

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs as seen by the What's Doing Contributors 1998

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 1998 (£10.99) Good Beer Guide were

Bolton – Bob's Smithy, Clifton Arms (Gateway), Hen & Chickens, Lodge Bank Tavern, Lord Clyde, Maxim's, Old Original British Queen, Sweet Green Tavern, Watermillock

Harwood – House with No Name

Horwich – Toll Bar, Old Original Bay Horse

Westhoughton – Rosehill Tavern

What's Doing January 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Brinsop

The Brinsop Arms on the A6 at Westhoughton, which has been shut for several years, reopened in November. It is still a free house and this time round is selling Taylors Landlord, Boddies, draught Bass, Wadworth 6X and Pedigree. The premises have been nicely fitted out and there is a restaurant plus bar food.

Swansong?

The Swan Hotel in Bolton town centre was reopened by Regent Inns on 17th December. It's now called the Cygnet Inn and the signs outside say it is a 'genuine free house'. However, the old Malt & Hops bar has been closed and the real ales are on sale in the main part of the pub, which, like others in the neighbourhood, seems to be targeting the young and the deaf. In the first week, Boddingtons, Directors, Theakstons and draught Bass were among the beers on offer. The Bass was a bit iffy.

What's Doing February 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Wetherspoons

Latest opening dates for local JDWs are:

Middleton (The Harbord Harbord): February 18th

Oldham (The Up Steps Inn): March 25th

Bolton: March

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.



Branch Meeting – Lord Clyde Thursday February 5th 8.30pm

GNWBF Meeting – Howcroft Wednesday February 11th 8.30pm

What's Doing March 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Branch Meeting – Kings Head Thursday March 5th 8.30pm

GNWBF Meeting – Clifton Sunday March 22nd 12.15pm

GBG Meeting – Dog & Partridge March 12th 8.30pm

Hogtied

Sir - I await with hope the opening at the end of April of the new Bolton Wetherspoons, to be named the Spinning Mule in honour of Crompton. If the new pub follows in the footsteps of the rest of the chain, it should gain a large and happy local following in view of recent events on Bradshawgate. As many people know, the real ale Malt & Hops Bar at the Swan Hotel was closed down late last year. Although there are some real ales on in the main bar, there is no longer the range that was formerly on offer, and I haven't heard of the fate of the annual beer festival that was held in the courtyard.

The latest bad news was reported in the 23rd January 'Cheers' page of the *Bolton Evening News*. After a refit, the Hogshead has been renamed 'Hogs'. According to the newspaper, a spokesperson for the Hogshead Alehouse chain said that 'the cask ales and relaxed atmosphere of the Hogshead did not fit in with the mood of most other pubs along Bradshawgate. The change of name reflects the change of style to a young person's "destination" pub.' Apparently the bar has been redesigned to include video screens and a larger dance floor.

Am I missing something here? I thought cask ale and a relaxed atmosphere were what a lot of us look for when going out for a drink of a night. I know my brain cells may not be what they were several years ago, but have Hogshead subtly(?) changed their original policy?

Sue Barker

What's Doing April 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Branch Meeting – Clifton Thursday April 2nd 8.30pm

GNWBF Meeting – Dog & Partridge Sunday April 5th 12.15pm

Holts in Bolton

The Crown (ex-Greenalls, *below*) in Horwich opened as a Holts pub on Thursday 12th March, run by the former licensee of the Orion in Withington. This landmark building at the junction of Chorley New and Old Roads now has a large vault with pool and TV and a lounge made up of three former rooms around the central bar.

On the way back into Bolton, the Doffcocker on Chorley Old Road is another imposing building recently taken over by Holts. Here, the bar separates a large vault and pool room from an L-shaped, low ceilinged lounge.

To get to Horwich from Manchester, you can catch one of the hourly trains from Manchester to Blackrod, then walk the mile up Crown Lane to the Crown. Or go by train to Bolton and catch the 125, 126, 575 or 617 bus to the Crown. The 125 and 126 go past the Doffcocker.



