

RUNNING SCARED

AS predicted in last month's Opening Times, Greenall Whitley, the country's largest regional brewer, with over 1700 pubs, is to abandon brewing completely and close its two remaining plants at Nottingham and Warrington with the loss of over 700 jobs.

Greenalls are to retain ownership of their beer brands which will be contract brewed for them by Allied at their Warrington and Burton-on-Trent breweries. As far as we know, the Greenalls brands will move across Warrington to Tetley-Walker's Dallam Lane site, while the Shipstones and Davenport's beers will be brewed by Ind Coope. It is thought unlikely that the Wem brands will survive the move.

Greenalls say the move was prompted by the fact that as the breweries were operating at less than 80% capacity, it is cheaper to have someone else brew for them (although a recent Stock Market report indicates that Holts are brewing at a similar level, and they are one of the most profitable brewing companies in the country - make of that what you will).

So, what will this mean for local drinkers? One thing is certain, the taste of the beers will change - experience shows that no matter what expertise and determination are applied, it is virtually impossible to reproduce one brewery's beers elsewhere. Whether the change will necessarily be for the worse in this case is open to question, the Tetley plant is far more traditional in its brewing methods than

is Greenall's brewery both in the brewing methods used and the ingredients.

Much play has also been made of the fact that as the biggest freehouse chain in the country, customers will get more choice from the new-look Greenalls. This is essentially a con as individual licensees will still have to stock what Greenalls tell them to stock and the additional beers so far announced are less than inspiring - Tetley Bitter and Stones Bitter. If Greenalls want to establish a reputation for running a freehouse chain that people will want to go out of their way to visit, they are going to have to offer more than a couple on ersatz in-house beers along with a few national brewery products available on almost every street corner.

This lack of imagination is perhaps at the root of the problem. For years Greenalls have become a by-word for bland, boring beers. Only with the introduction of the Thomas Greenalls Original did a respectable product come out of the Warrington plant. All the other breweries in the Greenalls empire that did produce distinctive products have been steadily closed down. It's the same story with the type of beer sold - while other breweries were switching back to cask, Greenalls stuck to keg in much of their estate. Greenalls could have been a byword for quality and choice if they had just shown the drive and flair which many smaller concerns have made their

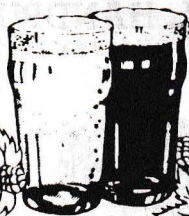
(Continued on Page 2)

De Olde Vic Chatham St.
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**STOCKPORT'S PREMIER
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Guest Beers Weekly

MARSTONS



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RUNNING SCARED (CONTD)

own. Instead they have wasted a decade shunning initiative, avoiding innovation, axeing beers and closing breweries. They almost seem to have been running scared of success and now, turning their backs on 200 years of brewing history, they have finally thrown in the towel and settled for ignominious failure.

SEVERED LINKS

ONE OF the more regrettable casualties of the Greenalls fiasco is the likely demise of their range of bottled beers. Not what you might expect a CAMRA publication to be shedding tears over, after all not one can be classed as 'real ale' but not only is the range a notably wide one for any brewery, but some of the beers represent important links with this region's brewing past.

Old Chester Strong Ale is a throwback to the old Chester Northgate Brewery (closed 1969) and, more familiar to older Opening Times readers, will be Red Rose Stout, not only is this one of the few remaining bottled stouts available, but it is the last surviving reminder of Groves & Whitnall, the famous old Salford concern, closed in 1972 and remembered for their Red Rose Ales.

Perhaps, though, it is best that they do go. To keep them would be all to poignant reminders of what might have been with a more dynamic company

MARBLE FESTIVAL

MANCHESTER'S Marble Arch freehouse on Rochdale Road will be holding its annual beer festival this month with about 108 beers available during the course of the month.

The beers will range from old favourites like Batemans and Fullers to more exotic brews such as Ringwood Porter and the bizarrely named Dr Thirstys Drought from the small Glenny Brewery. There will also be a daily range of traditional food including Real Ale Stew.

OCTOBER

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

PUB OF THE MONTH

THE Pub of the Month Award for October goes to the **Arden Arms**, Millgate, Stockport. The Arden is a true classic pub of immense character, which for twenty-five years was under the perfectionist care of licensee Jack May. When Jack retired in 1988, there were fears that the pub might not remain an unspoilt gem much longer. However, in the hands of Phil Simcock it turned out there was no need to worry - though as he is a man with a very individual sense of humour we may have doubted him at times!

There have been changes, but by no means all for the bad - there is now live music at least one night a week, and Phil has carried out a very tasteful extension to bring a former kitchen into the public area, which puts most other Robinsons renovations to shame. The core of the pub, the lounge, the grandfather clocks, the sash-windowed counter and the unique snug reached only by walking through the bar, remain unchanged, and the beer - Robinsons Best Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom - is served in consistently good condition.

Phil has respected the character of this very special pub, while at the same time improving its viability for the 1990s and beyond, and richly deserves this coveted award. Why not join us on Thursday 25th October for what promises to be an excellent night celebrating the traditional English pub at its best?



