

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

№71

MARCH 1990

# OPENING CAMRA TIMES FREE

## SWAP OF THE CENTURY

**A**S WE went to press, speculation was rife that Grand Met was to sell its brewing division to Elders IXL, the Australian Foster's lager group owned by John Elliott.

In the biggest fall-out yet from the 1989 Monopolies Commission probe of the brewing industry, Grand Met, who trade locally under the Wilsons/Websters and Chef & Brewer banner, looks set to swap its breweries for the 5000 Courage and John Smiths pubs owned by Elders.

Just before we went to press Grand Met formally confirmed that they were at an advanced stage in negotiations with Elders. Allen Shepherd, head of GrandMet, has been signalling for some time that he is anxious to quit brewing and to concentrate on retailing. The emphasis will be on food in GrandMet's up-market outlets, the Chef & Brewer chain in particular.

The deal with Elders will mean that GrandMet will sidestep the government's May 1st deadline for introducing guest ales into Big 6 pubs. The rules will not apply to GrandMet, as it will cease to be a brewer.

Full details of the deal, which may involve all or some of GrandMet's breweries, and any number of Elders' Courage/John Smiths pubs, are still uncertain. Not surprisingly, the deal seems to be having problems with the Office of Fair Trading largely because of both the size of the transactions and the positions it would give the companies in brewing and pub retailing. The whole deal has been condemned by CAMRA as a merger by any other name - it would create a single company with 20% of the beer market and a single pub owning company with anything up to 10,000 pubs.

In short, the deal will be bad for both the consumer and the licensee. Drinkers are likely to see a reduction in choice - what future would local brands like Wilsons then have. Licensees of the new pub company will miss out on the opportunities to stock guest beers which their rivals in other national brewers pubs will have. Full details should be available by next month and we will have a further report and local reaction to the deal.



The exciting Beer Festival news this month is that CAMRA have gone into partnership with Stockport's new **KFM Radio** to bring you this year's Beer Festival. The local community station will be sponsoring its own **KFM Festival Ale**, as well as bringing you competitions to win free entrance to the event. On the entertainment front, not only will the festival be covered by outside broadcasts, but on Saturday night we will have live RnB with John Brett and KFM's own Norman Beaker. More next month.

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MARCH			
4	11	18	25...
5	12	19	26...
6	13	20	27...
7	14	21	28...
1	8	15	22 29...
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# PUB OF THE MONTH

**T**HE Pub of the Month award for March 1990 has gone to the Crown, Middle Hillgate, Stockport.

In these days when too many brewers have come to regard their pubs as profit centres with little regard for tradition, the Crown is an increasingly rare throwback to a quieter age. This is a fact made all the more remarkable by the fact that it is owned by arguably one of the more exploitive companies - Grand Met.

The pub is solidly traditional, comprising of a thriving vault and a smaller, comfortably furnished lounge at the back which is served from a hatch but which often has waitress service in the evenings.

Looking at the bar it's easy to forget you are in the age of mass-produced junk lagers and 'niche' drinks - apart from one unobtrusive lager pump, there is just one bank of handpumps dispensing Wilsons Mild and Bitter which is so well kept it's easy to think that it's still being brewed at Newton Heath and not at the Halifax beer factory. The quality is such that it is one of the few Wilsons outlets in Greater Manchester to make it into the 1990 Good Beer Guide.

All this is due to the current hard work of licensees Brian and Margaret Cumston and the fact that the pub has been in their family since 1902. All this may come to an end this year as, faced with the prospect of an Inntrepreneur lease Brian and Margaret are thinking of retiring and our award is one way of thanking them for all that they have done. The presentation is on Thursday 22nd when all are welcome to a memorable night.

# BE MY GUEST

**T**HE GUEST beer policy to be operated by the Boddington Pub Co, exclusively predicted in Opening Times last month, has come out looking somewhat threadbare to say the least.

The arrangements, announced last month, simply involve a trading agreement with Warrington based Tetley Walker. Under the terms of the agreement, Boddingtons will take on Tetley Bitter and Castlemaine XXXX lager throughout its estate.

It was already known that Castlemaine was one of the replacements Boddingtons had chosen for its now-axed Kaltenberg brand; the choice of Tetley Bitter however came as a surprise. Both products will be gradually introduced into Boddington's managed estate and will also be offered to any interested tenants. It remains to be seen to what extent Tetley Bitter is able to compete against Boddington which still attracts a loyal brand following locally. The danger is that it could well affect the viability of the other current house beers - Higsons and OB, we know from long experience how practiced the industry is in manufacturing 'no demand' for beer they want to axe in the long run.

## GOING ONCE...

One new feature in the forthcoming Stockport Beer Festival will be a series of Brewerian Auctions to be held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. So, if you've any old brewery memorabilia such as bottles, trays, advertising material or whatever that you would like to convert into cash, please phone the auction organiser, Bernard Holland, on 487 224 (evenings only) for details of terms etc.



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## PUB OF THE YEAR 1989

**S**TOCKPORT & South Manchester CAMRA's coveted Pub of the Year Award for 1989 has gone to the **Railway**, Pottery lane, opposite Ashburys Station in Gorton.

