

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs as seen by the

What's Doing Contributors 1977 and 1978

Volume 2 Issue 3 January 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

The Rawsons Arms, Peel Street, Farnworth, was recently bought by Burtonwood from Whitbread. Members of local branches of CAMRA were lured to the official reopening and given assurances that the pub would be selling cask conditioned beer. Also, when we telephoned the brewery about the Rawsons and the four other Whitbread pubs bought in the package deal, 'A Spokesman' gave the impression that to suggest Burtonwood may sell non-traditional beer in any of these pubs was like implying the Lone Ranger and Tonto were more than just good friends. So, conceive then of our dismay when only a few weeks later bright pressurised beer began flowing from the Rawsons conveniently adaptable electric pumps. Whether this is a temporary or permanent state of affairs is not known.

The speaker at the North Manchester November branch meeting was Mr Alf Slinn, Public Relations Officer of the National Union of Licensed Victuallers. He told some twenty members at the Three Crowns in Little Lever about the work of the association and expressed his own views on CAMRA and its activities. It was clear from Mr Slinn's talk that he had as little idea about our organisation as we had about his and unfortunately what could have been an excellent opportunity for a helpful exchange of views and information was spoiled by Mr Slinn's unwillingness to accept suggestions and ideas which were not actually legal requirements on publicans. He was, for instance opposed to the labelling of beers at the point of dispense for the information of the customer since this would involve the licensee in some expense, and he did not in any case feel that the public needed or should have such information. We were left at the end of the evening feeling that we had had a most stimulating and provoking talk, whilst the landlord at the Three Crowns was left with a wall in the Gents toilet which was rather dented at approximately head height.

PUB of the MONTH The Clock Face, Farnworth - The Clock Face is a quiet Tetley pub near Hipwood and Grundy's garage in Farnworth. Like the Lord Nelson when Percy and Mary were there, the pub has the feeling of a real local with a small, regular clientele, a friendly landlord and a pint of Tetley's which, on form, is as good as you can get. The pub is of the three-roomed variety with a fair-sized vault, complete with dart board and colour television, and two medium sized lounges off the central bar, from which the beer is served through handpumps. The pub has a comfortable "faded" atmosphere which seems unlikely to change with the redecoration now in progress. Loudspeakers indicate piped music, but this is well in the background and seems to be more Vera Lynn and Ivor Novello than modern day pop. The Clock Face, handy for bus routes to both Manchester and Bolton, as well as being near the motorway, is an excellent pub for a quiet evening's drinking.

It is not clear why this now Bolton Branch Pub was North Manchester branch's Pub of the Month, perhaps it was selected before Bolton branch was formed?

Volume 2 issue 4 (February 1977) <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

No mention of anything in Bolton

Volume 2 Issue 5 (March 1977) <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

An article noted that Maurice Fitzgerald had been a guest speaker at the last Bolton Branch Meeting where he had been asked what he thought of the transformation of his local, the Three Arrows. (This is the one now in a cul-de-sac next to the M60 Junction at the bottom of Heaton Park). 'I think we made a mess of The Three Arrows' and 'The Three Arrows, I think, has gone wrong' This was followed by the comment – *Let us hope the brewery will learn from this mistake and treat future conversions with more sensitivity towards the character of the pub.* (They didn't.) It is now a nursery!

This was the North Manchester Branch's AGM edition and in the Chairman's report it was noted

In November we were pleased to see the formation of the Bolton branch which took from us the responsibility for Bolton, Farnworth, Kearsley and points north. The branch is now firmly established. Les Kilsby, formerly our event's organiser became its secretary and was replaced by Robin Bence, who has proved a most welcome member of the committee.

An article written by the Area Organiser Richard Greenhalgh (from Lancaster branch) included the comment - (Dave Easton was regional organiser at the time.)

Indeed, the areas now covered by the Rochdale, Oldham and Bury branch as well as the new Bolton branch were once looked after with difficulty by North Manchester itself.

The same article noted that 9,000 of the 10,000 print run of the first Greater Manchester pub guide (mentioned above) had been sold. The cost was quoted as £14.00 but should have been £1,400, it sold for 45p a copy. The Bolton pubs included in the Guide were very similar to the GBG.

