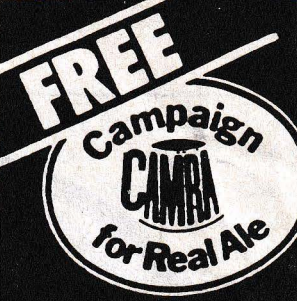


Opening Times



STOCKPORT & SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

No. 66 OCTOBER 1989

GROTNEYS RIDE AGAIN!

RUN-DOWN pubs, poor beer and demoralised licensees - a state of affairs which would concern any brewer. Well, almost any, as Grand Met, who trade locally as Websters/Wilsons, seem not only indifferent to the chorus of complaints from all quarters but are actively pursuing policies which, if anything, will make the situation worse.

PUBS - many of the managed houses, formerly run by the Pennine Hosts company, are in a poor state, reflecting the cheap nature of their refurbishment only a few years ago. Some of the 'Sports' pubs are literally falling to bits inside and even many of the more traditional conversions are characterised by tatty fittings and peeling paintwork. The traditional tenants who make up the majority of licensees have also complained of brewery neglect, and although the company denies this, they are keen to push their 'Inntrepreneur' scheme which will see the traditional landlords becoming leaseholders with full responsibility for maintaining their pubs.

BEER - Websters and Ruddles are the name of the game. Both of these used to be distinctive local beers which have now been quality-compromised in the name of mass-production and mass-distribution. Our local beer, Wilsons, is becoming more and more of an also-ran. We have warned in the past that the Wilsons name must be in doubt - the tell-tale signs are

there for all to see: no promotion and indifferent quality (even the tenants have complained about this) point to an eventual axeing through 'lack of demand'. The threat is heightened by the widely held view that Grand Met are to shortly sell their breweries. If this happened they will then be in the position of having their beers contract-brewed for them. In those circumstances it must be doubtful that they would be prepared to pay for the production of what are regarded as marginal brands.

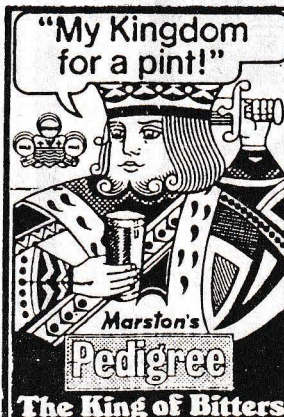
LICENSEES - the Inntrepreneur scheme threatens the future of every Wilsons tenant. Despite having several years of the old-style agreements left, more and more tenants are being pushed to sign the new 20-year leases. Many of these leases have been accompanied by hefty rent increases and there are swingeing penalties if annual barrelage targets are not met. There are already tales in the trade press of bankruptcies among the new 'Inntrepreneurs'. No wonder some apprehensive tenants are already talking about leaving the trade when their current agreements expire.

And what do we the customers stand to get out of all this? Not much it seems. A few years ago the antics of Grand Mets brewing arm led to them being dubbed 'Grotneys'. **Leopards, it seems, never do change their spots.**

SUMMARY

- Page 2: Pub Grub; Marble Arch
- Page 3: Pub of the Month - Railway
- Page 4: High Grove; Kings Arms; 'Firkin'
- Page 5: Good Beer Guide 1990
- Page 8: Stagger - Levenshulme
- Page 10: Five Years Ago; CAMRA Calling
- Page 11: Manchester Matters
- Page 12: Pub News.

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OR RETURN IT TO THE HOLDER



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Burton Best Bitter





**THE CLASSIC**  
**CASK**  
**CONDITIONED**  
**BITTER**



BY JOHN CLARKE

**T**HIS month we return to Stockport and Midway on Newbridge Lane. The Midway will be remembered by many as the first real free house in Stockport selling a range of, at the time, exotic beers. Now owned by John Smith, the beer range is still impressive for a town house of a national brewery with three cask beers regularly on sale - John Smith's Bitter and Magnet plus the powerful Courage Direct Bitter.

Licencees Ian & Gwen Parrott have set out to make a feature of the food in the pub, as well as serving a decent pint, as will be seen from the pub's advert elsewhere in Opening Times.

