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## Regional Row

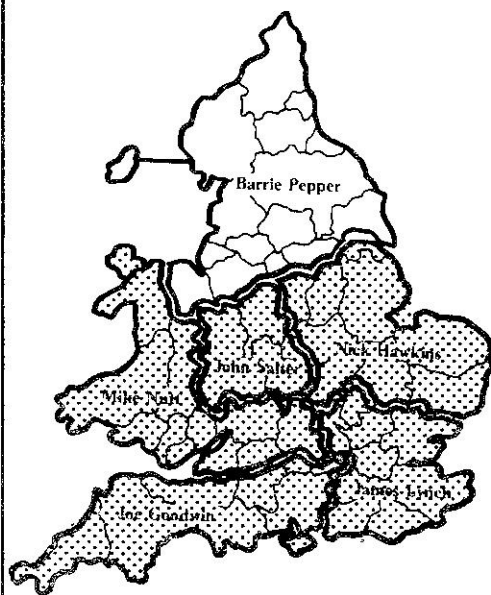
The following is an extract from the May issue of the CAMRA branch bulletin:-

'The branches committee reported on suggested new regional boundaries. It was agreed that there should be a meeting in Scotland to discuss the problems of CAMRA in Scotland. *The Pennine region was extended to the Border with Barrie Pepper as Regional Organiser.*' (Our Italics)

I leave it to the South Manchester Chairman to comment on the feelings of the Committee on this move by the National Executive which has totally disregarded anyone's views but its own.

I was astounded when I read the last Branch Bulletin issued from head office which reported on the reorganisation of Regional Boundaries. Not only was the Northern Region not reduced in size but it was actually *increased* and now spreads to the borders of Scotland. I was one of the representatives of the South Manchester Branch at the Northern Regional Conference in Lancaster earlier this year where one of the main topics of discussion was the overlarge size of the Northern Region and the consequent difficulties of the Regional Organiser and breakdown in communications with local branches. The suggestion was put forward that the region should be split down the Pennines, making North West and North East Regions and considerable discussion took place on this proposal with much support being demonstrated. The feel-

ling of the meeting, which was excellently attended, was then taken and this resulted in overwhelming support for such a move. I myself asked for an assurance from the number of National Executive members present that the strength of feeling on this issue would be taken into account by the N.E. and this assurance was given but still the N.E. decides to increase not decrease the size of the region. It seems incredible to me that an executive should so totally ignore the very plainly



The regional map from the Branch Bulletin and the offending area.

stated wishes of the members. Were the opinions expressed at Lancaster even considered at all? Are the assurances of N.E. members really so meaningless? Are the Executive Committee so much out of touch with reality and the members? Some very thought provoking questions. Obviously the problems facing this area, and discussed so seriously and in such great depth at Lancaster, are not going to improve but quite possibly get worse. In writing this letter I must stress that I am not attacking the present Regional Organiser who faces an impossible task, and he has done sterling work under very difficult circumstances. My grievance is against the executive who seem to act in such an arbitrary manner without considering the opinions of the members as being particularly important.

It just may be, of course, that my criticism is a little harsh. It is just possible that the N.E. did take all aspects of the problem into account (if so they should really have told somebody) but I am quite sure that if a representative of the N.E. wished to put their viewpoint I could prevail upon the Opening Times Editor to reserve a little space in the next issue.

Come on National Executive - who are the important people in this organisation -- the Executive or the members?

Alan Kellett

South Manchester Branch Chairman

I would be grateful for members views on this subject - Ed.

## LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

June 17-20th Nottingham (Organised by the Nottingham Branch).

July 2-3 York (Organised by the York Branch).

July 3rd Dalton-in-Furness (Organised by the Dalton Branch)

July 3rd Glossop (Organised by the High Peak and N.E. Cheshire Branch).

September 16-19 Batley (Organised by the Kirklees Branch)

November 12-13 Blackpool (Organised by the Fylde/Lunesdale/West Lancashire Branches)

It is hoped that the South Manchester Branch will be holding a beer festival in the Autumn but this largely depends on getting the necessary support from the branch members.

# Features

## Kamra-Kazi

"We're going to the Isle of Man Bank Holiday weekend."  
"What for?"  
"Okells and Castletown."  
"Whats there?"  
"They're Breweries stupid!"  
"Seems a long way to go just to sample beer."  
"Pubs are open all day."  
"I'm coming with you."

