

WHAT'S DOING



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THE MANCHESTER BEER DRINKER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VALUE FOR MONEY



The White Lion, Liverpool Road, Eccles, sells Holts mild and bitter at 34p and 35p a pint in the bar, and that must be the best value for money in Greater Manchester.

SWAP SNAG

The pub swaps between Wilsons and Matthew Brown are by now almost complete. One major snag occurred when Matthew Brown found that one of their pubs-to-be was falling down! Not surprisingly, they didn't want it. So now Wilsons will be

keeping the Wellington, Ripponden Road, Oldham and swapping the Shepherds Boy, Huddersfield Road, instead. Like the Wellington, the Shepherds Boy is on recently installed handpumps.

SMILES PLEAS

Yet another nail is driven into the coffin of draught mild. The narrowing differential between mild and bitter prices has eroded mild sales to such an extent that many outlets cannot turn over enough to ensure that the beer is kept in peak condition. This is the start of the vicious circle where out-of-condition beer causes low sales, causes out-of-condition beer. Kindly breweries like Greenalls can break the circle by withdrawing casks and installing kegs - end of problem! Or is it only the beginning? The decline of mild sales is so rapid that in five years' time mild may disappear entirely as a draught beer. Many Greenalls pubs are switching to keg mild - one of the latest victims is the Unicorn in Pendleton, an excellent local which still serves traditional bitter.

Because of the difference in gravity, mild should sell for between 4p and 6p a pint less than bitter. The brewers have not yet justified the pricing structure which makes mild only 1p or 2p cheaper. It is important to act now before mild disappears forever. Ask your publican and your brewery why mild is not 5p a pint cheaper than bitter. The inadequacy of the answers may force the brewers to alter their price structure unless they want to see mild disappear forever.

Roger Hall

GREENALLS CHANGE

Jack Thomas, manager of the Manchester Regiment, Chester Road, Hulme, since it opened some twelve years ago, is going 'back home' to Yorkshire. He will again be managing a new pub as Greenalls increase their stock east of the Pennines - the Punch Clock, near John Waddingtons factory in Hunslet, opens towards the end of February. Unfortunately for Jack and Yorkshire CAMRAmen the pub will be supplied with tanked beer. Meanwhile, the landlord of the Ardwick Empire returns to the pub where he did his training and the Regiment will remain on cask conditioned mild and bitter. The pub was named after the now disbanded Manchester Regiment and was built on the lines of the garrison church (St George's, Hulme) and the Hulme barracks.

On a sadder note, Greenalls would like to see a change in the tenancy of the Lord Napier, Great Jackson Street, Hulme, as landlady Gladys McNulty is now 61 and the brewery say women licensees must retire at 60. Gladys has run the pub since 1966 and recently brought a test case against Greenalls, claiming damages for sex discrimination. The result of the case is not yet known but we wish her well in her efforts, as she has always kept a good pub with a decent pint and a friendly atmosphere.

MR

WHAT'S DOING



BASS IN BOLTON

The Cromptons Mule, Spa Road, Bolton, now sells Bass (H) at 50p a pint instead of Theakstons bitter. The Mule has a restaurant licence and keeps normal hours, except for Monday evenings and Sundays when it is closed. Meals start from £1.30 and the menu is regularly changed. This is the only outlet for traditional Bass in Bolton.

LEYLAND LOSS

As reported in August WD, the Eagle and Child, Church Road, Leyland, has been internally devastated by Burtonwood. Once past the front door, virtually nothing is left of the old pub - the original bar and small rooms have gone. The pub is now attracting people from all around, who are no doubt impressed by its new anonymous image.

It is interesting to note that the Eagle and Child previously sold light and dark mild, but the brewery saw fit to retain only the dark mild. Is it because they didn't have any of the fancy bar mountings for light mild?

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

The newest pub in Bolton, Space City, Back Spring Gardens, which occupies the cellar of the Social Services building in Bolton, sells Greenall Whitley keg beers. Space City opens at 10.30 in the morning and closes at 10.30 in the evening, 'beer' being available only during normal opening hours. A coffee bar is open at all times. The pub includes some dozen pool tables and twenty-odd 'space invaders' machines (at 20p a go!) It is inhabited mainly by the young who know no better.

On a more healthy note, Chris, landlord of the Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street, has removed the pool table from the back room. He is a dominoes fanatic and did not want his domino room cluttered with dart boards so the pool room has now

become the darts room. Let's hope that all those traditional tap rooms which have been ruined by pool tables return to their former glory. Join the Campaign Against the Pool Table!

OLDHAM BREWERY STRIKES AGAIN

Three cask OB houses are to be modernised. The tenanted Farmers Boy, Huddersfield Road, is to have the full treatment, leaving only the shell intact. The licensee and customers want the handpumps and cask beer to stay.... we shall see. The other pubs are both managed houses; The Westbourne and the Westwood, in the Featherstall Road area, are to have extensive alterations carried out in the near future. There is probably a chance in a million that the real ale will stay.

