

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

# OPENING TIMES

CAMRA  
FREE

No 82  
FEBRUARY 1991

## PUB OF THE YEAR

### STOCKPORT PUB SCOOPS TOP AWARD

STOCKPORT & South Manchester CAMRA's top award, Pub of the Year, has been won for 1990 by popular Stockport local, the Arden Arms on Millgate.

The pub has a long pedigree with a pub on the site being recorded as long ago as 1709 when "Ye Blew Stoops" was even then described as "ancient". For a time during the last century the pub was a home brew house although this had ceased by 1879 when it was purchased by Robinsons, thus becoming one of their earliest tied houses.

More recently the pub became a well regarded local institution during the 25-year tenancy of Jack May which only came to a close a couple ago. It was that long tenancy which ensured that the pub remained unspoiled when so many others were having their hearts torn out. The unique snug only accessible through the bar, the grandfather clocks and lovingly restored furniture all contributed to the timeless feel of the place.

When Jack retired there was naturally concern that things might change for the worse, indeed such a change might have been inevitable if the pub had not come into the hands of Phil Simcock whose declared aim of making the pub a brewery flagship has been triumphantly realised. Phil's loving care has seen the pub, if anything, improved. A disused kitchen has been incorporated into the public areas with a degree of care and sensitivity that, given their pretty poor track record, it was impossible to believe that Robinsons possessed. There is now live music in the pub and the lunchtime menu has been extended but all this has been done without compromising the traditional qualities which make the Arden Arms so unique. It is a tribute to Phil that he has been able to strike the balance between improving the pub's economics and maintaining its traditions so successfully.

This well deserved award will be presented on Tuesday, March 12th when a full house is expected.



## THE 10TH STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL

30 MAY - 1 JUNE 1991

BELIEVE it or not, the countdown has already started for Stockport's 1991 Beer Festival. The dates for your diary are Thursday 30th May to Saturday 1st June. The venue will again be the Masonic Guildhall on Wellington Road South which proved so popular last year. Like last year there will be a huge variety of beers and ciders available - more next month.

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# OT COMMENT

COMMENT columns appear only rarely in Opening Times, usually when there is a major issue which we want to sound off about. This one, however, is more in the way of an explanation.

As editor, I have been disturbed to hear reports from licensees who disagree with what we say, that they feel that any attempt to put their point of view would not be fairly dealt with. Presumably if licensees feel that way then other among our readership feel the same.

Firstly, a word about Opening Times. This is a pub newsletter produced by the Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. CAMRA is a 28,000 strong nationwide consumer group for beer drinkers and pub goers. Apart from a small full-time staff at our Head Office in St Albans, all work for the Campaign is done on a voluntary, unpaid basis. This extends to Opening Times. We do not employ any professional journalists etc and the articles that appear are written by local members of the Campaign and essentially represent a personal view of whatever is being written about.

Clearly, there is always room for more than one opinion, especially on such an emotional subject as pubs and beer and I would hope that it goes without saying that articles and letters are always welcome. Provided they are not libellous or obscene, letters will always be printed, so, if you've something to say, don't moan into your beer - let us know!

- John Clarke, Editor.

## FEBRUARY

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

## PUB OF THE MONTH

THE Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for January goes to a pub which probably one of the oldest and at the same time one of the newest in Stockport - the **Queens Head (Turner's Vaults)** on Little Underbank.

The pub is reported to date back to the reign of Queen Anne and was taken over by the Turner Family in 1809. Following that very little changed for about 180 years when the pub was bought by Yorkshire brewers Sam Smiths. The 180 years of neglect, whilst providing for a museum piece of a pub also meant that the building was in a bad structural state and so Sam Smiths gutted the front part of the building and demolished the rest. However unlike another brewer not a million miles away from the pub, Sam Smiths then lovingly restored the old building to the showpiece it now is.