### silly

So it was that several brave members of the South Manchester KamraKazi club ventured half way across the Irish Sea to sample the delights of two Breweries who serve traditional beer in the vast majority of their pubs.  
"How are we getting there?"  
"Train to Liverpool."  
"How much is it?"  
"Couple of quid."  
"Stuff that" said Mick "I'll go on me bike."

### any excuse

Friday 28th May saw our noble band (no one ever counted how many) assembling in the Grapes in Liverpool. Two pints of Higsons later Mick arrived on his bike along with his mate Mike who had had a couple of pints with Mick in Warrington at dinnertime and thought he might as well down a few more in Liverpool that night. We were met in the Grapes by members of the Merseyside branch who are always more than willing to show people round the pubs of Liverpool (any excuse for a piss-up).

Several pints of Higsons, Walkers and Burtonwoods later saw most of us completely and happily pissed struggling through a Chinese. How we got to the ferry is still a mystery to me and an even bigger mystery to Mike who somehow found himself with a ferry ticket. The more insane members of the party made straight for the bars on the boat and drank steadily right through the night.

Early Saturday saw most of us asleep in a shelter on the sea front on a cold wet miserable morning. Mick cycled off and slept in the TT race pits.

One Manx breakfast, a paddle and a horse tram ride later saw us waiting impatiently for the first pub of our marathon 'The Terminus' to open. Once inside, the terrible thirst of half of us seemed to disappear as we realised that it wasn't yet 11 o'clock, we'd had hardly any sleep after a heavy night boozing in Liverpool, and there were still 12 drinking hours to go. Two or three pints of Okells later ("Okells Yokels - you can't beat 'em") we decided to travel to Laxey (where the wheels come from).

"How are we getting there?"  
"Manx electric tram?"  
"How much is it?"  
"65p."  
"Stuff that" said Mick, "I'll go on me bike."

And he did. We passed him pedalling furiously uphill having set out 10 minutes before us, he only arrived in Laxey about 10 minutes after us. (Knackered) The first pub in Laxey, I think it was called the Mines Tavern was decorated to look like a tram and apart from this it was a good pub. This is where we really started to seriously get to grips with the task of getting Manxed.

### disgusting

Four o'clock saw Gre in the fourth pub in Laxey (I can't remember the name) drinking his eleventh pint trying to watch the England Italy match on telly.

"Do you realise that there are still 6¾ drinking hours left Gre?"  
"Hmm, I'd better slow down."

"Don't be stupid" said Rick pushing another pint in front of Gre's glassy eyes.

One sleepy tram ride (or bike ride) later saw two of us pouring down another pint in the Terminus before running to join nearly everyone else on the Bus to Douglas.

### comatose

Then followed a very hot Madras curry (Gre fell asleep in his). What did we need to wash this down - BEER! Which in Douglas is not at all hard to find. That night must have been one of the most (un)memorable pub crawls of Gre's career as a piss artist. Pub followed pub and by the end of the night Gre and Mick could be seen almost running, almost staggering from pub to pub carrying between them the remnants of a push bike and sleeping bags.

## Brewery News

Joseph Holt announced pre-tax profits of £583,243 compared with £451,265 a year ago. The Chairman pointed to the fact that Holt's prices were well below those of National Brewers as a matter for optimism regarding future sales trends, since the further duty increases this year had surely brought nearer the point of 'nil' return. It was hoped to increase trade by building new houses and improving existing ones - last November the Winston in Churchill Way, Salford was opened, and in December extensive alterations to the Red Lion at Irlam o' th' Heights were completed. This year should see work start on the Church Inn, Newton Heath and finally it is hoped to rebuild the Bradford Road Inn.

Still in the stock market, Whitbread decided to take up its rights under Boddingtons £950,000 share issue. Since they currently hold 3.6M shares it will cost Whitbread £¼M, which it is emphasised should be seen primarily as an

investment (which to drinkers as opposed to financiers means you're OK, their money is doing more with Boddies as it is, than if they tried a takeover; to quote the Manchester Evening News "Indeed, the extensive presence of Whitbread outlets competing against each other in certain areas is something of an embarrassment"). Whitbread's holding is 26.4%.