WHITEFIELD'S GLORIOUS TWELFTH

Thursday, 12th February, is the day local real ale drinkers can 'shoot down' to the Junction Hotel, Besses o' th' Barn, and sample handpumped Tetley mild and bitter. The 'glorious 12th' is the date Whitbread withdraw in favour of Tetley-Walker (WD Dec) to place the Junction in the position of being the only Tetley outlet in the town

Three other breweries, Boddingtons, J W Lees and Robinsons, also have one Whitefield outlet each, namely the Red King, Lord Clive and Wheatsheaf. The remaining Whitbread houses in the area number half a dozen, so it's one down, six to go.



WIGAN WICKETS

At last work has started at the Legh Arms, the ex-Greenalls pub in Orrell, Wigan. It has been empty for two years and was bought last year by Thwaites. No doubt it will be traditional beer, perhaps with handpumps, which will be a welcome change in the Orrell area.

If the present trend continues handpumps will abound in the Wigan area. Two

banks of three have appeared at the Prince of Wales, Woodhouse Lane, (Tetley mild and bitter) thanks to enterprising landlord Alan Winstanley; the Silverwell, Darlington Street East (Walker bitter, Tetley mild) sports a bank of four in the large vault and two in the lounge bar, again thanks to the landlord, Ernie Roughley.

A fine array of handpumps has been promised at the Raven, Wallgate, (Tetley mild and bitter, Walkers Warrington) planned to be Wigan's first 'Heritage' pub. At all these pubs there has been a noticeable increase in sales.

KEG MILD

The Crofters Hotel, St Georges Road, Bolton, now sells traditional Greenalls bitter only; the mild is keg.

BYE BYE BASS

The Old King, Portwood, Stockport, is no longer selling Draught Bass. The only pub in Stockport still selling Bass is now the Midway.

CAMRA BAN

Last month we mentioned a Wigan landlord who banned some 200 customers. A correspondent informs us of a similar occurrence at the fashionable Salisbury Arms, a Camra Investments pub in Cambridge. It seems that the whole of the West Suffolk branch of Camra was banned from the place by telephone - the landlord had had enough of coachloads of Camra Hooray Henries who stole the beer mats and ripped up the ashtrays.

NEW PUB FOR BURY

Garsdale, Bury's latest pub, opened its doors on December 17th. Owned by Lanchester Taverns, it is situated on Woodhill Road and serves, in keeping with current Wilsons policy, handpumped mild and bitter.

Originally built in 1925 as a five bedroom house in its own $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land, the building was purchased and converted during the latter half of last year. Internally, the pub follows the normal Lanchester Taverns lines and falls into the "Popular, comfortable, country pub" category.

CAPACITY AND HUTCH

Following the takeover of Moorhouses by the Hutchinson Group, more information has come to light. Certain alterations are being made to the brewery in order to increase capacity to 30 barrels a week and a general tidying up has started. It is planned to introduce a 1044 gravity bitter around the end of February, principally for the take home trade. Free houses currently being considered as possible outlets range from Southport to Bradford. For the foreseeable future Moorhouses will be brewing real ale only and a mild may be introduced.

APOLOGY DEPT.

Contrary to the report (WD Dec) regarding the availability of real Sam Smiths OBB in Rochdale, the Alpine Ayingerbrau Gasthof on Whitworth Road still sports working handpumps. With a name like that, you may have guessed that it is a 'theme' pub, and perhaps a little out of place in a part of Rochdale not known for its ski slopes. However, the Gasthof is worth a visit, if only to sample the beer and wonder at the vast expanse of pine fittings. There is also a restaurant at the rear of the pub.

WHITBREAD RESTAURANTS

Whitbread are to close a number of their pubs to turn them into restaurants. It is believed about five are involved in the Manchester area - including the Wellgreen, Hale, which at present serves Chesters cask bitter. It remains to be seen whether the public bar is to be retained.

4p OFF

In an attempt to improve flagging sales Wilsons have reduced their prices in tenanted pubs. Beer will cost 4p a pint less for one month from 19th January. This makes it almost as cheap as Holts, who are understood not to be offering free plastic flowers with every pint.

HORWICH BASS

What's Doing readers with long memories will recall that back in January 1979 the Black Dog in Horwich was renamed Nibblers and admittance was restricted to gentlemen over 21 wearing ties or smart casual attire. After two years spent searching for a suitable CAMRA member to tread boldly, one was found. He would like it to be known to other suitable gentlemen that Bass cask bitter is on sale inside.

TIT BITS

A GP writing in the British Medical Journal recently claimed that real ale is bad for the babies of real-ale-loving mothers who breast-feed their little ones. One mother who breast-fed her baby boy whilst in booze-free hospital saw her little bundle of joy progress well. Unfortunately the progress of the wee lad did not continue after mother and son were discharged but, said the doctor, actually deteriorated. The blame was firmly placed on the real ale the happy parents were supping in their local. However, when mum stopped downing the real stuff baby's health improved and he put on weight again.

The article did not say whether the doctor then prescribed the bright variety, but if so the only improvement fizz might bring would surely be to baby's wind. Alternatively, if mum puts baby on the other breast she may discover that her little son has a preference for mild.

David Rowlinson

NEWS FROM SUE'S

Sue's Brews, Burnley Road East, Waterfoot, have gone over to handpumps for Taylors, Theakstons and Moorhouses.

