

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs as seen by the What's Doing Contributors 2001

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 2001 Good Beer Guide were

Bolton – Dog & Partridge, Hen & Chickens, Hope & Anchor, Howcroft, Kings Head, Lodge Bank Tavern, Lord Clyde, Old Man & Scythe, Sweet Green Tavern

Bromley Cross – Cross Guns, Flag

Farnworth – Britannia, Railway

Horwich – Crown

Kearsley – Clockface

Westhoughton – White Lion

What's Doing January 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bolton

Sat 13th Jan, Trip to Liverpool to visit the Head of Steam and tour of selected pubs. Meet at Bolton Station for 11.02 train.

Bass in Bolton

The new Bass outlet in the former Whitehead's store in Bolton (*WD last month*) will be one of their 'Goose' chain of pubs.

A journey to Farnworth took us to the **Clock Face** (actually in neighbouring Kearsley), another 'try also' entry. There is a working clock outside and inside there are three rooms, a vault and two lounge areas. This is a no-nonsense traditional boozer and the beers are Tetley and Holts bitters.

The next outing began with a train to Daisy Hill and the **Rose Hill Tavern** (aka the '**Bug**') on Leigh Road, next to the station. This grand building has been opened out to provide a games room to the left, bar and lounge area to the right. It is a Holts pub and the beers are the usual mild and bitter.

Daisy Hill is almost a suburb of Westhoughton, so that's where we

headed next, using the S40 bus. On Market Street, by the Town Hall, is the **White Lion**, an evocative Holts pub in their true style, 'oozing with boozing'. The low, multi-room building offers good mild and bitter in classic surroundings, although the piped music can be a bit obtrusive.

The S16 took us out of the town centre and into the neighbouring area of Wingates for the **Waggon & Horses** on Chorley Road, from where there are good views across the valley towards the Reebok Stadium and Middlebrook. The regular beers are Burtonwood bitter and one from Bank Top (Fred's Cap). The building's interior is 'brewer's baronial': cross-membered ceilings, scenes depicted on stained glass windows, inglenook fireplace, neo-gothic archways and adzed woodcarving. The conservatory extension does not detract from this. The Waggon & Horses is only a 'try also' entry in the GBG, but it was undoubtedly the best pub of the night.

(Bus route numbers should be 540 and 516 not S40 and S16)

To Little Lever next (change of bus required at Bury) and the imposing **Queen Anne Hotel**, set back from High Street. This attractive double-fronted Thwaites house still has many original

features, including etched windows, entrance hall and staircase. The separate tap room contains a collection of Laurel and Hardy figures. The real ale is Thwaites bitter.

Malt & Hops revived

The Malt & Hops Bar on Bradshawgate in Bolton reopened on 9th December selling Hancocks HB, Pedigree, Adnams bitter and two from Brakspear - bitter and O be Joyful, a seasonal ale. It is expected that there will be three permanent and three guest ales.

Gone but not forgotten

Thwaites opened their new Lord Nelson at Ringley in December. The famous old village pub featured in the Good Beer Guide for many years. It was in a conservation area, but only the front wall has been conserved and the new Nelson is just one more of those out-of-town pub/restaurants.

What's Doing February 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Holts corner

Stewart Revell

The **Railway** at Didsbury, which has been undergoing conversion to a Holts outlet, is expected to open mid-March. The roof was re-tiled recently and there is still a lot of work to do. If all goes according to plan, the brewery will be opening the **Millstone** in Bolton later this year. As for the Lloyds-TSB bank building acquired in Bury a few months ago (close to Wetherspoons), this is unlikely to be serving Holts beers until 2002. So, no point in forming a queue just yet!

What's Doing March 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bustling Bolton

Trotter

It's good to see that the real ale establishments in the town centre are pulling in the customers on Friday and Saturday nights.