Since its reopening the pub did suffer from a succession of inexperienced or temporary licensees which resulted in its potential being somehow dimmed - all changed 8 or so months ago with the arrival of Carol Butterworth who, with husband John, used to run the popular Three Tunnes on Great Egerton Street until its demolition. John has a full time job but still helps in the running of the pub - an echo of the Three Tunnes is the taped Jazz played in the pub most nights.

Under Carol's experienced management Turner's Vaults is settling down to become the local drinking institution it should rightly be and as a recognition of her efforts with this classic pub the award is well earned. The presentation will be on Thursday 28th February - get there early if you want a seat!

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# COACH AND HORSES – LATEST MOVES

THE campaign to save Manchester's Castle & Falcon and Coach & Horses public houses continues.

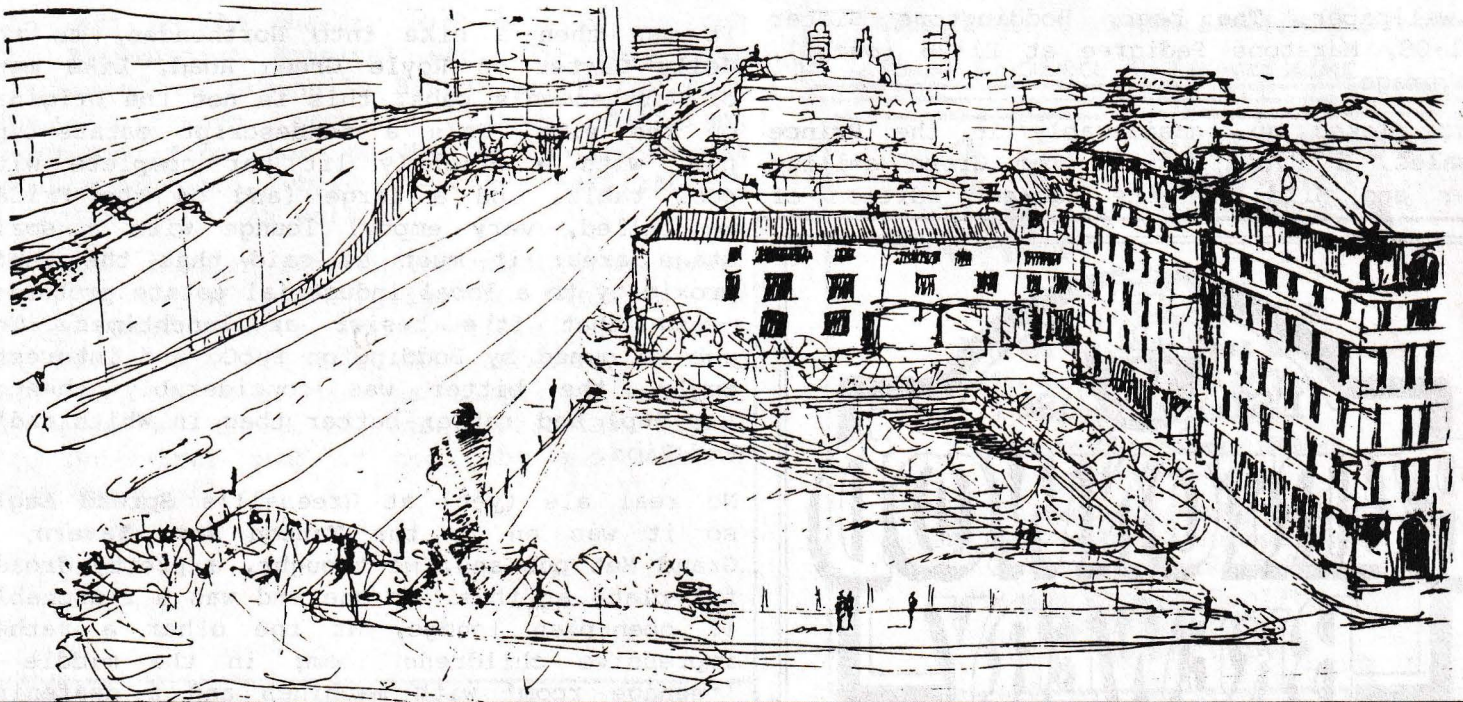
The Castle & Falcon is in fact now starting to look safe. Despite last year's fire, the building has been weatherproofed and indeed has recently had some new rafters fitted to make good some of the damage. The building is also being included, as a functioning pub, in plans now being drawn up for the wholesale redevelopment of the Shudehill area.

