

# What's Doing

OCTOBER 2005



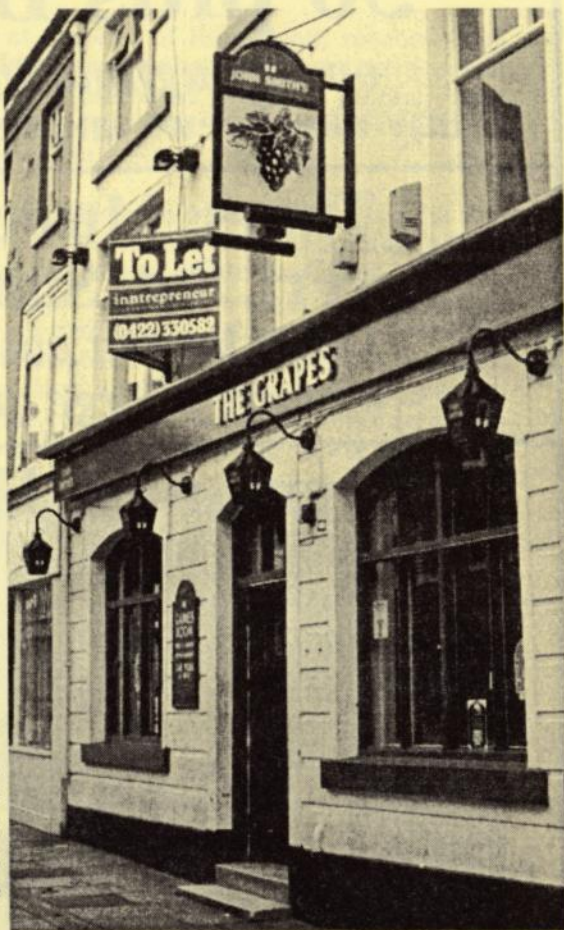
The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

## GRAPES EXPECTATIONS

After several years as a keg-only pub, a brief period as a restaurant and then a year as a cafe bar, the Grapes Inn on Church Street, Eccles, is to reopen as a pub. Former GBG licensee Jens Bollerod (late of the Drop Inn in Monton) is a partner in the venture, which has a commitment to cask beer and traditional food.

Initially the beers are from Bazens, Three Rivers and Beartown, and guests and mini beer/food festivals are promised.

Pricing will be competitive, with the house beer (Three Rivers GMT) coming in at £1.45 and Bazens' Pacific at £1.60. Most cask beers will be well under £2.



# **Beer Festival**

## **The Bridgewater Hotel**

23 Barton Road, Worsley      0161 794 0589

**29th October - 5th November**

# **30 plus Beers**

*on throughout the week*

**Many new brews and festival specials**

**Thurs: Music Quiz**

**Fri, Sat, Sun: DJ**

*Don't let that put you off  
- we have a large quiet room*

## **18 Permanent Handpulls**

*- is this a record for Manchester?*

**Open 11am till 11pm Mon to Sat  
12 noon till 10.30 Sun**

**Quality food every day till 8pm**

**Andy, Lynn, Gary & Jo**

**from the Hare & Hounds, Holcombe Brook, welcome  
old and new friends to their new watering hole**



## Jackson's Boat afloat again

*Neil Worthington*

David Hall and Paul Riley have been mine hosts at Jackson's Boat in Sale since March and, being keen on cask ale, they recently held a mini beer festival. Beers from Marble (Ginger Marble and Lagonda IPA), Boggart (Dark Side Porter and Goblin Gold) and Moorhouses (Pendle Witch) were on gravity in a temporary outside bar. Inside were the three regulars, Marstons Pedigree, Morland Old Speckled Hen and Taylors Landlord, plus an uncommon beer for these parts, Highgate Dark Mild. Two more beers completed the line-up: Fullers London Pride and Wadworth 6X.

Jackson's Boat now sells a full range of food, with the kitchen open every day of the week (till 7 on Sunday and 9 every other day). The interior has been spruced up, and Sky Sports and the TV have been ditched to give the place a more family-friendly atmosphere.

The pub is set in woodland at the end of Rifle Road, reached from Junction 6 of the M60, and there is a substantial beer garden and children's play area. If Phase 3 of Metrolink ever gets funding, then the line to the Airport will pass close to the pub and there will be a stop nearby (provisionally named 'Sale Water Park').

A long-time resident of Sale, Mr Wilkinson, recalls that when he was a child in the 1930s, his father would take him to the Jackson's Boat and deposit him in the landlord's kitchen, where there was a roaring fire and a grey parrot in a cage. He says the pub had no gas or electricity before the war and all cooking and lighting was by paraffin. Mains water arrived in the 1920s, when Tetley's bought the property; before that, water was drawn from a well. Sometimes there was too much running water. When the river flooded, the inhabitants had to take refuge on the first floor, without even a jug of ale to sustain them, as the cellar would be inundated.

Over the years the course of the Mersey has been altered and the pub has consequently moved from Lancashire to Cheshire. Nowadays there is a steep embankment to contain floodwater, but the surrounding meadows can still be flooded from time to time.



