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Sydney's deadliest pub crawl - SMH Article October 4, 2005

As "Abo" Henry's autobiography confirms, he and the notorious Neddy Smith were quite a duo, in bars and on the mean streets, writes Stephen Gibbs.

Neddy Smith liked his beer in middies - at least 30 of them a day. When he moved from VB onto Jack Daniels it could make for a quite a lively evening if Abo Henry had shifted up to rum.

A doctor told Smith he was alcoholic after he had stabbed a man dead on the drink. Smith could not believe it - to his mind, Henry was far worse. "Abo's the worst drunk in the world, barring no one," he has said.

Sydney's so-called gang wars of the mid-1980s were in some ways as much about Smith and Henry's drinking as they ever were about drugs. Their best asset was the green light; their greatest liability: amber fluid. From the Lord Nelson in The Rocks to Alexandria's Iron Duke, Smith and Henry and their cohorts laid out the most dangerous pub crawl Sydney has ever known.

Henry, who first shared a beer with Smith in 1977 at the Governor Burke at Camperdown, last month launched his memoir *ABO: A Treacherous Life - The Graham Henry Story (Mayhem in the Green Light Days with Neddy Smith and Christopher Dale Flannery)* at the Unity Hall Hotel in Balmain.

As with Smith's autobiography *Neddy*, published in 1993, it's also one long drinking tale. In the television drama *Blue Murder* some of the most colourful scenes take place in pubs. As none of the hotels is named, here's a guide to some Roger Rogerson baring his arse from a bar table was at the Covent Garden in Chinatown, as was the fight between Henry and Smith, won by Smith. The Anzac Day pub brawl, with Warren Lanfranchi riding his motorbike around the bar, was at the Broadway Hotel.

There is no physical evidence of Smith, Henry, Rogerson and Chris Flannery lighting up a pub cellar with automatic rifle fire - but if that did happen it was at the Iron Duke. Smith bit a chunk out of a drinker's face at the White Horse in Surry Hills.

As most of Smith and Henry's income was from distributing heroin that seaman Danny Chubb brought in off the wharves, they were regulars at his local - the Captain Cook at Millers Point. They had been drinking with him there only minutes before Chubb was shot dead around the corner, outside his mother's home one morning in November 1984.

Even closer to the Captain Cook than Mrs Chubb's home is the Lord Nelson - scene of countless massive Smith-Henry drinks, and one act of stupid gunplay by a hanger-on called Harvey Jones. The would-be gangster once leapt the bar at the Lord Nelson and held a cocked revolver to a barman's head, then let a few rounds go into the room.

Management's response was to require Smith and his companions from that day forth to leave their guns visible on the bar.

Sometimes you don't want to go where everybody knows your name. And in the mid-1980s Smith's team was at loggerheads with a crew run by Barry McCann, who owned the Lansdowne on Broadway. Bad blood between the two grew worse the night Smith knocked out McCann's eldest son inside the hotel.

Once outside, Smith's companion lined up five or six of McCann's bouncers at gunpoint against a wall, while Smith took a baseball bat from his car and flogged each one till he fell.

A fortnight later, Smith was leaving the Quarryman's at Pymont when one of three men in a parked car opened up with a shotgun on him, Jimmy Traynor and Tex Moran. Traynor was seriously wounded by two blasts.

Henry backed up for this outrage by shooting McCann gang member Terry Ball in the head. Ball survived and in April 1986 ran down Smith outside the Iron Duke.

Much of Smith and Henry's heroin operation was run from the Star Hotel in Alexandria, a pub no more. Every Saturday, Smith and Henry met their 10 full-time runners at the Star and fronted each a pound or half a pound of heroin. The Star was the last licensed premises on which Harvey Jones was seen. His body was found buried at Botany in 1995, off Foreshore Road, 12 years after he disappeared. Smith is serving life for taking Jones from the hotel and putting two slugs into his chest.

It was from the Cauliflower in Waterloo that heroin dealer Barry Croft was summoned by telephone in August 1987, intercepted on City Road near the Lansdowne and shot dead in his car. The last known sighting of South Australian drug dealer Bruce Sandery was at the Zetland Hotel in April 1988. His body was found six months later in sand dunes 500 metres from where Jones would one day be found.

Smith and Henry survived the decade but their criminal careers did not. Henry's ended first. On December 15, 1988, he started drinking over lunch and boxed on at the Epping instead of going home. He was then off to the Five Dock to get properly on the drink. After a trip to Surry Hills for more Christmas drinks, he found police prosecutor Mal Spence in the Lord Wolseley in Ultimo. Accusing Spence of telling other crooks he was a dog, Henry drove a knife into his stomach, then sank it into his neck. Spence survived the frenzy but Henry got six years.

One week later, on December 22, Smith was arrested outside Botany Council premises preparing to hit its Christmas payroll drop. His bail was revoked on a murder charge from October 30 the previous year.

Smith's itinerary on that day included, in order, the Lord Wolseley, Covent Garden, Chinese lunch, Covent Garden and the Australian Youth hotel in Glebe. On his way to the Coogee Sports Club he fought with another motorist and in Sydney's first well-documented road rage, stabbed tow-truck driver Ronald Flavell to death.