

# OPENING TIMES



No:  
92

DECEMBER 1991

## THE JABEZ CLEGG



One of the best developments on the South Manchester real ale scene for some time must be the opening of Jabez Clegg, the area's latest, and potentially most exciting free house. Sited on the corner of Dover Street and Portsmouth Street (off Oxford Road, directly opposite the University Union), this new pub is an imaginative conversion of the former Holy Name Hall and, being sited in the heart of the University precinct, seems set to be a roaring success.

This enormous building had lain disused for some years until it was purchased by local builders Aiden Clancy, Eamon Dwyer and Tom Ginty who together make up Ale Leisure Ltd. The owners are also the builders converting the place and this has resulted in a quality conversion of this old Catholic Centre. At the time of going to press only phase one had opened. This will eventually be a quieter lounge area but at the moment features live music most nights, often in the shape of just one or two performers. The conversion itself is most impressive - the barn-like room has been stripped back to natural wood and brick and despite the scale of the room the carefully thought out decor manages to convey a cosy, almost rustic feel.

Phase two is due to open at the end of January, and this will be where the project really takes off. At the moment it's just an enormous old church hall which is to be converted into two large rooms by the simple(?) device of inserting a floor halfway up the walls. The lower room will then be converted into a beer hall, with wooden floors, large wooden tables and church pews. There will also be a stage area and it is intended to feature live music seven nights a week.

The beer side is looked after by manager John Anderson, late of the Flea & Firkin, who is very much a real ale man. There are currently five cask beers on sale - Marstons Pedigree, Boddingtons Bitter, John Smiths Bitter, Courage Directors and Robinwood Old Fart. The bar in phase two will feature the first four beers on a permanent basis together with four regularly changing guest beers

(look out for Dobbins') The aim is to keep prices down and so far these are eminently reasonable for this type of pub - Boddies and John Smiths at £1.10, Directors at £1.30. It is also intended to serve good quality, value for money food and indeed the pub is already packed most lunch times. An early change to the beer range could see the replacement of the slowish selling John Smiths Bitter with the premium Magnet ale. Real cider will also be introduced (and yes, the Scrumpy Jack people have already been round trying to flog a fake handpump, but luckily this is one pub where integrity counts for something and if Scrumpy Jack is sold it will be through a standard keg-mounting).

And the name? Jabez Clegg was the hero of Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks' book of 1876, the Manchester Man. Watch for more news of this project in future issues of Opening Times.

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# PUB of the Month

## December

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

December's award goes to the well-known and popular Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock, home of the West Coast Brewery. This is the second time the Kings has received this award; while the earlier award was essentially in recognition of brewer-proprietor Brendan Dobbin's enterprise in starting up a new and excellent brewery, this second presentation is made specifically for and to the pub, and to licensee Simon Finch.

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

For it has to be admitted that, in the period when the Kings was run by a succession of (sometimes very short-term) managers, the pub did not always, in terms of upkeep, atmosphere and service, live up to the quality of the beer. Happily, Simon's arrival has changed all that, fully vindicating the decision to convert the pub to tenancy.

We now see both rooms back in full use again (and completely redecorated); a full programme of activities based at the pub, including regular live music; and a range of quality drinks to complement the West Coast beers - real cider, frequent guest beers and a wide choice of foreign bottled beers.

Join CAMRA members and the regulars for a night to remember when we present the award on Thursday 19th December - get there early, it's bound to be busy.

(note - simplest way to the Kings Arms is by 192 or other Stockport Road/Hyde Road bus to Ardwick Green, then follow Kale Street (corner of tyre depot), turn left, then right on Skerry Close (look for the Lloyd George plaque) to the rear of the pub.)

The Stanley Arms  
FREEHOUSE



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Your Hosts Mike and Lyane Belsham

UP TO 9  
GUEST  
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EXCLUSIVE  
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Live  
Entertainment  
every  
Weekend



Inside the King's Arms - Don Burgess, erstwhile head brewer and Brewery Manager of Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery - located on the premises - demonstrates his taste in psychedelic headgerar!

# RHYTHM and BOOZE

By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

The Kings Arms Hotel in Chorlton-on-Medlock is not only the December Pub of the Month, but also the venue for this month's musical pub review. The Kings Arms, a free house revitalised by master brewer Brendan Dobbin was a former Tetley pub which was closed and vandalised but has now become the home of the West Coast Brewery AND BOASTS a host of fine ales brewed on the premises. From Ginger Beer to Yellow Mountain Beer, to the award-winning Yakima Grande Pale Ale, along with a guest beer, all are served in excellent condition and at very competitive prices.

The Kings Arms boasts live music three evenings a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the bands perform in the back room away from the bar. On Mondays, the essence is most delightfully traditional, when Clann McCool hold their weekly ceildhs. Clann McCool are a 4-piece band of accomplished musicians who play traditional music from all over the British Isles. The acoustic instruments (guitar, fiddle, concertina, banjo, mandolin), along with lots of foot-tapping are used to great effect on a variety of compositions from slow mournful ballads, such as Carrick Fergus, to lively jigs and reels. The themes range from lost love to stories of hard times, as well as a host of traditional instrumentals.

Before their residency at the Kings Arms, the Clann played regularly in Rochdale and Middleton, and also take bookings to perform at private functions, when their numbers are increased. On this occasion, Ann the female vocalist was in control of a small but enthusiastic audience, and when a request for "The Wild Rover" was made, a lyrics book miraculously appeared and the requestee was cajoled into joining the band on stage and leading the song. This was greeted with rapturous applause and at this point we made a quick exit fearing any more audience participation. The atmosphere, though, was very relaxed with spontaneous decisions about the next number and the rest of the band continue to play while one member visits the bar. All in all, a very enjoyable evening.

Victor Brox takes the stage on Tuesdays. Victor has been in the music business for many years (the advertising leaflet says "as seen with Hendrix", and is a versatile entertainer whose bluesy style is completely unique. He plays piano and some sort of cornet, and has been accompanied by many different musicians. Whatever guise he adopts at the Kings Arms, it will doubtless be entertaining, and is well worth a visit.