As far as the Coach & Horses is concerned however, there is currently less cause for optimism. The pub is now standing empty and we understand that the owner of the block of which it forms part has served a notice to quit on the neighbouring Piccadilly Restaurant, the intention being, it seems, to demolish the whole block when vacant possession has been obtained.

We are still attempting to find out who in fact does own the building but enquiries of their solicitors have revealed that it could be purchased for something in the region of £180,000 - a price described by one expert as way over the odds.

Clearly urgent action is needed and CAMRA has not been inactive here. We have commissioned a scheme from leading community architect Ian Findlay for the redevelopment of the area incorporating the Coach & Horses in a combined leisure/retail/office complex - one of the preliminary sketches is shown below.

We must now 'sell' this scheme to the Development Corporation under whose jurisdiction the site falls - they have previously said that they regard the site as an eyesore but will keep an open mind on the subject. With luck they would then CPO the site and save it from otherwise inevitable demolition. More news when we have it.



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# STAGGER

BY: PAUL FELTON

THE damp and dismal night of November 16th saw our monthly Stagger take in the combined delights of Gatley and Northenden.

We began in Gatley but did not get off to a good start in the **Red Lion**, a Whitbread house on Church Road. I've nothing against Christmas decorations, but a fortnight before the beginning of December is a little too early for Christmas trees. Otherwise the Red Lion was with one large room divided into drinking and (raised) eating areas; it seemed even more of a restaurant with attached bar than on our last visit, and looked to have undergone a fairly standard refurbishment (pictures, art deco lampshades, lots of flowers on curtains and wallpaper. The beer, Boddingtons Bitter at £1.08, Marstons Pedigree at £1.26 (ouch!), was average.

Things picked up considerably in the **Prince of Wales**, a Hydes pub on The Green selling Bitter and Mild. In the current edition of

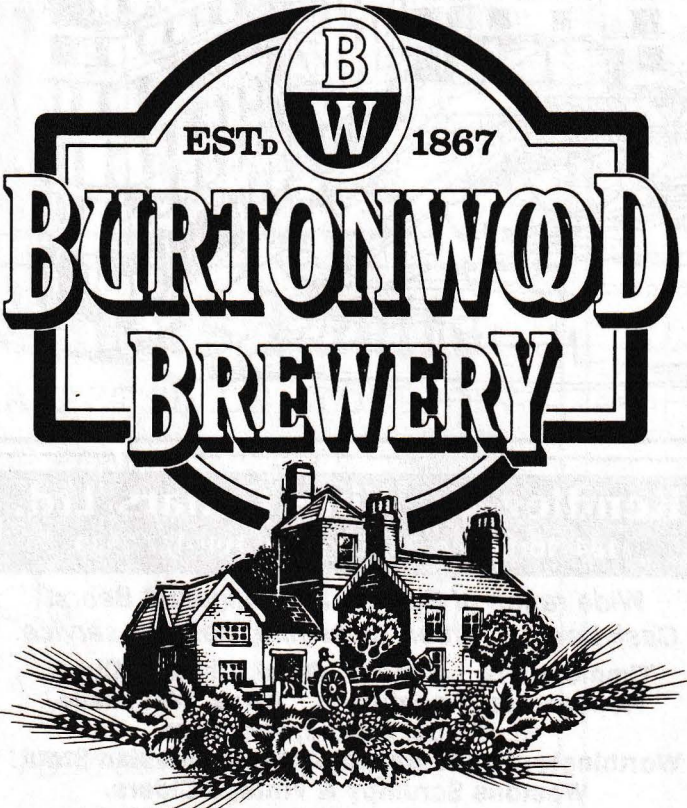
the Good Beer Guide, the Prince of Wales is a wide low ceilinged pub with three distinct areas: games room on the left, lunchtime dining area on the right (the food is good and reasonably priced). It's all very comfortable, done out in a 'country' style, with a series of photographs on the walls depicting the pub's history. The bitter, at 92p, was its customary fine self but no-one tried the mild.

