



# OFF THE RAILS!

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR LEASE



**STALYBRIDGE**  
FORMER  
**STATION BUILDINGS**

**S**TALYBRIDGE Station Buffet, one of the most unusual and characterful pubs in the country faces destruction if plans by British Rail for the leasing and redevelopment of the site come to fruition.

'Dot's Diner', as it is affectionately known, has been privately run for many years now and in that time has become a national, let alone a local, institution, appearing in more pub guides than possibly any other pub in the country - glowing entries in the Good Beer Guide, the Good Cider Guide and the Good Pub Guide being three of many.

To enter is like stepping back in time - there is a marble-topped counter, a fireplace with a coal stove and a paper-back library, all helping to create a unique atmosphere. For the beer enthusiast it is a mecca, with rare brews from the length and breadth of the country regularly on sale; for everyone it is a vital part of our local heritage.

None of which counts for much with BR who have now invited "prospective developers to submit their proposals and offer of rental for the redevelopment of the station buildings". Similar developments in the past have seen bistro-type offerings from the likes of Yates Wine Lodges and the Boddington PubCo. **This cannot be allowed to happen here.**

A vigorous campaign is to be mounted to stop this crazy scheme and there will be regular reports in Opening Times. You too can help by sending letters of support to licensee Ken Redfern, The Buffet Bar, Stalybridge Station. Write now!

Alan and June Preston  
invite you to  
**The Hinds Head**  
opening times

Mon.- Sat.(inc.) 11.30am - 11pm  
Sunday 12 noon - 3pm; 7pm - 10.30pm

**TRADITIONAL HANDPULLED BEERS**  
QUALITY LUNCHES AND EVENING  
MEALS SERVED SEVEN  
DAYS A WEEK



The Hinds Head  
Manchester Road  
Heaton Chapel  
061-431 9301



# SEASONS GREETINGS

## FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

**merry xmas**

to all our friends

FROM

**TOM & BETTY**

**the grove**

HAZEL GROVE



**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS**

**FROM RALPH, JEAN & STAFF**



**CROWN INN**



**CHEADLE**

**seasons greetings**

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FROM

*David, Roy, & Mike*

**THE TIVIOT, Stockport**

TEL 480 4109



*Christmas Greetings*

*from*



*Lance & Bev*



**BRITANNIA, ROWSLEY ST,**

**BESWICK**



**Open All Day**



**Bar Snacks Available All Day**

*Lees Fine Ales*

*Davenport Arms*

(Thief's Neck)

Woodford

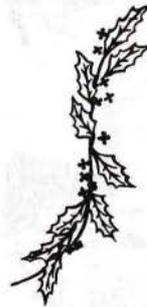
A Merry Christmas to All Our Customers

**JOHN, JUNE, ALISON & YVONNE**

In The Same Family For 60 Years

No Music - No Pool

Robinsons at its Best



**MERRY XMAS**

*to our customers from*

**Dot, Ken and Staff**

**Claremont Hotel**

*Claremont Rd., Moss Side*

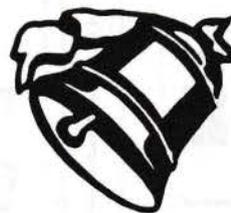
**seasons greetings**

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FROM

*Alan and Judith*

**GREY HORSE**

REDDISH



**JEAN and ROGER**

AT THE

*Church Inn*

**EDGELEY**

Wish All Our Customers

**A Happy Xmas**

## NEW NAME - SAME BEER

DRINKERS ordering the increasingly popular Sierra Nevada Pale Ale from Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery in Chorlton-on-Medlock may soon have to brush up on their Spanish pronunciation; for the hoppy, 6% ABV brew is set to change its name to Yakima Grande! Originally conceived in admiring imitation of the same-name beer produced at one of the USA's best known micro-breweries, Sierra Nevada of Chico, California, the beer has never been the subject of any formal licensing agreement, and it's hoped the name change will forestall any possible objection from the Californian brewers.

And the new name? Apparently it's a mountain peak in (where else?) the Sierra Nevada!

Also from West Coast Brewery we can now confirm that North County Mild (the 'light' mild) is no longer to be brewed; the excellent Dobbin's Dark Mild, however, will continue. And fans of Brendan Dobbin's beer need no longer be confined to the pub - numerous Chinatown restaurants are now taking the 'Chinese-style' Yellow Mountain beer, while West Coast bottles have also been seen challenging the Czech Budvar at the Deansgate Indian Restaurant on Longworth Street, Manchester.

## BASS SELL-OFF

THE fall-out from the Monopolies Commission report into the brewing industry continues. This time it is national brewers Bass who have revealed their long-term plans. As the company intends to stay in both brewing and retailing a substantial slimming down of its tied estate is called for.

Plans announced last month will involve the disposal of almost 3000 pubs and, we suspect, many in the Stockport & South Manchester area could be affected. We are attempting to find out which and will bring you more details as we get them.

### DECEMBER

2	9	16	23	30	
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	...

## PUB OF THE MONTH

THE Pub of the Month Award for December goes to the **Travellers Call** in Great Moor.

The Travellers Call is a pub that many people know, sited as it is on the main A6 between Stockport and Hazel Grove and close to Stepping Hill Hospital. Unfortunately most people only know it in passing as they drive past on the busy road, which is their loss as the Travellers is a pub well worth visiting.

One of that rare breed of pub where owners Robinsons actually managed to carry out major building work without ruining the rest of the pub, the Travellers is a cosy, multi-roomed pub dominated inside by an amazing collection of brassware - bells, old diving helmets, you name it, it's there. Outside, the rear beer garden is equally striking - an old telephone box and a set of working traffic lights among other things create a unique atmosphere.

Cask beers are Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter, kept up to standard, along with the rest of the pub, by able licensees Anita and David Lahan who took over some time ago now after a spell at the Pineapple on Heaton Lane. In recognition of their sterling work in maintaining this excellent traditional local, this is a well deserved and overdue award. The presentation will be on Thursday 20th December - don't drive past, leave the car at home and come and join us for what promises to be an excellent night.



## The Robin Hood

HIGH LANE, BUXTON ROAD, STOCKPORT  
Telephone: 061-483 2602



- BREAKFASTS
- LUNCHEONS
- DINNERS
- FUNCTIONS
- Residential · LIVE MUSIC
- SATELLITE T.V.

