

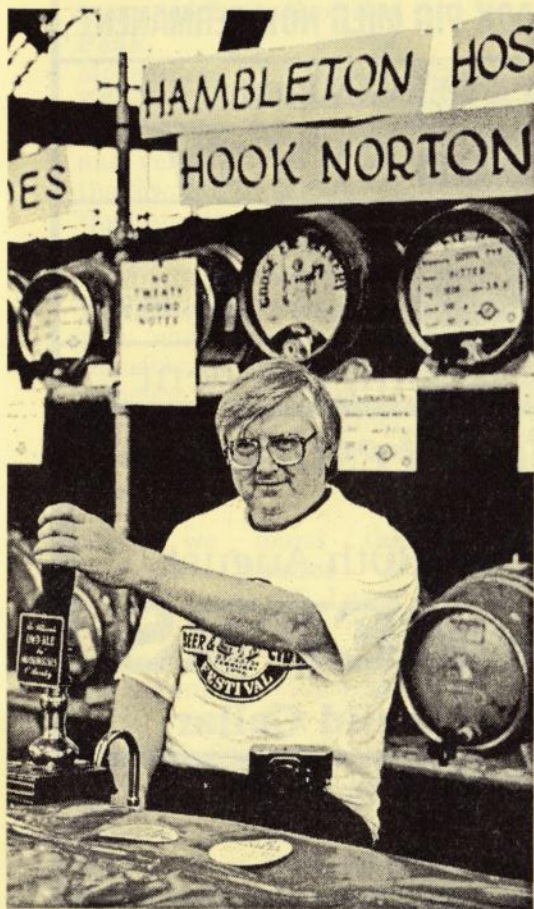
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What's Doing

AUGUST 2004



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine



WINTER ALES FESTIVAL RETURNS

After lengthy negotiations and much behind-the-scenes discussion, CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival is coming back to Manchester in January 2005. The festival lost its original home, the Upper Campfield Market Hall, after the 2002 event, when the building was needed for storage of museum artefacts.

The new venue is at the other end of town, in the New Century House, Corporation Street. Facilities are excellent and the festival will be twice the size of the Campfield one. It will be open for an extra day, too, from 19th to 22nd January.

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Our Next Beer Festival

will be from

Thurs 26th *until* Mon 30th August

40 NEW BEERS

Served from the Bar and Cellar

Function/Party Room available for free hire

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T.V. and Games Room open for darts

Towpath Crawl

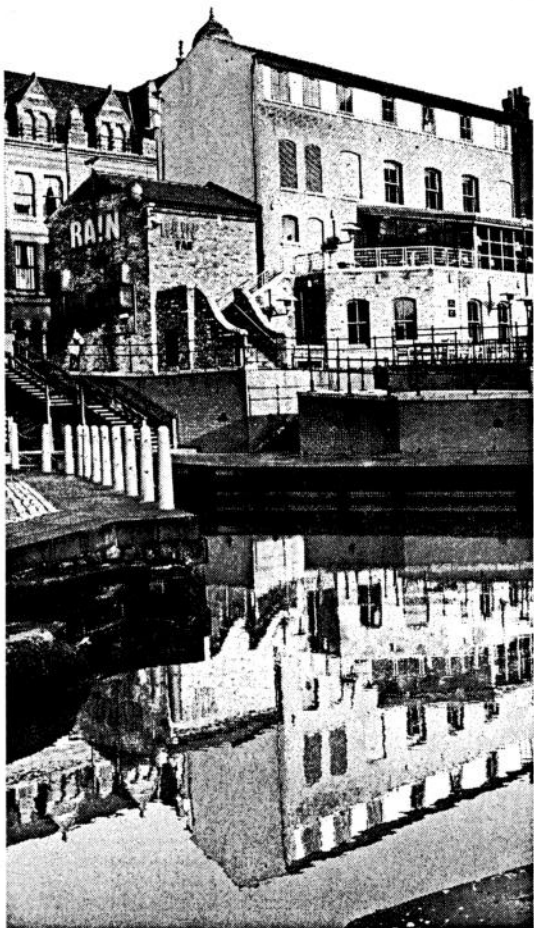
Staggerin' Man

The Rochdale Canal cuts through the heart of Manchester City Centre and after decades of decay, the waterway has seen a great deal of work to restore it to its former glory. The Castlefield basin is very much the hub, with its hotels, museums and trendy bars, so we started at the best one - the **Knott Bar** on Deansgate. This Marble Group pub serves two of James Campbell's vegan and organic beers, Manchester Bitter and Ginger Marble, along with two guests. On the night, there were Coniston Brewery Bluebird Bitter Premium XB (4.2%) and Oakham Bishops Finger.

On joining the towpath just up Charles Street, we made for the Lees flagship, the aptly named **Rain Bar**. Along with bitter, GB mild and Moonraker (the strong barley wine that is available all year round at the bar) there was the ever-popular seasonal, Scorchers (4.2%).

Just over the road is the renowned **Peveril of the Peak**, selling Moorhouses Pendle Witch, Wells Bombardier and Boddies - all on form and very tasty. Back on the towpath by the side of the Rain Bar, there was a short walk around a small inlet behind the Bridgewater Hall. This was once part of the Manchester & Salford Junction Canal, built to connect two canal networks across Manchester.