# THE CRESCENT

SALFORD

0161 736 5600

OPEN ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

10 cask ales always available

**HYDES BITTER - ROOSTERS SPECIAL**

**PHOENIX THIRSTY MOON** *Plus 7 guests*

Erdinger on draught, Liefmans Kriek + Quality Doubles Bar

Regularly Changing **BELGIAN Guest Beer**

BAZENS' AWARD WINNING BLACK PIG MILD NOW PERMANENT

PAULANER MUNCHEN ORIGINAL (4.9%) NOW ON DRAUGHT

**City Life PUB OF THE YEAR 2004-5**

Large Range of **BELGIAN & GERMAN** Bottled Beers

**FOOTBALL on SKY TV**

Food served every lunchtime from 11.30am (12.00 on Sundays)

Free Chip Barms Mondays 5-6pm

Weds 5-8pm Choice of Six Curries (Veg & Meat) + Rice - £3.20

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

***Our Next Beer Festival***

*is from*

Thurs 6th until Sun 9th October

**40 NEW BEERS**

*Served from the Bar and Cellar*

*Food served all day*

Function/Party Room available for free hire - Buffets or hot meals  
provided on request - T.V. and Games Room open for darts

## Salford Brewery Syndicate

Richard Bazen has been commissioned to produce a beer for the Salford Food and Drink Festival (see elsewhere in this issue), to be called **Salford Festival Ale** and available from 5th October. A new batch of **eXSB** is in production. The beer won the Great Harwood Beer of the Festival last May.

David Facer will be moving to Wales at the end of October (*see WD August*) and his final Salford brew will be **Beerjolais Nouveau**, using hops from his garden.

## Lions Festival

The Independent Swinton Lions Supports Trust are having a Beer Festival on Friday and Saturday, 11th and 12th November. Twenty-five ales are promised. The venue is The Folly on Station Road, Swinton (next to Swinton Station) and opening times are 7pm-11pm Friday; 12 noon to 6pm and 7pm to 11pm Saturday. Entry is £2 and there is a £2 deposit on a souvenir glass (returnable if glass is returned).

The organisers are looking for volunteers to help out during the event. (A certain amount of free ale will be available.) Contact D Bentham 01204 575268.

## Community Pubs Foundation

At this year's Great British Beer Festival CAMRA launched the Community Pubs Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation providing advice, information and limited financial help to groups campaigning to prevent pub closures. As property and land prices soar, more pubs are under threat and closures are now averaging 26 a month. There is more information on the websites:

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

## Cool Crescent

The October Crescent Beer Festival will coincide with the inauguration of the completely new cellar cooling system which has just been installed. As usual at these events, many of the beers will be served directly from the casks in the cellar, so the efficiency can be instantly appreciated.

## Letter

### Know your station

Sir - I must object to the comment in last month's *What's Doing* about Salford Central Station being 'nearly' fully staffed. Also, the Monday-Thursday times have nothing to do with engineering work, and trains are not diverted via Ordsall Lane. The early closing during the week is because there's no custom on those nights!

*Station Master, Salford Central Station*

## Holts corner

Stewart Revell

A few years ago Holts won a Silver Medal for their cask mild at the International Brewers' Awards. This year the event was in Munich, alongside a big international brewers' exhibition, and Holts did very well. **1849** won a gold medal and **Maple Moon** a silver in the Class 2 (4.4%-5.1%) packaged beers. It is possible that some of their recent bottled beers may be offered in the pubs as a seasonal beer, in traditional form, and I'm all for that!



The Joseph Holt labels and logos have been redesigned in recent times by a Leeds-based company called The Lock 23. Creative Director Nick Lock has a keen sense of humour judging from their website: <http://www.thelock23.co.uk/>

During the last two years or so a large studio complex has been built opposite the **Dukes Gate** pub in Little Hulton. Studios A and B are already in use by various TV companies and Studio C is almost ready. For the last few months, whenever there is a break between sessions or filming has finished for the day, the technicians leave word that they can be found in Studio D - aka the Dukes Gate.

[stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk](mailto:stewart@revell62.freemove.co.uk)

# RADCLIFFE CRICKET CLUB BEER FESTIVAL

**27th, 28th, 29th, 30th October**

*(Thursday to Sunday lunchtime)*

**30 CASK ALES and 2 CIDERS**

Musical Entertainment and Food

**Radcliffe Cricket Club, Homer Street,  
off Bolton Road, Radcliffe, Manchester**

*Good public transport links. The Bolton to Bury 524  
bus (frequent service) passes the club*

**Pre-booked** camping and breakfasts available

*For further information: 0161 724 8991*

## Trotter's Ales

*Trotter came out of retirement to sample a few beers over the Bank Holiday weekend and to cast an eye over the changing Bolton pub circuit...*

On Sunday evening, 28th August, I began at the **Britannia** Beer Festival. The Britannia is Farnworth's premier pub and whenever there's a Bank Holiday, there is a festival. My first beer was George Wright's refreshing Summer Ale, brewed at Rainford, St Helens. Next I tried Archers' Old Bill Bitter, which tasted similar to their Best Bitter, only slightly weaker. Titanic's Wreckage (6.6%) had just been replaced by Clarke's Classic Blonde (3.9%), a beer which I am partial to, with its citrus and hoppy flavour and dry finish.

