

25p

What's Doing

FEBRUARY 1998



The Manchester Beer Drinker's Monthly Magazine

Festival at the Smithfield

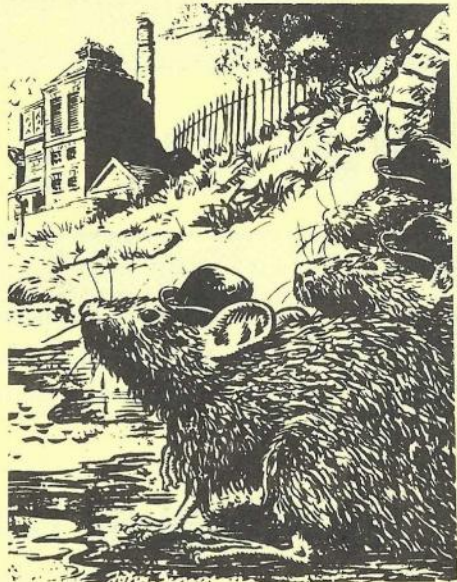
Since taking over from Alison at the Smithfield on Swan Street, Manchester, in November 1996, licensees Jennifer and Terry Poole have maintained the tradition of this popular Northern Quarter local. There are keen-priced regular beers such as Highgate Dark and Twelve Bore (both at 110p) and the good value meals and accommodation have also been maintained.

To recognise their anniversary(ish) in tenure, Jenny is holding a 20-30 beer festival in mid to late February, featuring both winter beers and new beers.



Bye Bye Brews

There comes a time when even the most seasoned cynic believes that the big brewers can't possibly close any more breweries, but close them they continue to do. Ten breweries have closed in the last five years, including the Fountain Head Brewery in Halifax and the world's largest real ale brewery in Warrington. Last year Bass announced the closure of its breweries in Sheffield (Stones) and Cardiff (Hancock's) and Carlsberg Tetley announced that production would cease at Wrexham (lager), Alloa (Arrol's) and Burton (Ind



Coope). (Bass have since bought the Burton brewery.) In January Whitbread followed suit with news of the impending closure of two of its five breweries, Flowers in Cheltenham and Castle Eden in County Durham, where Higsons is brewed.

This will leave the big four brewers with only nine real ale breweries between them.

Bass: Birmingham, Burton Whitbread: Boddingtons
Scottish Courage Bristol, Edinburgh, Tadcaster, Masham, Newcastle
Carlsberg-Tetley: Leeds

Beer consumption is still falling despite the best efforts of many people we could name. It was down to 36,000,000 barrels in 1997, which is only about half a pint a day each. In 1998 expect news of closures from Scottish Courage. It's not all bad news, probably because the big four are getting other brewers to do their brewing for them. Some of our once-famous local beers are brewed by small brewers:

Wilsons Bitter: Mansfield Wilsons Mild: Morland
Oldham Bitter: Burtonwood Chesters Mild: Everards
Websters Green Label: Ruddles

As the big brewers close their plants we can expect more beers to be outsourced, as the jargon has it.

Lacking punch

The Punch Bowl on Chapel Street in Salford, a Grade Two listed building since 1989, is boarded up and for sale.

A Walk on the South Side

Roger Hall

The day after Boxing Day was the date of North Manchester's annual curry crawl. This time we were to end up in Rusholme after a walk down Oxford Road from the City Centre. Our starting point was the Lass o'Gowrie near the BBC. This was open but deserted, but everywhere else en route was closed. Some 40,000 students and staff from the universities were on vacation so the Footage & Firkin, the Sand Bar, Scruffy Murphy's, the Phoenix and Barney McGrew's were all shut.

'What a relief!' some cried, as two separate spontaneous pub crawls were devised. One went to the left via the Mawson, the Bowling Green and the Grafton. The other went to the right via the Salutation, the Ducie (*below*), the Old Abbey and the Denmark. Both visited the Whitworth before moving on to the final ports of call - the Albert and the Tabak Restaurant.

Perhaps as a result of the high student population, all these inner city pubs thrive and are not as intimidating as their counterparts in North Manchester can sometimes be. I last visited the Ducie about twenty years ago when it was due to be knocked down the following

day. Influence by University regulars prevented its demise and it's still there today, next to the Dental School. It's now a Burtonwood house serving good quality mild and bitter. Like the Ducie, the Old Abbey was once a Wilsons house. It was serving Vaux Samson and Waggle Dance on our visit. Despite being near a 'Science Park', the Old Abbey retains its 'back street local' ambience.

The Salutation has been knocked about a bit internally but there's still a sense of separate spaces. Tetleys bitter and Peter Yates bitter were both on sale in December. The Denmark is a modern pub which replaces a characterful



old building of the same name. The old pub was on Denmark Road; the new one is on Moss Lane East. Surprisingly, there were four cask beers available from Hydes. The Whitworth is a considerably larger pub than I remember some twenty years ago and some of the features which gave it character, like the internal etched glass, have gone. But a wide range of Marstons beers was available, including bitter and Head Brewer's Choice.