Here we found the secluded **Pitcher & Piano**, just off Lower Mosley Street. And indeed, there is a piano in the middle of the one long room. The decor features plenty of light stained wood and light brown and wine colours, plus a large hexagonal fish tank at the end of the bar. There is a large



outdoor seating area by the canal. The bar had just one real ale on offer - a rather old example of Marstons Pedigree with a somewhat nasty aftertaste. One of our party called the taste 'the Burton snatch'.

Back on the towpath, we headed for the **Rembrandt** on Canal Street, a happy Lees house serving just the bitter. It was on the warm side, but okay. Next was the **Waldorf** on Gore Street. Always a good pub, this was selling Caledonian Deuchars IPA, Taylors Landlord, Abbot Ale and Boddies, which was on especially good form.

Journey's end was the **Jolly Angler** on Ducie Street, at the back of Piccadilly Station. Along with the bitter (arguably the best pint of Hydes bitter in Manchester) and new seasonal, Ticketyboo (4.4%), there was the rare Welsh Dark Mild - very dark with ruby hues, a pleasing head and body and with a splendid maltiness. This mild is alternating with the lighter mild, week by week in the Jolly. A great crawl.



Boggart Bulletin

June's special from Moston's Boggart Hole Brewery was Tower (5%), billed as a light and hoppy beer. July's special is Dobby (4%), billed as a traditionally coloured beer, fruity and well hopped.

Winter Ales Festival 19th-22nd January 2005

CAMRA members are invited to sign on to work. Staffing forms are initially being co-ordinated by Brian Taylor, 1 Gloucester Drive, Sale, Cheshire M33 5DH. Telephone 0161 962 2396.

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

This year's company AGM was held on 24th June at the Roebuck, Flixton. And as AGMs go, it was a very pleasant one.

The Chairman reported reasonable trading figures for the first three months of this year, despite difficult market conditions. Holts have not purchased any pubs in the last twelve months because they have not found anything suitable. They are still looking, so if anyone knows of a suitable building (presently used as a pub or capable of being converted into one), the brewery would like to know about it.

In answer to a question about the upgrading of licensed premises, with particular reference to disabled access, it was stated that all current legislation is adhered to. Next year, the company will be spending vast amounts of money on the **Woodthorpe** and this will include the provision of disabled access wherever possible. All pubs are looked at in a five-year refurbishment/upgrading cycle.

The Chairman acknowledged the award from English Heritage/CAMRA for the refurbishment at the **Railway** in Didsbury. They were pleased to receive the accolade: it shows that people care.

The 'Tesco Challenge 2004' bottled beer, Humdinger (3.5%, 500ml), was due to arrive in 200 Tesco stores on 26th July.

The daytime 'special offer' at the **Atherton Arms** and the **Mort Arms** in Tyldesley continues for the time being. Bitter or mild is only £1 a pint from 11.30am to 6.00pm weekdays.

In the free trade, the **Nook** at Middleton is now taking Holts bitter, and the **Lord Raglan**, Higher Openshaw, is selling the bitter once again. The **Tiger Moth**, Irlam, has changed hands and is now being run by Seamus and Eileen McCallion. The pub sells Holts mild and bitter.

Seasonal beers for 2004-2005 will be as follows:

Nuts & Holts *September to November 2004*

'A golden amber ale brewed with ale malt and aromatic honey, bursting with the fresh aroma of Willamette hops.' 4.1%

Nearly Holt Upright *December 2004 to February 2005*

'A full drinking bitter, bursting with flavour, supplemented by fresh hop aroma from Cascade hops added late in the boil.' 4.4%

Thunder Holt *March to May 2005*

'A premium red ale with a strong dry palate, complemented by citrus freshness of Challenger hops and the aroma of Styrian dry hops.' 4.5%

Lightning Holt *June to August 2005*

'A clean tasting, refreshing summer ale, with pronounced floral hop aromas from choice Styrian hops.' 4.3%

stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk

King's Ale

Leo King

The new pub, a former shop, on the Old Trafford (Stretford) side of Upper Moss Lane (*WD last month*) was due to open on Saturday 17th July. It is called the Hillary Step, a reference to Sir Edmund Hillary's final step in reaching the summit of Everest. Four handpumps will dispense the house beer (Thwaites) and guest beers. The manager tells me that there will be a strict no-smoking rule and an outdoor drinking area (similar to the Marble Beer House on Manchester Road in Chorlton) is planned.

To get there from the city centre, board the 46 in Cross Street or the 84 or 86 in Piccadilly. Alight from the 46 and 86 towards the curved end of Upper Chorlton Road, near to where the Seymour pub stood. The new pub is part of a row of shops at 199 Upper Chorlton Road. The 84 goes along Seymour Grove. Alight at the end and go along Upper Chorlton Road to the bend.



Royal Route revisited

In last month's item about the Royal Route through Hulme and Moss Side, I wrote that the **Queens Arms** was the Hydes Brewery tap. It wasn't - that honour went to the **Kings**

Head. Along with many others, the pub was bulldozed, probably unnecessarily. The next nearest Hydes outlet is the **Junction Hotel**, a quarter of a mile away in Hulme. This pub was across the road from Swales Brewery (*above, in 1967*), which was latterly owned by Boddingtons and is now long gone.

