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# 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.

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## 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.

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*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

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## 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 27<sup>th</sup> July, at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

## Letters

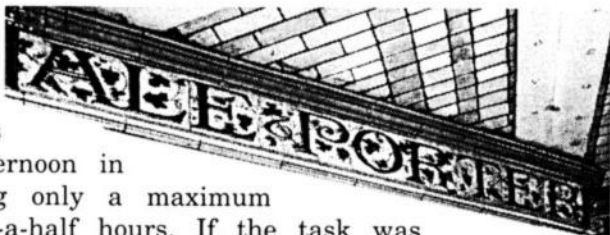
### Doing the Frieze

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*

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## 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 23<sup>rd</sup>. 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.

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## 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 Hostelryes

*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.

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## 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.



## Extended Hours

*Ian Kenny*

The following have made applications for extended hours under the upcoming Licensing Act...

**White Lion**, Manchester Rd, Swinton (Robinsons, GBG 2005 listed): Until midnight Sunday to Thursday; until 1.00am Friday & Saturday.

**Football**, Swinton Hall Rd, Swinton (Punch Taverns - Tetley bitter and dark mild): Until midnight Thursday to Saturday; from 11.30am Sunday.

**White Horse**, Worsley Rd, Swinton (Spirit Group - Boddingtons bitter, Theakstons bitter and occasional guest): Until midnight Monday to Wednesday; until 1.00am Thursday to Sunday.

**Barton Arms**, Stablefield, Worsley (Mitchells & Butlers - Boddingtons bitter and guest): Until midnight daily.

**Bridgewater**, Barton Road, Worsley (Spirit Group - Boddingtons bitter and usually two guests): Until midnight, Monday to Wednesday; until 1.00am Thursday to Sunday.

Local residents are believed to be opposing any extensions in Worsley village, though the **John Gilbert** (Hardy & Hansons) has already had its application approved: same hours as the Bridgewater.

**Plough**, Liverpool Rd, Cadishead (Punch Taverns - no real ale): Until midnight, Monday to Saturday; from 11am Sunday.

**Shakespeare**, Fountain St, city centre (Spirit Group - Boddingtons



bitter and Greene King Abbot): Until 1.00am Monday to Thursday; until 2.00am Friday & Saturday; until midnight Sunday.

**Town Hall**, Church St, Eccles (Punch Taverns - no real ale): Until midnight Monday to Thursday; until 1.00am Friday & Saturday; until midnight Sunday.

The **Cliff Convenience Store** on Great Clowes Street, Broughton, which has been known to sell bottled Facer's beers, has applied for a 24-hour licence.

Holts are believed to be making applications for all their managed houses to stay open until midnight Sunday to Thursday and until 1.00am Friday & Saturday.

Applications are currently running at below 10% of all premises eligible and the applications have to be submitted before August. Otherwise, premises will be classified as 'new licences' and will have to be considered by committee. If refused, they will not be able to open at all after November.

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### **Pints, Paths & Paddles**      Walk No.4: Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2005

This year's walk takes in the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal. The walk can be joined at various points, and might well surprise a few people with the bucolic and libatory delights to be savoured. The route can easily be accessed by public transport:

**11.00am:** Leave Stretford Metrolink and walk via Kickety Brook to the Lord Nelson, Urmston (3 miles).

**1.00pm:** Leave Lord Nelson, walk via Urmston Meadows to the Church Inn, Flixton (2 miles).

**3.00pm:** Leave Church Inn for the Fox & Hounds, Woodsend Ave, Flixton (1 mile).

**4.00pm:** Leave Fox & Hounds for the Boathouse, Irlam, via Irlam Locks (2 miles).

We then get very refreshed in the Boathouse. All welcome. Contact Ken Birch 0161 705 0836.