Your hosts: Janet & Peter Blissett M.B.I.I.

## The Nursery Inn

GREEN LANE, HEATON NORRIS,  
STOCKPORT

- ★ Traditionally Brewed Hyde's Anvil Ales
- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- ★ We now cater Mon-Fri for families in our upstairs Dining Room which is also available for functions
- ★ Bowling Parties Catered for - Details on request

Hydes  
Anvil Ales

Brewers  
of  
Traditional  
Cask  
Beers

Always in  
good taste

4  
 ★ SEASONS GREETINGS ★  
 FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

Merry Christmas  
 AND  
 Happy New Year  
 To All Our Friends &  
 Customers  
 FROM  
**Stan & Mavis**  
*The Waterloo*  
 Waterloo Road, Stockport



**MERRY XMAS**  
 FROM ALL AT THE  
*Nursery*  
 Green Lane  
 Heaton Norris



The Albert Inn  
 RUSHOLME  
 Best Wishes To All From  

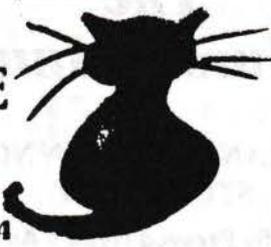
**Gerry**
  
 A HYDES ANVIL HOUSE



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

Pussy Cat Pussy Cat  
 Where have you been  
 I've been down to London  
 to visit the Queen...  
 So goes the Nursery Rhyme  
 But did Pussy visit the Chiswick  
 brewery of Fullers?  
 Silly pussy he didn't have to go that far,  
 but just to ...

**THE BOTTLE STOP**  
 Acre Lane,  
 Bramhall  
 Tel: 439 4904



to taste the delights of  
 the ESB Bitter on draught  
 and in bottles. One of many  
 draught beers and lagers  
 available.  
 Any Quantity Supplied  
**OPEN ALL XMAS (INC XMAS DAY)**  
**PARTIES CATERED FOR.**

Bob & Trudie Welcome You To  
**HORSE & FARRIER**  
 GATLEY  
**HYDES ANVIL ALES**  
 Merry Christmas to All  
 10 Great Years In THE GOOD BEER GUIDE  
 Twice Pub of the Month  
 Good Food - Good Beer






# END OF THE LINE

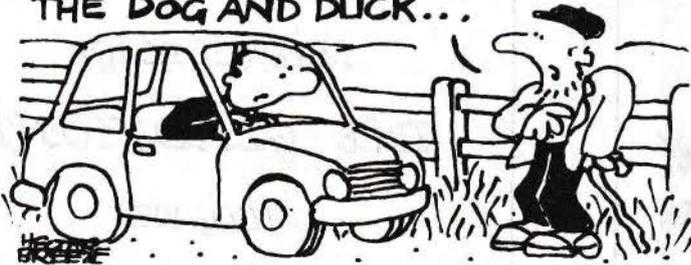
NOT JUST the regulars, but drinkers throughout Greater Manchester, were stunned last month by the sudden closure of the Railway on Pottery Lane, Gorton. It was known that, in the medium term, the pub was vulnerable to demolition for the next stage of the "Manchester Intermediate Ring Road"; what we didn't know was that the planners had decided to start work on this stage at the Ashburys railway bridge, to avoid this site becoming a bottleneck at a later stage of construction. Astonishingly, licensees Bob and Madeleine Gregory got less than two weeks notice of the compulsory purchase order which has deprived them not just of their business but of their home.

When Bob and Madeleine took over the Railway in February 1989 after several years' closure, there were many who doubted the viability of a freehouse serving numerous real ales in this relatively off the beaten track location. The formula never altered from day 1 - good beer (soon joined by real cider) at a fair price, good simple food, and a friendly down to earth welcome - and it was soon obvious that Bob and Madeleine hard work was paying off. So far from reducing as some had feared, the tally of regular beers actually grew, with the addition of Holts and Old Peculier not diminishing the punters' enthusiasm for the ever changing guest beers.

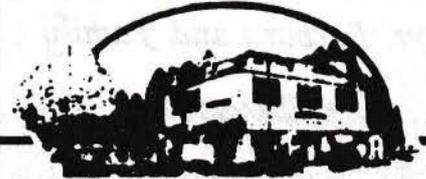
Not surprisingly, Bob and Madeleine's runaway success at the Railway, which CAMRA was delighted to recognise with the prestigious Pub of the Year award for 1989, sees them reluctant to become tied licensees for a brewery, and they are actively looking for suitable premises where the winning formula can be recreated. CAMRA members themselves, they've promised to keep us in touch with developments, so we hope it's not too long before we bring you news of their whereabouts - hopefully not too far away.

Meanwhile, the whole episode shows the local highway planners in a particularly unflattering light. To say nothing of the appallingly short notice given, the stated justification for this and other road schemes in East Manchester is to promote the economic regeneration of the area. How is this aim achieved by destroying a thriving business which was also one of the most vital social amenities in an under-privileged part of the city?

**TURN LEFT AT THE SITE OF THE ROSE AND CROWN, UP THE HILL PAST WHAT USED TO BE THE KING'S HEAD, BEAR RIGHT AT THE RUINS OF THE DOG AND DUCK...**



**NEW LIVE ENTERTAINMENT CRAZE**  
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**Fun Night with Customer Participation**  
**Hire, Lease or Buy**  
 THE FABULOUS  
**KARAOKE**  
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Home Cooked Bar Meals

Monday to Saturday 12 till 2pm

### THE GOYT RESTAURANT

From 7pm Saturday Evening-Bookings Advised

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JOHN SMITH'S FINE BEERS & DIRECTORS BITTER

ALSO THE GOYT LOUNGE

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CONFERENCES ETC.