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October



REAL
ALE &
CIDER

Sunday 27th

12-3, 7-10.30

FREE except: £1 Sat evening

FOLLOWING the success of CAMRA's Stockport Beer Festival at the end of May, drinkers are in for a further treat at the end of this month when Stockport Labour Club mount their own mini-festival.

Although this is not a CAMRA-run event, members of the local Stockport & South Manchester branch have been happy to give advice and encouragement to what they hope will be an annual event. There will also be a CAMRA membership and products stand where the newly published 1991 Good Beer Guide will be available.

At the time of going to press, the following beers had been ordered:

Thwaites Best Mild (og 1034) - rich and dark with a smooth malty flavour.

Thwaites Bitter (og 1036) - clean tasting with a bitter finish.

Taylor's Landlord (og 1042) - superb premium bitter, the favourite at every festival.

Caledonian 80/- (og 1043) - a malty, flavoursome beer from Edinburgh's most traditional brewery.

Caledonian Porter (og 1043) - dry and nutty, an excellent dark stout.

Lloyds VIP (og 1048) - heavy, dark and fruity, the first time this beer has been available in Stockport.

Robinwood IPA (og 1040-ish) - a superb, easy drinking dark beer. First available at Stockport Beer Festival where most was drunk by the staff!

Robinwood Old Fart (og 1060) - rude old ale, dry and dark like a stout.

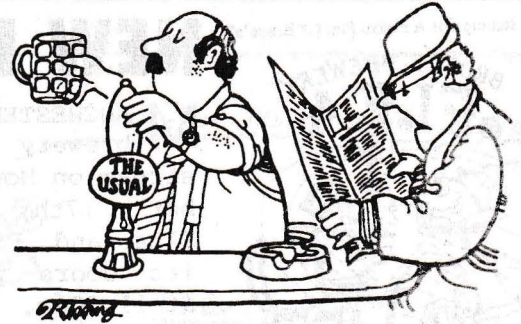
Moorhouses Black Cat Mild (og 1034) - new dark mild.

Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew (og 1050) - full tasting, malty beer.

West Coast Sierra Nevada Pale Ale (og 1050) - hoppy and powerful. Rapidly assuming cult status.

Camerons Strongarm (og 1040) - a fine malty beer from the North East.

In addition there will be traditional cider and perry from Westons, entertainment both evenings, food and, at lunchtimes only, a childrens room.



"A pint of the usual, Bert."

Brauerei

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- Billies Restaurant, Chorlton

De Olde Woolpack



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Soup — Pate — Prawn Cocktail

Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding

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(all served with a selection of fresh vegetables)
plus a choice of sweets

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Proprietors: Robert & Gillian Dickinson

'I'm Itching For A Firkin Pint Of Bruce's'



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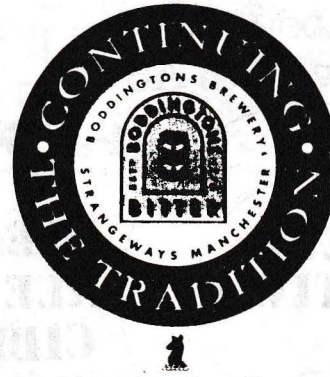
NEW BREW

MANCHESTER'S newest brewery came on stream on Monday, September 17th, when the Flea and Firkin opened its doors for business at 11.00am.

This is the latest in a line of 'Firkin' home brew pubs started by London entrepreneur David Bruce and is only the second outside of London (the other being in Derby).

The pub and brewery are situated in the old Grosvenor Picture House on Oxford Road in All Saints, bang in the heart of student-land, which virtually guarantees that the venture will be successful, and whilst rather gimmicky for some tastes, it has to be said that the conversion is a very successful one. The pub is essentially one large cavernous room but is quite successfully broken up into various areas although it's certainly not the place to go if you want an intimate chat in a quiet corner. The furniture is simple, large plain tables and pew seating, and there is a wealth of cinematic memorabilia on almost all available wall space.

The whole show is affably overseen by manager John Grover who tells us that he is a real ale fan, and here we come to the rub, and the reason why this venture perhaps only merits two cheers, for the house beers (Scratch, og1038; Grosvenor, og1045; and Dogbolter, og1060) are served under a light blanket of carbon dioxide gas and cannot therefore be classed as 'real ale'. To compensate, however, Robinsons Best Mild is a permanent feature and there will be a regular range of guest beers, all of which are traditionally stored and served. Worth a visit.



THE WHITBREAD BEER COMPANY

ON 18th September, the Whitbread Beer Co. staged a huge public relations jamboree at the Strangeways Brewery, and naturally Opening Times was there.

Hospitality was lavish - 26 traditional beers were available for sampling, there was a free buffet, entertainment, competitions and even a framed print of the

brewery to take home as a souvenir.