WILSONS CONVERSIONS

Three more Wilsons pubs are to go on to the Real Thing soon in the Stockport area. The converts are the Conway on Turves Road, Cheadle Hulme, the Smithy, Grove Lane, also in Cheadle Hulme, and the Moor Top, Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor. The latter should be a welcome attraction to the patrons of the Savoy Cinema opposite, as they can now get a decent pint after the show!

STICKY WICKETS

Fake handpumps have appeared in another Scottish & Newcastle pub - the King Edward VII, Penny Street, Lancaster. This time the brewery has gone overboard and the 'handpumps' dispense a range of keg beers from Tartan to lager.

While we are on the subject, beware also of the 'handpumps' in the Railway, Simpson Street, Hyde (Wilson's). The pub has gone over to fizzy beer but the old pumps are still in use until the electric ones arrive.

REAL CIDER

As well as Alan's Off Licence (mentioned elsewhere) The Dairy, Wahway Road, Sale (opposite the Vine) has Bulmers Extra Dry and Medium Sweet available at 32p a pint. Anyone interested in the art of cider making is invited to the February meeting of Trafford & Hulme branch. (see Branch Diary)

SWAN DOWNING

For an experimental period, Holts beer is available at the old prices (before the recent 2p increase) on Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes in the White Swan at Swinton. (Bitter 40p and mild 38p) The experiment seems to be very popular and lunches are to be added to the available Saturday fare.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

The first pub to change hands in the latest round of pub swaps was the Staff of Life, Manchester Road, Bury, on January 15th. Sadly, Tetleys have only put new signs up outside - the beer remains keg. With two excellent Thwaites pubs either side of the Staff of Life, it is very unlikely that keg beer will succeed in attracting any custom to this unremarkable pub.

5% ERROR

The original gravity of Hydes Anvil Strong Ale is 1080 and not 1075 as stated in last month's article on strong ales.

CHOICE IN DARWEN

A new real ale off licence is to open in Darwen, owned by the 'Legendary Lancashire Heroes' company. The licensing magistrates stipulated that they could not sell Thwaites, Matthew Brown or Whitbread beers. This should still leave them plenty of choice to tempt the drinkers of Darwen and surrounding areas.

SHUT

The Victoria Vaults, Chatham Street, Stockport, (Wilson's) has recently closed and is now boarded up.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Whatever the brewery decide to do regarding their bar prices, one local licensee has decided to go it alone. The price of draught beer at the Yarnspinners, Manchester Road, Werneth, Oldham, is to drop by 10p at lunchtime and evenings (up to 8.30pm) Good on yer Colin!

PUB OF THE MONTH

South Manchester's Pub of the Month, on Thursday 26th February, is the Arden Arms on the corner of New Bridge Lane and Millgate, Stockport. The Arden Arms is an old pub with a yard which was once used as a cattle market. The unusual interior is kept spotless by Jack and Beryl May. For the Arthur Neguses amongst us there are three working grandfather clocks, one of which dates back to 1790 (Thos Reed, Manchester). For those who do come along there will be a chance to meet the pubs goldfish - 17 years old and still swimming - as well as enjoying a superb pint of Robinsons.

Contributors: Paul Roberts, Peter Cash, Roger Hall, Mick Rottenbury, B J Brownsword, Don Chattwood, Bert Kerks, David Rowlinson, Brian Gleave, Alan Ball, Dave Eckett, Humphrey Higgins, Steve Lawton, Bob Lees, Pete Ogden

IRRIGATING CHORLTON DESERT

Tell any resident of Chorlton-cum-Hardy that the real ale battle has been won and you are likely to be greeted with a hollow laugh or a sledgehammer (usually both). However, the amber nectar has really begun to trickle through and while there is certainly no danger of a flood, it has brought a little life to the dried up old sticks that live there. Less than a year ago the only decent watering hole was the Southern on Mauldeth Road West, a large suburban pub serving a good pint of Boddingtons mild and bitter through electric pumps. It was deemed worthy of inclusion in the 1980 Good Beer Guide, where it was described as 'catering for all tastes', which is more than can be said of Chorlton.

Then, about eight months ago, an enterprising enthusiast by the name of Alan Barker decided to offer Pollards in his off licence, 'Alan's Wines and Spirits', at 119 Manchester Road (opposite Chorlton baths). The nice Mr Pollard loaned him a beer engine and you can now take your jug, bottle, plastic dustbin or whatever comes to hand and fill up with an excellent pint of hand pulled bitter at 39p. Containers up to 5 gallons can be had on payment of a returnable deposit of £4.60. There is a steady turnover of 2-3 barrels per week (depending on the availability of local students, who know the best use to which they can put their grants). If you're feeling hard up or like living dangerously, Bulmers still cider is available at 32p a pint. Opening times are: Mon-Thurs 5pm-10.30pm; Fri 6pm to 11pm; Sat 12-2 and 6-11; Sun 12-2 and 7-10.30. Tel 881 1110.

