

DECEMBER 1989

PROTECTION RACKET

A RECENT university thesis on the subject of Pub Conservation in Manchester has described the Briton's Protection on Great Bridgewater St in Central Manchester as:

"Victorian embellished facade on earlier building. Interior has considerable 'Gin Palace' character, although most of the features are of a slightly later date (c.1920's). These include glazed tiles in the lobby, glazed lobby screen, fixed bench seating and traditional pub furniture. Multi-roomed plan unchanged since at least 2nd World War."

The pub has also attracted the attention of the Manchester Early Dwellings Research Group and they have dated the building at 1811, becoming a pub in 1820.

None of this seems to mean anything to the owners, Tetleys. All they can see is \$\$\$'s because of the proximity of GMex and now the Central Manchester Development Corporation is promoting the development of an international concert hall, conference centre and speciality shopping centre in the locality. Tetleys plan to oust the present, highly successful, tenants who have built up a thriving trade at the pub, and replace them with a manager. Managers do not have the same stake in a pub; they do not as a rule make good stewards of our pub heritage. There is also talk of building a hotel on the site - Tetleys own the adjacent building and there is land behind the pub.

Whatever happens to the pub cannot possibly be an improvement. Indeed the only qualification about the pub at the moment is that it is quite up-market enough, with the cheapest beer at £1 a pint (Tetley Bitter, you pay more for Jennings and Burton Ale).

Tetleys have already spoilt pubs in Greater Manchester, we mustn't let them get away with any more. If you don't already know the pub, why not call in and see the Briton's Protection for yourself and then write to: Mr W. Bentley, Tetley Walker Ltd, The Brewery, Dallam Lane, Warrington WA2 7NU.

OPENING TIMES wishes all its readers and advertisers a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year. A special thank you to all our advertisers whose continued support over the year has helped to make Opening Times such a great success.

**PLEASE PASS OPENING TIMES
TO A FRIEND OR RETURN IT TO
THE HOLDER.**

ALE OF TWO CITIES

THIS month sees the launch of the latest guide produced by Manchester CAMRA branches.

Hot on the heels of the successful 'Vintage Pubs', 'Ale of Two Cities' aims to repeat that success with the first ever comprehensive guide to every real ale outlet in Manchester and Salford.

In total some 550 outlets are listed with details of the cask ales and ciders sold in each. In addition, 100 of the best have been selected for a more extensive write-up, giving fascinating details of the pub's history, its layout, atmosphere, facilities and beers. All manner of pubs are listed, from inner-city street corner locals to plush suburban watering holes, so there's something for everyone.

There are accompanying articles on how to save your pub, CAMRA, real cider and of course, full descriptions of all the beers and comments on the breweries that produce them.

'Ale of Two Cities' is lavishly illustrated throughout and is available at £2.95 p&p free from Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road Heaton Chapel, Stockport. Please make cheques payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester.

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By John Clarke

THIS month's Pub Grub visits a pub which is perhaps better known as one of Stockport's liveliest boozers rather than as a place to eat, but appearances can be deceptive as the **Manchester Arms** on Wellington Road (right next door to the cinema) offers some of the tastiest and best value standard pub grub around.

The menu doesn't go in for the more exotic dishes favoured by many local pubs but sticks to the mainstræm in its choice of food - chili and crusty bread, curry and rice/chips, pies, pasties and filled barmes. What makes the menu different from the others is both quality and value. Where else can you get a variety of pies with chips, peas and gravy for £1? And a good filing portion to boot. The most expensive items on the menu are £1.60 and for this you can get a mixed grill (a real plateful this with eggs, bacon, sausage, burger, the works) or the 'house specialities'...

These are the chili and vindaloo, both of which are prepared personally by landlord Martin Gibbs and they are hot with a capital H. I tried the chili which was meaty and packed full of flavour and, though hot like a good chili should be it wasn't too hot to spoil the taste. One of my companions tried the Vindaloo and turned progressively redder as he worked his way through a generous helping of curry chips and rice. Both threatened to be real 'bum burners' (Martin advised us to keep our toilet rolls in the fridge overnight!) but luckily there were no unpleasant after effects.

Food is available Monday to Saturday and on Sunday lunch free sausages are available, some covered in that chili sauce. Highly recommended.

FARMERS GROWS UP

THE **Farmers Arms** (formerly Farmers) in Cheadle Heath, reopened its doors last month following a period of closure and extensive renovation. Stuart Ballantyne has been along to have a look...