Astley Bridge – Ainsworth Arms and Craven Heifer

Bolton – Alma, Gypsy's Tent, Howcroft, Stags Head (Junction Road), Sweet Green Tavern, White Lion and York

Farnworth – Market and Saddle

Horwich – Toll Bar

Kearsley - Lord Nelson

There was then a two-page article on the new Bolton Branch see below

At last, after many months of planning and organising, Bolton's own branch of CAMRA has got off the ground. Bolton is often regarded by some members of neighbouring branches as somewhat of a desert for real ale drinkers. Although there is a certain amount of truth in this idea when Bolton is compared to some other areas of Greater Manchester, it has, nevertheless, not only got a high proportion of pubs selling real ale but also has a large number of brews available in the town centre

and surrounding area. Bolton no longer has any of its own working breweries, the last ones to brew in the town being Magee Marshall and Company (whose Crown Brewery still stands) and Howcroft's Brewery, both of which closed in 1970. Many remnants of once popular Boltonian brews can still be seen in the form of monograms on buildings and frosted glass windows. These include such names as John Hamers Voluntary Brewery, Joseph Sharman's Merehall Brewery, William Tong and Sons Diamond Brewery and the Rose and Crown Brewery. The fact that the town once had a number of its own breweries reflects in the choice the real ale drinker now has in Bolton. The brews available in or around the town centre include Boddingtons, Bass Charrington, Wilsons, Greenall Whitley, Tetley, Burtonwood and Thwaites. Farther out, from the centre, Holts and Matthew Brown Lion Ales (sadly now nearly all top pressure in the Bolton area) are available. Bolton comes close to also having a Hydes pub in its area. This arises from the fact that the border between Bolton and Bury at one point runs down the old Roman road of Watling Street, The Pack Horse Hotel (an excellent Hydes pub) stands on one side - the Bury side - whilst the 'unofficial' car park stands on the other, Bolton side. Incidentally, the 'unofficial car park is owned by a local farmer who, no matter what the weather, takes care of your car for a fee of 2p per evening. Inflation must strike all, as originally this fee was, I'm told, only 1p. A meeting to test support for the formation of a Bolton branch of CAMRA was held in October in the Sweet Green Tavern, A room set aside for the meeting, capable of holding perhaps a dozen or so people, was seen to be completely insufficient when 30 or 40 people turned up. A second meeting was quickly arranged for the following month at a larger venue in the Gypsy's Tent on Deansgate. On this occasion it coincided with a re-arranged midweek match at Burnden Park and consequently the meeting suffered quite heavily from this. It looked as if nothing could go wrong for the inaugural but three weeks before the meeting Tetley Walker (in one of whose houses the inaugural was to be held) went on strike! Fortunately, thanks to Harry, the landlord of the Gypsy's Tent, the meeting was blessed with Jennings Beers from Cockermouth and everything went well. It could be pointed out that during the period of the strike the number of brews in Bolton could have put even the best areas of Greater Manchester to shame: such exotic brews as Jennings, Hartleys of Ulverston and Theakstons were available as well as Robinsons, Camerons and Scottish and Newcastle. The branch has now been active for about four months and good relationships have been built up with a number of landlords in the area. The recent takeover by Burtonwood of the Rawson Arms in Farnworth provided a good opportunity to meet officials from the brewery and to talk about Burtonwood policy in this pub and others in the Bolton area. A visit to Burtonwood's Brewery has also been arranged for the future. The attendance at monthly meetings has fluctuated but on average about 30 people per meeting have turned up to hear talks by John Parr of Burtonwood and Maurice Fitzgerald of Boddingtons. Finally, it is hoped that any future beer guide publications containing the Bolton area will reflect a more realistic situation than current guides and that more people will think twice about by-passing Bolton. Eric Petela, Chairman, Bolton Branch.