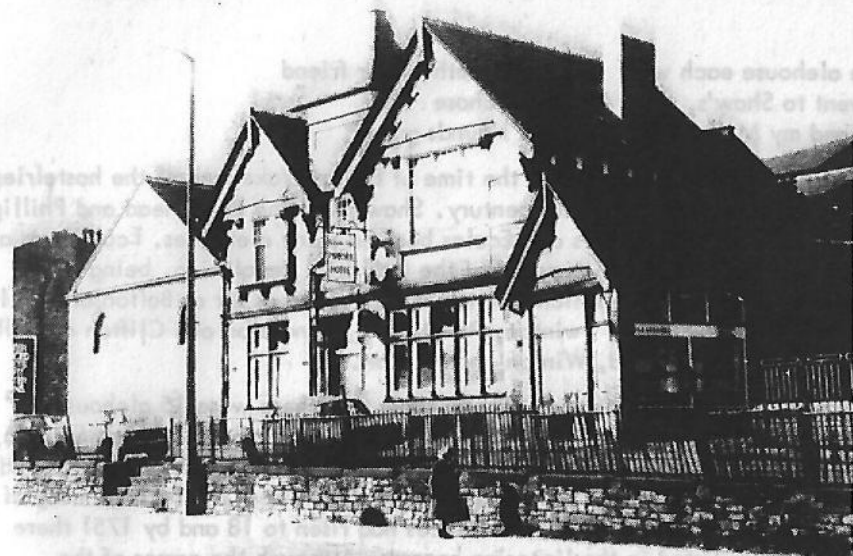
Towards the end of November, choice really came to Chorlton when Whitbread introduced handpumped Chesters bitter in the Royal Oak on the corner of Barlow Moor Road and Wilbraham Road. Whenever I have visited the Oak the beer has been very good and it seems that the landlord is taking the trouble to make sure it is always served at its best. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case in all the recent Whitbread 'conversions'.

MR

THE PRESTWICH REAL ALE CRAWL

Prestwich has the fortunate distinction of having no less than 18 real ales within its boundaries, some of which cannot be found elsewhere in the Bury area. Last month 'the lads' decided to embark on a crawl, imbibing a half of each of these in one evening session. The day chosen was a Saturday, starting at 7.00pm in the Farmers Arms, Simister. On arrival, it was found that the doors of this particular hostelry were still locked, so we decided to trek down to the Same Yet, where we tasted the first of the evening, J W Lees mild, and were asked if we wanted our passports stamping. Then we backtracked for Lees bitter at the Farmers. After this we had to go boundary to boundary since our next port of call was the Staff of Life at Rainsough. This meant jumping on the 7.25pm number 33 bus as far as the Friendship Inn and walking down Hilton Lane to the Staff, for a half each of Marstons Pedigree, bitter and mild.

The next stage was more of a hike than a walk. Leaving the Staff we walked back



up the brow, turned left into Butterstile Lane and must have covered half of Carr Clough housing estate before reaching the Park Hotel and Chesters bitter. Next we had to get to Prestwich village. It was suggested we take the short cut through the "Clough" and on to Bury New Road. After an eerie ramble past St Mary's Churchyard we got to our fifth pub, the Foresters on the New Road, for our Holts mild and bitter, and then went to the Grapes for Greenalls mild and bitter. By then half way round, we were glad that the walking was behind us. The Wilsons was had over the road at the Railway and Naturalist.

It was only 10.00pm and the New Road side of Prestwich was completed; next came the Old Road. We took the 10.10pm train from Prestwich station to the next stop, Heaton Park, turned left and up Bury Old Road to the GBG listed pub, the Commercial, for one of each of the Tetleys. We then swayed left to the next pub along for Boddies mild and bitter at the Parkside, and then back past the station and right into Whittaker Lane to tumble into the Royal Oak, our final port of call, for our Hydes mild and bitter, where last orders were just being called.

Barry Chemney

Pseud's Corner

This piece of unmitigated tripe was written by the Bog-brush advertising agency in an otherwise serious attempt to persuade Burtonwood to continue brewing light mild.

BURTONWOOD LIGHT MILD - AN UNDISCOVERED SIMPLE PLEASURE FOR THE CARES OF A COMPLICATED WORLD !

Treat yourself to a pint of one of life's traditional, but under-rated fine mild ales. Light Mild : impeccable balance, but unstinting taste. It won't knock you out, and you don't need a bank-roll to afford it. A beer for today, that allows you to think for tomorrow.

ECCLES PUBS 200 YEARS AGO

"To the alehouse each went with his sweetheart or friend
Some went to Shaw's, other Phillips's chose
But me and my Mall to the Hare and Hounds goes."

These words of a song popular at the time of Eccles Wakes recall the hostelries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Shaw's was the Bulls Head and Phillips's the Grapes, but even 200 years ago Eccles boasted many alehouses. Eccles was an important town long before the impact of the Industrial Revolution, being the focal point of a large parish which at one time extended as far as Bolton and still included Worsley, Walkden, Swinton, Pendlebury, Pendleton and Clifton as well as Barton, Irlam, Cadishead, Winton and Monton.