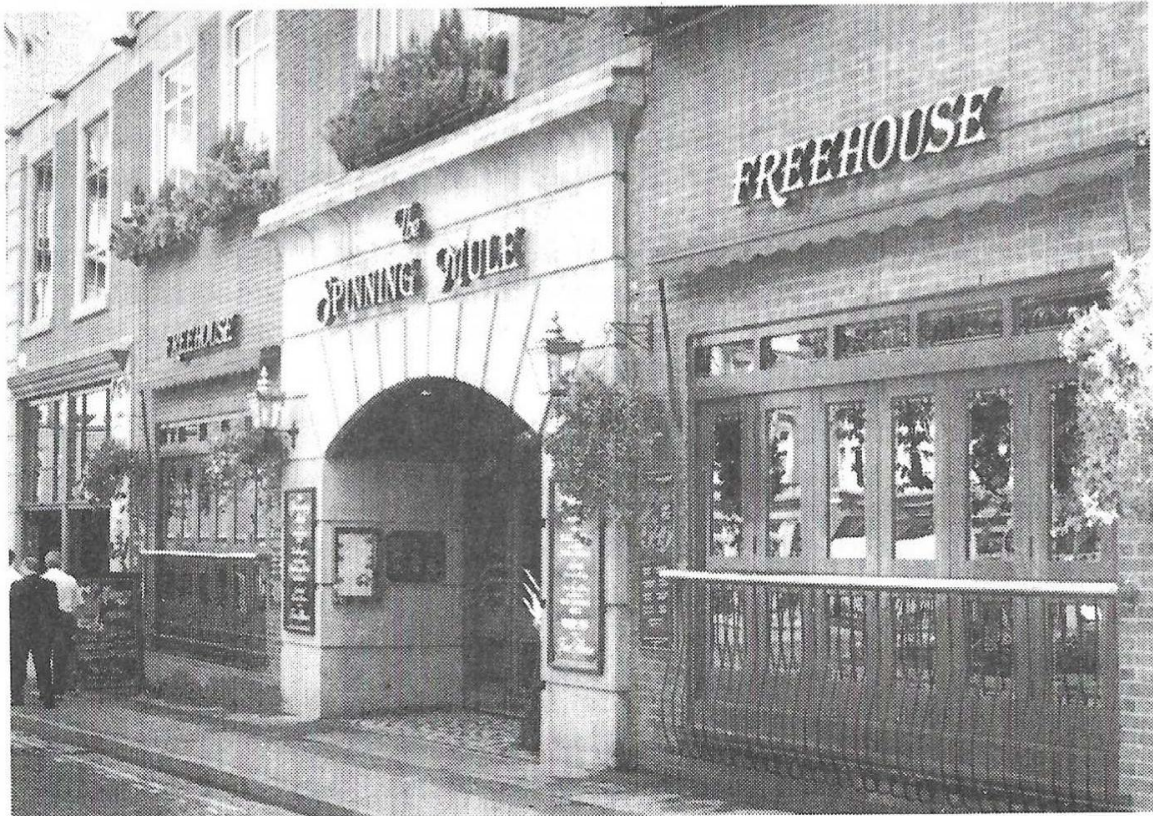
The **Spinning Mule** (Wetherspoons) always has a lively mix of clientele and must be commended for serving the likes of Adnams Broadside, Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Bishops Finger at the set price of £1.49, alongside microbrew ales. In fact on Saturday 17th February the Spitfire (4,5%) was on offer at £1.29 a pint.

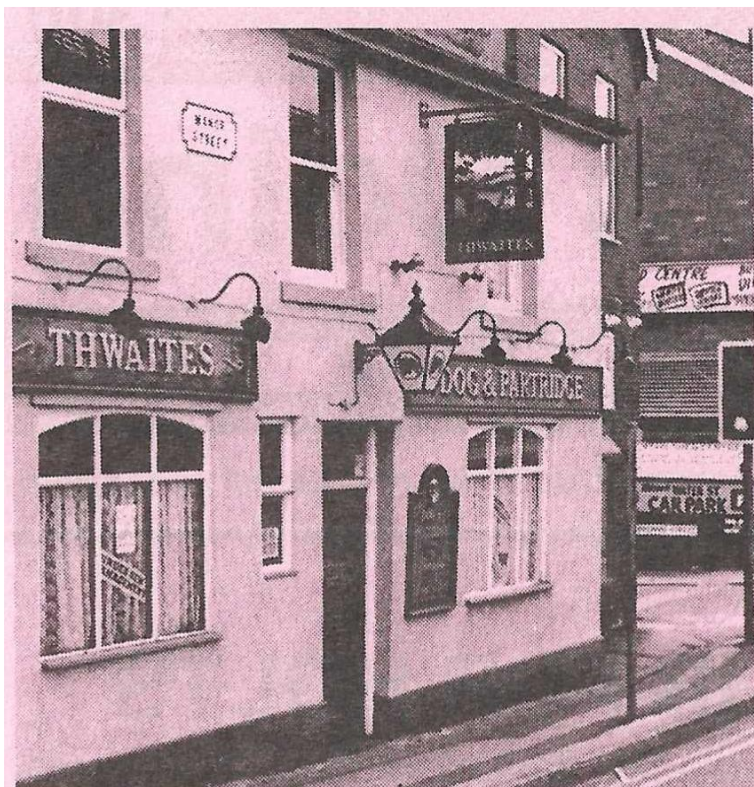
The **Old Man & Scythe** continues to be a magnet for real ale and cider drinkers and has some excellent guest beers in addition to Boddies, Joey Holts and Flowers IPA. Local buskers perform at the far end of the pub early Saturday evenings.

