

30p

# What's Doing

DECEMBER 2004



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## OXFORD ROAD ALE

Real ale is available at the **Font Bar** on New Wakefield Street. This is the street that runs alongside the viaduct holding up Oxford Road Station and the bar is about fifty yards along from Oxford Road itself. It's a fairly recent conversion, offering a modern ambience on three levels, but fully accessible throughout thanks to a spacious lift. The landlord is a cask ale fan and keen to showcase beers from micros and the better regional brewers. York Brewery's Stonewall is currently a regular, and there are generally two beers on at weekends.





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**PHOENIX THIRSTY MOON** *Plus 7 guests*  
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**PAULANER MÜNCHEN ORIGINAL (4.9%) NOW ON DRAUGHT**

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**Free Chip Barms Mondays 5-6pm**

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**[www.beer-festival.com/crescent](http://www.beer-festival.com/crescent)**

***Our Next Beer Festival***

***will be from***

**Thurs 27th *until* Sun 30th January**

**40 NEW BEERS**

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**Function/Party Room available for free hire**

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As mentioned last month, the **Queens** in Hyde has become a Joseph Holt pub. For the last few weeks it has been going through a refurbishment and makeover in the Holts style and by the time this edition of WD hits the pubs, the Queens will have reopened. It is expected to be selling the full range of Holts beers - traditional mild and bitter and the current seasonal, Nuts & Holts.

This has not been confirmed, but there may be no cask conditioned Sixex this Christmas. Only the bottled version will be available. I'm not too sure just why this is; maybe it is partly due to the fact that the brewery has been giving greater attention to the seasonal beers. The entire last brew of Sixex may have been sent for bottling, with none retained for racking into casks.

A 275ml bottle of the 6% Sixex is currently around £1.12. After a couple of pints of bitter, I have occasionally topped up a half of bitter with a bottle of Sixex, as a last order. Mind you, after tasting it, you do feel like having another!

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*The radio station of choice for the Holts aficionado would appear to be Century FM. Listeners have voted the Crown & Anchor on Cateaton Street their Pub of the Year 2004.*

## Session in the Marble Arch

*Staggerin' Man*

If there's ever a pub that complements the Mancunian drinking scene, it is the Marble Arch on Rochdale Road. The London-styled pub is also home to the vegan and vegetarian Marble microbrewery.

In the able hands of James Campbell, the Marble recently launched a new regular beer - the long awaited Marble Bitter (3.9%) - providing an excellent reason for a session there. The strength is perfect for the lunchtime and early evening trade and the beer is a stablemate to the popular 4.2% Manchester Bitter. Light tawny in colour, with a fruity and hops aroma, Marble Bitter has a lingering hoppy and citrus bitterness and is priced at £1.85. James told me that the Cloudy Marble and N/4 beers are now seasonals and WILL return.

The main room of the pub - the one that slopes down to the bar, with the tiled floor and walls and high ceiling - has seen some renovation recently. The room is frequented by a loyal band of regulars, office workers and posties from Oldham Road sorting office. The back room (now no-smoking) has been revamped and reduced in size to make room for the kitchen extension.



First, an update on the situation at the **Arthur Inn**. Sadly, as was feared, the pub is now up for sale. Sue, the landlady for the last four years, has agreed to stay on in the meantime. Was it really only four years ago when we (originally) waved goodbye to Reginald Perrin? It must be true what they say; plenty of Sunshine makes the time fly. As the clock is ticking, why not pay this superb pub a visit? Use it, before we lose it.

Talking of changes, I must mention the **George** in the town centre. After putting my cynical expectations into print last time, I've been pleasantly surprised by the new incarnation. The new landlords have signalled their intent to aim for a slightly more sophisticated clientele. New, comfy chairs, a cleaned-up bar and the promise of quality food show the way. Interestingly, and rare these days, is the promise of cask ales etched on the new signage. After a few false starts, cask has started appearing. It appears to be mainly Boddingtons in the week and possibly a Caledonian beer at weekends.

Greene King have bought the **Rose & Crown** on Lowercroft Road, to establish their first pub in Bury. The only changes so far have been on the beer front. Out went Boddingtons and Bass, and in came Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale. Black Sheep is still available for customers of a more refined palate.