The standard menu is impressive in itself, kicking off with a good selection of starters ranging from soup at 85p to Melon in Port at £1.10. Main meals are fairly standard pub fare, albeit with the advantage of being truly home-made. Steak & Kidney Pie at £2.35 and Bread & Butter Haddock at £2.50 are fairly typical samples of what is on offer. There is also a range of House Specialities such as Rump or Sirloin Steak at £6.20 and 10oz Gammon Steak at £4.80. Last, but by no means least are 'Gwen's Specials' which change daily. On my visit there was a choice of Homemade Scotch Broth at 85p, Beef Bourguignon at £2.60 or Cod & Prawn Pie at £2.75.

I chose the Cod & Prawn Pie - delicious piece of Cod and a generous sprinkling of prawns in a rich white sauce, all topped with mashed potato and cheese. Served with chips and peas, this made for a filling, value for money meal. My only gripe was with the tinned peas; frozen would have been much better. My companion chose the steak & kidney pie, again served with chips and peas. Also again a good value dish but with the comment that the gravy was a bit watery for his taste. All in all though, good food at good prices, and that at the end of the day is what it's all about. Recommended.

**SOARING ARCH**

**T**HE Marble Arch Freehouse on Rochdale Road is running an in-house beer festival this month to celebrate the 101st anniversary of the pub with 101 different beers. Owner Van der Meer is hoping to feature less well-known beers from the country's numerous home-brew pubs plus a brew from Manchester's 'unknown' brewer - based in the University.

This month should also see the completion of the alterations at the pub which involve the re-siting of the bar and the construction of a new lounge at the back of the existing pub.



# OCTOBER

1 8 15 22 29 ...  
2 9 16 23 30 ...  
3 10 17 24 31 ...  
4 11 18 25 ...  
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6 13 20 27 ...  
7 14 21 28 ...

## PUB OF THE MONTH

**P**UB of the Month for October is the **Railway** on Pottery Lane, opposite Ashburys Station in Gorton.

Regular readers will know of the Railway's reopening in February this year, and it's quickly gained an enviable reputation for the quality of its beers, which come from Holts, Theakstons, Thwaites and Youngers, together with regular guest beers and traditional cider.

Since the presentation night falls just a few days before Halloween, it's appropriate that the pub has its own ghost. It seems that the last licensee under Bass, a man who detested jukeboxes and fruit machines, dropped dead of a heart attack in the pub toilet - and since the pub reopened, the jukebox has needed re-wiring five times, the fruit machine frequently plays up, and the toilet has been flushed with the pub empty!

The current licensee, though, is very much alive and kicking, as are the lively and friendly crowd of regulars, from house pool champion Billy Crookes, currently chasing national honours in Hazel Grove Music's championship, to 'Mr Play-it-Cool' Tommy and his tireless fundraising efforts for Withington Hospital. Come early to get a seat and meet local CAMRA members and the pub's regulars, as we make the presentation to licensees Madeleine and Bob Gregory and son John on Thursday 26th October, any time from around 8'clock on.

## ARDEN HARMED?

**P**LANS have been submitted for minor alterations at Stockport's Arden Arms, one of the most unspoilt pubs in the town.

It is intended to convert the old kitchen into a dining room which will connect with the existing vault via a hole to be knocked into the dividing wall. This will however incorporate a folding oak partition which will enable the two rooms to be kept separate or used as one when the occasion demands. The bench seating that will be removed from the vault to make way for this will be re-sited in the new room.

There are those who would question whether any alteration is desirable here. However, if there must be alterations, and given Robinsons generally appalling track record in this field, this is the best that could be hoped for.