Across Churchgate, the **Varsity** attracts the youth/student type, but it does sell Banks's and Pedigree real ale.

At the other end of town on Deansgate, the **Hen & Chickens** continues to come up with good quality guest ales, and in here an array of characters like the white van man, the hairy monster and other ex-salty dogs prop up the bar, discussing the meaning of ale and other topical items.

The **Malt & Hops Ale House**, next to the Swan on Bradshawgate, was open for a brief period over Christmas and New Year, but now it's closed again.





Angus reunited with Dog

On 17th March Angus Crompton returned to the Dog & Partridge on Manor Street in Bolton, following the departure of Holly Caulfield to pastures new.

It was Angus who a few years ago brought the old Dog back to life again as a Thwaites real ale pub, assisted by several Bolton CAMRA branch members.

Bolton

Sat 12 May, Social outing to Southport to include 2nd Sandgrounder Beer Festival. Meet 10.35am at Bolton Station for 10.45 train.

Brit Beer Bash

The Britannia in Farnworth, opposite King Street Bus Station, will be hosting a beer festival from Friday 4th to the end of the Bank Holiday, 7th May. The event will once again take place in the specially created bar area in the beer garden at the rear of the pub. Six real ales will be served on handpump at each session and it is expected that around fifteen will be available during the festival, plus two traditional ciders.

The Millennium Pub Trail - The Return

Part Thirteen: A New Beginning

Last year Steve Smith and Mark McConachie toured all the Greater Manchester pubs in the 2000 Good Beer Guide. Now, equipped with the 2001 Guide, they step boldly, seeking out additions and variations. They are visiting each of the metropolitan boroughs in alphabetical order and hope to complete the tour in a ten month period. Here goes...

Around Bolton

The **Hope & Anchor** on Chorley Old Road (B6226) at Doffcocker, known as the 'Little Cocker', has a lively bar room and real ales in the form of Taylors Landlord, Lees and Tetley bitters and Tetley Dark Mild. The pub still has its original front room fireplace, solid wooden snob screens and bell pushes. A back room vault is used as a games room.

The **Kings Head** on Junction Road at Deane is a comfortable retreat off the main A676. Tetley Dark Mild and Bitter and Taylors Landlord again feature, along with Moorhouses Pride of Pendle and a guest beer. The main room, opened-out and spacious, has stone floors, exposed timber beams and low ceilings. A third room, mostly for dining, was added to the Grade II listed building in the 1990s.

The **Lord Clyde**, an ex-Bass pub on Folds Road (A676), is only a short distance from the town centre, close to the Stagecoach Ribble bus garage.

The pub seems to have been in a time warp since the Bass days. There's a traditional vault with television and a side room on split levels incorporating a pool table. A further room appeared to be unused. The pub seemed



quiet and pervaded by a smoky atmosphere, but it was a good place in which to enjoy the Hydes Anvil Light and Bitter.

With its timber-framed frontage, the **Man & Scythe** on Churchgate is the oldest pub in town. Tradition says that it dates from the thirteenth century, although it was rebuilt in the seventeenth century. The rooms and drinking areas have stone flagged and bare wooden floors (sloping and on split levels), low beams, leaded windows and stained glass, and some incongruous electronic features. To the rear is a small patio area. The beer range consists of Boddingtons, Holts and Tetley Bitter, Flowers IPA and Original, plus guest beers.