Even better was the **Horse & Farrier**, near the cinema on Gatley Road. It's another Hydes pub again with bitter but here partnered by Anvil Light, and is another current Good Beer Guide entry. The outside is mock-Cheshire, the inside is large and dark, with numerous separate drinking areas (and more art deco lampshades...) with a particularly nice little corner just underneath the stairs to your right as you go in the front door. The licensee is long serving, and produces a consistently splendid pint. The beers were by some way the best of the night, with the Anvil Light getting particularly enthusiastic comments from the assembled throng. Highly recommended.

It was then a hike into Northenden, to the **Jolly Carter** on Royle Green Road. Like many of Northenden's pubs, this is not the original on the site. It's a nondescript estate-type pub, with a brightly lit bar complete with pool table, and a large (and on the Friday we called, very empty) lounge with a small stage area: it must be said that the pub's proximity to a local industrial estate probably means that it's busier at lunchtimes. The pub is owned by Boddington PubCo and interestingly, the bitter was considerably cheaper (at 96p) and rather better than in Whitbread's Red Lion.

No real ale (yet) at Greenall's **Spread Eagle** so it was on to the **Tatton Arms Tavern**, a Grand Met pub and, we thought, a pretty dreadful place at that. At one end was a reasonable if open-plan lounge, at the other a rather impressive childrens room; in the middle a 'teenage room' with machines and a deafening jukebox. The beer was Websters Yorkshire Bitter at a hefty £1.04 a pint. As for its quality, well, what can you say? Not nasty by any means, but just another typically bland, standardised lowest-common-denominator pint of brown liquid foisted on us by a national brewer. Boring.

The **Crown**, a Boddingtons pub, was by some way the busiest and noisiest of the night, due in part perhaps because it was also the smallest pub of the night. There is a lounge and vault with lots of brass hanging from the ceiling and many pictures on the walls. It was once known locally as the Corner Pin, from the days when it was on the end of a row of cottages. Both bitter and mild were available (the only cask mild in Northenden in fact) and both were rather good. Possibly



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No rest for the wicked; on to Tetley's Church. This place provided the surprise of the night - in addition to Tetley Bitter at £1.04, Robinsons Best Bitter was available as a guest beer, a reasonable choice in a village like Northenden which has no Robbins houses in the area. The Church is basically one large room, open-plan but separated, with raised areas immediately beside the doors, interestingly grandiose curtains, and an area with two pool tables and pop videos. Perhaps in need of a little sprucing up. Both beers were OK, with the Tetleys getting a slightly more favourable response.

Lastly we came to the **Farmers Arms**, a Greenalls house which is the other candidate for the best pub in the village, and for my money won the contest on the night (if only because it was quieter than some of the others...). It's a square building but with some 3½ (3½? - ed.) distinct areas served by one bar and NO MUSIC. There are numerous references on the wall to the charity work done by the pub for Wythenshawe Hospital etc. The only beer available was Greenalls Bitter which for some strange reason provoked rather different reactions from our party: half thought it was rather good, while the other half thought it rather poor. Ah well...

So ended another interesting night with, overall, pride of place going to Gatley's two Hydes pubs. However, this article isn't meant to be a once and for all judgement of the pubs or the beer but is simply a snapshot of what we found on one particular night. Why not visit some of the pubs and make up your own mind?