A change in management at the **Church Inn** on Spring Street has failed to see cask ale restored to this once popular hostelry. However, signs do proclaim that drugs are prohibited and that under 18s aren't allowed alcohol. What sensible ideas. Perhaps, one day, the Government will put them on the statute books.





## Wigan and district

*Dave White*

Lots of news this month; mostly bad.

The time-worn expression 'closed and boarded up' involves a certain degree of licence, at least in these parts, as the windows and doors of nearly all the pubs concerned are covered in sheet metal. Whatever, the **Whitesmiths Arms** on Standishgate has now fallen into this category. Once a bustling little Boddies pub, the Whitesmiths seems to have lost its way in recent years, doing a stint as **Harry's Bar** and undergoing several changes of management. Elsewhere in the town centre, the once-illustrious-but-long-closed **Grand Hotel**, Dorning Street, is to be turned into offices, or so it is rumoured.

There has been a flurry of activity in Hindley, with the **Royal Hotel** on Castle Hill Road closing its doors recently. Keg is king in this part of town, with only the **Derby Arms** on real ale; and even that closed for a few weeks recently.

At the other end of Hindley, the **Plough Hotel** on Atherton Road is closed and boarded up. This is another pub that has had a chequered history in recent years. In the centre of town, the **Prince of Wales**, Market Street, has gone over to fizz, and the **Worthington Hotel** on the same street has reopened as **Last Orders**. I haven't been to the pub yet, but given this company's track record, I wouldn't expect real ale to feature prominently, if at all.

In Ashton - in - Makerfield, the **Fleece Hotel**, Warrington Road, has reopened, but remains keg. Over in Springfield, the



**Prince of Wales** on Woodhouse Lane opened its doors again during the summer, but there wasn't much call for the Draught Bass and the pub reverted to keg-only before long.

The **Alexandra** at Whelley closed for refurbishment recently. The pub is a keg emporium of many years' standing, so what chance real ale when it reopens? Meanwhile in Dalton, the **Prince William**, Beacon Lane, is to close for an extension; if, indeed, it hasn't already.

The **Rose & Crown**, a splendid little boozer on Church Lane, Orrell, is to close for five weeks for a refurbishment, and yet the rumours persist that an investment company has set its sights on the premises. Time could also be running out for the hapless **Jarvis Bar**, Main Street, Billinge. The inn was voted 'Best New Cask Ale Outlet' by Wigan CAMRA a year or two ago, but the lease is up for renewal in about eighteen months' time, and again, a property developer is understood to be waiting in the wings.

At least it isn't all doom and gloom in Swinley, where the **Fox & Goose** has added Deuchars IPA alongside Tetley and Holts bitters. Still on Wigan Lane, the **Bowling Green** has just been voted Wigan CAMRA's autumn Pub of the Season. The pub has recently been tastefully refurbished, offers a good range of real ales and now serves food daily. Did I mention the coal fire?



## Glossop circular

*Hikin' Man*

As well as the Hope Valley railway line (*WD last month*), guided walks also take place on the Manchester to Buxton and Manchester to Glossop lines. We recently undertook a circular walk from Glossop Station and were able to see, before we set off, which beers we would be enjoying at the end of the hike. This was thanks to a blackboard outside what must be the most convenient pub for a rail station anywhere in Derbyshire.

The **Star** is just one minute from the platform and has always sold a good selection of real ales. It has recently become even better, since CAMRA members Paul and Vivien Hurditch took over. A convenient bench outside facilitates the removal of dirty boots, then through the door on the right is a corner lounge.

The bar is to the left, with tables along the wall opposite. Further along is a small, separate room with a hatch to the bar. On our visit there were Lees GB Mild, Black Sheep Bitter, Wye Valley Hereford Pale Ale, Shaws Golden Globe (very dry and bitter), Barnsley Trick Or Treat (a Halloween special) and the 6% Pictish Whiteout. Trains back to Manchester are every half hour, up to 1935 on Saturdays, so it is all too easy to decide to miss another train and sample one more beer!





