

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs as seen by the What's Doing Contributors 1999

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 1999 (£10.99) Good Beer Guide were

Blackrod – Gallaghers (Goose & Gander)

Bolton – Arkwright's, Bob's Smithy, Clifton Arms (Gateway), Hen & Chickens, Howcroft, Lodge Bank Tavern, Old Man & Scythe, Sweet Green Tavern, York

Bromley Cross – Cross Guns

Harwood – House with No Name

Little Lever - Horseshoe

Westhoughton – Cross Guns, Rosehill Tavern

What's Doing January 1999 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Man & Scythe

Wadworths 6X has joined the regular beers - Holts bitter, Boddies bitter and Flowers IPA - at Bolton's Old Man & Scythe. Marstons Pedigree and Merrie Monk Mild have been recent guests. All the beers are consistently well kept. In fact, it has been said that the Holts is generally on better form than in many of Joey's own outlets!

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

Joey's DBA premium bitter was launched in November at the Ape & Apple, with the Lord Mayor Gordon Conquest pulling the first pint - and paying for it, to help raise funds for the Holt Radium Institute. The following pubs are selling the new beer...

Bolton Castle, Bolton

Brooklyn, Bolton

Crown, Horwich

Doffcocker, Bolton

Rose Hill, Westhoughton

Sweet Green Tavern

Dave Crookell

The Sweet Green Tavern is conveniently situated on Crook Street, approximately 100 metres from the bus/rail interchange. It's one of Bolton's premier free houses, regularly voted Pub of the Year by the Bolton branch of CAMRA. The Sweet Green has a multi-roomed layout, with four separate drinking areas around a central L-shaped bar. To the left of the entrance is a basic vault with TV, to the right is a comfortable lounge with a real fire. Next to the lounge is a pool room, with many photos from pub outings adorning the walls; on the far side there is a small snug and outside there is a paved beer patio.

There are two regular real ales, handpumped Tetley bitter and Sweet Green Special bitter (4.2%, £1.60). Brewed by Moorhouses, the latter is a pale, sweetish, hoppy bitter that fills the gap between Premier and Pendle Witch. The Sweet Green is one of about twenty pubs supplied by Moorhouses with their own-brand 'custom' beer. At least two guest beers are also sold. Currently there is Bank Top's Freds Cap (4.0%, £1.60), Moorhouses Nick's Choice (4.7%, £1.60), named after a recently deceased regular, and Moorhouses Old Ale (6.0%, £2.00). Previous guest beers have included Thwaites Daniel's Hammer and Greene King Abbot Ale.



Affetside is served by bus No.508 from Bolton at 20 minutes past the hour and from Bury at 18 minutes past the hour, daytime only and not Sundays. A day saver ticket (£3) is good value as you can use it to catch buses 273 and 560 to visit the nearby villages of Hawkshaw and Walves. The **Red Lion** at Hawkshaw (273 and 508 stop outside) sells handpumped Jennings and the **Willows** (a Millers Kitchen Family Pub) at Walves sells handpumped Boddingtons bitter and Greenalls Original. This place was only built a few years ago and it has already had its name changed from the more appropriate Turton Heights. The original Walves pub, the Bulls Head, shut a couple of years ago but it can still be seen across the road.



Letters

Chill factor

Sir - Why do J D Wetherspoon keep all their bottled beers at the same temperature? On a recent visit to Bolton's Spinning Mule, Taylors Landlord and Coniston Bluebird were alongside Becks, Budweiser, Pils and, indeed, Newcastle Brown in the cooler, which I was informed was set at 4°C. CAMRA should remind JDW that real ales served too cold lose their full flavour. Newcastle Brown is probably robust enough to retain flavour at this temperature and lagers are fairly tasteless anyway, but shouldn't bottled versions of draught real ale be served at the recommended cellar temperature so that the subtle flavours can still be appreciated? It cannot be beyond an organisation such as JDW to have a separate cooler for bitters and milds set at 13-14°C and one for lagers set at 4°C.

Dave Crookell

NEW BAR IN BOLTON

Last month Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries opened one of their Varsity bars on Churchgate in Bolton. The bar is of the split-level, bare boards and basic furniture genre, with an emphasis on food during the day and plenty of room for vertical drinking at night. W&D already have nine other Varsitys - in Liverpool, Preston, the Midlands and Wales - and they're going to open more.