With another free residency on Thursday nights the Kings Arms is in many ways the place to be if you fancy free live music and excellent beer in a no-nonsense boozier with a lively atmosphere.

# The King's Arms

HELMSHORE WALK  
CHORLTON ON MEDLOCK

**IT'S ONLY DIFFICULT TO  
FIND THE FIRST TIME!**

HOME OF DOBBINS FINE BEERS

*Best Bitter  
Dark Mild  
Extra Special Bitter  
Yakima Grande Porter  
Ginger Beer*

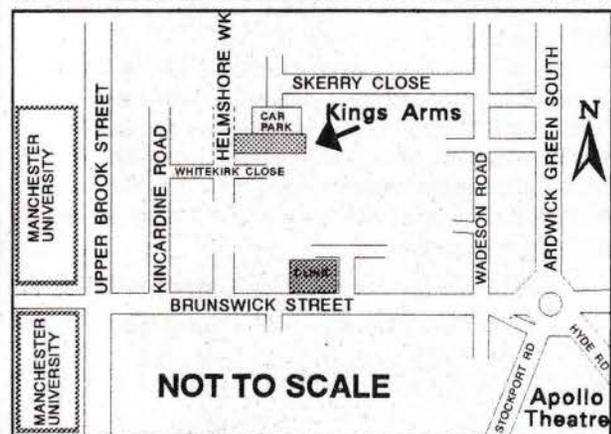
**Great Beers  
at Low Prices**

Draught German  
and Bottled Belgian  
and German Beers

including: Rochefort Trappist, Sixtus,  
Chimay, Urval, Duval, Liefmans  
Fruit Beers - Draught Ciders

**LIVE MUSIC**

**MONDAY - TUESDAY - THURSDAY**



**WARNING: Excessive Intake of Alcohol is  
NOT RECOMMENDED**

The run-up to Christmas is usually a time of great activity on the pub scene and so it has proved to be this year with a flurry of openings and refurbishments completed. Two of the newcomers at least, Jabez Clegg in central Manchester and the Number 12 in Marple look set to vastly improve the drinking scene in their respective areas and our best wishes go out to both.

Less welcome is the continuing turmoil in the licensed trade. For too many long-serving licensees, the season of goodwill is anything but as the leasing schemes promoted by the major brewers threaten their futures and livelihoods. Despite a chorus of protests from drinkers and the trade

## In the Editor's View

by John Clarke

alike, the big brewers seem determined to press ahead regardless of the damage inflicted on our public house tradition, and all the while blaming the MMC report. This is of course rubbish and in the coming 12 months Opening Times will continue to expose these greedy excesses for what they are.

On a happier note, this month we welcome readers in the Marple area to Opening Times. As always on these occasions, we hope you like what you see - if you don't please write and let us know. News and views are also more than welcome and should be sent to the

editorial address. All that remains now is for me to wish our advertisers, the licensees who stock OT and of course, you our readers

*a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

## OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From R.E. Edwards

As a reader of *Opening Times* I notice that you never have a "Stagger" in the Haughton Green area of Denton.

I write because my "local" is the Shakespeare on Mancunian Road, Haughton Green. The former leaseholder of the Shakespeare sold an excellent pint of Wilsons and Websters cask beers, looked after by a bar cellarman. Unfortunately they sold off the lease to the "Woodley Hall Pub Co".

They then dispensed with the services of the bar cellarman. They have now installed a manager, who, when I complained about the beer constantly going flat, admitted that all the draught beer on the premises are now keg beers.

They are pulling this beer through handpumps, still with the signs Wilsons, Websters, and Boddingtons traditional ales. Perhaps some pressure from CAMRA could persuade Woodley Hall Pub Co to reintroduce cask beers into the pub, instead of the keg being sold there at present.

(Editor's note - Haughton Green is not in fact in the Opening Times circulation area and, by and large, this is what we try and restrict the "Staggers" to. I've certainly never heard of the Woodley Hall Pub Co - perhaps they would like to get in touch and explain just what their policies are in this respect. Other than that a word with your local trading standards office might not go amiss...)

From: Neil S. Chantrell, Director of the Coach House Brewing Co

I was disturbed to read in your September issue that our Coachmans Best Bitter was reputed to be on sale at the Marble Arch at £1.35 per pint.

The facts of the matter are that in the Marble Arch, Coachmans Best Bitter was £1.10 per pint and the premium, Innkeepers Special Reserve was £1.35.

These prices alas are not uncommon in the guest beer market and in part are caused by high distribution costs for small and irregular quantities.

It is our company's policy to produce top quality cask beers at as low a price on the bar as possible. To that end we are able to offer landlords our Coachmans Best Bitter at a price which enables them to maintain their usual gross profit and charge only 99p per pint or less.

Your readers can sample this at Buskers in Salford together with Buskers Best Bitter, a special brew for the hostelry.

Brewers, obviously cannot control the retail price but I am very happy to report that two clubs we supply sell Coachmans Best at 92p and 72p per pint. Long may this last!

I hope that this sets the record straight and clarifies our company's policy.

(Editor's note - we're very happy to put the record straight here. We suspect however that Neil Chantrell's remarks about the price at which their beer can be sold may have one or two licensees squirming...)

*Larry and Margaret*  
**Travellers Call**  
Hyde Road  
wish customers old and new  
a very Merry Christmas and  
a Happy and Prosperous New Year

 **Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year**   
from Eddie & Alwyn  
**The Grapes,** Hazel Grove

# Christmas Cheer

As usual at this time of year we present one or two festive recipes you might care to try out at home. We start with that perennial favourite using Robinsons superb old ale - Old Tom Cake:

All you need is : 4oz butter; 4oz sugar; 1 cup dried mixed fruit; 1 bottle of Old Tom; 2 cups of plain flour; 1 level tsp. bicarbonate of soda and 1 level tsp. 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 mixed 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. This makes an unusual dessert and can be eaten plain or buttered, or as a sweet with cream and sugar.