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263 Newbridge Lane, Stockport

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superb cuisine

including traditional

Sunday Lunch

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SUNDAY NIGHT

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# SEASONS GREETINGS

## FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year  
from Barbara and Family  
The Blossoms  
Stockport Road, Heaviley



Proper Ale

**THE TATTON ARMS**  
Moss Nook  
Near Airport  
Marie, Alex and Staff  
Wish all customers a  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS &  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Proper Fire

Proper Food

Proper Music

**KINGS ARMS**  
Chorlton-on-Medlock  
PRESENTS  
EXCLUSIVELY AT THE KINGS  
**Dobbins Yuletide Ale**  
(OG 1080)  
Over the Christmas period  
together with  
**Yakima Grande**  
(Formerly Sierra Nevada)  
**Merry Christmas!**



Merry Christmas and  
A Happy New Year  
TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FROM  
**Alan, Maureen & Staff**  
**Parrswood Hotel**  
PARRSWOOD DIDSBURY

Merry Xmas &  
Happy New Year  
To all our customers  
From Pat and John  
The Star  
Ardwick  
Bank's Traditional Ales

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS  
FROM PAULLINE, PAT, MICHAEL  
& STAFF AT  
**THE PACK HORSE**  
MARKET PLACE  
**THE GLADSTONE**  
HILLGATE  
**TETLEYS FINE ALES**

# WINTER ALES



HOME BREWED BY ALASTAIR WALKER

HERE are two winter ale recipes that the home brewer might like to try making for the festive season and beyond. The first is rich, dark and fruity with plenty of body, and the second is lighter, very dry and more bitter. Although both beers should be just about ready for drinking after a month in the bottle, they are best left until 3 months, and should keep improving the longer they are left. But beware, after 6-12 months, they will be very dry and potent!

## Recipe 1

(4 gallons) OG 1061

7lb crushed pale malt	A
1lb crushed crystal malt	A
4oz crushed black malt	A
3oz E. Kent Goldings hops	B
4lb golden syrup	B
2oz molasses	B
1 teaspoon Irish Moss	
5 saccharin tablets	
1 sachet of dried yeast or 2oz wet yeast	
White sugar for priming	

## Recipe 2

(5 gallons) OG 1060

5lb crushed pale malt	A
2oz crushed dark malt	A
4lb light diastatic malt extract	A
1lb 14oz demerara sugar	B

(continued in next column)

2oz Fuggles hops	B
2oz Goldings hops	B
1 teaspoon Irish Moss	
5 saccharin tablets	
1 sachet of dried yeast or 2oz wet yeast	
White sugar for priming.	

## Method

- 1] Heat 2½ gallons of water to 70°C and add one teaspoon of gypsum and a half teaspoon of epsom salts.
- 2] Slowly add ingredients 'A' to the water with stirring.
- 3] Bring the temperature back to 65°C and maintain at 63°-68° for 1½ hours.
- 4] Remove the grain from the wort and sparge (rinse) with hot water (60°-70°C) until 4 gallons are collected.
- 5] Discard the sparged grain.
- 6] Add ingredients 'B' to the wort, with stirring.
- 7] Bring to the boil and keep boiling for 1½ hours.
- 8] 15-20 minutes before the end of the boil, add the Irish Moss.
- 9] Discard the hops.
- 10] For recipe 2 only, make the volume up to 5 gallons with cold water.
- 11] Cool the wort to below 25°C (preferably below 20°C) and add the yeast and saccharin tablets. Stir thoroughly.
- 12] Maintain at a fermentation temperature of 16-20°C until the specific gravity will drop no further. This should be at approximately SG 1015-1020.
- 13] Run the beer into a separate container and maintain under an airlock for 7 days.
- 14] Either
  - (a) transfer the beer to a pressure barrel and prime with white sugar at the rate of one dessert-spoon per gallon
  - Or
  - (b) put into bottles and prime with white sugar at the rate of a half teaspoon per pint.
- 15] After 1-12 months, drink your winter ale!

De Olde Vic Chatham St.  
Edgeley

STOCKPORT'S PREMIER  
FREE HOUSE

Guest Beers Weekly

MARSTONS

BATEMANS

TAYLORS

TETLEYS



Tom & Betty Burke  
welcome you to

— The Grove Inn —

LONDON ROAD, HAZEL GROVE

Robinson's Fine Ales

Good Home-Cooked Lunches

☎ 483 4021

# XMAS CHEER

**T**HE 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; home 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 nearly boiling point then add toasted bread. Add 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 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; topping with the pulp of roasted apples and being well brewed, drink it while hot.'

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



## SEASONS GREETINGS

FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

Merry Christmas

to all our customers

Peter and Susan

The Grafton Arms

Chorlton-On-Medlock

Merry Xmas

From Kay & Staff

YE OLDE VIC

Edgeley



Whitworth Hotel

RUSHOLME

BRENDA & JOHN

Wish All Their Customers

Merry Christmas &

Happy New Year

Merry Xmas

FROM BOB, GILL & STAFF

YE OLDE WOOLPACK

STOCKPORT

The  
Cheadle Hulme

JOSEPH HOLT PLC  
PUBLIC HOUSE & RESTAURANT

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ONE AND ALL

Bryan & Veronica Armstrong

Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire SK8 7AA

Telephone: 061-485 4706

Merry Christmas

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FROM

Ian and Dot

Bakers Vaults

□ STOCKPORT □

# 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).

# STAGGER

BY: STUART BALLANTYNE

A LARGE group gathered in **Ye Olde Woolpack**, on Brinksway, for the start of this month's Stagger around Edgeley. Although the evening was fine, it was ominously overcast, and a heavy downpour seemed likely. On entering the pub, the range of beers on sale soon put this to the back of our minds as tonight's range included a new beer that most of us had not tried before. Brewed by Shepherd Neame, Spitfire Ale was a special beer to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and most of us opted to try this. Also available were Marstons Pedigree, Theakstons Bitter and Tetley Bitter. The Spitfire and the Tetleys were the only beers sampled and both were very enjoyable. Even at 7.00pm the pub was beginning to fill up, a far cry from the position a few years ago when the pub was rescued from bankruptcy and near dereliction by current owners Bob and Gill Dickinson - proof again that enterprising licensees selling quality cask conditioned beers will often succeed where others have failed. Sadly, it was time to move on.

The **Bridge Inn** on Chestergate looks to have seen better days. Most of the internal walls were knocked out years ago, creating a one-room pub. The internal decor was tatty and drab, and light patches on the walls which showed

ESTD  1867  
**BURTONWOOD**  
**BREWERY**



**A FAMILY TRADITION  
 OF FINE BREWING**

where pictures used to hang did nothing to add to the atmosphere. The only cask beer was Robinsons Best Bitter and this was considered average.

