

WHAT'S DOING



AUG
1980

THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

HOLTS SET TO WRECK TWO MORE



Holts are still continuing with their policy of demolishing or radically altering any pub which has the smallest vestige of individuality or character. The latest pubs to be threatened with their insensitive treatment are the Lord Nelson in Urmston (above) and the Waggon and Horses in Irlams o' th' Height.

MORE SALFORD LOSSES

The Red Cow, Boddingtons' only remaining Salford beerhouse is due to close in August. Notice of Entry has been served and the pub will be demolished sooner than originally expected. Over in the Greengate area two pubs have recently closed - the Globe (Wilsons) and the Three Legs of Man (Robinsons). This beer drinkers' paradise now looks a bit sick - in the last year we have lost the Flying Horse (Tetley) and the King Billy (Marstons) as well, and choice is now limited to Boddingtons, Wilsons and, of course, Holts in the Eagle, which the brewery in their wisdom intend to extend and improve. How the perfection of this hidden gem

can be improved is something to which only brewery architects have the answer. Who knows - perhaps they'll turn the Duke of York into a bistro and put a cocktail bar in the Spread Eagle to entice the clientele from the Gloucester next door.

BETTER BOLTON

During the last couple of years Bolton town centre has seen a dramatic increase in both real ale and the choice of brews available.

The latest to change for the better is the Three Crowns, Deansgate, where Brian and Glynis Firth have thrown out the Willsons keg beers for cask conditioned mild and bitter served via four new Angram handpumps. Brian and Glynis have been CAMRA members for four years, and are keen collectors of brewery memorabilia and old brewery photographs. While Brian is busy with the beer his wife is organising the excellent and expanding catering side of the business. A good range of lunches is provided at reasonable prices.

The Three Crowns is to undergo major internal refurbishment at a cost of some £20,000 as well as having a curved centre window replaced at the front of the house, which was broken many months ago; the cost is in the region of £900. The pub will be closed for some two weeks later in the year for the duration of the work.

Bert Kerks

SPREAD EAGLE REOPENS

Robinsons brewery tap on Lower Hillgate, Stockport, the Spread Eagle, has just reopened after a twelve month closedown and over two years repair work on the old and historic building. Painstaking work has resulted in a virtually new pub. The days of the old back room, where draymen's problems and brewery gossip were aired for so long have ended. Nevertheless, Robinsons now have a good basic pub which has every chance of finding a special place in Hillgate folklore once again. I would suggest that the juke box might be given less prominence, though, or no-one will hear a drayman even if he could tell you the latest strike news!

The new licensee, Mabel Ready, has been displaced by 'that motorway' from the Rockhouse Tavern (Great Egerton Street), a pub with a reputation hard to replace among serious Stockport drinkers.

Pete Ogden

FEATHER IN THEIR HAT

It's nice to see that the Whitbread Special Cask bitter is doing quite well at the Hat and Feathers in Mason Street, Ancoats. The pub has been refurbished and the handpump has been transferred to the opposite side of the bar. Former landlord of the Hat and Feathers, Bernard Armstrong, who introduced Special Cask, has taken over at the Railway Hotel in Hollinwood, opposite the station. One wonders whether he will bring a taste of tradition there.

Leo King

LEYLAND LOSS

The West Lancashire branch of CAMRA have been unsuccessful in their fight (see April's What's Doing) to save the historic Eagle and Child in Church Road, Leyland, from modernisation by Burtonwood Brewery.

South Ribble Borough Council, acting on the advice of the Chief Planning Officer that the atmosphere of a pub was not a valid reason for refusing planning permission, are to allow the brewery to gut completely the many-roomed interior in favour of a single large lounge. Burtonwood have apparently promised to retain "as much atmosphere as possible", which shouldn't be difficult as within the planned format the amount of the present pub's atmosphere it will be "possible" to retain is about nil.

News is still awaited on the Keystone in Preston and other pubs in the Plungington area.

Jimmy Ribble

PUB OF THE MONTH

The Pub of the Month for South Manchester branch in August is the Ladybrook Hotel, Fir Road, Bramhall. It is a large, Edwardian, half timbered hotel whose facilities (apart from excellent Boddingtons) include a small upstairs ballroom where the landlord provides the beer by gravity for dos! The pub will re-open its residential facilities some time next year. The hosts, Geoff and Margaret Heathcote, who moved from the White Lion in Little Hulton last year, are keen supporters of CAMRA and the pub also boasts a good vault, a snooker table and a full meal service at lunchtime. There is no juke box and no pool.

The pub is rather difficult to find when sober and well nigh impossible when drunk! Its sign is missing due to rot and/or drunken driver! However, a warm welcome is promised at the social evening on the 28th August, when all members and friends are invited.

Fir Road is off Bramhall Lane South, some 15 minutes walk from Bramhall Station. South Manchester branch are intending to hire a minibus (and driver) for the event and if you wish to book a seat please contact Humphrey Higgins on 432 0059.

HANDPUMPS GO

The choice of handpumps (vault) and electric pumps (room) seems to have ended at the Old Garratt, a Boddingtons house on Princess Street, in Manchester's City Centre. On many occasions I have been offered beer from the room side when I have been in the vault, but the final blow came when I last visited the Old Garratt and noticed an electric pump installed alongside the three smart handpumps. My pint was dispensed from the new pump and the taps on the handpumps were taped up.

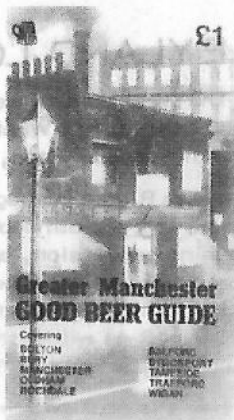
Leo King

DENSHAW CHOICE

Despite rumours to the contrary, Lanchester Taverns assure us that OB and Boddingtons will continue to be served at their recent acquisition, the Golden Fleece at Denshaw, alongside Wilsons.