As a main course why not try a hearty stew made with a seasonal ale. The following could be made with say Lees Moonraker or perhaps West Coast's Yakima Grande Porter.

You will need: one and a half pounds of stewing steak; 2oz seasoned flour; 2 oz lard; 2 chopped onions; 6 sliced carrots, 8oz each of chopped celery, turnip and swede; 3 tablespoons of tomato puree; pinch of grated nutmeg; bouquet-garni or generous pinch of mixed herbs; salt and pepper; 2 large tomatoes, skinned and chopped; 1 clove of garlic; 2 level dessertspoons of soft brown sugar; 1 pint of strong ale.

Cut the meat into one inch cubes, cutting off any excess fat. Toss in seasoned flour. Fry onions gently in lard until soft, but not brown. Add meat and fry until lightly browned. Stir in seasonings, tomato puree and soft brown sugar. Add remaining vegetables. Stir in strong ale. Cover and cook gently in the oven at gas Mark 3 (170C/325F) for three to three and a half hours until the meat is tender. This recipe will serve 4-6.

The more adventurous might like to try some traditional mulled ales - home brewers will find these 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 and then stir and sweeten to taste. Cover and stand in a warm place for up to three 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:** This recipe comes from the 17th century, and is 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."



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Tony & Elaine Wilson

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**The Olde Vic** Chatham St.  
Edgeley

**STOCKPORT'S PREMIER  
FREEHOUSE**

**Guest Beers Weekly**

TAYLORS BATEMANS  
MARSTONS



Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year  
to all our customers and friends  
from Bryan & Veronica

**The  
Cheadle Hulme**  
PUBLIC HOUSE & RESTAURANT

**The  
Nursery Inn**  
GREEN LANE,  
HEATON NORRIS,  
STOCKPORT

- ★ Traditionally Brewed Hydes's Anvil Ales
- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
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Hydes  
Anvil Ales  
Brewers of  
Traditional  
Cask  
Beers

**Always in  
good taste**

# STAGGER

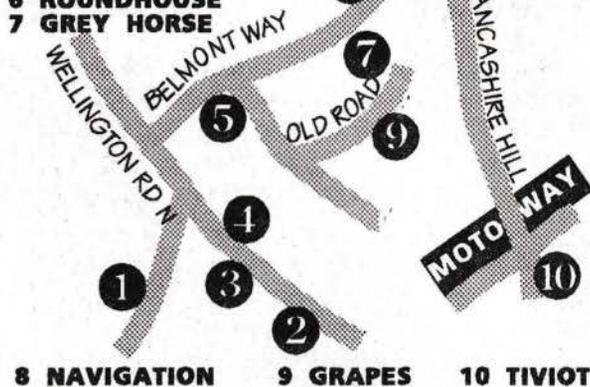
with Paul Felton

The night of Friday 11 October saw our latest stagger take in the many wonders of Heaton Norris. First up was the BRIDGE, on Georges Road (do not confuse with the like-named pub on Brinksway). It's a small Robinson's pub, with a dark lounge, a pool room and a tiny quadrant bar, of particular merit (and rarity) is the table skittles. As is standard with most Robbies' pubs, both best mild and best bitter were available (the mild was re-introduced last year after some time when it was not on sale): the bitter was OK, while the mild was not tried.



## HEATON NORRIS STAGGER

- 1 BRIDGE
- 2 MIDLAND
- 3 MAGNET
- 4 RAILWAY
- 5 SILVER JUBILEE
- 6 ROUNDHOUSE
- 7 GREY HORSE



Next was the MIDLAND, on Wellington Road North. It's a Whitbread (boo hiss) pub selling Chesters bitter at £1.10 and Boddingtons bitter, also at £1.10 (the Boddies' had a pump clip proclaiming 'Whitbread Beer Club Guest Beer' - shurely shome mistake). There was also keg Scrumpy Jack on handpump (also boo hiss). The pub itself was something of pleasant surprise for your writer - a nice mosaic floor in the hallway, good wooden bar, nice layout and decor (not too sure of the wallpaper though), three areas including poolroom. Unfortunately the quality of the beer was nowhere near as high as that of the pub.

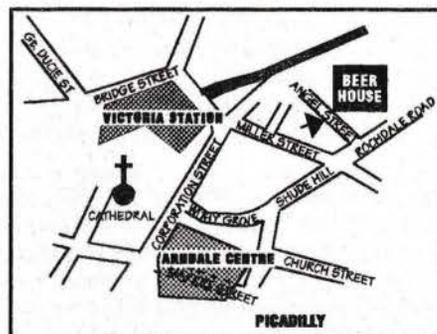
## THE BEER HOUSE



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Over 100 Bottled Belgian  
& Worldwide Beers

Now Available on Draught  
Belgian Wheat & Kriek Beer  
Before Xmas - Belgian DRAUGHT Beers inc. Rodenbach Ordinaire,  
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### FIFTEEN HAND PUMPS !

THWAITES BITTER	3.5% ABV
HOLTS BITTER	4.0% ABV
DOBBINS BEST BITTER	4.0% ABV

and eight other British ales.....

### HOT AND COLD FOOD

The MAGNET is just a little further out of town on Wellington Road North. Nominally a 'Wilson's' pub, this is in fact in name only - there was no Wilsons available at all, just Websters Yorkshire bitter and the comparatively rare Websters Green Label, both at £1.10. There was a vault on the left and a whitewashed, completely characterless 'lounge' on the right. For once, the person who plumped for the Yorkshire bitter got the better of the deal; for while this was poor, the Green Label was virtually undrinkable, being unpleasant and far too warm (judging by the lack of customers, quite possibly the first out of the barrel).

Greenalls RAILWAY is on the same road, opposite side, and again just a little more out of town. Greenalls bitter (a hefty £1.15) and Original (60p a half) were on sale. Unfortunately this information did not seem to have got through to the bar staff, for when one member of our party asked for Original, he received the response "What's that?", and was duly given bitter. This was in reality academic, for both beers were notably poor. The pub itself was however quite pleasant and comfortable, with two lounge areas and a pool room, but one should be warned about the adverts for a pianist/singer at weekends - if the dire MOR mush being pumped out of the speakers was any indication, these are social events best avoided.

