

# Opening Times



STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

No. 31

NOVEMBER 1986

## STUFF THIS GREAT BASS!

By Andy Cooper.

Stockport and South Manchester are rightly renowned for the wide availability & choice of traditional beers. However, one Brewery provides a notable exception to this otherwise excellent record, and surprisingly that is the Brewery which has for years advertised its commitment to traditional beer - Stand up and be counted, BASS!

Nearly 90% of Stockports' pubs & over 60% of those in South Manchester sell traditional beer the figure for Bass is a pathetic 25%. Only 1 in 4 Bass licensees are able to sell the beer which is demanded in the vast majority of pubs belonging to other breweries in the area.

So what certainty do you as a drinker have when venturing across the portals of a Bass pub that you will be getting the real thing? To put it simply, very little. In itself this would not create a problem were it not for the fact that even where traditional beer is sold, you are frequently faced by a plastic box on the bar giving no indication of the fact.

The traditional response of any brewery to Camra if we enquire why their pubs are not selling traditional beer is that there is no demand. It seems strange that in an area such as ours where decent beer is so readily available this is likely. However you, as a consumer, have to vote with the brewery. When next in your Bass local pub, vote with your feet. The pub that sells real ale. If not, vote with your feet. The pub down the road will sell traditional beer. If you are unfortunate enough to live in a pub house (e.g. Rylance Park, where Bass predominate.)

So, give some thought to the consumer for who should have some traditional beer in more of our pubs. The emphasis on Carling Black Label, Hemeling

is not. (e.g. The Old Rectory, Stockport; The Church, Clayton Lane; the Prince of Wales, Rylance St., Beswick; the Rylance Shop, Rylance St., Beswick; the Rylance Hotel, Heaton Chapel and Rylance Park, Stockport).

any more we would love to know!

## IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

By John Clarke

Almost one in three of our areas' pubs are breaking the law by not displaying their prices. The shock result of a survey carried out by CAMRA members recently has been greeted with dismay by trading standards officers and publicans alike.

Pubs are obliged to display prices under the Price Marking (Food & Drink on Premises) Order 1979, and it means \*the price of drinks has to be displayed \*any service charge must be stated \*where a drink is sold by reference to a quantity, eg a pint. then the price must refer to the quantity involved.

Altogether 123 pubs were checked & 37 (about 30%) did not show prices. Stockport pubs came off slightly better than their Manchester counterparts with 28.8% (17 out of 59) disregarding the law compared to Manchester's 31.25% (20 out of 64). These figures are in line with surveys carried out in other parts of the Country & also the Manchester City Centre survey conducted last year.

Why almost 1/3 of licensees should choose to disregard this aspect of the law is something of a mystery and also very disturbing, certainly the Trading Standards Departments in both Stockport and Manchester expressed their concern when presented with the figures and in fact the Stockport Dept. is to prepare some guidance notes on the Order for issue to Landlords and the LVA.

(Cont. on Page 2)

## Boars Head, Market Place, Stockport.

Open 6 Days: Closed Sundays: Good Food Daily: Live Music 6 Nights.

Sam Smiths Real Ale: Tel: 480 3978

PRICES SURVEY - Cont from page 1.

Concern is also shared by Stockport LVA President, Tom Jones, who, while expressing his doubts about the results given the size of the sample, told us that he was 'surprised at the numbers given' and went on to assure us that he will 'make it clear to our members that by law they should show their prices.

Summing up the results, the Chairman of Stockport & South Manchester Camra, Rhys Jones, told "Opening Times" 'despite comments in the local press recently questioning the role of CAMRA these figures show more than ever the need for an active consumer organisation working on behalf of pub goers.'

It is intended to check out the same pubs next year and we hope that by then some improvement will have been made, but until then we will continue to Campaign for choice, quality and fair play.



Cartoon by kind courtesy of Bill Tidy.

HEARD IN A HOLTS PUB: "They ought to have a happy hour." - Are some people never satisfied!!