## Christmas in Paradise

The week between Christmas and New Year can sometimes be a bit flat, so John Wood and his staff at the Paradise Brewery are thoughtfully putting on a beer festival, with a choice of 20 beers and the promise of some unusual brews.

The Paradise Christmas Beer Festival runs from Tuesday 28th December to Thursday 30th December. Opening hours are 11.00am to 11.00pm each day.

Arriva Trains Wales will be running their normal weekday service to and from Wrenbury and the Brewery is a couple of minutes' walk from the station. On the Tuesday, the 11.34am Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff Central express will make a special stop at Wrenbury. On the same day, an express will stop at Wrenbury at 5.05pm for the return journey to Wilmslow, Stockport and Manchester.



## Salford Brewery Syndicate

**Bazens'** strong mild **Wild Boar** (6%) sold out quickly. One of the last casks was featured at the Trackside, Bury, just after the Bury Beer Festival. Demand for the regular beers is still fully occupying the brewery, so much that another expansion is planned for the new year: bigger mash tun and fermenters. The winter special **Knoll Street Porter** (5.2%) came out mid-November and **Santa's Reinbeer** (4.6%) at the start of this month. December 20th sees the annual launch of **Wass Ale** (4.5%).

**David Facer's** latest 'English Literature' beer is **Anthem** (3.9%), with a World War One theme. (Wilfred Owen wrote *Anthem For Doomed Youth*.) Still on a cheerful note, there will be another Christmas beer, different from last year but still conspicuously distinctive (raisins, maybe?). In the new year, the first **Facer's Mild** will be launched at the National Winter Ales Festival in the New Century Hall, Manchester, on January 26th; strength and final name are still undecided.

## No it ain't

Contrary to the note in last month's WD, Pendleton Bowling Club is not about to close.

## Oxford Baguettes

The Oxford in Bexley Square, Salford, has reopened, not as a pub, but as a cafe, catering to court users and local businesses.



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE



# NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

NEW CENTURY HALL  
(corner Corporation St & Miller St)

**MANCHESTER**

Weds 26th Jan  
to  
Sat 29th Jan

See January  
What's Doing  
for full details

## Festival success

This year's Bolton Beer Festival at the Howcroft Inn was the biggest and best ever, with record attendances at each session.

Over 200 real ales were available and the 'sold out' signs were put up before the end of the Saturday night session. Around £30,000 was raised for Bolton Lads' and Girls' Club.

October 23rd saw the celebration of the Ashton Arms' first birthday. This was not in its constructional sense; the pub has been in Clegg Street, Oldham, for upwards of a century, but to mark its reopening in 2003.

During the previous five years the pub has endured a succession of landlords of varying talent. Then it closed for some months and was considered for conversion into solicitors' chambers. The situation was grim and looking grimmer for the hard-pressed ale-suppers of Oldham, who had to fall back upon the varying quality supplied by our local Wetherspoons.

Then at the eleventh hour appeared a saviour in the shape of Jo Potter, former Hogshead manager for Whitbread. When the Hogshead



chain was bought by the Deutschland Bank, the managers were systematically driven out by a dirty tricks campaign instituted by the bean counters who embody what banking is all about. Anyway, seeing the opportunity to do her own thing without being hassled by area and regional overlords, she jumped ship and took over the Ashton.

A year later it is in both the *Good Beer Guide* and the *Real Ale Pub Guide*. It can boast up to six real ales (all at £1.70), draught cider, home-cooked food, no juke box but a big Duke dog and numerous social events for charity.

Doing a bit of lateral reporting I must add, for connoisseurs of art, that the Gents is, in a modest way, a temple to the sportsman. There is a



skinny Indian cricketer with an unpronounceable name, looking a bit like Ben Kingsley in a cap, then a compendium of 1930s Brylcreem ads extolling the virtues of a slicked-down 'barnet' with a centre parting. This, it seems, is guaranteed to turn your average scrawny drip into sporty superman - 'Net results brilliance!'

Finally, my favourite section of the gallery: four American football programme covers from the 1940s. As the names of these All-American gladiators are sadly unknown, I suggest some captions: 'Chuck Nelson the one-armed quarterback,' 'Doctor Kilkenny does the Can-Can,' 'Jud Pigg and his giant Easter egg' and then 'The Great Stocking Sale - Hank Scrotulstein first through the doors.'