The initial call for cash from Boddingtons was in any case something of a 'first the good news' situation (Private Eye 'Situation Corner' entry?) since joy at the prospect of 80% proposed capacity increase was tempered, on reading between the lines, by the question of where the additional outlets required were going to come from, thereby reviving thoughts yet again in some quarters of an attempted takeover of Holts.

Meanwhile the Boddington family bandwagon rolls on, and at a recent Stockport LVA dinner at the Belgrade, Stockport, John Boddington addressed an attendance of over 300, including no less than 45 Boddington licensees, plus wives and relatives (the first time I met John Boddington I was impressed by the fact that he knew each one of his 300 or so licensees, and their families, personally).

And now turning to Robinsons, we offer them our congratulations on the recent centenary of the purchase of the first public house by the founder of the company. The pub is the Royal Scot, originally known as the Railway Hotel, at Marple Bridge, and the directors of Robinsons held a celebration there, one hundred years to the day. Sir John Robinson said the two key dates in Robinson's history were 1856 and 1876. In 1856 William Robinson was the licensee of the Unicorn Inn on the site of what is now the brewery and one of his sons, Frederic, helped build up the business for twenty years before buying the Railway. In welcoming the guests Sir John paid tribute to the many long service employees at Robinsons and long tenancies among licensees, in one case, the Davenport Arms, going back three generations. Incidentally, as a final footnote-cum-digression, the present licensee of the Royal Scot is Mr Ian Niven, the Manchester City director, whose previous pub was the Fletchers Arms at Denton, a favourite calling place for City fans before or after the game. (The visitors book had some choice comments: "What, no late ale?" M. Doyle) I wonder what happened to the Malcolm Allison room there? Perhaps it's now the bathroom.

Dave Hall.

## The Column that Jack built The Burton Brewers

### The Early Days of Bass

According to an old brochure entitled 'A Glass of Pale Ale', we learn that the Brewery was first started by a Mr William Bass in 1777 when George III was king and William Pitt, Prime Minister. Before entering the brewing trade Mr Bass had been in the carrying business. This branch of his business was afterwards to become the famous firm of Pickfords and Co.

The first brewery was built on a small plot of land not much bigger than a 'normal' garden but what was considered a normal garden then would be worth a fortune at today's land prices. Later (1888), Bass's brewery extended over 45 acres of freehold (value £250,0 £250,000) and over 100 acres of leasehold property. There were 34 steam engines producing a total of 720 horse power, 2 portable engines of 26 horse power, 10 locomotives and 34 miles of private railway sidings.

It was not widely known at the time that in addition to their fabulous Pale

Ale, Bass produced a lovely creamy stout. It's unpopularity caused the brewery some concern (no publicity men in those days!).

Eventually, Bass became known as Messrs Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton Ltd., and the famous red triangle trade mark became, I believe, British Patent No.1 or the first registered trade mark (correct me if I am wrong).

Before I end this series of notes on Burton, it is worth noting that in 1885 at a re-union between the French, Belgian and Burton Brewers, Sir Arthur Bass made some remarks concerning Burton Beer which would do no harm for his present day Brewing compatriots to be reminded of. The remarks were to the effect - 'that the excellence of Burton Ale was simply due to the choice quality of the Malt and Hops they used, combined with of course, the finest supply of natural water in the world.'

It is gratifying (writes one person after hearing these remarks by Sir Arthur) that in these days of Hop and Malt substitutes and other abominations, to know that the Princes of the trade still adhere to the genuine Malt and Hops in the concoction of their world renowned drink. Was this person the first ever member or founder of CAMRA? It certainly sounds as if he was!

Jack Hopwood.

## BRANCH NEWS

July 15th - Branch meeting at 8.15pm in the Gateway Hotel, Didsbury.

August 7th - Day trip to Lancaster and Morecambe. Contact Graham Lister for further details on 225 8916.

## New Pub for Altrincham

Further to the information received from the Sale Guardian we have been in touch with Mr Cunningham of Wilsons, on the subject of the new pub. He stated that building on the pub had not yet commenced but this would soon be underway and was expected to last at least 12 months. On completion the pub would be maintained in the Wilsons image and would be, as far as he knew, a managed house. It was not yet decided how the beer would be dispensed and this would be decided at a later date. He asked us to get in touch with him again in the Autumn when he would be able to furnish us with further details.