PACK 'EM IN!

Stockport readers will recall the tragic fire at Chesters Big Lamp on Hillgate. Naturally the pub closed after this but we are now pleased to report that it has reopened following a complete refurbishment.

The former 'House of Horrors' type décor, followed by Whitbread a few years ago has been abandoned in favour of a more traditional layout. The bar has been moved to the centre of the pub enabling the corner door to be used once again. There is comfortable seating and much brasswork around the bar which together with the restrained decor make the Big Lamp, now reverted back to its original name, the Pack Horse, a better pub than its been for years. Good news on the beer front too, with handpumped Chesters mild and bitter being joined by Cask Trophy. It's good to see as well that none of the beers are having to compete with their keg equivalent as is often the case in Whitbread-Chesters houses.

The only regret is that what is now such a fine pub had to be born out of a tragedy. It deserves to succeed and we wish it well.

Thank goodness, it's back.

Now you can try a taste of J.B.A. Premium bitter - the beer that became a legend in its own time.

Originally brewed at the Almond family brewery in Wigan, this superb full-bodied beer captures the full flavour of a bygone era.

J.B.A. Premium bitter is now being brewed again in the time-honoured tradition, allowing you to enjoy a taste of the past again.



Welcome home.



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Brewed by Burtonwood Brewery

**THE****BRIDGEWATER**CHESTERGATE, STOCKPORT.FREE HOUSE.TETLEY BITTER -JENNINGS BITTER.PUB GRUB & BAR SNACKS.

REAL ALE IN CENTRAL & SOUTH MANCHESTER -  
Update no. 8.

Three new outlets to report this month, all of them reopening after a period of closure. In the City the Burton Arms, Swan St., sells handpumped Bass mild, Stones & Draught Bass; in Beswick the Queen Victoria (formerly the Victoria) on Grey Mare Lane sells handpumped Chesters Bitter; and in Clayton the Church Clayton Lane sells handpumped Bass Light & Stones.

A real ale loss, of a sort, is the Stage Door bar attached to the Palace Theatre. OK, I know traditional Stones was only available every other Shrove Tuesday, but the loss of the solitary handpump is a reminder of the dismal record of Manchester's places of culture and entertainment when it comes to real ale. It need not be so - witness the Victoria Theatre in Stoke, which in the unpromising setting of a converted cinema, sold a range of cask beers in good condition and Neuadd Dewi Sant in Cardiff, a purpose built concert-cum-conference centre that won a deserved place in the 1984 Good Beer Guide.

Back to Manchester - Ind Coope Burton ale has been introduced into 4 pubs in the City Centre - the Ancoats, Britons Protection. Coach & Horses and the Wheatsheaf. The Ancoats has also gained Boddingtons Bitter & lost Youngers Scotch Bitter. The Crown & Kettle has gained Wilsons Mild & the dispense for Tetley Bitter in the Old White Bear is now handpump. The Church in Ardwick now has Websters Choice, the Mauldeth, Burnage, has lost Websters Bitter but the Grove, Openshaw, has gained Websters Bitter, lost cask mild & switched its Wilsons Bitter to handpump. Finally the Concert Inn, Openshaw does not sell mild, but the Whitworth Rusholme has gained Marstons Mercian Mild.

**PUB OF THE MONTH**

The November Pub of the Month Award has been won by the Swan With Two Necks, Princes Street, Stockport.

The pub won the award some five years ago when under the tenancy of Irene & Ernie Smith. Irene retired from the pub in July last year and the tenancy was taken over by her daughter and her husband, Susan & Kevin Conley.

A snug and cosy pub it is rightly described as a haven in the shopping precinct and boasts a small vault and comfortable lounge complete with a real log fire.

Excellent value lunchtime food is available, either in the pub itself or the dining room at the rear and children are made welcome and a beer garden is available in the summer (if we ever get one!)

The award is well deserved and Sue & Kevin will give all who attend the presentation night on Thursday, November 27th., a very warm welcome. It's going to be a good do - be there!