At this point during the session my good friends Rock Chick and Old Dick arrived and I immediately put them on the Blonde. We spent the rest of the evening socialising and enjoying the festival's excellent quality beers.

Hart Brewery was represented by a beer called Chinook, which must be the first ale named after a helicopter. It was a new one to me and, like all Hart beers, it was good. Next up was Wye Valley Butty Bach, a golden, full-bodied premium ale. I finished the session back on the Clarke's Classic Blonde.

On to Day Two of the festival, and a nice, sunny Bank Holiday afternoon. I began with another of the George Wright beers - King's Shilling (4.5%), then went on to Clarke's Blonde (again), before sampling Wright's Cheeky Pheasant, a 4.7% mid-brown ale. Bazens' Pacific came on, so I couldn't resist sampling this ale from Salford by the Sea. Another replacement was Smiles' Maiden Leg-over, an appropriately titled ale since the England cricket team had thrashed the Aussies the day before. I resisted the temptation to try Wobbly Bob and ended the session with some Pendle Witch. There were discussions about the Brit holding a Halloween theme beer festival, so watch this space.

Going into Bolton on the No.8 bus, the first port of call is always the **Alma Inn**, the rockers/bikers pub and now the only venue in town which hosts rock/metal band nights. Only one handpull, but some quality beers have been downed here. When I visited recently for the Bolton Metal Showcase, Adnams Broadside was supped.

In a nearby side street, another favourite pub, the **Anchor** (aka Little Anchor) has been shuttered up for some time and the building is for sale as a 'business opportunity'. Before going downhill, the Anchor sold an excellent pint of Bass.

Going along Bradshawgate, the next real ale outlet worth a visit is the **Wetherspoons** pub in Nelson Square. Next door, the **Red on the Square**, which sold handpumped Thwaites when it first opened, has

been bought by renowned local chef Paul Heathcote and is to be turned into an upmarket Italian restaurant called the Olive Press.

All the other outlets on Nelson Square are fashionable or themed bars. Across Bradshawgate, the former post office building on the corner of Silverwell Street was a Hogshead pub a few years ago. As with all Hogsheads of that era, there were bare wooden floors and about eight real ales. Times changed and so did the interior decor; the place went 'sporty' for a time, with fewer and fewer real ales and now the pub is called **Circa**.

**Maxims** was a regular stop for me and my drinking buddies years ago, then it became a Seventies theme bar called **Tiger Feet** (yes, named after the Mud hit) and it is now called **Bar:[Me]**, which is appropriate, as on Friday and Saturday nights it attracts the barmy army of under-30s who wouldn't know a real ale if they fell in a vessel full of the stuff.

Further along Bradshawgate, **Elements** had good intentions when it first opened, selling three real ales at reasonable prices. Now there is none.

The good news is that **Barristers**, on the other side of Bradshawgate, has two more handpulls and now eight real ales are available. The house beer is Barristers Brief, brewed exclusively for the bar by Moorhouses. The impressive refurbished courtyard has recently been hosting jazz sessions on Sunday afternoons.

The **Old Man & Scythe** on Churchgate still offers real ale, as does the Joeys outlet, the **Pepper Alley**. Down on Manor Street, the **Dog & Partridge** is still worth a visit, if you can prise yourself away from the nearby Pole Dancing Club. The **Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate continues to offer good food and ale, and the **Howcroft Inn** will be hosting its annual beer festival on 12th-16th October in aid of Bolton Lads and Girls Club - 200 beers expertly kept by Fletch and his trusty assistant.





## Time Team

Last month Channel 4's Time Team came to Manchester to excavate the remains of Arkwright's mill, which stood near the corner of Miller Street and Rochdale Road, where the car park is now. The building was destroyed during a Second World War air raid which reduced most of the north side of Miller Street to rubble.

The cotton mill was built in the 1780s and twenty years later a pub called the Weavers Arms had opened nearby. This happily survived the attention of the Luftwaffe and is still with us today as the Beer House on Angel Street. The pub was handy for the Time Team archaeologists and production crew, and CAMRA member Phil Harding was to be seen, resplendent in a new hat.

## Letter

### Albert Vaults

Sir - Re last month's item about the Albert Vaults on Chapel Street, Salford. I frequently go to the Vaults after work and I've had some fine, well kept beers there. Over the last Bank Holiday weekend I sampled Marstons Ashes and an ale from Tom Wood. Try to support the landlord before he leaves, and get your CAMRA buddies in there more often.

Jon Arbuckle

## *The Grapes Inn*

27 Church St., Eccles.

*After years in the wilderness,  
the Grapes is reopening  
- as a pub!*

*Cask ales from Bazens,  
Three Rivers and Beartown  
plus regular guests.*

*Home cooked traditional food.*

*Occasional live Jazz*



## Eminent Philosophers who supped around Manchester

### No.1: Ludwig Wittgenstein

Alan Gall

In the abstruse world of philosophical thought, few men have exerted such an influence as Ludwig Wittgenstein. Depressed, and sometimes suicidal, he tortured his brain to extract the meaning of life, the universe and everything. Had the answer been 42, it might have seemed a little bit more comprehensible to the average Joe. But Ludwig occupied a higher plane than most and in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, first published in 1921, proclaimed, 'What we cannot speak about must be passed over in silence.' Hmmm.