## Whaley Bridge Wanderings

*On a hot, sunny evening in June, North Manchester CAMRA members boarded the Buxton train for an extramural jaunt to Whaley Bridge. Pete Cash recalls...*

Backing on to the railway station is the **Jodrell Arms**, a large ex-Wilsons house. This must once have had an international clientele, for above a curiously shaped back door, now permanently shut, a sign proclaims 'Rooms; Chambres; Zimmer'. We entered the side door and inspected the bar. One of the two handpumps had a Pedigree clip, but no real ale was available.

In a side street across the A5004 from the Jodrell, there is the **Goyt**, a small, low-ceilinged, two-room pub with a comfortable 'lived-in' feel, complete with leaded glass partitions and nicotine coloured walls. Newspapers are displayed on an interestingly booted two legged



table. In front of the bar is a panel painted in traditional narrowboat style (the canal basin is nearby) with the name of the famous trading company 'Fellows, Morton and Clayton - Number 1937 327.' This was commissioned by a previous landlord in the early nineties and the number refers to his date of birth. His daughter confirmed that the pub is much the same today as when she was resident. The beers were Greene King IPA and Abbot - both excellent - and Tetley Bitter and Dark Mild. Somebody thought the latter was a 'bit appley'.

The **Railway** on the main road is a Robinsons pub with a central bar serving a separate vault and lounge, and a pool table in an alcove. Unicorn Bitter and Hatters Mild were on sale. Only the bitter was tried and was of good quality. Thanks to unreliable trains and problems on the Metro, we were left with time only to go to the



**Shepherds Arms**, about a quarter of a mile from the station. The front door is on the old road and the back entrance is on the new. There are just two rooms: a smart, comfortable lounge with pictures and brasses around the walls, and a cosy tap room with a stone-flagged floor, a small but effective open fire, and tables that have been worn white by decades of scrubbing. There is also an attractive beer garden.

Regular beers are Marstons Burton

Bitter and Pedigree, together with Banks's Original (mild), all served in the vault. An extra pump in the lounge features a guest beer; on our visit it was Shepherd Neame's Bishops Finger. All beers except the Banks's were tried and were in tip-top condition.

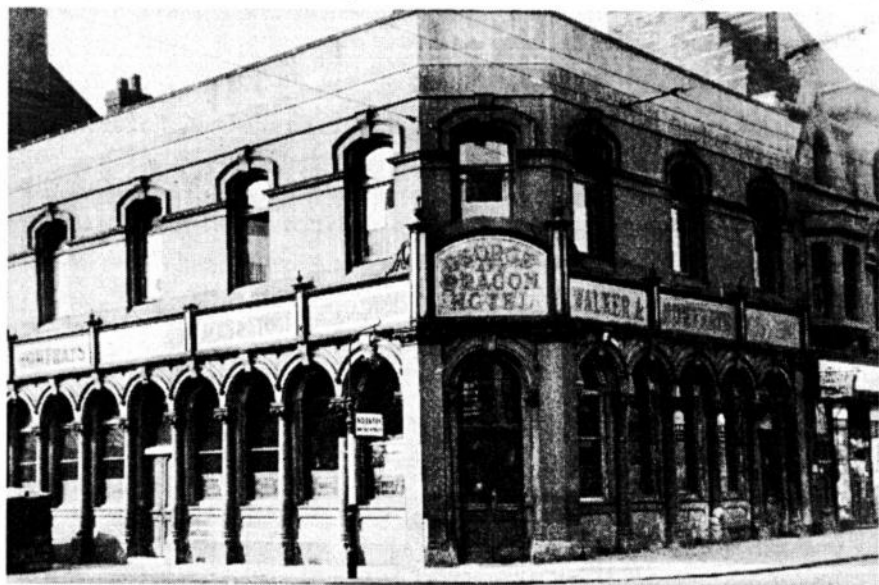


## **King's Ale McKenna's**

*Leo King*

Last month's feature on the the Marble Arch mentions B & J McKenna & Co, the Harpurhey brewery which rebuilt the pub in the 1880s and had its ale and porter stores there. McKenna's owned another pub not far away, the George & Dragon on Swan Street. It is still there, now the Band on the Wall, which for many years has been a well known music venue.

