30p

What's Doing

CARA

JUNE 2006

The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

BEER IN THE BANK

The former banking hall on Mosley Street in the city centre has undergone a lavish refurbishment to bring out the best of the imposing building. Once a Firkin outlet, the massive hall with one long bar is now upmarket, with real ale playing centre stage again.

There were recently four beers on: Taylors Landlord, Boddies Bitter and interesting guests Nethergates Suffolk County Best Bitter and Goffs Jouster.



Bazens' Brewery News

Second in the new series of monthly special beers on the film titles theme, and following **On Goldings Pond** is one using Fuggles hops and called **Good**, **Bad & Fuggly**. Like all the series, it will be 4.0% with an identical malt content. Expansion at the brewery has resulted in three 11-barrel fermenters which will allow 12 barrels per week to be produced. Discussions are taking place with a Manchester restaurant with a view to supplying bottled conditioned beer, possibly On Goldings Pond.

Boggart Bulletin

Light fancies have enchanted the Boggart elves from Moston to bring a new spring ale called Darwin (4%): a golden hoppy session bitter. To stop his elves from daydreaming about long summer evenings, the Green Boggart has another new beer in the pipeline from Boggartland by the Clough.

Bye bye brewery

The former Boddingtons Brewery at Strangeways has been sold to developers

THE CRESCENT

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www.beer-festival.com/crescent

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

It wasn't long before Altrincham's Old Market Tavern reopened under new management. The pub is leased from Punch Taverns by a local businessman, John Glover, who has a keen interest in good beer. He has persuaded his son Robert to take on full time management of the pub. The pair of them have worked very hard to refurbish the building during the few weeks that it was closed.

Most people are struck by the transformation on entering the pub now. It seems completely different and yet nothing fundamental has really changed. The layout is the same, but there is a lot of new furniture and other tables and chairs have been repolished and re-upholstered. Everything has been cleaned, of course, and there's new lighting and a fresh coat of paint.

The bar still sports a fine set of handpumps and some five or six cask beers are usually available now, with well known brands like Deuchars IPA alongside uncommon brews like Eastwood & Saunders Nettle Thrasher. The range will change quickly but micro breweries will always feature prominently.

Two significant changes are the loss (for now) of real cider and removal of the block and tackle used for lifting casks of Old Tom on to the back counter. Live heavy metal bands, for long a feature of Sunday nights at the OMT, are likely to return.



BEER FEST

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Saturday 15/07/06 1100 — 2300

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www.stdement-chortton.org.uk/beer

The Marble Brewery's assistant brewer Philip Little is to leave to set up his own micro in Ince, near Wigan. Named Rosebridge Brewery (the address is Rosebridge Court), it should be operational early in June. The first brews will be a 3.8% golden summer ale and a 4% session bitter. Seasonals are also planned.

Some of the equipment has come from the former brewpub, the Lass o'Gowrie in Manchester, and the new brewery will supply the Lass with beers brewed through the original LOG recipes from the 1980s.

Pushing the Boundaries

Dave Porter, the Rossendale brewer, states that he is not in favour of bringing out new beers just for the sake of it. Usually, just after he has been heard saying this over a pint of his beer, a new one comes out.



His latest, **Pushing the Boundaries** at a whopping 7.8%, is a pale, very spicy, quite sweet ale with a spice cinnamon finish and aroma. It drinks like a far stronger **Sunshine**, a strong premium bitter and can be found at the Railway in Stockport town centre.

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

PLEASE NOTE

There will be no What's Doing next month (**July 2006**) owing to essential maintenance work on the printer.

The next issue will be for AUGUST 2006.

The **Colliers Arms** on Frog Lane, Wigan, reopened recently as **Sams Bar** (sans apostrophe). In over thirty years of drinking dirty beer, I don't ever recall this pub selling a drop of real ale and Sam, whoever he or she may be, has done nothing to change the situation.

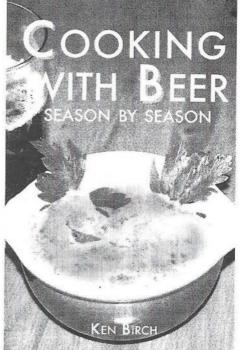
A few issues back I reported that the **Wheatsheaf Hotel**, Miles Lane, Appley Bridge, had started to sell Deuchars IPA alongside Tetley bitter. When my wife and I called on Good Friday, however, I was told that the handpumped ale wasn't on. Since then the pub has closed and is now shuttered up; but a little bird has told me that the Wheatsheaf may reopen soon, so watch this space.