Robinsons SILVER JUBILEE on Belmont Way was our next point of call, serving Robbies' best mild and best bitter at the competitive (bar) prices of £1 and £1.07 respectively. This is a modern estate-type pub next to the Belmont shopping centre, which looks rather like part of a housing estate turned into a pub, with a largish lounge and smaller vault which barely had room for its two pool tables and darts area, let alone any customers! Despite one of the locals accusing one of our party of drinking his pint, the Silver Jubilee scored reasonably highly with us by virtue of the fact that it was only the second pub of the evening where the beer was anywhere near good.

Next was a place which for your writer really plumbed the depths: the ROUNDHOUSE, further east along Belmont Way. This is that most unrealistic of beasts, a purpose built 'Open House', with all that this title implies (many have been reconverted into 'proper' pubs, but not this one). Any soul brave enough to enter gets a round house (well, there you go), dark, pseudo-plush, deafeningly loud music and some of the slowest, most regular-biased service it has been my misfortune to come across in a long time. The beer was as nondescript as Websters Yorkshire bitter always is (again at £1.10) - so consistently bland and boring is this beer, that while its virtually impossible to serve well, sometimes I think that it's just as difficult to serve badly. Quite 'orrid'.



We then made our way to the GREY HORSE on Old Road, serving Greenalls bitter and Stones bitter. The latter was on a strange type of fake handpump (the bar staff appeared to be 'topping-up' as normal, but from an electric pump), but tasted real (keg Stones bitter is among the worst of its kind). However, when asked if it was cask-conditioned or not, the barmaid did not know; and the barman said no, it was traditional, that was why it had the red pump clip. Oh well. The pub itself consisted of a largish, dark lounge, with some very dodgy 'stained glass' pictures above the bar, and a quite smart vault (distinguished as being so by being much brighter). The beer was okay.

Next was the NAVIGATION on Lancashire Hill, a smoky two-roomed Wilsons pub which (again) had no cask Wilsons' beers for sale - only Websters Yorkshire bitter and the all-too-ubiquitous Boddingtons bitter. For some reason there was a buffet on, possibly someone's birthday; and the evening was 'enlivened' (perhaps not quite the right word) by one poor chap being in receipt of a 'whip-o-gram' from some buxom female in the lounge. The beer was okay; but mention should be made of the fact that despite the pub not being too busy, service was rather poor.

The GRAPES on Old Road was another two-roomed pub, vault on left, lounge on right, this time Boddingtons, serving bitter only (which was again pretty average). The lounge was almost overwhelmingly bright after many of the other pubs that evening, with fake beams, horse brasses, and topped off by some poor man and his guitar playing along to backing tapes and making a dreadful racket. Live music is better, they say. Well....

Our final port of call was the TIVIOT, on Tivot Dale. Another Robinsons pub, the beer was almost outrageously cheap - £1.02 for best bitter, only 96p for best mild. It's a good multi-roomed pub, vault on the left, pool room at the back and several others, we sat in the empty dining area, very pleasant and cool, surrounded by numerous pictures of cats and (especially) dogs. A good little pub, again with a halfway decent pint.

Of course the views expressed in this review are not meant to be any kind of 'definitive' opinion; but it was interesting that the pubs on the night whose beer received the acclamation of being 'above average' (and also those which were the cheapest) were the three Robinsons houses, these being the only ones belonging to a true regional brewer. Perhaps it only goes to show...

A very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year  
from all at the  
**Waggon and Horses**  
Hyde Road, Gorton

**Merry Christmas &  
A Happy New Year**  
To all  
**customers and friends**  
from *Phyllis, Wendi & Stuart*

**The Printers  
Cheadle**

*Robinsons Best Mild & Bitter*

**The Ideal Christmas Present!**  
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1992 Good Beer Guide £7.99

**The perfect Stocking Filler**  
East Manchester Comprehensive Pub List 50p  
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(THIEF'S NECK)**

**WOODFORD**

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From Alison and Yvonne

**In the Same Family for 60 Years**  
No Music - No Pool - No Premium Lager

*Robinsons Traditional Beer*  
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Your Hosts  
Alan and June  
Preston invite  
you to call in  
and try their

**TRADITIONAL HAND-PULLED BEERS AT**  
**THE INN WITH THE REPUTATION FOR**  
**EXCELLENT FOOD AT AFFORDABLE PRICES**  
*Merry Christmas to all our friends & customers*  
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HEATONIAN MAGAZINE "PUB OF THE YEAR" 1990

**CAMRA CALLING!**

Once again this month we have a varied programme,  
with something for everyone.

On Monday 9th there is a social at the Adswold Hotel, Shaw Heath, Stockport. As with all Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm. This is followed on Thursday 12th by the branch meeting which will be at the Blossoms, Buxton Road (A6), Heaviley. As well as the usual business, there will be our annual Christmas Quiz.

On Saturday 14th is one of the main social events of the year - the annual Christmas Meal which once again will be held at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, Manchester. Places are limited so please phone early to book.

The social on Monday 16th is at the Station, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury - come and meet the new licensee of this excellent little pub. Pub of the Month is on Thursday 19th at the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock (see feature on page 2). A hectic week is rounded off on Friday 20th with the annual Hillgate Crawl. Just for a change this year we are going uphill so we start at the Queens Head (Turners Vaults), Little Underbank at 7.00pm and re-assemble at 8.30 in the Black Lion, Hillgate. Finishing point will be the Blossoms.

The last pre-Christmas event is on Monday 23rd with a social at the Sir Robert Peel, Castle Street, Edgeley. Nothing then until 1992 when there is a social on Monday 6th at the Old House at Home on Braemar Road, Fallowfield. Also worth a mention is Friday 10th January when there will be another of the popular minibus trips around some of the better pubs in East Manchester. We will be leaving the Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.30pm. Again call Tracey to book. For details of any of the above, please phone Tracey Clarke on 061 456 6354.