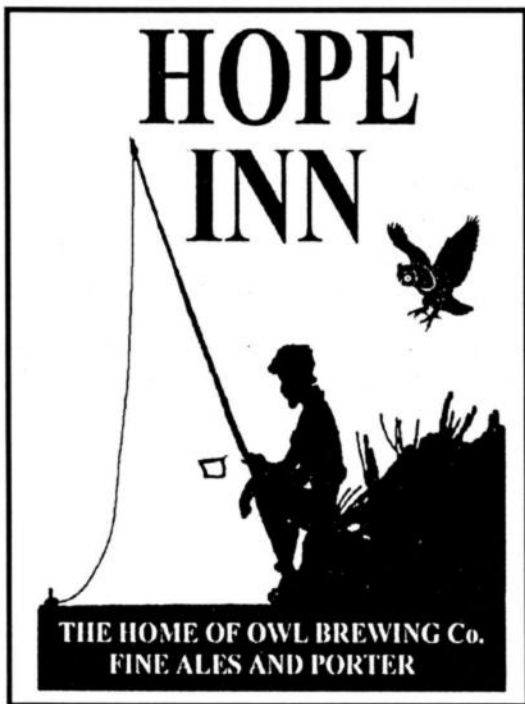
I am proud to mention that I received a souvenir ballpoint at the party and will treasure it as long as the ink lasts.

Now on to the Potts portion and another tale of restoration and recovery. The Hope Inn on Greenacres Road in Oldham had been closed for two years - except when temporarily reopened by the local tea-leaves, seizing the opportunity to recycle the various fittings. Formerly a Thwaites house, and earlier Wilsons, it is now home to the Owl Brewery.

The Potts in question, Gordon by name, used to be a designer for the brewery industry, became interested in the brewing side of the trade and then decided to go commercial. Spotting a bargain set of brewery

thingamies at an auction, he bought them, put them in storage and began to look for a suitable site. He decided upon the Hope because he wanted a tallish building so he could utilise gravity flow; a sort of micro tower brewery, you might call it.

He is attempting to develop a distinctive beer style by utilising complex malt flavours. To be honest, his first batch was definitely over the top and over-flavoured, but he has since toned down and is refining with each successive batch. I can say from personal experience that his ales are now distinctive and very drinkable.



I might add that my wife (God bless her) thinks that Mr Potts bears a distinct resemblance to Dick Van Dyke. Personally, I'll reserve judgement until I hear him sing a medley from *Mary Poppins*.

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## Beer Miles 2004

*Dave Hallows*

The inaugural Beer Miles event took place in October. Teams collected beer miles - the shortest road distance from the door of the pub to the gate of the brewery - for each of ten beers sampled in the Smithfield, Bar Fringe, Beer House, Marble Arch and Queens Arms, Cheetham. The last distance to be added was that from brewery number 10 back to the Smithfield. The teams could only mark down a particular brewery once.

It was a hi-tech game, requiring a laptop and the services of the web maestros, namely Tim Jackson and Kim Walton, with Alban Pearce.

At the finish the scores were very close. Cows are Gone amassed a total of 2,853.6 miles, just beating Team Klondike with 2,764.8. The winners were presented with a CAMRA plaque and hold the title of CAMRA North Manchester Branch Beer Miles Champions of 2004. Will the 3,000-mile barrier be broken next year?

## Boggart Bulletin

*Dave Hallows*

Winter has come to the Boggart Hole Clough Brewery. The Green Boggart and his merry elves have brewed Ruby Red (3.7%), a roasted flavoured bitter, and Blackout Stout (5.5%), a rich, malty stout with a bitter aftertaste.

## New Bell

An outfit called the John Barras group has taken over the Blue Bell at Monton. John Barras was the founder of the Newcastle Brewery and the group owns over a hundred pubs around the country.

According to the website, their pubs are positioned at the heart of the community and offer heritage and tradition, real value food and drink, service and standards. No information yet on the real ale situation.

## Tre corona

The Three Crowns, Leigh Road, Daisy Hill has closed and is to reopen as an Italian restaurant.