## The Nursery Inn

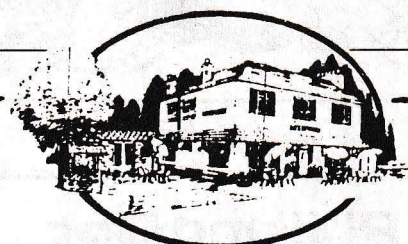
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- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
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**Hydes Anvil Ales**

Brewers of Traditional Cask Beers

**Always in good taste**



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**De Olde Vic** Chatham St.  
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**STOCKPORT'S PREMIER  
FREE HOUSE**

**Guest Beers Weekly**

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990

**MARSTONS**

**BATEMANS**

**TAYLORS**

**TETLEYS**



**Phil and Dot**

**Welcome You To The**

*Arden Arms*

MILLGATE, STOCKPORT

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GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990



## KINGS ALE

**T**HE High Grove, Silverdale Road, Heald Green, has a new landlord, manager Sam Rosenbloom, who moved in, along with his wife Sharon, on Monday 11th September. It is a homecoming for Sam - he was manager of the Tatton Cinema in Gatley for four years, before joining Tetleys; his last pub for Tetleys was the Olde Black Bear in Sandbach.

They plan no immediate changes to the pub; though long-term there is the prospect of use being made of the currently empty off-licence next door. Hot meals are on offer lunchtimes Sunday to Friday, with the emphasis on home-cooked food and value for money.

Sam was pleased to tell us that he sells more mild than both lagers put together. The High Grove is a traditional community pub, popular with all age groups. It is unusual in that there is no music in the pub whatsoever - no juke box or piped muzak. And Sam hopes to keep it that way.

## NEW AT GROVE

**S**OME interesting developments are in prospect this month at the **Kings Arms**, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock. Brewer Brendan Dobbin will be introducing the first of his replica international beer styles, this time featuring North America.

The two beers are **Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve**, a 1044og 'super-premium' style lager, which in common with many American beers of this type will be brewed using a combination of maize syrup and malted barley. The second beer will be **Sierra Nevada Pale Ale**, a replica of what has become one of the most successful naturally conditioned beers in the USA. At 1050og, the beer will be an 'extremely bitter' draught pale ale and will contain 'more hops than all the other beers in Britain put together'. This will be a cask conditioned beer and, like 'Henrys' will only be available for one month.

## FIZZ AND FIRKIN

**C**HORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK is to get yet another brewery in the form of the "**Firkin**", a development by Midsummer Leisure (the company that made an abortive bid for Boddingtons) in the old Grosvenor Picture House on Oxford Road. Plans submitted reveal a snooker hall in the basement and a large ground floor bar served by a first floor brewery.

In common with the other 'Firkin' operations around the country there should be two or three beers brewed which will be stored in tanks under a blanket of carbon dioxide gas which of course means that the beers will not qualify as 'real ale'. An interesting venture and we will bring more news when the pub opens. Shame about that gas though.



## ▣ The Britannia ▣

ROWSLEY ST., BESWICK

**J.W. Lees Beers**

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Good Beer Guide FIRST 1990!

Brian O'Connor  
Welcomes you to

**THE CHEQUERED FLAG**

Greenheys Lane, Hulme

**THE MAWSON HOTEL**

Kincardine Road, C-on-M.

TEL. 061 274 3529

**Tetley Mild & Bitter**



**Burton Ale**

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990.



## — THE SIDINGS —

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**HOLTS REAL ALES**

**Lunchtime Food**

Joan & Graham Smithies Welcome You

Good Beer Guide 1990

*The Crown*

HILLGATE, STOCKPORT

**Handpumped Cask**

**Mild & Bitter**

Good Beer Guide 1988-90

Brian and Margaret Welcome You

**A Wilsons House**

# GOOD BEER GUIDE · 1990

THE · PUB-LOVER'S · ESSENTIAL · REFERENCE · BOOK

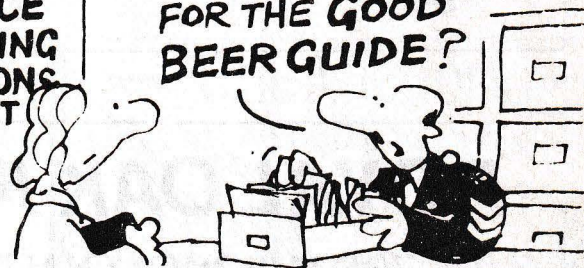
**T**HIS month sees the launch of CAMRA'S flagship publication, the 1990 Good Beer Guide.