Also, I missed out one pub on the Moss Lane East route - the **Prince of Wales**. So the Royal Route in full was: **Crown Inn, Kings Head, Queens Arms, Alexandra Park Hotel, Prince of Wales, Albert Inn and Alexandra Hotel**.

Wigan and district

Dave White

A recent article in the local press gave the impression that the **Crown Inn**, Bradley Lane, Worthington, was going to be converted by its owners into luxury apartments. Fortunately, this is far from the truth. The new licensees at the Crown have just taken out a twenty-five year lease, found themselves a new chef and have big plans for the pub. The local planning department only gave consent to convert the building into flats after the lease had been agreed. Twenty years ago, when most of Wigan's pubs sold Tetley, Greenall Whitley or Burtonwood beers (albeit in cask form), the Crown always had an interesting range of ales on - a tradition which has been maintained. Well worth a visit, and I'm told that the cuisine is something else.

Wigan CAMRA's Pub of the Season is the **Royal Oak** on Standishgate, Swinley, which is now home to the Mayflower Brewery. Further to last month's report, Stewart Thompson is now brewing flat out at ten barrels a week, most of which goes to the Royal Oak. Congratulations, therefore, to mine hosts Chris and June and everyone at the Oak, and for Stewart, it's a case of 'keep up the good work'.

Elsewhere in Swinley, the **Bowling Green** on Wigan Lane has reopened. A few of the regulars got together to give the place a lick of paint and a general tidy-up, and one of them has taken over the running of the pub with his wife. Beers on sale include Tetley dark mild and bitter, Deuchars IPA and Greene King Old Speckled Hen.

Still on Wigan Lane, work is in progress at the **Millstone** and the word is out that Thwaites are building a kitchen and perhaps a conservatory.



Club news (yes, you read it right the first time) and the **Jubilee Club** on Wigan Road, Ashton in Makerfield, now sells cask conditioned ale, mainly of the Landlord/Old Speckled Hen/Greene King IPA variety. Non-members are welcome. Handpulled Old Speckled Hen is also on sale at £1.80 a pint at **St William's Catholic Club** at the back of what used to be the **Bird i'th'Hand** in Higher Ince, near the railway station (it's an off-licence now). These clubs are all the more remarkable for being located in real ale wastelands.

Further up Ince Green Lane from St William's, Thwaites' **Anderton Arms** has reopened following refurbishment. The exterior of the 'Long Neck' was so forlorn that I wasn't aware that it had been closed for twelve months. I haven't been in the pub yet, but hope to have something to report next month.

Finally, the **Black Bull**, a Burtonwood house on Market Street, Standish, has reopened. The interior of the pub is much improved but the beer remains, sadly, keg.

Salford Brewery Syndicate

Bazens' Twenty Not Out (4.1%), with a powerful hop character, proved very popular at the Stockport Beer Festival and a second batch has been brewed to satisfy demand in the free trade. The next seasonal will be **Iccle Jimmy** (4.6%), a hoppy blond beer due at the end of July.

Facer's Smoked Ale (4.1%) is making an appearance at the Great British Beer Festival in London and the rest of the batch will be on sale locally. It has a darker, ruby hue this time around. The **Chatterley** seasonal beer has finished and the next (in the English Literature series) will be **Loll's Summer Love**, brewed with the same lager malt as **Cliff Bier**, but using an ale yeast and coming in at 3.9%.

David is running a competition via *What's Doing* and *Opening Times*, for readers/drinkers to guess the literary source of this beer name. Closing date is 14th August. Answers to Facer's Brewery, Salford Brewers' Syndicate, Unit 6, Knoll Street Industrial Estate, Salford M7 2BL. There are six bottles of the rare bottled conditioned **Landslide** to be won.



Salford update

Around the time the **Old Nelson** on Chapel Street was burnt out (*WD last month*), there was also a blaze at the **Ship** on Cross Lane. The 1970s pub remains shuttered and shut.

The **Wellington** on Regent Road has been closed and boarded for a few weeks and the **Kersal Hotel**, Moor Lane, was demolished at the beginning of July.



A sign has appeared outside the **Railway** on Broughton Road, Pendleton. The building is being offered for sale as an office or workshop, somewhat optimistically, since parts of the roof are still missing.

The licence application for premises on the west-facing side of Salford Precinct (*WD last month*) refers to **Cool Village**, an internet cafe and African restaurant.

On another side of the Precinct, the **Flat Iron** opens in the morning when the market is on and closes at 8.00pm. Holts for breakfast, anyone?

Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Roy Bullock, Ian Openshaw, Dave Hallows, Pete Cash, Duncan Roberts, Stewart Revell, Dave White, Neil Worthington, Roger Hall, Frank Heaton

Rail Ale Trail

On a rather overcast Saturday afternoon in June, Paul Warbrick and fellow CAMRA members caught the train to Greenfield...