I was less surprised to find the **New Scholes Tavern** in a similar state the other day. The former **Flamingo** on Vauxhall Road, Scholes, hasn't sold real ale for ages and since its name change seems to have been closed almost as often as it has been open.

Cooking with Ken

Ken Birch's new book, *Cooking* with Beer, is a season-by-season set of recipes using a wide variety of beer styles, from peach beer to brown ale.

If Tripe with Cassis is not to your taste, why not try the Mixed Game Pie (if you can get the hare, wood pigeon, male pheasant and wild duck)? Or the Kriek kebabs delicious. although avoiding burning the bay leaves is tricky. For the lazy/pissed-off housewife, Chicks de Bourgogne is great - a really quick and tasty chick pea recipe which you can eat with naan, and if the other half wants meat, you can do him some kebabs to go with it.



There are forty-odd recipes to play with and a guide to specialist beer suppliers at the back of the book, as quite a few of the recommended beers are not stocked by the average supermarket. The book costs £7.99 and can be obtained from Ken Birch, 31 Rock Bank, The Cliff, Salford M7 2EX. Tel: 0161 705 0836.

The beer for the football season will be **Golden Boot** at 4.2%. All being well, this will be available week commencing 29th May in around 50 managed houses as well as selected free trade outlets.

The **Albion** on Battersby Lane in Warrington is a new stockist of Holts Bitter.

The 6% Sixex will soon be on sale in 500ml bottles with a new label.

No news as yet on the fate of the **Church Inn**, Whitefield. Paul Butler tells me that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has a new case officer who is very apologetic about the delays. The file has gone to the Secretary of State (Tessa Jowell), presumably with a recommendation one way or the other, but of course we are not allowed to know what that recommendation is. English Heritage's view is that the pub should be listed.

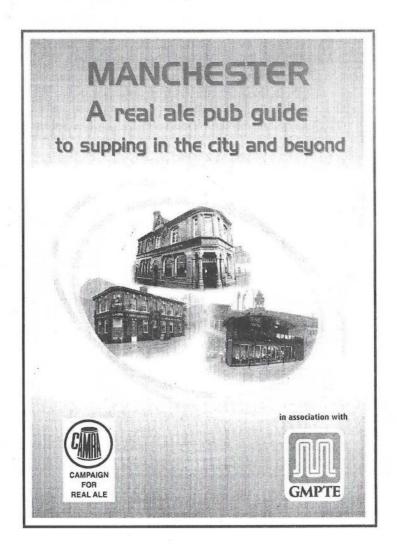


The **Crumpsall Hotel** is also under threat of demolition and Holts are none too pleased about that either.

At the Joseph Holt AGM in May, I met Jim Pilkington, the former tenant of the **Black Dog**, Belmont. Jim was brought up in Belmont and became a fireman there, then he put in for the Black Dog, which he ran successfully from 1985 until his retirement in 2001. Now semi-retired and living in Heysham, he still takes a keen interest in Joseph Holt's activities.

stewart@revell62.freeserve.co.uk

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Mild has been an endangered beer style for a long time now, so it is a good idea to set a day aside (the first Saturday each May) to enjoy it and maybe ask some friendly hostelries to stock it too.

A band of CAMRA folk gathered after large breakfasts, as there was some serious drinking to be done. Start was at high noon at the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road. The Marble Uncut Amber, strong at 4.7% and getting darker these days, is still just as tasty. The Bank Top Dark Mild was also raved about by what was now a large group of us.

Next up and just down the main road was the **Beer House** with a tasty Cains Mild. On Swan St, the **Smithfield** had the usual Robinsons Dark Hatters. At this point, I checked out the **Crown & Kettle** on Oldham Road and found Titanic Nautical Mild on the sticks. Along Oldham Street is the **Castle**, with both Robinsons Dark Hatters and Hatters mild.