In complete contrast to the Man & Scythe, across the street can be found one of Bolton's newest pubs, the **Varsity**. The interior is fitted out in light wood, from bar counter to flooring, interspersed with green columns; I-beams and ducting give the modern minimalist industrial look. The large room incorporates a gallery area and a mezzanine (non-smoking) level. The pub's name indicates the targeting of a youthful clientele, but on our Monday night visit the place was decidedly un-busy. Banks's Bitter and Marstons Pedigree are the ales.

Well away from the town centre, at Bromley Cross, we found ourselves at the renowned **Flag Inn** on Hardmans Lane, off the B6472. Styled a Whitbread Hogshead 'Ale House', the best pub in this





area does not disappoint. Amongst the regular beers, such as Boddingtons and Dent Bitter, there is a wealth of guests, including some from Bolton's Bank Top Brewery (Dark Mild and Golden Brown Bitter). The interior of the Flag Inn has been opened out, with bare wood and stone slab floors, exposed beams and the usual 'Ale House' trimmings.

Finally for this tour, to the opposite end of the borough and the **Railway Hotel** on Egerton Street, Farnworth. The pub is a stone's throw from Moses Gate Station and near

the junction with the A6053. It is a large, imposing building, with a rather basic interior, subdued, soft lights and a giant television screen dominating the substantial lounge. Holts mild and bitter can be enjoyed in the traditional vault.

That completes the round up for Bolton, a metropolitan borough where the dedicated imbiber can find a good variety of ales.

Sun, no sea and Sandgrounder

The sun was out, the sky was blue, so on a glorious May weekend Paul Warbrick caught the train to Southport for the Second Sandgrounder Beer Festival at the Arts Centre...

After signing-in, collecting the essentials (beer tokens, glass, etc) and meeting up with Steve Larkin, I tried the Merlins Magic, a 4.3% full bodied ale from Moor Beer Co in Bridgewater, Somerset. Perusing the beer list in the centre of the programme (which included prices per pint), I spotted a couple of blondes, so I tried Genuine Blonde (4.2%) by Passageway. It was described as a naturally cloudy wheat beer, but on this occasion it was crystal clear, though it still had its fruit/hoppy flavours. The other blonde was from Arran and similar in taste to the Passageway variety, though slightly stronger.

Further down the bar were two interestingly titled ales from SP Sporting Ales (Leominster), Joust Bootiful (4.2%) and Joust Perfic (4.9%), an amber brew with a rich flavour. After a few more beers we left the Sandgrounder Festival, went out into the dazzling sunshine and set off on a short pub crawl of the town.

Beer note. There was a lack of beers available on handpull at the Sandgrounder Festival and maybe this can be rectified next time around. I quite like a well pulled ale.

About Bolton

Trotter returns to his home town...

Having alighted from the bus near Orlando Bridge, I walked over the footbridge and headed down Lever Street to the junction with Fletcher Street and the **Queen Elizabeth**. A rectangular bar serves both the medium-sized lounge and the games room. The two real ales are from Moorhouses - Premier and Broomstick (4.2%), which was selling for £1.20 a pint. The Queen Lizzy provides a three-course Sunday lunch for £3.50, which is served in the compact dining area, complete with tablecloths!

Next stop, after a short walk, was the **Lodge Bank Tavern** on Bridgeman Street, the J W Lees pub. Despite being listed in the 2001 Good Beer Guide as serving seasonal JWL ales, it's just the mild and bitter.

From there, I headed towards the town centre and stopped off at the **Sweet Green Tavern**, where there was a choice of four real ales: Tetleys bitter, Sweet Green Special, Adnams Broadside and Moorhouses Thunderstruck. The pub's name, incidentally, is a reminder of the area in the early nineteenth century - a place of fragrant gardens and picturesque houses.

I sampled the Thunderstruck, a strong, slightly sweet ale, then headed for the **Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate, usually my first port of call whenever drinking in the town. Back in 1993 it was rumoured that the building was to be pulled down, but happily for real ale



lovers the Hen & Chickens has not been 'laid' to rest! It was once called the Higher Hen & Chickens because there was a pub of the same name on the opposite side of Deansgate near Sweeten's Bookshop, which itself used to be a pub called the Kings Arms.