Once there, we proceeded to the **King William IV** on Chew Valley Road. Six real ales were available at this detached, stone-built pub on the main road through the village. I sampled Summer Lightning and Cumberland Ale, the two guest beers, whilst the others tried the Lees bitter and Tetley mild, which is rarely seen on handpull. The pub has a cosy, friendly interior and there's no jukebox.

Heading back towards the station, we called in at the **Railway**. Again, this is a friendly, no-frills local, with a central bar and games room. Accommodation is available and the pub is an ideal base for outdoor pursuits. The three permanent ales are John Smiths bitter, Taylors Landlord and Wells Bombardier, and there are two changing guests. On our visit these were Deuchars IPA and Batemans XXXB, the 4.8% russet-tan brown classic.

We caught the train to the next stop down, Mossley, where the **Britannia Inn** is directly facing the station. This is a former Marstons house, with a corner bar and an open-aspect interior, and it serves good quality meals. Marstons ales are still sold, so the majority of the party had the 4.2% First Strike. There were also two guest ales.



The next stop on the Rail Ale Trail was the famous **Stalybridge Buffet Bar** on Platform One of the station. This National Institution has been lovingly restored to its former glory. Four rooms are served from the centrepiece marble-topped bar. I sampled two of the five guest ales - Grozet Gooseberry Wheat Bear (4.5%) brewed by Heather, and Celebration (4%) from the nearby Greenfield Brewery. Both were quite palatable.

An additional pub on the trail was suggested, so we left the station and walked up to the **Stamford Arms**. I say 'up', as there were thirty-seven steps to climb to reach this Burtonwood



pub. It was hoped that a guest ale would be available, but they now only do the Burtonwood bitter.

So it was back to the tracks for the final leg of the trail - to Ashton-under-Lyne. We headed down the pedestrian zone to the **Caledonia Hotel**, a large, three-storey pub with three distinct drinking areas. It's a Robinsons outlet and I sampled the Double Hop.

The final pub on the trail was the still-under-threat **Witchwood** on Old Street. This is a lively two-bar pub, mainly famous for its live music from tribute bands and established artistes doing low-key performances. There is always a wide selection of beers in the front bar and I sampled Thunderbolt from Salopian Brewery, Shropshire, and Millstone bitter.

Antelope Ale

In *WD May*, Paul Warbrick reminisced about having his first legal pint of real ale (Greenalls bitter) at the **Antelope** on Manchester Road, Kearsley. All these years on, the Antelope still sells cask Greenalls, and cask John Smiths as well.

Oases in the pub desert

Neil Worthington

Last month, Leo King bemoaned the paucity of pubs in modern-day Hulme, saying it 'has been degraded into a pub desert'. Well, there may no longer be 73 pubs dispensing cask ale, but there's certainly no need to go thirsty.

Members of Trafford & Hulme CAMRA recently took a ramble along Stretford Road. We started at the **Tollbar Inn** at Trafford Bar - not in Hulme, of course, but handy for Metrolink. This is a modern building with Banks's bitter the sole cask offering. A reasonable pint, but at £1.87 it was pricey for the area and a bit on the cold side.

We set off along Stretford Road, finding our first public house just after the Trafford/Manchester border (marked with elaborate metal signs in the style of pennants). This was the **Platford Hotel**, signed as a Joseph Holt house but actually independent of the brewery, or so we believe. 'Hotel' is a rather grand title for what is now a very basic pub offering Holts bitter at £1.40. But it's a fairly busy place, clearly appealing to the sportsman - blank betting slips for the bookie's over the road were scattered about, and there seemed to be a lot of traffic between the two establishments. Again, a decent pint, well up to the standards of Joey's managed houses.

Cheered up by good ale and a friendly reception, we had high hopes for the **Three Legs of Man** over the road, but this turned out to be keg. And the next port of call was even more dispiriting. This year saw the centenary of the famous meeting of the Hon. Charles Rolls



and Sir Henry Royce. It also saw the demolition of the **Sir Henry Royce** public house on Royce Road.

Fortunately, we had the glad sight of the **Junction** in the distance. This is an extraordinary place - the oldest building in this part of Hulme by a long way. Almost all of the surrounding buildings date from the last three decades, but the Junction is a classically solid stone building of the nineteenth century. It's also triangular in shape, looking a little like a ship that's run aground (if you've had a few) - the more so since the street pattern which dictated its layout has long since disappeared. Rolls Crescent runs along one side of the building but there is no sign of the street which formed the south side. I'm told that it was originally the Grand Junction, so perhaps it was named after the railway of the same name, opened in 1837.

Inside, we found one cask ale on offer and surprisingly it was Hydes Light, on handpump at £1.55 a pint. The interior decoration is very traditional, with old brewery photographs and the like, but the sound system was mostly booming reggae. Again, a quality pint - though some of our party would have liked to have seen Hydes Bitter too.

Also on Royce Road, but on the other side of Stretford Road, we found the intriguing **A-Fe-We**, formerly the Grants Arms and now billed as an Afro-Caribbean Community Pub. This also featured West Indian and African music and was decorated to match the music - no sepia prints here! Sadly, no cask ale.