**KEY:** 1- RED LION, 2- PRINCE OF WALES, 3- HORSE & FARRIER, 4- JOLLY CARTER, 5- SPREAD EAGLE (KEG), 6- TATTON ARMS, 7- CROWN, 8- CHURCH, 9- FARMERS ARMS

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# SLOPPING OUT

## George Symes Returns to a Well-Worn Theme

THE Stockport & South Manchester branch of CAMRA has taken the decision to try to have the national Campaign press for legislation to stamp out the practice of putting slops back into beer (the Australians have neatly solved the problem with the compulsory presence of dye crystals in drip trays). In an increasingly health conscious age we are all aware of the potential hazards attached to drinking beer which contains re-cycled warm stale beer, which in many cases has already been down the side of somebody else's used glass. Eurgh!

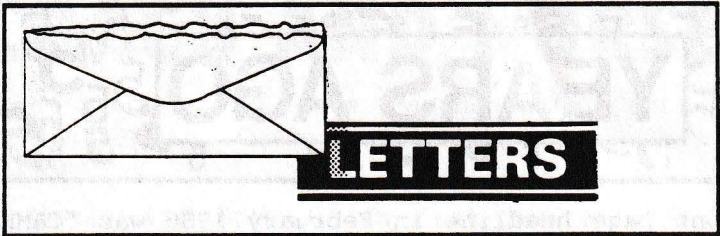
The practice of putting slops back is one that any beer drinker should oppose, yet so many tend to turn a blind eye to it, or simply give their landlord a bit of ragging. It's usually easy to spot as the evidence is there for all to see. A bucket, usually stainless steel, and generally covered, will be filled periodically from the drip trays beneath the pumps. Sometimes you can even see the bucket carried away, studiously avoiding the nearest sink. Tomorrow you will be paying good money for some of that!

Unless drinkers object, this vile, unhealthy practice will continue. Here are a few things you could do:

- Tell us where you see it, and we'll check for ourselves.
- Ask the landlord if he has a legitimate excuse - carrying a bucket away doesn't always mean that slops are being returned.
- Tell the landlord that you disapprove of the practice and ask him if he would stop it if enough of his regulars objected.
- If you get a hostile reaction, tell us, tell the brewery and tell the Environmental Health Department. Above all, tell your friends.
- Don't ignore it, and don't treat it as a joke. You are being cheated.

Please let Opening Times what you think about this - letters to the address on the back page please.





**From Peter Edwardson:**

On a recent visit to Whitbread's Hinds Head in Heaton Chapel, I was dumbfounded to be charged no less than £1.28 for a pint of Strong Country Bitter (OG 1037), on sale as a "Guest Beer". Now this isn't some exotic brew from a small independent brewery at the other end of the country, it's a mass-market beer produced under the name of a defunct brewery by Whitbread themselves at their Cheltenham factory, and easily available through their national distribution network. On the same day the nearby George & Dragon was selling what to my mind is a notably superior Whitbread beer, ie Boddingtons Bitter, for less than a pound.

The pricing in the Hinds Head neatly sums up Whitbread's policies - take over your local brewery, close it down, produce a feeble imitation of the beer somewhere else, and charge you the earth for the privilege of drinking it!

I understand that the licensee in the Hinds Head is a CAMRA member. If so, might I suggest that he shows a little more commitment to the ideals of the Campaign by kicking out these fake Whitbread "guest beers" and replacing them with genuine guest beers from independent breweries at reasonable prices - as he is quite within his rights to do. Why not Holts in Heaton Chapel? But what would that do to the sales of the other bland, overpriced Whitbread beers in the pub?