**CASTLED**

By the time you read this the Castlewood, Bridge Street Brow, will be officially reopened after extensive refurbishment to the main, downstairs, room.

The bar has been moved to its former place in the rear of the room, the entrance is now central, with the fine original windows exposed and the ceiling has been lowered. Redecoration throughout has made this fine pub even more welcoming and a new range of food has complemented the alterations. The upstairs lounge and the pool room remain unaltered.

**MANCHESTER  
ARMS**

WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH, STOCKPORT.

**ROBINSONS' BEST ALES!****PUB FOOD & SNACKS MON-SAT.****STOCKPORTS' BEST JUKE-BOX!**

# STAGGER

-THE REDDISH ROUTE MARCH - By Jim Flynn.

Bravely we set out to visit every pub in Reddish from Reddish Lane in the North to the top of Lancashire Hill in the South - a 3½ mile trek in all.

We started at the newly renovated Pomona (in Gorton, but who cares!) An excellent starting point it was - previously an indifferent, drab keg establishment Wilsons (or is it Websters?) have made a beautiful job of the inside of the pub with wood panelling tastefully abounding. Wilsons Bitter and Websters Bitter & Green Label were all on handpump but we all stuck to the former and whilst we were unanimous concerning the decor there was a divergence of views concerning the beer which was thought to vary between average & excellent.

Down Gorton Road into Reddish proper & past the keg Bass Bulls Head (2) the next stop is Whitbreads' Railway (3) which is still seedily sporting their old house style with mirrors on the pillars, fake house plants & red paint. One can only look forward to its rumoured refurbishment. The Chesters Bitter was marked between average & good & the mild as good.

Marshalling ourselves we progressed to the Fir Tree (4), a Tetley House which has recently been expensively reconstructed internally. The vault has been done pleasantly if unoriginally but the latter adverb could not be used to describe the lounge which sports a library and a conservatory. One of our number described the decor as a cross between a cocktail bar and a fast food eatery although the more charitable would say it was tastefully over the top. While no one really disliked the pub the Tetley Mild was thought slightly below average & the bitter only average.

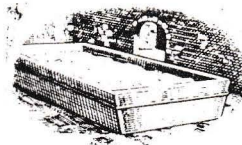
We now deviated off the main road down Longford Road West to check on the Reddish Vale (5), a large estate pub which was found to be still Bass, still keg & still awful. Backtracking we walked down Harrogate Road & Houldsworth Road and came out on Broadstone Road opposite the Union. We first went into the Grey Horse (6) which had been nicely redecorated since most of us had been there and was now selling Boddingtons Mild as well as the bitter. Both beers were considered as above average.

Next door now to the Union (7) which was found to be in mid refurbishment & any comment must be left to a future issue of 'Opening Times'.

The Robinsons Best Bitter & Mild were both considered between average & good. We then walked up Broadstone Road to the Houldsworth Arms (8) in the centre of Reddish. This Whitbread pub has also been refurbished in the past twelve months in the pleasant, but bland, style that the brewery is now adopting to appeal to the 'over-age drinker'. Some would uncharitably say this matches their beers but we found the Chesters Bitter to be about average & the mild good.

Now a chance for all to sober up a little as there was a ¾ mile walk to the next real ale pub, the Carousel. So down Reddish Road we went within 50 yards of Tetleys' keg pub, the Thatched Tavern (9). The Carousel (10) is a conventional open-planned Wilsons house selling Wilsons Bitter, Mild & Websters Choice. The beer was about as interesting as the pub with both Bitter and mild thought only average or just above.

There being no further pubs on Reddish Road our intrepid group set out down Birkdale Road & through the Whitehill Industrial Estate to the Ash (11) on Manchester Road. This 200 year old Wilsons pub has had a plastic refurbishment and now boasts a cocktail lounge. The architects of this display of bad taste have even managed to remove the pub's one unique feature, a hexagonal stand for the beer pumps which used to be in the middle of the bar.