The Albert is a traditional Hydes local just off Rusholme's curry run. It serves GBG quality bitter. The Mawson, like the Albert and the Salutation, has Irish connections. It is a fine example of an unspoiled multi-room pub with a relaxing atmosphere and good beer (Tetleys mild and bitter). The Bowling Green and the Grafton are both on Grafton Street. The Bowling Green is a Greenalls pub near Upper Brook Street and the Grafton is a modern Holts pub near MRI car park.

The areas we covered offer a good range of beers in, for the most part, comfortable, welcoming pubs. If we were to include the Church (Lees) near the Salutation, then it would not be difficult to suggest a seven or eight pub crawl taking in Lees, Hydes, Burtonwood, Vaux, Tetley, Marstons, Holts and a couple of guests. Would that we could say the same for Ordsall, Lower Broughton or Miles Platting. There are no decent curry houses in those areas either.

LAUREL AND HARDY

Classic comedies shown on Super 8 and 16mm upon 36 square foot of silver screen. Each reel lasts around 20-25 minutes after which there is a short break while you replenish your glasses!

THE MARBLE ARCH on ROCHDALE ROAD, just ten minutes walk from the City centre, on the **THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH**.

THE BEER ENGINE, POOLSTOCK, WIGAN on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** of every **OTHER** month (4 Feb, 1 Apr, 3 Jun, 5 Aug, 7 Oct, 2 Dec)

The shows all begin around 8.15pm. **ADMISSION IS FREE**

SATURDAY 5th SEPT 1998

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Protected Pubs

Peter Barnes

Many fine buildings which people take for granted have actually survived through the intervention of conservation bodies, and pubs are no exception. In Manchester city centre, for example, Liverpool Road Station, the Albert Memorial, Parr's Bank (now the Athenaeum pub), the Albert Hall and the Mechanics Institute are still with us only because of some vigorous campaigning to draw attention to their architectural and historic merits and to prevent demolition or a slow decline into dereliction.

The best protection for a pub is for it to become statutorily 'listed'. Pubs which have been saved in recent years include the following:

The **Plough, Gorton** (listed 1994) had been blighted for decades by the Hyde Road Improvement Scheme. Consequently, Robinsons had not tried to 'improve' the premises and the Victorian interior is still intact. If the road widening plans are ever resurrected there is now a strong case for a redesign to avoid the pub.

The **Railway, Broadheath** (below, listed 1994) is now thriving. Without listing protection it would definitely have been flattened and become part of the car park for the adjacent retail park. The pub has recently been successfully extended into former living areas and there is direct access from the retail park. It has gained Holts beers and the original interior has been saved and enhanced.



The **Alexandra, Edgeley** (right, listed 1994) was scheduled to have the usual utterly awful Robinsons refurbishment until English Heritage stepped in. Now the fine art nouveau wall tiling and decorative glass and timber screens and bar front, plus the splendid arrangement of four rooms, are saved for posterity.



The **Swan and Railway, Wigan** (listed 1995) had been sold to a leisure company and was

about to be turned into another Irish theme bar. The close working relationship between CAMRA and English Heritage helped to expedite procedures and the pub was listed before any harm could be done. It is still a Good Beer Guide pub and its character is protected.

The **Queens Arms, Eccles** (listed 1989) became a local cause celebre during 1996 when Greenalls planned some extensive alterations. Much of what was proposed was welcomed but some structural alterations involved protracted negotiations between CAMRA, the licensee, Greenalls, the Local Authority, the Victorian Society and English Heritage before agreement was reached. The result was good enough for the local branch to recommend the pub for the CAMRA Design Awards.

The most recent success concerns a wonderful pub interior in Lancashire. The **Victoria, Great Harwood** (listed December, 1997) has been put on the market by Scottish Courage. The listing of the building was already in the pipeline, so English Heritage responded quickly and it is now safeguarded no matter who the new owners may be.

These pubs are the most obvious cases. There are many other examples of once-vulnerable interiors, now listed, which would have fallen victim to the interior design brigade (or the managing director's wife) at some stage, if they had not been protected.

So much for the good news. The system did not work as well in the past and even these days it is possible for some pubs to slip through the net. Classic pub interiors which almost certainly could have been protected if the bulldozers or the interior designers hadn't got there first are **Tallow Tub, Salford** (demolished 1992); **Roebuck Hotel,**

Urmston (radically altered 1990); **Globe**, Rochdale (wrecked 1994), and the **Old Cross**, Radcliffe (wrecked 1997/98). Occasionally, even when a pub is listed, it cannot withstand the financial and corporate muscle of big business and entrepreneurial local government, as we know to our cost in Manchester city centre. R.I.P. the **Imperial** (1997), **Wellington** (1998) and **Sinclairs** (1998).