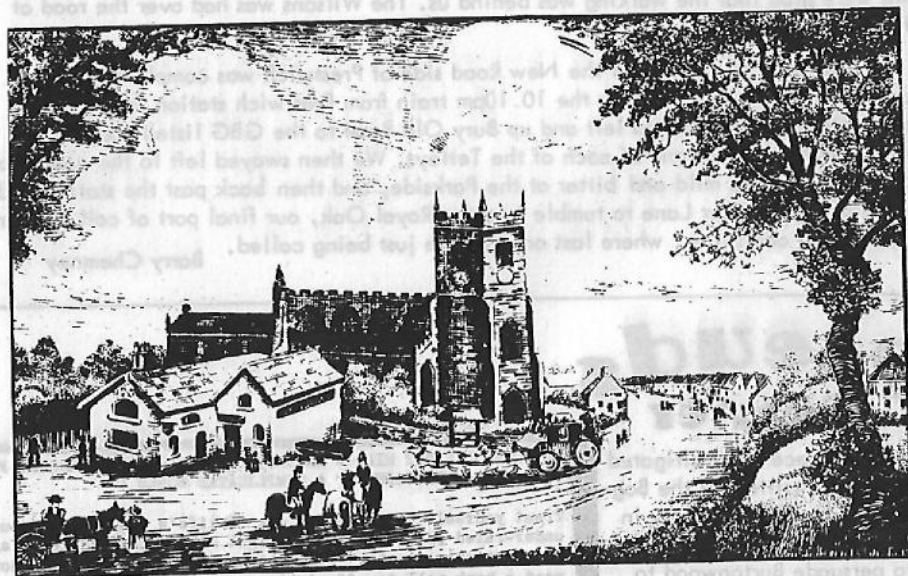
The earliest remaining licensing records show that there were 15 alehouses in Barton in 1629. At that time the township of Barton upon Irwell included Monton, Winton, Peel Green, Patricroft, Davyhulme, Dumplington, Irlam and Cadishead as well as Eccles, where there were three licensed premises. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the number of licences had risen to 18 and by 1751 there were 20 alehouses listed in the licensing records. Although the names of the licensees or alehousekeepers in each area are indicated, it was not until 1772 that the names or signs of the pubs were also included. The records for Barton for that year list the following pubs and licensees:

Grapes
Key

John Phillips
Thomas Hall

Bull
Dog & Partridge

Ralph Brownhill
Margaret Hunt



Joiners Arms	Ann Heywood	Nags Head	James Carrington
Fleece	James Birch	Unicorn	John Chorley
Daggers	Alice Bennison	Boat	James Cooke
Bell	John Greenall	Ship	John Mather
Swann	Richard Crompton	Bulls Head	Jonathan Shaw
Sunn	John Blears	Irlam Boat	James Knight
Golden Cross	John Royle		

The Grapes, the Key (Cross Keys) the Daggers and the Bulls Head were in the centre of Eccles. The Daggers or Crossed Daggers was eventually to become the Oddfellows. The Bell was the Blue Bell at Monton whilst the Sun was later to become the Jolly Carter at Winton, notorious for a dreadful murder. The Golden Cross still exists in Patricroft whilst the Unicorn was on the site of the recently re-named Unicorn at Peel Green. The Nags Head was in Davyhulme, the Boat in Dumphington and the Ship and Irlam Boat in Irlam.

The Dog & Partridge seems to have existed until 1820, after which there are no further records. The remaining pubs - the Joiners Arms, the Fleece, the Swann and the Bull may have changed their names, a quite common occurrence at that time. There is evidence to suggest that four pubs which existed in 1800 dated back some time before the turn of the century...

The Waggon & Horses, Peel Green (also known as the Dog, Greyhound, Brown Cow)

Hare and Hounds, Church Street

Rock House, Barton (formerly known as the Dog Behind the Door)

The Brown Cow, Winton (also known as the Batt Inn)

Although most of the pubs existing in 1772 are still with us today, there have been considerable changes. Many of the eighteenth century alehouses would have had accommodation for travellers and stabling for their horses. The railway era made this unnecessary in Eccles earlier than elsewhere and there are few relics left of this bygone era. The Industrial Revolution and its associated population growth had a considerable impact on the number and distribution of licensed premises in Eccles. Pubs were established along new communication routes like the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester and Liverpool Railway and the Manchester Ship Canal and the growth of licensed premises was further fuelled by the 1830 Beerhouse Act.

Almost all Eccles pubs have origins dating back to the nineteenth century and before. Only one beerhouse remains, all the others having acquired full licences over the years. The pubs have a better survival record than many other industrial towns, where redevelopment has meant the wholesale destruction of licensed houses.

The Singer and his Mall might not recognise the Bulls Head or the Oddfellows today, but they might still feel at home in their own favourite, the Hare and Hounds, which together with the Grapes has not been altered beyond recognition since the days of Eccles Wakes.

Roger Hall



Rupert Periwinkle



Joyous news for Parrotophiles in Grotley - the Noble and Boddington are back! In an uncharacteristic fit of pique, our adipose adept has turned his back on aspirations of semi-deification and turned his hand to hostelry keeping. No doubt this will come as a relief to those who've suffered from Noble-designed traffic jams and bus lanes, but it is a sad reflection on the judgement of the National Executive that Boddington's underclaw was passed over for installation as el-supremo. Who else, one wonders, besides the Noble himself, demonstrated sufficient wisdom to vote for him?