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MEMBERS PRICES

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£1

£2

£2 (£1 BEFORE 6PM)

OPENING HOURS

THURSDAY 7PM TO 11PM

FRIDAY 11AM - 3PM

FRIDAY 6PM - 11PM

SATURDAY 11AM - 11PM

NON-MEMBERS PRICES

£2.50

£2

£3

£2.50

PRICES INCLUDE FREE PROGRAM AND FESTIVAL GLASS, WHILST STOCKS LAST

Farnworth

The Britannia on King Street, Farnworth, is holding a beer festival on 1st-4th May. Over at the Clock Face, Holts bitter has been on sale there for a few months.

Improvements and redecoration have been completed at the Brooklyn, the Great Lever (Bolton) pub Holts bought from Greenalls a few years ago. I hear that it has been fitted out in splendid fashion.



Bolton Wetherspoons

The Spinning Mule opened on Nelson Square in mid-May. It's a new building, fitted out to the usual Wetherspoon standard, with an open bar area for 'vertical drinking', some seats to the sides and a dining/no smoking room at the back.

On the bank holiday weekend the pub was busy and it has already been assimilated into the Bradshawgate 'monkey run'. There were six real ales on, including guests Oakhill Mendip Gold, Marstons Sundance and Jennings Cocker Hoop.

The chaps at Wetherspoons have obviously put a lot of time and money into the Spinning Mule, so why pick such a boring name? Nearby, there is already a Crompton's Mule (ex-Prince William) and a Cottons (ex-Hogshead). Is that all there is to Bolton's rich heritage - t'cotton mill?



New Brew Launch

The latest beer from Bolton's Bank Top Brewery will be launched at the Smithfield, Swan Street, Manchester, on Thursday 11th June. The beer is one of the 'Knights' series and is called Sir Bedivere. Demand is likely to be strong, so get there early.

A fire at the Rawsons Arms, Farnworth, last month caused considerable damage. The pub remains shut.

Little Lever

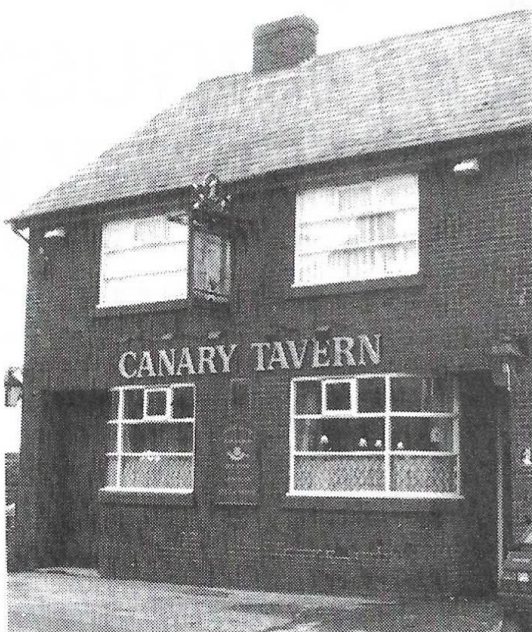
Ian Kenny

Little Lever is situated along the A6053, about three-and-a-half miles south east of Bolton. Entering the village from the south one encounters the **Jolly Carter**, the plushiest pub in Little Lever and also the one with the widest range of real ales. On offer are Boddies Bitter, Morlands Old Speckled Hen, Flowers Original, Wadworth 6X, Chesters Mild and an ever-changing guest, which on my visit was Caledonian 'In the Rough'. The pub also provides food each day, often until mid-evening. Well recommended.

Further up and across from the parish church is the **Ring o'Bells**. Despite boards advertising real ale, none was available at this Enterprise Inns house. Turning left into Lever Street, on the right can be found Hydes' **Horseshoe**, where bitter, mild and Billy Westwoods can be supped. The pub has been a regular in the Good Beer Guide in recent years but unfortunately the beer was rather off-form on my visit. There's no need to continue further down Lever Street as the **Seven Stars** is now keg-only, despite sporting several handpumps. Retracing one's steps and passing into Market Street, the next pub is the **Church**. Again an Enterprise Inn advertising real ale, and again none was available. Is this a company policy?