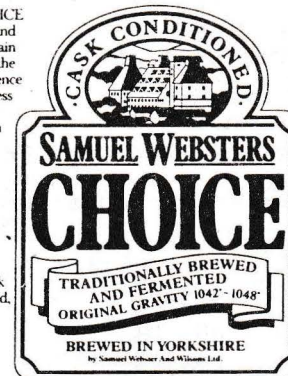


Samuel Websters CHOICE is traditionally brewed and fermented at The Fountain Head Brewery, Halifax, the home of brewing excellence since 1838, using a process that results in a smooth creamy beer boasting an Original Gravity of 1042° - 1048°.

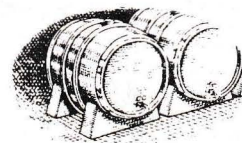


Using the finest blend of carefully selected malt, hops and yeast strain unique to Websters, the traditional brewing process and natural spring water result in a wholesome full bodied flavour with all the characteristics you would expect from a top quality traditional bitter.

Available only as a Cask Conditioned, handpulled, traditional ale, Samuel Websters CHOICE is considerably stronger with a higher gravity than normal bitters, which is why it costs a little more.



As you would expect from a brewery with traditions and experience spanning a century and a half, our attention to detail doesn't stop there. Samuel Websters CHOICE is available only in selected and approved outlets, whose high standards of Innkeeping match our own.



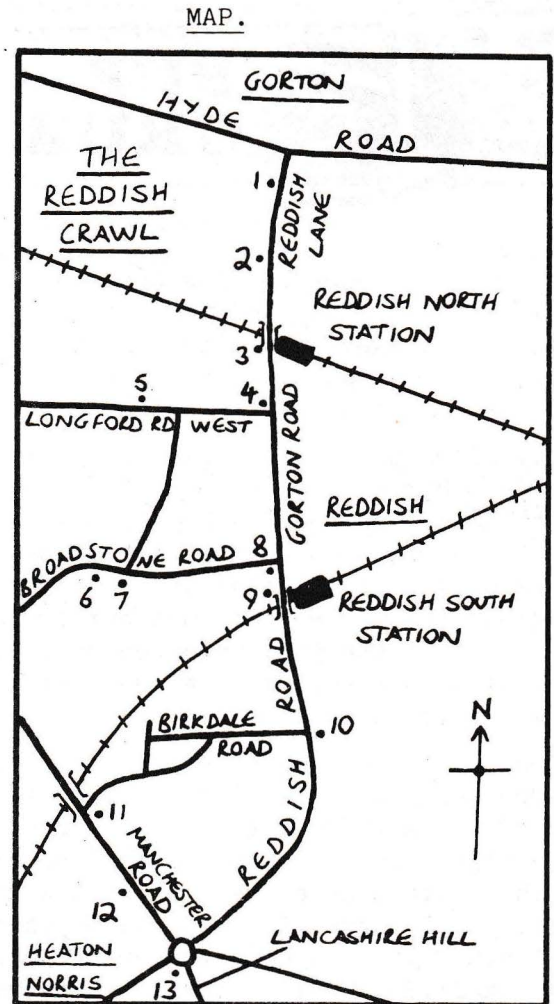
## MAKE IT YOURS

Again the beer were Wilsons Bitter & Mild and Websters Choice. The Bitter was mareded as just average and the Choice, which most of us drank, as above average overall.

Next stop down Manchester Road is Boddingtons Three Crowns (12) which is akin to a down market social club. We quickly downed our mild (marking it between poor & average) & bitter (average) and left before the evenings entertainment, the Spurs, made their appearance.

Our final port of call was the Navigation (13), which was completely reconstructed a few years ago. The decor is pleasant and tasteful in both the lounge and vault and the Wilsons Bitter was considered above average (the mild being off). Alex Stepney, the landlord, was not available, but he's left his picture on every wall of the pub!