## Pub going?

The Dock & Pulpit in Encombe Place, off Chapel Street, Salford, is expected to be demolished soon. The pub last appeared in the Good Beer Guide in 1999 and it has been closed for some time.

Years ago it was a Whitbread pub called the Borough Arms. Burtonwood took over for a time and for its last few years it was a real ale free house.

## Pub gone

The George in Prestwich (ex-Boddies) was demolished last month.

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

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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** £3.30 for six months, £5.80 for twelve months. Send cheque/PO together with your name and address to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW. Cheques made out to 'What's Doing'.

**BACK NUMBERS:** 15p per copy. Send stamped addressed envelope to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW.

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



## Desperately Seeking CAMRA

Neil Worthington

A note in last month's *What's Doing* informed the world that the North Manchester branch of the Campaign for Real Ale was planning a foray into the south side of Manchester city centre. For reasons too tedious to go into here, this is officially the territory of the Trafford & Hulme branch. A few T&H stalwarts decided to meet up with the Northerners and show them round 'our' pubs. But where were they?

The starting time was billed as 8.00pm in **Corbières**, one of Manchester's more unusual bars and a long time stockist of cask ale. It's a cellar bar, hidden away at the end of a winding staircase reached from Half Moon Street, just off St Ann Street and behind Cross Street. Down the steps we went and into something that the Clangers might once have called home: a small room with whitewashed lumpy plaster walls and ceiling, all very lunar landscape.

It's a busy little room with lots of young drinkers. Some of them were evidently students, diligently writing essays. Everybody seemed to be smoking. The cask beers are usually from Bazens these days, and on this occasion we had a very decent pint of Pacific to enjoy. Occasionally there are two beers on, both handpumped, and there are some interesting bottled beers too.

But where were our comrades from North Manchester? We kept looking round the room but saw no familiar faces. Neither did we see anyone looking lost or obviously seeking CAMRA as we were. So after a while, we tore ourselves away from the lure of the famously exotic jukebox, and out of the fug of smoke, and headed south.

Were they perhaps in **Mulligans** on Southgate, off Bridge Street? It used to be the Waggon & Horses,



but now it is one of the city's more authentic 'Irish' conversions. No sign of CAMRA. Still, they had a good pint of Taylors Landlord. The cask offering used to be Boddingtons, but the pub gave up on the brew a few months ago, blaming a number of problems on beer being delivered in poor condition.

Where could the CAMRA chaps be? Were they enjoying the bright lights of the **Hogs Head** on Deansgate? Nope. But for the record, this pub is still offering two cask ales, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Fullers London Pride - unlike its namesake in Sale, which has given up entirely on cask ale.

We pressed on to the next 'official' watering hole, as advertised in WD. This was the **Sir Ralph Abercromby** on Bootle Street. (A mate of another great pub name, Admiral Lord Nelson, Sir Ralph was Commander-in-Chief of British forces in the Mediterranean and mortally wounded at the battle of Alexandria in 1801.) This was a very quiet spot, with only four other patrons, none of them supping pints. The Ralph offers a largely unexciting range of beers but it is a rare outlet for Castle Eden, sadly not available that evening. We made do with Wadworths 6X (distinctly lacking in lustre) and Boddingtons bitter (far more interesting and for me, the best pint of the night).

Giving up on CAMRA, we headed off for our buses, pausing only to confirm the continuing absence of decent beer at the otherwise interesting **Jam Bar** on Peter Street (Hydes' only keg pub) and **Temple Bar** (the erstwhile public conveniences at the junction of Great Bridgewater Street and Oxford Street).



## Thirty Years On

Duncan Roberts

A friend once expressed the opinion that no local CAMRA magazine is as fixated with prices as *What's Doing*. Each time a beer is mentioned, it seems to him, it is accompanied by brackets containing its price. He will not like what follows.

In the autumn of 1974 I spent a weekend working as a waiter at the Grapes Hotel in Peel Green. At the time the pub was managed by Tom Evans and his wife. A few weeks ago I dug out the price list Tom had written for me and revisited the place, to see what had changed, besides the prices.