Walking around the corner on to King Street West brought us to the **Comfortable Gill**. This pub is well known as the local for the bus drivers from the depot opposite, although none seemed to be in on our visit. The pub's open plan 'Tudor' style must go back twenty years or so, when a lot of pubs were modernised in this way. Great then, but now seeming dated and uninspiring. A nice touch was the numerous plaques on the walls commemorating charitable donations to underprivileged children. Both Boddingtons Mild and Bitter were well thought of.

Up the road from the Comfy Gill is **Tom Thumbs**, for years one of the few local pubs selling only keg beers, it is now revitalised and selling cask Boddingtons and John Smiths beers under a new and particularly 'zany' licensee. Zany because this is the man who sat all day on the pub roof in a bath of custard to raise money for charity, zany because as we entered the pub we couldn't help noticing the dummy soldier on the roof in full combat uniform, zany because...well, I won't go on. Zaniness apart, both Boddingtons Bitter and John Smiths Bitter were on good form on our visit.

Next, an exhilarating walk up the hill to **Ye Olde Vic**. This tiny pub, a former CAMRA 'Pub of the Year' and the first pub in Stockport to offer guest beers, had latterly been criticised by some for its unimaginative range of guests. On sale tonight were Thomas Hardy Country Bitter, Taylors Landlord, Marstons Pedigree and Greene King Mild, a range that could hardly be described as unimaginative. The beers were all in good condition with the mild proving the best beer of the night so far.

Our next stop, the **Greyhound**, is a busy community pub built in 1959. Although it cannot be described as an architectural gem, its unpretentious business-like approach is remarkably successful without compromising on that increasingly difficult to find quality of a 'real local'. The casual visitor can be forgiven for thinking that the beers on sale are all keg, as there are no handpumps or other methods of dispense visible on the bar. This of course would be quite wrong as the pumps dispensing cask conditioned Boddingtons Mild and Bitter are hidden below the bar top. Both beers were rated highly by our party.

Hardly staggering distance away was our next port of call, the **Church**, a small Robinsons pub on the corner of Mosley Street and Bengal street. Tonight it was packed, probably due in part to the live entertainment in the form of an organist and singer/guitarist. We managed to squeeze into a corner of the pub to drink out Robinsons Best Mild and Best bitter - the Hartleys now having been taken off due to poor sales. The Mild was a little above average with the bitter being preferred.

A short walk around the corner brought us to the **Blue Bell**, a large Wilsons pub that at one time was a residential hotel. No doubt once a splendid building, it seems to have been neglected over the years and the large front lounge seemed somehow to lack the intimacy of other pubs in the area. Wilsons Bitter was thought to be below average with, surprisingly, the Websters Yorkshire Bitter faring better scoring comfortably above average.

Our next call was the **Amoury**, on the corner of Greek Street and Shaw Heath. Renovations seemed to be in progress in the

room at the time of our visit. Where the fireplace should have been there was now a gaping hole. We hoped that this didn't mean that the fireplace was to be bricked up and not replaced. The central bar serves three rooms (with a fourth room at the back), where there is much emphasis on wood paneling and, in the lounge, brassware. This is a great traditional pub although to my mind it is slightly spoilt by some unsympathetic features such as a circular strip light fittings and the occasional formica topped table. Both the Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter were well thought of.

Only a few yards further on is the **Swan**, a Wilsons pub that despite its traditional exterior hides a much altered less traditional interior. It was considerably quieter than the last pub so we had no difficulty in finding a seat. Unfortunately we picked the wrong one, as we chose a small table around an interior lampstand. When one of our group rested his elbow on the table it pivoted alarmingly. Had we placed any of our drinks on the table they would all have ended up either over us or over the floor. The two cask beers are Websters Yorkshire Bitter and Wilsons Bitter. The Websters wasn't on and the Wilsons was not very good at all, subsequently turning out to be the worst beer of the night.

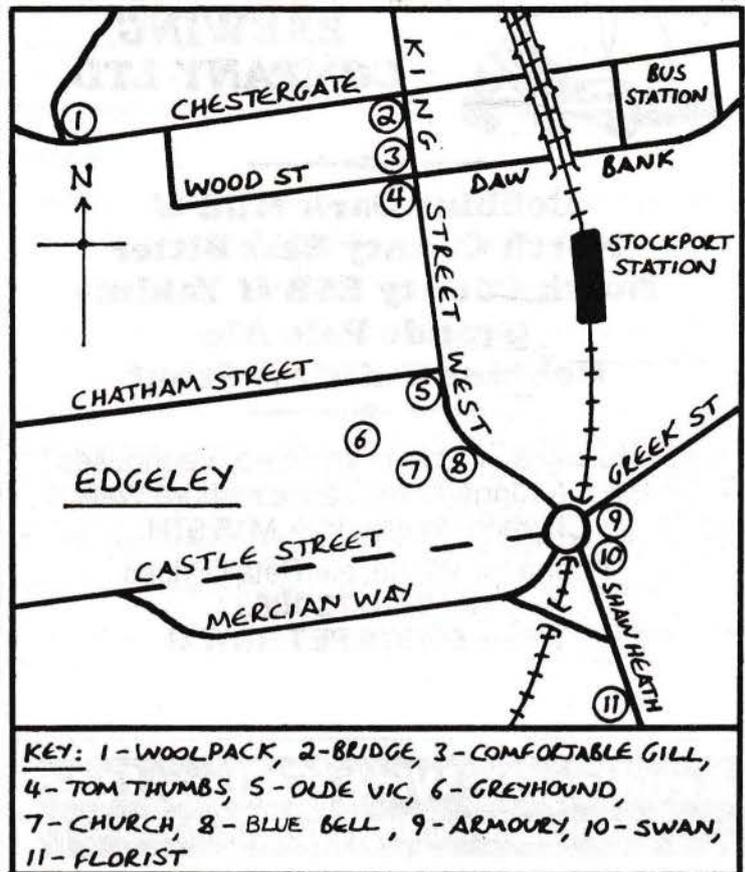
Our final pub, the **Florist**, is one of the area's greatest unspoilt pubs. Somewhat neglected by the brewery, its original etched glass windows, multi-roomed rambling interior and strong local following make it one of the best community pubs in the area. Only the replacement of doors by archways, and the multitude and variety of the furniture spoil the image - try counting the number of different tables in the pub! For seventeen years the pub has been under the threat of a CPO for a road scheme but this has recently been lifted and the pub reprieved. Perhaps now the brewery will spend a little money on the place, as long as it's not their usual "knock it through and paint it white" job. The Robinsons Best Bitter was thought to be good, the Best mild very good.