"The old 'Open House' theme pub has gone, being replaced by a more traditional design. There are now two separate rooms -

The vault at the front has had the bar moved back giving more room and space for a second pool table; the seats have been reupholstered and all the woodwork is new. I found the combination of TV, compact disc video jukebox, and heavy 'loud' curtains all a bit too much, the bright lighting seemed to exaggerate this.

The lounge has also been extensively altered in similar style to the vault but with carpet throughout and lighting that is easier to live with, it is pleasant enough. Although I noticed a no-smoking sign low down on one of the partitions, this seemed to be no more than a token gesture as most of the tables had ashtrays, and most of the customers were smoking. If the Farmers Arms is serious about providing a no-smoking area then they need to give this a much higher profile. Lunchtime food is not available.

The cask beers on sale are Wilsons Bitter (90p) and Websters Yorkshire Bitter (92p), with prices the same in both bars. There was a spare hand-pump in both rooms, which presumably will be destined to sell Ruddles County or Best Bitter which were on the price list but not on sale. I tried the Wilsons which was quite acceptable without being anything special.

The Farmers Arms is certainly an improvement on Farmers, but is let down by gimmicky features, obtrusive video machines, and an uninspiring range of beers."

De Olde Vic Chatham St.
Edgeley

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3	10	17	24	31
4	11	18	25	...
5	12	19	26	...
6	13	20	27	...
7	14	21	28	...
1	8	15	22	29
2	9	16	23	30

PUB OF THE MONTH

ON 15th December Roger and Jean Meredith will be celebrating the 3rd anniversary of their arrival at the Church, Moseley St, Edgeley. Almost a week later they will be celebrating again as they receive the Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December 1989.

Since their arrival the pub has been transformed from a run-down, unwelcoming place to a thriving locals pub with a welcome for all. All the more credit is due as the Church is Roger and Jean's first pub as such although they were previously stewards at Marple Golf Club. The transformation of the fittings and decor was overseen by Jean while Roger has concentrated on looking after the cellar, with Hartleys XB recently joining the Robinsons Best Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom on sale; the Church is in fact the only Robinsons pub in Stockport to offer its customers such a wide choice from the Robinsons range.

This long-overdue and much deserved award will be presented on **Thursday, 21st December** when a memorable night is assured, join us there.

BODDINGTONS - HOW OPENING TIMES CARTOONIST GORDON RILEY SEES IT.....



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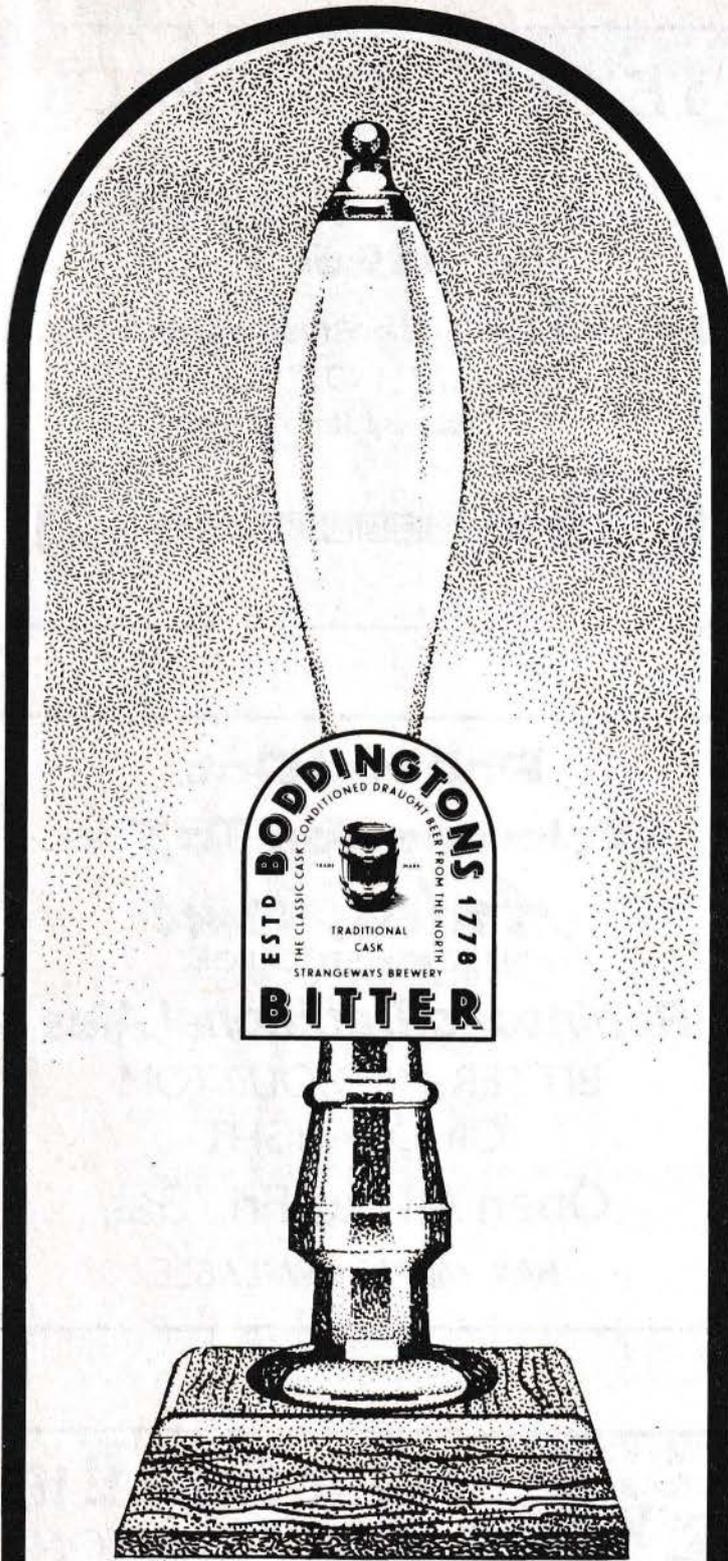
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CONDITIONED
BITTER