THE UNSPOILT LOCAL BOOK

The Greater Manchester Good Beer Guide is out this month - 64 pages of CAMRA recommended pubs in Manchester, Bolton, Oldham, Wigan, Stockport, Tameside, etc. The book, complete with town centre maps, contains about 1,000 pubs in 130 districts. It is available from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester, for £1.00 plus a large s.a.e.

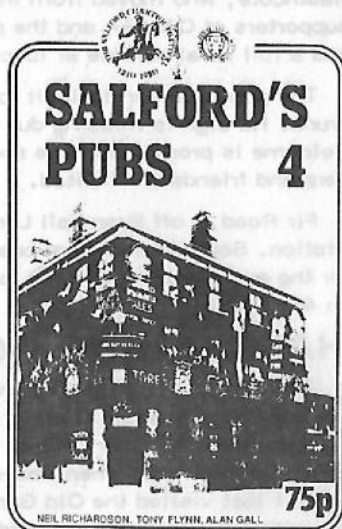


PEAK CONDITION

This month also sees the launch of a new real ale guide covering North West Derbyshire, including Glossop, New Mills, Whaley Bridge, Chapel en le Frith and Buxton. The guide has been produced by the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch and complements the existing real ale guide for that area, which deals mainly with the urban areas within Greater Manchester, by providing a country counterpart which covers part of the Peak District. The Guide to the High Peak and surrounding district is available from Laura O'Reilly, 9 Jodrell Street, New Mills, Stockport SK12 3HJ for 15p and an A5 size s.a.e. or at High Peak branch meetings.

TUPPENCE A PINT

Many hours of painstaking research and drinking have gone into Messrs Richardson, Flynn and Gall's latest instalment of the Salford saga, "Salford's Pubs 4". This volume deals with the pub life in Salford 50 years ago, a century of brewing in the city, seventeenth century alehouses and the origins of some of the pub names. The book is available from Alan Gall, 22 Stoneleigh Drive, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 9HA for 93p including postage.



TRAD JAZZ NITES

Lovers of Trad Jazz in the Oldham area are rapidly making a Wilsons real ale pub their Tuesday night rendezvous. Licensees Colin and Carole at the Yarnspinners, Manchester Road, Werneth, recently introduced this popular form of pub entertainment and very soon it was a case of "come early or stand at the back"!

The handpumped Wilsons ales are very popular on the remaining six days of the week as well.

Steve Lawton

REAL ALE IN KÖLN

Germany has a wide range of beer and brewing styles, with many more types available than can be found in this country. It also has a greater number of breweries, over 1,600 at the last count! The differing styles of beer tend to be very highly localised, however, which means that whereas in Britain many areas are monopolised by one or two brewers producing a range of mild, bitter, brown ale, stout, etc., in Germany one finds a large number of small breweries all producing, at least as far as draught beer is concerned, only one style.

In Köln (Cologne) the local style derives its name from the city itself and is known as Kölsch. Kölsch beer is top fermented, like British beer, It has an average content of 3.7% and is usually well-hopped and golden in colour.

Köln is a very modern city, largely due to the efforts of the RAF, and consequently most of its pubs are modern also. In the city centre, many of the pubs are merely bars with very little character. There are, however, some rather more "ethnic" drinking houses. One of the best is probably the Cölner Hofbräu, at 12 Am Hof, near the cathedral. This vast pub is supplied with Kölsch by its own brewery, operating under the business name of PJ Fruh. In the Hofbräu, beer is tapped from wooden barrels and brought to your table by "Köbes" as the waiters are called, carrying specially designed and numbered trays. It pays not to argue with a "Köbe", however, as in the ensuing debate you are quite likely to be told to "Go back to Russia!"

PJ Fruh's brewery serves a small number of additional outlets, one of which is at nearby Siegburg, just opposite the railway station.

Also on Am Hof, one can sample Gereons Kölsch in the Keule Restaurant, which is worth a visit if only to see the unique "block and tackle" dispense system! Nearby, in Unter Taschenmacher, the small Sion brewery has its own pub. Sion have been brewing since 1511 but by German standards this only qualifies as middle aged!

My favourite area of Köln is Friesenstraße, just one stop on the tram subway going north from Hauptbahnhof. Here one can find Päßgen at 64 Friesenstraße. Päßgen beer, which is brewed in the pub's backyard, is again served from wooden casks. The interior of the pub is largely wooden also, which makes



for a good atmosphere. Specially recommended here is the food, with "Half a hen", the local delicacy (which is in fact bread and cheese) being half the price it is in some of the trendier city centre pubs. One is allowed to argue with the waiters here, but there is a 50 pfennig surcharge for changing your order!

Also in this area is at least one outlet for Sester Kölsch, the Kölsch most liked by members of our party. Sester is a very light and dry Kölsch but the barmaid of this particular establishment is perhaps best described as "full bodied".

There are about a dozen different breweries producing Kölsch, all of which by law must be located within the area under the control of the Cologne Brewers' Union. This area includes Bonn, which has only one brewery, Kurfürsten. One outlet for Kurfürsten Kölsch is at Siegburg railway station buffet. Other brands of Kölsch include Sünner (a more malty version), Dom, Gilder, Römer, Reissdorf (a more fruity version which has "only" been brewed since 1894) and Gaffel, which is available at the Cafe Solaris near Deutzbrücke, where it is served via a remarkable porcelain font system. There is even a "Rats Kölsch"!