First launched in 1974, The Good Beer Guide has established itself over the years as the most authoritative publication of its kind in the country. This is due to the fact that pubs are selected entirely on their merits with the consistent quality of their ales the main consideration, unlike some other guides where pubs can't buy their way into the Good Beer Guide. Nor are the pubs picked by some elite panel of experts, they are chosen by thousands of CAMRA members up and down the country who use their pubs regularly and know which can be relied upon to serve the best at all times.

The 1990 Guide, the seventeenth edition, is the second to be edited by Andrea Gillies who this year has set out to stamp her impression on the Guide more strongly than before. The result is a longer guide, now up to 480 pages with longer pub descriptions which should let you know exactly what to expect when you visit each pub, and more feature articles than ever before and the whole guide wittily illustrated throughout.

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HE'S DOING RESEARCH  
FOR THE GOOD  
BEER GUIDE?



Brian Welcomes You To

**The Red Bull**

HILLGATE, STOCKPORT

**Good Food AND  
FINE ALES**

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990



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## The Queens Arms

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The Family Pub

ROBINSONS TRADITIONAL ALES

Good Beer Guide 1987-90



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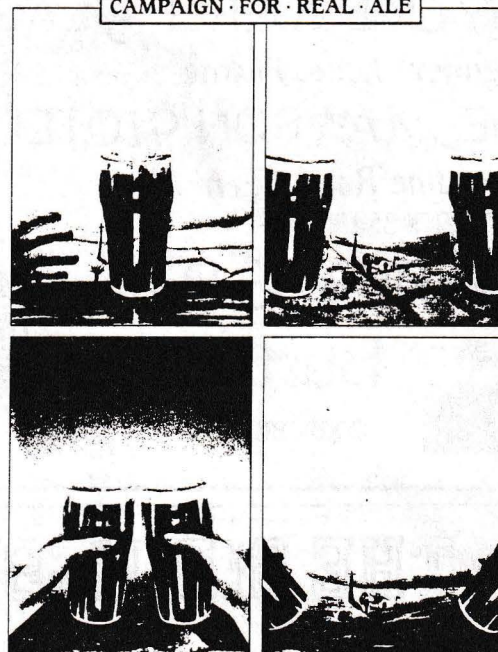


# GOOD BEER GUIDE · 1990

THE · PUB-LOVER'S · ESSENTIAL · REFERENCE · BOOK

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CAMPAIGN · FOR · REAL · ALE



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LUNCHES SERVED MON.-FRI. 12.00-2.00pm

Good Beer Guide 1990

## The King's Head

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A Good Guide  
To Good Beer

Youngers Scotch Bitter & IPA

Theakstons Best Bitter

Matthew Brown Dark Mild

Hand Pulled For You

*Good Beer Guide 1990*



# GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990

**T**HE Guide is subtitled 'The Pub-Lover's essential reference book, and this is where the Guide really does come into its own. With detailed descriptions of over 5000 pubs the length and breadth of the country, there will be a pub for everyone, from basic inner-city boozers to thatched gems in the heart of the countryside, they're all there: pubs with food, pubs with gardens, pubs with accommodation and pubs where you can take the kids.

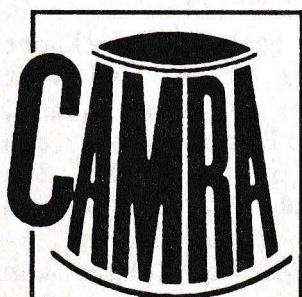
In addition there is an index of all the real ales brewed in Britain and a comprehensive section on the breweries telling you what's what and who's who in the industry. A new feature this year is an attempt to tell you just what the beers taste like - CAMRA set up tasting pannels throughout the country with the arduous task of tasting every beer brewed in Britain. Their tasting notes and their pick of the year promise to make interesting and possibly controversial reading. Will your favourite pint get a good mention?

Other features this year include:

- ☐ Beer for Beginners, a guide through the basics.
- ☐ Who hates the British pub?
- ☐ If you must drink lager...
- ☐ The GBG Advertising Awards

And many more.....