Future Attractions The following events have been arranged during the next few weeks. Thursday 24 March: Monthly branch meeting, Gypsy's Tent, Deansgate, Bolton. It is hoped to have a speaker from Thwaites. (8 pm) Thursday 14 April: Social, Duke of Wellington, St. John's Road, Lostock, near Bolton. (8 pm) Thursday 21 April: Monthly branch meeting, Gypsy's Tent. (8 pm) Sunday 24 April: Pub crawl of Wigan town centre (joint with S. Lanes branch), Park Hotel. (7.30 pm) Thursday 19 May Trip to Thwaites' brewery. Details at April branch meeting. Tuesday 24 May: Pub crawl of Bolton (return fixture with S. Lanes branch), Sweet Green Tavern. (7.30 pm)

Bolton Beer Guide A publication entitled 'A Guide to Good Beer in Bolton' has recently appeared in and around Bolton, It purports to list 100 pubs which in the words of the author are 'good Northern pubs' selling 'decent beer', It is not a CAMRA publication, although the author is sympathetic to the aims of CAMRA and devotes a page to encouraging beer drinkers to join the campaign and to giving details of local branches. Like most beer guides nowadays, this one includes a potted history of brewing in the area and a description of the breweries which currently have outlets there. The guide covers the whole of the metropolitan borough, which it divides into smaller areas. The pubs are listed with the minimum of subjective comment, the ubiquitous 'working man's local' and *clean but basic! do not feature. There is no indication of whether a pub sells real beer; the guide simply lists the types of beers sold and the methods of dispense. The presentation of the guide leaves a lot to be desired, but at 20p + stamped addressed envelope it might be useful to someone who doesn't know the district very well or who wants to go on a series of mammoth pub crawls. It can be obtained from John Stott, 8 Brazley Avenue, Great Lever, Bolton.

What's Doing Volume 2 Issue 6 April 1977) <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

This issue had an article entitled Bank's Ale as

'Planning permission has been granted to convert the building which was formerly the National Provincial Bank in Bradshawgate, Bolton into a pub. The building is of the solid, respectable, stone-built type normally associated with Banks and Building Societies and it will be interesting to see how it is converted. Will the new pub have a vault, I wonder?

Efforts are being made to find out who now owns the premises, what the exact plans are and what type of beer will be on sale.'

A simple online check today but not possible then of the council planning applications shows that 09043/78 (in 1978 not 1977?) was for a change of use from a vacant bank to a wine bar with facilities for music, dancing and dining on the ground floor and basement. No further details, but it became Corks Wine Bar and today is known as Courtneys, having passed through various other disguises in between. It was initially keg and still is today.

The Rawson's Arms was mentioned it had been pub swapped from Whitbread to Burtonwood

'Two months ago, we reported that the Rawsons Arms, Farnworth was selling bright beer. It now looks as if this was a temporary lapse. Since then, the Burtonwood beer has been excellent and the pub can be thoroughly recommended for a good pint in lively surroundings.'

Bolton Branch – coming events were listed as the two pub crawls mentioned above plus the Branch meeting on Tuesday 31st May at the Sweet Green Tavern.

Another full-page article was about Beer in Bolton

Ten breweries at present sell their products in the 'old' Bolton area. These are: Bass Charrington, Boddingtons, Burtonwood, Greenall Whitley, Lion (Matthew Brown), John Smith, Thwaites, Tetley Walker, Wilsons and Whitbread.

Greenall Whitley probably supply the greatest amount of real ale; service is usually by electric pumps or pushbutton meters - handpumps are very rare. Real beers available are bitter, best mild and dark mild. Sample Greenalls at...

Alma Inn, Bradshawgate - small pub in the Good Beer Guide

Boars Head, Churchgate - lively young people's pub

Peel Arms, Higher Bridge Street - popular local

Next in the real ale league is Tetley Walker - two bitters (one brewed to the Walkers formula) and a mild are available and, although electric pumps are probably the most popular methods of serving, many pubs still retain handpumps:

Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street - small pub very popular with Camra members.

Howcroft Inn, Pool Street - 'local' with a substantial student clientele. Bowling Green.

Ainsworth Arms/Stork Tavern, Halliwell Road - two locals within 100 yards of each other.

Gypsy's Tent, Deansgate - regular venue of Bolton Camra branch meetings.

Wilsons still provide a good deal of real ale in Bolton, although the beer in the centre of town is invariably bright. Service is by electric or push-button meter, used for both real and bright beer!

Globe Hotel, Higher Bridge Street - small local (H)

Bowling Green, Bury Road - basic local (H) Boddingtons have only two pubs in Bolton.

Of these, the one to try is the Prince William Hotel, Bradshawgate — lively town centre pub much improved under new (10/76) landlord.

Burtonwood have only three pubs in Bolton.

Of these, the Stags Head (last year's Good Beer Guide) is now on tank beer. The other two, both selling electric pumped real ale, are;

York Hotel, Newport Street - basic drinkers'/games pub.