The Bolton Varsity is built on the site of the Boars Head, the Grade II listed building which Greenalls abandoned a few years ago. The minimalist decor of the new bar extends to the ceiling - there isn't one. Air conditioning conduits loom overhead and it's a bit like drinking beneath one of those transporters from Moonbase Alpha.

The handpumped ales in the opening week were Banks's Bitter, Banks's Wolmore Warmer and Pedigree.



Holts Corner

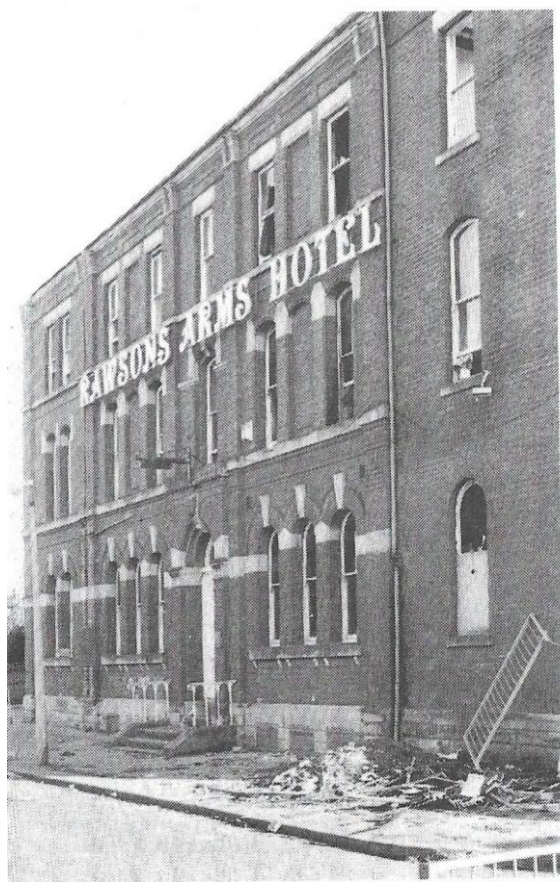
Stewart Revell

In the last week or two, Joeys have acquired another pub - the Rumworth (*below*) on Wigan Road, Bolton - but it's too early to say when it will be converted to Holts beers.



Rawsons razed

The Rawsons Arms Hotel (*right*) on Peel Street, Farnworth, an imposing Burtonwood edifice near to the station, has been reduced to an imposing pile of rubble.



Farnworth

The Britannia on King Street (facing the bus station, *below*) is currently selling Moorhouses Premium and Trophy Bitter at a very reasonable £1.22 a pint. Old Speckled Hen is £1.65. The pub is hosting a beer festival and barbecue at the end of May.



Drinkers who enjoy beer in a bottle should check out the B&M Discount Store in the precinct. Thwaites Daniels Hammer (5.2%) is 99p for 500ml and the premium Czech lager Budweiser Budvar is 69p for 330ml.

On Market Street, the former Scarlett's Showbar has been cleaned and gutted and you can now see the pub's original name, the Rose & Crown. There are plans to reopen the place as another late night venue, but there is considerable opposition from local residents short on sleep. The licence has already been refused once.

Bolton news

A Trotter

Last month Holly Caulfield celebrated her first anniversary at the **Dog & Partridge** on Manor Street and to mark the occasion the Thwaites horse-drawn dray made a special delivery. Holly took over the running of the pub from Bolton CAMRA member Angus Crompton and has continued the tradition of serving quality Thwaites mild, bitter and seasonal ales. The Dog & Partridge is one of the few pubs in the area to sell cask mild.



On Deansgate, the **Hen & Chickens** continues its guest ale policy and on a recent visit Morland IPA and Bank Top Sir Gareth were available. On the 'coming up' board were Bateman Hillbilly Bitter and Nethergate Golden Gate. The Hen & Chickens is a fine, well kept pub close to the bus station and an ideal starting or finishing point for a tour of Bolton's real ale pubs.