Although much effort has been put into identifying pubs worthy of listing in the last few years, there will be further candidates. The English Heritage criteria are continually evolving and pubs dating from the period 1914 to 1939 are particularly worth looking at because the listing process is just beginning to consider buildings of that age. The concept of 'architectural merit' can cover quite basic pubs which are nevertheless rare and distinctive if they are unaltered. Don't take them for granted. If you want a second opinion or assistance with a listing application, please contact Peter Barnes, c/o *What's Doing*.

Clifton and Pendlebury

The Beehive in Clifton (ex Tetley) has been sold and is due to open in February with a new name, Magowans. On Bolton Road, work appears to be in progress at two other former Tetley pubs, the Bowling Green and the Station, and the Black Horse is now also shut.

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Lees Corner

Bernie Jackson

In addition to the **Charlestown** in Blackley, which is now fully open and trading well, Lees have bought two more pubs - the **Halfway House** in Wardle and the **Hark To Dandler** in Bury (*below*) - and the brewery is looking for more suitable outlets. Two Middleton pubs are being refurbished: the **Middleton Archer** is getting a pitched roof and the **Assheton Arms** is being extended. In Royton, the **Angel** is getting a facelift and Harry & Vi have just announced their retirement from the



Halfway House. The **Boat & Horses** on Broadway has suffered from subsidence owing to the extensive road works nearby and this has led to the tap room being moved into part of the lounge. However, Lees have high hopes for this pub when the work is completed.

Both the seasonal beers (Jumbo Star and Ruff Yed) are reported to have sold well, but a full reappraisal of the sales figures is to be undertaken before any more brews are made. Meanwhile, the two beers are to be produced in bottled form.

The 1997 Passport scheme was completed by 51 people (one person did it twice!) and will be celebrated at the brewery on 29th January.

A report in December's WD (taken from the *Manchester Evening News*) about local brewery profits and numbers of employees gave Lees a lot of employees. The brewery does not dispute the figures, which are taken from their official disclosures, but the actual number of people employed directly at the brewery is 143. The more than 400 mentioned in the report are part-time bar staff in managed houses.

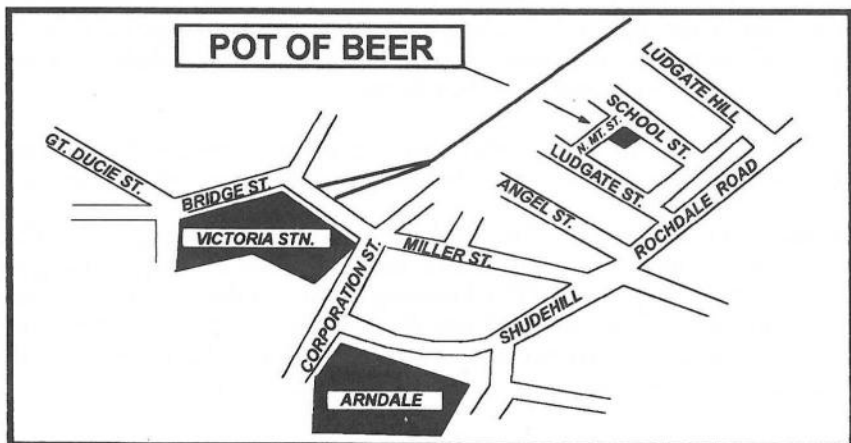
Finally, Lees' Head Brewer, Giles Dennis, will become the National President of the International Brewers Guild on 28th April and will hold the post for two years.

Contributors to this issue: Peter Barnes, Steve Smith, Keith Egerton, Mark McConachie, Roger Hall, Pete Cash, Paul Roberts, Dave White, Roger Wood

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Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

It took over three months to complete the deals and at last the names of the latest additions to the Holts estate can be made known. The pubs are:

Red Lion, Robins

Lane, St Helens

Mosley Arms,

Brightmet, Bolton

Doffcocker (*right*),

Chorley Old Road,

Bolton

They may be closed for a short time whilst they are transformed into Holts outlets.



In mid-January Joeys put 1p on the price of bitter and mild to reflect the increase in excise duty as announced in the Budget of many months ago. Other brewers and pub chains have increased their prices by 2p or more. Regarding the share price fall to £21 (*WD last month*), a senior spokesman had no idea why this happened, but similar breweries were in the same position. He also had no idea why the price had peaked at around £37 in the first place.

Wally's and Welly's

After many years 'in residence', the Star Inn Folk Group has decided to call it a day owing to declining attendances. Their last meeting was in January at the Star Inn (Robinsons), Back Hope Street, Higher Broughton (also known as One Armed Wally's). However, their music lives on at other venues and the move does mean that many more drinkers can get into the Star on Wednesday evenings.

On the same theme, the Full Circle acoustic music group can now be heard in the Duke of Wellington, Higher Blackley, every Thursday from 8.30. It's not all folk music with Full Circle - they also play popular hits, country and Irish music - and Welly licensee Ian Slammon is keen to promote this new entertainment and see fresh faces enjoying the music and the excellent Holts beers. Before coming to the Welly, Full Circle were based at Crumpsall's Cleveland Hotel and Blackley's Golden Lion, and on Mondays they can be seen at the Joiners Arms, Middleton.