This is certainly not a stagger for the faint hearted - but it is one of the best opportunities to see the varying efforts of the brewers are making in renovating their pubs, whilst still being able to drink reasonable, if unexpectional, beer throughout.



Hanson's Black Country Bitter is a 1035° - 1036° lighter bitter offering the full flavour, clarity and clinging head of a distinctly Banks's beer. The revival of the ancient brewing skill of 'late copper-hopping' has created a Bitter of superb, individual character.

- Available at the following Banks's & Hanson's pubs:
- The Falcon, Chorlton-on-Medlock
  - The Gorton Arms, West Gorton
  - The Gransmoor, Openshaw
  - The Station at Cheadle, Cheadle
  - The Longsight, Belle Vue
  - Osborne House, Collyhurst
  - Mitchell Arms, Beswick
  - The Milestone, Burnage

## SWAN UPPING

As mentioned briefly last month Wilsons Swan, Shaw Heath, Stockport, has reopened and has turned out to be a major improvement. The interior has been completely rearranged with the bar moved to the centre of the pub. There are two lounge areas, one on the left where at lunchtimes the accent is on food, and on the right a raised area with comfortable seating at the back and a vault type area at thr front. This is dominated by a large free-standing light fitting which does look a little out of place. There is some rather odd seating in this part too which appears to have been designed to, literally, keep you on the edge of your seat!

The general decor however is pleasant and comfortable & it's particularly good that Wilsons have restored the etched windows broken by football hooligans last year.

The main gain is on the beer side. Cask beers from Wilsons & Websters are available, whereas previously the pub sold only keg. This now means that all pubs in the Edgeley & Shaw Heath area now sell real ale.





By John Clarke.

This month we're back in Stockport and a pub which is probably not familiar with too many people. Tucked away on Wellington St., Little Jack Horners is popular with office staff but is off the main town centre drinking circuit.

Recently given an external revamp by Wilsons, Little Jack Horners looks most welcoming with its newly exposed brickwork & external lamps. Inside its small and cosy and built on two levels. The upper level is where the food is sold and the tables laid out but you can eat anywhere in the pub. Only one cask beer is available in the form of Wilsons Bitter at 75p & was on good form on my visit.

The food is all home-made and the menu is correspondingly small - often a sign of quality food. All main dishes come with rice/ chips & vegetables as appropriate & on my visit the choice was between steak & kidney pie (£1.60), lasagne (£1.55), chili, chicken curry (both £1.50). ¼ beef burger or jumbo sausage at £1.20. Smaller portions are available for 20p less.

I chose chicken curry and would rate this as one of the best I've had. Generous helpings of rice & chips together with a huge portion of curry meant I struggled to finish. The curry, thick and tasty, was full of meat and had that home-made touch. The chili looked very appetising too, being obviously meaty - not the stew of kidney beans with the odd piece of meat which is common nowadays.

Snacks in the form of sandwiches and toasties are available. All sandwiches are 55p & you can choose from ham, cheese or corned beef & all come with salad - an extra 40p will get you chips as well. A steak sandwich will cost 70p, the same as the toastie & other toasties are ham, cheese (55p) or ham & cheese (60p).

If you've room for more 30p will bring you a huge bowl of ice cream, on my visit almost everyone was trying this so good did it look. Coffee is also available at 30p.

So another rave review but this place is difficult to fault - if they charged half as much again it would still be good value - check it out!



## BEER DRINKERS BIBLE

At the end of last month CAMRA published the fourteenth edition of the Good Beer Guide. Over 5,000 of the best pubs in the country are listed from Thurso in the North of Scotland to Jersey in the Channel Islands together with full information regarding every British Brewery and the beers they produce.

The Guide is still the best on the market as it is the only one really produced for the beer drinker and their families. As well as detailing the beers provided in the pubs the Guide informs the reader whether they can obtain a meal, stay overnight, take their children into the pub or sit outside and consume their pints. The new edition also contains a number of articles including one on the topic of the '80s - additives in beer.