And thus it came to pass that Slumley Parva was the venue for our hero's first venture into the realms of the alehousekeeper. Although he is embroiled with Frothy's, I dismiss with contempt vindictive suggestions that this is as a result of his abusing his position in the hierarchy. Little could be further from the truth. The Noble is merely advancing his talents into an ongoing entrepreneurial opportunity situation. He's also managed to assert himself somewhat. Frothy's wanted to 'renovate' the pub by removing the vault, moving the bar, festooning the place with incongruous ephemera and having a grand opening ceremony with large breasted dwarfesses clothed as topless beefeaters swinging on trapezes. But the Noble has put his foot down and the pub will remain a traditional Slumley pub. Consequently gallons of spog-coloured paint, rolls of khazi wallpaper and sacks of second-hand sawdust have found their way into the Robins Nest. Will he fit behind the bar? Will he sell Fartons, Drabs, Boringsods, Brassos and Goosegreases? Will Bunty be banned? Will the Robins Nest prove to be a meeting place for like-minded cognoscenti? What effect will this have on Perry Drab? Will televisual non-personalities like the obese Royal Hall and the estranged sweetie Bogbrush hold court in this potential amber nectar Mecca? All these and other unanswered questions will be revealed shortly. Watch this space.

I am informed by one of Bunty's spies that the erudite Peter Podge has been sidling into local meetings. He was noticed recently at a South Clogshire meeting. Surprisingly he did not pontificate with distilled wisdom about the joys of bringing amber nectar to the undeserving proletariat in their smutty little clubs but, according to Bunty's informant, was seen in intimate conversation with Kurt Berks. It is feared that the Barnsley and Sheffield Cleverdick may be coming out and acting as a gay ambassador, attempting to spread rampant pansyism from Dimcaster to Grotley. Fear not, Bunty's stalwarts will resist and overcome this latest threat to normalcy.

Peter Hammerstein's acolytes and decrepit hostelry enthusiasts were disappointed at the first anniversary of the Grotley D.O.G.S.H.I.T. meeting. There were, among the assembled veterans, such worthies as Admiral Bogbrush, Mr Zimbabwe Talbot, Max Wall, Bazza Primp and the Noble himself, devoid of parrot but sporting an unlocked truck full of brand new amber nectar guides. However, the absence of Harry Beandick-like sticks dwellers and the replacement of Badge and Madge by the voluble Dermatitis and a garrulous Devan (Ms), rendered the occasion immemorable. Few people were trampled to death and the hostelry remained standing after the mob had departed. Biryani gobbling was relatively demure and the non-presence of Ms Whalebody rendered sexual indiscretion futile.

NOBLE'S NEST



On the 9th February the Noble Robin Bence takes over as landlord of the Duke of York, Church Street, Eccles. The pub will be closed until about the 17th, while it is redecorated. Whitbread have been persuaded to leave the bar where it is; the seating from the pool room will be put in the snug and replaced by more modest bum-rests. A traditional darts/games room will replace the old kitchen and new lighting, carpets and wallpaper are promised.

A grand opening night is scheduled for Friday 20th February (those who know Robin may want to check this before they cancel any previous engagements). On the 25th of February (lunchtime) the North West launch of the national Good Beer Guide will be celebrated. There may be free beer for parrot-carrying CAMRA members at these events.

As well as Chesters mild and bitter, Eccles' answer to the Poseurs Rest will be offering Taylors (Landlord or Best Bitter), Burtonwood light mild and Marstons Pedigree from the wickets.

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 10p + 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 GRETLEY - Stumley, 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.

REAL ALE IN BURY METRO A 20-page guide to Whitefield, Ramsbottom, etc, with maps, illustrated, brewery history, etc. 50p + s.a.e.

REAL ALE IN HIGH PEAK Inc. Glossop, New Mills, Whalley Bridge, Buxton 15p + 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 & Hornfrays, etc. 78p inc post.

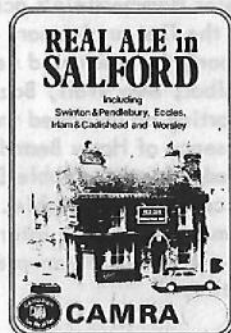
SALFORD'S PUBS No2 - Greengate, Chapel St, Ordsall, Threlfalls, small breweries etc. 78p inc postage

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, Aireys, Oldfield, Albion breweries etc 47p inc post

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



CLOUDY ON THE HORIZON



Well, after eleven years as mine host at the Golden Cross, Patricroft, Douglas Walter Brown is to retire and venture into the catering business, a mere stagger away from the Golden Cross.

"Cloudy", as he is better known to the drinking class of Eccles, was often a familiar sight, tired and emotional behind the bar, but always ready with witty repartee if the occasion demanded. I'm afraid the Golden Cross without Cloudy is going to be like Iran without the hostages.

On a more serious note, the fate of the pub may now be in the balance. Only last year Holts issued a vague statement to the effect that when the time was right the pub might be altered - read into that what you will. It would be a sad loss if the Golden Cross were to be demolished for a new pub. It dates back to the 1840s and is very popular with its motley clientele. At the moment two rooms are used for storage, though at one time there was a concert room. Rumour has it that there is still a piano in there somewhere, possibly under the Britannia tables. At the rear of the pub, where the stables used to be, might be a good place for a few tables and chairs in summer: a Holts beer garden - the mind boggles!

One last word: Would the vandals stop chucking half-bricks through the acid-etched windows? There is only one left and they are irreplaceable. Ta.