Wigan and District

Dave White

As anticipated (Sep '97) JD Wetherspoon opened a superpub in Ashton-in-Makerfield just before Christmas. The SIR THOMAS GERARD on Gerard Street is a former Kwik Save; both pub and street are named after the sixteenth-century maverick and devotee of Mary, Queen of Scots, who owned much of Ashton and Ince-in-Makerfield. The pub is pretty much what you would expect from Wetherspoons (which is fine by me), though there are one or two alcoves which make the place a bit more intimate than most JDW outlets. Only an optimist would contemplate a pub-crawl of Ashton nowadays, so the Sir Thomas Gerard should be a pleasant retreat for those who still prefer to drink out of a (lined) glass.

Still in Ashton, JOE'S PLACE, Bolton Road, has been renamed the BEER HIVE. Banks's is the beer in question, in a hostelry which seems to have had more aliases than Carlos the Jackal - it was known as the ASHTONIAN club not so long ago. Heading out of town on the A58, the RAMS HEAD at Stubshaw Cross remains closed and up for sale, and after the inclement Christmas weather is looking dilapidated; the BAMFURLONG HOTEL, Lily Lane, is also boarded up and for sale. This ex-GBG regular resembled the House of Usher when your reporter called by last spring, and the beers were keg.

Staying on the same road, the VICTORIA, Liverpool Road, Platt Bridge, is still closed and is also showing signs of decay. The Vic made it into the Good Beer Guide when it was a Walkers house in the 1980s. Not too far away in Hindley, the MINSTREL on Wigan Road has yet to find a buyer and has been shut for almost a year, rendering its GBG status redundant.



Better news in Higher Ince, however. The ENGINEERS ARMS, Belle Green Lane, reopened in January and despite the presence of the old Vaux sign over the door, now sells handpumped Holts mild and bitter. Beware the (nitro)keg Theakstons and John Smiths also on offer. Elsewhere, the MANLEY HOTEL (ex-Vaux) on Ince Green Lane, Ince Bar is still

closed, as is the SHEPHERDS ARMS, Warrington Road, Lower Ince. This Enterprise Inn shut its doors following a brutal assault on the landlord late last year.

Nearer the centre of Wigan, the FLAMINGO, Vauxhall Road, Scholes, has re-emerged as the SCHOLES TAVERN, with a range of ales as imaginative as its new name. Flowers IPA had been on sale at one point, though the pub offers only keg products now. In the whole of Scholes and Whelley, only two outlets for real ale remain: the BLACK BULL, Hardybutts (Tetley, *below left*) and the WATER WHEEL (Thwaites) - and neighbouring Lower Ince and New Springs have but one cask ale pub each.

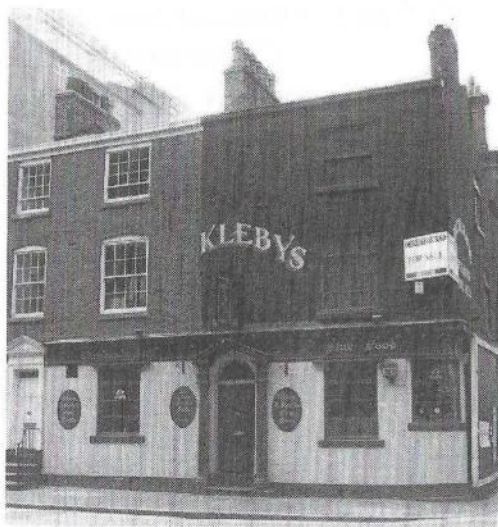
Over the border in Lancashire, the WIGGIN TREE, a Wayfarer Inn on Parbold Hill, no longer sells real ale. The Buffet Bar at Appleby Bridge railway station is down to just one cask beer - (cold) Jennings bitter. The guest ale policy at the SANDBROOK ARMS, Sandbrook Road, Tontine, looks to have died the death. The blackboard proclaiming said ales was blank, though the Tetley dark and bitter were quite drinkable on the weekend when I called by.

Finally, the organisers of Wigan Beer Festival promise a new brew at Trencherfield Mill. Longshanks Ale, brewed by CAMRA's own Ian Austen and Pete Cash, is said to be a 'lightish, summery bitter' of 4.2-4.5%. The beer is being brewed at St Helens College, with ingredients from Bank Top Brewery of Bolton. Longshanks will be available at the festival launch at the Orwell free house on the afternoon of 19th February. The Eleventh Wigan Beer Festival runs from 7th-9th March 1998. Get there early.

Knickerless

An outfit called Blue Stocking Ltd plans to convert Nickleby's on Dale Street in Manchester into a showroom and offices. It's a listed building, so let's hope they're careful.