CHEADLE HULME

THE notices on the pillars advertise Beaujolais Nouveau, the 120-seater restaurant is selling T-bone steaks for £9.75 and Trout at £5.75 and yet the pumpclips on the bar tell you that the Cheadle Hulme is a Holts pub.

Even former regulars would be hard pressed to recognise the Cheadle Hulme as the former Junction. The already sizeable pub has been enlarged by a rear extension and also by the drinking area being knocked into a former private room. Other than the restaurant area, there is just one L-shaped bar with drawing-room type furniture, plush tied-back curtains and pictures of country scenes on the walls which give a pleasant, easy feel to the place.

New licensee is Neil Vigerstaff who was previously with Grand Met at the Blue Bell in Monton Green and the Brunswick in Piccadilly. There is certainly a lot resting on his shoulders as not only did the pub cost several hundred thousand pounds but this is the first ever 'Derby Restaurant' in a Holts pub.

The Cheadle Hulme is a vast improvement on the Junction with the only slight drawback being the lack of separate rooms and in particular the absence of a public bar. Holts obviously believe that the area demands the open style of pub, looking at the success of the nearby Hesketh as an example. However there is a danger that in not having separate areas the pub may fall between the two stools of the Cheadle Hulme yuppie and the traditional Holts drinker, and alienate both. That having been said, the Cheadle Hulme is well worth a visit, particularly for the uniqueness of having a restaurant meal washed down by a few pints of Holts.

STOCKING FILLERS

STUCK for that last minute Christmas present? We are able to offer a variety of gifts for all those with an interest in pubs and beer. Make your selection from the list below and send your remittance (cheques should be made payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester) to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Rd, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK14 5EG:

- * 1990 Good Beer Guide.....£6.95
- * 1990 CAMRA Diary.....£3.50
- * Cumbria Guide.....£1.75
- * Lakeland Guide.....£3.95
- * Bolton Guide.....£1.50
- * Wigan Guide.....£1.25
- * Cooking with Beer.....£4.95
- * Beer, Bed & Breakfast.....£5.95
- * CAMRA Mirror.....£16.00
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★ SEASONS GREETINGS ★

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Claremont Hotel
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JEAN and ROGER
 AT THE
Church Inn
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A Happy Xmas



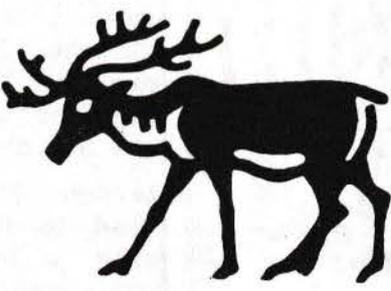
HAPPY CHRISTMAS
 to one and all!
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 MANCHESTER ARMS
 STOCKPORT

Merry Xmas 
 FROM BOB, GILL & STAFF 
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THE TIVIOT, Stockport
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Nursery 
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Merry Xmas
 FROM PHIL & DOT
Arden Arms
 MILLGATE 
 STOCKPORT

STAGGER

BY: ROBIN WIGNALL - STOCKPORT

OUR evening started at the **Unity** on Wellington Road South. This local has been fairly tastefully 'Robinsonised'. A dart board is retained in a side area. The pub was fairly busy for 7 o'clock, perhaps due to the attractive prices, with Best Mild at 81p and Best Bitter at 85p, and both beers being in good condition.