So, what was it all really in aid of? CAMRA tends to regard this type of event with a certain degree of cynicism and indeed, there was a fair amount of PR spiel and much nodding and smiling on the part of the Whitbread bigwigs but, it has to be said that the underlying message was essentially a very encouraging one in that Whitbread see a vigorous future for cask beer. They anticipate that their own beer sales will be 50% cask by 1993 - what a contrast with the message that they were propagating just a few years ago when they appeared to regard real ale as more of an inconvenience than a growth market.

Whilst there can be little doubt about this new-found, and very welcome, commitment to cask beer, the flipside of course, is the thorny question of quality. Of the 26 beers available to Whitbread pubs up and down the country, five are brewed by respected independent brewers and four (Boddies Mild and Bitter, OB Mild and Bitter) are quality beers from Strangeways. With one or two notable exceptions (Chesters Mild and Castle Eden Ale) the rest are eminently forgettable makeweights brewed many miles from their point of origin. To excuse these beers by saying they're what the public want is a cop-out, given the opportunity the public will opt for quality at any time, and that is what Whitbread must now provide.

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THE ORIGINAL GOOD BEER GUIDE.

Back in 1787, when men were men and hops were hops, a brewer by the name of Thomas Greenall created a masterpiece.

It's upon his original recipe that we have based our new premium cask conditioned ale.

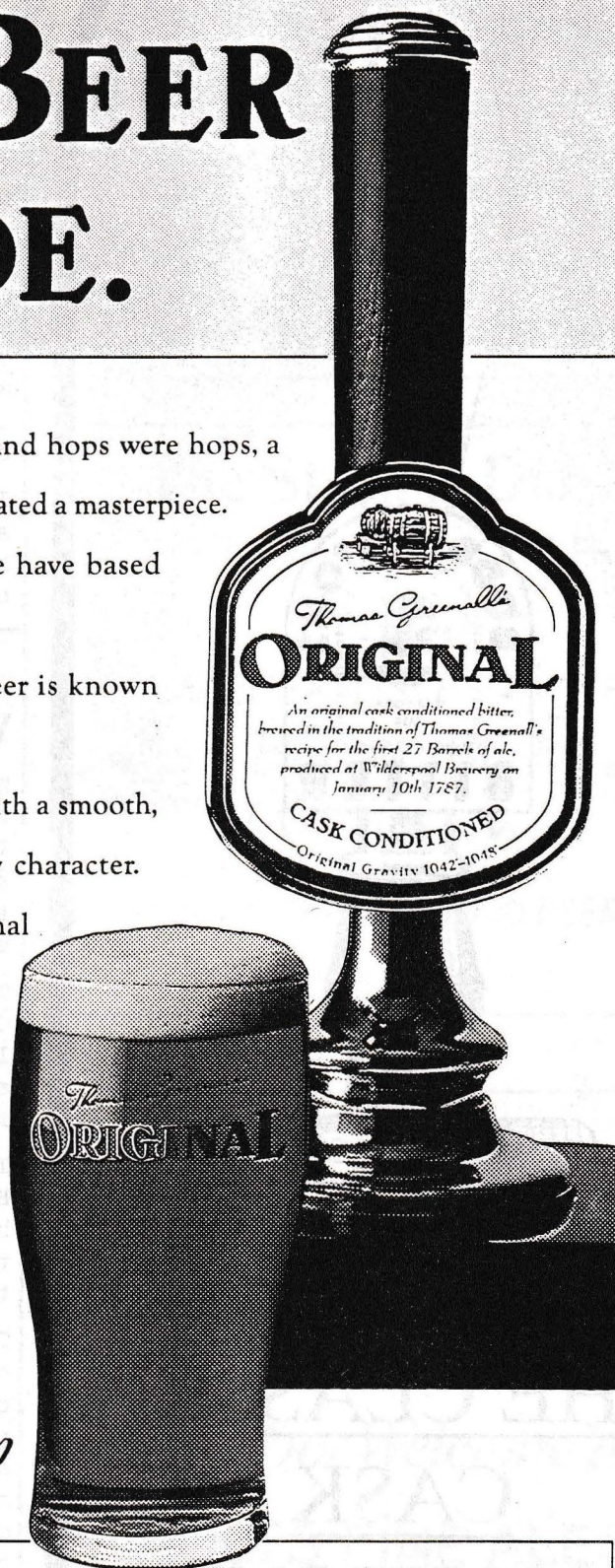
Hardly surprising, then, that this beer is known as Thomas Greenall's Original.

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.

Let your palate be your guide.

Thomas Greenall's
ORIGINAL
A masterpiece since 1787.



Approved purveyors of Thomas Greenall's Original include:

VICTORIA INN, 125 Hall Street. STOCKPORT ARMS, 25 St. Petersgate. GREY HORSE, 89 Old Road, Heaton Norris.
RAILWAY, 74/76 Wellington Road North. GREYHOUND, Ladybridge Road, Cheadle Hulme.