On our way to the **Grey Horse** on Portland Street we lost one of our number, who made tracks in the direction of the **Crown & Anchor**,



Hilton Street. He came in last at the Grey Horse, spluttering, 'I've just had a narrow escape.' Apparently, he went to find a back entrance to a pub and thought he'd found it. As it was open, he went in, to hear a female of certain years call, 'Come upstairs, luvvie. I'm ready for you!' He had accidentally walked into a massage parlour.

The **Rain Bar** on Great Bridgewater had no mild, despite having the beer 'as a regular' and the rest were on. This is disappointing, as the pub is a Lees city centre flagship and the brewery appears less committed to the real mild: either dropping it altogether or replacing it with Lees Black in their pubs.

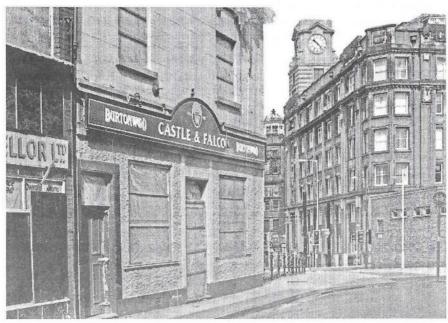
The next stop was the plucky **Font** on New Wakefield Street. The modern trendy bar was serving a mild each day in May. Salamander Mad Dog (3.8%) was well received. Across Oxford Street, the **Lass o'Gowrie** on Charles Street had put on Bank Top Dark Mild for the day and it was on song too. Next was the **City Arms** on Kennedy Street, where Tetley Dark Mild is a regular. Halves of Holts mild were had at the **Ape & Apple**, before setting off to a new real ale outlet: the **New Oxford** in Bexley Square, Salford. Two milds were on here, both in top-notch form: Taylors Golden Best (a light mild) and Moorhouses Black Cat.

The climax of each mild crawl is a visit to the **Crescent**, where the May Beer Festival was at its height. The Northern Mar-V-Lus Mild had been supped-up, but we all had Fernandes Malt Shovel, which was dark and dry. So in one afternoon thirteen different milds were enjoyed, and in twelve different pubs. Not bad, not bad at all.



Since the Arndale Bus Station shut, several locations have been used as termini for buses coming into Manchester. There is now a new bus station on Shudehill, which is very handy for the the Hare & Hounds, and one of the services which has been relocated here is the No.8, the Bolton service. As a regular traveller on the No.8, this latest change got me thinking about the history of bus stations in Manchester. Those thoughts were quickly replaced by a more interesting subject - what was there before the bus stations - in other words, pubs.

The Shudehill bus station is in one of the oldest areas of Manchester, and so there were a few pubs about in the distant past. The Bulls Head and the Swan Inn faced the Hare & Hounds, whilst Hanover Street had the Cheshire Tavern, the Barley Mow and the Grapes, among others. On the south side of the site, next to the Metrolink Line, was Bradshaw Street. There were two pubs here, the St Georges Tavern and, fondly remembered by many, the Castle & Falcon (below), demolished ten years ago this month.



Before the Arndale Centre was built, the No.8 ran from Victoria Bus Station. This was a most sensible terminus, with buses approaching Manchester along the A6 and other routes to the west having a straight run along Chapel Street. It was so different from today, when buses have to crawl through the city's crowded streets just to get a few more yards into the 'centre'.

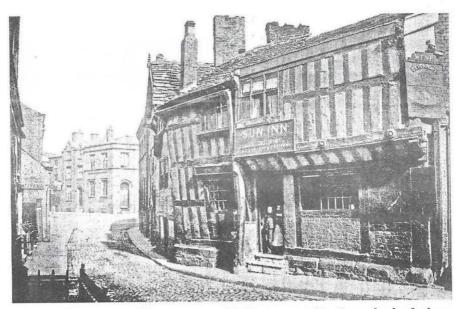
Victoria Bus Station was built in the 1930s on the site of a block of

property which included a Boddingtons pub, the Raven Hotel (below), which was a replacement of a much older alehouse called the Red Lion.

The very first Bolton to Manchester bus service was a private concern begun in 1927 by a Bolton ice-cream maker and charabanc owner, John Tognarelli. The fare was 1/- single and 1/6d return. The service lasted only a year or two, as Manchester Corporation refused to grant the necessary licences for his buses. Manchester wanted control over the revenue from bus operation within its boundaries, and the same went for Salford and other municipal operators, so most private owners, with no territory of their own, were effectively squeezed out.