Brewers in neighbouring towns sometimes attempt to produce Kölsch-type beer. Under the aforementioned law, however, they are not allowed to describe this beer as Kölsch. They therefore attempt to associate these beers with Kölsch by giving them such names as "Ober" (to suggest top-fermentation), as in Bremme "Ober" available in nearby Wuppertal or "Köbes" (to suggest the Köln waiters of the same name), as in Beckermann's "Köbes". This last is available at one of Köln's most remarkable pubs, the Hotel Timp at Heumarkt. Seemingly open all hours of day and night the place seems fairly normal by day but after dark it is populated by some of the most amazing "persons of unconventional sexuality", as Rupert Periwinkle might put it, that I have ever seen. Not surprisingly, the pub is the focal point for Köln's "Gay Pride Week", held this year during the last week in June.

Whether or not you include the Hotel Timp on your itinerary, Köln is worth a visit. Kölsch costs around 1DM (25p) for .2 of a litre. Pubs generally close around midnight but some stay open later, and public transport finishes at around 1.30am. As well as Kölsch one can occasionally sample genuine "Löwenbräu" from München and there's always Malzbeer, described as suitable for athletes and nursing mothers (so why was Paul Roberts drinking it?) After a few days in the pubs and bars of Köln, I'm sure you too will feel, in the words of a local brewer's advert "...fine, hell and Obergärig!"

Jim Davies



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für Qualität + Reife



Rats Kölsch



MÜHLEN
Kölsch



Sion
Kölsch

Tradition
aus der Altstadt



Königsbräu
ein Genuss

WONDERINGS ABOUT WHITBREAD



As Whitbread seem poised to bring out two new beers, one possibly a 'real' mild (but not Chesters) and also to increase the outlets for their Special Cask bitter, we went exploring to see what was happening in the nineteen tied houses in the Trafford and Hulme branch area. The overall outlook is promising, though most landlords had little or no knowledge of the brewery's plans. In the case of managed houses, the usual comment was 'We have no choice in the matter, we have to sell whatever the brewery gives us'. One would hope, of course, that Whitbread will be selective and introduce cask beer in pubs with sympathetic landlords. Here, then, is a breakdown of the pubs we visited. If you live near one perhaps you could pop in occasionally to see if any mysterious handles have sprouted from the bar.

Altrincham has the Bakers Arms on Pownall Road. Built 13 years ago to replace a pub of the same name that was demolished, it is a friendly but unprepossessing house with two large rooms, a sizable cellar and a landlord who is longing for the day when cask beer is made available to him. In the historic Old Market Place stands the Unicorn, an impressive old pub with room for half of Altrincham to drink there. The seats in the side room are made out of old Chesters mild casks and the landlord would be happy to serve real ale 'as long as it is a good one'. Out at Oldfield Brow and right on the banks of the Bridgewater Canal is the Bay Malton, where cask beer has been asked for, though as yet the brewery have been unable to supply the goods. The three remaining pubs are extremely unlikely to stock real ale. They are the Old Hall on Timperley Golf Course, a comfortable pub with a good reputation for its restaurant, the Wellgreen in Hale, a fine old building with a modern extension that is really a pub in its own right (the main building

only towards the end of the week, beginning Thursday with the Folk Club) and the Bleeding Wolf in Hale Village, a black and white building with a bowling green.

The best bet for an early return to real ale is the Swan with Two Necks, a beautiful country pub covered in flowers near the River Bollin at Little Bollington. Handpumps on the bar are still in working order and stillages found in the stables at the back have been installed in the cellar. Meals are served every lunchtime and Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. By way of contrast, I would think the neighbouring Stamford Arms to be an unlikely candidate, although no-one was available for comment. From the outside I would have expected to enter another 'country' pub, but not so. The six pool tables, pinball machine, table soccer and electronic games attract a young crowd, mainly motorcycle enthusiasts, and lager and cider would probably outsell any cask beer.

Sale boasts the only outlet for Special Cask in the area, at the Volunteer on Cross Street, and while it enjoys only a modest turnover it does have a regular following and seems set to stay. The other two Whitbread houses in Sale, the Brooklands Tavern (built originally as the taproom for the Brooklands Hotel - the Big B - long since demolished to make way for an office block) on Hope Road and the Brigadier on the Racecourse estate both have cellars designed to accommodate tanks with no room for stillages.

In Stretford, both pubs must be considered as possibilities, though no-one was available for comment at the time of the visits. They are the Gorse Hill on the main Chester Road and the Throstles Nest, Seymour Grove, which appears in the Egon Ronay Good Food Guide.

Urmston has the Bent Brook, a modern estate pub with no cellar space to take cask beers, and the Greyhound, which must be a possibility, although the landlord has no strong feelings one way or the other.

Lastly, Hulme offers the Platford, a fairly basic but friendly house adjoining the Talbot on Stretford Road. The manager would like to take cask beer as soon as it becomes available. Likewise the Bulls Head on Chester Road (near the Hope) would be very interested, though being a tenanted pub it is likely to be near the bottom of the list. The Sir Henry Royce, a modern estate pub across the road from the Grand Junction, has adequate cellar space and the manager would be interested 'if it tastes all right'. Finally, the Alexandra over towards Moss Side had no-one available for comment, though I find it hard to believe that the regulars there are likely to take to cheeky little bitters at 45p a pint. Not a pub to visit if you are of a nervous disposition!

The final analysis shows that eight landlords would be happy to take a good cask conditioned beer, six would be unable or unwilling, with the other five being unavailable for comment, though three of those would be strong possibilities. On the whole, a promising situation.