## PUBLICITY

Turvilles Hotel, Bass Charrington (Chester Road, next to Bass N.W. Technical Services Dept.) has withdrawn the cask Bass due to poor sales.

The Midway a free house in Stockport now sells the following beers all by traditional methods; Wilsons (Mild & Bitter), Pollards, Boddingtons Bitter and now Bass and Scotch Bitter.

Guinness have recently begun bottling a new beer at their Park Royal Brewery. The beer, known as 'Triple Stout' has an O.G. of 1073 and is now available at the following 3 outlets in the Manchester area:

OLD BOARS HEAD Middleton (a Free House with possibly no other real ale apart from the bottled Guinness).

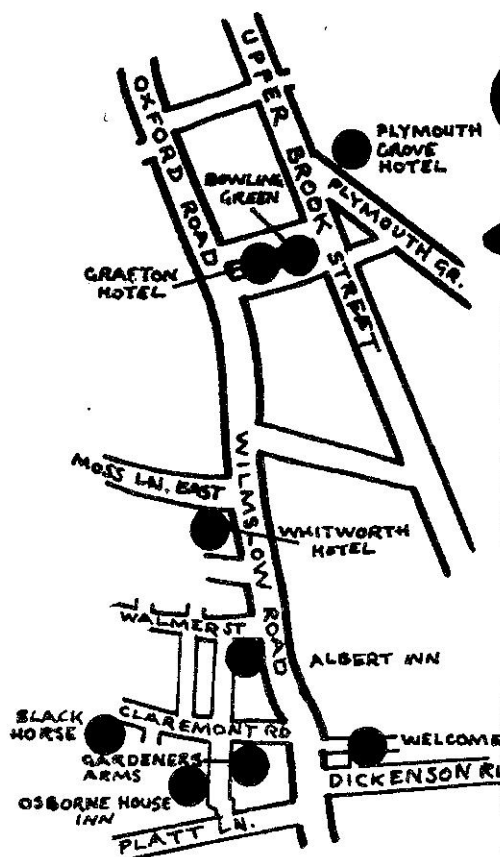
LEACH'S WINE STORE (?) Warley Road, Ramsbottom.

CRESTA COURT HOTEL, Church Street, Altrincham (near Orange Tree).

At present the beer is only being test marketed in these outlets and is imported direct from the Dublin Brewery by J Bateson & Co Ltd., Preston.



# STAGGER

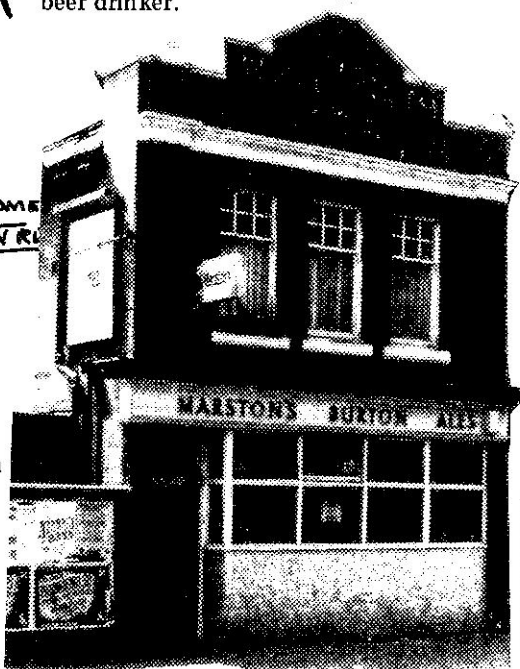


## 1. Chorlton-on-Medlock and Rushholme.

A surprisingly good choice of beer displays itself on the immediate southern outskirts of Manchester. In fact there are 12-15 brews available from 5-6 breweries. Pub No 1 is the Plymouth Grove Hotel, (Boddingtons) which stands in a prominent position almost at the junction of Plymouth Grove with Upper Brook Street. It is a splendid example of Victorian architecture and is complete with its own clock tower. Inside it has been recently modernised and serves Boddingtons bitter and mild from electric pumps. The clientele is strongly Irish and some evenings every week a ceilidh band turn up to increase the lively nature of the pub.