So ended another interesting and varied stagger with a good variety of pubs and beers. It should be remembered that the views in this article are not meant to be a once and for all judgement of the pubs or beers but simply represent what we found on one particular night. Most of the pubs covered are worth a second visit so why not pop in and see what you think.

## YUEL FUEL

OVER Christmas, the Kings Arms in Chorlton-On-Medlock will be selling Dobbins Yuletide Ale, the latest product from the on-site West Coast Brewery. We are told that this will be a dark hoppy ale with the more than respectable original gravity of 1080 (about the same as Robinsons Old Tom). It will sell at £1 per half pint, which, it must be said, does make it expensive when compared with similar brews from other local concerns.

Meanwhile, Sierra Nevada Pale Ale officially became Yakima Grande Pale Ale (see item on page 2) from the start of trading on November 19th - don't worry, it tastes as good as ever!



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- PWD is the Manchester & Stockport area's leading patio door specialist: impartial advice and technical assistance is always freely available.

### ★ 5 FREE PINTS ★

- Every (free) ESTIMATE given to a GENUINE ENQUIRER as a direct result of this advertisement will be accompanied by a VOUCHER FOR 5 PINTS OF REAL ALE redeemable at: The Railway Hotel, Ashburys, 61 Pottery Lane, Gorton (CAMRA Pub of the Year 1989) or Ye Olde Woolpack, Brinksway, Stockport (CAMRA Pub of the Month, January 1989)
- This offer applies to over 18s only. The Company's decision on what is a genuine enquiry is final.
- 'phone Derek "The Doc" Hayward-Shott or Andrew "Yogi" Baron at PWD to ARRANGE YOUR ESTIMATE AND VOUCHER.

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**Dobbins Dark Mild &  
North County Best Bitter  
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Grande Pale Ale  
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St. Sixtus, Pinkus, and more.*

*Worthington White Shield, Imperial Russian Stout.  
Westons Scrumpy & Vintage Ciders.  
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Parties & Functions supplied.*

*Note: We operate under the Wholesale Licencing Act,  
therefore minimum purchase is 24 bottles beer or 12 bottles  
wine/spirits, which can all be different.*

*Open: 8am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri, 11 - 3 Sat, 12 - 3 Sun  
Telephone orders accepted on a COD basis*

## The Red Lion

WITHINGTON

Mon.-Fri. 11.-11

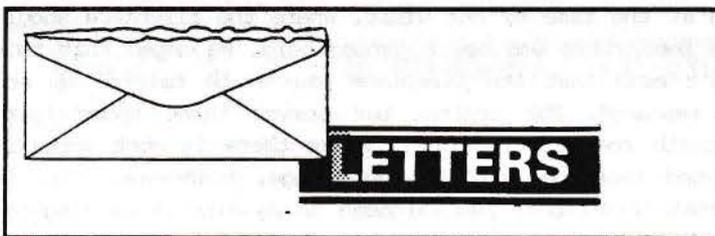
Handpulled Marstons

Pedigree and Burton

Best Bitter

★ LUNCH 7 DAYS A WEEK ★

★ EVE. MEALS MON.-FRI. 5.30-8.00 ★



From Derek Hayward-Shott:

I have seen the 1991 edition of the "Good Beer Guide" and, not unnaturally, paid particular attention to the entries for Stockport.

I was surprised by the omission of the 'Olde Vic', but accept that they have had quality problems ("heat haze" with the Timothy Taylor's Landlord in July being a memorable example), although in my opinion less so than one or two other pubs which have been included this year.

I was utterly astonished by the omission of 'Ye Olde Woolpack' on Brinksway.

The Guide has retained The Railway at Ashburys - your Pub of the Year 1989 - and I have the greatest respect for what Bob and Madeleine Gregory have done there. But 'The Railway' is a small and rather stuffy pub with limited creature comforts, and Bob and Madeleine have made the very best of what they've got. I wish them even more success in whatever they turn to next.

In contrast 'Ye Olde Woolpack' has the best range of guest beers in Greater Manchester. 'The Beer House' or 'The Marble Arch' may have more choice at any one time, but neither can match Bob and Gill Dickinson's selection of 10 or 12 guest beers a month, every month, and all of them in quite splendid condition even if not always to my personal palate. In addition the food is excellent, the service good, and the place is spotlessly clean. My main criticism, in fact, of which Bob and Gill are well aware, is the horrible 'muzak' which I maintain he uses solely to force people to play his blasted jukebox.

I wholeheartedly accept that editorial independence must be completely free from any relationship with advertising: otherwise no editor would ever feel free to express an opinion. But on this occasion I feel a significant injustice has been done, and I know many other regular and casual customers of 'Ye Olde Woolpack' agree with me. I would like you to publish this letter in "Opening Times" and ensure its contents are known at national level.

(Editor's note - selection of the pubs for the Good Beer Guide is always fraught with difficulty, not least due to the time scale involved - the 1991 entries were picked in February - but also due to pressure of space, locally we have over 320 pubs serving real ale of which only 27 can go into the Guide. At the time of selection the Woolpack had just undergone a major change in its beer range - Vaux

Samson dropped in favour of Tetley Bitter - and although guest beers had been talked about, they had not yet appeared, we did not know when they would be introduced or what form they would take.)

**From Bernard Holland:**

I recently attended the "Pub of the Month" award at the Arden Arms. I would imagine that if pubs were chosen on architectural merit or even atmosphere then the Arden would win most months. The article advertising the event was most complimentary on these points, also mentioning Robinsons very good internal alterations.

Scant mention was made of the beer except to say it was consistently good. Well, I know the subject is a matter of taste but I'd go as far as to say it should be the main criterion for a pub of the month and the beer since the changeover has not been consistent. Being mainly a mild drinker I have to rate the Arden as one of the worst examples of how to put people off drinking Robbies Mild. I go in the Arden quite regularly because I like the pub but have given up trying with the mild. Agreed the bitter is generally good but even that's inconsistent.

