

Camra Bolton Branch and its Pubs as seen by the What's Doing Contributors 2004

Bolton Branch Pubs included in the 2004 Good Beer Guide (£12.99) were

Blackrod – Cherry Tree

Bolton – Ainsworth, Bobs Smithy, Dog & Partridge, Hope & Anchor, Howcroft, Kings Head, Old Man & Scythe

Bromley Cross – Flag

Farnworth – Britannia

Horwich – Crown

Stoneclough – Market Street Tavern

Westhoughton – Robert Shaw, Rosehill Tavern

What's Doing January 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

About Bolton

Dave Crookell took a brief midweek, pre-Christmas stroll around Bolton town centre...

We began at **Ye Old Man & Scythe**, where well kept Holts bitter is still a regular at a reasonable £1.50 a pint. There was also Deuchars IPA, London Pride, old style Boddies and 'new improved' Boddies in the cellar, waiting to come on. Occasionally there is also Old Speckled Hen. Incidentally, John, the landlord of 'th'Man,' allows customers to bring food into the pub, and the policy is even mentioned on the menu. You can nip out to one of the many take-aways in the area for a kebab or a pizza and then wash it down with pints of Holts. Or you can order a meal from the Hong Kong Chinese restaurant next door and have it delivered. I have often wondered if there is a reciprocal agreement whereby you can eat in the Hong Kong and have Joey's delivered to your table.

Moving on to the **Hen and Chickens**, there was Pedigree and Broadside, both in good condition but at £2.03 and £2.13 respectively - how do they arrive at these prices? Also available was Davenports Bitter at 3.9%, which we declined. It is probably a well crafted session bitter and I suspect we were put off by the name - Davenports and the Beer at Home service - what was that all about? I can recall the TV ads but not much else. It conjured up images of an era when we had to suffer Brew Ten, Long Life and Party Sevens.

Next we headed for Nelson Square and Wetherspoon's **Spinning Mule**, somewhat disappointing of late but still usually one of the best bets for a choice of real ales. It was even more disappointing on this occasion, as the place was closed for a minor refurbishment.



Time was now pressing and a quick decision had to be made. Either a trek to the **Sweet Green Tavern** for the eponymous Special bitter or take a gamble on the availability of real ale and risk the karaoke in the **Clifton** or the **York**. We hummed and hawed and suspected that closer to hand there would be draught Bass available, but in the dismal **Anchor**. Once upon a time the **Swan Hotel** had cask Boddies and Stones, but it was now closed and firmly shuttered, to be reopened in 2004 as a Walkabout-type fun pub. So the choice was between Holts' **Pepper Alley** for cold bitter and unreliable Patersons, or a return to **th'Man** with the hope of finishing on Old Speckled Hen. It was no contest really. Resisting the temptation to pick up a chicken rogan josh on the way, we went back to the **th'Man**, where to our chagrin we discovered that Old Speckled Hen had been discontinued because of poor sales. But at £2.30 a pint this was hardly surprising.

More about Bolton

Frank Booth also has a look round

I hadn't been in the **Sweet Green Tavern** since licensee Lilian Longmire retired, so I paid a visit recently. The pub itself is still the same, with several rooms and as it was a cold, damp, winter evening, the real fire roaring away.

Tetley bitter is always available and the guest ales listed on the blackboard were Taylors Landlord, Adnams Broadside and Sweet Green Special from Moorhouses, the house beer of several years' standing. I tried the Broadside, at 4.7% the strongest of the regularly brewed Adnams ales.

My only gripe about the Sweet Green Tavern concerns the prices of the guest beers. These have now been nudged up to the £2 a pint mark and the Broadside is £2.20.

The **Alma Inn** is a short walk away, next to the large JJB Sports shop on Bradshawgate. This is now essentially a rockers' pub. I visited one Saturday night and the solitary handpump was serving the 4.8% Bateman XXXB. I called again a week later, and this time Pendle Witch was available. Both beers were in excellent condition. The Alma is worth a visit for the brilliant rock jukebox, if you're an old rocker at heart like me.

The rest of Bradshawgate these days is a ghastly mix of late-licence bars that cater for lager lads and alcopop babes, and sadly there is not a drop of real ale to be found.

And so to the **Pepper Alley** on Crown Street, formerly the Millstone Hotel. When the beer is on form, a decent pint of Holts bitter can be had. The pub's name, incidentally, derives from the address of the original Old Millstone. This stood on the corner of Deansgate and Pepper Alley, which was widened and renamed Crown Street.

Back in 1996 and long before the Pole Dancing Bar opened on nearby Bank Street, the Millstone made headline news in the local paper after introducing topless barmaids to boost trade.

What's Doing February 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Trotter's Independent Trophies

The second annual TIT Awards feature some new categories...

Best CAMRA Beer Festival

1st: Fleetwood Beer Festival
Joint 2nd: Liverpool Beer Festival & Southport Beer Festival

Best Non-CAMRA Beer Festival

Howcroft Beer Festival, Bolton

Best Mild

Cains Mild

Best Bitter

Phoenix Arizona

Best Brewery Trip or Social

Salford Brewery Syndicate (North Manchester branch)

Runner up: Sheffield Crawl (the thank-you social for Accrington Beer Festival staff)

Most overpriced pub

Rain Bar (J W Lees)

Best Pub Refurbishment

Spread Eagle, Kearsley, Bolton

Best Bottled Beer

Uncle Sam's Bitter, Cropton

Best Pub Animal

Fang, at the Crescent, Salford



Hen & Chicks

Sir - With regard to Dave Crookell's comments about the pricing policy at the Hen & Chickens in his About Bolton article (*WD Jan*). It is obvious that Mr Crookell doesn't frequent the Hen & Chickens on a regular basis, otherwise he would have known the prices of the guest beers. The maximum price for any beer above 4.5% is £2.10.