The guest ales available during June at the **Farmers Arms** on Chorley Street will be Nethergate Augustinian, Elgood Greyhound, Beartown Bruin's Ruin and Everards Anniversary Ale.

Finally, there is talk that the **Malt & Hops Bar** next to the Swan Hotel may reopen. This was one of my favourite watering holes as there was always a fine selection of real ales. If it does reopen, let's hope they don't alter the basic interior.

Escape to Entwistle (eventually)

Dave Crookell

It was the night of a certain European Cup final and in an attempt to escape from the hordes of boisterous football fans in their red replica shirts crowding into every pub in Manchester, we visited Entwistle in the West Pennine Moors, courtesy of First North Western Trains, where we hoped to find the Strawbury Duck a red shirt and televised football-free zone.

To get there, a cheap evening return ticket from Salford Crescent to Entwistle cost £1.70, which was exceptional value for a round trip of about thirty miles, when compared to £1.35 for the three mile bus ride to the station.

Once north of Bromley Cross, the train passed through attractive countryside, the views almost rivalling those on the Settle-Carlisle as we travelled alongside Jumbles Reservoir and crossed an arm of Wayoh Reservoir by viaduct before approaching Entwistle some 25 minutes after leaving Salford. Curiously, our train continued through the station without stopping. Apparently the driver was confused and had forgotten to stop at Entwistle, so we found ourselves in Darwen, thirty minutes before the next train back. After apologising profusely, the driver gave us a fiver for a drink in Darwen by way of compensation. We tried two pubs near to the station but they were both fairly dismal and keg-only.

Eventually we arrived back at Entwistle where, virtually at the top of the station approach, stands the Strawbury Duck, a popular rural free-house and not to be confused with the Strawberry Duck on Crabtree Lane by the Ashton Canal in slightly less rural Openshaw. Originally known as the Station Hotel, the Strawbury Duck was built at the end of the nineteenth century and extended in 1981 into the much older Bridge Cottages. The pub has a rustic interior, with exposed beams and a flagged floor around a



central bar that has unusual and fairly uncomfortable cycle-saddle shaped seats attached to it. Round the back of the bar, past the toilets ('Ducks' and 'Drakes') there is a small games room with pool table and TV (and yes, the football was on). There are several alcoves and a separate dining area. As usual in a country pub, the Strawbury Duck is food oriented with a fairly predictable menu and more imaginative daily 'specials' advertised on a blackboard.

There were five real ales available, all on handpump - Duck Ale (brewed for the pub by Bank Top, 3.6% and £1.50), Taylors Landlord, Fullers London Pride and Batemans - all at around £1.80 - and Pendle Witch at £1.92. We found all the beers to be in good condition and the Taylors Landlord in particular was in fine form.

Return trains to Salford and Victoria are at 2217 and 2324. I would recommend the 2217 because if you miss the last one (or if the driver forgets to stop) you are faced with an expensive taxi ride home, although the Strawbury Duck does have accommodation. We interrupted the return journey in Bolton and visited the Sweet Green Tavern, where guest ales were Pedigree and Burton Ale, both at £1.60, before making our way home, anticipating the play-off finals when we too would become boisterous football fans - but in laser blue shirts...

Holts Corner

Stewart Revell

The Globe In Leigh is due to reopen as a Holts pub on 2nd July. The Rumworth, the recently acquired outlet in Bolton, will be reopening about a week later.

Happy days

The Swan Hotel in Bolton is having all-day happy hours (11am-11pm Monday to Thursday) when all drinks - pints, bottles, minerals, etc - are £1. Real ales on a recent visit were Boddies bitter and Courage Directors. Still, you can't complain at £1 a pint.

Rumworth

16th July saw the second Holts opening within a month - the Rumworth on Wigan Road, Bolton (buses 127, 540-2, 547-8 from Bolton). This is a good-looking, solid, red-brick, double-fronted building with a very comfortable lounge, a central bar and a well appointed vault, with pool and darts area to the rear of that. If the locals get a liking for Joey's beers it should do well.