The terminus for Mr Tognarelli's buses was at Poets Corner, Long Millgate. The site is now part of the landscaped area next to the Urbis building and across from the entrance to Chetham's School of Music. There was once a pub here called the Sun Inn, an old black-and-white building which in the 1840s hosted 'poetical soirées', hence the name Poets Corner. The Sun (pictured opposite) closed in the 1860s, when the police complained that the place was used by undesirables and women customers were in the habit of robbing unsuspecting visitors. The building became a shop and was eventually demolished, along with adjoining property, in 1923.





Before John Tognarelli gave up on his licence applications, he had plans to buy the land he was using at Poets Corner and spend £45,000 on a new bus station and offices. So that was a Manchester bus station that never was.

CAMRA Walking Club

A series of walks has been organised for the summer. Non-members are welcome to join in and work up a thirst, explore the countryside and enjoy some fine pubs.

29th April: Stretford to Irlam

Meet Stretford Metro 10.30; Lord Nelson, Urmston 12.15; Church Inn, Flixton, 4.15; Boathouse, Irlam 7.00pm.

20th May: Altrincham to Lymm

Meet Malt Shovels, Altrincham, 12.00 noon; Swan with Two Necks, Bollington, 1.30; Railway, Heatley, 5.30; Saddlers, Lymm, 7.00pm.

24th June: Strines to Hyde

Meet Sportsman, Strines, 12.00 noon; Duke of York, Romiley, 3.30; Cheshire Ring, Hyde, 5.30.

8th July: Greenfield to Stalybridge

Train to Greenfield and meet Railway, 12.00 noon; Navigation, Dobcross, 3.00pm; Church Inn, Uppermill, 4.30; train to Stalybridge Buffet, 7.30.

19th August: Halifax to Sowerby Bridge

Meet Three Pigeons, near Halifax Rail Station, 1.00pm; Shepherds Rest, Sowerby Bridge, 5.00pm; then evening crawl of Sowerby Bridge.

For further information, contact Ken Birch, 0161-705-0836.

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Heywood has many pubs still apparently doing okay. **The Wishing Well** on York Street is by far the best in terms of beer quality, but what of some of the others?

First off was Wetherspoon's **Edwin Waugh** in the town centre. All the 'Spoons in the UK were holding a beer festival in May and it really was quite good. At least in this pub it was. There were Moorhouse's Edwin's Morlan, Titanic Lifeboat, the usual Courage Directors, an interesting Pivovar Herold Brezinice; Herold Granat (5.8%), a ruby red beer using Saaz hops; Batemans Dark Lord, Hydes Jekyll's Gold and George Wright's Kings Shillin'. I had the King's Shillin', which was on good form and had a good bitterness to it.

I then popped into the **Brown Cow** on Bamford Road. It didn't have any real ale, but it did have a memorial honouring Anthony Palmer, who won a VC in the Crimean War. He died in Crumpsall Hospital in 1892, some forty years after the conflict. Well worth a half of Guinness in the ex-Paras pub.

The **Bird in Hand** on Bury and Rochdale Old Road is a former Bass pub. Two rooms separated by a back bar with three beers on: Draught Bass, Tetley Bitter and Highgate Dark Mild. I tried the Bass and the mild and thought they were in good condition. The pub is very olde worlde, is noted for its food and well worth visiting.

Moving on, there's the **Pack Horse Inn** on Elbut Lane, Birtle. The accent is on food, with Lees Bitter and a seasonal beer, but no mild. Further up the lane, the **Church Inn** has new management. It is an eighteenth century former farmhouse with large extension for the restaurant. Wells Bombardier, Theakstons Best Bitter and Taylors Landlord seemed to be selling well.

Pub of the Season

The **Hillary Step** in Whalley Range has been selected as Summer Pub of the Season by Trafford and Hulme CAMRA. It opened in a beer-starved district in summer 2004. This non-smoking cafe bar sells Thwaites Throughbred plus three guest beers, normally from microbreweries; local micros are well represented. Bottled Belgian beers are also sold.