Might young Ludwig have begun his first ruminations through the bottom of a pint glass? As a student at the University of Manchester (1908-11) he spent many of his evenings in the Grouse Inn. Situated in remote moorland at Chunal, about halfway between Glossop and Hayfield, the inn offered ample opportunity for contemplation. Ludwig was then studying advanced aeronautical engineering and the university operated a kite flying station nearby for measuring conditions in the upper atmosphere, so the inn provided very convenient accommodation.



The cost of a lengthy stay at the Grouse (*above, in the 1950s*) would not have been a problem because Ludwig's father owned most of the steel industry in Austria. In fact, there is a story that illustrates the Wittgenstein financial outlook. One day Ludwig decided on a trip to Liverpool with a friend. The pair managed to miss the train, so Ludwig suggested that they could just hire their own. Later in life, Ludwig declared that money was only a distraction and started giving away large chunks, often to impoverished poets. This alarmed his sisters somewhat. His brothers were less concerned, since most of

them, three out of four, had committed suicide.



There is no doubt that Ludwig (*left*) was a talented engineer. In 1910 he patented a novel propeller with a nozzle on each end to give propulsion. The work on propellers stimulated his interest in mathematics and then the philosophical foundation of mathematics. After reading one of Bertrand Russell's books, he took off for Cambridge University on the road to philosophical stardom. Having completed his great work in 1918, Ludwig decided there was nothing left to be said about philosophy. He abandoned the subject, only to return to it in 1929. On 27th April 1951

Ludwig fell violently ill. When told that he only had a few days to live he exclaimed, 'Good!'

The Grouse Inn was a seventeenth century farmhouse until the farmer turned his hand to brewing. It operated as a free house for many years before passing to Salford brewers Walker & Homfray in the 1930s. Today, the owners are Thwaites. Ask landlord Wilf and he will tell you that he now sleeps in the room that Wittgenstein once occupied. How does he know? Perhaps the great man inscribed one of his philosophical gems on the wall - 'Wittgenstein was here.'

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## Boggart Bulletin

*Dave Hallows*

As the nights draw in, so does the alcohol content of beers from Boggart Hole Clough Brewery.

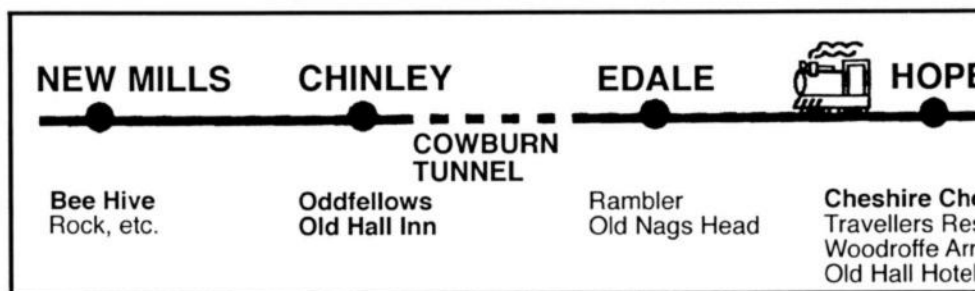
New are **Goblin Gold** (5%), a copper coloured beer, lightly bittered with a hop Goldings finish, and **Next** (7.5%), a strong, dark ale, smooth on the palate and with a moderate bitter finish. As *WD* went to press another, yet to be named, beer was in the fermenter.

## Altrincham

*Roger Wood*

I got it wrong last month. The **Old Mill in Altrincham** has been renamed **Barringtons Cafe Bar**. The pub was called the Barrington until about 1985. A Thwaites sign has appeared and the vault bar at the rear was recently selling Coachhouse Coachmans Bitter and Thwaites Lancaster Bomber on handpump.

The former GBG (1994) Boddingtons pub, the **Grapes**, has been on keg beer in recent times.



## Hope Valley Hop Gathering

*Rail Travellin' Man*

A series of articles by *Hikin' Man* over the last eighteen months has featured real ale pubs suitable for rounding off a day's hill walking. Late in August, a party of CAMRA members from across the region decided to dispense with the hills and just visit the pubs in or near to the villages along the Sheffield to Manchester railway line through the Hope Valley.

The first station after the Topley tunnel is Grindleford, which has a large pub, the Maynard Arms, nearby. However on this occasion we decided to start at Hathersage and the **Little John**, where we arrived just as it was opening for lunch. Beers on offer were







Wentworth WPA, Clarke's No Angel and Clarke's Classic Brunette (a darker version of Classic Blonde). Several of the party took advantage of the large-portioned meals which are excellent value for money. The train from Manchester following ours happened to be a Folk Train carrying musicians and folk fans heading for the Little John, who arrived shortly before we departed, to the sound of mandolins and banjuleles being tuned up.

Alighting next at Bamford Station, we faced a longish uphill walk to the village and its two pubs. One enthusiastic couple were glad they had taken our advice not to try to walk all the way from Hathersage as well. The higher of the pubs is the **Anglers Rest**, where Marstons Bitter, Mansfield Cask and Smiles Slap & Tipple were sampled. Five minutes away is **Ye Derwent**, where we found Adnams Bitter, Old Speckled Hen and Black Sheep Bitter on sale. There was some debate about the flavour of the Adnams, without a consensus being reached.