In and around Bolton

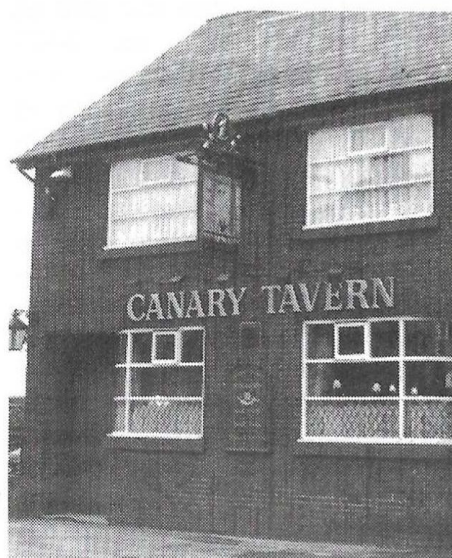
A Trotter

The **Varsity** on Churchgate is having a 'Stupid Summer' prices promotion, 11am to 8pm each day, and Banks's bitter is £1.25 a pint. On the other hand, don't be enticed by posters around town proclaiming Flowers IPA at 83p at a certain town centre venue; it isn't cask ale.

Still a popular meeting place adjacent to the bus/rail interchange, the **Sweet Green Tavern** is worth a visit to see the football pennants from Scotland(!) The pub sells Tetley bitter, Sweet Green Special and one or two guest ales.

The **Antelope** on Manchester Road, Kearsley, is selling handpumped Bass (£1.65) as well as Greenalls bitter.

In Little Lever, Gary and Judith, who used to be at the Man & Scythe (cider 'ouse) in Bolton, recently celebrated their first anniversary at the **Canary** (*right*). The pub sells Holts (£1.20) and Boddies, although the Boddies may soon be replaced, possibly by Hartleys XB. Down the road, the **Stopes Tavern**, has Thwaites bitter and Boddies on handpull.



Over the boundary in Radcliffe, the **Beer Engine** has a large sign stating that it is a Cask Ale Emporium, but only Boddies and Pedigree were on handpump on my visit.

Farnworth beer festival

The **Britannia** on King Street is hosting a beer festival and barbecue over the late August Bank Holiday, beginning on the Friday evening and continuing until the evening of the Bank Holiday Monday, or until the beers run out. If the last beer festival at the Britannia is anything to go by, expect an excellent choice of ales.

What's Doing September 1999 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bolton news

A Trotter

The **Swan Hotel** is due for a refurbishment and when the work is completed the part of the building which housed the **Malt & Hops Bar** on Bradshawgate will reopen. This closed in 1997 after Regent Inns bought the hotel. When it reopens, will it be a real ale bar again, or will it be turned into a continental-style café bar serving overpriced designer bottled drinks and smoothflow?

Down the road in Nelson Square, Thwaites' latest addition to Bolton's pub culture is nearing completion and is to be called **Red on the Square**. The building is situated next to Wetherspoon's **Spinning Mule**, so it will be vying for custom with this established no-music pub. Let the battle of Nelson Square commence.

Scaffolding went up round the **Alma** (*right*) on Bradshawgate last month and the builders moved in for another makeover. The Alma has seen a few changes of style since it became a Burtonwood pub and has attracted clienteles ranging from real ale aficionados to those of a less discriminating palate. What next?

Donaghy's Bar on Great Moor Street has been closed for some time and the building is to be demolished to make way for redevelopment connected with the nearby Water Place.

Down in Little Lever, the **Canary** has dispensed with bland Boddies, though there has been no replacement as yet and Holts is now the only real ale.

Things look a lot brighter at the **Jolly Carter**, Little Lever, these days, where there are six real ales to wet the ale drinker's thirsty throat. On my visit, these were Fullers London Pride, Old Speckled Hen, Chesters mild, Tetley bitter, Flowers Original and bland Boddies.

Nestling beside the River Irwell in the tranquil village of Ringley is the **Lord Nelson**. The pub was the venue for the first North Manchester CAMRA meeting and also its 25th anniversary some



years ago. The pub hasn't changed much; the Railway Room is still there and old photos of the village adorn the walls. The real ale is Thwaites bitter.

Across Ringley Bridge is another Thwaites pub selling cask bitter, the **Horseshoe**. Back up the road on Market Street, Stoneclough, the **Market Street Tavern** has only John Smiths bitter on handpump next to the smoothflow. The last time I was here, there were also guest ales. Further along the road is the **Grapes** (Bass), but I couldn't see any handpumps. The last pub on the road is the **Hare &**

Hounds, where Joey Holts is available for £1.18 a pint.