Terry Bount

PLANNING NEWS

Wilsons have applied for permission to extend Clynes Wine Bar and to incorporate the adjoining cottage. In Withington, Whitbreads want to extend the Princess Hotel which you would have thought was big enough for anyone.

CANAL CULTURE

The inland waterways have an attraction that some people find irresistible. The Mikron Theatre Company are so drawn to the canals that they spend the whole summer afloat, just cruising from one canalside pub to the next. It sounds the ideal life.

Their theatres are beer gardens and public bars, and their audiences are the pub regulars, with their families. The company produce a new play every year, always set against the background of the canals and water folk. Mikron have already passed through Manchester this year, but they will forsaking the canals briefly on September 13th and 14th to attend the Liverpool Road Station celebrations in Manchester.

In October, they conclude their 1980 season with a series of performances at pubs beside the Huddersfield Narrow Canal:-

8.00pm Oct 27	Church Inn, Church Road, Uppermill
8.00pm Oct 28	New Bridge Inn, Micklehurst Road, Mossley
8.00pm Oct 29	Pack Horse Hotel, Carr Lane, Slaithwaite
8.00pm Oct 30	Four Horse Shoes, Market Street, Milnsbridge
8.30pm Oct 31	Rose & Crown, Stalybridge
8.00pm Nov 1	Railway, Station Road, Marsden

Henry Peacock

THE NOT QUITE AMBER NECTAR RAILWAY SHOW

Followers of the Great Railway Extortion saga will remember that the organisers gave CAMRA the bum's rush when they realised they could screw some cash out of Whitbread for the beer concession. It was originally reported that the brewery would be supplying real ale in the form of a new 'Chesters bitter'. Not so. 'Chesters bitter' is some keg concoction on the lines of keg Stones. So, unless Whitbread put on their Special Cask, visitors in need of a pint of real ale may care to explore the surrounding pubs, as detailed in 'Real Ale in Central Manchester'.



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PRESTWICH HISTORY

The photograph (courtesy of Dennis Laherty) is of the Plough Inn, Rain-sough, circa 1910. The MB sign was the old Manchester Brewery Company, a Walker & Hornfrays subsidiary. The front of the pub is awash after a nearby culvert had burst, most likely the reason the photograph was taken. Another unusual feature is the advertisement for a dairy product above the door. The old sign has long since gone and what is now the extension was once a row of cottages.

Next door to the Plough Inn is the modern Staff of Life standing close to the site of the old pub of the same name. The car park was once the site of the Rainsough Workhouse, which was sold by public auction in 1875 at the Red Lion, Bury New Road.

The Red Lion appears to have been a popular hostelry in those days, as indeed it still is today. In Middleton's "Annals of Prestwich", published in 1902, there are several tales of a local man named Tommy Howe who was of "eccentric habits."

'On another occasion a Scotchman in kilts was performing with the pipes and dancing in a room at the Red Lion, when Tommy, attracted by the sound of the music, entered the house, and seeing his opportunity for a little fun, or, as he called it, a lark, knowing where he could obtain a wasps' nest, hastened away to fetch it, and soon returned with the irritated insects, and throwing them on the floor, remarked, "Aw'll larn thee hew to doance," and thoroughly succeeded, for the wasps began to inflict their vengeful pain upon poor old Sandy to such an unpleasant extent that he hastily beat a retreat with some violent anathemas.'

Opposite the Red Lion is Church Lane, leading to the Parish Church of St Mary's and the Church Inn, known as the Ostrich Inn until 1823. A local Justice of the Peace held court at the Church Inn in a room called the Star

Chamber and, it would seem, was the dread of the parish drinkers. Serious offenders were sent to the New Bailey Prison in Salford.

During the reign of King Edward I the parish became known as Prestwich-cum-Oldham and many of the surrounding townships such as Oldham, Royton, Chadderton and Crompton were subject to Prestwich Parish until around the middle of the nineteenth century. The 'Annals of Prestwich' had this to say about weddings at the Parish Church and celebrations at the Church Inn:-

'Formerly it was the custom for the people residing at Oldham and other townships subject to Prestwich, to be married here, and a gay stir have they made. Men and women dressed as their own means and friendly wardrobe would allow, used to dance at the bottom end of Church Lane, going frequently in and out of the inn, while some were admiring the scenes from the upper windows, and with ribbons flying loose, or with pipes or ale pots in their hands, calling to their friends below, while rival fiddlers scraped away in anything but harmony, until the lane was thronged with an excited crowd.

Tommy Howe used to drink in the Church Inn too. Again from the 'Annals':-

'One afternoon on his return from work, he called at the Church Inn, where he met an itinerant vendor of crockery. Tommy, casting his eye upon the pots, remarked to the man, "Aw'st surprised thee", and, after repeating his remark several times, eventually he did surprise the man by jumping into the middle of the basket with his clogs, and smashing all his wares, for which Tommy had to pay.'

Alas, the Church Inn is a John Smiths house these days.

In the late eighteenth century a Mr Thomas William Coke decided to dispose of his Prestwich estates and summoned the tenants to meet him in the Ostrich Inn, Bury Old Road.

The Ostrich Inn probably took its name from the Coke family crest, which was an ostrich attempting to masticate a horseshoe. I refer readers to Roger Hall's interesting article on the pubs of Cheetham Hill (What's Doing - July 1980) and suggest that the Horseshoe in Coke Street very likely had the same origin.

The Same Yet in Simister has an unusual and amusing story to its name. Cliff, the amiable landlord of this friendly village pub, told me the tale over a fine pint of John Willie Lees the other day.