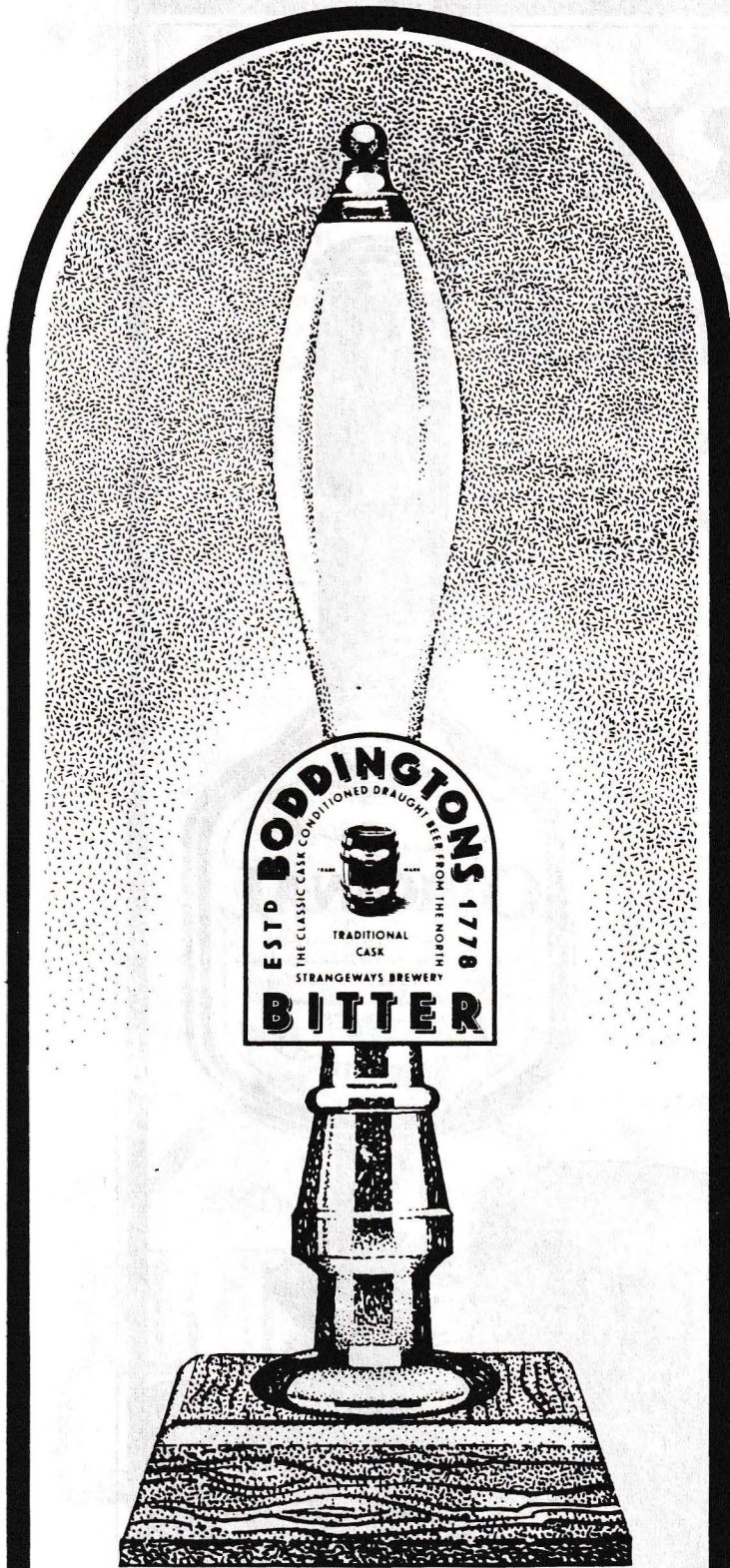
(All above outlets in Stockport).

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.

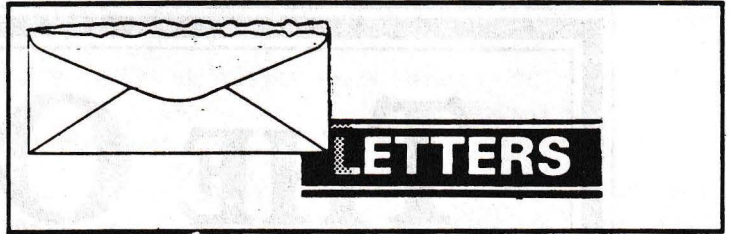
DOG & PARTRIDGE, 665/7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. QUEENS ARMS, 72 Guide Lane, Denton.

CARTERS ARMS, 209 Stockport Road, Denton.

(All above outlets in Manchester).



THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER



From: local CAMRA member **Peter Edwardson**

In your August issue you ask for readers' views on the question of tenants vs. managers. One area where the tenants have a big advantage is pub food. True, there are still some managed houses where the managers have the food franchise and have the motivation to offer something that stands out from the crowd. But more and more brewers, both big and small, want the food profits for themselves, and are going in for predictable, standardised menus and portion control. You'll be lucky if you find any food better than the good side of adequate in a managed pub.

If you come across a tied pub where the care and imagination devoted to the food make it really memorable, 99 times out of 100 it will be a tenancy.

