Best Bitter and John Smiths.

Next, the **British Queen**, a pub causing a bit of controversy because of its electric pump. However, it **is** real ale, and Thwaites. We moved on to the **Brookside**, which is under new management and has a changing beer policy. I sampled the Wadworth 6X; the other

handpulls were serving Flowers IPA and Greene King IPA.



The Ale Trail complete, there was time to catch some more live music before the train home. It had been a fantastic two days in glorious sunshine, as most of Darwen's pubs have either a beer garden or yard for outside drinking.

Pendleton Crawl

Pete Cash

Thumbing through back copies of *What's Doing* (as you do), I noticed that on 2nd October 1985, the North Manchester Branch of CAMRA did a pub crawl of Pendleton. Meeting points were the **Church**, Ford Lane, and the **Bridge**, Strawberry Road, both of which sold draught Wilsons. We drank Greenalls at the **Unicorn** and Boddingtons at the **Railway** and the **Priory**. I don't recall the **Maypole** selling the real stuff. The new pubs over the A6 also did cask beer - the **Woolpack**, **Woodman** (recently converted into a chrome and neon place called **Sports**) and the **Flemish Weaver**.

So how have things changed in nearly two decades? We were due to start at the **Flat Iron** next to the market at 7.30pm. The sign outside advertises Holts, but the windows were all covered in steel shutters and the landlord had left some fifteen minutes earlier and driven off in his car. It was supposed that this pub ties its opening hours closely to those of the market.



The nearby **Brass Handles** had been checked out a few days earlier and found not to be selling real ale, so we headed for the **Winston** on Churchill Way. This former Holts tied house still has all the Holts signage and delivered an excellent pint of Holts bitter. Next was the **Woolpack** on Belvedere Road. Despite extensive Boddingtons signs, the handpumps were not in use - only the fizzy stuff was on sale.

So it was across the A6 to the **Church** on Ford Lane, by St Thomas's Church. This still has its Wilsons signage, but nowadays sells just Holts bitter, which was almost as good as the beer at the Winston.

A quick look in the **Unicorn** on Broughton Road revealed only keg beer, and further down, the former **Railway** had all the fascia boards painted over, though the Boddingtons sign was still hanging. However, the place had been made secure and weatherproof.

It was on to Gardner Street and the **Priory**. Like the Woolpack, the pub had a Boddingtons handpump but it wasn't in use. We expressed surprise that the new, much improved cask ale wasn't on sale. The lady behind the bar explained that, 'People round here are too lazy to keep real ale.' Passing the end of Strawberry Road, the **Bridge** is still to be seen, but long shut.

Back on the other side of the A6, a walk round the outside of the **Flemish Weaver** found all the doors locked, though there were lights on inside and a couple of people were playing pool. However, we couldn't see any evidence of real ale, so we gave up on Pendleton and headed for the **Crescent**, where it would take as much space again to describe all the beers and ciders available that night!



Buffet Bar's 500th

Since John Hesketh and Sylvia Wood took over at the Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar some seven-and-a-half years ago, the bar has sold hundreds of different beers from small breweries and microbreweries all over the country. There is an ever-changing selection, with five or six on at any one time, and up to twenty different beers every week.

John has been carefully logging all the beers, and as a result we now know that the 500th guest ale has made its appearance. This is 500 BC (Buffet Count), described as a light straw coloured, very astringent brew from the Millstone Brewery in Mossley.



Porter's Strong

There was a big surprise at the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival this year, in the shape and strength of JSB (Jolly Strong Bitter) at 10%. It came from Porter's Rossendale Brewery and was an amber-coloured brew with a malt whisky aroma and taste, plus pleasing warm hop aftertones, with a fruity finish.

Happy hours

The Junction Inn (Beartown Brewery) at Hendham Vale, off Queens Road, Harpurhey, is selling Bearskinful (the bitter) and Black Bear (a strong mild) for just £1 a pint between 5pm and 8pm, Monday to Friday. The same price applies when there's a City or a United match on the box. At other times, the beers are £1.35 and £1.40.

Brewery visit

A trip to the Anglo Dutch Brewery, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, is being organised by the North Manchester branch of CAMRA on Tuesday 10th August. A pie and peas supper will be provided. Further details from Paul on 07944 500174 or 0161 228 5682 (2pm to 6pm Mon-Fri).

Bottle

The Co-op Superstore at Irlams o'th'Height (*see May WD*) has gained yet another unusual bottled beer. This time it is Federation Brewery's Christmas Ale at 4.2%. Which Christmas it relates to is unclear, as there is no 'best before' date on the box packaging.

Rupert

Fiona's view was unequivocal. 'Once a pub has ceased to be a pub, it may as well be knocked down; it'll never become a pub again.' The argument had started when Alistair and Ophelia Hampton presented the result of their survey somewhat pretentiously entitled, 'The Grotley Public House: Origins and Destinations.' Eddie had refused to print it in this organ, describing it as 'tickers' drivel which pushes back the boundaries of mindless pedantry with an electron microscope.'