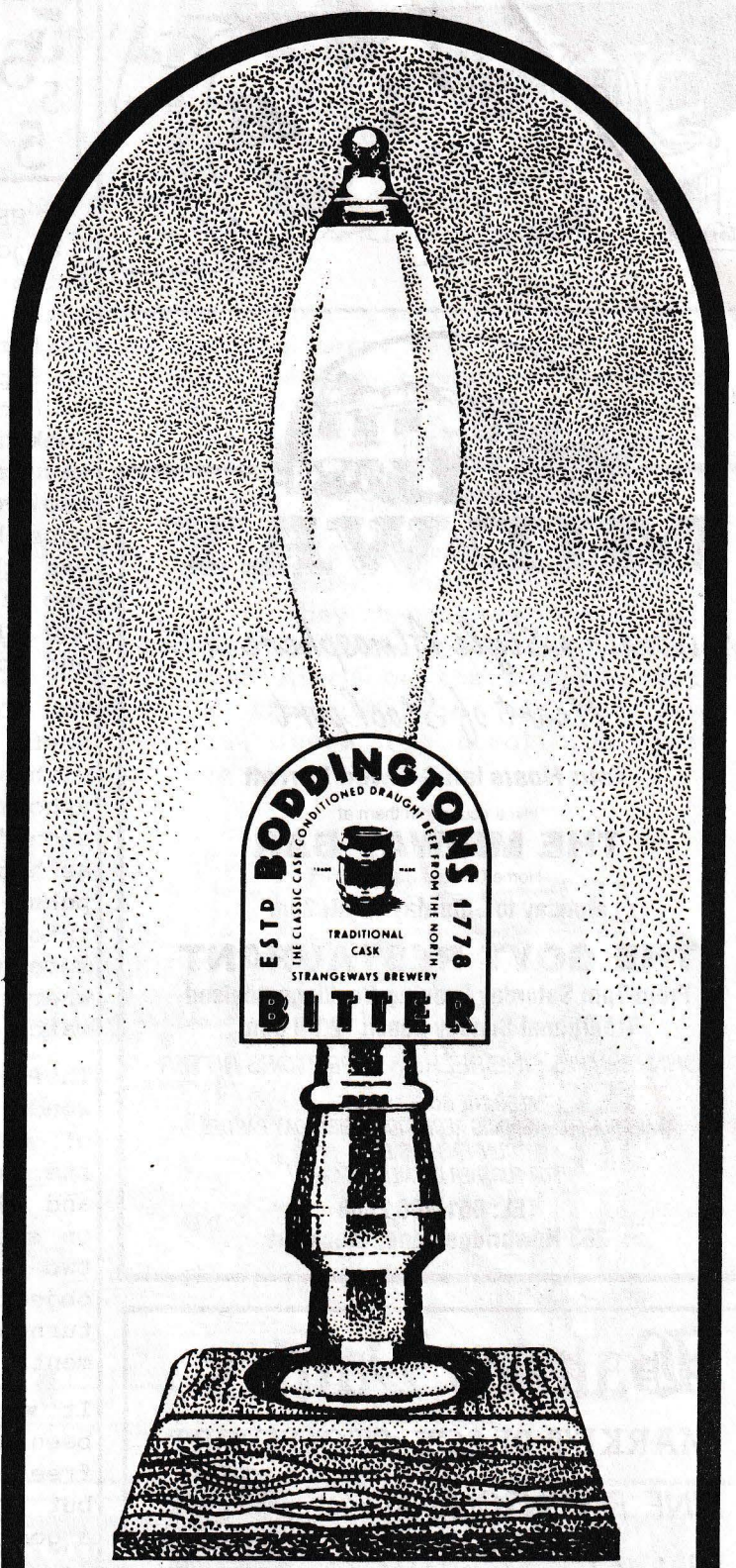
**From Rhys Jones:**

I spent the morning of New Year's Eve in Aberystwyth, a small and remote town on the Welsh coast.

It was a wet Monday; the town has considerably more pubs per head of population than Manchester and the students, who constitute a big chunk of the local pub trade, were away. Yet every pub I saw between 11.00am and 12 noon has its doors open!

Why can't Manchester licensees do the same? All praise to the few who do, but they're as rare as a brewery price cut.