So, introduce yourself to the beers of Britain and order your Good Beer Guide today. It will be available in local bookshops and also in some pubs. However, if you really want to be sure of getting a copy order one now from CAMRA. Write to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG. The price is a good value £6.95 (p&p free). Please make any cheques out to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Branch'.



## The Station, Didsbury

A WARM WELCOME FROM

★ Ann and John ★

*Marstons Pedigree*



*Burton Bitter,*



*Mercian Mild*

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Bob & Trudie Welcome You To

## HORSE & FARRIER

GATLEY

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1980 - 90

## — The Victoria —

WILMSLOW ROAD WITHINGTON

Hydes Anvil Ales

Good Beer Guide

— 1990 —

KEITH & NORA WELCOME YOU

## The Blossoms

BUXTON ROAD, HEAVILEY

ROBINSONS ALES

Good Beer Guide  
1979 - 1990

Barbara & Family Welcome You



name has passed through the care of the unlamented Pennine Hosts set-up. This pub was treated more kindly than many however and is still a straightforward if uninspiring pub with one large main room plus a smaller room for the pool table - some thought it reminded them of a London pub. Everybody tried the Wilsons Bitter at 80p and it was palatable enough.

We then trotted up the road towards Manchester and went into the atrociously named **Dicey Reilly's**, a 'free house' serving Boddingtons



ION  
IG

and Wilsons bitters; Websters Choice was off, despite it being advertised by a pump-clip. The pub has neon signs outside, bare floorboards within and a peculiar raised seating area downstairs, although there is more seating upstairs on the balcony-cum-gallery. Here we all tried the Boddingtons which was no more than average.

Third stop was **Sports** with Wilsons Bitter at 90p and also the increasingly common and unimpressive Websters Yorkshire Bitter. The decor was standard Sports and in common with many other Pennine Host 'Open House' style pubs, it's showing its age badly - stained mirrors, filthy venetian blinds, all told the same sad story of a bad idea gone wrong and due for scrapping. Not surprisingly, nobody touched the Websters, the Wilsons was no better than average.

A quick look round the door of the **Railway** to see if cask beer had been installed yet (it hadn't), and into the **Union**, a Boddingtons pub with bitter at 85p. The Union can only be described as basic but nonetheless it's a good, solid local with three separate rooms plus a corridor. It was good to see a list of beer strengths displayed in accordance with the new regulations. In the past, the beer here has been reliably good but on this occasion got a more mixed response but was still rated above average.

Bypassing both the **Church** (Greenalls) and the **Victoria** (Wilsons) as each serve only keg beers, we came to the **Midway** a massive Wilsons pub. In past incarnations it was a grand multi-roomed pub with wood panelling, etched windows and stained glass together with an ornate staircase. Now unfortunately it isn't, having been knocked through into a large open-plan barn with 2 pool tables, a young clientele and many window panes replaced by safety glass. Live music is a feature. The beer, Wilsons Bitter at 88p, was nothing to write home about.

esters pub, the **Farmers** 86p. The lounge was old fireplace, decent

pictures on the walls and an old-fashioned barman, complete with dickie-bow and apron. The pub had obviously been open all day - the ashtrays were full to overflowing and the tables could have done with a wipe. The beer was poor, some going so far as to say it was more like wine or dry sherry.

We next retraced our steps back up Stockport Road, turned off into Chapel Street and went into the **Horseshoe**, another Wilsons house, serving Websters Bitter, Wilsons Bitter and Mild - the first cask mild of the night. The vault had a pool table and TV, the lounge had a Country and Western trio playing. A very comfortable pub although the lounge was