We crossed over Princess Road by the Hulme Arch bridge, which has inspired the new name for a Robinsons outlet, the **Arch**, built fairly recently to replace the Red Admiral. The building is notable from the outside for its blue tiles. Inside, it's very high tech, very modern, with red walls and plastic upholstery, a complete contrast to the traditional Junction. It was also very quiet - no music, few customers. This is probably an evening venue, as the DJ's desk at one end suggests. Robinsons Unicorn Bitter was on offer at £2.10 a pint, and again was highly acceptable.

At the end of Stretford Road there is Cavendish Street and the **Cavendish** public house, which despite one



solitary handpump offers no cask ale. But beyond there is the most impressive **Salutation** where we had a real choice of beers at last. Tetley Bitter (£1.70), Dark Mild (£1.50) and Taylors Landlord (£1.80) were on offer, and many of us thought the Mild the best pint of the day. Old Speckled Hen and Marstons Pedigree are also usually on sale here.

A few of our party decided to make for the newly opened **Kro Bar 3**, or the **Old Abbey**, to be exact. When we asked some of the locals where the new Kro bar was, there were blank expressions, though someone pointed us in the direction of Lloyd Street. We meandered down this featureless road, past the **Ducie Arms** on the left, but there was still no sign of it. Two local lads thought it might be along Denmark Street, though east or west they were not sure. Finally, the local bobbies on the beat came to our rescue and in the middle of the Manchester Science Park we found our goal, 61 Pencroft Way, off Denmark Street and near its junction with Upper Lloyd Street. This pub isn't always open on Saturday afternoons and sometimes it is hired out for private parties.

That was the case when we arrived, but we were kindly invited in and found a pleasant little bar which had quite an impressive menu for their busier lunchtime custom on weekdays. Two of the usual three beers were on; Taylors Landlord and Fullers London Pride, and both were in excellent condition. The Kro opens at 8.30am on weekdays for non-alcoholic refreshments such as tea and coffee.

Afterwards, I checked out Booth Street West, which runs from Boundary Lane to Oxford Road. The **Gamecock** is unequivocally keg, but the **Czech Bar**, while



keg-only on draught products, does offer bottles of authentic Budweiser from Budweis in the Czech Republic, plus Pilsner Urquell.

Finally, the best kept real ale secret in Hulme - or is it Chorlton-on-Medlock here? - must be the **Royal Northern College of Music** at the east end of Booth Street West. The college has a bar that's open to the public and there are six - count them! - cask ales. They tend to be Tetley Bitter, Marstons Pedigree, Old Speckled Hen and Abbot Ale from Greene King, the rare Burton Ale and guests such as Brains and Deuchars IPA. They're priced at around £2.20 a pint, but for that you get an interesting modern setting, outside two concert halls, with an extensive smoke-free seating area and access to a snack bar.

The bar is normally open from 12 noon to 2.00pm, then from 5.00pm till 11.00pm, Mondays to Fridays. It tends to open only in the evenings at weekends, depending on what events are on, and sometimes there is a late licence. Don't dash round just yet, though, because the bar is currently closed for rebuilding and extension. It is due to reopen on 24th September.

Saddleworth Museum

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Organised by The Friends of the Museum as a
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With generous assistance from CAMRA

Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th September 2004

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Open Friday 7pm to 11pm,

Saturday 11.30am to 5pm and 7.00pm to 11.00pm

(Small admission charge)

Friday night music: Roger Higgins Blues Band
Saturday night: The Harmony Hounds (playing 1920s jazz)

11 beers from 8 breweries

local to Saddleworth and surrounding area
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For travel information, phone 01457 874093

Letters

Pub to Pub

Sir - Having been a reader of *What's Doing* for the past 25 years or so, I was pleased to find, when the July 2004 edition arrived, something on Rupert's page that I could actually understand.

In his last paragraph he asks about pubs that have closed, been used for other purposes and then turned back into pubs. I remember such a place on the west side of Deansgate that I used to pass in the 1960s whilst en route from Sunlight House on Quay Street to Knott Mill Station in order to catch one of those delightful MSJ&AR trains home to Stretford, where I was then living.

It was on the corner of one of those little streets that went off Deansgate between Camp Street and Liverpool Road. Now my memory is a bit shaky here, because I cannot remember ever going into the pub, but was it called the Reindeer? It closed down and became a bank, which later closed and returned to use as a pub.

It is some years since I last traversed that part of Deansgate, so I am not aware of the present situation.

Norman Tandy

Middleton musings

Sir - A few years ago Paul Roberts and I had a correspondence spat in *What's Doing* about the merits of the new (as it was then!) **Wetherspoons** in Middleton (*below*). I promised to visit the said



emporium. It took me a year or so to sample the place. (There's nothing like a topical letter.)

Sorry, Wetherspoons is not for me and I regret its installation as it has killed off the lunchtime trade in the quieter, traditional Middleton pubs.

The good news is that the **Joiners Arms** on Cross Street is now open again at lunchtimes, with Tetley cask and, dare I say it, a really excellent John Smiths smooth. The Joiners used to be Paul Roberts' local before he emigrated to Bavarian Juke-less climes.