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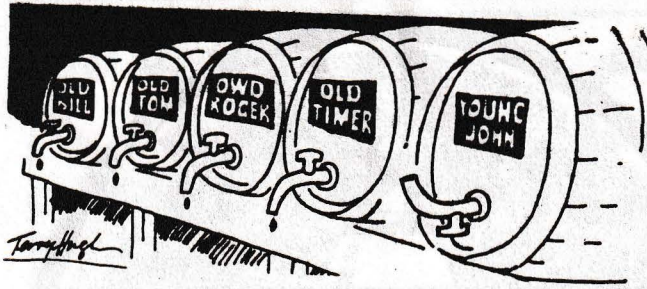
**CASK**  


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**CONDITIONED**  


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**BITTER**



THE front page headline in February 1986 was "CAMRA joins push for extra time". A rather stupid position had arisen - Stockport pubs could stay open until 11pm every weekday night, but in Manchester, Salford and Trafford, "drinking up" time started at 10.30pm. So CAMRA were making their own representations to try and regularise the anomaly. It seems odd to look back on the problems that the extra half-hour was causing - we have had "all day opening" for over two years now, and it can be very confusing to find pubs keeping very different hours. But of course that was the idea - flexibility - and now there is only one time that you can rely on, and that's 11pm closing. And there are still exceptions like the Isle of Man and Scotland.

The Conway in Cheadle Hulme re-opened as a Pennine Hosts "Open House" - it was all very light and airy, with yellow lights, brass rails and light-coloured upholstery, and a music system with the lights "flashing along". The vault had gone, of course. But mercifully, as happened with so many of the Hosts' theme or concept pubs, it wasn't many years before it was turned back into a pub again. Furniture and carpets are once again more traditional, and there is even a separate vault where you can have a game of pool or darts, or even watch television in comparative comfort.

The Romper (or Red Lion) near Manchester Airport, a wonderful old pub, was announced as being under threat of major alterations which would completely destroy its character. The pub belongs to the Boddington PubCo, and they had applied for planning permission to add on such things as a glass and aluminium entrance hall, two 40-seat dining rooms, a cocktail bar...Lots of objections were made, the planning application was turned down, and there have been no further developments.

It was announced that the Shady Oak in Bramhall had been sold to Tetleys - and this was one of the few free houses in the Stockport & South Manchester area, but at least Tetleys were persuaded to keep quite a good range of beers, including non-Allied products.

A few Stockport snippets from 1986:

The Red Bull was voted Pub of the Year.

The Buck & Dog was all set to close.

"Renovation" for the Royal Oak turned into demolition.



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# MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

**M**OST welcome real ale gain of the month has to be the **Cotton Tree**, Cotton Lane, Withington, with handpumped Greenalls Bitter and Original - a splendid little local, complete with log-end dartboard, and the sort that never should have lost its traditional beer. The same two beers are now on handpump at the **Church** on Stockport Road in Levenshulme - note though that Greenalls beers now come from the Tetley Walker brewery in Warrington, Greenall's own brewery having closed in mid-January.

In the City Centre the newly opened **Manto** on Canal Street has Boddingtons Bitter, Marstons Pedigree (at £1.50 a pint!) and a Whitbread "guest beer" on handpump, together with bottled Timmermans fruit beers from Belgium, while the long-keg **Rosies Bar** on York Street now has Wilsons and Websters bitters on handpump.

Two pubs have reopened, the **Midland** in West Didsbury with handpumped Boddingtons Bitter (seemingly no Pedigree despite the pumpclip) and the **Royal George** on Lever Street in the Centre with handpumped Websters Bitter, while the **Hat & Feathers** on Mason Street in the Centre has gone back to real ale in the shape of handpumped Boddingtons and Chesters bitters. Real Ale losses are the **Ancoates** in the City Centre and **Yates's** in Fallowfield (both keg) and the **Imperial** in the City Centre (closed for refurbishment).