The distinguishing feature of this increasingly popular pub is what "Ale of Two Cities" describes as "the best range of beers and ciders in East Manchester".

The pub has been open in its present state for just over a year, before which it had been closed for several years. Not for the first time, a pub discarded by a national brewer (in this case Bass) has prospered in the free trade. And this prosperity is in the fullest measure due to the hard work and enthusiasm of licensees Bob and Madeleine Gregory. There were plenty who doubted the pub's potential, but Bob and Madeleine enter their second year with a widened range of beers, including some interesting bottles, and not forgetting the "Gloucestershire Gargleblaster", Frampton Dry Cider, in simple but well-kept and friendly surroundings only 4 minutes by train from the centre of Manchester.

The night to remember is Saturday, 24th March, when the Pub of the Year award will be presented to Bob and Madeleine; great beer and cider, plus the special atmosphere of a CAMRA presentation at this fine and friendly pub, should make for a memorable night out.

## WHITE SHIELD BLUES

### Paul Thompson laments .....

**I**N THE same way that draught real ale undergoes a secondary fermentation in the cask once it has left the brewery, Worthington White Shield is a beer which undergoes a secondary fermentation in the bottle and is therefore recognised as one of the few bottled real ales. It is one of the very few genuine British traditionally brewed bottled beers available today. Although brewed by Bass, it is not available in all Basas pubs, but is available in certain pubs tied to other breweries, eg Hydes and Robinsons.

The big advantage of bottled beers, of course, is that they are easy to transport and are ideal to drink at home. Augustus Barnett is a chain of off-licences owned by Bass and there may well be a branch near you. My local branch does not normally stock Worthington White Shield but it is available to order. Be warned however, my order placed just before Christmas has not yet come through ("Sorry, they're out of stock"). This is in stark contrast to the range of bottled beers not brewed by Bass, have been imported into the country and which are permanently available.

It's a sad day for the British brewing industry when Britain's biggest brewer has no difficulty in supplying foreign beer to its own off licences but cannot supply a traditional British product from one of its own breweries. With such a set-up now, what chance do Bass have in 1992 when the Single European Market is introduced? There must be a Europe-wide market niche for a traditional British bottled beer but I can't see Bass rising to the occasion.

## BEER HUNTER

**B**EEER at last makes it to the small screen with the Channel 4 series, 'The Beer Hunter', which starts on March 27th for a 6 week run.

Michael Jackson, the world's only full-time writer on beer and whisky, has written and presented the series which was shot in journeys through six countries. It looks at the world's greatest brews (both lagers and ales) - in styles that differ as much as a champagne does from a port. He stops at bars, restaurants, festivals, tastings and breweries in Germany, Belgium, a monastery in the Netherlands, California and Britain.



The series starts with a look at the beers of Belgium, familiar perhaps to some OT readers from the local free-houses that sell these unusual beers and in later episodes goes to Bavaria where amongst other brews he looks at smoked beers made using hot stones and then, via Czechoslovakia (the home of the original Pilsener Lager), Holland, California (Anchor Steam beers - featured in January's OT) he returns to the UK for the last programme on May 1st with a look at Bateman's award-winning beers from Lincolnshire and CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival. All in all a series not to be missed.

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anniversary at the  
DUB of the YEAR  
presentation on  
Sat 24 March.



# LIFE WITH BODIES

## A CAUTIONARY TALE

### BY ROBIN WIGNALL

**O**NE OF THE first locals to be affected by the new direction taken by Boddingtons has been the **Crown Hotel** on Heaton Moor Road, a high barrelage tenancy formerly in the hands of long-serving licensees Peter and Maurenn Dabell, ably assisted by bar and cellar manager Steve Atkin, and arguably the only true local remaining in the village.

Boddington's outlined the processes for dealing with potential changes in issue 2, Vol 1, of their imaginatively retitled in-house magazine, 'The Opening Times' (not to be confused with the long established local CAMRA publication you are now reading).

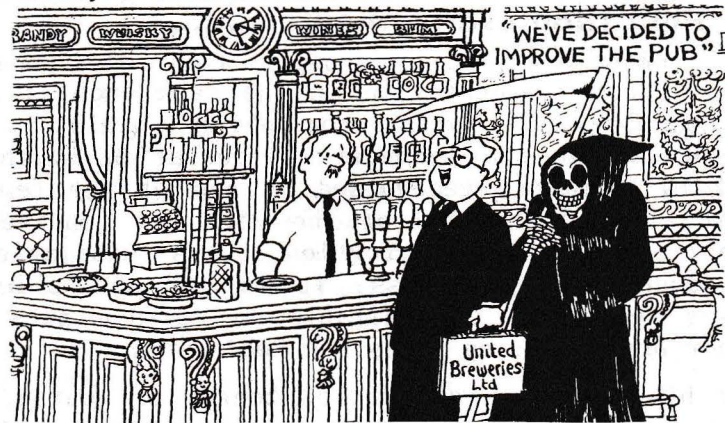
Certainly as far as the Crown is concerned the processes were followed. The tenant was 'approached by senior personnel to explain the company's position'. Some 'steps have been taken to reach a sensible and amicable settlement'. Peter Dabell was asked to consider other tenancies with a low barrelage, and other managements. Peter rejected these and so for the time being at least he and Maureen went into semi-retirement when the new licensee took over. Peter's right hand man Steve Atkin has moved not too far away and will be found at the Miners Arms, Adlington/Higher Poynton supporting the present landlord. The Crown's loss is the Miners' gain.