The other day at the **White House**, atop the Pennines adjacent to Blackstone Edge and with Littleborough wallowing on the plain below, I sampled what the cognoscenti will already have tasted, a really idiosyncratic brew called Arizona, from the Phoenix Brewery, Heywood. 'Dry as the Desert,' it says on the pump clip. It was a very pale straw coloured, superb chalk-dry bitter without any trace of sweetness, and went down very quickly, Quite quirky, I thought. This was followed by Archers Hip-Hop (or somesuch name), dry and similar to Holts bitter, and also as pale as the desert.

I will return to the White House, as there were other real ales to sample in welcoming surroundings.

Michael D White

Buffet Bar's 500th

Sir - Well done! Five hundred different beers in seven and a half years at Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar (*WD July*).

I copped all but one of the A4s, but got all the Deltics. I remember underlining them lovingly in my Combined Volume. Hang on. If there had been 23, 24 or even 30 Deltics, and not the 22 built, I would probably have copped them as well.

One small brewer, whom I shall not name, complained gloomily about outlets such as the the Buffet Bar. 'I offered them my Best Bitter and they said somewhat sniffily that they did not want it as they had had it before. I made an utterly trivial change to the recipe of one batch, made up a faintly ludicrous name for it and they took it without hesitation - they had not had **that** one before.'

Another number on the list. One more beer they can underline in their Combined Volume. (But, please note, they seem to write the entries as well as underline them.)

I think Stalybridge Station Buffet is a gem and I make a point of taking friends there whenever I can, but 500 different beers? 325 under 500 different names might be more credible.

Independents' Day Treasure Hunt 2004

This year's Treasure Hunt was organised by Two Dead Goldfish (Ian Openshaw, Miriam Makin and Peter Maguire). Ian reports on the day...

If the Greece v Portugal result was supposed to be a shock, it was only a minor one compared to the result of the Independents' Day Treasure Hunt the previous day. For the first time in six years, the winners were not the Castle Knights or the Raving Mad Bastards. Agreed, the Castle Knights had gone on holiday and the Raving Mad Bastards had got themselves into a muddle and became Rabid Vast Grandmas for the day.

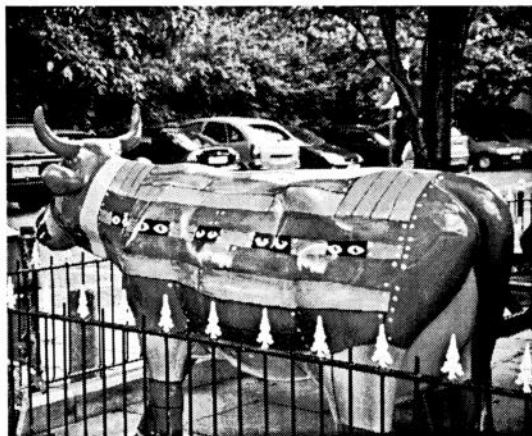
As it had rained all morning, it was a relief to see 14 teams turn up and register. The teams faced dingbats-style cryptic clues to identify the eight pubs that contained the other clues. For example, a picture of some sheep next to a picture of Hank Marvin leads to Sheeps Hank. Sheepshank is a knot, hence The Knott.

All the clues were answered correctly by at least one team. The teams also had 15 photos to link with the pubs for extra points.

The usual question at the beginning of the day caused some consternation: 'Team Name?' One team, The JB's, stood around for 15 minutes trying to come up with a team name. Another team said they'd come up with a name later, so could they just put a question mark down for the moment? (They were the eventual winners and might now regret their topical choice of name.)

The total possible points score was 90. Rabid Vast Grandmas finished in 4th place on 73 points. In 3rd place on 79 points and winners of 4 points were the 1998 winners, the Rat & Handbag Doms Team. 83 points, just 7 short of a full house, were scored by two teams, Lost Sheep and the question mark crew, now called 'What's with all these cows anyway?'

A tie break question gave The Cows the shield for this year and a gallon of beer. It'll be interesting to see how small the letters will have to be to fit their name on the little shield on the newly expanded trophy. Not to mention the cost of engraving, which is usually per letter. (I said they might regret their choice of team name.)



Lost Sheep had six free pints to console themselves with and to drink at their leisure; not bad for a team of two.

Thank you to Emma and the team at the Marble Arch for doing the catering and donating the gallon of beer for the winners. The quiz entry fee paid for the food and the 2nd and 3rd prizes. The 12 teams that returned enjoyed a cosy supper in a packed Marble Arch (a Saturday night crowd plus 47 competitors and Two Dead Goldfish).

So Steve Bishop, Malcolm Cornelius and Alan Dobson, otherwise known as 'What's with all these cows anyway?', will have the pleasure of setting and organising next year's quiz. Thank you to all the landlords and landladies who put up with the hordes tramping through their pubs and thanks again to our hosts, the Marble Arch. I just hope that the two teams that failed to return, The JB's and The Likely Losers, aren't still wandering round Manchester, looking for clues.

Doing the Card

Dave Hallows

The **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street, next to the former bus station in Oldham, has had a spectacular change of fortune since Jo Potter took over in October last year. This former Porter's house has really come on and its popularity has increased since CAMRA's Oldham Beer Festival. During intervals between sessions, it was visited and appreciated by many people.

The Ashton sells an excellent selection of real ales, ciders and genuine continental beers on draught and in bottle. There is also very good value hot and cold food - massive portions, too. I went along to sample the card one midweek early evening...