What the intrepid pair had tried to do was to establish the provenance of all taverns in the county which weren't built as such and to discover the fate of all those hostelries which have closed. They had discovered pubs which had started life as banks, stables, cinemas, synagogues, shops and restaurants. They had also found former taverns, some going back centuries, which were currently in use as offices, church halls, temples, apartments, schools or restaurants. Sometimes the only indication of provenance was an incongruous address such as Kings Head Yard or Three Tuns Passage, or an entry in an old directory. They had found on closer examination details which supported their findings.

Their thesis, to which I readily lent my support, was that, unless a closed pub immediately found another use, there would be an inexorable decline via 'closed and boarded' and 'burnt out shell' to 'brick strewn croft'. If, however, premises were recycled as, say, an Indian or Thai restaurant, they could eventually re-emerge as a public house. In this way, the new owners acted as custodians of our heritage.

Unfortunately, when it came to evidence, this was a little thin. Fiona provided one example of a fine hostelry which had been closed and boarded for years without falling prey to peripatetic arsonists. When she challenged us to provide examples of the pub - something else - pub transition there was a deafening silence.

Several people have said that I don't appeal to readers enough, so I thought I'd have a go. I had hoped to use my first appeal to collect signatures for a petition to reverse the conditions of Bunty's ASBO, which ban him for life from entering any licensed premises in England and Wales. But this can wait until his release. So, do you know of any pub which started off as a pub, closed, changed use and then became a pub again? Please let us know so that we can wipe the smug smile off Fiona's face and discuss something else like smoking in pubs.

Contributors to this issue: Pete Cash, Dave Hallows, Alan Gall, Phil Stout, Paul Warbrick, Leo King, Dave White, Stewart Revell, Ian Kenny, Beverley Rae, Roger Hall.

Photos: Paul Warbrick, Peter Butler, Andy Jenkinson

Branch Diary

Regional Meeting

Sat 10 July 12.30pm, Stalybridge Buffet Bar

Regional CAMRA 18-30 Social Group (*our new name*)

Fri 2 July at 8pm: Social in the Sand Bar, Grosvenor Street, All Saints, Manchester. Contact: davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

North Manchester www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Tues 29 Jun 3-7pm, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey St
Wed 30 Jun 8pm, Social, Ace of Diamonds, Oldham Rd, Miles Platting
Sat 3 July 12 noon, Independents' Day Treasure Hunt, Marble Arch
Wed 7 July, Atherton Crawl. Train at 1828 (Victoria), 1841 (Swinton).
Letters Inn 7.15pm, Punchbowl, Pendle Witch 8.30pm, Wheatsheaf, finish Atherton Arms.

Weds 14 July, Manchester Towpath Walk. Start Knott 7.30pm, then Rain Bar 8.15, Pitcher & Piano, Peveril of the Peak, Rembrandt 9pm, Waldorf, finish Jolly Angler

Weds 21 July 8pm, Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Tues 27 July 3-7pm, What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey St

Weds 28 July 8pm, Guest Speaker, Andrew Davison (English Heritage) in the Derby Brewery Arms (upstairs room)

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Wigan

Wed 21 July 8pm, Branch Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Ladies Lane, Hindley

Contact: Valerie Hollows 0161 629 8243 (*weekdays*);

07889 898955 (*eves/weekends*). email:vhollows@peel.co.uk

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 6 July 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Healey Hotel, Shawclough Road, Rochdale

Sat 24 July, Coach Social to Steve's watering holes, Cheshire. 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 1 July 8pm, Branch meeting at The Wheatsheaf, Manchester Road, Altrincham. NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

Sat 3 July. Visit to Chester by train. Meet 9.45am at Altrincham Station
Weds 7 July 7.30pm, Pub of the Season presentation at the Moss Trooper, Moss Lane, Timperley.

Thurs 15 July, Stretford Visit: Melville (Holts) at 7.30pm, then Trafford Social Club, Derbyshire Lane, Stretford, 9.00pm

Weds 21 July, Joint Social with Stockport Branch at the Old Hall, Altrincham. Diners meet at 7pm and drinkers at 8pm

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

Dave and Sue welcome you to

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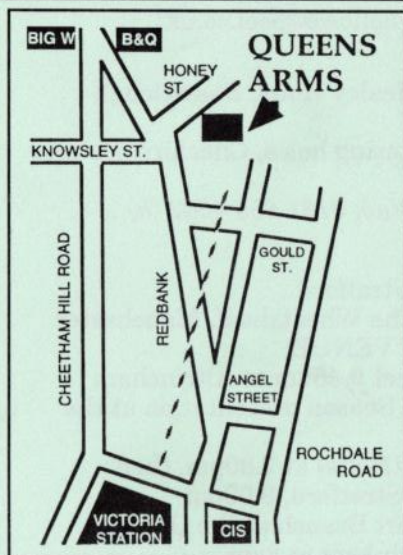
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PUB OF THE YEAR 2002-3



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