Meanwhile the regulars have been concerned about the future of their local and many letters were written to Boddingtons expressing concern. Obviously a new landlord would bring his own style and personality into the pub and hopefully Boddingtons management team would choose a landlord to fit the bill.

Rather more worrying is the stated intention in Boddingtons 'The Opening Times' to support licensees with a 'rapidly expanding pub refurbishment programme'. Regulars are worried what this could mean for the Crown. At the moment it seems that refurbishment will simply be redecoration, reupholstering and recarpeting. For the present there are no plans for any structural alterations apparently. Hopefully there will not be any future plans. The Crown is a fine multi-roomed boozery. It is the only pub on Heaton Moor which is multi-roomed, and it is the only pub on the Moor with a vault. This vault is a much valued room where working clothes are not frowned upon, and where university lecturer and solicitor happily rub shoulders with building labourer and warehouse storesman. The vault is home to two darts teams, playing in Boddingtons Stockport & District Darts and Cribbage League.

Luckily the arrival of the new licensees allows for some optimism that Boddingtons appreciate what they have in the Crown. New landlord and landlady are Peter and Carmel Belfield, formerly of the Dutton Arms, a Boddingtons house in Eccles. Peter claims to be a 'vault man' which hopefully augurs well for darts and crib, and the vault in general.

It is all too easy for the big ideas of brewery architects to spoil a good pub. Hopefully boddingtons realise that they manage what is already a considerable asset.



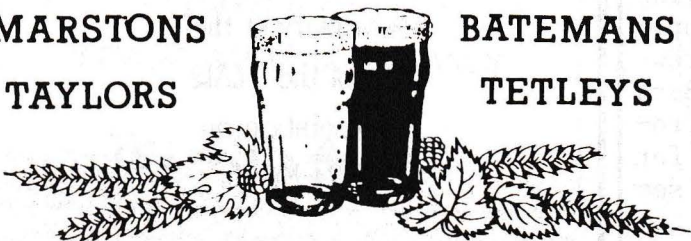
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**LETTERS**

**From Rhys Jones:**

Just to reinforce Peter Edwardson's point (OT, February) that football supporters are no excuse for the absurd difficulty in finding a pub open in central Manchester on Saturday afternoons, I simply observe that the great majority of pubs in Liverpool City Centre open all day Saturdays.

**From 'A Local Drinker':**

IN CAMRA's Festival Times 89, a claim is made that CAMRA is the largest consumer organisation in the country.

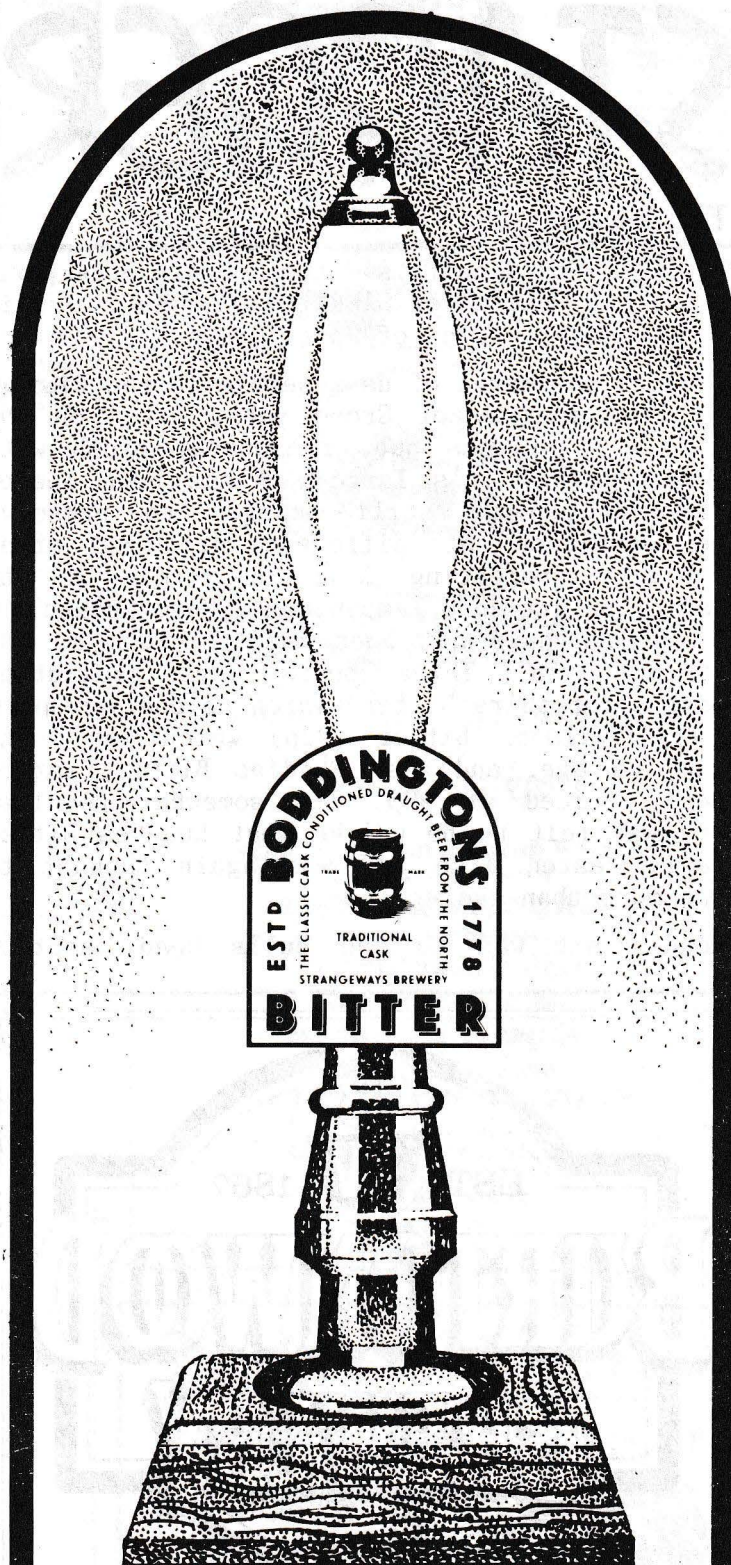
As I have been a consumer of beer for six decades, I now invite CAMRA's advice as to what can be done and should be done to defend a consumer of beer in the following circumstances.