McKenna's company office was next door to the pub and the 'McK' monogram can still be seen above the second floor window. They also had their wine and spirit stores there. The photo shows the pub in the 1950s, complete with Walker & Homfray signs (the Salford brewery which took over McKenna's). Just visible is the double electric wiring used by Manchester's trolley buses which once ran along Swan Street.



## **Hobson's Choice**

Also in last month's *What's Doing*, there was an article about the film *Hobson's Choice*, and it was stated that the pub in the film was a studio set. I was under the impression that they used a real pub - the Brown Cow on Oldfield Road in Salford, which was renamed the Hobsons Choice in the 1970s and was demolished about ten years ago.

## **Phoenix**

The name of another old brewery still survives in the All Saints area, near the University. This came about because there used to be a pub

on the corner of Oxford Road and Brunswick Street called the College Inn. It was owned by the original Phoenix Brewery of Heywood before the local Cornbrook Brewery took over, but 'Phoenix' was used when Cornbrook's successors, Bass, opened their new pub on Oxford Road in the 1970s.

### Higsons

The Kings Arms, another of the old student pubs on Oxford Road, belonged to Higsons Brewery of Liverpool. It was one of only three they owned in Manchester: the Railway was directly opposite Knott Mill Station (why on earth did they rename it Deansgate Station?) and the third was in Crown Square. I forget the name, but the beer was keg rubbish!

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### Barton Blues

*Pete Cash*

Acting on a hot tip from Stewart Revell, that real ale had returned to the Kings Head near the Barton Swing Aqueduct, I diverted my usual route between the Peel Green **Grapes** and Patricroft's **Stanley Arms**, to go an extra mile or so down the Bridgewater Canal and back to check it out. Whilst there, I had to pass the **Dutton**, which still has a large sign proclaiming Traditional Beers, so I went in. Unfortunately, there was no such thing visible.

Under the canal, then, where outside the **Kings Head** was a similar sign advertising cask conditioned ales. Indeed, there were two handpumps on the bar, each with a Boddingtons Bitter clip but turned away from the customers. I told the barmaid my story, but she said the real ale appeared 'very, very rarely'. In fact, it was so long ago she couldn't remember what the beer was, though it wasn't Boddingtons. Sorry, Stewart, but your informants have been sadly mistaken.

Heading up Cawdor Street back to the A57 I checked out the **Barton Inn**. A similar sign to the Dutton implied real ale but the somewhat gloomy interior showed no sign of a handpump. Sadly, the beleaguered beer buffs of Barton must go to Patricroft for their real ale: Boddies at the **Queens Arms** and Holts at the **Bird In Hand**, **Stanley** and **Bridgewater**. Similar signs outside the **Packet House**, **Spinners Arms** and **Oddfellows** also hold out false hope of the real thing!

## Beerienteering

Dave Hallows

This year's Beerienteering event, a real ale drinking game on the lines of orienteering, run by the region's CAMRA under-30s social group, had a very close finish. There were just nine minutes between the first three teams.

Teams had to follow the clues and find six pubs in the correct order, travelling on foot or by public transport from the Knott Bar on Deansgate in Manchester. The last pub was some eight miles away in Stockport. There were time bonuses and penalties, and the score was calculated in minutes from start to finish.

Last year's champions, *Team Purple*, made a quick start and were on fine form. The organisers were surprised that they and all the other teams managed to solve what was thought to be a difficult clue, earning a 30 minute bonus. Getting it wrong would have brought a 30 minute penalty. After a staggered start, all teams piled into the City Arms at different intervals. The *Lost Souls* team fared well, as did *Making Poverty History*. A team of eight, *The Misfits*, was a mix of last year's *Bald But Beautiful* and *Barmy Army*. The organisers vainly tried to split them into two groups, but they wouldn't have it. Maybe the presence of a female member in a silver-sparkly dress and shocking pink wig had some bearing on it?