**Fritzby's** in Fallowfield no longer sells Chesters but does have Castle Eden Ale and Marstons Pedigree on handpump, though availability apparently varies. Further out in Withington, **Bertie's** has lost Castle Eden, the

**Waterloo** has lost Wilsons Mild, and the **Manor House** now has just Tetley Bitter and Burton Ale on handpump. **Squires** in Didsbury is still Squires despite the refurbishment (perhaps they ran out of names), but with the addition of handpumped Ruddles Bitter and a less cheap-jack appearance. Just outside our area, the **Beech** in Chorlton-cum-Hardy has gained handpumped Marstons Pedigree.

There's been a clutch of beer changes in the Centre, mostly involving the disappearance of slower selling real ales from national brewers' pubs. In Grand Metropolitan pubs, Websters Choice has gone from the **Brunswick**, Green Label from the **Ducie Bridge**, and Ruddles County from **Paddy's Goose**, while the once-proud **Crown & Kettle** has lost Wilsons Mild, Websters Choice and Ruddles County - in addition the **Mitre**, while gaining Ruddles Bitter on handpump, has lost Wilsons Bitter. Among Tetley pubs, the **King**, the **Portland Arms**, and the **Square Albert** have lost real mild, though creditably, the **Bank** has introduced it on handpump. Whitbread's **Seven Oaks** now sells keg mild, but there's handpumped Chesters Mild at the **Star & Garter**, while the **Brewers Arms** has gained handpumped Marstons Pedigree - all real ales here are now on handpump in both bars.

Finally, the **Britannia Inn** (Newton Street), now a Control Securities house, has handpumped Tetley mild and bitter in place of the Webster/Wilsons beers; **Yates's** on High Street has dropped Burtonwood Bitter; and the **Harp & Shamrock** has regained handpumped Pedigree - it almost makes a change to drink this beer in a Marstons house these days, brewery flagship though it be!

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**PUB NEWS**



Poor old Whitbread still can't unload the **King William IV** in Chorlton-on-Medlock. It was supposedly up for auction last month but after the date for that had passed it was still appearing in the local press as up for sale. Will no-one put it out of its misery?

The **Stockport Arms** on St Petersgate no longer sells Greenalls Original leaving Bitter as the sole cask beer.

**Cheekies** on Stockport's Great Portwood St has reportedly returned to the real ale fold and is now apparently selling Websters Yorkshire Bitter and Green Label on handpump (don't all rush at once).

Rumours abound that Holts are in the process of buying the **Midland** in West Didsbury. Now

Cask mild has now returned to the **Bridge Inn** on Georges Road, Stockport. This often overlooked pub is well worth a visit.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Contributors to this edition:** John Clarke, Peter Edwardson, Paul Felton, George Symes, Phil Levison, Rhys Jones, Peter Soane.

Copy date for the next issue: Friday 22nd Feb; Publication Tuesday 5th March.

Details of advertising rates and postal subs are available from the address below.



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that should do something for local prices which continue ever upwards. Meanwhile Holts beers are now on sale at the former **Chesters Pie & Ale House** in the City Centre where the change of ownership has seen the price of a pint go down by 27p.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Stockport's **Egerton Arms** seems to have its share of ups and downs since the departure of John Newport. At the end of the month it was sporting signs proclaiming yet more new management. Only a couple of weeks previously a Saturday night visit found no cask beer at all in what seemed to be a sadly scruffy pub, the atmosphere not being helped by a fight breaking out and the arrival of the police. Things can only get better.



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

**APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP**

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S) ..... DATE .....

ADDRESS .....

..... POSTCODE .....

SIGNATURE ..... TELEPHONE NUMBER(S) .....

I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: **U.K. £10**  **Joint membership £12**

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

Knowledge of the average age of our members would be helpful. The information need only be given if you wish.

AGE: 18-25  26-35  36-45  46-55  56-65  Over 65

*Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:*

**STUART BALLANTYNE, 62 CHELTENHAM RD, CHEADLE HEATH, STOCKPORT SK3 0SL**