About 11.30am one morning last year I went into a small City pub, ordered a pint of bitter, and requested that the volume of the music then being churned out at maximum volume be reduced a bit. I made the request because I am one of many who deplore the increasing practice of publicans playing very poor quality music at maximum volume when at least some of us prefer to drink without such unwanted inflictions.

The barmaid served me, then disappeared, and a middle aged lady (sic) arrived and favoured me with a raucous verbal attack (which I will not repeat). I was so astonished by this treatment (I have often made similar requests elsewhere which have always met with courtesy and a favourable response) I walked out without asking to meet the landlord.

Question What rights has a consumer of beer in such circumstances. I know licensees have wide powers as to who should be served - but such powers are intended I think, to be used in the event of disturbances and damage to the pub and certainly not when a modest request is made for consideration. Presumably the consumer has 5 rights - to make the request, to insist on meeting the landlord, to complain to the licensing authority, to write to the brewery and, the final sanction, to avoid such a pub - and staff - in future.

**(Editor's note:** this is certainly a disturbing state of affairs. Our correspondent should certainly send a stiff letter to the brewery at least. What do you think? Letters please to the address on the back page.)



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# STAGGER

BY: PAUL FELTON

**F**RIDAY 19th January saw the monthly Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Stagger, this time in the wilds of Hazel Grove.

7 o'clock saw seven of us assemble in the **Rising Sun**, like most Hazel Grove pubs, sited on the A6. It's a Wilsons pub, reasonably plush with a low ceiling. It's large and has been opened up somewhat, but still manages to preserve some semblance of different drinking areas (with an interesting line in prints of the Titanic and art-deco lampshades). Unfortunately, the toilets have not been made a plush as the drinking area. Three beers were available: Websters Yorkshire Bitter (which no one ventured to try, Wilsons Bitter (92p) which was found to be average, and also Ruddles Bitter, rather steeply priced at 98p. Its somewhat peculiar taste was felt to be unlike what Ruddles Bitter normally tasted like and was again thought to be no more than average.

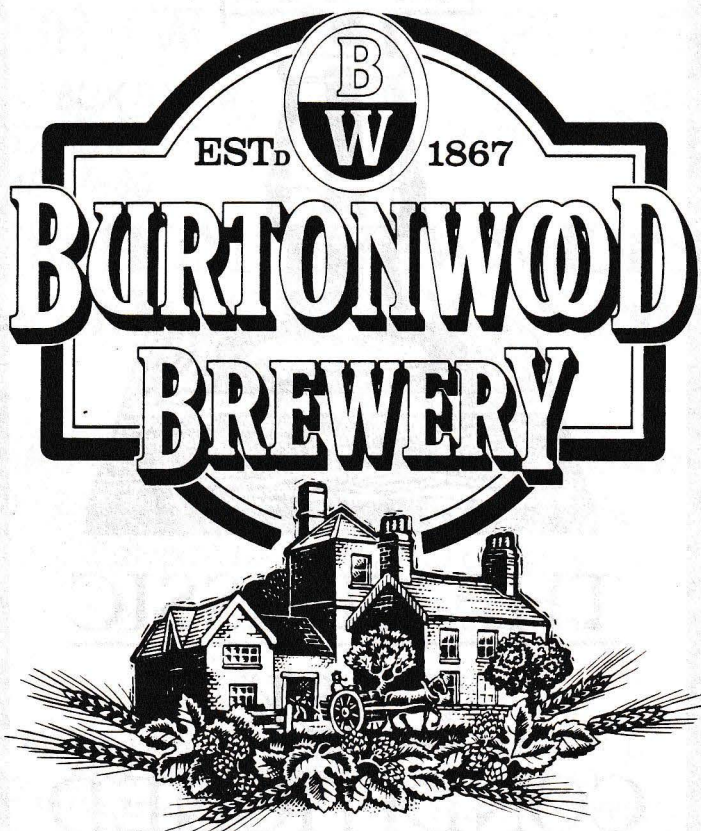
Second visit was to the **Bulls Head**, another