So, how does this edition compare with previous years? The cover is more eye-catching and the descriptions in the brewery sections (especially the one on the 'Big Seven') are more detailed. The Guide is punctuated by excellent, hard-hitting cartoons and it is pleasing to note the absence of sexist cartoons that have lowered the tone of previous editions.

Criticisms? Well the editors' rather nasty sense of humour has not totally deserted him for in the section 'How to use the Guide' we are treated to a description of a pub called the Maltdown with the details being a pun on the recent Chernobyl disaster. The major criticism relates to the carelessness of the editing with silly mistakes creeping in like the GraDes in Hazel Grove.

However the Guide is indispensable to the beer drinker for a day out, a night on the town or a holiday with the family - so buy a copy for yourself and how about one for a Christmas present

Copies are available from Jim Flynn, 66, Downham Rd., Heaton Chapel at £4.95 inc P&P. Cheques payable to CAMRA, Stockport & South Manchester.

## Old Ship Inn, Styal.

IN THE HEART OF THE NATIONAL TRUST PARK.

HANDPUMPED MARSTONS PEDIGREE -

WILSONS MILD & BITTER -

WEBSTERS YORKSHIRE BITTER -

THE HOME OF HOME MADE FOOD!

KEVIN AND SUE WELCOME YOU TO THE

# Swan With Two Necks.

OPP WOOLWORTHS, PRINCES ST.  
STOCKPORT.

ROBINSONS BEST BEERS.

HOT & COLD LUNCHTIME FOOD.

CHILDRENS' ROOM, BEER GARDEN

A HAVEN IN THE SHOPPING PRECINCT!

## CAMRA CALLING!

Are you a non-active CAMRA member, or someone interested in our organisation? If so, it could be that you've wanted to meet us but have been put off by the prospect of coming to a Branch meeting. Well, why not introduce yourself at one of our socials? We have something for most people ranging from coach trips to informal Monday night get-togethers. Every month in this new feature I'll be running through our events giving additional information and occasionally describing each type of event in more detail so you will know what to expect.

Probably the easiest way to 'break the ice' is to come aslong to a Monday Social. These are held at pubs throughout the area and are chosen for a variety of reasons - there could be a new, keen licensee, a new beer or it could be just a pub that hasn't been visited for a while! All socials are timed to start at 8-30 although many don't arrive until 9-00 or later. The turn out can be anything from 4 or 5 to a dozen or more depending on the weather, the location of the pub or the beer - and all mannner of other reasons.

Over the next few weeks we've several dos - on the 17th. we're at the Stockport Arms, the Greenalls pub on St. Petersgate, Stockport, on the 24th., we're at Wilsons Albert in Withington and on December 1st. we're back in Stockport at Robinson's Florist on Shaw Heath.

On Wednesday 10th., there's something a bit different - a quiz night at the Diggle Hotel, Diggle. This is a free house selling beers from Tim Taylors, Boddingtons and Oldham Breweries and comes highly recommended. There will be teams of three and transport will be laid on. The cost is expected to be about £2 to £3 a head. If you contact me I'll be able to give details of exact cost and transport arrangements. If you don't fancy taxing the brain cells at

the quiz, then come along to our pub of the month award for November on Thursday 27th., November at the Swan with Two Necks, an excellent little Robinson's house on Princes Street, Stockport, people start arriving at 8-30.

Last but not least for November is a crawl of Burnage on Friday 21st. We kick off at 7-15 at the Milestone (Banks's) on Burnage Lane and at 9-15 we should be in Hydes Albion, also on Burnage lane.

Finally if you're really brave and fancy the Branch meeting then come along on the 13th., to the Blossoms in Stockport (on the A6 just before the Cemetary). You'll find we're not all that bad!

Please feel free to contact me, John Clarke, at any time on either 831 7222 extn. 307 in the day or 477 1973 at night.