Around the corner is **Little Jack Horner's**. This is a grand little pub with a multi-roomed feel. Good use of wood is made in panelling and beams and historic photos make for interesting decorations. Sad to report, the only real ale available is Websters National Bitter, though to be fair it was well kept and was rated much higher than is normally the case with this uninspiring product.

On to St. Petersgate and Greenall's **Stockport Arms**. This is a former Boddington's house, exchanged in the early 70's. It has been opened out from the original multi-roomed pub, but some separateness remains, including a vault.

Greenall's Bitter was rated average to good. At the time of our visit the mild was keg served through a fake handpump although we have since received a report that this misleading practice may have ceased.

Passing the site of a lost local, the **Beehive** now a building society, we reached the **Egerton Arms**. We found a busy pub with loud pipe music, whilst there was live music upstairs. This is another former multi-roomed pub, opened out into a large area around the bar. Fine etched windows remain from architecturally richer days. There is quite a good choice of beer, with Wilsons Mild and Bitter, and Websters Bitter and Choice available. Both Wilsons beers were given average marks by a small group, the Websters beers remained untried.

Down the steps to the **Queens Head/Turner's Vaults**, which has reopened amid much publicity after refurbishment. This is a fine example of pub refurbishment, with much of the character retained, including the newsroom and the country's smallest gents. Many superb interior fittings have been retained with assorted nooks and crannies, period adverts, old photographs and artefacts. Perhaps some of Robinsons architects could stroll down Underbank to find out about pub refurbishment. The beer - both Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter and Museum Ale were available and both were rated above average.

Wending our way down and out of Underbank past the keg-only **White Lion**, we reached the **Tiviot**, near the foot of Lancashire Hill. This Robinsons house has been opened out but retains a vault and obviously separate drinking areas, so some character is retained even if the decoration tends to be rather plastic. Both Best Mild and Best Bitter rated average. I recall drinking a decent pint of Old Tom one recent winter though this luxury was not available on our visit.

Across the road stands Boddington's **Kings Head**, a former Clarke's house. This is a pub with a lot of potential with two rooms and small vault plus some fine wood panelling. Boddingtons Mild was a recent addition to complement the bitter and both were considered very good, the best beer of the night. Curiosities on the shelves were bottles of Robinsons Old Tom. The Kings Head is well worth a visit.

Into Princes St. we came to the **Swan with Two Necks**. This is a town centre gem with wood panelling and stained glass. The pub is multi-roomed with vault, corridor and cosy rear lounge with an open fire and interestingly decorated with framed sets of cigarette cards. Both Best Mild and Best Bitter were rated up to good.

Back towards Underbank we visited the **Castlewood**

ESTD  1867
BURTONWOOD
BREWERY



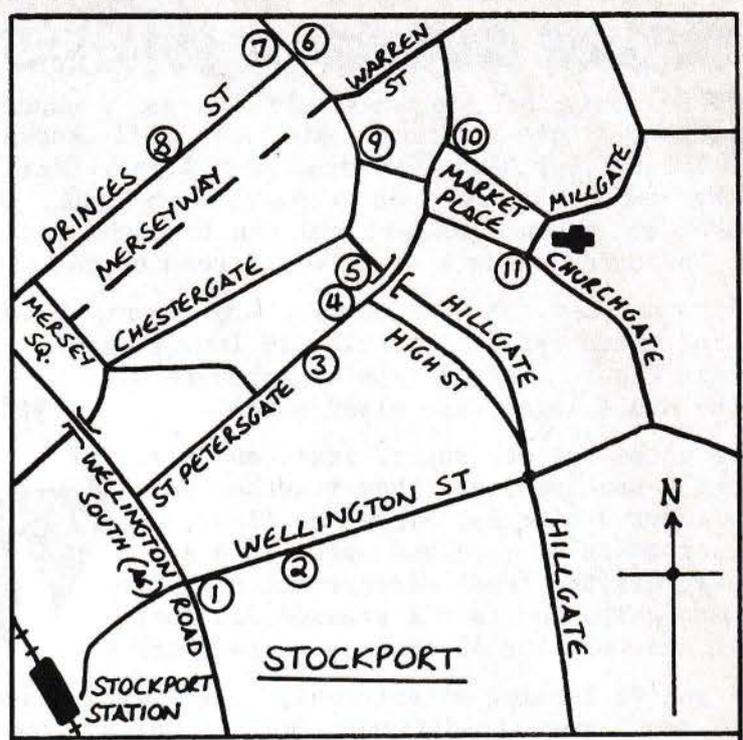
**A FAMILY TRADITION
 OF FINE BREWING**

formerly the Kings Head or Hole i' th' Wall. On our visit it was in the throes of decoration but was nonetheless very busy, with a rather youthful clientele. The pub has two rooms on two levels, though the upper room was shut on the night. The piece de resistance is the old bar back which dominates one wall. A certificate told us that the regulars had donated £110 to Stockport County - that's the way to move the town team up the league table! The beers - Websters Bitter was tried by one member who gave it a token score, presumably on the basis that it was wet. Wilsons Bitter was rated above average whilst the Ruddles County was quite good.