The pub used to be called the Haunch of Venison and it is said that the signboard of such named pubs sometimes displayed a stockinged thigh of prodigious girth. (*The photo shows a Nic-less Nickleby's in 1994*)





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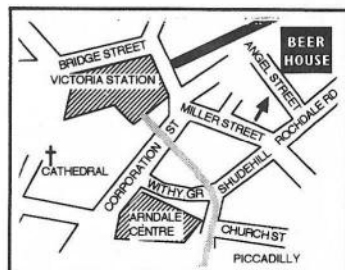
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Corrections to GBG '98:

- ☆ We open at 12 on Sunday
 - ☆ We do have a beer garden
 - ☆ We do not have a Laurel & Hardy Club (although it looks that way at times!)
- Shurely shome mishtake?

Spanking New Roger

Last month WD reported that the Spanking Roger in Miles Platting had reopened. Mark McConachie went to have a look...

Wilson's Brewery sold the Spanking Roger to Vaux some years ago, but the pub is now a free house and in the hands of C&M Pubs. Impressive exterior walls and railings have been installed, along with 'leaded' double-glazing all round. The two-room floor plan has been retained, but decor and fittings have been greatly improved - it's almost luxurious!



In the place of Vaux beers are, surprisingly, Hydes mild and bitter, together with their smooth nitro keg bitter. Prices are keen, with bitter at 120p, but sadly the smooth is the same price and cask sales seem to be suffering as a consequence and the mild may even be withdrawn soon. Despite that, the new Spanking Roger is a welcome investment in a difficult area and it deserves success.

In the shadow of the gasworks on Bradford Road, the Fountain is being refurbished piecemeal and tastefully. The pub, ex-John Smiths, now has cask Chesters mild. However, on a recent visit it was considered 'too long since any was drawn off' to sell. Going some way in the right direction, anyway.

Wetherspoons

Paul Roberts

J D Wetherspoons' January Sale received great coverage in the national press and on television, focusing particularly on the pledge on 'prices to make the supermarkets blush'. This compared Wetherspoons prices for Theakstons, Directors, Guinness and Murphys with those of Asda, Sainsbury and Tesco.

Latest opening dates for local JDWs are:

Middleton (The Harbord Harbord): February 18th

Oldham (The Up Steps Inn): March 25th

Bolton: March

Just outside the *What's Doing* area, **Matlock** JDW (The Crown) will be opening later in the year.

Over the hills and not so far away...

An occasional series on pubs which can be reached by public transport from the Manchester area by Steve Smith.

Strawbury Duck, Overshores Road, Entwistle

Surrounded by reservoirs, Entwistle is a hamlet on the Bolton and Blackburn railway line and the Strawbury Duck is the former Station Hotel, next to the station. Seventeen years ago the pub was extended into an old cottage and today it is a professionally run, isolated free house which caters for a mature clientele.

The main bar area has a stone-flagged floor and is furnished with bench seating and cask ends. There is an unusual arrangement of cast iron and wooden fixed bar stools, a log fire and a banknote collection on the bar wall.

To the far right, 'hideaway rooms' at split level give intimate drinking space. There is a vault and games room reached through a narrow passageway running behind the bar. The 'new' (non smoking) room to the left of the entrance has comfortable button-back seating, carpeting, cast iron tables, pictures, prints, a plate collection and a low-beamed ceiling. A gas fire set into a brick surround with brass implements lends an authentic feel.

There is good, if slightly expensive food and reasonably priced accommodation. Opening hours are from 7pm Mondays (except Bank Holidays, when open all day); 12-3, 7-11 Tuesdays to Fridays, and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

The real ales are Boddingtons bitter (£1.51), Flowers Original (£1.69), Taylors Landlord (£1.67), Duck (best beer) bitter (3.8%, £1.47), Moorhouses Pendle Witch (£1.85) and a guest, Moorhouses Owd Ale at the time of calling (£1.99).

A Happy Hour Return from Manchester Victoria to Entwistle (available after 6.30pm) costs £1.55. There is a train from Victoria at 7.13pm and from Entwistle at 10.25pm and 11.28pm Monday to Saturday. No Sunday service. Journey time is approximately 35 minutes.



Trafford News

Keith Egerton

The **Rope & Anchor** at Dunham reopened before Christmas after yet another refurbishment, but this is by far the best to date. The vault has been moved to one of the front rooms and, by clever use of panelling and furniture, the other rooms have been made to appear much less open and more cosy, creating a completely different atmosphere. The former vault is now a comfortable seating area and a staircase has been opened up to a first floor room for sitting or dining. Three real ales are available: Greenalls bitter, Boddingtons bitter and a rotating guest beer.

There are rumours that the **Malt Shovels** in Altrincham is to undergo a major alteration. The pub has been well known as a jazz venue for over twenty years, but now the jazz bands have been given notice to quit and that suggests they will not be welcome when the alterations have been completed.

Rumours also abound about the **Hogshead** in Altrincham (right). The current management is due to move to the Manchester High Street branch in March, whilst the High Street management is being groomed for the new venue on Deansgate. There are suggestions that Holts might be buying or leasing the Altrincham building. Watch this space.