NEW AT OAK

WELCOME to Neil and Sylvia Lindley, who took over from Phil and Mo Ferris at the Royal Oak in Cheadle at the end of August. Phil and Mo have 'retired' to Spain, after lifting the Oak out of the doldrums. Neil and Sylvia come from the Crescent in Disley, their first pub, where they were for over six years.

They have no major changes in mind for the Oak; though they have introduced meals at lunchtimes and hope to be able to start making some use of the vault, which has been closed for some time.

The Royal Oak is a Robinsons house with both Best mild and Best bitter - the bitter has been steadily on form recently and the fact that Neil is a mild drinker should indicate that that will be similarly taken care of.

The pub is open all permitted hours with the exception of Saturday afternoon when it is closed between 4 and 6. Sadly, most Cheadle pubs have found it wiser to close on Saturday afternoons. The thirsty shopper, wanting nothing more than a quiet sit-down with a drink or a cup of coffee, suffers because of the unacceptable behaviour of a few drunks.

JOIN  NOW

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Good Beer Guide

1979-1991

Barbara & Family Welcome You

— The Victoria —

WILMSLOW ROAD WITHINGTON

Hydes Anvil Ales

Good Beer Guide

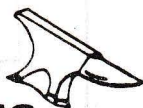
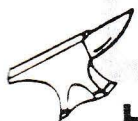
— 1991 —

KEITH & NORA WELCOME YOU

Bob & Trudie Welcome You To

HORSE & FARRIER

GATLEY



HYDES ANVIL ALES

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1980-91

Brian Welcomes You To

The Red Bull

HILLGATE, STOCKPORT

GOOD FOOD AND

FINE ALES

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1991

THIS month sees the launch of CAMRA's flagship publication, the 1991 Good Beer Guide.

First launched in 1974, this will be the 18th edition of what has become the most authoritative pub guide 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, 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 on to serve the best at all times.

The 1991 Guide is the first under new editor, Jeff Evans and readers will find several changes - in layout, approach and emphasis. Most obvious to casual browsers will be the enhanced importance of the brewery section which, newly laid out, takes its place to the rear of the book for easier reference. This section features many new, small breweries together with something in the region of 100 new beers.



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1991



The Strawberry Duck

Crabtree Lane, Clayton

Boddingtons Bitter

Holts Bitter

Regular Guest Beers

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1991

Phil Welcomes You To The

Arden Arms
MILLGATE, STOCKPORT

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ON DRAUGHT

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BRIAN AND JEAN WELCOME YOU TO

The Prince of Wales

Gatley Green, Gatley



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Good Beer Guide 1991

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Live Music Every Saturday Night

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1989-91



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

**GOOD
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1991

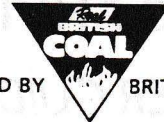
GUIDE

THE PUB-LOVER'S ESSENTIAL REFERENCE BOOK

Edited by Jeff Evans



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GOOD BEER GUIDE 1991

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1991

SUBTITLED 'The Pub-Lover's Essential Reference Book', this is where the Guide really comes into its own. With detailed descriptions of over 5000 pubs the length and breadth of the country, there will be something 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.

This year's Guide is also unashamedly more commercially presented in an effort to widen its appeal to the general public with features like:

- Beer and television - behind the scenes of Michael Jackson's TV series, and an insight into Inspector Morse, the beer drinker's detective.
- We find out why real beer is not available in Parliament.
- There are 'Fringe Benefit' items on the collecting of bottles, mats and labels.

To fill in the time waiting for the pub to open there is a light-hearted beer quiz. A competition with the prize of a trip to the 1991 Oktoberfest is also included.

The Guide will be available in all good bookshops and 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 £6.99 (p&p free). Cheques to CAMRA Stockport & S.M/cr.

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Good Beer Guide 1988-91

The Station, Didsbury
A WARM WELCOME FROM
— Ann —
Marstons Pedigree
Burton Bitter,
Mercian Mild
WE'RE IN THE 1991 GOOD BEER GUIDE

Brian O'Connor
Welcomes You To
The Mawson Hotel
— KINCARDINE ROAD —
CHORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK
* Tetley Ales *
Good Beer Guide
1990-1

The Claremont
— Hotel —
CLAREMONT ROAD
MOSS • SIDE
Ken & Dot Welcome You
HOLTS FINE ALES
Good Beer Guide
— 1991 —

STAGGER

BY: PETER EDWARDSON

ON ONE of the hottest nights of the year, our July Stagger took us down a two-mile length of the A6 Buxton Road from Hazel Grove to Heaviley. This stretch is notable for the fact that eight of the nine pubs are owned by Robinsons, whose beer is well known for being very variable in hot weather. Does the drinker suffer from this lack of choice we wondered. As always, the views expressed are purely those of the individual CAMRA members on one particular night.