There is always a good selection of guest ales at the Hen & Chickens and on recent visits I have had Cains FA, Bishops Tipple and 'The Usual', one of Hydes' seasonal beers, plus a local beer called Golden Brown.

Paint jobs

Burtonwood's painters and decorators have been out and about. The **Staff of Life** in Swinton has been repainted and given new signage, whilst the **York** in Bolton has been given a full makeover and is selling a guest beer alongside the Burtonwood.

The **Millstone** on Crown Street in Bolton is being transformed into a Holts pub. The work is expected to take until November and when the pub eventually opens it will have a new name - **Pepperally**. (Pepper Alley was the name of an entry off Deansgate which was widened to become Crown Street.) Parts of the cellars of the adjacent church are being incorporated - yes, I know, lovely vault - into the new pub layout and an additional entrance is being provided. The Bass pub next door (part of the Goose chain) is expected to open some four weeks earlier.

BOLTON BURTONWOOD

The York on Newport Street in Bolton has been refurbished in line with the pub's proclaimed status as one of Burtonwood's 'traditional pubs of character and distinction.'



The woodwork is lighter, the wall and ceiling colours are bolder; a chimney breast has been removed to give more circulation space, but there are still four distinct drinking areas (including tables and stools in a non-smoking zone) as well as the pool room. There is a new U-shaped bar and in July the cask ales were Burtonwood bitter and Top Hat and Morrells Varsity, the guest from the monthly Cask Collection.

Wetherspoons for Cow Yeds?

Discussions are ongoing regarding the purchase of the old Co-op store on Market Street, Westhoughton, for a Wetherspoons. Nothing has been agreed so far.

Last year JDW pulled out of developing the former Nibblers night club and snooker hall in Horwich, saying the conversion of the Edwardian building would be too expensive for a town the size of Horwich.

Brit Beer Bash

The Britannia in Farnworth will be hosting its 12th Biannual Beer Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend. The first ales will be available on the Friday evening, 24th August, and a total of about twenty will be served during the festival. There will be food in the form of a barbecue.

Pepperally

Sir - I read that Holts' new pub in Bolton will be called the Pepperally after an old street (*WD July*). Are you sure? Sounds to me like a member of Sergeant Bilko's platoon: Henshaw, Barbella, Dobermann, Fleischman, Ritzic, Pepperally, etc.

If Joeys have run out of steam on their Monkey/Ape theme, Fort Baxter will provide enough new pub names to keep them going for a year or two.

Col Hall

New Bolton pub

An outfit called Luminar Leisure Ltd has been given the go-ahead to build a pub in Nelson Square, next door to the Spinning Mule (Wetherspoons) and next-door-but one to Red on the Square (Thwaites).

Luminar say that the Orange House will be designed like a traditional pub, combining wood surfaces, different styles of seating and some nice fabrics. There will be an emphasis on food. But will there be real ale? We'll see.

What's Doing September 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Letter

Fort Baxter

Sir - There has been a most woeful lapse in the standard of accuracy of your magazine. In his letter about Holts pubs being named after characters in Sergeant Bilko (*WD August*), Col Hall said that Ritzic was a member of Sergeant Bilko's platoon, Not so. Rupert Ritzic was the mess sergeant.

You don't get mistakes like that in *Opening Tripe*.

Nat Hiken

Out in Bolton

Paul Warbrick

On a hazy July evening, a group of North Manchester CAMRA members headed for Bolton and first stop was the **Howcroft Inn** on Pool Street, near the junction of Topp Way and St Georges Road. The

pub has two wood-and-glass panelled snugs separated by the bar, a large concert-type room and a conservatory overlooking the bowling green.



Regular ales are Taylors Landlord, Tetley mild and bitter, an ale from Bank Top Brewery, plus a guest. We tasted the Gold Digger (Bank Top) and the 4.5% Old Dog from Weetwood.

From the Howcroft we made the short trip over to the **Farmers Arms** on Chorley Street, opposite the site of the Bolton Royal Infirmary - now a David Lloyd Sports Centre and a housing development.

The Farmers was a Magees beerhouse for many years and now serves Greenalls bitter and a Bank Top ale. The pub is split-level, there's a beer garden to the side and rock-type bands usually play there on Saturday evenings.

The final pub of the mini-crawl was the **Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate: the ales sampled were Hits the Spot and Triple Hop, seasonal ales from Hydes and Cains.