Bridgewater

Since the place was revamped by Greenalls last year, the **Bridgewater** in Worsley has been attracting a clientele with a penchant for antisocial behaviour. Fed up with vandalism in the village, Worsley folk have protested to the police and hope to get the pub licence revoked at the February sessions. Up to now, Greenalls have refused to do anything about the problem, but the prospect of losing the licence and a consequent drop in profits might focus their minds a bit.

Saddleworth Sojourns

Steve Smith

Part Three - Grasscroft, Greenfield and Uppermill

Grasscroft is a village on the main thoroughfare between Lees and Greenfield, whilst Greenfield covers a wide area and contains some interesting pubs.

Uppermill is the main administrative and shopping centre for Saddleworth. The museum is of interest and is usually the venue for a beer festival each September. There is a local rushcart festival and the Brownhills Visitor Centre at the edge of town by the canal is worth a look.

Church Inn, Church Road, Uppermill

A free house, approximately three-quarters of a mile uphill from the village, and home of the Saddleworth Brewery. The micro brewery produces three beers: Saddleworth More (3.8%), Bert Corner Bitter (4%) and the stronger (very palatable) Shaft Bender (5.4%), all reasonably priced. Other beers at the pub include John Smiths and Websters bitters and a well established food operation makes this place quite busy. There is a pleasantly opened-up interior with low beams, exposed brickwork and leaded windows, and jugs, horse brasses and other items in abundance.

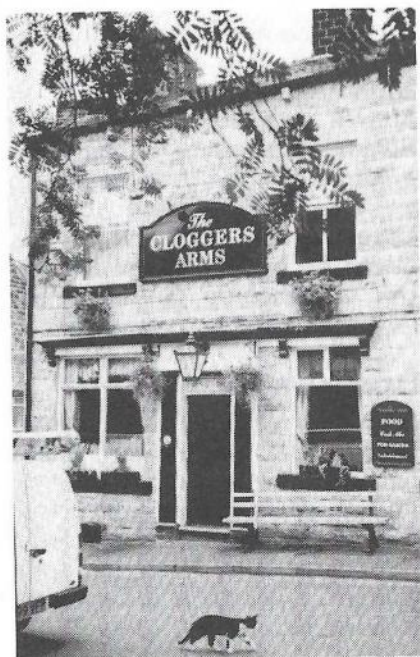
Clarence Hotel, Chew Valley Road, Greenfield

A Bass-cum-Banks's hostelry with a homely, comfortable interior. A collection of Toby jugs hangs from a rectangular bar which serves three regular handpumped ales (Banks's bitter and mild and Marstons Pedigree) and possibly two guests (Flowers Original and Morrells Varsity on our visit). Archways separate the drinking areas, some for games such as pool, others for relaxed drinking. Britannia-type tables (albeit painted cream in parts) and a copper kettle sitting on top of a wooden cask add to the scenery. Outside is a traditional red telephone box and an old clothes mangle sits on the roof.

Cloggers Arms,

1 Lee Street, Uppermill

A former Bass house, now owned by Century Inns, recently converted to real ale and dispensing Tetley bitter. It is a pleasantly-decorated, opened-out,



end-of-terrace local and the decor includes a group of clogs by the fire and an old book collection on the window sill. An old photograph and a painting of the pub in its Bass days flank the chimney breast and drawings and cartoons of local scenes add to the flavour.

Commercial Hotel, 90 High Street, Uppermill

A large, multi-room Bass establishment fronting the main square and local bus termini. A little run down perhaps, but now undergoing a refurbishment. Worthington Best Bitter is the only real ale. A raised area to the rear of the pub serves as a games room, featuring pool tables and fruit machines, and there are old photographs of rugby teams and brass bands, with wall cabinets devoted to toy car collections.

Cross Keys Inn, Church Road, Uppermill

Practically next door to the Church Inn and reached by a pathway or via Running Hill Gate. Over 250 years old, this John Willie Lees showpiece was recently tastefully refurbished, retaining the original beams and stone-flagged floors. There are several rooms and plenty of wood panelling. One room features an old Yorkshire cooking range and a dedication to local rescue and charity teams, whose pictures adorn its walls. Indeed, the pub serves as the headquarters of the Oldham Mountain Rescue, Cross Keys Clay Pigeon Club, Saddleworth Outdoor Pursuits Association, the Saddleworth Runners and the Clog and Garland Dancers. A pewter tankard collection atop the bar and a variety of stuffed animals also feature. GB mild, bitter and Moonraker are available on handpump.

Farrars Arms, 56 Oldham Road, Grasscroft

A popular old local on the main road, just into Grasscroft. Up the steps and through the narrow entrance is a long bar, together with low beams (from which hang plates with unusual three-dimensional designs) and bare floorboards. On the wall in the quieter room to the left is a history of the pub and framed local prints. The room to the right contains a television, fruit and games machines. Once a Wilsons house, it now sells up to five real ales. The regulars are Farrars Best Bitter (brewed by Coach House of



Warrington), Theakstons XB and Websters Yorkshire Bitter. Guests were Morland Speckled Hen and Marstons Pedigree. This pub's old clothes mangle is being used as a flower container.