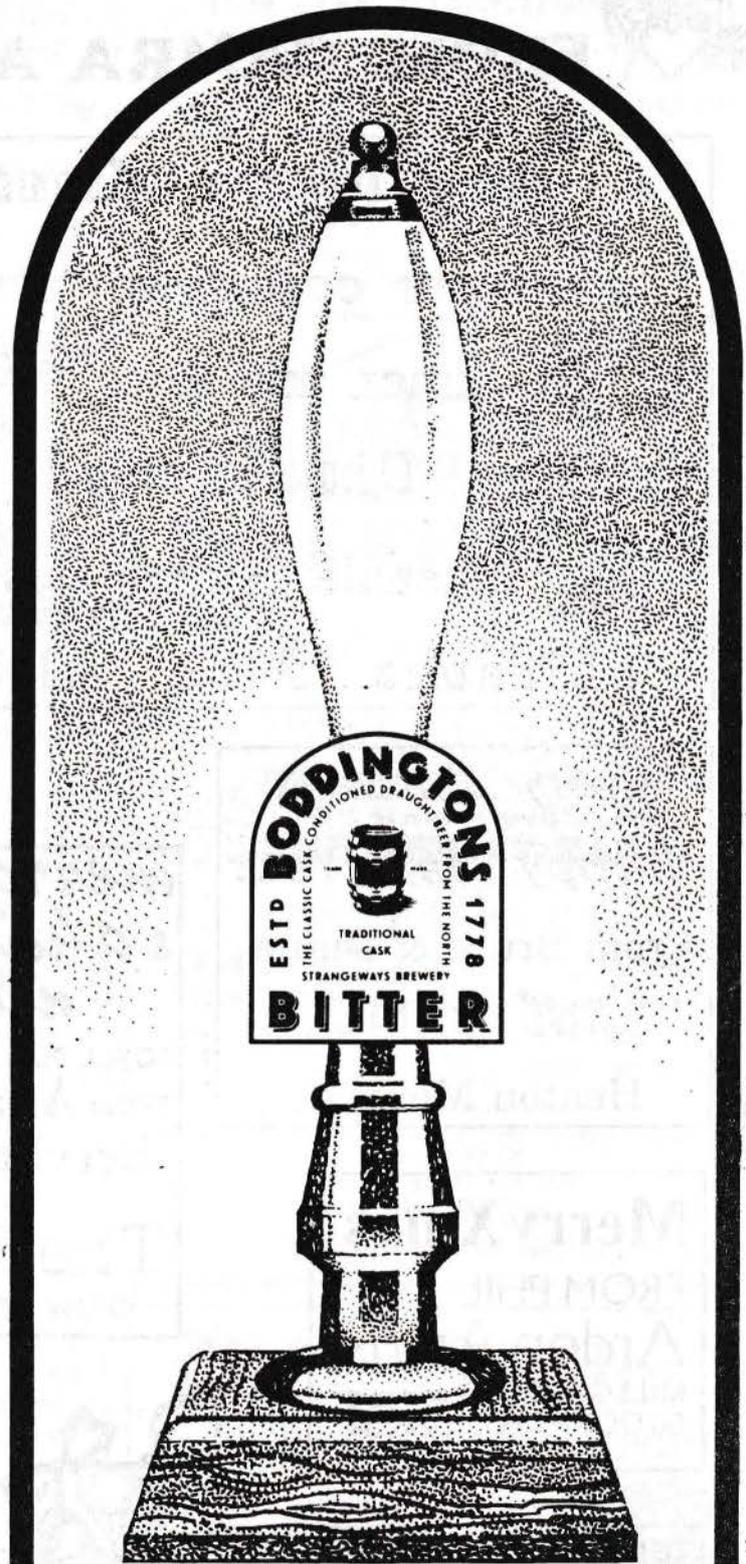
Until the mild is as good as we all know it can be the pub does not deserve Good Beer Guide status or monthly accolades!

(Editor's note - this just goes to show that one man's meat is another man's poison, I suppose. Personally, I have enjoyed both the mild and the bitter in the Arden Arms for a long time now. Cask beer is of course a living product and some occasional inconsistencies are perhaps to be expected - even the best run pub will have an off night once in a while.)

## SOME GOOD - SOME BAD

AS WE feared in last month's issue, the government has given the go-ahead to the proposed pubs-for-breweries swap between Grand Met and Courage, despite the Monopolies Commission finding that it would be against the public interest.

The proposed 10-year tie has been reduced to 7 years for the pubs coming under the jointly owned Intreprenuer Estates and to 4 years for the pubs which will continue to be run exclusively by Grand Met (generally the managed houses trading under the Chef & Brewer banner). Several thousand pubs will have to be freed from the tie and, interestingly, those freed will not be able to be re-tied at some later stage, nor will the new combine be allowed to loan-tie them (that is offer the new 'free houses' cheap loans in exchange for an exclusive product tie). This is perhaps the best news to come out of the whole deal as it does raise the prospect of a whole new range of free houses appearing around the country, which must be good news for the small independent brewers.



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

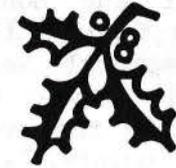


# SEASONS GREETINGS



## FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

A very Merry Xmas  
 To all our customers from  
 Simon and Rose  
 The Church Inn  
 Cheadle Hulme  
 Robinsons Fine Ales



Bowling Green  
 GRAFTON STREET  
 Chorlton-on-Medlock  
 Best Wishes To All Friends  
 Pat, Margaret,  
 Anna and Staff

Merry Xmas &  
 Happy New Year  
 From Bruce & Diane  
 The Griffin  
 Heaton Mersey

*merry xmas  
 & a happy  
 new year*  
 TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS  
 FROM Allan and  
 Beryl at  
 The Florist  
 SHAW HEATH



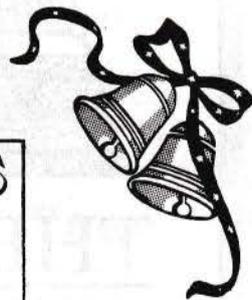
Merry Xmas  
 FROM PETER & JANET  
 The Robin Hood  
 HIGH LANE

Merry Xmas  
 To all our customers from  
 Simon P. Lyons & Jimmy  
 The Crown  
 Northenden

Merry Xmas  
 FROM PHIL  
 Arden Arms  
 MILLGATE  
 STOCKPORT



HAPPY XMAS  
 TO YOU ALL  
 FROM TIM & GILL  
 AT THE  
 MILESTONE  
 Burnage Lane



MERRY XMAS  
 AND HAPPY NEW YEAR  
 TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS  
 From Andy, Eunice & Staff  
 The Queens  
 CHEADLE  
 Good Beer Guide 1987-91



**REMEMBER - DON'T  
DRINK & DRIVE  
THIS CHRISTMAS  
'S JUST NOT WORTH IT**

**555 YEARS AGO 555**

**D**ECEMBER 1985 saw the 20th edition of Opening Times with much improved printing quality, a bolder heading and a doubling of the previous circulation; and of course it was still FREE, being financed entirely by revenue from advertisers.