**Happy Christmas**  
to all our regulars  
from

**Kath, John and staff**  
**Sir Robert Peel**

**Castle Street**  
**Edgeley**



# Number 12

We reported on page 1 the opening of Jabez Clegg in central Manchester - at the other end of the Stockport and South Manchester area, there has also been an important development of the real ale scene with the take-over of the Number 12 Wine Bar on Stockport Road, Marple, by CAMRA members Stan Chlebicki, Lisa Hillier and Alex Panesh.

Cellar space is limited so the range of real ale is necessarily restricted. At the moment there is one handpump selling Dobbins North Country Bitter (the first outlet in Marple for this excellent product of the West Coast Brewery) although sales have been sufficiently promising to look to the instalment of another pump to sell guest beers. An interesting range of bottled beer is also being built up.

This is of course a wine bar and not a pub so food is also much to the fore. This is Lisa's province (she also helps take care of the ever popular food at Stockport Beer Festival) and the variety is both wide and imaginative, with interesting vegetarian options and mouth-watering puds (your editor had two on his last visit!). The Number 12 is set to become a real asset to the Marple drinking (and eating) scene and is conveniently situated in the town centre. Well worth a visit.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to John Henson of York, winner of the "Name-the-Beer" competition at Openshaw Oktoberfest. The darkish and intensely hoppy 1050og bitter, impressive even by West Coast Brewery's high standards, attracted a clutch of inventive entries (including a notable multiple entry from "Whats Doing" columnist Leo King - better luck next time, Leo) but the two judges concurred in awarding the prize to John's entry "Railhead".

## New Brewery

Greater Manchester is to gain its newest brewery this month when Rochdale's McGuinness Brewing Company comes on stream. The brewery is based in the cellar of the Cask & Feather on Oldham Road, Rochdale and the beers will be served here and at two other pubs in the town owned by brewery proprietor Tom McGuinness. Free trade outlets will also be supplied. Three bitters will initially be produced, one of which will sell at £1 a pint.

HEARD AT THE BAR ...of the Jodrell Arms in Whaley Bridge. Licensee explaining the disappearance of Taylor's Landlord. "We've got Websters, Wilsons and Ruddles and we'll soon have Tetley's and John Smiths - if you put a bit of each in a pint pot it'll probably taste like Landlord anyway".

Calling all pub organists! The Coach and Horses at Belle Vue is currently missing its popular Friday, Saturday and Sunday night organ entertainment in the Lounge. The organist's moved to Hollinwood, which is rather too far to travel. Anyone who feels like filling the breach should apply to landlady Beryl Lavelle at the Hyde Road pub. If there are no takers, the organ may make way for a piano - so pub pianists should also apply!



Stan, Lisa and Alex - behind the bar at Number 12

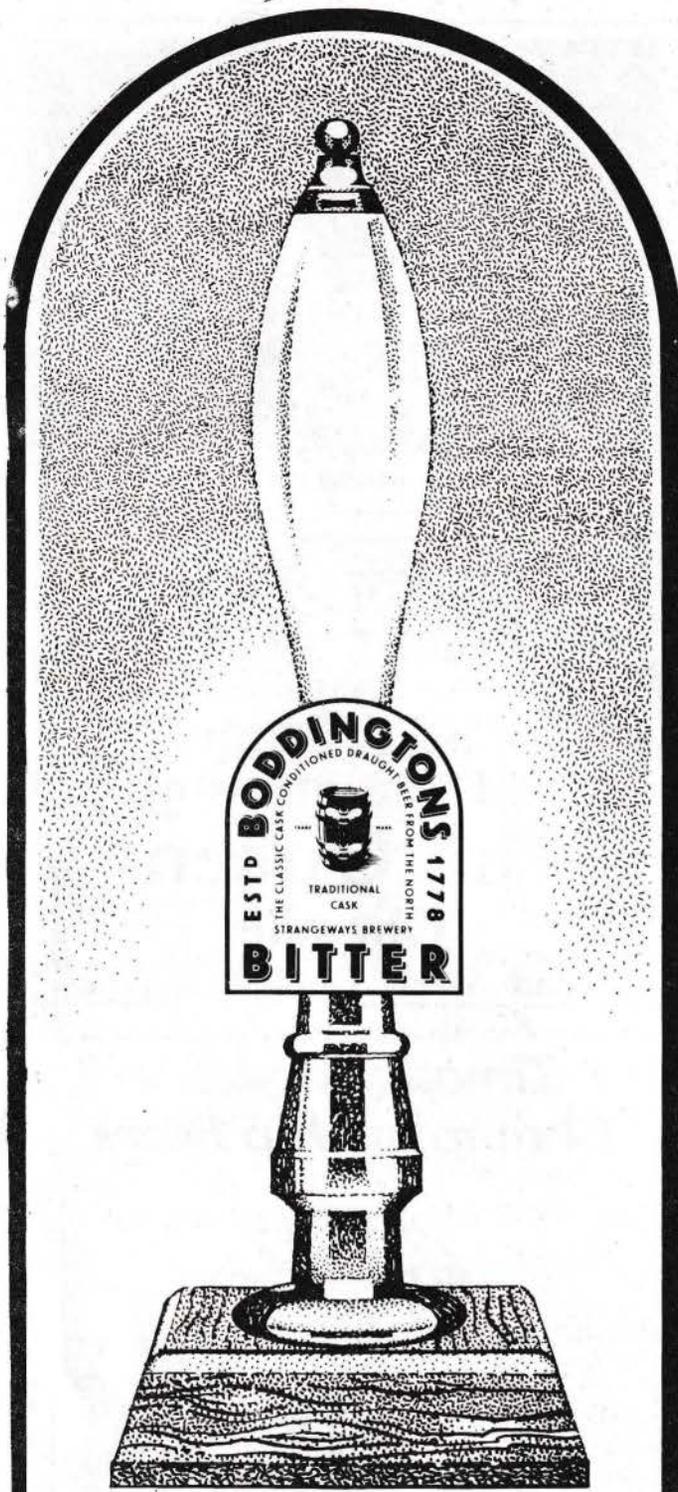
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**THE CLASSIC  
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## New Brew News

At the Flea and Firkin in Chorlton-on-Medlock, the home-brewed Grosvenor Bitter is now dispensed without gas pressure, and it's hoped that Dogbolter will follow suit soon; the "session beer" Scratch Bitter is likely to stay on the gas blanket for the foreseeable future. Total Eclipse Stout, though, is a genuine cask conditioned beer on handpump, and amazing value at £1 for a 4.3%/1045og beer.