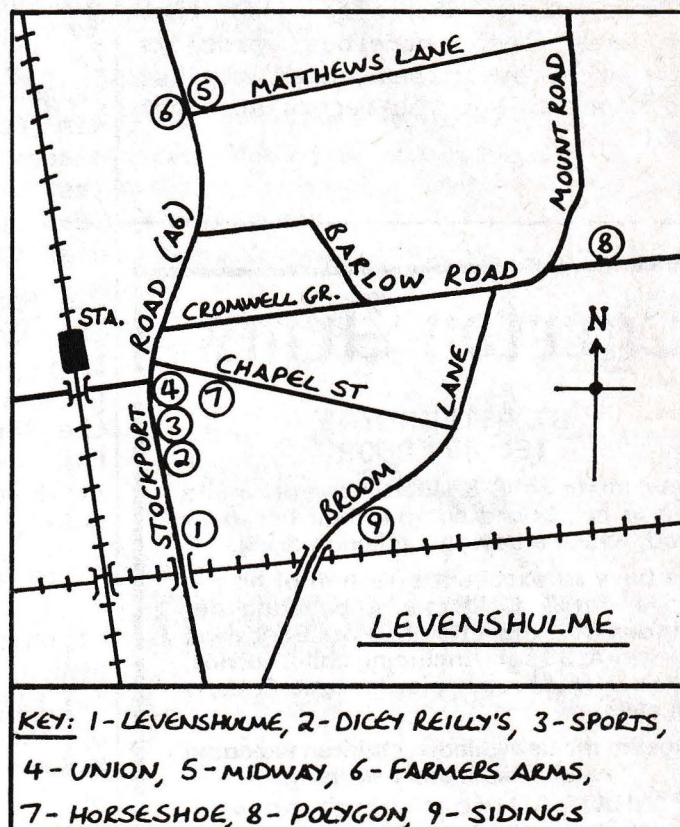
very busy. One soul was spotted adding two ice-cubes to his pint of bitter. Taste was divided between the two Wilsons beers, both were okay with the bitter being slightly preferred. Not surprisingly, nobody touched the Websters.

We then cut across to Barlow Road to visit the **Polygon**, an imposing Boddingtons pub. The vault (made up of the old vault and snug for those who remember) was quite posh, with a nice line in tiles on the floor. The 'snug' area was still separated from the rest of the room by bannisters, all in all, a tasteful refurbishment. The bitter also received a favourable response from most of the company.

Last and by no means least was the **Sidings**, a Holts pub on Broom Lane, which was highly commended as a new pub in CAMRA's national pub awards. Being a Holts pub, the beer was far and away the cheapest of the night, 67p for mild, all of 70p for bitter. The lounge is smartly decorated (more dubious Holts job-lot wallpaper, however - see your nearest re-decorated Holts pub for similar) and to no-one's real surprise, the beer was by some way the best of the evening, with the mild stealing a narrow victory over the bitter.

So ended an interesting evening which again showed that if it's good beer you want, you're probably better off going into a pub run by

an independent brewer such as Holts or Boddingtons rather than one serving beers from one of the national concerns. As ever the views expressed here simply reflect what was found on the night and are not meant to be a once and for all judgement on either the pubs or beer.



# THE BEERHOUSE

ANGEL ST., off ROCHDALE RD., M/CR

**Theakstons, Holts, Matthew  
Brown & Linfit Beers**

**Thatchers Traditional Cider  
Hot and Cold Food**

MON.-SAT. 11.30 - 11.

SUN. 12.-3., 7.-10.30





## ALEXANDRA

Following last month's Stagger comments on the Alexandra, Northgate Road, Edgeley, landlord Mel Hancock has asked us to point out that the poor mild on the night was taken off sale after our visit. He also adds that there have been numerous problems with the mild over the summer months. We are happy to set the record straight here.

## Egerton Arms

ST. PETERSGATE  
TEL: 477 8008

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 home-made Hot & Cold meals, boasting our famous Hot Roast Beef & Pork Sandwich Carvery at 99p and including chilli, curries, steak & mushroom pie, lasagne & daily specials

Evening meals available, children welcome lunchtime & early evening.

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Friday & Saturday: LIVE BANDS

Sunday: Happy Hour 9 - 10.00pm & Members Draw

Parties catered for - function room available.

HAPPY HOUR 5.30 - 7.00 MON - FRI

Open 11 - 11 Monday to Saturday, Food 12 - 7.30

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FINE ROBINSONS ALES

superb cuisine  
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## 55 YEARS AGO

**O**PENING Times No.5, dated October 1984, reported an experiment in which Blackpool pubs were open for 12 hours a day - there was no trouble, and it was judged a huge success. The rather plaintive question was put - "How long before we change our mediaeval licensing laws?" Well, we've had all day opening for just over a year now, but it's strange how many pubs seem to keep their new hours a secret. Most shops display their hours, why can't pubs do the same?