We started out at the **Grove** in Hazel Grove, a four-square Robinsons house which inside is a pub of two halves. On the left are a traditional games room and a delightful little snug, decorated with photos of Royal Navy ships - more the kind of thing you might expect to see in Portsmouth - but on the right the rooms have been knocked through into one lounge rather lacking in pub character, with a horrendous Spanish-style arch where the dividing wall one was. The electrically pumped Best

Mild and Best Bitter were both above average, and served at a proper temperature. (Real Ale should be kept and served at about 13°C or 55°F, which will taste pleasantly cool on a hot day).

Crossing the busy A6 for the first of many times, we came to the **Anchor**, a pub which has attracted some ridicule for containing a variety of nautical tat in the midst of landlocked Hazel Grove. However, many of the artefacts are of genuine interest, including a huge old-style diver's helmet, and although opened out, the pub retains something of a multi-roomed feel. The Robinsons beers are dispensed by free-flow keg-type electric pumps, but are real enough despite that. The Best Bitter was a little above average, the Best Mild good.

Next door to the Anchor is the **Woodman**, until recently a characterful pub of traditional small rooms, but now opened out and extended into neighbouring cottages in Robinsons' usual bland style. The beer too was distinctly uninspiring, the Best Mild being below average, while the Best Bitter was cloudy and almost at room temperature - definitely the worst beer of the night.

Whitbread's **George & Dragon** offered the only break from Robinsons in the evening. The beers on offer were Boddingtons Bitter at £1.00 a pint (now of course just another Whitbread brand) and Marstons Pedigree at £1.16, both of which were no better than average. These were the only beers at £1 a pint or over during the whole crawl, and it is worth remembering that Robinsons Best Bitter has a gravity of 1041, while Boddingtons is only 1035 and Pedigree no more than 1043. The pub itself has been renovated in Whitbread's standard manner, with raised seating areas, polished wood and stained glass, and seemed to be popular with Hazel Grove's affluent young.

Lovers of traditional pubs would be more at home in the **Crown**, an imposing multi-roomed building with its own bowling green, spoilt only by the fake arches which have been inserted above the internal doorways. The handpumped Best Mild and Best Bitter were both good, and refreshingly cool, too. One brave soul tried the Old Tom which was also pronounced good. Many members of the party had never been drinking in Great Moor before, and both this pub and the next two came as a real discovery.

We crossed the A6 again to the **Travellers Call**, a much smaller pub, which has been modernised by the addition of a new toilet block, but otherwise retains three distinct rooms of considerable character. We weren't seeing things - there really were a traffic light and a telephone booth in the beer garden! The Best Mild and Best Bitter, here served by electric pumps, kept up the standard, both being good.

ESTD **B** **W** 1867
BURTONWOOD
BREWERY



**A FAMILY TRADITION
 OF FINE BREWING**

Back over the road to the **Dog & Partridge**, a large rambling pub which reveals at the back how it has been extended in the past around its original core. Inside it has a variety of cosy rooms with low ceilings, oak beams and wood panelling, served from a central bar, with evidence in the glasswork of former ownership by Bells, taken over by Robinsons in the 1940s. The Best Mild was well above average, while the Best Bitter, by a slim margin, was judged the best beer of the night.

We now had a longish trek down the A6 to the next pub, the **Duke of York**. This too featured extensive use of wood in the decor, but had been rather more knocked about than the previous three, and did not seem quite as characterful. We found the Best Mild and Best Bitter to be both above average.

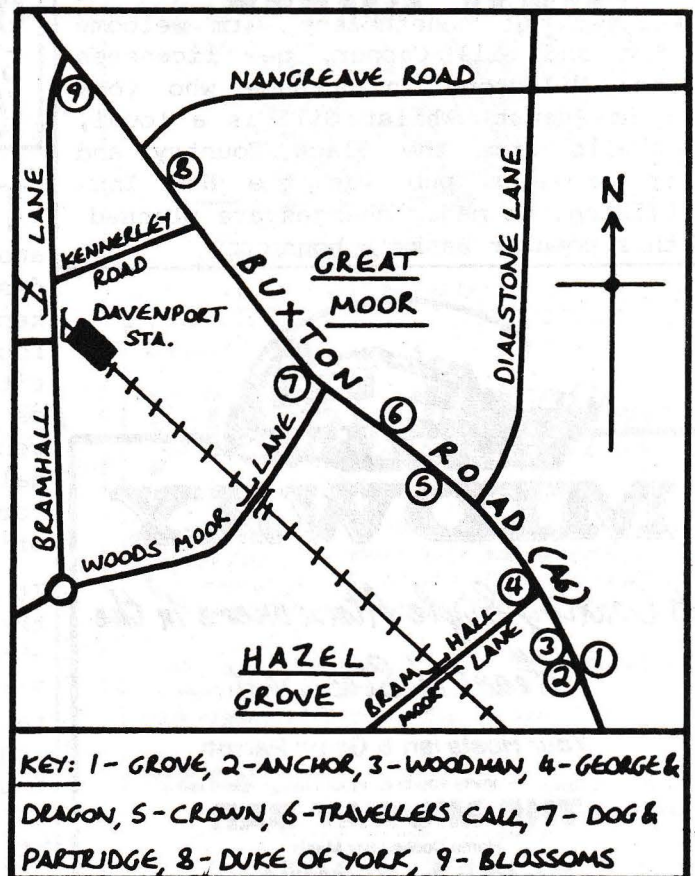
Passing the **Bamford Arms**, a Berni steakhouse where the public bar was closed, we eventually reached our last port of call, the **Blossoms** in Heaviley, a pub long revered by CAMRA for its traditional character. Outwardly an impressive triangular building on a busy road junction, inside it's surprisingly small, lively and down to earth, with vault, pool room and snug all clustered around the central bar. The handpumped Best Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom were all judged above average, although the beer was a little too warm for most tastes.