Further along Market Street can be found the **Three Crowns** and this used to be my favourite Little Lever pub, with its multi-room layout and rather scruffy charm. However John Smiths swept away all that and now there is a single room, nicely decorated but devoid of atmosphere. The one real ale is John Smiths bitter. Just along from the Three Crowns is the **Canary**, which provided me with the surprise of the day. It was once a keg Whitbread outlet, but now Bolton CAMRA members Gary and Judith have taken charge and the place has been transformed. Real ales available are Boddies and Holts bitter at the bargain price of £1.05. There is also traditional cider from Bulmers and Thatchers. Well worth a visit.

Leaving the Canary and turning right up High Street, the next pub to be found is the **White Horse**. Here Boddies bitter and Trophy bitter are joined by Lees bitter, quite a rarity for the area. Virtually next door is Thwaites' **Queen Anne**. The pub has been



opened out, and can anybody explain why visitors to the vault are greeted by a life-size model of a grinning Stan Laurel wearing a ball and chain? The solitary real ale is Thwaites bitter. Continuing out of the village on Stopes Road, you come to the **Stopes Tavern** and the **Wellington**. Comfortably furnished, the Stopes offers the bitters of Boddingtons and Thwaites, whilst the Wellington is now a keg-only Thwaites pub.

In the ten years since the last survey of Little Lever was printed (CAMRA's 'Beer in Bolton') the number of real ales has almost doubled, one pub has disappeared, more pubs are keg-only and real mild is now almost extinct. From the early 1980s, when I regularly visited the area, some welcome improvements have been made, but at the cost of losing some excellent traditional pubs, which probably reflects events elsewhere.

What's Doing September 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Pubs gone

Another Bury pub has bit the dust. The Brewers Arms (Thwaites, *right*), Bell Lane, was demolished last month. Out in the countryside, the Black Bull at the Walves crossroads near Edgworth has become a private house. At the auction of the pub fixtures and fittings, the stuffed



deer's head went for forty quid. So which pub will it turn up in next?

What's Doing October 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Branch Meeting – Dog & Partridge Thursday October 8th 8.30pm

Holts have now opened the Mosley Arms on Red Lane in Breightmet

What's Doing November 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Branch Meeting and AGM – Dog & Partridge Thursday November 12th 8.30pm

What's Doing December 1998 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Man & Scythe

Dave Crookell

Ye Olde Man and Scythe (aka t'cider 'ouse) on Churchgate, Bolton, reopened during April following a restoration of the main bar to a layout and colouring believed to be closer to that which existed in the nineteenth century.

The inn is claimed to be the fourth oldest in England and tradition says it dates from 1251, the year Bolton received its royal charter and became a market town. The original building had a timber frame, with wattle-and-daub walls and a floor of beaten clay, overlaid with ashes and cobblestones. It is believed it was rebuilt in 1636, when the walls were converted to the present brickwork. The flag floor in the front bar dates from the nineteenth century. During the 1920s the building was extended by roofing over the space between the main structure and the present toilet and kitchen, which were used as the licensee's quarters in Victorian times.

In the Museum Room - one of two separate drinking areas to the right of the entrance - is a cabinet containing a chair which tradition says was used by James, the unlucky seventh Earl of Derby. In 1651 he was beheaded in the market place outside for supporting the Royalist cause during the Civil War.

The current licensee of the Man and Scythe, John Jewitt, was responsible for the recent restoration and gives historical tours of the inn on request. He is amassing a collection of customers' tankards and there's the incentive of a pint on the house if you let him keep yours on display!



There are three regular beers - handpumped Holts Bitter, Boddies Bitter and Flowers Original - together with a frequently changing guest. Recently there have been Adnams Hill Billy (4.2%), a pale, hoppy bitter, and Fullers Red Fox (4.3%), a sweetish, ruby coloured beer with a taste of liquidized blackcurrants and raspberries! There is also a selection of ciders.