At the Victoria (Hydes) in Withington village, the teams had the chance of a time bonus with the score from throwing three darts. This year was billed as 'Beerienteering 2: Quest for the Tankard', so there had to be a tankard, or two tankards, to be precise. One was a decoy. The correct tankard was ignored by three teams, including last year's winners, who thought both tankards were red herrings. That unwise decision made for the close result.

At this stage *Team Purple* were in the lead, with *Lost Souls* and *Three Legs* on their tails. The next pub was the Royal Oak (Marstons) in Didsbury, where a simple clue was solved for a 30 minute bonus. Then came the Old Vic on the Edgeley side of Stockport, which had opened specially for the event. *Team Purple* were making such good time that the organisers were worried that the team would arrive before they were ready for them.



The penultimate pub was Sam Smith's Queens Head (Turners Vaults) on Little Underbank. Here the teams could pick up more bonuses when interviewed by CAMRA U30 Co-ordinators Kim Walton and Tim Jackson (creator of Beerienteering) and Stockport Beer Festival Head Steward Paul 'Freddy' Formby.

The event ended at the Arden Arms on Millgate, a runner-up in CAMRA's National Pub of the Year competition. All the teams finished within an hour-and-a-half and when the scores were added up the *Three Legs* team, Matt Parr and Amy Joughlin, were declared the winners. Second, by a mere seven minutes, were *Lost Souls*, and *Team Purple* came third.

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

**To Join CAMRA** send £18 to Membership, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.



## A trip to Keswick

*In late May, William and Maureen of Irlam put on their wellies and headed for the Lakes...*

We had a pit stop at the **Inn on the Lake** at the southern end of Ullswater. The view from the lounge windows was breathtaking. I had a pint of Old Speckled Hen, at an equally breathtaking £2.80.

Keswick is situated at the northern end of Derwent Water and the Derwent launch boats take visitors to seven different picturesque spots round the relatively small stretch of water. However, there was no real ale at the **Lodore Falls Hotel**, or at the **Merry Mount** at the bottom end of the Water, or at the **Derwent Hotel** at the top end. But at least these plush hotels allow scruffy, ruck-sacked beings on to the premises. The Merry Mount says 'Walkers Welcome' and you are not put in a potting shed or 'Ramblers Bar' either.

There was no problem at Keswick itself. Jennings, Jennings, all the way, with Theakstons and Thwaites thrown in. We stayed in a non-smoking guest house and there was a non-smoking pub, the **Four in Hand**, a stone's throw away. The place was packed and it had four Jennings beers: bitter, Cumberland, Snecklifter and Crag Rat, which was a sort of super Cumberland Ale designed to get you rat-arsed.

There are plenty of buses to get the traveller about, but boots and waterproofs are essential.



## Rupert

Ophelia Hampton had brought her hand-held down to Ratties and insisted we all played her Google game as we sat in the beer garden on Midsummer's eve. What you had to do was think of two words which had nothing in common and would, therefore, result in a no match; ie, no standard web page contained both words. In the case of a draw a judgement had to be made in terms of elegance between the relative merits of, say, 'transvestite buckyborg' and 'retromingent horsetrough', both of which had no match.

Mycroft and Ophelia were still arguing about the legitimacy of 'Gritviken ionosphere' and 'endocrinologically farinaceous' when I thought I'd try something. I popped in the words 'Jamie Frotter'. Imagine my surprise when it returned 985 hits. Even when it was restricted to pages in English, there were still 210. He's obviously more notorious than many of us had dared imagine.

I think his name had been on my mind because of a missive which he had penned to our mother organ. In this communication he

expressed the view that he had become a denizen of Grotley purely to sample the delights of Drabs' amber nectars which, subsequent to his departure, had deteriorated to a bland reflection of their former glory.