Having sampled all the pubs, the conclusion must be that the drinkers of Hazel Grove and Great Moor don't suffer too much from Robinsons' near monopoly. They have eight pubs serving high-quality, locally brewed beer from an independent brewery, all offering real mild as well as bitter, all charging reasonable prices and almost all, on one night's evidence, keeping the beer well, even in the middle of a heatwave. It is doubtful whether things would be as satisfactory if the situation was reversed as it is in most other parts of the country, with eight Whitbread pubs to one Robinsons. But the one Robinsons pub would certainly do good business!

EXTENDED GRIFFIN

HOLTS have applied for planning permission to extend the Griffin, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey.

The application is for an extension on the car park side of the pub to create another lounge with aporch and new entrance, together with more cellar area underneath. There will also be a kitchen extension at the rear and a new ramp up to the existing front entrance. As far as we can tell, there are no proposed changes to the existing layout or bar area of the pub which, given Holts current dubious track record, is something to be grateful for.



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NEW MILES

A belated but nonetheless warm welcome to Tim and Gill Capner, new licensees at the Milestone in Burnage who took over in August. Whilst Gill is a local, Tim hails from the Black Country and their previous pub was the New Inns at Bilston. No major changes are planned at this popular Banks's house.



THE main front page item in October 1985 concerned Pub Price Lists - the law is quite specific, and has been for a number of years - every pub must display a clearly visible price list. So CAMRA members kept a careful check over the summer months, and found that about a third of the pubs visited had either no price list, or one that was so obscure as to be useless. Quite a casual personal check made recently showed a roughly 50/50 situation, ie only half with a decent price list; and there's another complication now - the ABV (% alcohol by volume) of the drinks sold should also be displayed.

It was reported that Hartley's Bitter had gone from the Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club - this was after about a year being sold alongside the Robinson's Best Mild and Best Bitter. Hartleys, of course, was taken over by Robinsons in 1982, but many drinkers tend to go for the beer they know, or recognise; possibly for this reason, Hartleys has been very slow coming into the area - it has recently appeared at the Thief's Neck (Davenport Arms) at Woodford, so it will be interesting to see how it fares there against the generally excellent Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter. (To complete the up-to-date picture, the Conservative Club now has Boddingtons, Robinsons and Banks's Bitters, and Banks's Mild.)

Pub of the Month for October was Holt's Junction in Cheadle Hulme. Although very much a local brew, the Holts in this case could well be called a "rare brew for the area" due to the brewery's 95 or so pubs being comparatively closely grouped mainly in the North Manchester area. Other unusual features were the Junction's full size snooker table, and the licensee's name, John Holt (no relation). Sadly, this Junction Hotel no longer exists - it's not been demolished, but re-furbished, re-built, extended, changed - a restaurant (and an area reserved for diners) now figure prominently in the "Cheadle Hulme" - thankfully, the beer is still reliable Holts, and the prices still have some way to go to the magic "£1 a pint".

Other snippets from 1985 - Banks's had bought the old Cheadle railway station/ was cask beer going to be brewed at Scottish & Newcastle's Moss Side Brewery? (no)/ the new, small Failsworth brewery was in trouble (and has now long been out of existence).



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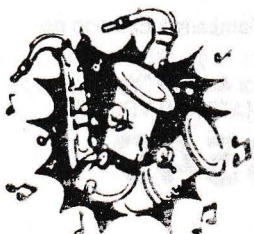


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MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

A busy month, this month, with no fewer than four real ale gains to report. The **Flea & Firkin** on Oxford Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock is covered elsewhere; here I merely remind readers that while the house beers cannot be classed as 'real ale', being served under blanket pressure, the guest beers most certainly can; furthermore the presence of real cider - Weston's Old Rosie on handpump - is a very welcome gain.

Our three other real ale gains are in the City Centre. On Oxford Road near the station, the former **Oxfords** is now **Grand Central**. Run by a leisure company, and with renovation work barely started when this was written, it offers Boddingtons Bitter on handpump. The same beer features, along with handpumped Theakstons Bitter, at the **Pig & Porcupine** at the Castlefield end of Deansgate, the latest development from the Boddington Pub Co. It seems that "PubCo" are to open two multi-beer freehouses, one in Birkenhead and the other in the **Kings Arms** on Bloom Street in Salford, let's hope that these are sufficiently successful to encourage a more enterprising range of beers in the rest of their estate.

