

**STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA**

**No:  
94**

# OPENING TIMES

**CAMRA**  
**FREE**

**FEBRUARY 1992**

**CAMPAIGN  
FOR REAL ALE**  
200 SOUTH AND  
SOUTH MANCHESTER  
BRANCH

## Pub of the Year 1992



After a vigorous debate in which it was a pity that any of the leading contenders had to lose, the sought-after title of Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year 1991 has been awarded to the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock.

The progress of this pub, from a closed and vandalised Tetley house to the thriving home of the West Coast Brewery, which is based in the pub's cellars, has been well documented in *Opening Times*. Progress has not been smooth, and at times over the past few years, it is true to say that the quality of the pub has not matched the excellence of the beers brewed on the premises. The past 12 months have, however, seen major changes and not only is the pub at long last starting to find its roots in the local community but both it and the brewery have, for many beer enthusiasts, a "star quality" attaching which attracts eager visitors from across the country and indeed overseas.

As so often, it is personalities that make the difference. The initial inspiration came from Brendan Dobbin, surely one of the great characters of the brewing industry. Brendan started his career by brewing the first real ale for years in his native Northern Ireland and subsequently travelled the world as a small-scale brewer before setting up the West Coast Brewery in the cellars of the Kings Arms some three years ago.

And running the pub is one of the characters of Manchester's pub trade - virtuoso licensee Simon Finch, who made his name at the Gamecock (now the Witchwood) in Ashton-under-Lyne and the Beer House

in the City Centre before taking on the Kings Arms last year. It is Simon, assisted by a friendly team of staff, who has made sure that the Kings is not just an outlet for the excellent West Coast beers, but a thriving vibrant local with a life of its own.

The Pub of the Year presentation night is always one of the highlights of the local CAMRA year - help both us and the regulars celebrate this richly deserved award on Saturday March 7th. (See the pub's advert in this issue for a map showing you how to get there.)

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**STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA**



## Star Renovation in Cheadle

The Star in Cheadle reopened recently following a much needed renovation. The pub has been extended at the rear, with the addition of a kitchen and food serving area. The theme of the renovation is Victorian, with considerable use of mahogany type woodwork, victorian style lighting and rich flowery wallpaper decorated with an 'explosion' of pictures.

One of rgw pub's most interesting features, the revolving door at the entrance, has sadly fallen victim to the changes. But at least the brewery has had the sense not to ruin the pub's unique exterior with its fine etched glass windows. And talking of windows, few people stop to consider that the pub has only got two windows, one in the bar and the other in the lounge. Due to the pub's long narrow shape, the lack of natural light, generally dark decor and considerable use of dark woodwork gives the lounge almost an oppressive feel.

Following the renovation, the brewery have missed a chance to clear up a long standing anomaly. Why is it that the pub windows proudly proclaim the pub to be 'the Old Star' while the pub sign describes it as 'the Star'?

These though are only minor criticisms. With both Hydes Mild (102p) and Hydes Bitter (109p) on good form, with free peanuts on the bar when OT called, the pub is much improved & worth a try.



Kath, John and staff  
welcome you to the  
**Sir Robert Peel**

Castle Street  
Edgeley

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- lunchtime food -

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therefore minimum purchase is 24 bottles beer or  
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## No More on the Pint, Norman

**CAMRA nationally has called on Chancellor Norman Lamont not to increase beer duty in 1992. A tax freeze would benefit not only millions of beer drinkers, but also the recession-hit pub trade and brewing industry.**

"Britain's beer drinkers pay more tax than most other E.C. countries," said Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox. "A third of the price of a pint is tax. Beer drinkers pay four billion pounds in tax every year, and enough is enough." Last year's increases in duty and VAT amounted to twice the rate of inflation, and brewers of all sizes found sales slumping.

"Supermarkets and off-licences are cheaper than pubs, Penal tax increases will simply drive heavy drinkers out of pubs to drink at home. Why should the vast majority of sensible drinkers suffer, when problem drinkers will not be deterred?"

"Every beer drinker grumbles about the price of a pint, Norman Lamont has the chance to be that rare thing, a popular Chancellor, if he heeds our call."

With an election imminent, there is perhaps a better chance than usual that he will spare the drinker this year, but whether that will set a precedent for the future is of course very doubtful, whichever party is in power.

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						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

# PUB of the Month February

Our Pub of the Month award for February goes to a very deserving pub, the Hare & Hounds on Abbey Hey Lane in Gorton. The pub was described in the recent East Manchester Pub Guide as one of the friendliest in the area. The atmosphere is always relaxed and welcoming; indeed landlady Angela Regan assures us that this is the sort of pub where women need have no fear of arriving alone.

The pub's handpumps dispense Boddingtons Bitter which is of a consistently high standard, and the excellent cellarwork is not just down to husband John. When he was hospitalised some time ago, Angela took it over with considerable success. Another one in the eye for male chauvinists!