Up into the market, the trail took us to the Boars Head. This Sam Smiths house has been opened out from a former multi-roomed pub. The pub was very busy at 10 o'clock but there was no problem getting served. Old Brewery Bitter received varied scores, very much depending on personal taste with the best rating being very good.

Across the market the stagger finished at the Pack Horse, a Tetley's house reopened on 12th September after refurbishment. The original homely front room has gone but this is generally a tasteful refit - a full description appeared in October's Opening Times. Tetleys (Warrington) Bitter is available, though none of our group tried it. Ind Coope Burton Ale attracted ratings better than average but it was the new Tetley Dark Mild that found most tasters who gave it ratings from average to good.

Here ended our Stagger in Stockport centre. Obviously we missed many pubs, but there is a limit even to a CAMRA Stagger, so apologies to the pubs omitted. Of the pubs visited, there is the usual proviso - both the pubs and the beers were as we found them on the night, and the opinions are a consensus of the group of people present. Try them for yourself and see what you think.



KEY: 1 - UNITY, 2 - LITTLE JACK HORNERS, 3 - STOCKPORT ARMS, 4 - EGERTON ARMS, 5 - TURNERS VAULTS, 6 - TIVOLIOT, 7 - KINGS HEAD, 8 - SWAN WITH 2 NECKS, 9 - CASTLEWOOD, 10 - BOARS HEAD, 11 - PACK HORSE

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Good Beer Guide 1990

XMAS CHEER

THE merits of Robinsons Old Tom as a superb example of a winter ale are well known. The brewery have also created a light, fruity cake using the beer as a main ingredient. It makes an unusual dessert and can be eaten plain or buttered, or as a sweet with cream or custard.

All you need is: 4oz butter, 4oz sugar, 1 cup dried mixed fruit, 1 bottle Old Tom, 2 cups plain flour, 1 level tspn bicarbonate of soda and 1 level tspn mixed spice.

Place the butter, sugar, fruit and ale into a saucepan, melt them together and boil for 3 minutes. Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spice into a bowl, add the fruit mixture and mix thoroughly. Put into a greased 2lb loaf tin and cook for 40 minutes at gas mark 4.

If you're feeling adventurous, you might like to try some traditional mulled ales; brewers will find them particularly cheap:

WASSAIL BOWL: To warm yeasty mild, add sugar which will start another fermentation. Add ground ginger, nutmeg and fortified wine like sherry (or brandy). Add some more beer, lemon then stir and sweeten to taste. Cover and stand in a warm place for up to 3 hours.

MULLED ALE: To strong ale, add honey, a pinch of cloves, ground nutmeg, ginger and cinnamon. Bring nearly to boiling point, add rum or brandy, then sugar to taste. Serve piping hot - but stand well back!

ALE POSSET: Bring a quantity of milk to near boiling point then add toasted bread. A quantity of yolks of eggs and butter, stirring all the time. Heat some ale and pour it into the thick liquid. Stir, heat until the mixture thickens further, adding sugar and a pinch of ground nutmeg to taste. Serve hot.

LAMB'S WOOL: From the 17th century comes this recipe, found with many variants, but all featuring the white fleecy pulp of roasted apples.

'Boil three pints of mild; beat well six whole eggs and add to the ale. Add sugar, nutmeg cloves and ginger to taste. Top with the pulp of roasted apples and being well brewed, drink it while hot.'

It is not really possible to use bitter beer for any of the above recipes for the hoppiness of modern beer would militate against the other ingredients. The ales need to be mild but can be strong or weak according to taste.



THE BEERHOUSE

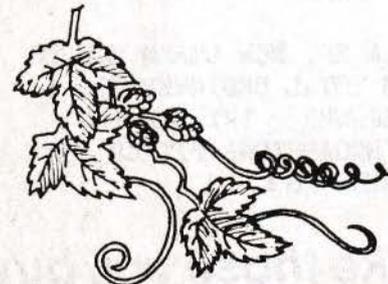
ANGEL ST., off ROCHDALE RD., M/CR

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

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MON.-SAT. 11.30-11.