Grand Met pub. Websters was 98p; and if we had found the Ruddles Bitter a trifle expensive in the Rising Sun, we were taken aback to see it on sale here at £1 a pint. The entrance to the pub is through the car park. Several years ago, the Bulls Head was felt to be a reasonably decent example of a refurbishment, but it hasn't worn well and was felt to be somewhat lacking in soul - 'like sitting in a plastic stable'. There were many tables and chairs cluttering the place up, with stained red wood, red 'velvet' seating and pictures on the wall of the pub advertising Showells Fine Ales - long since gone. The beer here - all tried Ruddles despite the price - was considerably the better of the two samples of Ruddles we were offered.

From there on in, with one exception, Robinsons took over. First was the **White Hart**, brewer's Tudor on the outside (though the paint job needed touching up). Those who knew reckoned that the pub had been unchanged for at least 10 years, which is good considering Robinsons dubious reputation where refurbishments are concerned. Best Mild was 79p, Best Bitter 84p and Old Tom £1.32. It's a pub with a low ceiling, fake beams and two areas - the left half of the rectangle was a seated 'lounge' area, while the right half of the pub was filled by the bar and rather less seating. The mild wasn't very good, suffering from an excess of the unfortunate sulphury smell that Robinsons beers sometimes have, but the bitter was decent. The one sample of Old Tom was found to be off - the landlord changed it immediately, without question, and even apologised. Good to see - other pubs please note.

Next was the third and final Wilsons pub on the stagger, the **Horse & Jockey**. The outside of this pub is rather splendid and impressive, if fake. Unfortunately, the inside was something of a disappointment - comfortable but dark and opened-out, 'quintessentially nondescript', someone rather unkindly put it. The bar is stuck in a corner, with two distinct areas which were once separate rooms. The bitter was generally thought to be below average and a word of warning about the mild - it's keg beer served through fake handpumps, a practice CAMRA deplores as an attempt to deceive the public.

After that it was Robinsons all the way home. Opposite the Horse & Jockey is the **Grapes**, with the standard range of Best Mild (80p) and Best Bitter (84p). This was the first pub of the evening to have a separate vault and lounge, even having smaller rooms off the main lounge, decorated with horse brasses. It's a good comfortable pub that's remained unchanged for a good few years, although we could have done without the juke-box speakers in the side room. The beers, which unusually



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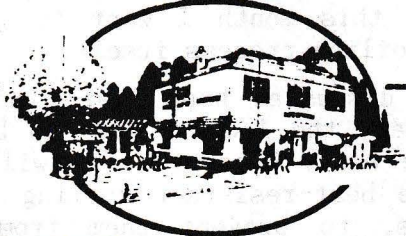


was served via electric diaphragm pumps, was in good form, with little if anything to chose between the two.

Next was the **Three Tunnes**, virtually next door to the Grapes. Best Mild was 80p, unfortunately your writer did not make a note of the Best Bitter price (84p I think - ed.). It's another good pub with a variety of rooms, more brasses and (possibly fake) beams. Unfortunately the pub seems to be in some trouble with regard to damp slowly dissolving one or two of the outside walls and a fairly drastic rebuild by Robinsons has been on the cards for some years. The Best Bitter was a little above average, the Best Mild being more favourably received.

The **Bird in Hand** (Robinsons again, of course) was further up, on the other side of the road. The beer was the cheapest of the night - Best Mild was 78p, the Best Bitter 84p. This is an old, formerly somewhat grotty pub which was subjected to a typical Robinsons refurbishment which, while nothing to write home about, is considered by those who know the place to have actually been an improvement. Notable were the giant wooden spoon which was hung up on one of the walls, and the fact that the juke-box was TOO LOUD (perhaps we're too old...). The beer was again slightly above average, but it was noticeable that the pub was comparatively quiet for a Friday night.

And that is all that space will allow for this crawl. There remained several fine pubs to cover, notably the **Royal Oak**, the **Cock** and the **Grove**, all of which can be recommended. They, and the pubs of Great Moor and Heaviley will have to wait for a Stagger later this year. As to the pubs we did cover, the comments simply reflect how we found them on the night and are not meant to be a once and for all judgement. As ever, try them yourselves and see what you think.