Holts in the free trade

Clock Face, Old Hall St, Kearsley

House Without a Name, Lea Gate,
Harwood, Bolton

Old Man & Scythe, Churchgate, Bolton
Old Original British Queen, Blackburn Rd,
Bolton

Volunteer, Radcliffe Rd, Darcy Lever

Wingates Labour Club, Chorley Rd,
Westhoughton

What's Doing October 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bolton Beer Festival

The 8th Bolton Beer Festival at the Howcroft Inn will be held between Wednesday 10th and Sunday 14th October. This is the biggest pub beer festival in the country, housed in a marquee on the bowling green at the back of the pub.

Landlord Clive Nightingale began hosting festivals at the Howcroft following the demise of the Great North Western Beer & Cider Festival, the northern equivalent of the GBBF, which was held at Silverwell Street Sports Centre and for two rather unsuccessful years at the Excel Centre.

Over 200 beers will be available this year, with a festival brew from the nearby Bank Top Brewery. Bottles, ciders and soft drinks will also be sold. Once again the event is in aid of Bolton Lads and Girls Club; last year £20,000 was raised.

The Howcroft is on Pool Street, off Vernon Street and St Georges Road, and is 15 minutes from the train station and 10 minutes from the bus station. Opening times and admission prices are:

Weds 7-11pm £3: Thurs 7-11pm £3: Fri 7-12pm £4
Sat 12-6pm £2, 7-12pm £4: Sun 12-4pm free

Branch Meeting – Varsity 18th October 2001

Bilko's

The opening of the Pepper Alley, the new Holts pub in Bolton (ex-Millstone), has been provisionally set for 23rd November.

What's Doing November 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Footloose

Maxims on Bradshawgate in Bolton town centre is being refitted. The former Vaux pub is now in the hands of the Laurel Pub Company, who are turning it into a traditional and authentic 70s style bar called Tiger Feet. The prospect of real ale is doubtful.

The provisional opening date for the **Pepper Alley** in Bolton is 23rd November.

Branch Meeting – Farmers Arms 8th November 2001 (AGM held on January 10th at Old Man & Scythe at 8.30pm)

25th Anniversary Meeting – Howcroft 29th November 2001

What's Doing December 2001 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Manchester Crawl – 8th December 2001

Branch Meeting – ?? 13th December 2001

Bolton News

Dave Crookell

Hallowe'en saw the start of Wetherspoons' Legendary Beer Festival at the **Spinning Mule**. Beers from Brakspears with names taken from Arthurian legend, such as Excalibur bitter (4.4%), were featured, and to commemorate All Hallows Eve there was Wychwood Hobgoblin (5.0%). Both were good value at £1.29 a pint.

The phrase 'legendary beer festival' conjures up an image of hundreds of different real ales, spicy German sausages and maybe a 70s rock anthem tribute band at venues such as the Howcroft or the Formby Hall - events that raise funds for local charities. Wetherspoons' interpretation appears to be two or three real ales that have been conveniently named after legendary figures. Some bright spark conceived the notion that the Spinning Mule should honour legends from the popular music industry, so there were CDs stuck to the back of the bar and cardboard LP covers pinned to columns. An area was designated 'The Cavern' and adorned with black cardboard cutout guitars bearing the names of the Fab Four in the kind of display you might find on a junior school classroom wall (no offence, kids). Had there been background music featuring tracks from Revolver or Sergeant Pepper, then this could have been forgiven, but it was all rather incongruous, especially when you consider JDW's policy on music.

Over at the **Old Man & Scythe**, the ever-changing guest ale policy appears to have been curtailed, but there is still a commendable



regular line-up of Holts bitter, Tetley bitter and Old Speckled Hen, with usually one from Flowers IPA, London Pride or Boddies. When in good condition, the Speckled Hen is, in my humble opinion, one of the finest pints in Bolton. Its smooth, sweet flavour provides a splendid contrast to the acerbic bitterness of Joey Holts. On several occasions recently, however, the Hen has been undrinkable. The reasons given were that it is difficult to keep for any length of time and it does not sell well because of the price, £2.20 a pint. The solution to the problem should be simple enough then...

The revised opening date for Holts' latest pub, the **Pepper Alley** in Bolton (ex-Millstone), is Thursday 29th November.