Sam Smiths announced two additional cask beers to join the Old Brewery Bitter (which had been their only cask beer for about 6 years.) The new 4X Mild didn't seem to get very far past the trial stage, and although the Tadcaster Bitter lasted for a few years, that too has now been discontinued. (The OBB has now been joined by Museum Ale, but at 1047og it's not exactly a session beer).

A new pub, as yet un-named, was being built in Bramhall - it turned out to be the **Shady Oak**, at the time one of only three free houses in the CAMRA South Manchester branch area. Alas, it was soon sold to Tetleys, and it has just had a complete internal reconstruction. Of the other two free houses existing at the time, the **Midway** in Stockport is now John Smiths, and the future of the poor old **Coach & Horses** in Manchester doesn't look too rosy either.

An addition to the Real Ale in South Manchester list was reported - the Kings Arms on Helmsford Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock, and the beer was Tetleys. It then closed and stood empty for several years - it has just re-opened as a brew pub, with no less than 9 beers and lagers, all produced in the pub's cellar.

No.1 of a new series entitled "Round Britain Drinker" reported on a trip to the West Midlands, where one of the highlights was a visit to the Simpkins Brewery at Brierley Hill - only just in time too, for the following year Greenall Whitley took them over and closed them down almost immediately.

## CAMRA CALLING

**D**UE to pressure of space, there's only room for a brief item this month. However, two dates for your diary are:

**Friday, October 13th** when we will be running our annual trip to the ever-popular **Stoke Beer Festival**. The coach will leave the Pineapple, Heaton Lane, Stockport at 6.30pm and will pick up at the Bulls Head, Hazel Grove at 6.45. We will leave Stoke at 11.15. The cost is £4 plus, for non-members only, £2 admission to the festival

**Friday, October 20th** sees our monthly 'Stagger' and this time we will be visiting pubs in the City Centre starting at 7.00pm at the **Bulls Head**, London Road and meeting at 8.30 in the **Grey Horse**, Portland St.

For more details phone Angela Walker on 0663 43769





## MANCHESTER MATTERS

**A** RECENT survey of the City Centre for the forthcoming "Ale of Two Cities" - CAMRA's guide to beer and pubs in Manchester and Salford brought to light a number of pubs which have removed their cask beer. To take the worst cases first, both the **City** on Oldham Street and **NewYork NewYork** retain handpumps, with the appropriate pumpclips, while selling only the keg versions of the beers concerned. Another that appears to be in the same category is the **Hat & Feathers**, where the cask beer was not on but we were assured that it usually is - apparently the same promise has been made on previous visits, so it seems to be a 'case of "always real ale tomorrow" (perhaps the Hat in the pub's name was supplied by the Mad Hatter?).

**Langtons Wine Bar** appears to be closed, as does the downstairs bar of **Oxfords** (the only part that has ever served real ale in the pub's present incarnation). **Polars** no longer serves real ale (and is up for sale), neither does the **Midland Hotel Crowne Plaza** etc etc (which isn't). Finally, we must mention the **Lower Turks Head** on Shudehill. It's still keg, as reported here some time back, but the keg Tetley beers that appeared briefly have been replaced by keg Belhaven. However, keg Tetley Bitter is still available - on handpump! Small wonder that of several dozen pubs surveyed, this was the only one entirely devoid of customers.

We also uncovered a number of changes to beer range in the Centre. To start with the gains, **Mama's** on Rochdale Road now has Chesters Mild and Trophy alongside bitter (though keg Trophy is also sold); the **Bank** has Ind Coope Burton Ale; the **Crown & Kettle** has gained Wilsons Mild

and Ruddles County; and the **City Arms** has Tetley Dark Mild. The High Street branch of **Yates's**, now the only one of the four in the City Centre with real ale, has lost its only mild (Tetleys) and Websters Bitter, but gained a pricey pint of Burtonwood Bitter; the **Place Next Door** has dropped Stones Bitter in favour of Whitbread Trophy; the **Britannia Inn** has dropped Green Label but gained, if that's the word, Websters Bitter; and Branagans has dropped McEwans 80/- but added Tetley Bitter.