Look out also for the Flea's Ginger Beer, at 6.6%ABV; owing to cellar space considerations, this is piped from the conditioning vessel to a keg and served from there by handpump. Meanwhile, the traditional cider has now reverted to Westons Old Rosie, while Robinwood Bitter and Robinsons Old Tom have appeared fairly consistently as guest beers.

Not a million miles away, the West Coast Brewery in Chorlton-on-Medlock is producing as its winter ale a draught version of the bottled Old Soporific barley wine. Served by gravity at the Kings Arms, it has an original gravity of 1084 and a massive 10% alcohol by volume - handle with care! The Kings is another outlet for Westons Old Rosie which has taken over the guest cider slot.

## Moss Rose

We welcome Joe and June Maher as the new licensees of Hydes' Moss Rose on Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris. They were previously Marstons tenants at the Mancunian in Hulme, where they did a very healthy food trade, and they plan to reintroduce lunchtime food at the Moss Rose.

They also tell us that Hydes have plans in 1992 to put a new external cladding on the pub, which currently has a pretty unappealing 1970s appearance, but inside is in fact surprisingly pleasant. First impressions suggest that Joe is continuing to keep the Hydes Light and Bitter in very good condition.

## No Smoking !

A new feature in CAMRA's 1992 Good Beer Guide is the introduction of a symbol for pubs which have a no-smoking room or area. When we surveyed our local pubs earlier in the year, none of them yet offered this facility. However, since then, one of our Good Beer Guide entries, the Davenport Arms at Woodford, has taken the plunge, and the snug on the right-hand side of the front door has been designated a no-smoking room.

Licensee Yvonne Hallworth tells us that it has proved extremely popular, not only with diners but also with drinkers who simply want to escape from smoke. In fact, some customers who had given up going to pubs because they found them too smoky have been tempted back. The pub cats seem to like it too!

Obviously there's a strong pent-up demand for no-smoking areas in pubs, and it must be said that local licensees seem to be slow in responding. The only others I can think of are in the Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme and the Royal Scot in Marple Bridge, just outside our area. If your local has brought in a smokeless zone, why not write and let us know?

**OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1991**

# OLD ALES

This month we begin a two part series looking at the many seasonal old ales and barley wines that become available at this time of year. Part one concentrates on those that are brewed locally in Greater Manchester and next time we'll take a look at those brewed further afield.

Perhaps the most famous of the locally brewed strong ales is Robinsons Old Tom. Brewed all the year round, Old Tom is not strictly a winter-only strong ale but with its powerful 1080og(8.5%ABV) and its intense "winey" flavour it certainly fits the bill in every other respect. It's been brewed constantly since the last century and so has the longest pedigree of all the locally brewed strong ales. Most Robinsons pubs sell the beer in bottle and a few have the beer on draught all the year round -the Blossoms, Heaviley; the Davenport Arms, Woodford and the Arden Arms, Millgate being three notable examples. In the winter months, though, many Robinsons pubs will have the beer on sale, often dispensed from a small barrel stillaged on the bar.

Two other breweries in the Stockport and South Manchester area are also producing seasonal beers this year. In Chorlton-on-Medlock, Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery has produced the most powerful of the strong ales available locally in the shape of Old Soporific, a powerful 1085og/10%ABV brew. Unusually for this type of beer, Old Soporific is a pale mid-brown beer and, despite its strength, has the strong hoppiness that is a characteristic of so many West Coast beers. This helps the beer avoid the cloying sweetness that is so common with beers of this strength and so makes for a dangerously drinkable ale that should be treated with care. Available in many free houses in bottle, it is also available on draught at the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, home of the brewery.

The third local entry is as yet untried. The increasingly enterprising brewer at the Flea and Firkin on Oxford Road, All Saints is to launch a 1054og Winter Stout this month. The beers coming from the Flea at the moment are becoming more impressive by the brew and this should certainly be one to seek out -availability is likely to be limited to the Flea and Firkin itself.

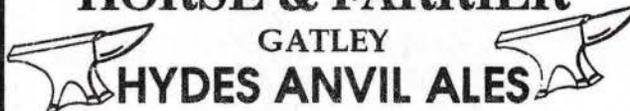
Elsewhere in Manchester we have a winter ale "loss" to report as Hydes have announced that this year they will not be producing their fine 1080og Anvil Strong. Apparently the brew did not sell as well as anticipated last winter with the result that there were substantial unsold stocks. Anvil Strong has not been discontinued altogether, and the position will be reviewed next year - let's hope that it puts in an appearance for winter 1992.

Up in Middleton, Lees produce their unusually named Moonraker which weighs in at og1073/7.5ABV. The beer is named after yokels who, after imbibing, attempted to rake the moon's reflection out of a pond with pitchforks. Again, a classic deep, warming barley wine with a fruity finish, it's well worth seeking out. The lack of Lees pubs locally doesn't help in this respect although Gullivers on Oldham Street in the City Centre has been known to sell it.

The Oak Brewery, newly arrived in Heywood from their previous home in Ellesmere Port, also produce a notable strong ale, and again one that is available all year round. Wobbly Bob, named after a three-legged brewery cat, weighs in at 1060og and is well on the way to achieving cult status with some drinkers. The flavour is an excellent combination of hoppiness and fruitiness that makes for an easily drinkable beer. Wobbly Bob is a regular in the free trade and is almost always on sale at the Marble Arch on Rochdale Road.