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



WARNING: Pages 9 and 10 were missing in the original.

HOME BREW

BY Alastair Walker

THE main function of mashing the grains is to provide a source of fermentable sugars, which can be converted into alcohol by yeast at a later stage. The type and proportion of malt grains and adjuncts used in the mashing process is crucial to the flavour and strength of the final beer. At the end of the mashing stage, the unfermented liquid is known as wort, and will be ready for the next stage (boiling).

MALT AND ADJUNCTS

During the last century there were a very large number of commercial maltsters to supply the thousands of small brewing companies throughout Britain. Unfortunately, there are very few independent maltsters left to cater for the vastly reduced number of small and medium-sized breweries that have managed to survive to the present day. Apart from the very large brewing companies, very few present day breweries can afford the luxury of having their own maltings, in which the labour intensive and time-consuming process of converting barley into malt occurs. Unmalted barley is useless for brewing purposes, since the very large carbohydrate molecules present in the grains cannot be utilised for conversion into alcohol. At the maltings, these large molecules are converted into smaller, more manageable units by soaking the barley grains in warm water to make them germinate. When the desired amount of breakdown has occurred, the process is halted by heating the grains in a kiln. The degree of temperature employed and the length of heating time determines the final type of malted barley produced.

Pale Malt - This is the least roasted type of malt and contains the largest proportion of carbohydrate for eventual conversion into alcohol. It therefore contributes greatly to the final strength of the beer but provides very little colour.

Crystal Malt - Moderately roasted malt which adds colour, maltiness and body.

Chocolate and Black Malts - The most heavily roasted malts but containing negligible amounts of useful carbohydrate. Provides much colour, bitterness and dryness to the beer, and often imparts a ground coffee type flavour.

Roasted Barley - Roasted but unmalted grain. Contains no usable carbohydrates, and is generally used to impart colour and dryness.

Malt Extract - Obtainable in powdered form or, more commonly, in a thick syrup-like

consistency. Malt grain is used, the typical amount being from 10 to 15% instead of

Adjuncts

as torrefied and rice. Since they do not require pre-treatment (ie malting), they tend to be cheaper than malted barley, and therefore, most commercial brewers use varying quantities of adjuncts as alternative cost-saving sources of carbohydrate. However, whilst imparting body and ancillary flavours to the final beer, these alternative grains are much inferior to good quality malt and should not be used in proportions of more than 5% of the total quantity of grains. Several big brewers use these materials in very large proportions and the result is always a very thin, insipid, bland beer.

Brewing Sugars - Largely maltose, glucose or sucrose (standard household sugar) which can be directly utilised by the yeast without pre-processing. These sugars will considerably increase the alcoholic strength of the final beer, but if too much is used at the expense of malt grains, then the beer will be thin and lack body. I would recommend no more than 2lb of sugar per 5 gallon brew. If brown sugar is used instead of white, the alcohol conversion rate is slightly less, but a pleasant caramel flavour will enhance milds and old ales.

A typical recipe for mashing 5 gallons of best bitter would be 6lb of pale malt, 1lb of crystal malt, and 1lb of brewing sugar, which should give an OG of approximately 1045, if mashed correctly.

Next month we will start to look at the mashing and boiling processes.

Brian O'Connor
Welcomes you to

THE CHEQUERED FLAG

Greenheys Lane, Hulme

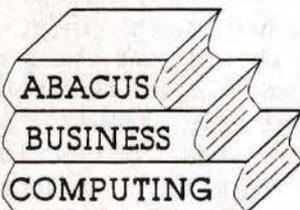
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YEARS AGO

OPENING Times appeared as usual at the beginning of December '84, but then a special Christmas issue was produced later in the month. Between them, the two editions reported further on two contrasting changes that were taking place on the local pub scene, involving Wilsons and Banks's - the former being part of Big 6 Watneys, and the latter part of Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries.

Wilsons were selling off a number of pubs, generally due to their run down state/poor profitability, and were then spending a lot of money in an attempt to drum up business by applying Pennine Hosts treatment to their existing managed pubs. Meanwhile, newcomers to the area Banks's, part of one of the biggest and wealthiest of the independent brewers, were buying up Wilsons cast-offs, and then re-opening them after very extensive refurbishments; in addition, they were building completely new pubs in the area.

One of the first Hosts refurbishments to re-open was the former **Mr Chips** in Mersey Square. Re-named the **Far Pavilions**, it was supposed to offer customers all the spice of old India in the days of the Raj (in Stockport?) - there was an 8ft pith helmet over the bar, and taped jungle noises in a tent-like pavilion' To give some credit to Wilsons, the newly re-opened **Nelson Tavern**, (also in Stockport) was described as fairly tasteful.