The original name of the pub was the Seven Stars until, just before the turn of the century, a violent storm blew the sign to the ground. The landlord, so the story goes, had a few too many on the day the sign writer arrived, and, when asked what name to write on the new sign, the landlord replied, "Same Yet", meaning the same as it was before. The sign writer took the landlord at his word and named the pub "Same Yet", the name it has had ever since.

Another tale about Tommy Howe took place in a Manchester pub some time about the middle or late nineteenth century. Tommy was drinking at the 'Sign of the Black-a-Moor's Head' (Does anybody know of it?) when the whole building collapsed and buried him. Eventually, Tommy crawled from under the rubble and exclaimed, "Is there anybody kilt but me?"

David Rowlinson

FULL BODDIED

Yates Wine Lodges first grew up in Lancashire, and were intended to wean hardened drinkers away from stronger spirits, at a time when drunkenness was widespread.

After amalgamating with Addisons Wine Lodges, the chain has grown until they now have almost fifty branches. The lodges and off-licences offer a curious selection of groceries including flour (wholemeal or unbleached), tea, Portuguese sardines, olive oil and also their own brand of cigars.

Despite their many virtues, the Lodges have not served cask beer for some years (with the notable exception of the London branches). There are now signs that this policy may change. The Chorley Lodge has recently introduced Boddingtons bitter. Two handpumps have been installed and the price is 38p per pint.

Let us hope that this proves successful and encourages Yates to introduce cask beers into their other establishments.

Henry Peacock

MORE BOTTLED LAGER

Imported German bottled beer has been increasing in availability in recent months, as recorded in these columns. But now comes "Steffl" beer from neighbouring Austria. "Steffl Gold" is described as a "premium Austrian beer with a delicious hop flavour" which is "traditionally brewed and matured in Austria". Draught Steffl is Austria's largest selling draught beer and was certainly until recently brewed by the Schwechat Brewery. "Steffl Gold" currently available, however, is brewed by the giant Osterreichische Brau of Linz. It would appear that brewery takeovers are also to be found in Austria!

The beer is imported by Mr Booze Ltd of Birmingham and is available in a number of Spar off-licences in the North West at 49p for a half litre bottle.

SORRY

Jim Davies

We have been asked to point out that the article 'Gloucester Boss Jossed' in June's What's Doing could be construed as libellous to Mr Hartley. This was certainly not the intention and we apologise for any inconvenience or distress caused him

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The Amber Nectar Show was really trem, particularly for those of us in a hands on situation. Not only were we able to savour a vast array of cheeky little bitters and malty mellow milds unparalleled outside the portals of the Fatted Pseud, but we were visited by many old friends, including Max Wall, Boddington, Mr & Mrs Prune, Bazza Primp and the barrel-shaped Mr Kellet, which added to the conviviality of the occasion. Sylph-like Ned Kellet was speculating as to who had ratted to the gutter press about his share deals in CAMRA Investments whilst Bazza Primp was resplendent with purple hair and spray on trousers. The Badge Fair-plastic emulation prize, however, was won by Ms Rottenbodge, who was more badge than clothe. The Noble Robin was mortified when the normally retiring Boddington eloped with the besotted Royal Hall to the nearest Drabs emporium.

Talk amongst those in the know was of the impending resignation of Demyss Roussos and of his probable successor. There's not much competition, particularly now that Denis Huntley has allowed the Ally Pally to burn down and intends to hold the Beerex in a disused gas-works in Wandsworth, so it looks like Elsie Clockwork-Nun will get the job. Boddington tells me she won't get his vote, although I would discount evil talk about her flatulence in a Puddlebury Drabs house back in '76.

Which brings me to the other major topic of interest - the amazing doings of the dynamic Perry Drab. After the electronic Jewish piano fiasco, Perry has started interfering with rents and threatening to smack tavern keepers who put their prices up. He's also been upsetting the draypersons again by not buying them a new horse and being terribly mean wage-wise. Grotley may soon lose its title as Mecca of the North if the supply of Drabs dries up - why else do effete South persons make the pilgrimage, if not to savour the delights of the Rat and Handbag or the Marquis St Excrement?

Over in downtown Dockley, Cobblers Tavern has a superabundance of tavern-keepers. If this carries on the brewery will have to buy the Hotel Piccadilly to house all the former licensees and their solicitors.

STOP PRESS Informed opinion from the Home Office suggests that Willy Wonker will shortly announce the unconditional pardon and immediate release of Bunty Fortescue. I believe that Bunty has been hardened by his period of incarceration - Caveat Bogbrush!

LETTERS

Dear Ed,

On my rounds delivering 'What's Doing' to the literati of Smarmford and Slutch, much consternation has risen over your decision to drop the centre page supplements of comprehensive (well, nearly) guides to various areas in Greater Grotley. A petition of some 5,000 names, including leading members of the local clergy, three Brown Owls and the entire membership of Slutch Temperance League (Irish Division) was handed in to me at our last real ale poetry reading evening. Unfortunately, while circumnavigating a large, water filled pot-hole on my bike, the petition became detached from my left hand, fell into the murky depths and promptly drowned. You must, therefore, take my word for it (as a Gentleman and a Scholar) that no-one will buy your worthy publication unless 'Real Ale in Chorlton-cum-Hardy' and suchlike continue to appear as a free reward to those who subscribe their hard-earned ten pences so willingly. May I suggest, by way of a compromise (after all, we are British) that the inserts continue to appear, but less frequently - perhaps once every three or four months?

Yours etc. Mr Rottenbodge

Nestfeather replies:

The editor is certainly willing to continue with the lists, which could be accommodated by now and then chopping up or slinging out articles from some of our more wordy or boring contributors. New lists are eagerly awaited for certain areas of Greater Manchester. In passing, it is worthy of note that some contributors have compiled guides to most of Germany, Belgium and parts of Eastern Europe, not to mention the lavatories of Loughborough, in less time than it is taking others to check out Bolton, Stockport and South Manchester.