Many of us had been under the impression that he had come to Grotley pursued by Plod and the *News of the Screws* and had left hurriedly for the same reason. Given his explanation, this is clearly wrong and Bunty in particular regretted anything he might have said or done which created a different impression and hoped that in the fullness of time Jamie might once again grace our fair city with his presence.

As the light eventually died, Mycroft brought the last round of 'not-as-good-as-it-used-to-be' Drabs out to our table and I thought I'd have one last go at the hand-held Google game. Surely there could be no connection between the new global brewer InBev and their American counterpart Anheuser Busch? Not much - only 16,900 hits, compared with a mere 403 for the combination of Hydes and Boddingtons. The implication of that would have to wait.

## Sportsmen's corner

The table football machine has been removed from the Jolly Angler, Ducie Street, in the city.

## Branch Diary

### Trafford & Hulme

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

Thur 7 July 8pm, Branch Meeting,  
Lloyds, Chorlton

Sat 16 July: Summer social/survey.

Meet 1pm at Railway, Broadheath.

2pm Bay Malton, Oldfield Brow. 4pm Vine, Dunham Massey

Wed 27 July 8pm: Pub of the Season award, Peveril of the Peak,  
Manchester

Thur 11 Aug 8pm: Branch Meeting, Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Contact: *John Ison 0161 962 7976*

### Regional Meeting

Sat 16 July 12.30pm,

Beer House, Angel

Street, Manchester

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

Sat 2 July: Independents' Day Treasure Hunt. Marble Arch. Start at  
noon. Return before 8pm for scoring

Wed 6 July: Social at Crescent, Salford. 8pm, or before 7.30 for curry.

Wed 13 July: Bolton Crawl: Barristers, Bradshawgate, 7.30. Howcroft  
8.45. Hen & Chickens 9.30.

Wed 20 July 8pm: Branch Meeting, Beer House

Tues 26 July 3pm: What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey St

Wed 27 July: Millstone Brewery Visit. Unit 4, Vale Mill, Micklehurst  
Road, Mossley, at 7.30. Booking essential. £6 per head includes beer  
and food. Phone Phil Booton 0161 957 7148. Train from Victoria at  
18.27 arrive 18.46. Assemble in the Britannia, across and along road  
from station

Contact: *Roger Hall 0161 740 7937*

### Wigan

Wed 13 July 8pm: Branch Meeting, Foresters Arms, Main St, Billinge

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

*07889 898955 (mob). email: [vhollows@peel.co.uk](mailto:vhollows@peel.co.uk)*

### Eccles (very) Cross

Disorderly conduct among the denizens of the Wetherspoons pub in  
Eccles (*WD last month*) has resulted in increased door and CCTV  
security measures. If things don't improve, it is believed the police  
may ask for the pub to be closed.

Elsewhere in Eccles, the Devonshire Arms (ex-Swampy's Fun Pub,  
etc) on Liverpool Road is closed and boarded. The owners are  
advertising for a new manager with immediate start.



*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

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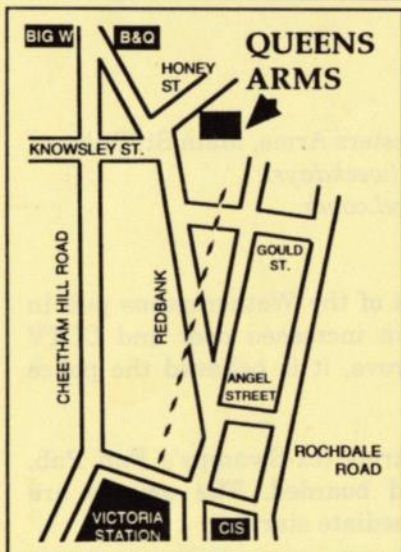
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