High House Farm Auld Hemp (3.8%): An amber coloured brew from a new brewery. A bittery, flowery and hoppy session beer in tip-top condition.

Phoenix Monkeytown Mild (3.9%): For the regular mild drinker, this is one of the favourites. A strong beer, dark with ruby hues. Malty and surprisingly dry.

Hydes Jekylls Gold (4.3%): Golden bitterness with fruits. Very tasty and moreish.

Hydes Cloud Nine (4.4%): The spring seasonal. Golden hoppy bitter.

Cains Sundowner Ale (4.5%): One of the Liverpool brewer's seasonals. A premium ale brewed with a dash of lemon, it says on the beer badge. A pale, refreshing, very fruity and zesty beer.

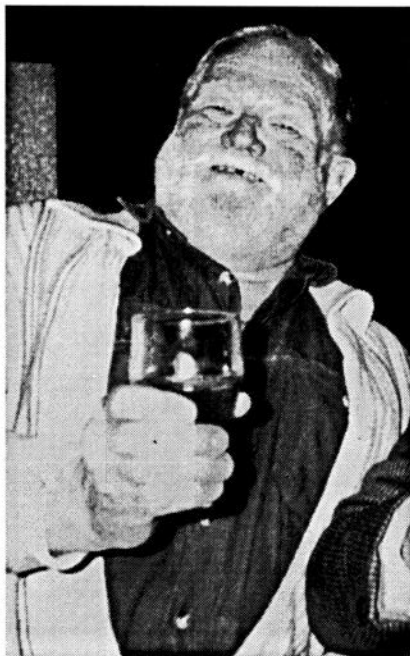
Part 32: Midsummer Liberty Pale Ale

This month I had meant to report on how last year's cider turned out, but a sad event has intervened. Tony Molyneux, a CAMRA colleague whom I have known for some thirty years, died of a heart attack early in July. Only a few weeks earlier, this warm hearted and generous man took us on a tour of his favourite Liverpool brewery during CAMRA's annual Members' Weekend in Southport. He showed us the magnificent tiled hop store (now empty) and outlined his vision for the room to become a visitor centre with a micro-brewery.

As we were going out of the gates and into the brewery tap, he pressed into my hand three discs of compressed hops, each about the size of a £2 coin and about 2 cm thick. He had explained to us earlier, that whilst the hops used in the boil are pelletised (these break down into a fine hop 'dust' when wet), the discs are whole Liberty hops which are used for 'dry-hopping' the casks. I said I would make a small brew from them and let him have a couple of bottles.

Liberty is an American hop, grown mainly in Washington and Oregon and first sold in 1991. It has a good aroma and bitterness, but is fairly low in α -acid (3.5% - 6%). It is a triploid seedling of Hallertauer Mittelfrüh and has a similar aroma. When I got home, I weighed the three discs. They were just half an ounce each. I tend to use a high hop-to-malt ratio, much higher than commercial brewers, and for this beer I ground just 3lb of Halcyon pale malt, aiming to make one-and-a-half gallons.

There was another reason for this mini-brew. The beer I made from the 2003 home-grown hops had for some reason developed a slight 'off' flavour. Not enough to make it undrinkable - out of 11 gallons there are about 3 pints left - but I didn't want to risk carrying any taint forward by reusing the yeast. By a stroke of luck, I had completely overlooked a one-pint bottle of the 2002 high gravity brew. This was in superb condition, with not a hint of off-taste. I used the small amount of yeast in the bottom of this bottle, first adding half a pint of chilled wort from the boil and leaving it overnight.



For the boil, two of the three hop discs were added at the start, along with Irish Moss, and the third one was thrown in about ten minutes from the end (late copper hops). The wort was chilled with my large copper coil carrying cold tap water, then stood overnight. It was racked off from the cold break protein, the gravity was measured (1.043) and (on Midsummer's Day) the yeast starter pitched in. This latter wasn't showing any activity, so it was an act of faith, but to avoid any undue oxidation I put the whole brew under an airlock from start to finish - something I normally do only with lager. After another 36 hours, all was well. A vigorous ferment was underway.

I have mentioned the 2003 home-grown hops. Altogether we picked 3.5lb fresh weight, equivalent to a dry weight of about 19 ounces. There won't be a 2004 crop. The hop vines have outlived their welcome in their present home and have been largely uprooted (not an easy task). However, cuttings have been propagated and I intend to grow them myself. It will probably be 2007 before there is a usable amount, but in the last few years various friends and acquaintances have been taking cuttings and some should have mature plants by now.

When I learned of Tony's sad demise, the Pale Ale was still under airlock. It had dropped bright and had a final gravity of 1.007 (alcohol about 4.2%) and even in a 'green' state it had an excellent, clean flavour. Normally I would have put it in unlabelled quart bottles and drunk it fairly soon, but in the circumstances, it has gone into 24 half-pint bottles, primed with 12ml of sugar and sealed with black-bordered gold crown caps. It will be dedicated to the memory of Tony Molyneux; I intend to produce an appropriate label.

Next time, cider 2003 and a report on the 2004 apple crop.