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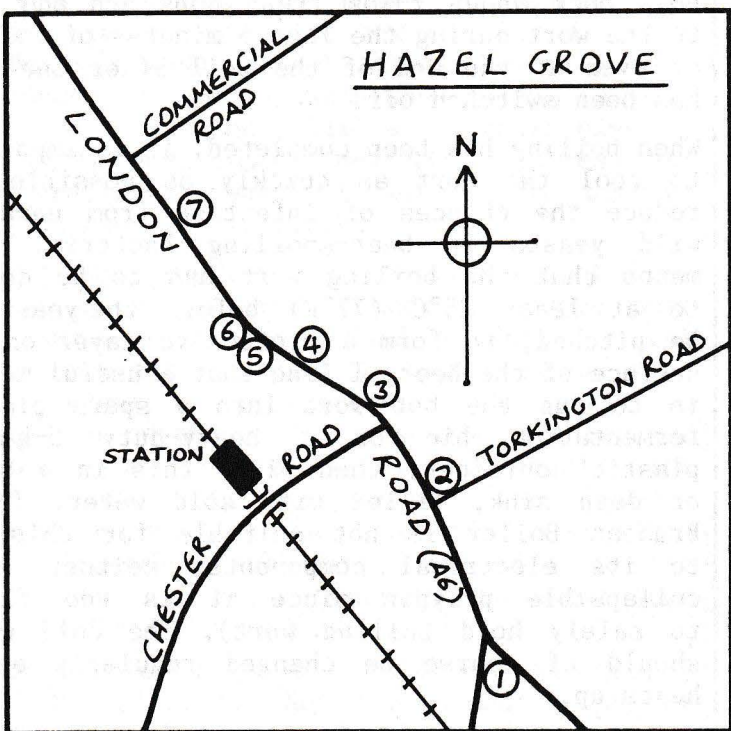
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**KEY:** 1- RISING SUN, 2- BULLS HEAD, 3- WHITE HART, 4- HORSE & JOCKEY, 5- GRAPES, 6- THREE TUNS, 7- BIRD IN HAND

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# HOME BREW

BY ALASTAIR WALKER

THIS MONTH: BOILING AND COOLING

**L**AST month I concluded by suggesting either a large enamelled saucepan or, more expensively a Bruheat Boiler as suitable boiling vessels, this month I want to go on and look at the boiling process itself.

We also discussed hops last time and if using a saucepan, the loose hops can be put directly into the wort. Otherwise, it will be necessary to use a heat-resistant boiling bag to contain the hops, to prevent them from blocking the tap in your Bruheat boiler when running off the wort after boiling is complete. There are two types of boiling bag, both nylon. The first is a simple, long, bag that can be filled with the requisite quantity of hops, knotted at the open end, and dropped into the boiling wort. The other is a more shallow bag that has strings attached, and is intended to be left open and suspended from the rim of the boiler when the lid is in place. Although ideal for the mashing process, I would not recommend the use of the second type of bag, since the

strings restrict the seal between the rim of the bin and the lid, allowing dangerous steam to escape during the necessary vigorous boiling.

## BOILING

There are several reasons why the boiling process is essential to making beer, not least of all to sterilise the wort, hence the reason why everyone, including children, used to drink beer several hundred years ago - it was safer on sanitary grounds than water. Boiling also destroys any further unwanted enzyme activity from the malt, and is crucial in coagulating unwanted proteins from the mashing stage, which can lead to hazes when the wort is cooled (this latter process is known as the "hot break"). In addition, the inclusion of hops imparts flavour, aroma and bitterness, as well as having an anti-bacterial preservative effect on the finished beer.

A vigorous "rolling" boil is required to extract full benefit from the hops, and this should be maintained for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 hours. It is easy to see when the hot break has been achieved by the presence of small, mushy, spherical pellets of protein. The attainment of the hot break can be improved by the addition of Irish Moss (an extract from seaweed, also known as copper finings) to the wort, 15-30 minutes before the end of the boil.

Unfortunately, a certain amount of the more volatile, aromatic elements from the hops are lost during the boiling stage. Commercial brewers rectify this problem by adding a handful of fresh hops to the finished beer in the barrel. Since this process is not practical for the average home-brewer, a good compromise is to hold back about  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz fresh hops and add them to the wort during the last 5 minutes of boiling or even at the end of the boil after the heat has been switched off.

When boiling has been completed, it is important to cool the wort as quickly as possible, to reduce the chances of infection from unwanted wild yeasts or beer-spoiling bacteria. This means that the boiling wort has to be cooled to at least 25°C (77°F) before the yeast can be pitched, to form a protective layer on the surface of the beer. I find that a useful method is to run the hot wort into a spare plastic fermentation bin or a heavy-duty 5-gallon plastic container, then place this in a bath, or deep sink, filled with cold water. (NB a Bruheat Boiler is not suitable for this due to its electrical components, neither is a collapsible poly-pin since it is too flimsy to safely hold boiling wort). The cold water should of course be changed regularly as it heats up.

Next month, Alastair Walker looks at yeast and fermentation.