Hope Station is a fair walk from the village, with its Woodroffe Arms and Old Hall Hotel, and about as far again from our target, the **Cheshire Cheese** on the Edale Road. This pub also serves generously portioned meals, and beers on the day were Whim Hartington Best Bitter, Anglo Dutch Spike's On T'Way (a very pale beer), Black Sheep Bitter and Cottage Golden Arrow. We all sat around an enormous round table in the side lounge. For reasons discussed by Hikin' Man (Gray's beers, now believed to be brewed by Coach House), we missed out the next station (Edale) and its two pubs, the Rambler and Old Nags Head.

Our next stop was Chinley (*see last month's article*) where we headed for Whitehough and the **Oddfellows Arms**. This sells Marstons beers, on this occasion just Burton Bitter. Just across the road is the recently reinvigorated **Old Hall Inn**. It was a fine summer evening by now, and the pub was very busy, so we enjoyed the beers (Adnams Bitter and Broadside, together with Marstons Ashes and Burton Bitter) in the very pleasant beer garden. From here we telephoned ahead to book a table for our evening meal at the last pub on our itinerary.

Eventually it was time to head back to Chinley Station and catch the 7.55 train to New Mills. A few of the party decided to head home at this point and others who were not dining visited a Robinsons pub, the **Rock**, before joining the rest of us in the **Bee Hive**. New Mills has not yet been featured in the Hikin' Man series, but this Good Beer Guide entry, which is closer to New Mills Newtown station than Central, features a modestly sized, two-room, stone-floored pub downstairs and an Indian Restaurant on the first floor. We just had time to order our first beer from a selection including Storm Ale Force & Summer Breeze when our table upstairs was ready. More beer can be ordered via the restaurant waiter. After a very full day, including about six miles walking, we finally caught the 10.30 pm train back to Manchester.

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## New for John Willie

The Swan on Stand Lane, Radcliffe, once a Whitbread pub, has been acquired by J W Lees.

## Salford Food and Drink Festival

*Gavin Robertson*

The 8th Manchester Food and Drink Festival will take place from 7th to 17th October and this year for the first time Salford is holding its own fringe festival, as indeed are Tameside and Trafford.



Bazens' Brewery, the only brewery currently in the city, is producing an ale just for the festival. Richard Bazen has thought long and hard about this and has decided that it will be a light coloured beer of about 4% with a citrous nose. The beer will be ready for the start of the festival, but as a limited amount is to be brewed, it will only be available for a short time.

It will be available at another Salford Food and Drink Festival event, the Crescent Beer Festival, 6th - 9th October. Idy and Sal at the Crescent have pulled out all the stops and are putting on a beer festival especially to coincide with the main event. There will be around 40 beers on offer, but we're hoping that the star of the show will be Bazens' Salford Festival Special.

## Wigan and district

Dave White

An old acquaintance wrote to me the other week to see if I knew anything about the former police station at Pemberton. The building, on Ormskirk Road, has been boarded up for some time now and the word was out that one J D Wetherspoon was interested in buying it. A phone call to the local magistrates' court revealed that no-one had applied for a licence, although the rumour continues to circulate around Pemberton. I can't see this part of Wigan being Tim Martin's cup of tea, somehow.

A little further down Ormskirk Road stands the **White Lion**, which was done up not so long ago. The pub did need a bit of money spending on it, to be sure, but it was one of the few real ale outlets left in Pemberton and, rarer still, offered a cask mild (Tetley Dark). Unfortunately traditional ale has not survived the changes and if you happen to be looking for a drop of the decent stuff in this neck of the woods, you might be as well going that extra mile or so to Upholland.

Two pubs that had been reported closed (*WD May*) have reopened. The **Brookhouse Inn** on City Road, Kitt Green, doesn't look any different, but has stopped serving cask Lees bitter. There are three pubs on City Road and the nearest you'll get to a pint of handpulled beer at any of them is by standing next to the sign that still advertises the stuff outside the Brookhouse.

On a brighter note, the **Stocks Tavern**, Alder Lane, Parbold, is back in business and again looks much the same as before, though the lounge has become a no-smoking area. Handpulled Tetley bitter and a guest beer are available. As the total number of watering holes in the Wigan branch area offering traditional beer slips below the 40% mark, it's good to report that all the pubs in Parbold serve real ale, so far as I know.

Town centre news now, and the eagerly awaited reopening of the **Whitesmiths Arms** on Standishgate (*WD June*) has turned out to be a damp squib as the pub has been transformed into a Spanish restaurant called **Casa Carlos**. No real ale. At the other end of Wigan, plans are afoot to turn the former **Bricklayers Arms** into a daytime drop-in centre for the homeless. (No change there, then, some would say.) This Hallgate inn has been closed for years and was delicensed in 2004.

Finally, cask Tetley bitter has disappeared from the **Red Robin** at Robin Park. The amber nectar lover will have to go bob bob bobbin' elsewhere after a visit to the cinema nearby.