To complete our local round-up mention must be made of Joseph Holts. So popular are this brewery's draught beers that the bottled Sixx is often overlooked. Admittedly it is just a processed bottled beer but nevertheless is still a richly smooth beer with a potent 6%ABV. On draught it would be a sure fire hit but Holts, in their idiosyncratic way just don't want to know. Shame.

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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

# NOVEMBER 1986

Last month (November 1986) Bass came in for criticism because of the small proportion of their pubs in the area selling cask conditioned beers. This month Bass North West announced a major shift in policy which was expected to result in a big increase in the number of pubs selling the stuff. But before the celebrations start, let's wait and see what happens next month.

Grand Metropolitan, the Watney parent company, announced plans for the national distribution of Ruddles County, which was described as the flagship beer of the Leicestershire brewery. In the North, County would be in direct competition with the recently introduced Webster's Choice, and the question was posed as to what would become of other premium beers brewed by Watney. (Fearshave perhaps been unfounded as far as Choice is concerned - the Cottage Loaf in Llandudno has just chalked up its third consecutive Good Beer Guide entry with County and Choice selling alongside each other.)

There was a reference to the area's two specialist real ale off licences, the Bottle Stop at Bramhall and Legendary Lancashire Heroes of Withington, which in addition to their take-away real ale, also sell a respectable range of foreign bottled beers. (Now, in 1991, whilst the Bottle Stop is still going strong, the Heroesshop has become an ordinary off-licence called Tipples.)

The House of Commons passed the first reading of a Bill aimed at creating no-smoking areas in pubs, with the restriction applying to at least 40% of the public area. No real problems for multi-room pubs, but how would the newly "opened out" layouts fare. The Bill didn't become law due to the peculiarities of the Parliamentary timetable, but one wonders whether it is feasible to segregate non-smoking and smoking drinkers. (Even five years later, no smoking areas in pubs are fairly rare - some pubs have tried it, then abandoned the idea. The Thief's Neck, Woodford currently has a no-smoking room.

Amongst the Stockport snippets - another appearance of Robinson's Royal Oak, (opposite the brewery) - due to re-open on December 17th. after more than a year of complete rebuilding.



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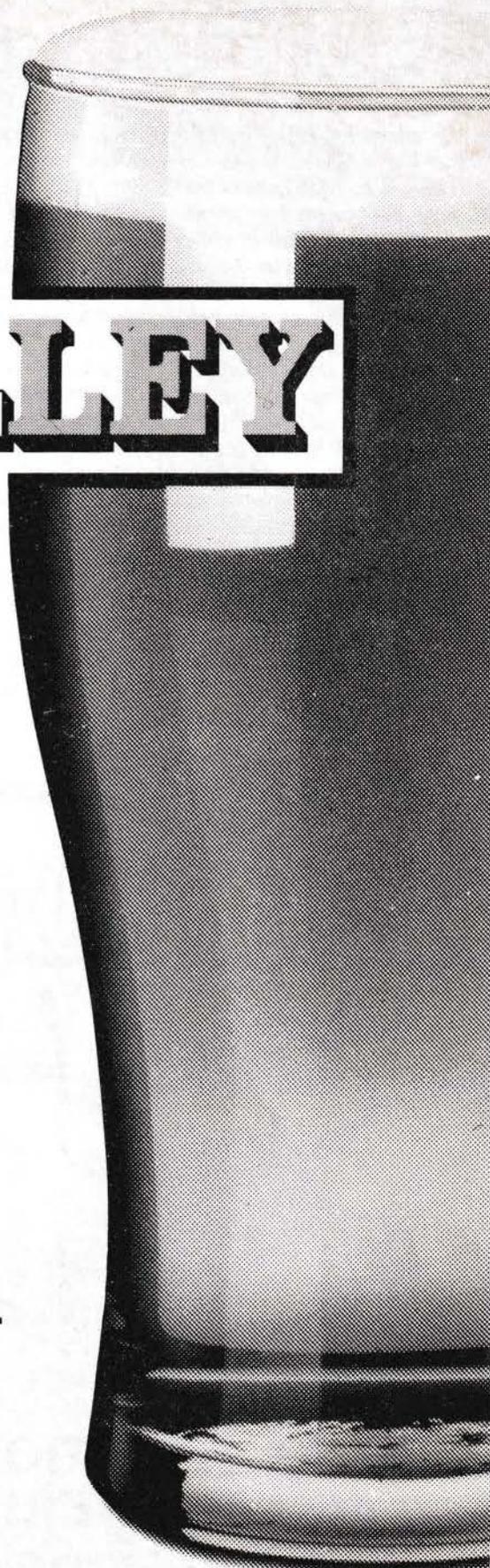
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# LOCALLEY

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# MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

Pride of place amongst the pre-Christmas openings must go to Jabez Clegg, Dover Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock - or more pertinently, in the heart of the University precinct. Fully described elsewhere, this ambitious conversion of Holy Name Hall looks set to bring quality and value to a student drinking scene plagued for too long by blatant rip-offs.

Not far off, the Shere Khan restaurant on Wilmslow Road in Rusholme has spawned, a few doors towards town, its own bar - the Shere Khan Wine Bar, with handpumped Boddingtons Bitter, Castle Eden Ale and Flowers IPA - it's closed on Sunday lunch times, though. In the City Centre, the Star and Garter on Fairfield Street has reopened, with Boddingtons Bitter, Chesters Mild and Flowers IPA on handpump, while in Ancoats the Crown on Old Mill Street was due to reopen in Mid-November under its new name the Cock Robin - more news of this next time.

There has also been a move to plug the gap left by the demise of Legendary Lancashire Heroes, as on Manchester Road in Chorlton-cum-Hardy the Marble Arch

freehouse opens its off-licence off-shoot - Marble Arch World Beers with a variety of draught and bottled beers.