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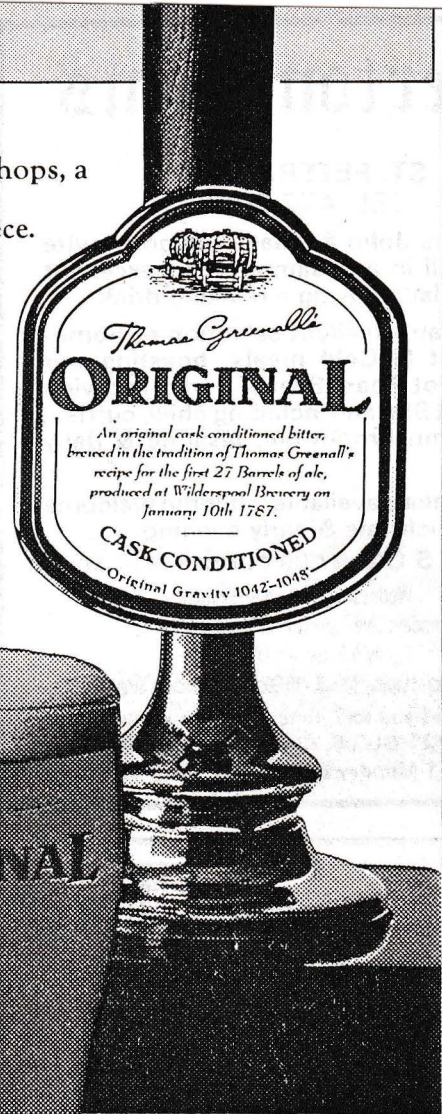
Hardly surprising, then, that this beer is known as Thomas Greenall's Original.

It's a strong, dark, full bodied bitter with a smooth, rounded flavour and a distinctive hoppy character.

Because Thomas Greenall's Original needs careful handling you won't find it everywhere. Only in those public houses where the licensee's cellarmanship is proven beyond question.

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RAILWAY, 74/76 Wellington Road North. GREYHOUND, Ladybridge Road, Cheadle Hulme.

(All above outlets in Stockport).

TOMMY DUCKS, 8/12 East Street. PACK HORSE, 359/361 Deansgate. PACK HORSE, 1135 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw.  
WELCOME INN, 2 Hyth Road, Didsbury. CROWN, 770 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury.

DOG & PARTRIDGE, 665/7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. QUEENS ARMS, 72 Guide Lane, Denton.  
CARTERS ARMS, 209 Stockport Road, Denton.

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# YEARS AGO

**I**N MARCH 1985, those magic words 'Pound a Pint' appeared on the front page of Opening Times. This was following CAMRA's national price survey, and it was actually referring to some London pubs that had gone through the pound barrier - but they were mostly selling higher gravity beers like Young's Special and Ruddle's County. Greater Manchester was quoted as "best value for money", with a typical bitter price of 61-64p (except for Holts, of course, which averaged 55p for bitter). So now, in 1990, an average pint of bitter costs 85-90p, with Holts again undercutting that by over 10p (In the Cheadle Hulme, an extremely smart Holt's pub, that most people will remember as the Junction, mild and bitter are currently 69p and 74p respectively!)

Banks's were in the news again with the re-opening of what used to be the Gorton Brook, a huge fizzy Wilsons pub in Gorton that had been closed and boarded up for ages. This was another of the series of ex-Wilsons pubs that Banks's had bought, and then re-opened after extensive refurbishment. General consensus of opinion is that they always make an excellent job of the alterations.

There was an item on pubs that appear regularly in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, and it was surprising to read that only one pub in the South Manchester branch's area had been in every guide since the first one was published in 1974. It was the Coach & Horses on London Road, now of course under threat of demolition to make way for the new rapid transit system. Mention was also made of four other pubs that had made their first appearance in the 1975 Guide, and then in every edition up to 1985. They were: the Gateway, East Didsbury; the Griffin, Heaton Mersey; the Printers Arms, Cheadle; the Tatton Arms, Moss Nook. It's comforting to think that these four are all still going strong, but the Tatton is the only one to have continued (up to 1990) the unbroken record of every Guide since '75.

There was a reminder of what a wide range of cask beers was available at the Midway, Newbridge Lane, Stockport - Tetleys, Thwaites, Boddingtons, Marstons, Theakstons and even Winkles (remember them?) BVA from Buxton. These all disappeared when the pub was bought by John Smiths, but at least we now have the "rare bew for the area" - Courage Directors. The Midway was one of the very few free houses in the area, but oddly, another one has now opened on Newbridge Lane. The Stanley Arms sells Thwaites, Tetley, Bass and Whitbread products. Whilst this is a good selection it ia made even better by the addition of Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery beers, which, you may be surprised to learn, are brewed in the cellar of the Kings Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock.



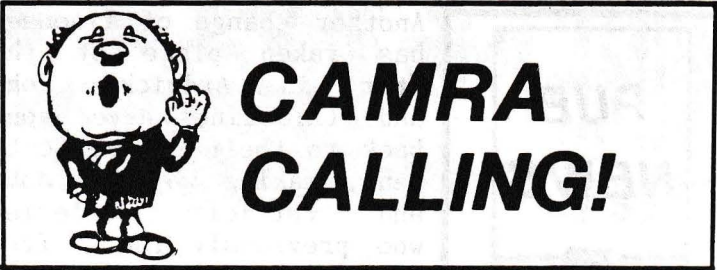


# MANCHESTER MATTERS

**Y**ATES'S Wine Lodge on Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, now sells Stones Bitter and Websters Bitter on handpumps, while in Wythenshawe, the **Portway**, on the road of that name, has handpumped Chesters Bitter. Just outside OT's circulation area, the **Crown** on Epping Walk in Hulme has handpumped Stones Bitter.