Tony Flynn

BAMFURLONG IS BEST



The Bamfurlong Hotel, Bamfurlong, near Ashton in Makerfield, has been voted Pub of the Year by CAMRA South Lancs members and joins the exalted company of previous winners Holts Arms (Foot), Billinge and Old Crow, Newton le Willows.

Excellently run by friendly landlord Ken Ashton, the Bamfurlong is a deceptively large local, with a long, roomy vault, separate pool room and two comfortable lounges. Ken serves delectable Walkers bitter and Tetley mild from an impressive array of handpumps. Visitors are wise to note the opening hours - 1.00pm to 3.30pm and 7.00pm to 10.30pm (11.00F, S)

The competition this year was a clean sweep for Tetleys, with the principal runners up being the Park Hotel, Wigan (noted for its waitress service) and the more rural Stocks at Parbold. Also nominated were the Cart and Horses (Holts), Astley; Prince William (Burtonwood) Dalton, and Bowling Green (Boddingtons) at Newtown near Wigan.

Brian Gleave

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I'd like to pass on an idea unashamedly poached from 'The Local', a CAMRA publication in the Cams area.

A regular feature in the aforesaid newspaper is written by a football fan who recommends watering holes of note for fellow supporters at forthcoming away matches, thereby making an 'ongoing' article. This idea could be adapted for any or all of the Greater Manchester teams. I do concede though that the



away supporters of Peterborough, the subject of the original series, could be fitted into one pub at many of their away fixtures, while few hostelrys could cater for more than 1% of United's away support. I don't have the necessary interest in football to provide your copy but surely someone in this Great Movement of Ours can be induced to try.

Yours, B J Brownsword

Dear Sir,

I heard with alarm that Whitbread Special Cask bitter was to be reduced in strength to make it more competitive with Trophy. Surely Trophy has enough competition from the regular bar bitters sold by each and every other brewer?

Special Cask is a full, fruity, strong 'Best Bitter' in every sense of the word and should be promoted as such. To weaken or generally to mess about with it is tantamount to sacrilege. It deserves to be promoted in depth - telling licensees about it would be a start, for many of them do not know it exists. Put this beer where it is needed, in every house that is willing to try it.

I campaigned for six months to get Special Cask and during eighteen months selling it I have never had cause to regret it. Aside from CAMRA members, quite a number of customers now drink cask in fair quantities.

Why not leave this superb beer as it is? Why not give it the same promotion as is given to the weaker Chesters bitter? These are questions that only the brewers in their wisdom can answer, and then not to our satisfaction.

Vic Balderstone, Derby Arms, Bolton

CHESTERS TREK

To boldly go where no CAMRAman has been before. This was the brave intention of the South Manchester trip in January. Whilst What's Doing's City Desk had explored some of the territory, we nevertheless charted some hitherto virgin Whitbread pubs in our tour of all eight Chesters bitter outlets in the city centre. It's not a bad crawl if you are fit, and it can be split into two if you're not!

Start at the Waldorf on Gore Street, off Piccadilly, aptly situated next to the Blood Bank. A comfortable 'city' pub, but the beer was not at its best and a bit gum-freezing. Next was the Crown and Anchor on Hilton Street. A better pint here and the pub comes complete with plastic and polysomething-filled ships' lamps, nylon ships' ropes, imitation half barrels topped off with an olde worlde chandler's shoppe window and a space invaders machine.

Down to Earth for the next call at the Red Bull on Mason Street. An excellent pint and only 42p compared with 45p and 46p in the others. The Red Bull is an honest and straightforward street corner boozer - alas a dying breed - and boasts a large collection of Irish songs on the juke box, which thankfully doesn't dominate the pub. On to the Crown and Cushion on Corporation Street - another basic pub still resplendent with Chesters insignia on the glass around the bar - and another good pint.

The other four pubs are all handily placed for a mini-crawl and were covered

in last month's City Desk - the Abercrombie, Bootle Street, the St Matthews Tavern on Tonman Street and the White Lion and the Oxnoble on Liverpool Road.

In all, Whitbread are to be congratulated on their choice of outlets for the initial launch of Chesters bitter - pubs to suit all tastes, including mine - which can't be bad! Generally speaking, the beer is promoted sufficiently and served and kept well.

Humphrey Higgins

DIAL 999

A landlord's lot is not always a happy one. A spate of muggings and break-ins has recently underlined this, has resulted in a number of guard dogs being bought and has left many licensees reflecting on the lack of security on their premises. At least one tenant in the Sale area has forked out £900 of his own money on a sophisticated alarm system after several nocturnal intrusions. With some breweries prepared to spend thousands on renovations, could they not set aside more cash to protect their licensees by installing alarm systems and employing security guards to collect takings from the more vulnerable pubs? I believe Greenalls already do this with some of their larger managed houses. Fire, too, is a hazard and a 'tastefully modernised' open plan pub, full of highly inflammable 'comfy' seats, can become a raging inferno within half an hour of the ash trays being carelessly emptied into a cardboard box.