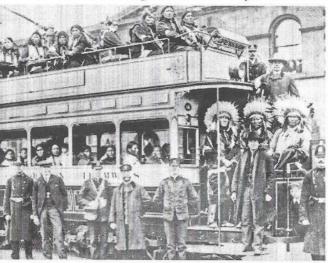
The presentation of the award will be at 8.00pm on Tuesday 11th July. The pub is at 199 Upper Chorlton Road and is served by the 86 Bus route from Piccadilly to Chorlton.

Ale gain

The **Bridge** on Moss Lane in Altrincham, a J W Lees free house which was reported to be keg a few months ago, now has a cask guest beer. Lees Dragons Fire at £1.60 was on recently.

With so many bus routes now operated by one firm during the day and another at night, it makes a lot of sense to get an 'all bus' Day Saver ticket

if you're planning a pub crawl (and you're under 60). This means that you don't have to check what colour your bus is before you get on - just check that it's going in the direction. (And that doesn't say 'Sorry Not In Service' on the front.)



The prices went up a bit recently.

Your basic Day Saver, valid on virtually all buses operating in Greater Manchester, now costs £3.50 (or £4 if you buy it before 0930, Monday to Friday). There are several variations, though: Bus+Train for £4; Bus+Metrolink for £4.50; Train+Metrolink for £5.50 and Bus+Train+Metrolink for £6.50. You buy all these tickets on the day, from bus driver or ticket office or ticket machine as appropriate.

For the truly dedicated travelling toper, there's no better value ticket than a Wayfarer. This has to be bought in advance, at a railway station or a bus station Travelshop, and it now costs $\pounds 8.40$. It's valid all over Greater Manchester and adjoining parts of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and the Peak District.

Of course, none of this will be remotely relevant to you if you're aged 60 or over. Since the start of April, you've been able to travel for free on buses, trains and Metrolink trams in Greater Manchester between 9.30am and midnight, Monday to Friday, and all day at weekends and bank holidays. Don't stay out after midnight, though, as all buses turn back into pumpkins then.

Waterloo

Developers have turned their attention to one of Salford's long-closed pubs and, unusually, they don't seem to be knocking it down. The former Waterloo Hotel stands on Greengate, near where Trinity Way cuts across the old thoroughfare. It was a Wilsons pub and is one of the city's oldest surviving buildings. For now.

Saturday 1st July sees the fourteenth Annual Treasure Hunt. The clues are being set for the second time by the Rat & Handbag Doms Team -last year's winners. The newly enlarged trophy (the original one has been mounted on a bigger shield) is on display in the Beer House.

The idea was conceived by Rhys Jones, of CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester, in 1993 as a joint North/South enterprise to publicise CAMRA's Independents' Day, a celebration of Britain's independent brewers on the first Saturday in July. Participating teams would be directed via a series of clues to pubs owned by or selling beers from independent brewers, sampling those beers whilst they struggled to solve the clues.

This year things kick off at noon in the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road. Teams of up to five are welcome and the entry fee is £4 per team. The aim

is to return by 8.00pm (to be confirmed on the day), when quiz sheets will be marked and winners announced. Food will be provided and is included in the entry fee. Winning teams for the first 13 years are as follows:

1993 N orth Manchester Branch 1994 Pete Cash, Rhys Jones 1994 Pete & Pauline Wadsworth 1995 Two Dead Goldfish, Bury 1996 Dave & Carol Sheldon 1997 Hattie's Harriers 1998 Rat & Handbag Doms Team 1999 Raving Mad Bastards 2000 Castle Knights 2001 Raving Mad Bastards 2002 Castle Knights 2003 Raving Mad Bastards 2004 What's with all these Cows.. 2005 Rat & Handbag Doms Team

The tradition is for the winning team to set the puzzles the following year. So if you fancy a fun day out with some good friends, sleuthing and sluicing in pubs selling excellent beers from INDEPENDENT breweries, come along to the Marble Arch, comer of Gould Street and Rochdale Road, on July 1st.



Rupert

The conversation turned from mortality to morbidity. We were in Tiggy's at the behest of Fiona, who wanted to see the new barperson who had taken the place of a series of cloth-eared wenches. serving She described herself as a 'Fiona lookalike' and referred to me as a 'bell end'. Bunty had expressed a wish to see another bulldog chewing a wasp, but one with exquisite judgement. As luck would have it, it was her night off, so I breathed more freely. I'd not had a pint poured over my naughty parts since the departure of Hattie Nightingale and didn't want to risk it again.