An item headed "Requiem for the Oak", (Royal Oak on High St, Stockport) regretted its closure - it had been hoped to carry out remedial work whilst the pub remained open, but the discovery of serious structural faults meant that a complete rebuild was necessary. This was a unique pub, with... "individuality, character and atmosphere, and a vast array of bric-a-brac festooned throughout the rooms and the corridor. Everything from hundreds of key-rings, a collection of bank notes, and an Alladin's cave of rocks (I think a bit of the moon was there) to the superb old brewery posters and mirror..." "...it is difficult to believe that the Oak will be anything other than a faint shadow of its former self when it finally re-opens." Prophetic words - today's Royal Oak is squeaky clean, brightly lit, and not even a pale shadow of its former self.

There is another Royal Oak in Didsbury - whilst you can always rely on a decent pint of Marstons, it has another claim to fame - its lunch-time food, and the Pub Grub feature described it as "best value yet". The menu is basically bread and cheese or pate, but the choice and portions are enormous, and all at the flat rate of £1.60 (and a "doggy bag" to take home what you can't eat.)

News of new beers - Sam Smiths announced two new cask beers - a Mild, and a stronger (og 1048) version of their regular Old Brewery Bitter, to be called Museum Ale. The mild just never appeared, but the Museum Ale did (and is still around today). Banks's announced a new Hanson's Brew, called Black Country Bitter at 1038 og, stronger than the standard bitter at 1035 (but now the only Hanson's Bitter available is the 1035 version.)

**The Old King  
Great Portwood St.**

- STOCKPORT -  
061 480 6026

**HANDPUMPED REAL ALE  
CHRISTMAS DINNERS TO ORDER  
FROM DECEMBER 3RD.  
MON - SAT 12-8.30  
SUNDAY 12-2.30**

**SMALL FUNCTION ROOM AVAILABLE  
\*\*GUEST BEER - TETLEY BITTER\*\***

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CHILDREN WELCOME**

**SATELLITE TV**

**YOUR HOSTS  
Steve & Dorothy**

**De Olde  
Woolpack**



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**FREE HOUSE**

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Tetley Bitter - Weekly Guest Beers

**GOOD HOME-MADE FOOD**

Served 6 lunchtimes a week  
from a wide-ranging menu PLUS

★ 3-Course Sunday Lunch ★  
choose from:

Soup - Pate - Prawn Cocktail

Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding  
Roast Lamb & Mint Sauce  
Roast Chicken & Stuffing  
(all served with a selection of fresh vegetables  
plus a choice of sweets)

**£4.50**

Proprietors: Robert & Gillian Dickinson

**MATTHEW BROWN AXED**

**M**ATTHEW Brown of Blackburn, the most fought-over brewery in modern history, is to be axed. Scottish & Newcastle announced the closure last month - and reneged on a firm promise to keep the brewery in operation that was given in 1985 to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Despite an assurance that the Blackburn plant was 'sacrosanct for continued brewing purposes', S&N have now turned round and blamed the MMC report on beer supply for the closure. This, of course, is nonsense - S&N are now below the 2000 pub threshold and so count as a 'regional' brewer. They do not have to allow their tenants to take a guest beer and, form their strong free trade base, are well positioned to get their beers into other national brewers pubs. As is usual in the industry these days, cant and hypocrisy rule the roost.



# 16 SEASONS GREETINGS



## FROM CAMRA AND YOUR LOCAL

Merry Christmas

& Happy New Year



To all our customers



From David & Julia, Arthur & Anne



& all our staff



Come and visit the new extension  
opening on 16th. Dec.

**Strawberry Duck**

Crabtree Lane, Clayton

Merry Christmas &

A Happy New Year

To All Customers and  
Friends

FROM PHYLLIS, WENDI AND  
STUART

**\*The Printers\***

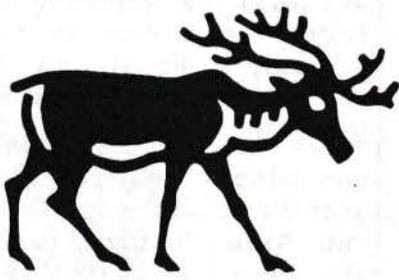
CHEADLE

ROBINSONS BEST MILD AND BITTER

**Merry Xmas**

FROM ALL AT THE  
**Red Lion**

WITHINGTON



**MERRY XMAS**

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

*from Nora & Keith*

**Victoria Hotel**

Wilmslow Rd., Withington

**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& HAPPY NEW YEAR**

from Eddie & Alwyn

**The Grapes**

HAZEL GROVE



*Merry Xmas*

FROM IAN & GWEN

**The Midway**

NEWBRIDGE LANE  
STOCKPORT

**Seasons**



**Greetings**

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS

From Ann & Staff

**THE STATION**

DIDSBURY

Good Beer Guide 1988-91

Merry Christmas

AND

Happy New Year

TO CUSTOMERS OLD AND NEW

FROM

Aline, Peter and Family

**Little Bradford**

ASHTON OLD ROAD



# MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

THE month is overshadowed by the shocking closure of the **Railway** on Pottery Lane, Gorton, of which further details appear elsewhere. Also closed is the **Millstone** in the City Centre, while the **Park** in Bradford (where the latest flirtation with real ale, this time Boddies, lasted only a matter of weeks) and the **Three Legs of Man** in Hulme (now in Vaux ownership) now sell only keg beer.