The **Metropole** in Beswick is closed and boarded up, though light's been seen upstairs. **Sports** in Levenshulme is also closed and had the builders in as we went to press, hopefully it will emerge as a proper pub once again. The **Cheshire Hunt** in West Gorton now sells keg beer only; however at the time of writing the handpumps remained bearing pumpclips advertising traditional John Smith's Bitter - a deceptive practice which has been reported to the trading standards authorities.

In Ardwick, the **Star** now sells Banks's Mild on electric pump - at the time of writing the old pump with the "brewery conditioned" (ie keg) mounting was in use, but hopefully this will be put right before long. Further along towards town, the **George & Dragon** no longer sells Courage Directors. Finally, the first handpumps for Boddingtons Bitter have been seen in Whitbread pubs - it's at the **Victoria** in West Gorton and the **Abercrombie** in the City Centre. At the **Abercrombie** we are also told that, although Castle Eden Ale is still sold, cask Trophy has been dropped. Incidentally, the Marstons Pedigree at this pub retails at £1.20 a pint and not £1.26 as reported last time.



# CAMRA CALLING!

**O**UR usual mixed bag this month with, hopefully, something for everyone.

We start with the branch meeting on Thursday, 8th which will be held at the Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport from 8.00pm onwards. This is followed on Monday 12th with one of our regular informal socials, this time at the Farmers Arms, Cheadle Heath. Like all Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm. On the Friday of the same week (16th) we have our monthly Stagger, this time around the Heaton. We start at 7.00pm at the Chapel House on Manchester Road or you can join us at 8.30 at the Plough, Heaton Moor Road.

On Monday 19th the Social is at the Hinds Head, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel. This is followed on Wednesday 21st by a visit to Hydes Brewery - please phone for details. The following night we are presenting our Pub of the Month award to the Crown on Middle Hillgate, Stockport. A hectic week finishes on Saturday 24th with the presentation of our 1989 Pub of the Year Award to the Railway, Pottery Lane, Gorton - see the item on Page 3.

Just two Monday Socials to finish off with - on Monday 26th we are at The Falcon, Dryden St, Chorlton-on-Medlock (although we may finish the evening at the Kings Arms) and on Monday 2nd April, we are at the George & Dragon, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel. If you want more details, please phone either John Clarke on 477 1973 or Stuart Ballantyne on 428 4114, both evenings only.



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**PUB NEWS**



Another change of licensee has taken place at the **Star** in Ardwick. John and Christine have gone back to their native Scotland, making way for John and Patricia Jefferies who previously ran a free house near Skegness. The pub is currently undergoing a much needed redecoration which should have been completed by the time you read this. Structurally the pub will be unaltered, thus retaining its vault where it is hoped that pool and darts teams can be set up. John and Patricia hope to introduce food and eventually maybe even bed and breakfast facilities. The **Star** is a Banks's pub and now both mild and bitter are

available in cask form.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Higsons Bitter has been dropped from the **Crown**, Heaton Lane, Stockport. Apparently nobody was drinking it and landlord Jim Mulvey tells us he couldn't drink half a barrel a week himself. The **Crown** has also recently re-started lunchtime food and has introduced a folk night on Thursday. \*\*\*\*\*  
 Shortly before press date, we heard that Mid-summer Leisure's "**Firkin**" home-brew set up in Riley's Snooker Hall at All Saints is unlikely to proceed at present. More news when we have it.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 More new licensees, this time at the **Grapes**, Heaton Norris where we welcome Bryan and Jane Hall who have taken over this Boddington's house from the **Black Bull** at Clitheroe, which appropriately enough is a Whitbread pub. Bryan is a local lad returned to his roots and we wish him and Jane well - any chance of reinstating cask mild?

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Yet another failed 'Open House' has reverted back to a traditional local. This time it's **Drakes** in Offerton which has re-emerged from under the builder's rubble as the **Golden Hind** once more. A full report next month.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 We learn from the owner that **Gatley Wine Bar** of all places is to install cask beer. Its sister establishment, Stockport's **Three Shires** will be remaining keg-only due to minimal cellar facilities.

Grand Met have announced the disposal of 17 of their worst performing Berni Inns. Surprisingly one of those to be sold off is **City Limits** in Heaton Mersey, probably the newest of the lot. In a way though it is fitting that it should come to this - some readers may recall that prior to its conversion to a Berni Inn, City Limits was yet another venture of the disastrous Host Group marketing concept (along of course with the failed 'Open House' pubs.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 We hear that Tetley Bitter will be disappearing as a regular beer at Stockport's **Olde Vic** and will be replaced by a beer from the Whitbread range.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 The **Anson** in Longsight has been bought by Sunderland brewer Vaux as part of an expansion programme into the North West. For many years a keg-only pub, it is unclear at present as to whether cask beer will be introduced.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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