Granby Arms, 28 High Street, Uppermill

A busy local on the main street, serving John Smiths bitter, Taylors Landlord and the rarer (in this area, anyway) Websters Green Label. There's a modernised central bar with a television set in one corner and a gaming machine on the other side. Local prints and plates adorn the mock-rustic black-and-white walls. A room to the left has an area used for darts and there's a quieter room to the right of the entrance.

Hare & Hounds, 68 High Street, Uppermill

A small, dimly-lit Bass local on the main street, with coloured glass patterns in the door and lounge partition windows and some framed prints on the walls. There's a separate games area and a raised drinking corner, plainly furnished. A down-to-earth pub, with Worthington Best Bitter the only real ale.

King William IV Hotel, 138 Chew Valley Road, Greenfield

A smart, detached Bass house with a cobbled courtyard and red telephone box outside. Inside, the pub has been opened up to create an attractively furnished lounge area, with plates along the wall and some settle-type seating. Local prints are also featured, and a smaller room which can be curtained off contains a television and loudspeakers. Real ales on offer are draught Bass, Toby Light and Worthington Best Bitter, making the pub a comfortable retreat in which to drink.

Railway Hotel, Shaw Hall Bank Road, Greenfield

A basic, bustling pub with old Wilsons insignia opposite the railway station. There are live music sessions, so it can be noisy and a smoky atmosphere pervades the place. The rooms have been opened out to accommodate a television, pool table, dart board and the all-too-rare table football, plus gaming machines. The interior doesn't seem to be divided up into specific areas, but the range of beers more



than makes up for this: Wilsons and Websters bitters, Taylors Landlord and Theakstons mild.

Royal George, Manchester Road, Greenfield

Near the border with Mossley, this recent Lees acquisition has been given a thorough renovation. Very nice it is, too. Stone-flagged floors and carpeting surround the long, narrow bar and there's a raised drinking area to the left; eating area to the far right. There are beams and pillars, wood panelling and a brick fireplace, and decoration includes a stone jar collection, country scenes on the walls and old woodworkers' tools such as axes and adzes. Lees GB mild and bitter are normally available, supplemented by the stronger Moonraker.

Waggon Inn, 32 High Street, Uppermill

The only Robinsons house in Saddleworth, with a number of rooms and all neatly fitted out. It has low beams, tiling and wood panelling around the top of the bar, local prints on the walls and lots of brass and copperware (including the beaten table tops). To the right are rooms which appear to be used for dining and another for a games area. Dogs frequent the drinking areas and there are promotions for veterinary practices. The beers are Best Bitter and Hatters Mild.



Wellington, 29 Chew Valley Road, Greenfield

This has the appearance of being a Bass pub, but inside all the Bass beers are keg and Boddingtons bitter is the only real ale. It's a corner local on the main street, opened out and with a smart interior. Plates, local prints and jugs hang from the beams, which are supported by brick pillars. A busy pub, and with a lively pub cat!

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 £50 or £200 for six months, half page £35 or £150 for six months, quarter page £25 or £100 for six months. All adverts must be accompanied with payment. Cheque payable to 'What's Doing'.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: £3 for six months, £5.50 for twelve months. Send cheque/PO together with your name and address to Roger Hall, 123 Hill Lane, Blackley, Manchester M9 6PW, for six issues. Cheques made out to 'What's Doing'.

Rupert

We were sitting in the Chimp & Cherry, discussing the amber nectar scene and reflecting on the Campaign's successes and failures. 'Well,' Ophelia Hampton opined, as she downed her fifth pint of Drabs, 'the Campaign's over; we've won. All the big, horrid brewers have sold all their pubs, closed all their nasty breweries and there's lots of spiffing amber nectar about, brewed by people who care about it. We may as well pack up and go home, there's no fight to fight. 'Bollocks!' said Bunty, glancing across at his parole officer. 'Pack up and go home, yes. But not because we've won, because we've lost.'

Fiona joined in: 'What do you mean, Bunty, you cantankerous old sod?' 'The big brewers have left the crumbs because there's no money in ale any more. They've moved on into smart places and pseudo-sophisticated food chains. The cracking back street boozers, where I've had many a decent brawl, have all been burnt down or else they're full of wacky baccy detritus, scumbags and feckless scrotes.'

The Campaign consists of middle class dilettanti who wouldn't recognise a decent pint if it bit them. All the pubs we've got left are selling smoothflow and lager. Real ale and real pubs are doomed and, if we want to do anything about it, we'd better start a proper campaign now, instead of poncing about with this lot, writing coffee

table books and drawing up lists of the pub as a museum.' At this point, Billy Shippon slunk out, missing his chance to contribute to the selection of hostelrys for the amber nectar vademecum.