## From Broadway to Oldham

*On the afternoon of the Manchester Derby, Staggerin' Man embarked upon a tour taking in every pub along Oldham/Manchester Road, from the bottom of Broadway and passing through Failsworth, Hollinwood and Werneth...*

After checking out the **Guido** (no real ale) and failing to get into the **Black Horse**, where the door was closed because of the match, I went into the **Foresters Arms** (ex-Wilsons) not very hopeful of finding the proper stuff. I was proved wrong! There was John Smiths Cask on in the large, comfortable vault and Courage Directors in the lounge. I tried the Directors and found it very good and at a keen price of £1.50 a pint. The welcoming, well-run pub has a large function room/extension to lounge, behind partition doors. Across the road is the **Brown Cow**, displaying a 'to let' sign. I found a handpump with a John Smith badge, but no longer in use.

The **Liberal Club**, the **Bridge**, the **Crown & Cushion**, and the **Royal Oak** had no real ale, but across the way, opposite the church, the **Church Inn** (Robinsons) had Unicorn on electric dispense. On semi-chill, this was refreshing and of good quality. I also saw Robbies Smooth bitter at the bar. The Church is an imposing building and, like a lot of houses owned by the Stockport brewer, it has undergone various stages of Robinsonisation. The separate front darts room has

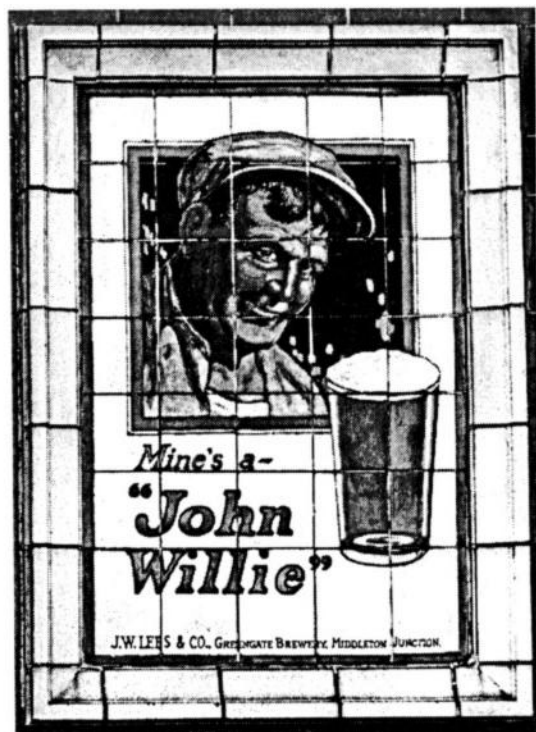




its original floor and the bench seating was covered in leatherette back in the 60/70s. The long lounge, in 'cottage decor', is a throwback to the 70/80s and a recent refurbishment of the beer garden has provided a playground, including a Wendy house for the kids.

Next came the big shock of the day. I ventured into the nearby **Pack Horse**, now a W&D house, to find no real ale. This old pub was once in the *Good Beer Guide* and I had hoped for at least a Banks's Bitter. What makes it even worse is that I don't think there's much chance of a real ale in future. The pub has been extended along the road, the rooms opened out and the bar is of cafe bar style to give an upmarket feel. W&D have ruined this pub!

The **Sun Inn** proved to be keg and the **Dutch Bird** (W&D) seems to be undergoing a refurb. But with a porch being built, this might be a conversion to private houses. The **Houghton Arms** (W&D) had a Burtonwood bitter handpump, but on asking, I was told the beer was never on and it was just Marstons Smooth. Further down the road, the **Wheatsheaf** still had its six handpumps, but nothing was on. I then saw **Baldy Bob's Bar/Kehoes**. 'For a top night out' it says outside. I decided to give it a miss, but if I hear there is a real ale here, I will eat a beer mat!



Down the road in Hollinwood, where there are two Lees houses, was a lot better. The **Grey Horse** had the bitter on fine form and the handpumps sported Cask Ale Week badges. This opened-out pub has three distinct drinking areas, with a beer garden at the back.

It has a low ceiling with some original oak beams and the tiling outside incorporates an unusual advert proclaiming 'Mine's a John Willie'. Another noteworthy feature is a plaque displaying Manchester Dave's ponytail, commemorating a head shaving for charity.

Passing a bookie's and an Indian restaurant, I came to the **Woodman**, which seems to have undergone a redecoration both in and out. In fact, there was no pub sign at all. Good quality Lees bitter is available. The sloping floor down to the bar is worthy of note.

After checking out the **Waggon & Horses** (no real ale) I ventured into the **Spinners Arms**, just past the M66. There is nothing outside to say that this is a Sam Smiths pub, recently refurbished to a very high specification. It has an Edwardian feel, with plenty of oak furniture and fittings in bar lounge and snug, and an oak panelled separate vault with its own bar hatch. There is the full card of Sam Smith beers, apart from OBB Bitter. I had a half of extra stout to discover more about the impressive refit and also to find out about what was happening across the road at the **Bowling Green Inn** (Lees) The massive pub was covered in scaffolding and closed. The word is that it will reopen after an extensive refit inside and out.

On to the **Bridgewater** (Holts) on Manchester Road. Despite signs declaring 'for regulars only', I managed to get into the lounge of this modern hostelry. There are two massive open-plan rooms. I found three beers on - mild, bitter and Joey's bitter, which I tried. It was okay, if on the thin side.