Losses of a cask beer from the range are Pedigree from the **Harp & Shamrock**, Websters Choice from **Paddy's Goose**, and Bass Mild from the **Town Hall Tavern**. Worst of all, perhaps, is the disappearance from the **Ancoates** of all cask beers apart from Tetley Bitter - a very unenterprising move from a pub that once seemed set to become almost as interesting a freehouse as the **White House** down the road.

The centre dominates this month, but one or two interesting things have happened outside. At the **Railway**, Ashburys, Frampton Dry Cider is now on handpump rather than being second direct from the cask. Also at the Railway, Youngers No3 is now available on handpump - this is officially a "trial run" but it's hoped that the beer will sell well enough to go permanent. Further south, two more Whitbread pubs - the **Old Cock** in Didsbury and the **Midland**, West Didsbury - are taking Marstons Pedigree on handpump; the Midland though, has dropped cask Chesters Mild and Castle Eden, and has also been considerably revamped in an attempt to improve its image.

Finally two re-openings. The **Portland Bar** in the City Centre, which apparently is still selling Tetley Bitter and Burton Ale on handpump, and as threatened last month, 'Pictures' has opened in the shell of the Greens Arms in Clayton. The beer's all keg and the pub, while a shade cleaner than before (not difficult), is really no pleasanter (and that wouldn't have been difficult either).

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## PUB NEWS



'Another candidate for the growing list of Stockport's lost locals'? we asked last month about the **Stanley Arms** on New-bridge Lane, Stockport. Well, not if Mike Belsham has anything to do with it, it isn't. Mike, who hails from Harrow, is the man who bought the pub 3 days before it caught fire with serious damage to the bar area. The damage could in fact have been a lot worse - most of the pub is just badly smoke-damaged with only the rear bar area needing major reconstruction. The pub, which Mike hopes to have open for Christmas will be 'totally free' and although the beer range hasn't been decided

yet, it is possible we could be seeing Hydes and Boddingtons permanently on sale plus a weekly guest. A free house in this part of town would be very welcome - more news when we have it.

\*\*\*\*\*  
We reported last month that the **George & Dragon** in Ardwick seemed to be intending to sell keg John Smiths Bitter through handpumps. The situation has now been clarified and it is good to be able to report yet another real ale gain. At the time of writing, at least one keg dispenser remained, disused, on the bar, perhaps further confusion could be avoided if this was removed. No complaints about the beer though, which was on fine form when sampled recently.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The **Pack Horse** in Stockport Market Place reopened on September 12th after an extensive and expensive refit by Tetleys. The rear lounge has been retained and the former pool room at the front has been converted into a second lounge - both have been decorated in a traditional if rather chintzy style which will nevertheless provide a welcome refuge for tired shoppers. Nice features are the old cast iron fireplaces that have been installed. The main change centres on the lobby/vault area - the bar has been turned through 90° and is now sited along the left-hand wall of the pub. This has created much more space and a more authentic vault feel is helped by the quarry-tiled floor. Much use has also been made of natural wood and leaded stained glass, particularly in the screens at the entrance and window

panels, both of which are attractive and unusual features.

Beers available are Tetley Bitter, Tetley Dark Mild and Ind Coope Burton Ale, all served through handpumps. Lunchtime food is also going to be available. Licensee is Pauline O'Sullivan. Both she and the pub deserve every success and we wish them well.

\*\*\*\*\*  
We are told that the **New Inn**, Wellington Road South, Stockport, has also been taken over by Control Securities and is now selling hand-pumped Tetley Bitter in place of Wilsons.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Some rather cheap-looking Belhaven signs have appeared on the **Cleveland**, Wilson St., Chorlton-on-Medlock. This would seem to indicate another Control Securities pub. The beer should now be Tetleys (confusing all this, isn't it?), but we will confirm next month.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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