Fortunately there is some good news. Pick of the crop of pre-Christmas reopenings seems likely to be the **Sandpiper** on Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield. Formerly a keg Greenalls pub, this has been bought by the licensee of the Orwell on Wigan Pier; and following the success of Brendan Dobbin's West Coast beers in the Orwell, they will form the main attraction at the Sandpiper - the initial range is expected to be North County Bitter, Guiltless Stout, and Yakima Grande (formerly Sierra Nevada) Plaa Ale. As we went to press refitting of the pub was (most unusually) running ahead of schedule, and it was expected to open on 29th November. A welcome re-opening in the City Centre is the **Smithfield Vaults** on Swan Street, now known as the **Royal Crown** and with Boddingtons and Chesters Bitters on handpump. Next door we are assured that the **Burton Arms** is now regularly selling handpumped Draught Bass.

In Bradford handpumped Chesters Mild has returned to the **Shakespeare**. In Northenden, the Boddington PubCo's **Jolly Carter** has handpumped bitter but only keg mild; Tetley's **Church** has handpumped Robinsons Best Bitter; Greenalls' **Farmers Arms** now has bitter on handpump; while

Chef & Brewer's **Tatton Arms** has lost Wilsons Bitter and Websters Choice but gained a handpump, not always in use for Ruddles County.

Numerous changes of beer have been noted in the City Centre. In the Grand Met estate, the **Salisbury**, which has been revamped internally removing the alcoves, has lost Wilsons Bitter and Websters Choice but gained handpumped Ruddles Bitter; Wilsons Bitter has also vanished from the **Crown** on Deansgate leaving the unusual range of Holts Bitter and Websters Choice (with a massive 36p price differential); while Choice has been withdrawn from the **Rising Sun** in favour of handpumped Websters Bitter.

Two more Whitbread pubs - the **Abercrombie** and the **City Road Inn** - are taking handpumped Boddingtons Bitter, the City Road also adding Chesters Mild and Trophy on handpump. Meanwhile the Boddington PubCo's **Old Garratt** has dropped "Higsons" Bitter - a loss few will regret now it no longer comes from Liverpool.

The **Grand Central** has gained handpumped Ruddles Bitter, while the **Pack Horse** now has Greenalls Original on handpump (handpumps have also replaced electrics to dispense the Pack Horse's bitter). Finally, the **Briton's Protection** joins the growing band of Tetley pubs taking handpumped Robinsons Best Bitter.

**STOP PRESS:** just before going to press we heard that Holts have moved into the City Centre with the purchase of **Chesters Pie & Ale House**, if true this is welcome news indeed - more, hopefully, next month.

## CAMRA CALLING

VERY little room this month - just enough to mention the Branch meeting on 13th at the Midway, Newbridge Lane, Stockport from 8.00pm onwards. There will be a general knowledge quiz with lots of fabulous prizes (it says here). And of course on Friday 21st it's the annual Hillgate Crawl - 7.00pm in the Blossoms, 8.30 in the Crown. Don't miss it.

Phil Welcomes You To The

*Arden Arms*  
MILLGATE, STOCKPORT

**Robinsons Traditional Ales**

BITTER, MILD, OLD TOM  
ON DRAUGHT

Open All Day Fri./Sat.

BAR MEALS AVAILABLE

• **The Royal Oak** •

WILMSLOW ROAD, DIDSBURY

*No Music • No Machines*

*No Children • No Dogs*

JUST FINE MARSTONS ALES IN A  
SUPERB TRADITIONAL PUB

## PUB NEWS



At Greenalls' **Angel** in Gorton we welcome George & Liz Henderson, whose first pub this is. George and Liz took over in late October as tenants, after several years of managers in the Angel, and those who propound the virtues of the tenancy system will certainly note the increased level of personal attention in the pub. In recent years the Angel has only sold one real ale, Greenall's Bitter, but with an eye to Greenalls' impending withdrawal from brewing, George and Liz are looking at the possibility of extending the range - sensibly, though, they don't want to run before they can walk, so expect change to be gradual rather than revolutionary.

Over in Openshaw, work is now well advanced on the **Seven Stars**, Ashton Old Road, with the new extension looking almost complete.

Re-opening was supposed to be in November but this hadn't come to pass as we went to press - hopefully we will bring you a full report next month. Just down the road, there seem to be some developments at the old **Openshaw Inn**, latterly the Pop Inn the alcohol-free kids' pub that ended up derelict and sold off by Whitbread. The pub has been repainted and has new windows - is a re-opening as a pub is prospect?

A warm welcome to a new face at the **Egerton Arms**, Market Place, Stockport. Tony Eckersall took over at the start of November, previously having run Bergman's Bar in Oldham, a John Willie Lees pub. Tony tells us that the Egerton may be refurbished in the new year with a view to increasing the pub's food trade. The refurbishment will also include the upstairs family room, a welcome move for a town centre pub. He also said there should be a guest beer but was unable to be more specific at this stage.

The **Metropole** in Beswick is closed and boarded up once again. The pubs owners? You guessed it - Control Securities!

Improvements look to be on the cards at the **Old Star**, High St, Cheadle. Having seen trade plummet, Hydes have installed a caretaker licensee and are actively looking for a new tenant. Meanwhile, the pub has been cleaned up and arrangements made for the beer to be delivered in smaller containers to help maintain its condition until trade picks up. The pub is to be refurbished next spring and this will involve building an extension at the back and a complete redecoration. The beer is now much improved and the atmosphere at the pub more welcoming. Worth a visit.

The **Windsor Castle** in Edgeley has returned to the real ale fold with the introduction of cask Stones Bitter as a guest beer. Meanwhile across the road, the **Pineapple** is shut, having apparently been closed down by the police. Its fate remains unclear.

The new Forshaws Bitter from Burtonwood is now on sale at the **Royal Oak** in High Lane.

Whitbread are having another attempt to get rid of the **King William IV** in Chorlton-on-Medlock. It goes up for auction (again) in January with a reserve in the region of £100,000.

**Contributors to this issue:** Peter Edwardson, John Clarke, Rhys Jones, Alastair Walker, Tracey Clarke, Stuart Ballantyne, Phil Levison, Paul Braidley.

Copy date for the next issue Friday 21 December with publication on Wednesday 9th January.

Opening Times wishes all its readers 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 make Opening Times such a great success.

**Bob, Caz and Betty**  
Welcome You To  
**The Plough**  
Shaw Heath

— *Fine Ales* —

*Good Home-Cooked*  
— *Meals* —

\* BY GRAHAM THE CHEF \*

 480 3833



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 0WD. Tel: 477 1973 (home), 831 7222 ext. 3411 (work). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.