I drew a blank at the **Church** on Chapel Road and at the **Golden Buck**. The word from the **Spinners Arms** was that I would be able to get Boddingtons Bitter at the interestingly-named **Smut Inn**. There was a handpump for this beer, now brewed by Hydes, in both the vault and the lounge, but Boddies smooth was on and the real stuff wasn't, and hadn't been for a while, as far as I could tell. The **Werneth Arms** had nothing to offer, but the excellent **Royal Oak** (Robbies) certainly did. This *Good Beer Guide 2005* pub sells good quality Hatters mild and Unicorn bitter on handpump.

The new **Plough Inn** had zilch and seemed to have no power (and therefore no beer), as the pub was lit by candlelight! On to the **Queens**, just outside the town centre. This basic Robbies house, still showing signs of past Robinsonisation, had Unicorn bitter and Old Stockport bitter (known as Ordinary Bitter some moons ago) on handpump. The latter was one of my favourites from the Robbies portfolio, so I tried it. Alas, it was somewhat tired and seemed to have been sitting in the line for some time.

I drew a blank at the **Friendship Inn**, which still sports its Matthew Brown livery, so moved on to the best pub of the day by a country mile. The **Ashton Arms** on Clegg Street in the town centre can at long last be more easily reached, as the roadworks further down the road have been completed. Owl Hoppy Birthday, Fyfe Brewery Wheat Beer, Cottage Silly Mid Whippet, Boggart Angel Hill, Cains Sundowner and Copper Dragon Best Bitter were on the sticks. I tried the Copper Dragon, as the Skipton Brewery never disappoints.

The day ended with convivial chatter with regulars and old friends and reflection on the highs and lows of my survey. The refurb at the Bowling Green Inn holds promise, as does the beer at the Foresters Arms. If only the friendly Spinners Arms had Sam Smiths bitter on handpump.

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

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

## Beer in the Baltics

*Roger Hall has been on holiday...*

The Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) have been free from Soviet rule for 15 years and members of the EU since 2004. Although they were traditionally beer drinking nations, that heritage suffered under the Soviets, but now there are signs that they are emerging from the malign influence.

As you move northwards from Vilnius in Lithuania to Helsinki in Finland, prices increase and the beer becomes Heinekenesque in general. In Lithuania, Svyturys, notwithstanding its ownership by Carlsberg since 1999, was preferable to Utenos or Kolnapilis, the other widely available brews. There are some microbreweries emerging and it is here where the best beer can be found. In Kaunas, for example, Avilys is a restaurant/bar with its own brewery producing a light, Pilsener-style beer and a honey dark beer. Both are excellent and good value.

The Lithuanians seem to have rediscovered porter or dark beers. In the coastal town of Klaipeda, Memelis, a Hanseatic house and warehouse, has been converted to a bar and restaurant on four floors. The ground floor brewery produces a light beer and a 6% porter. One feature which we'd not seen before was the use of what looked like drainpipes containing four litres of beer. These turned out to be 'drink towers', a replacement for jugs or pitchers. Memelis provides good beer, particularly the porter, good food and entertainment including a nightclub.

We weren't particularly impressed by Latvian beers, although we didn't sample everything. Aldoris, again owned by Carlsberg, is the most common. Riga does, however, boast an Indian restaurant which compares with Manchester's best.

Estonia, most distant of the Baltic states from Germanic influences, has the least developed brewing tradition. But there is a growing number of breweries to satisfy the thirsts of Estonians and visiting Finns. Helsinki is only an hour and a half away by Sea





Cat and Tallinn is somewhat cheaper than Finland.

One fairly recent development (2002) is the Beer House, a Bavarian-style Bierhaus with its own brewery. Three beers are always available on draught - Märzen, Pilsner and Dunkles. At around £2 per half litre, it's more expensive than Latvia or Lithuania but considerably cheaper than Finland. The Beer House serves German-style food, including what looks like half a pig. Perhaps better to drink there and go to one of the nearby Estonian restaurants for something to eat.



In Finland, beer is typically €4.50 per half litre and wines and spirits are even more expensive. This is a relic of prohibition 75 years ago. There is something akin to the Reinheitsgebot in Finland (sugar is allowed) but in general the beer is not much to shout about. However, there are microbreweries and bars which sell their wares. One such is Oluthuone Kaisla in Helsinki, which also sells Belgian, Czech and German beers, all on draught.

In August, temperatures in the Baltics can be in the mid-20s (Celsius, that is) and many bars have gardens or terraces for outside drinking. It can remain warm and light until turned 10pm, so evenings can be

spent outdoors as well. Beer is generally OK and can be excellent. Prices are higher than Prague, but the stag phenomenon has not yet taken off so it can be more pleasant. It may only be a matter of time. There are Irish theme pubs in such unlikely places as Tartu, an old Estonian university town. So get there whilst it's relatively unspoiled, before the Carlsbergisation and In-Bevication really sets in.