Also, the Davenports Bitter, which he declined, is brewed by Highgate Brewery and is worth sampling.

Angry Albert and the staff of the Hen & Chickens, Bolton

What's Doing March 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Ken's Third

Pints, Paths and Paddles Pub Walk

Radcliffe - Stoneclough - Ringley - Radcliffe

Taking in some barely known rural scenery and evocative reminders of the birth of the Industrial Age, this year's walk also gives pub lovers a chance to contrast the village pubs of Stoneclough and historic Ringley with the urban delights of Radcliffe's varied hosteleries.

It's cheap, too! Excellent Bank Top Flatcap is £1.35 at the Market Street Tavern, Stoneclough, and other pubs are selling well kept ales at £1.40 to £1.70 a pint.

Take the Metro to Radcliffe for a gathering in Radcliffe Metrolink car park at 10.15am or meet at 12.30pm at the Hare & Hounds, Stoneclough, next to Kearsley rail station. Distances are Radcliffe to Stoneclough 3.5 miles (time - four hours, with pub visits). Ringley to Radcliffe 2.5 miles (time - whenever, it's a pub crawl!) Contact Ken Birch on 0161 705 0836



About Bolton

Frank Booth

On the last Saturday in February I teamed up with my old school mate, Martin Ward, for a session around the town centre. First call, as always, was the **Hen & Chickens** on Deansgate. When I'm in this pub, I usually start with Cains Mild, but this time I went straight for the guest beers. I sampled a half of Highgate Saddlers Best Bitter, a 4.3% fruity, pale yellow ale with strong hop flavour, while Martin had a pint of Lady Godiva from the Warwickshire Beer Company. This brewery, based in a former village bakery, has been in operation since 1998. The beers in the Hen & Chicks are always well kept.

We moved on to Nelson Square and the **Spinning Mule**. This is the town's only J D Wetherspoon outlet and it is always busy. The St Austell Tribute had sold out, so we both tried the Steaming Billy Bitter from the brewery of the same name in Leicester. It was an excellent, well-rounded 4.3% beer. The quality of the guest beers here has been much improved in recent months and the pub deserves to be included in future editions of the Good Beer Guide, particularly since there are not many real ale outlets left in the town centre.

It was then straight down Bradshawgate and into the **Pepper Alley** for a pint of good old Joe Holts bitter. The latest seasonal and the mild were also available.

There was just enough time before our bus home for one more ale, so we called into the **Old Man & Scythe** (t'cider 'ouse). I had tried a half of the new version of Boddingtons Bitter earlier in the day, so we



both had Holts bitter. Martin reckoned that the Holts here was preferable to that at the Pepper Alley. The other two handpulled ales were Flowers Original and Deuchars IPA, with Tetleys on smoothflow. The Old Speckled Hen handpull was not in use. A Bank Top ale would be brilliant here, as the Bolton brewery's beers are rarely available in the town centre.

The Man & Scythe has become the first pub in the country with Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) accreditation, joining high profile tourist attractions such as Hampton Court Palace and the Lost Gardens of Heligan. The pub's intriguing history is told on tours of the place, which are proving quite popular.



What's Doing May 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Business opportunity

There are several signs attached to the **Antelope** on Manchester Road, Kearsley, advertising the business for sale. This was the pub where I had my first legal pint of real ale. It sold Greenalls bitter in those days.

What's Doing June 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Nothing about Bolton Branch or its Pubs.

What's Doing July 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Nothing about Bolton Branch or its Pubs.

What's Doing August 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Antelope

In May Paul Warbrick reminisced about his first legal pint of Real Ale (Greenalls Bitter) at the Antelope on Manchester Rd Kearsley. All these years on it still sells Greenalls Bitter and John Smith Cask too.

What's Doing September 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bolton briefly

The Anchor Inn, Union Buildings, Bradshawgate, is the latest victim of the town centre bar wars. Metal shutters adorn the pub which sold Draught Bass.

The Hen & Chickens on Deansgate is now open all day on Sundays, although food is not available.

In Farnworth the Wellington is now serving Real Ale.

What's Doing October 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Bolton Beer Festival

This year's festival at the Howcroft Inn will be held from 13th to 17th October. With over 200 beers available, it will be the largest pub-based festival in the country. Opening times are 7-11pm Wednesday and Thursday, 7-midnight on Friday and noon to 6pm on Saturday.

Once again the festival is in aid of Bolton Lads' and Girls' Club. Volunteer staff are required, especially for set up Monday to Wednesday daytime. For further information contact Claire Philips 01204 540117.

What's Doing November 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Nothing about Bolton Branch or its Pubs.

Branch Meeting and AGM – Sweet Green Tavern November 11th 8.30pm

What's Doing December 2004 <https://greatermanchester.camra.org.uk/branch-magazines/whats-doing/>

Festival success

This year's Bolton Beer Festival at the Howcroft Inn was the biggest and best ever, with record attendances at each session.

Over 200 real ales were available and the 'sold out' signs were put up before the end of the Saturday night session. Around £30,000 was raised for Bolton Lads' and Girls' Club.

Tre corona

The Three Crowns, Leigh Road, Daisy Hill has closed and is to reopen as an Italian restaurant.

Branch Meeting – Dog and Partridge December 9th 8.30pm