The Grapes was, and still is, a busy pub. The vault was often full of thirsty men who had just finished work at Dunlop's plant just round the corner or at Gardner's foundry in Barton Hall Works. Inevitably, much mild and bitter (and little else) was consumed in the vault. There were two lounges, for which I was the waiter. The regulars played cards and dominoes in one and conversation was predominant in the other, augmented some days with sing-songs accompanied by a pianist.

The lounges' patrons drank bottled beers, lager and spirits as well as mild and bitter. They were quite an eclectic group. Today, the rear,





# Thirty Years On

Prices: Autumn 1974 and Autumn 2004

	1974 Price pence	2004 Price £s	Ratio of Prices	Comments
<b>BULK BEERS</b>				
Bitter	15	£1.40	9.33	
Mild	14	£1.33	9.50	
Mixed	14.5	£1.37	9.45	
Lager	22	£1.53	6.95	Holts' own brand (only one on sale in 1974)
		£1.68		Holts' own premium brand
Guinness		£2.33		No bulk Guinness in 1974
<b>BOTTLES</b>				
Guinness	12	£1.40	11.67	
Brown Stout	11.5	£0.80	6.96	
Sixex	12.5	£1.12	8.96	
Lager	12.5	£1.45	11.60	Base product (Harp in 1974)
		£1.93		Other more expensive brand (not sold in 1974)
		£2.40		Much more expensive brand (not sold in 1974)
Cider	11.5	£1.26	10.96	(Woodpecker)
<b>SHORTS</b>				
Whisky	17	£1.23	7.24	Holts' own brand
		£1.75		Premium brand
Brandy	17	£1.37	8.06	Holts' own brand
		£1.69		Premium brand
Rum	15	£1.23	8.20	Holts' own brand
		£1.48		Premium brand
Gin	15	£1.23	8.20	Holts' own brand
		£1.48		Premium brand
<b>BUS FARES</b>				
Lamb to Grapes 8		£0.70	8.75	

quiet lounge has been extended and the piano has gone from the front lounge.

The lobby was a drinking area in its own right. It had a few tables and chairs for predominantly female and middle aged customers. Bottled beer was the normal tipple of these folk.

Behind the vault there was a billiard room with a full-size table. Two standard pub pool tables now occupy this space and the clientele seems younger.

Inside and out, the Grapes is still an impressive Edwardian pile.

The table represents a summary of prices then and now. The fourth column gives the ratio of the second to the third. Thus a pint of bitter today is 9.33 times the price it was in 1974.

I have noted both prices only where direct comparisons are possible. The range of bottled beers has changed considerably; far fewer are from Holts and many more come from other suppliers. In 1974 the only spirits on sale were the brewery's own. Now the selection has been augmented by better-known brands (at suitably higher prices).

Draught beers are about 9.5 times their 1974 prices, but ordinary lager has risen by a smaller amount. Holts' own bottled beers have gone up by rather less than this, but the bottled products from other suppliers are over eleven times the price. This reflects trends elsewhere in the industry. 'Draught' Guinness seems fearsomely expensive. Holts' spirits are proportionally better value for money than they were.

I would like to see a similar comparison made for one of Eccles' erstwhile Boddingtons pubs. In the 1970s Boddies' prices were similar to Holts'. I'll wager that they have gone up by a lot more than nine and a half times since then.

Finally, to catch a bus to the Grapes from Eccles (say the Lamb Hotel) would have cost you 8p in 1974. Today the fare is 70p - just under nine times the price and in line with the changes at the Grapes.

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## Top TIT

Readers can still vote for their favourite beer in the 2004 TIT (Trotter's Independent Trophy) Awards.

Vote by email to [thecrow1961@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecrow1961@yahoo.co.uk)