# Rupert

Once upon a time the combined campaigners for foaming ale in Greater Grotley thought it would be a great idea to produce a toppers' vademecum to all the amber nectar hostelries of Grotley and Slumley. So the stalwarts set to work. They surveyed all the taverns in Slumley and North Grotley, wrote encomia and provided, through the cartographic and calligraphic talents of Billy Cosh, detailed maps of their area. All this was delivered within the timescale agreed by Tubs Caries, who was the designated coordinator. Sadly, he chucked everything in a bin and the vademecum never emerged into print.

Chastened by this experience, the Slumley aficionados vowed never again to enter into such an ill-fated venture. In the ensuing years they produced, through the good offices of Eddy Nestfeather, guides to the inns and taverns of Grotley City Centre. These sold well and were generally well received. They have all been sold and, as it's three years since the last one was produced, a new guide has been planned.

But what mutterings of discontent do we hear from one vociferous

person from Snobley and Snoot Magna? 'It will spoil the sales of the Snobley guide. We should have a guide to Grotley and Slumley, not just Grotley centre.' This has certainly raised hackles among those in Slumley whose last efforts in this direction came to nought. I can't possibly associate myself with remarks made by Bunty, Mycroft, Fiona, Alistair, Tish and the rest, but they ran along these lines.

'Bollocks, we'll do what we want! There's a market for a Central Grotley guide. There's no market for a guide to Grotley and Slumley. Co-operation is difficult and futile. Co-ordination is impossible. Much of inner city Grotley and Slumley is a beer desert. Most of the hostelries serving real ale are either good enough to be in the GBG or so bad that you wouldn't send your worst enemy there.

Why on earth would you want to send anyone to a hovel frequented by heroin-fuelled members of socio-economic group Z (© D Busman 1981) when they can enjoy the pleasures of selected premises in the smarter suburbs? Why, indeed, would anyone other than an atavistic masochist want to visit Vile Splatting, Gungehurst, Little Hardon or Hyperopia? I suppose demented tickers might.

## Bombs away

The **Chadwick** in Urmston duly opened in August and for now at least sports two handpumps. Different beers have been spotted, all well known names. On a recent visit a very acceptable pint of Fuller's London Pride was on offer, alongside a less interesting Flowers IPA. The pub is named after Roy Chadwick, designer of the Lancaster Bomber.

# Branch Diary

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

Tues 4 Oct 8pm: City Centre Guide Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Wed 5 Oct: Harpurhey. Junction 7.30pm, Hipp 9.15pm

Wed 12 Oct: Salford. Kings Arms, Bloom Street, 8pm. Albert Vaults 9pm. Finish at Crescent

Thur 20 Oct 8pm: Branch Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Tues 25 Oct 3pm: What's Doing collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street

Wed 26 Oct 8pm: Social, Sinclairs, Cathedral Square, Manchester

Sat 29 Oct: Beer Miles 2005 event. Start Smithfield, Swan St, 1.00pm

Sun 6 Nov 1pm: Winter Ales Festival Meeting, Crescent, Salford

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

## Wigan

Sun 9 Oct (time tba): Best New cask Ale Outlet/Club of the Year Award. Jubilee Club, Wigan Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

Thurs 13 Oct 8pm: Branch Meeting, Colliers Arms, Wigan Road, New Springs

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

## Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 4 Oct 8.30pm: Branch Meeting, Cemetery Hotel, Bury Road, Rochdale

Sat/Sun 8/9 Oct: Weekend coach social to Scarborough via York. Details from Branch Contact

Tues 18 Oct: Bury Beer Festival Meeting, Trackside, Bolton Street, Bury

Sun 30 Oct: 10k Social, Tandle Hill Tavern, Thornham Lane, Middleton. Details from Branch Contact

Contact: Peter Alexander 0161 655 4002 (h)  
email: [peter@peteralexander.plus.com](mailto:peter@peteralexander.plus.com)

## Trafford & Hulme

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

Thur 6 Oct 8pm: AGM at the Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Thur 20 Oct: Chorlton Social. Meet 8pm at Hillary Step; on to Marble Beer House at 9.30pm

Wed 26 Oct 8pm: Special Award presentation to the City Arms, Kennedy Street, Manchester, for ten years' continuous entry in the Good Beer Guide

Thur 3 Nov 8pm: Branch Meeting, Orange Tree, Altrincham

Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976

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Contributors to this issue: Paul Warbrick, Pete Cash, Dave Hallows, Roger Wood, Steve Holt, Roger Hall, Gavin Robertson, Dave White, Alan Gall, Neil Worthington

Photos: Phil Stout, Neil Worthington



*Dave and Sue welcome you to*

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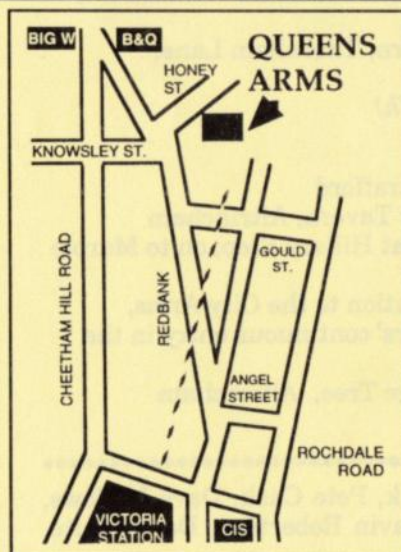
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