After leaving here cross over Upper Brook Street and turn right into Grafton Street, where on the left first will be seen the Bowling Green if you fancy a pint of Greenalls but there's more of this later on so continue to the Grafton Hotel, one of the few Holt's houses on the south side of the city. The Holts mild and bitter served from handpumps here are invariably superb. The lounge is small and cosy in this reasonably quiet pub. But now back to noisier pubs and on continuing to the end of Grafton Street turn left down Oxford Road as far as Moss Lane East and there at the corner of Whitworth

Park will be seen the Whitworth Hotel, a Marstons house. Pedigree, Burton bitter and mild are all dispensed from handpumps in this GBG listed pub. The atmosphere can get boisterous here and it is not uncommon to see several figures hanging around in wait at about 5.30. An absolute must for the beer drinker.



If you had a few in the Whitworth Hotel you should really be ready to take on Rushholme's offerings. Carry on along Wilmslow Road into Rushholme as far as Walmer Street which is on a side street to the right. As you turn into Walmer Street you will see on your left at the edge of a huge demolished area the Albert Inn, a Hydes house. It sells Hydes bitter and mild from handpumps. It is largely patronised by Irish people (note the two Guinness taps on the splendid long bar in the vault). If you've only had a pint in each up to now you should still be feeling in a drinking mood as you leave the Albert Inn turning left, keeping left along the fringe of the demolition area along Victory Street until Claremont Road is reached, turn right here and a little way along on the left you will find the Black Horse—a Wilsons house serving hand pumped bitter and mild. If you feel like a drink-

ing machine you might walk almost the whole length of Claremont Road before you come to another Holts house, the Claremont Hotel to sample some more really excellent Holts draught bitter and mild.

However, the normal crawler will leave the Black Horse and continue along Victory Street to the Gardeners Arms, another jovial Irish pub. Hydes' beers are available on the other side of the same street about 50 yards further on in the Osborne House Inn. This is a popular pub packed to the doors when the Blues are at home. It is one of the minority of Hydes houses still using handpumps. Bitter and mild are sold as well as strong ale on the bar in winter.



Phew! Just one more to go. Navigate yourselves back onto Wilmslow Road and reach the junction with Dickenson Road. About 50 yards along Dickenson Road on your left, a bit isolated now, in the wake of the demolition men stands the Welcome Inn. It too, could have been flattened for redevelopment, but a successful petition saved it. It serves Greenall Whitley bitter and mild from electric pumps and just as the GBG 76 says 'A classic Edwardian pub composed of separate rooms'.

Next month- Altrincham crawl.

# Odes to Ale Competition

Following the launch of the Whitbread competition in last months Opening Times I have received an overwhelming volume of entries (two) and here they are:

There was a young bighead called  
Whitbread,  
Who sold all his bitter as keg,  
If he had his way, there'd be no real ale  
today,  
And everyone'd drink lager instead.  
OR  
There was a young bighead called  
Whitbread,  
Who tried to serve beer from a pressure  
keg,  
He said there's no demand for real ale  
And its horrible and stale  
But his tasted just like lemonade.

The competition remains open in the expectation of another deluge of entries.

## GBG

### NATIONAL GOOD BEER GUIDE

The treasurer now has a huge supply of 1976 Good Beer Guides, available from him at £1.20 for members or £1.40 for non members, p&p included. If you require a guide, send a cheque or postal order for the correct amount and made payable to CAMRA (South Manchester) to R W Greenhalgh,  
9, Brogden Grove,  
Sale, Cheshire, M33 1UF