Dear Sir,

I can sympathise with your correspondent Mr Wheeler in his search for a head-free pint as I moved to Manchester from Suffolk (I still occasionally wake up in a sweat at the thought of Greene King mild). I can, however, recommend the Railway in Broadheath, Altrincham (Boddingtons) where the landlord, on request, will remove the sparkler and sell you a bubble free pint for your taste buds' delectation, though you will still have to put up with other customers exhorting you to take it back because it's off! I found that small pubs where the landlord himself served you were more sympathetic towards us 'deviants', but I must confess I have given up the struggle and accept the head I am given nowadays.

On the subject of haunted pubs, the Bull i' th' Thorn at Hurdlow, Derbyshire, has been the location of a number of sightings, including a lady in black evening dress seen by the landlady. In addition, an otherwise robust and worldly lad, because of an eerie sensation in a corridor, refused to go to the gents' on his own. (I concede that more Freudian explanations are possible in that case).

BJ Brownsword

TRAFFORD TRANSITIONS

The Lord Nelson (Holts), Stretford Road, Urmston, has changed from a tenanted to a managed house with the result that the price of a pint has dropped by 6p. The locals are chuffed.

Cask mild has rejoined the bitter on handpumps in the Axe and Cleaver, Altrincham, after a spell on the chilled and filtered variety.

It is strongly rumoured that the Bass Drum, Stretford, is to become a restaurant.

Extensive plans to completely alter the Grapes (Boddingtons) in Altrincham are in an advanced stage. Electric methods of dispense will naturally replace the handpumps.

All Wilsons pubs in Altrincham will be serving traditional beer by early autumn. At present the odd one out is the Bricklayers, a cosy little pub on George Street, but when the new cellar is complete stillages will be installed and pillar taps will be used to dispense cask conditioned mild and bitter. Apparently the council have given a grant towards the alterations since the aim is to enable the dray to deliver to the rear of the pub, thus enabling Trafford to complete the full pedestrianisation of George Street within the next six months.

Ron Buttery

RAGLAN REAL ALE

The Lord Raglan on Walmersley Old Road, Nangreaves, Bury, has had a handpump installed serving McEwans 80/-. This trendy, isolated free house was previously selling only the usual wide variety of barely indistinguishable S&N keg beers, which the Masons down the road still does. The Hark to Dandler, the lowest of the three pubs on the road, continues to sell Youngers IPA.

Don Chattwood

Subscriptions

If you want to be sure of getting What's Doing every month, why not subscribe? It costs £1.40 for six issues, postage paid. Fill in the form below and send it together with a cheque or postal order made out to "What's Doing" to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester

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Please send me the next six issues starting with the issue (state month)

Back Numbers

These are available from the above address at 10p a copy. Please send a large s.a.e.

What's Doing COPY DATE for September issue is 21 Aug

What's Doing is edited by Neil Richardson, 51 Lime Street, Farnworth, Bolton. Farnworth 78138

COACH & HORSES

The Coach and Horses on Bury Old Road, a Good Beer Guide pub serving excellent Holts, changed hands last month.

The house, which has changed very little since the 1930s, was taken over by the Bentley family during the war years. Mr and Mrs C Bentley ran the pub from 1941 until 1949, when their son Bob and his wife became the tenants. We were all saddened by Bob's death recently and wish Mrs Bentley good luck for the future.

The Coach and Horses is a fine example of a warm, friendly local with a good atmosphere. There is a lounge, cosy snug at the rear and a popular, basic vault. Old fashioned coal fires burn during the winter months.

Just out of the photograph to the right are the stables which serve as a reminder of the old coaching days when the mail coach on the Manchester/Burnley route called here. Bentley's Brewery (no relation) once stood behind the pub, where the foundations can still be seen. The old railway bridge nearby was known as Bentley Bridge. A series of three photographs on the wall opposite the bar shows the old bridge, work-in-progress and the completed new bridge over Bury Old Road and the M62 motorway.

David Rowlinson



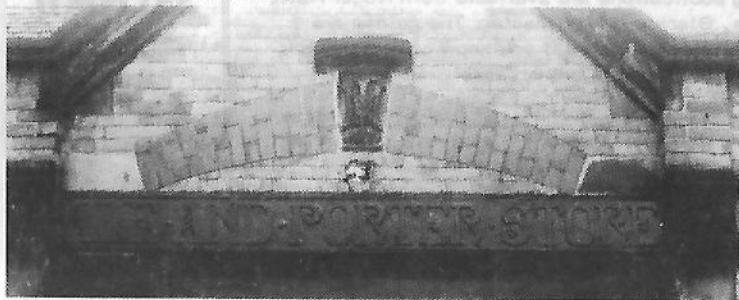
JUBILEE JUBILATION

Cask Wilsons ales have at last returned to the Jubilee in Shaw, near Oldham. After taking over at the pub some months ago, Derek and Chris Fletcher urged Wilsons to install handpumped cask beer. The brewery agreed, and have gone one better and built a ground level "cellar" on the back of the pub with a window opening adjacent to the bar in the lounge. So customers now have the novel experience of seeing the casks from whence their beer is drawn. Chris has continued the well respected catering side at the pub and the upstairs restaurant is in regular use.

Steve Lawton

MANCHESTER BREWERIES No 18

B & J McKenna



Harpurhey, unlike districts such as Hulme and Ardwick, has never been a popular brewing area. The only brewery of any importance to have existed there belonged to Bernard and John McKenna; and this ceased production over seventy years ago.