Back in Bolton, the town's only brewer, John Feeney, may be moving his brewing operations. In the planning section of the evening paper there was a 'change of use' application - for the conversion of a tennis club house at Bank Top Tennis Club into a micro brewery with meeting and reception rooms. Some Bank Top residents are already objecting to having a brewery nearby because of the smell!!

Finally, the word is that the **Millstone** on Crown Street (left) will soon become a Joseph Holts pub. Just what the town centre needs.

What's Doing October 1999 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Big Cat

Moorhouses are introducing a new dark beer called Black Panther (4.8%), brewed to retain the characteristics of Black Cat but with a higher ABV. Black Panther was recently available as a guest at Bolton's Sweet Green Tavern, where the other guest beer is Boddingtons bitter.

Bolton

Being in Bolton for a meeting on September 14th, I chanced upon Thwaites' new pub, **Red on the Square** (*below*). Inside, it is all lightish wood, with some nice metalwork in traceried balustrades and light fittings, and walls painted in blocks of bold bright colours, the sort you used to get in poster paints at school. As for the beer, there is a large ceramic Warsteiner dispenser at the centre of the U-shaped bar, several banks of fonts for lagers, wines and keg beers, and three handpumps - on my visit, two for Thwaites bitter and one for a seasonal Thwaites ale, Morning Glory (3.8%, £1.80 a pint). The menu is rather pricey but not uninteresting; there is additional room in an upstairs gallery; and the clientele consisted mostly of young or would-be-young professionals.

The older-established Wetherspoons pub next door, the **Spinning Mule**, was similarly comfortable,



but busier and noisier, with a more mixed clientele. The only exotic colouring in this pub is in the carpeting and the mosaic floor tiling. Here there was a choice of six real ales, including Harviestoun Schiehallion at £1.69, and Thwaites dark mild. How will the two pubs thrive alongside each other? How long will it be before Red is revamped?

After this I wondered what **Maxims** in Bradshawgate would be selling on handpump following the downfall of Vaux as a brewer. The answer turned out to be Theakston XB, Bass and Stones. Not finding this a compelling choice, and avoiding the **Cygnets Inn** at the Swan Hotel (which claims to be 'a genuine free house' but has only Boddies and Directors at £1 a pint, Monday to Thursday all day to entice customers), I looked into Banks's **Varsity**. It was almost empty, despite offering Banks's bitter at the 'stupid' summer price of £1.25. I went instead for Lindridge Ale (4.5%, £1.95), served in an oversized glass from which I had several mouthfuls before I got anywhere near the pint line. Varsity is much more airy than the other pubs, with plain surfaces of brick and wood, and green-painted ducting everywhere. It also had the best-looking female customers.

What's Doing November 1999 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

It's not Christmas yet

Sir - On a recent visit to Wetherspoon's Spinning Mule in Bolton, our barman when invited to 'take your own' helped himself to £1.89 of our hard-earned - the price of a pint of Stella - on top of what was merely a round of two pints and a Coke. In spite of all their other well-documented policies, Wetherspoons do not have a policy regarding tips taken by bar staff. The manager claimed there is no recommended fixed amount to be accepted by staff and that gratuities are at the discretion of the customer. We seem to have experienced the indiscretion of the barman who was, apparently, a recent addition to the staff.

Dave Crookell

Bolton

Recent deliveries of Holts bitter to the **Old Man & Scythe**, Bolton, and the **Railway Hotel**, Moses Gate, were found to be much paler than usual, to the extent that in the Man & Scythe drinkers were offered a choice of either light or dark bitter. The light version was straw coloured, slightly sweeter than usual but still with the Holts acerbity and quite drinkable. The licensees said that the barrels appeared to be identical and they were informed by the brewery that it was simply a variation in the brew.

The latest guest ale at the Man & Scythe is Hartleys XB at £1/pint. This follows the recent special offer on Tetleys Bitter at £1/pint - competing with the all-day happy hours next door at the Swan. It will be interesting to see if the special offers continue now the Swan is closed for refurbishment. Drinkers with an asbestos mouth and lead-lined stomach might like to try the chilli con carne at the Man & Scythe. You have been warned!