RICHARD AND SUSAN GENDERS -

## The Bottle Stop

136, ACRE LANE, BRAMHALL  
GIBBS MEW BISHOPS TIPPLE, THEAKSTONS,  
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WARSTEINER PILS & MUNCHEN SPATEN  
BOCK BIERS ON TAP  
OCCASIONAL BEERS FROM FULLERS, BRAKSPEARS,  
PINTS-POLYPINS-FIRKINS-BARRELS.  
OPEN MON-FRI 3-10-30, SAT 11-11, SUN 11-10.  
TEL: 439 4904.

HEARD AT THE BAR - 'Do you want one of these real ales?'

'No thanks, I'll just have ordinary bitter.'

## Castlewood

(HOLE IN WALL)

OPP. TSB BRIDGE STREET, STOCKPORT.

WILSONS & WEBSTERS REAL ALES  
ON HAND PUMP

HOT AND COLD FOOD  
MON - SAT 11.30 - 2.00  
and 5.30 - 7.00

Childrens Room

Telephone: 480 5529

## LETTERS

From Tim Webb, Woolpit, Suffolk.

Dear Sir,

Pigeon post takes a long time to deliver "Opening Times" to deepest Suffolk. However, I hope it is not too late to make a comment on something which appeared in your August edition.

The licensee of the Emigration Inn, Mr. Ball, wrote to say that according to "the requirements of the law", after a pub modernisation the licensee and bar staff should be able to see all drinking areas from the bar. While I have no doubt that this is what his brewery told him, it is not true. If it were, how would it be possible to incorporate family rooms into a pub, legally?

I assume his brewery is Robinsons and that this is one of the excuses they give for their campaign of slaughtering pub atmospheres by ruthless modernisation. The more forward looking breweries in the south are beginning to recognize that customers prefer to drink in small, cosy rooms not aircraft hangars. In our area the dividing walls are going up again and the juke boxes are being removed to the dive bars where they belong.

## EDITORIAL

Readers have no doubt seen the reports in the local press following our Offerton Stagger in an earlier "Opening Times."

When we re-launched the paper I wrote: "Whilst it (Opening Times) is financed by revenue from our advertisers, in no way are we beholden to any Brewery or pub." That still stands! As our spokesman said "There are members of the trade who still think the drinkers role is to put up, sup up and shut up, but when a pint costs up to 75p people are entitled to decent beer in decent surroundings"

As always comments made in 'Stagger' are the opinions of the group who attended on the particular night & in regard to the Emigration the licensee exercised his right of reply, which was duly published.

Later suggestions that Camra members do nothing about beer is akin to suggesting that members of the AA can't drive. If, in the future, we feel obliged to criticise then we shall do so - we are a consumer body that exists to defend and fight for the rights of the drinker - we don't seek out arguments with pubs - but we will continue to fight for drinkers rights!

I am delighted to report that to date no pub has refused to take "Opening Times" as a result of this furore - indeed the reverse is true and our outlets are increasing.

Humphrey Higgins, Editor "Opening Times".



## BAKERS

## VAULTS

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SATURDAYS FROM SEVEN PM

FINE ROBINSONS ALES.

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## Egerton Arms

ST. PETERSGATE

(Near the Market Merseyway Car Park)

Your hosts John & Joan Newport invite you to call in and sample their excellent food, whilst enjoying a relaxing drink.

We have an excellent selection of homemade Hot & Cold meals, boasting our famous Hot Roast Beef & Pork Sandwich Carvery at 95p and including chilli, curries, steak & mushroom pie, lasagne & daily specials.

Evening meals available, children welcome lunchtime & early evening.

**WHAT'S ON IN OUR CONCERT ROOM**

Thursday: **FOLK NIGHT**

Friday & Saturday: **LIVE GROUPS**

Parties catered for - function room available.

TEL: 477 8008

Contributors: John Clarke, Jim Flynn, Andy Cooper, Rhys Jones, Humphrey Higgins. For details of advertising please contact the Editor.

OPENING TIMES is produced by the Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Campaign. Send your news to: S.H. Higgins, 48 Moorcroft Drive, Burnage M19 1WH