There was reference to the old Cheadle Railway Station, which was to be converted to a pub, and it had long been reported that David Pollard was to be involved - but nothing happened for almost a year. Coming up to date, the **Station at Cheadle** has now been a pub for a number of years, but not under David Pollard - it became one of Banks's early conversions, and it has proved to be extremely popular. The theme is obviously railways, and the line still runs alongside - as you enjoy your pint of Banks's, there's that familiar rumble as a train goes through - and it's a real train, none of your taped sound effects a la Wilsons - but there are no passenger trains any more, it's now goods only.

There was a major feature in the Christmas issue, and this was something that never changes (apart from licensees) - The Compliments of the Season from the local pubs.

The target date for the opening of the **Bird in Hand**, Oldham Road, Miles Platting (reported here last month) is Wednesday, December 6th. Beers planned are Matthew Brown Mild, Holts Bitter, Taylors Landlord, Theakstons XB and Youngers Scotch Bitter & IPA, together with uest beers, amongs which Thwaites Bitter may well make an early appearance. As a sister establishment to the Railway at Ashburys, the Bird looks set to bring new quality and choice to a poorly served area area of the city - get along there soon.



★ SEASONS GREETINGS ★
FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL



MERRY XMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS
from Andy & Eunice
The Queens
CHEADLE
 GOOD BEER GUIDE 1987 & '88

Seasons
Greetings
TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS
FROM ANN, JOHN & STAFF
THE STATION
 DIDSBURY
 Good Beer Guide 1988-90

Merry Christmas &
 A Happy New Year
 To All Customers and
 Friends
 FROM PHYLLIS, WENDI AND
 STUART
The Printers
 CHEADLE
 ROBINSONS BEST MILD AND BITTER

Davenport Arms
 (Thief's Neck)
 Woodford
 A Merry Christmas to All Our Customers
 JOHN, JUNE, ALISON & YVONNE
 In The Same Family For 60 Years
 No Music - No Pool
 Robinsons at its Best

KING'S HEAD
HAPPY XMAS TO ALL
TRADITIONAL
BEERS
 ERNIE and KARL
 & NANCY and KATRINA
 WISH TO GIVE A WARM
 AND FRIENDLY WELCOME TO ALL
 Chancellor Lane

• WELCOME •
 RUSHOLME
Roy and Brenda
 Wish All Their Customers
Merry Christmas and
A Happy New Year
 GREENALLS ALES



★ SEASONS GREETINGS ★



FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

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GOOD
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Happy New Year**

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TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS
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Merry Xmas

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FROM

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RECENTLY REFURBISHED

3 Real Ales

RUDDLES ★ WILSONS ★ WEBSTERS

Happy Xmas to all our Customers
from Elaine, Adrian & Staff



Ron, Val & Nel

WELCOME YOU TO THE

SUBURBAN

GORTON

J.W. LEES FINE ALES

Ask for this year's HARVEST ALE

MERRY XMAS TO YOU ALL



CAMRA CALLING!

AGAIN we have a full range of activities this month starting on Monday 4th with a social at the **Pack Horse**, Hillgate, Stockport. In common with all Monday socials, this starts at 9pm.

The following Monday, 11th, there is a social at the **Cheadle Hulme** (formerly the Junction) in Cheadle Hulme. On the Thursday of that week, 14th, there is our monthly branch meeting. This month we are at the Midway, Newbridge Lane, Stockport. The meeting starts at 8pm prompt and will include a beer/general knowledge quiz, with fabulous prizes (it says here).

Saturday 16th sees one of the highlights of the branch year with our annual Christmas Meal. This year it is being held in the new lounge at the **Marble Arch**, Rochdale Road, Manchester. There will be a buffet meal, a prize raffle and a guest speaker - Brendan Dobbin, brewer at the Kings Arms. Tickets are £8.50 each, please phone straight away if you are interested.

On Monday 18th, the social is at the **Seven Stars**, Ashton Old Road, Beswick and on Thursday 21st there is the Pub of the Month presentation to the **Church Inn**, Moseley St., Edgeley.

The month ends with another traditional event - the famous Hillgate Crawl. This is a traditional branch event which attracted over 40 people last year. Good fun and it's downhill all the way. Meet 7pm **Blossoms**, 8.30 **Crown**.

Finally, apologies to anyone who turned up for the Pub Hunt to find it cancelled - this was due to the re-arrangement of our visit to Boddingtons. We will run it next year. If you want more info phone Angela on 0663 43769.