The Harpurhey brewery, Rochdale Road, was built and equipped by the Salford firm of Gregory & Heynes for the McKennas in 1868. Apart from the brewing side, they also blended whisky and stocked a large range of wines, mostly bottled on the premises. The wine and spirits department, and later also the registered office, stood at 29 Swan Street, Manchester, next to the George and Dragon Hotel and close to Smithfield Market. McKennas owned the George and Dragon (still there today as the Band on the Wall), together with warehouses on Oak Street and Goadsby Street, all located on the same block. No 29 Swan Street also housed McKenna's Restaurant.

The first pubs tied to the brewery were the Queens Vaults, Wellington Head and Osborne House, all on Rochdale Road, and the Britains Protection on Oldham Road. The photograph shows B&JM's monogram over their ale and porter stores behind the Wellington Head, now the Marble Arch.

John died in about 1890, leaving Bernard as sole owner, but the trading name continued unchanged. B&J McKenna Ltd was formed in 1895 with a capital of £80,000. Nine years later, Walker & Homfrays of Salford bought the concern for £130,000. In their report for the year ended December 1905, the directors of Walker & Homfrays stated "The entire undertakings of B&J McKenna Ltd has now been absorbed by the company, and after making the necessary adjustments there is a surplus on the transaction of £39,783."

The Harpurhey Brewery was subsequently divided up into smaller units for commercial use. Nothing of the brewery still stands but it is remembered in the names of two roads flanking the old site - Bernard Street and Brewster Street (once Brewery Street).

Alan Gall

NEW HANDPUMPS

As promised by J W Lees, the installation of handpumps is taking effect. Two pubs have recently received theirs - the Rembrandt, Sackville Street, in Manchester City Centre and the Woodman Inn (near Ferranti's) in Hollinwood.

Leo King

Real Ale Guides

The following publications are available from Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester. The guides are updated from time to time so if you know of any changes please contact the relevant branch - see Branch Diary.

REAL ALE IN HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

Including Marple, Hyde, Ashton, Audenshaw, Dukinfield, Stalybridge, Mossley & Denton. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN SOUTH MANCHESTER - Gorton, Openshaw, Clayton, Didsbury, etc 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN STOCKPORT - Hazel Grove, Cheadle, Heaton Mersey, etc. 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN SALFORD - Swinton, Eccles, Irlam, Worsley 25p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN ROCHDALE Heywood, Littleborough, Middleton etc 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN ROSSENDALE - Bacup, Haslingden, Helmshore, Rawtenstall etc 10p + s.a.e.

INNS OF MAN - Illustrated comprehensive guide to the island's tied houses 50p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN TRAFFORD & HULME - Altrincham, Sale, Urmston etc. with maps 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL MANCHESTER A comprehensive guide to the real ale outlets within 1 mile of St Peter's Square. Map, illustrated 50p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN OLDHAM - Failsworth, Royton, Chadderton, Shaw, Saddleworth, 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN BURY - Ramsbottom, Radcliffe, Tottington, Whitefield, Prestwich, 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN MANCHESTER NORTH - city centre, Ancoats, Collyhurst, Newton Heath, Moston, Blackley, Cheetham etc 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL AND NORTH CHESHIRE - Warrington, Widnes, Runcorn, Lymm, Frodsham, Northwich, Middlewich and Winsford 10p + s.a.e.

THE ROAD TO WIGAN BEER - Leigh, Atherton, Standish, Skelmersdale, Newton etc, fully illustrated, maps. 35p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN ST HELENS - Sutton, Peasley Cross, Thatto Heath, Moss Nook, Eccleston, Parr, etc 10p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN GREATER GROTLEY - Slumley, Smarmford & Slutch, Poshton & Pseudley 10p + s.a.e.

GREATER MANCHESTER GOOD BEER GUIDE A selective guide to about 1,000 pubs in Greater Manchester - Bury, Stockport, Oldham, Salford, Trafford, Wigan, Bolton, Rochdale, Leigh, Tameside, etc. 64pp. £1.00 + s.a.e.

Pub & Brewery Histories

The following publications are available from Alan Gail, 22 Stoneleigh Drive, Stoneclough, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 9HA

SALFORD'S PUBS No1 - Hanky Park, Regent Road, Cross Lane, Walker & Homfrays, etc. 78p inc post.

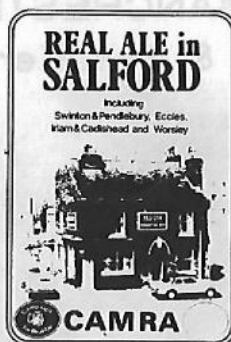
SALFORD'S PUBS No2 - Greengate, Chapel St, Ordsall, Threlfalls, small breweries etc. 78p inc postage

SALFORD'S PUBS No3 - Broughton, Weaste, early inns, Groves & Whitnall, demolition, etc. 78p inc postage

SALFORD'S PUBS No4 Pubs 50 years ago, alehouses of 1600s, 100 years of brewing, pub names 93p inc post

WIGAN'S PUBS No1 Town centre, Newtown Brewery, Alreys, Oldfield, Albion breweries etc 47p inc post

WIGAN'S PUBS No2 - Scholes, early inns, brewing in and around Wigan, surrounding pubs 47p inc postage





Branch Diary

BOLTON

Tues 5th August Branch Meeting George, Gt Moor Street 8.45pm
 Tues 2nd September Branch Meeting George, Gt Moor Street, 8.45pm
 Mon 22nd Sept Social Derby Arms, Derby Street from 8.30pm
 Contact Bert Kerks Bolton388172