Sportsmans Arms, Chorley Old Road - small local.

Bass Charrington beer is mainly bright. I cannot recommend any of their pubs. The only draught Bass in Bolton is, as far as I know, in the Swan Hotel, Bradshawgate. It is, however, very variable in quality.

Thwaites have three pubs in Bolton, one of which (The Starkey Arms) is on tank beer. Of the other two, I recommend the King William Hotel, Chapeltown Road a superb country pub with restaurant attached. (H)

There is no real Whitbread or Lion in Bolton. John Smiths produces no real ale whatsoever.

Bolton Branch area has always followed what was then the 'new' Bolton Metro Boundaries, this meant a couple of pubs such as the King William in Turton had become East Lancs Branch Pubs.

Confusion was already apparent with Post Codes as BL codes extended well into Bury, but not into parts of Radcliffe and Stoneclough/Ringley. Simply put if it is licensed in Bolton then it's in our branch area and yes Wigan Golf Club is in Bolton! The Alexandra in Hindley Green is in Bolton, even though the Bolton boundary sign is clearly visible well up the road on the opposite side, as the actual boundary runs down the road next to the pavement on the pub side of the road, before crossing the road at the boundary sign.

What's Doing Volume 2 Issue 7 (May 1977) <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>



PRINCE WILLIAM

The Prince William is conveniently situated in the centre of Bolton, on Bradshawgate, and is one of only two Boddingtons houses in Bolton, the other being the Lodge Bank Tavern on Bridgeman Street, some distance away.

Mr Philip France, the tenant, has been at the pub for about eight months since moving from Rowlands Bar in Blackpool. In this relatively short time he has brought about some remarkable changes, the most striking being in the decor. The interior of the pub has been completely transformed. Criticism has been levelled at Boddingtons over the modernisation of several of their pubs, but the Prince William badly needed a change of image.

It is not only the decor and the clientele which have changed. The beer is now one of the best pints of Boddingtons I have tasted and although mild isn't available, the bitter more than makes up for it.

It is nice to see that there is now a good Boddingtons pub in the centre of Bolton.

Keith Enright

If only the above was still true. It's been keg for many years now and more recently has been closed and looking a right mess after numerous name changes.

This edition featured a photo of Magee Marshall Brewery and a photo of the Rawsons Arms in Farnworth, which had been one of 5 Whitbread pubs sold in a package deal to Burtonwood the previous December. (See below.) Also noted in an article about Duttons was the fact that they took over both Settles and John Hamer Breweries in Bolton in 1955. It was also the first issue to feature one Rupert Periwinkle, who was to become a regular contributor. It was also the first to include an insert with a comprehensive real ale pub list by area in this case for Manchester and Salford.

*Magees Brewery, Bolton.
Taken over and closed
down by Greenall Whit-
ley in the 1960s, now
a bottle store for
Cambrian soft drinks.*



*The Rawson's Arms,
Farnworth. Sold to
Burtonwood in Dec-
ember last year.*

What's Doing Volume 2 Issue 9 July 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

Was replaced by an additional Christmas Issue (see below)

What's Doing August 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

Wilsons Brewery introduced Brewers Bitter but none of their Bolton pubs were selected to sell it.

A list of pubs where What's Doings were on sale every month did not list any in Bolton.

What's Doing September 1977 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

BEER EXHIBITION A SUCCESS: The Central Manchester Beer Exhibition in the Royal Exchange was extremely successful, despite some problems with supplies. Over the three days from 21st to 23rd July more than 3,200 people, including many local licensees and brewery representatives, drank nearly 8,000 pints. Particularly popular brews were Whitbread (Marlow) and Stones, kindly supplied by a Sheffield licensee after the brewery only offered the keg variety. Walkers Bitter sold well and it is hoped that Tetleys will increase the outlets for this in Manchester. The organisers would like to thank the licensees of the Borough, Salford University and the Staff of Life for providing beer when supplies ran low on Friday, and Wilsons, Tetleys, 'Boddingtons and Lees, whose late deliveries kept the exhibition going on the Saturday.