Or by text, beginning with the word BEER, to 07944500174

# For the best real ale pubs in the UK

## Good Beer Guide 2005

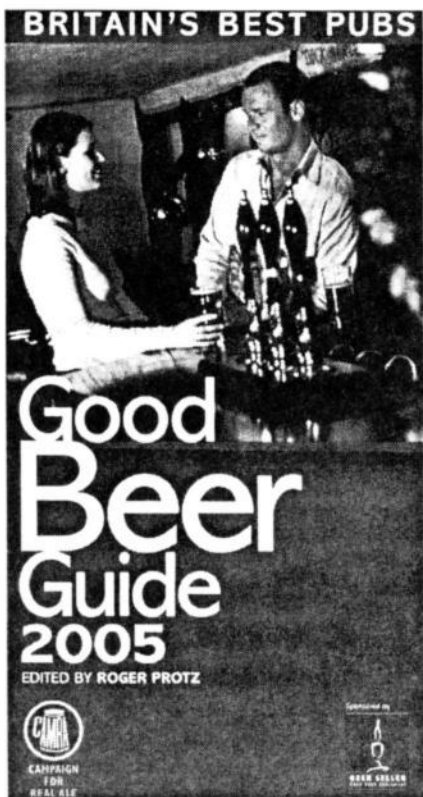
**"Every time I tour the nation,  
it's the first thing I pack"**  
— Oz Clarke

This best-selling guide provides details on 4,500 of the best real ale pubs in Britain today. All pubs listed within the guide serve good-quality real ale and are inspected throughout the year to ensure a consistently high standard.

Every entry contains contact details for each pub as well as descriptions and information on the choice of real ales, food and suitability for families. This beer lovers' bible also contains information on all Britain's breweries with tasting notes for real ales brewed in the UK.

Edited by Roger Protz, the Good Beer Guide 2005 is available direct from the Campaign for Real Ale, RRP £13.99 but only £10 plus £1 p&p for CAMRA members. Call 01727 867201 to order or buy online at [www.camra.org.uk/books](http://www.camra.org.uk/books)

[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)  
**01727 867201**



## Letters

### Good Beer Guide

Sir - I note that both next year's and this year's editions of the Good Beer Guide have emblazoned on their covers 'Britain's Best Pubs' - or something very similar. (Previous editions might also have said this, but it's usually what's inside that interests me).

Forgive me, but I thought that the whole point of the GBG was that it is a good BEER guide, not a pub guide (there are plenty of them about). The Guide's purpose is to lead the thirsty to good beer. If the pub is 'Violent and filthy,' has 'Brawls Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays,' or is a 'Rare example of authentic squalor,' then the comments should tell me this and I can make my own decision about going there.

I recall one Salford pub, short-listed for a 1970s edition of the Guide, that had its ashtrays screwed to the tables, which were in turn screwed to the floor. The mynah bird's cage was secured to the piano, which was rawl-bolted to the wall (to the detriment of its acoustics), but its beer was wonderful.

Has the campaign lost its way or should my membership category be changed to Reactionary Old Fart?

*D Busman*

### No Smoking

Sir - The following can be added to Neil Worthington's list of pubs with no-smoking rooms in the Trafford area (*WD October*):

Vine, Dunham Massey  
Cheshire Midland, Hale  
Bulls Head, Hale Barns

*Roger Wood*

### One more for Eccles

Sir - Re the list of Eccles pubs in last month's What's Doing. I know Pat Town and Charlie Rycroft had had a few by the time we got to the Eccles Cross, but they were chucked out for singing, so they should have remembered it. Definitive list, indeed.

*Bunthorne Fortescue*

### Feet of Endurance

Sir - With reference to Hikin' Man's FEB hiking boots (*WD last month*), purchased in August 1974. I can beat that. I still wear a pair of wellingtons (Argyll Uniroyal) bought in the 1960s.

*Ol' Boot*

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Contributors to this issue: Roger Hall, Dave Hallows, John Cresswell, Duncan Roberts, Paul Warbrick, Pete Cash, Michael Lynn, Neil Worthington, Phil Stout, Alex Koval

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# Rupert

Recent legislation will have a damaging effect on our hostelries, inns and taverns and not just where you might think. Back home, the Wealthshire Hunt, which Fiona described as 'pink rhyming slang,' will be no more and with it will go such treasures as the Stirrup Cup and Hark to Toddcroaker. But what about the inner city?

Not quite for centuries, the Vile Splatting Hunt has used Jack Russells and quasi-feral lurchers to chase rats which were usually despatched with air rifles or pickaxe handles on some brick-strewn croft. At first it was thought that hunting with dogs laws would make it illegal. It appears, however, that it's only foxes and deer which are protected. It's OK to pursue any other animal with dogs, or indeed any animal at all with leopards.