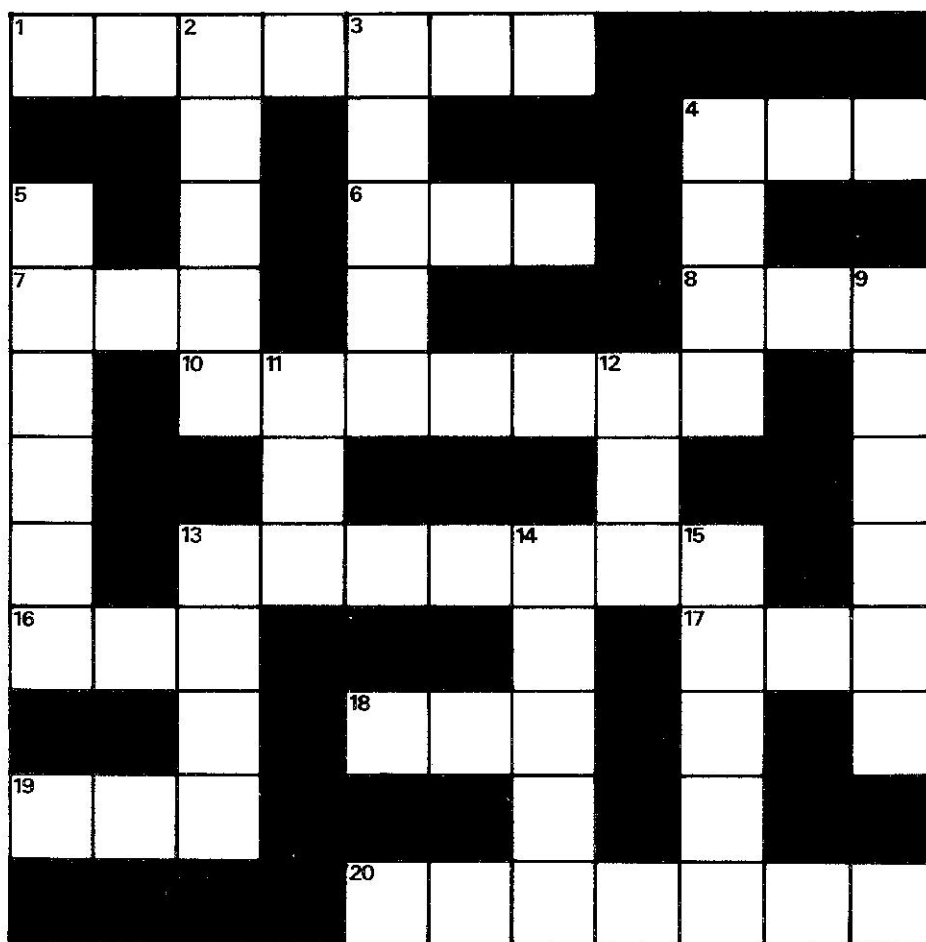
## War Cry

If you want the Opening Times to continue on the basis that it has been for the last 3 months it is vital that you do something about it. The situation at present is that if we are to continue printing and publishing a newsletter of this high standard we are simply going to have to sell more copies than we are doing at the moment. If 3 or 4 of us are managing to sell 250 copies (as well as producing the thing) just think of the amount 60 people could sell without too much effort.

If you wish to become a member of CAMRA all you have to do is send a £2 cheque or Postal Order, payable to CAMRA and post it to:

# TIMES Crossword

By Steve Pearson, our man in the Library with froth in his beard.



### Across

- 1) Oh for the local in which to find the inebriant. (7)
- 4) Without this ingredient, bitter wouldn't be (3)
- 6) Tax on a container? (3)
- 7) In no way can we see the hostelry. (3)
- 8) Puts a shine on 10 across. (3)
- 10) Nat kept in the dark about his drinking vessel. (7)
- 13) Disturbance, when sugar meets yeast (7)
- 16) A pint for each person (3)
- 17 (and 11 Down) The aged beer is good enough for punch. (3,3)
- 18) Turnover from waiting on? (3)
- 19) The sum of shots on the golf course for those who stop before the nineteenth hole? (3,5)

20) The quality needed when the beer at the local is off. (7)

### Down

- 2) Even hot and cold upstairs makes the termite sing. (5)
- 3) Have not had a drop, so I can see the port! (5)
- 4) This stuff has plenty of proof. (4)
- 5) Oral evidence of a good night out. (6)
- 9) Ban dry pubs - that's the spirit. (6)
- 11) See 17 across.
- 12) Drunk and hurry's inside (3)
- 13) Untied house. (4)
- 14) All that's left when the ale has gone. (5)
- 15) See 19 across.

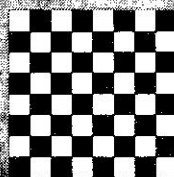
The Membership Secretary,  
Campaign for Real Ale,  
34, Alma Road,  
St. Albans, Herts. AL13BW.

You will then receive a membership card and a monthly copy of the campaign's newspaper 'What's Brewing'

# WILSONS



## GREAT NORTHERN BITTER



With 160 years of great Northern brewing behind it.