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

WHAT'S DOING ADVERTISING: Full page £52.50 or £210 for six months, half page £36.75 or £157.50 for six months, quarter page £26.25 or £105 for six months. All adverts must be accompanied with payment. Cheque payable to 'What's Doing'.

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

Rupert

So, farewell then Zimbabwe-Talbot. Namechanger, exile from Scouseley and tireless campaigner. He will be missed. His untimely death serves to remind us all of our own mortality. In our salad days we mostly make unarticulated pacts which go something like this: 'What's the point of living a careful and frugal existence now for the sake of a few more unfulfilling years at the end? Far better to live life to the full and if I croak early, so be it.'

Then we live life to excess and when we feel the first twinges of fallibility and hear death beckoning for us to wander in his shade, we renege on our contract with ourselves. It is surprising to see those who, in the past, drank as though all breweries were going



to close the following day, sipping halves and going home at sensible times. Campaign meetings resemble Rechabite reunions and reformed toppers tut-tut at binge drinking and other excesses of the young.

Hattie Nightingale, who once drank for England and poured pints down the trousers of geekish twerps like Rumpleshirtscream, is now living in teetotal respectability in the soft underbelly of the South. Even Billy Cosh, who always ate sensibly and walked a lot, has restricted his intake of amber nectar. It's an irony that, just as licensing laws are about to be liberated, we'll all be too boring to enjoy them.

It's good that some people never made the pact in the first place and so carry on as they always have. Bunty is due for release at the end of August. I am not sure whether it is his frequent incarcerations which have made him drink as much as he does when he's out, but he certainly does. As he's banned under the terms of his ASBO from all licensed premises, we've arranged a private party.

Pater died in July and I've inherited Periwinkle Towers and the title. I've arranged for Bunty's release party to be held there in Wealthshire. For the first time, I'm hoping he doesn't wreck the joint as it's worth a few bob. If he does, I'll probably join the long list of tavern-keepers who refuse to sign the petition to change the terms of his ASBO. All WD readers are, of course, welcome to the do.

Branch Diary

Regional CAMRA Under 30 Social Group

Fri 6 Aug from 8pm, Social in the Bar Fringe, Swan Street, Manchester. Details from: davehallows2002@yahoo.co.uk

North Manchester www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 4 Aug 7.45pm: Social at Cask & Feather and a look at the McGuinness Brewery, Oldham Road. Rochdale. Trains from Victoria 7pm (First NW) or 7.16pm (Arriva).

Tues 10 Aug: Trip to Anglo-Dutch Brewery, Dewsbury. 5.30pm train from Manchester Piccadilly. Pay in advance - £6 including pie & peas. Phone Paul Warbrick on 07944 500174 or 0161 228 5682, 2pm-6pm Mon-Fri.

Sat 14 Aug 12 noon: First meeting to plan National Winter Ales Festival, Manchester 2005. Crescent, Salford.

Wed 18 Aug 8pm: Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford.

Tues 24 Aug 3-7pm: What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey St

Wed 25 Aug: Winton to Patricroft Crawl: Jolly Carter (Lees), Worsley Road/New Lane, 7.30pm. Grapes, Peel Green, 8.15pm. Calling at Bird in Hand and finishing at Stanley Arms, 9.30pm onwards.

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Wigan

Wed 18 Aug: Ah, Wilderness! A crawl around Parbold and Dalton. Coach leaves the Anvil, Dorning Street, at 7pm. A deposit must be paid in advance to secure a place

Sun 22 Aug 1pm, Branch Meeting-cum-barbecue, Royal Oak, Standishgate, Swinley (the reigning Pub of the Season)

Contact: Valerie Hollows 0161 629 8243 (weekdays); 07889 898955 (eves/weekends). email:vhollows@peel.co.uk

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 3 Aug 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Royal Oak, Manchester Road, Werneth, Oldham

Sun 22 Aug, Saddleworth Rushcart Social. Details from Branch Contact

Contact: Peter Alexander 0113 232 4023(w), 0161 655 4002 (h)
email: p.alexander@virgin.net

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

Thurs 12 Aug 8pm, Branch Meeting, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham.

NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE & DATE

Thurs 19 Aug, Chorlton Survey/Social. Sedge Lynn 7.30pm. Visit other nearby pubs then return to Sedge Lynn at 9.30pm

Sun 29 Aug, Bev's Garden party. 2pm till late. details at Branch Meeting.

Contact: Dave Ward 0161 980 1170

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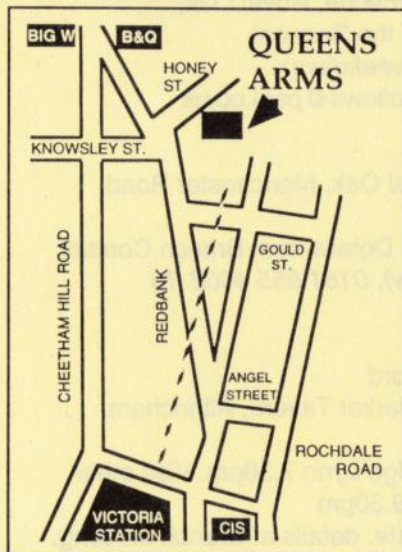
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