So what's the fear, then? Well, it's a class thing. Mycroft Fortescue turned up some years ago outside the Alsatian and Pickaxe Handle in motley and playing a clarinet, the idea being to charm the rats away. It didn't work and Mycroft was found in the stinking bog after which the district was named with the clarinet in a place where it couldn't be played. This event led to Bunty's first incarceration for the ensuing carnage.

What the good people of Vile Splatting fear is the gentrification of the rat hunt by displaced hoorays from rural hunts. It won't translate well from horses to off-road bikes and they'd stick out



like sore thumbs in the charismatic hostelries of the area. Poncy cuisine catering to the new clientele is the last thing they need. The class war should be undertaken in less visible ways.

It's not just hunting which threatens our licensed premises. In some of the less respectable hostelries of Grungehurst, for example, the post-coital cigarette is a tradition going back decades. The Rampant Strumpet's masked grab-a-granny evenings have proved popular with overseas visitors for a long time and have survived the disappearance of Slumley Docks. The snug, or 'matchmaking room,' as it was dubbed by some visitor from Lisdomvarna, has proved ideal for the purpose. To force people to go outside would seem to be a step too far. I suppose Big Doris could always stop serving food, but that's hardly the point. I have never had sex in a pub or smoked with dogs, so I have no axe to grind.

# Branch Diary

## **Regional CAMRA Under 30 Social Group**

Fri 3 Dec, from 8pm. Social in the Rain Bar, Great Bridgewater Street, off Oxford Street, Central Manchester  
Contact: davehallows2002 @yahoo.co.uk

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

Wed 1 Dec: Eccles Crawl. White Lion 7.30, Royal Oak, Wellington, Albert Edward 9pm. Lamb 9.45pm.

Wed 8 Dec: Wetherspoons Survey: Paramount 7.30pm, Waterhouse 8.00, Moon Under Water 8.30, Piccadilly 9.15. Finish at Jolly Angler.

Wed 15 Dec 8pm: Branch Meeting. Beer House, Angel Street

Wed 22 Dec: Salford Social Evening, Kings Arms, Bloom Street 8pm. Albert Vaults, Chapel Street 9pm

Wed 29 Dec (note - Wednesday): What's Doing Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street, 12 noon. Followed by pub crawl including Dutton and Northern Quarter, then Christmas Curry

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## **Wigan**

Wed 15th Dec 8pm: Branch meeting, Orwell, Wigan Pier

Wed 29th Dec: Branch social/pub crawl around Liverpool city centre.

Branch contact has details

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

## **Rochdale, Oldham & Bury**

Tues 7 Dec 8.30pm: Branch Meeting, Arthur Inn, Bolton Road, Bury

Tues 14 Dec: Christmas Social, The Baum, Toad Lane, Rochdale.

Details from Branch Contact

Tues 28 Dec: Drown the Turkey Social, Central Manchester. 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](http://www.camra.org.uk/trafford)

Thur 9 Dec 8pm: Branch Meeting, Wheatsheaf, Altrincham

Thur 16 Dec: Hydes Brewery, Christmas Social. Limited number of places, so booking essential. Contact Neil Worthington

Thur 6 Jan 8pm: Branch Meeting, Orange Tree, Altrincham

Thur 13 Jan 8pm: Chorlton Social, The Beech Inn, Beech Road

Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976



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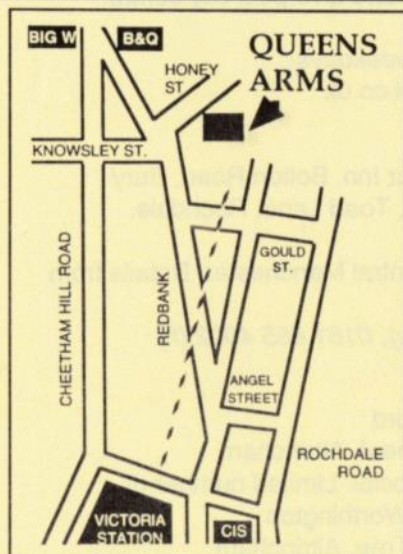
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