MANCHESTER MATTERS

FIRST, the plug. From this month on, these notes which have until now, at least in theory, been intended as 'update sheets' to the leaflet style "Real Ale in Central & South Manchester" can be used to keep up to date your copy of "Ale of Two Cities", CAMRA's new guide to beer and pubs in Manchester and Salford. More fully described elsewhere in this issue, 'A2C' should be available from mid-December - an excellent stocking -filler! Remember, though, that except in cases of unusual interest, this column will confine itself to the Opening Times circulation area - the City Centre, South Manchester E of Princess Parkway and East Manchester S of the Medlock. Our sister paper 'What's Doing' occasionally carries items of interest relating to the rest of Manchester and Salford.

Now to business, and passing only to record the conversion to cask beer - handpumped John Smith's Bitter - of the **Lord Nelson** on Newton Street in the City Centre, we reserve this month's big round of applause for the re-opening of Boddington's **Concert Inn** on Fairfield Road, Openshaw. A splendidly discreet refurbishment has preserved the layout (and the etched glass, intact, rescued the formerly near-derelect pool room, and generally transformed a badly run-down pub into the little gem it always should have been - why didn't they do a job like this at the **Locomotive**? Beer, as before is handpumped Boddingtons Bitter.

Also in Openshaw, mild at the Banks's **Royal Oak** is now keg (though a handpump still displays a pumpclip - naughty), and the **Pack Horse** has added handpumped Thomas Greenall's Original. Back in the City Centre, the **King** no longer sells Ind Coope Burton Ale.

The Nursery Inn

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PUB NEWS



New faces at the **Britannia**, Rowsley St, Beswick are Lance and Bev Turner, who took over on 13th November. Though this is their first pub, they have a family connection with the **Church** (Lees again) on Cambridge Street, Hulme. They say they chose the Britannia as it was "a traditional pub...just what we wanted" - we wish them every success in this lively little local.

Manchester University's **Students Union** has started serving real ale in their top floor bar. Open weekdays 12-2, they serve Stones Bitter, Youngers IPA and Theakstons Best Bitter for 85p and Old Peculier for £1.30 plus Westons Old Rosie Cider. The beer is not always on top form but is certainly an improvement on the keg beers recently available.

Brewing Supplies, the home brew shop in Heaviley, was voted one of the top three retailers of its kind nationally, having already won the local heat of the competition. Not only does the shop stock the fullest possible range for the home brew enthusiast and sell Robinsons beers, but it also has its own exclusive kits made up to home produced recipes.

As we went to press the **Stanley Arms** on Newbridge Lane, Stockport was set to re-open on 6th December as the town's latest free house. The fire damage has been repaired and the pub will be decorated in traditional style. Owner Mike Belsham tells us that up to 5 cask beers will be available from Whitbread (Marstons Pedigree), Tetley (Bitter) and Matthew Brown. A full report next month.

The mild in the **Mersey Vale**, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, is now keg although when last visited the hand-pump complete with pumpclip was still on display - you have been warned!

The **GM Buses Social Club** on Mount Road in Belle Vue now has Chesters Mild & Bitter and Tetley Mild & Bitter all on handpump. Meanwhile, at **Didsbury Cricket Club** on Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter is now available. The club is open to non-members on special nights, Thursday for example is Jazz Night (admission £1.50).

Brian Geegan of the **Pineapple** (Hydes), off Hyde Rd near Belle Vue, has moved to Southport to take over Tetleys Blue Anchor - the last keg Tetley pub in Southport, which Brian will soon be converting to the joys of real ale. We wish him every success in his new venture.

We reported last month that the **Grapes**, Heaton Norris appeared to be having some problems with its mild. We are told that only keg mild is now on sale.

We welcome Karl, Katrina, Ernie and Nancy, the new licensees of the **Kings Head** in Ardwick. They have taken over from Tony & Audrey Stokes who have had to retire due to Tony's ill health, and to him we wish a speedy recovery. There are no immediate changes planned for the Kings - the excellent range of Scottish & Newcastle beers remains. However Karl & co are making strong commitments in two important areas - they want to improve the standard of food available with the reintroduction of breakfasts and food on Sundays; they also want to make the pub a family affair and so welcome children. We wish them the best of luck.

Contributors to this edition: Peter Barnes, John Clarke, Stuart Ballantyne, Jim Flynn, Robin Wignall, Alastair Walker, Phil Leviso, Rhys Jones, Angela Walker, Gareth Bell, Dennis Rowlinson, Ian Saunders.

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Opening Times is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA — the Campaign For Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9WD. Tel: 477 1973 (home), 831 7222 ext. 3411 (work). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA:: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.