Finally, **Band on the Wall** on Swan Street is now selling handpumped Ruddles County - as many readers will be aware, this is a music venue that opens around 8.30pm and generally has an admission charge. And to clarify a recent gain, the handpumped Marstons Pedigree we reported in the YMCA's Y-Club on Liverpool Road is actually in the bar of the associated Castlefield Hotel, which is open to the public.

On the debit side, we hear that the **Burton**

Arms in the City Centre no longer sells real ale, and there are three closures to report - the short-lived **Stage** in Ardwick, the **Travellers Call** in Beswick, and Control Securities' keg **Pitchers** (formerly the Greens Arms) in Clayton. As we went to press, there was also concern over the **Coach & Horses** in the City Centre which appears to have finally closed down - a closure apparently brought about by the disconnection of the gas and electricity. The fate of this historic pub looks more than ever to be in the hands of the Development Corporation, and, sadly, in the balance.

Moving to the beer and cider changes, it's a delight to see real cider back at the **Marble Arch** on Rochdale Road, after a very long absence - it's Thatchers, served on gravity. The **Little Bradford** in Bradford no longer sells Old Peculier, while in nearby Gorton, the **Steelworks Tavern** has added handpumped Chesters Mild (a very nice pint when sampled recently), as has the **Gardeners Arms**, which has also dropped Chesters Bitter in favour of handpumped Boddies. In East Didsbury, the refurbishment of the **Parrswood** has seen handpumped Tetley Bitter and Theakstons Bitter added to the range, while **Yates's** in Fallowfield has gained handpumped Ruddles Bitter.

Finally, just out of OT's normal circulation area, the **Three Legs of Man** in Hulme, formerly selling cask Webster/Wilsons beers, is now in Vaux livery - any information on the beers sold would be welcome.

CAMRA CALLING

ONLY room enough to mention the annual trip to **Stoke Beer Festival** on the 19th. The coach will depart from the Pineapple, Heaton Lane, Stockport at 6.00pm and we will be leaving Stoke at about 11. The festival will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and should be better than ever, a particular feature is the large foreign beer stall. For details, contact Ian on 445 5979, evenings.

The Red Lion

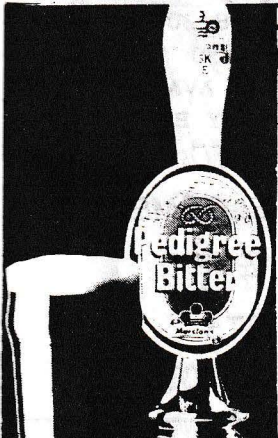
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PUB NEWS



We offer a warm if belated welcome to Bill and Cath Fleming, who took over J.W.Lees' Suburban in Gorton on 4th July. While this is their first pub, they have a considerable experience of bar and cellar work, and early impressions suggest that the pub's high standards are being maintained.

 We reported last month that the Conway in Cheadle Hulme had dropped both Wilsons Bitter and Ruddles Bitter from the range. It turns out that this was for the summer only - Wilsons Bitter is already reinstated and Ruddles will be following.

 Another pub up for sale, this time it's the Victoria on Hyde Road in Gorton. This Whitbread house, although pleasant enough inside, is under long-term threat from a proposed road widening

scheme which may make the asking price of £110,000 on the steep side.

 Hazel Grove looks set to get its umpteenth Robinsons pub in the next 18 months or so as we learn that, after some considerable effort, the brewery has finally obtained permission to develop its site on Jacksons Lane.

 Boddingtons Bitter is the latest beer to make an impact under the new 'guest beer' rules, aided no doubt by what we hear are very generous inducements to licensees, who no doubt will rush to pass the savings on to their customers. Sitings include the Jolly Crofter in Edgeley, Tom Thumbs on King St West in Stockport, which in itself is only a recent real ale gain, and also the Navigation in Heaton Norris.

 A touch more enterprising on the guest beer front is the Bowling Green in Marple, just outside OT's normal circulation area, which has joined the growing number of Grand Met (that's Wilsons) pubs taking Holts Bitter.

 Work is now underway at the Strawberry Duck on Crabtree Lane in Clayton to build a new extension which it is aimed to complete by the first week in December. The extension is needed because of the increased popularity of the pub with regular guest beers complementing the well kept Holts and Boddingtons which are always available. Forthcoming guests include Eldridge Pope Royal Oak and Thomas Hardy Country Bitter. The extension will be in the same style as the rest of the pub and it is hoped to have a Lancashire Range as the centrepiece of the new extension - if anyone knows of one being available, phone Dave McConnville on 223 4415.

Contributors to this edition: John Hutchinson, John Clarke, Peter Edwardson, Jim Flynn, Charlotte Bulmer, Deborah Chlebicki, Phil Levison, Rhys Jones, Paul Braidley.

The copy date for the next issue is Friday 19th October with publication on Tuesday November 6th.

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