MR

Subscriptions

If you want to be sure of getting What's Doing every month, why not subscribe? It costs £1.60 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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What's Doing COPY DATE for March issue is Thurs 19 Feb

What's Doing is edited by Neil Richardson, 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY. 061 793 5329

JOIN CAMRA

To join CAMRA send £5.00 to: Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 3BW

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Since Bolton Post Office was computerised the editor's post has been regularly routed through Reykjavik, resulting in some delay in items getting to What's Doing. From next month please address all articles, correspondence, writs, etc to his daytime residence:

375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 2AY 061 793 5329



Branch Diary

SOUTH MANCHESTER

Thurs Feb 12th Branch meeting at Gateway, Wilmslow Road, E Didsbury 8.00pm
 Thurs Feb 26 Pub of the Month - Arden Arms (Robinsons), Millgate, Stockport 8.00pm
 Thurs Mar 12th Branch Meeting at the Gateway, E Didsbury 8.00pm
 Contact: Humphrey Higgins 432 0059

NORTH MANCHESTER

Weds Mar 4th Manchester pub crawl. 7.00 George & Dragon, Bridge St. 8.00 Unicorn, Church Street
 Weds Mar 11 Social/Committee meeting Old House at Home, Blackley 8.00pm
 Weds Mar 18 Branch AGM, White Swan, Swinton
 Contact: Roger Hall 740 7937

ROCHDALE, OLDHAM & BURY

Tues 10 Feb 8.00 Branch meeting, Bridgewater (Holts), Manchester Rd, Oldham. Representative from Bulmers
 Tues 24 Feb 8.00 Committee meeting, Smut (Boddies), Manchester Rd, Oldham
 Tues 10 Mar 8.00 Branch meeting, Stonemasons (Thwaites), Bridge St, Heywood
 Tues 24 Mar 8.00 Committee meeting, Healey (Robinsons), Shawclough, Rochdale
 Contact: Steve Lawton 061 236 4411 ext 7236 or 061 620 9239

TRAFFORD & HULME

Thurs 19 Feb 8.00 Branch meeting, Malt Shovels, Stamford St. Altrincham. Guest speaker from Bulmers
 (Film and samples)
 Weds 25 Feb Coach to Appleby Brewery, Jennings Brewery and a few pubs. £5 the round trip. Pick up points:
 Malt Shovels 11.00am, Sale Odeon 11.10, Stretford Arndale 11.15
 Thurs 26 Feb 8.00 Pub of the Month with S Manchester branch, Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport
 Thurs 5 Mar 8.00 Committee/Social, Royal Oak, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton cum Hardy
 Contact: Mick Rottenbury 061 969 7013 (home)

HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

Tues 10 Feb 8.30. Branch meeting at Jolly Sailor, Marple
 Fri 20th Feb 8.30 Social, Lowes Arms, Stockport Rd, Bredbury
 Contact: Tom Lord 061 427 7099

BOLTON

Weds 11 Feb 8.00. Social With Bolton Institute of Technology Beer Appreciation Society. At college bar. Real
 ales include Thwaites M, B(H), Warrington Ale (H) & Marstons Pedigree
 Tues 3 Mar 8.45 Branch meeting, George, Gt Moor St, Bolton
 Sun 8th Mar. Lunchtime crawl. Howcroft, Pool St 12.00, Rock House, 12.30, Globe 1.00, Peel 1.30,
 Falcon 1.45
 Contact: Bert Kerks Bolton 388172

SOUTH LANCES

Fri 13 Feb Leigh Survey (pub crawl) 8.00 British Volunteer
 Fri 23 Feb Atherton survey 8.00 Punchbowl
 Contact Ian Ogden Wigan 79534

WASHBROOK'S

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 59 Halifax Road, Rochdale

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DRIED MALT EXTRACT Light, Medium, Dark. 66p 1lb £30.30 25kg

LIQUID MALT EXTRACT 2lb £1.16 4lb £2.20 14lb £6.57 28lb £11.75 25kg (55lb)

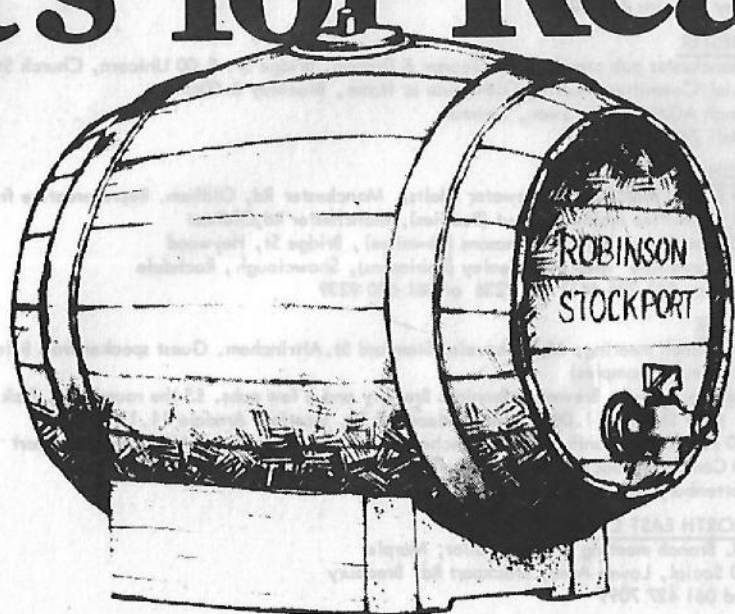
HOPS 6 varieties 2oz 28p 16oz £2.15 £23.70

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*Bitter Ale not available in Pins

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