The handpumps at the Clayton Arms in Clayton are not now in use - cask beers was at the best of times a rarity here. And so it also seems to be at the Robin Hood in Moss Side, where the bitter is now Cock Robin keg and mild was unavailable on a recent visit - not very good for a Robinsons house. In the City Centre, the Burton Arms has extra handpumped beers: "Matthew Brown" Bitter brewed in Nottingham rather than Blackburn, and Theakstons Best Bitter and Old Peculiar brewed in Newcastle-on-Tyne or perhaps the original Masham Brewery if you're lucky. The Peveril of the Peak has dropped Wilsons Mild in favour of handpumped Websters Green label.

In Beswick the Shakespeare has dropped Stones Bitter (and who says CAMRA never visits the pub? - Ed) while in Openshaw the Crown becomes the latest Boddington PubCo house to take handpumped Old Shilling from Mansfield Brewery.

Back in Rusholme, the Whitworth has gained handpumped Marstons Mercian Mild. And finally, speaking of mild, we have an apology to make - we've omitted to mention that the Duke of Edinburgh in Bradford has been selling handpumped Tetley Mild for virtually the entire tenure of the present licensee. Just another reason to visit this excellent pub.

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**OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1991**



At Openshaw's reopened Smithfield (formerly the Locomotive) manager Darren Hickey, who arrived in mid-October, seeks to bring the pub back to its former glory. When visited just before Openshaw Octoberfest, the pub's splendid beer and pleasing atmosphere did much to bolster Darren's reputation (a pint of Boddies at 99p did no harm either). Let's hope that the pub can now enjoy a much-needed period of stability.

Our report last month about the Royal Oak in Hazel Grove selling Hartleys Mild in place of Robinsons was sadly duff information from a usually reliable source - the mild on sale remains Robbies Best. Apologies to all concerned. What we can report however is that the nearby Grapes on London Road has now installed handpumps to dispense the Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter.

A surprise outlet for real guest beers is the Imperial on St. Petersgate, Stockport. As we went to press the current guest was Eldridge Pope Bitter. Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew has also been on sale. The guest beer is dispensed by a handpump in the back room, where the current guest and the price are chalked up.

Two Edgeley pubs which we virtually wrote off in the last issue have shown welcome signs of life. The Pineapple on Castle Street has in fact re-opened and sells Wilsons Bitter on handpump. Over the road the Windsor Castle does in fact sell real ale in the surprising form of Robinsons Best Bitter. The new licensee here is Bill from the Royal Oak in Hazel Grove.

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The Windsor Castle does however blot its copybook by selling keg Scrumpy Jack Cider from a fake handpump as, apparently, does Tom Thumbs on King Street West. Just down from Tom Thumbs we learn that licensees Stephen and Josy Close left the Bridge Inn on Chestergate last month and have taken over at the Northumberland Arms in Compstall.

In the City Centre, Sawyers on Deansgate was being thoroughly gutted as we went to press. Previously keg-only, it remains to be seen whether real ale will put in an appearance on re-opening. Across town, the Lancaster Tavern on Whitworth Street seems to be edging closer to opening. Although a "Free House", Tetley signs have appeared outside so it's a fair bet as to what will be on sale.

Still no signs of the beers from the new CoachHouse Brewery appearing in the local Greenalls tied estate. Two obvious outlets would seem to be the Bobby Peel in Edgeley and the Victoria in Offerton. How about it Greenalls? We also hear that Victoria licensee Ian Sherry is currently recovering from a major heart operation - he has our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Major rebuilding work has started at the Manchester Arms, Wellington Road South, Stockport. The building is currently covered in scaffolding and inside the vault ceiling is supported by a steel prop. Other remedial work is necessary as the front and back walls are bulging outwards and need to be corrected. The neighbouring shops on St Petersgate are to be demolished and the living quarters which used to be above them are to be moved into the former function room.

For some time now, Merrilla Wine Store in Didsbury Village (it's opposite Squires) has been selling an extensive range of imported bottled beers, quite possibly the best choice in this part of Manchester. Belgian and German specialities feature and also on sale is Brendan Dobbins Yellow Mountain Chinese-style lager.

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The Castlewood on Bridge Street Brow, Stockport now has Boddingtons Bitter alongside Websters and Wilsons (the latter with no pump clip). The licensees of the Castlewood are also temporarily running the Kings Arms on Great Portwood Street, following the previous landlord's heart attack. The Kings Arms is also one of two Stockport pubs put on the market by the Boddington PubCo, the other being the Kings Head on Tiviot Dale.

Work is nearing completion at the Claremont Hotel, Claremont Road, Moss Side. This Holts house has for some time needed "real" money spending on it and at long last the brewery have coughed up. The dividing wall behind the main public bar has had two arches built into it giving greater access and security to the vault and main lounge (known as the "blue room"). The "red room", originally a small snug, has been closed for some years and now been opened up and brought into the body of the pub. The toilets have been re-drained and re-tiled and the whole pub has been reupholstered and repainted. The Claremont has a loyal band of regulars who spend a lot of money in the place, it's nice to see the brewery ploughing some of it back into improving the facilities at last.

The Rampant Lion on Anson Road, Fallowfield is expected to open its banqueting suite, which has been built adjacent to the existing pub, this month. Cask Telleys and guest beers are expected to be on sale.

It was twelve months ago we reported that it was intended to carry out a major (and much-needed) refurbishment at the Old Star in Cheadle. At last work is underway as indeed it is at the nearby Printers where the builders seem settled in for a long haul. Work will involve moving the ladies toilet into the (once male-only!) vault, moving the vault into the front lounge and moving the bar back to create more, and admittedly much-needed, space in the bar area. As we reported last month, it does look as though both pubs will end up with a conservatory extension.



As we went to press, Stockport's Egerton Arms was in the final throes of a transformation into "Porky Pig's Pie Shop" (yes, really). Whilst it's easy to scoff, this was a pub that badly needed a change of direction and initial impressions are of a limited but reasonable quality refurbishment. More next time.

Hydes Horse and Farrier in Gatley is to be extensively refurbished in the New Year - the work is apparently to include the addition of a family room.

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