What's Doing October 1977 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

Handpumped Pollards and Bass are now available alongside Thwaites in the Strawbury Duck near Entwistle Station (between Bolton and Blackburn), and according to licensee Denis Hilton they are going down well. When Mr Hilton took over the pub two years ago, he straightaway replaced the keg beers with Thwaites draught bitter and best mild, and has tried other traditional ales since - McEwans Scotch and Lees - although neither was successful, The Strawbury Duck was originally a Hamers pub and when Duttons took the Bolton brewery over in the 1950s they changed the name from the Strawbury to the Station Hotel. After Whitbread took over Duttons the pub was sold and modernised to become the Strawbury Duck. The pub is now enjoying a new lease of life under Mr. Hilton, with traditional beer and singalong, jazz and 'Temperance 7' entertainment three nights a week. Mr Hilton is interested in the history of the pub and would like to hear from anyone with information on the old Hamers brewery.

Despite not being in 'new' Bolton Metro the Strawbury Duck was a regular haunt of Bolton Camra members at the time, being easily accessible by train and providing welcome alternatives to Greenalls and Tetleys.

What's Doing November 1977 1977 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1977>

A new branch Trafford and Hulme had broken away from South Manchester, just as Bolton had done with North Manchester a year earlier.

What's Doing December 1977 and Christmas Special 1977

<https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

Anything about Bolton was conspicuous by its absence.

What's Doing January 1978/February 1978/March 1978 1977

<https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

Nothing in about Bolton, but the 1978 GBG (£1.95) pubs were

Bolton – Alma, Bradshawgate; Bowling Green, Bury Road; Craven Heifer, Blackburn Road; Gypsy's Tent, Deansgate; Prince William, Bradshawgate and Sweet Green Tavern, Crook Street

Farnworth - Market, Brackley Street and Saddle, King Street

Horwich – Toll Bar

Little Lever – Queen Anne

Stoneclough – Lord Nelson

Westhoughton – Duke of Wellington, Chew Moor and White Lion, Market Street

What's Doing April 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

It was noted that two Bolton Tetley pubs the Bradford Arms on Bradford Street, and the White Hart on Deane Road had handpumps installed.

What's Doing May 1978/June 1978/July 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

Nothing about Bolton, although in the May edition the Salford May Day beer exhibition is mentioned which a couple of Bolton members worked at. It was held in an open tent in Buile Hill Park and around tea time the gentlemen from Salford became quite boisterous (understatement) and the staff were serving customers stood on one leg, the other leg/foot was up against the trestle tables to prevent them being crushed against the beer stillaging. The bar closed early on safety grounds with Mr Plod dispersing the said gentlemen!

What's Doing August 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

A news item noted that The Swan on Bradshawgate was now selling hand pumped Burtonwood beer replacing the Bass (keg) selection, this was following the purchase of the pub by a catering company.

What's Doing September 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

A second Bass Pub in Bolton has changed hands. The Dog and Partridge, Manor Street was bought at public auction by Thwaites recently.

What's Doing October 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

A new Liverpool brewed Whitbread beer was to be test marketed at The Railway in Daubhill amongst others.

A new list of Tetley pubs selling Walkers Bitter was printed, those in the branch area were

Bolton – Bobs Smithy, Clifton, Howcroft, Spread Eagle

Westhoughton – Duke of Wellington, Cross Guns, Three Crowns

Compared to the previous list (see above) the Portland which was not listed before but should have been, no longer sold Real Ale, with both the Gypsy's Tent and Ainsworth having switched to Tetley Bitter.

What's Doing November 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

The front page headline was Whitbread Real – at last! Out of about 70 initial pubs two were in Bolton, Tippings on Blackburn Road and as previously thought the Railway Daubhill. (They really knew how to pick the most suitable pubs!)

There was also a list of Matthew Brown pubs that sold traditional beer in the branch area this was just the one which was the Hartcommon, Wigan Road, Westhoughton

The Moss Rose in Kearsley was noted as having started selling Cask Wilsons, but the Antelope across the road had gone the other way and was now only selling 'bright' Greenalls.

What's Doing December 1978 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/#1978>

Following on from last month's Whitbread real ale news there was a full list of the outlets by distribution area, The Railway and Tippings were supplied from Shadsworth, Blackburn and surprisingly listed from Salford was Dean (e?) Social Club, Bolton. The beer was now referred to as 'Special Cask'.

A list of the outlets for Boddingtons Strong Ale was also provided but none were in Bolton.