All the paperwork has been signed and the **Millstone** in Bolton is now part of the Holts tied estate.

Branch Meeting and AGM – Dog and Partridge Manor St November 11th 8.30pm

Around Bolton

Those in the know, know that Trotter can usually be found propping up the bars of Bolton town centre pubs on a Saturday night. For a change, he decided to visit a few pubs on the fringe...

On Pool Street, the **Howcroft Inn** serves an interesting range of guest ales and I sampled Weetwood Old Dog, Moorhouses Volcano (4.2%) and an ale from Barleyhead called Autumn Gold (4.8%), though I thought it was a bit pricey at £1.85 a pint. Tetleys and Taylors Landlord are also available.

From the Howcroft, I went to check out the **Rock House** (right) in nearby Duke Street. This is one of only two Banks's pubs in Bolton and a typical local serving Camerons Ruby Red Bitter and Banks's Original Mild on handpump. For some reason the bitter isn't hand drawn.

Moving closer to town, on Chorley Street is the **Farmers Arms**, where Greenalls bitter is served alongside two guests - Spitfire and Theakstons bitter when I got there. A beer from the nearby Bolton Brewery can often be found at the Farmers. However, if you like a quiet drink, avoid Saturday nights as this is band night.

On the other side of town, about ten minutes' walk from the station, is the **Lodge Bank Tavern** on Bridgeman Street. This is an open-plan Lees pub, serving handpumped mild and bitter and the seasonal beers. The pub across the road, the **Park**, is keg only.

Out in Farnworth, the ever-popular **Britannia**, opposite the bus station, is serving Brains Dark Red at £1.42 a pint. This follows the beer's success at the last beer festival held at the pub. Also available at the time of writing is Wadworth 6X at £1.55 a pint.



Westhoughton

'Ceaw-yed land' doesn't appear in the pages of What's Doing too often, so Dave White made the trip in late October...

Our first intended port of call was the **Commercial** next to the railway station, but this was closed and in darkness, so we walked down to the **Red Lion** on Wigan Road. Only keg Greenalls here, alas, so it was on to Market Street and the **Wheatsheaf**. This Greenalls pub has had the 'Your Local' treatment and the snug contained some interesting photographs of old Westhoughton. Cask Boddies bitter was on offer.

We turned on to Bolton Road for the **Cross Guns**. Tetley bitter was on sale here, as were Robinsons Best and something called 'Batesmans mild'. This product proved as dubious as the spelling, and must have lain in the pipes for ages. Nice pub, though. No such problems at the **White Lion**, back on Market Street, with Holts mild and bitter in fine fettle. Surroundings earthy but endearing.

Just before boarding the 540 bus to Daisy Hill, there was time to nip in the **Victoria**, a Greenalls pub opposite the White Lion. The beer engines were still in place, but with nothing on offer, and the pub was nearly empty. Judging by the volume of the music, we could only conclude that a Central American dictator was holed up in a nearby building and that someone at the Vic was trying to flush him out.

There were great expectations when Hydes bought the **Daisy Hill Tavern** from Greenalls. However, the pub is noisy and the vault looks as though it has been made out of old kipper boxes. Only one handpump had a clip for Hydes bitter and it was a cold pint-and-a-half at that. We stayed on Leigh Road for the **Rose Hill Tavern** (commonly known as the **Bug**) for the best beer of the night. The Holts mild and bitter were singularly yummy and the pub is handy for the last train back to Wigan from Daisy Hill Station.

P.S. The **Alexandra**, Swan Lane, can be found on the 540 bus route, just on the boundary between



Daisy Hill and Hindley Green. This free house has Tetley mild and bitter and Boddingtons bitter as permanent fixtures with, until recently, a handpump free for Draught Bass, Pedigree or something equally boring. Now, however, the Alex is more adventurous and the spare pump is used to dispense beers from Brakspears, Youngs and Smiles, to name but three. The intellectual powerhouses of Wigan CAMRA can usually be found in the Alexandra on Sundays for the quiz night, winning more free beer than they can drink.