Although many of us had dismissed Bunty's rantings as over the top, it soon became apparent that there was some merit in them. As we shortlisted areas of Grotley and Slumley for surveys, it was remarkable how entire districts were devoid of any pub of even dubious merit. In the past we'd argued long into the night about the comparative claims of the Dimp and the Nether Slumley Blood Tub.

Today, apart from the odd beacon of excellence, there was nothing to debate. In the whole of Vile Splatting, Slimeley and Slutch not a single tavern was proposed for investigation. The preselection meeting was over in fifteen minutes. Bunty moved among the assembled cognoscenti, trying to encourage people to join Provisional CAMRA, a breakaway group which he'd formed to campaign for real ale and real pubs and not 'badge-brewed crap and ersatz ponce bars for plonkers,' as he put it. By the time Bunty left to sort out a brouhaha in the vault, several people had already signed up and paid the fee of £1.00. I've not joined but I'm going to the inaugural meeting at the Rat & Handbag when it reopens. There's safety in numbers.

Branch Diary

Rochdale, Oldham & Bury

Tue 3 Feb 8.30pm, Branch Meeting, Success to the Plough, Bolton Road, Springfield, Rochdale

Weds 4 Feb 8.30pm, 2nd Oldham Beer Festival Organisation Meeting. Venue to be arranged - phone contact for details.

Sat 7 Feb, Coach crawl around Eccles - phone contact for details.

Tue 17 Feb 8.30pm, Committee Meeting, Merrie Monk, College Road, Rochdale

Weds 18 Feb 8.30pm, 3rd Oldham Beer Festival Organisation Meeting. Venue to be arranged - phone contact for details

Thur 26 Feb 8.30pm, What's Doing Collation, Flying Horse, Town Hall Square, Rochdale

Contact: Peter Alexander 0113 232 4023(w), 0161 655 4002 (h)

Trafford & Hulme

Thur 5 Feb 8pm, Railway, Broadheath, then Cresta Court and Railway, Altrincham

Thur 12 Feb 8pm, Crown, Deansgate, then out to Hope, Cornbrook; return to Oxnoke and White Lion, Liverpool Road.

Thur 19 Feb 8pm, Timperley Survey. Hare & Hounds, then via Stonemasons Arms to finish at Quarry Bank

Thur 26 Feb 8pm, GBG preselection meeting. Railway, Ashley Road, Hale. Later to Tatton Arms and Grapes, Altrincham

Contact: Roger Wood 0161 747 3987

North Manchester

Wed 4 Feb, City crawl & survey: Old Garratt, Granby Row 7pm; Grey Horse, Portland Street 8.30; Waldorf, Gore Street. 9.30

Wed 11 Feb 8pm, Good Beer Guide Selection (non-City), Beer House, Manchester

Wed 18 Feb 8pm, Branch Meeting, Queens, Green Lane, Patricroft

Tues 24 Feb, 6pm onwards, WD Collation, Queens Arms, Honey Street

Wed 25 Feb 8pm, Good Beer Guide Selection (City) White Swan, Worsley Road, Swinton

Contact: Roger Hall 0161 740 7937

1998 Fleetwood Beer Festival

Takes place at the Marine Hall, Fleetwood on 19th - 21st February. Over fifty beers are promised and there is live entertainment at the Friday and Saturday evening sessions. The sessions are as follows:

Thursday 19th Feb: 7.30pm-11.00pm (Admission £1.50)

Friday 20th Feb: 12 noon - 4.00pm (£1) and 7.00pm-11.00pm (£2)

Saturday 21st Feb: 12 noon - 4.00pm (£1) and 7.00pm-11.00pm (£2)

Admission is free for CAMRA members. Organised by the Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Branch of CAMRA.

Dave and Sue welcome you to the

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Bitter - Old Peculier - Taylors Landlord
& Best Bitter - Bantam Bitter £1 a pint
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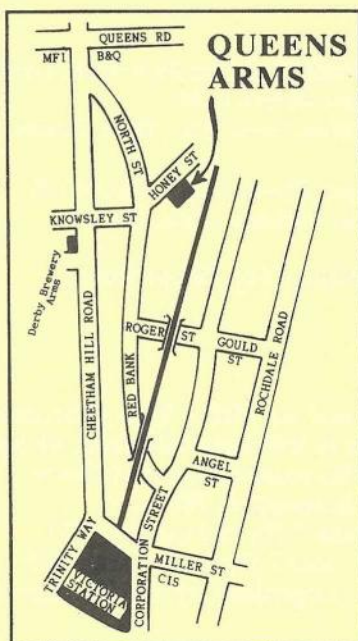


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Hot and cold food available until early evening

Opening Hours: 12.00-11.00 Mon-Sat; 12-10.30 Sunday



Children's play equipment in the Beer Garden, with swings, slides, climbing net, etc.

We have a Children's Certificate so families are welcome inside or in the Beer Garden.

Bar-B-Que for hire free of charge.

Bar Billiards, Backgammon,
Chess, etc.

General Knowledge Quiz Night
Tuesday. Beer Prizes

*We're in the Good Beer Guide
and CAMRA's Good Food Guide*