Apropos of nothing, Ophelia opened up the discussion. 'Look, we shouldn't be worrying much about recent croakees, but about people falling apart. We're all getting old and becoming physical as well as derelicts. Billy Cosh has had to go into hospital to reverse blindness. From what I'm told, he still hasn't stopped doing what caused it. Royal Hall has spent a week in a Frogley cardiology unit collapsing after at Mickey Sourisville. And now, calamity

of calamities, Eddy Nestfeather has refused to publish What's Doing next month just because he's going for a brain transplant. Who's going to be next? Is Alistair going to choke on his beloved Haggis à la Drambuie? Is Mycroft going to suffer a series of ischaemic attacks and be turned into a mumbling cabbage? Will Bunty contract some chronic mind-wasting disease? perhaps Fiona will be the first person to get ovarian cancer at the same testicular time.'

'Or perhaps you'll get a broken jaw, Ophelia,' Bunty remarked as he quaffed a quart of foaming organic bush meat-free amber nectar from the wickets. They're all wimps. Just look at the Nightingales. Retired hors de combat at 58 to a home for geriatric jessies in the southern underbelly. You just need to keep going and if you die with your boots on, so much the better.'

As Bunty finished, a young woman with a look of Fiona came in, closed all the windows so as not to disturb the residents of the gentrified aparmtents next door and said, 'OK, which one of youse is the bell end?'

Contributors to this issue: Ken Birch, Roger Wood, Dave Hallows, Peter Cash, Stewart Revell, Neil Worthington, Dave White, Roger Hall

Photographs: Andrea Ku, Andy Jenkinson

Branch Diary

North Manchester www.camra.org.uk/nmanchester

Wed 7 June, 8pm: Social, New Oxford, Bexley Sq, Salford

Wed 14 June: Social, Barton Arms, Worsley 8pm; Bridgewater 9pm

Wed 21 June, 8pm: Branch Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill

Wed 28 June: Stalybridge Buffet Bar (Optional visits to nearby pubs).

Trains at 7.12pm Piccadilly, or 7.27pm Victoria.

To be confirmed for a Saturday in June: Under-30's Cider Crawl. Details

from Tim Jackson or Kim Walton - 07838 119326

Sat 1July, noon: Independents' Day Treasure Hunt. Start at Marble Arch, Rochdale Road

Wed 5 July, 8pm: Social, Junction, Harpurhey

Wed 12 July: Visit to Storm Brewery, Macclesfield (to be confirmed). E5

each, includes beer. Details from Social Secretary - Ot6l 957 7148

Wed 19 July, 8pm: Branch Meeting, Hare & Hounds, Shudehill

Tues 25 July, 3pm: What's Doing Collation, Queen's Arms, Honey St

Wed 26 July, 8pm: Woodthorpe (Holts showpiece pub), Bury Old Rd,

Prestwich. 135 bus or walk from Heaton Park Metro

Wed 2 Aug: City Centre pub crawl. Bank, Portland St, 7.30pm; Piccadilly

8pm; Brunswick 8.45; finish Jolly Angler 9.15pm

Wed 9 Aug: Greenfield Brewery Visit. £8 each, includes food & beer.

Details from Social Secretary - 0161 957 7148

Contact Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

Wigan

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

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tues 6 June, 8.30pm: Branch AGM, Eagle & Child, Higher La, Whitefield Sat 24 June: Coach social to rural Cheshire pubs. Details from branch contact

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

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

Thur 8 June, 8pm: Branch meeting at Lloyds in Chorlton Sat 17 June: Joint social with South Cheshire branch around

Manchester. Meet 1pm at the Knott Bar, Castelfield

Thur 22 June: Solstice social. Meet 8pm at Jackson's Boat, Rifle Road,

Sale (near Sale Water Park)

Thur 6 July, 8pm: Branch meeting at the Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

Contact: John Ison 0161 962 7976

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12 noon - 11.00pm Mon-12 noon - 10.30pm Sun Kitchen: 12 noon - 4.00pm Mon-Fri 12 noon - 6.00pm Weekend

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