SOUTH MANCHESTER

Thurs 14 Aug Branch Meeting Gateway, East Didsbury 8.00pm
 Fri 15th Aug Trip to Bollington - contact H Higgins to book seat on bus
 Thurs Aug 28 Pub of the Month Social; Ladybrook Hotel, Fir Road, Bramhall. Minibus seats available
 Contact: Humphrey Higgins 432 0059

HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

Tues 12 Aug Branch Meeting The Organ, Hyde 8.30pm
 Sun 3rd Aug Joint Social with Macclesfield branch at Bulls Head, Kettleshulme, 12.30pm
 Fri 15th Aug Pub crawl of Ashton, starting at the station 8.00
 Tues 16 Sept Branch Meeting, the Swan, New Mills 8.30pm
 Contact: Tom Lord 061 427 7099

NORTH MANCHESTER

Sat 16th Aug Sheffield Shuffle: Assemble 7.00pm Globe, Howard Street (Sheffield). Recommended
 catch 5.24pm train from Piccadilly. Details from Duncan Roberts 794 2494
 Weds 3rd Sept Pub Crawl of Cheetham Hill. Egerton, Hanlon St 7.00; Crumpsall, Bury Old Rd 8.00
 Weds 10 Sept Committee/social; New Crown, Newton Heath
 Weds 17 Sept Branch Meeting, White Swan, Swinton
 Sat 20th Sept Early evening trip to Shropshire. Details next month
 Contact Roger Hall 740 7937

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM AND BURY

Tues 12 Aug 8.00pm Branch Meeting Kings (Thwaites) Market Place, Heywood
 Tues 26 Aug 8.00pm Committee meeting Bay Horse (Whitbread) Torrington Street, Heywood
 Tues 9th Sept 8.00pm Branch meeting Welcome (Holts) Besses o' th' Barn, Whitefield
 Weds 10 Sept Trip to JW Lees Brewery
 Tues 16 Sept 8.00pm Committee meeting Royal Oak (Hydes), Whittaker La, Prestwich
 Contact: Steve Lawton 061 620 9239 (h) 061 236 4411 (w) ext 7236

TRAFFORD & HULME

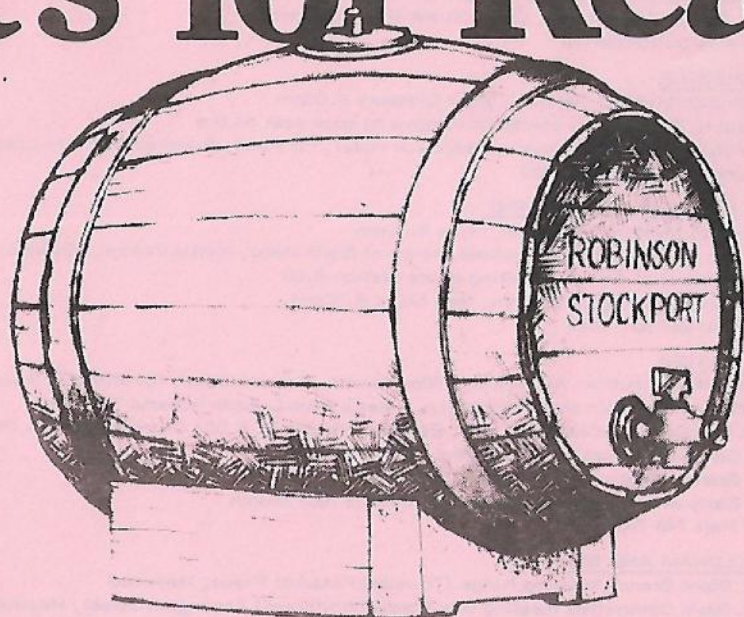
Thurs Aug 7 8.00pm Committee/Social Osborne House, Victory Street, Rusholme
 Thurs Aug 21 8.00pm Branch Meeting, Old Plough, Green Lane, Ashton on Mersey
 Thurs Aug 28th 8.00pm Pub of Month Social with S Manchester - Ladybrook, Bramhall
 Contact: Mick Rottenbury 969 7013 (h)

AMBER NECTAR SHOW SOUVENIR

A limited number of these rather fetching souvenir "Amber Nectar Show" tee shirts are still to be had, in three colours and two sizes. These are available for £2.70, post paid, from Terry Grimshaw, 21 Allingham Street, Longsight, Manchester 12. Telephone 224 0374.



It's for Real



We at Robinson's, think that what matters most about beer is its flavour. That's why we are still brewing beer the same way that we did a hundred years ago. Natural ingredients, the same time-honoured brewing ways, even on the same site - not many can say that!

And you can buy at least one, usually two and sometimes more of the traditional Ales listed here in any Robinson's pub within 100 miles of Stockport. Not many can make that sort of claim either.

Now you can have Real Ale at home for parties or just for your own enjoyment. Available in Firkins and Pints* complete with tap, stillage and detailed instructions. You can order

from any Robinson's On or Off-Licence or Unicorn Wine Shops.

Always available from Unicorn Wine,

Old Tom Ale
Best Bitter Ale
Bitter Ale*
Best Mild Ale



Lower Hillgate, Stockport, (just by the Brewery) 061 480 6571. And its the cheapest way of buying beer. A little more trouble perhaps but we think you will agree with us that it is worth it.

There are deposits on the casks, stillages and taps, returnable in full when you bring them back. You can borrow glasses, paying only for those you break or fail to return providing you also make appropriate purchases of items to fill them.

We strongly recommend that you place your order as soon as possible for Christmas or New Year use.

It's Robinson's . . . for Real.

*Bitter Ale not available in Pints.

**When you buy any of these Robinson's Ales,
you are buying Traditional Draught Beer
-at its very best.**