The pub itself is a gem, featuring three rooms and a splendid tiled corridor. There is a cosy snug on the left, a well-used and comfortable lounge at the back and a traditional vault complete with 'bus seats' and dartboard on the right. It also boasts a beer garden, one of the few in the area. The pub is the base for a number of teams, mostly football and darts, and the 1947 charabanc outing is still commemorated by a fine old photograph in the vault. The pub serves its community well, and although this is only the second of our Pub of the Month awards for 1992, it is already being suggested that the Hare & Hounds will be a strong contender for the Pub of the Year award in 12 months time.

The presentation will be on Thursday 27th February when CAMRA hopes to bus in a few stalwarts from Stockport to join the locals for what promises to be a good night. Those of you travelling independently should note that the 168 and 169 buses pass nearby, and both Gorton Station and the Ashton Old Road buses are not too far away. Come and help us make this a memorable occasion for two excellent licensees.

12 STOCKPORT ROAD,  
MARPLE

061 - 427 6727

# N<sup>o</sup> 12

## WINE BAR

14th Valentines Night Special - bring the partner you'd like to be with and leave the one you are with at home!

18th Feb - Belgian Beer Night. Come and taste the varieties of Belgian Beer

1st March - St David's Day Celebration - all things Welsh



# PUB OF THE YEAR 1992

## The King's Arms

HELMSHORE WALK  
CHORLTON ON MEDLOCK

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

HOME OF DOBBINS FINE BEERS

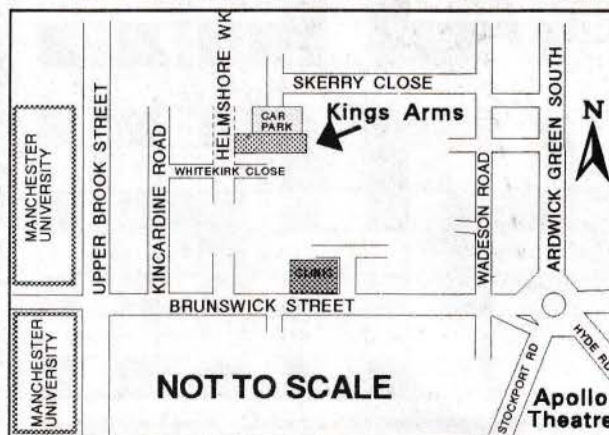
*Best Bitter*  
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**WARNING: Excessive Intake of Alcohol is  
NOT RECOMMENDED**

As usual at this time of year, Opening Times leads with news of our Pub of the Year.

Whilst a cliché, it's nevertheless true to say that it's a shame that there can be only one winner, particularly this time when there were so many strong contenders. It is however very pleasing to see licensee Simon Finch getting a major award from CAMRA.

He has served both the campaign and, more importantly, the Manchester real ale scene, well for many years now and with little or no recognition. Although his career has had its ups and downs, he retains a considerable reserve of affection with many CAMRA members and I am sure I will not be alone in offering him heartiest congratulations.

This month we also illustrate the contrasting approach of two pub chains - Boddingtons and Greenalls. The former really do seem to be showing a considerable degree of flair and imagination, certainly far more than many would have predicted when the decision was made to give up

# In the Editor's View

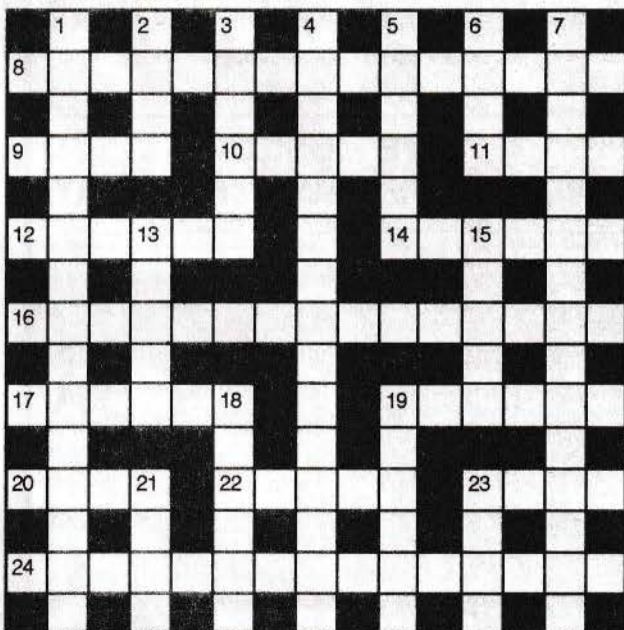
by John Clarke

brewing. With Greenalls, though, it's the same old story - a dull, unimaginative company, slow to respond to changing market conditions and making seemingly no more than half-hearted gestures in what it thinks is the right direction. This really does sum up the company - they responded to the real ale boom of the late 1970's by turning to keg beer, they responded to the increased interest in local beers in the late 1980's by closing five breweries in as many years, and how do they respond to the guest beer market of the 1990's? By offering Stones Bitter to their pubs. This is a pathetic performance by any standards. The company re-organisation recently announced dilutes the Greenall family shareholding and makes them vulnerable to takeover - if they don't get their act together, Greenalls days of independence must be numbered.

And finally - a word about Hydes treatment of the licensee of the Horse & Farrier in Galley: disgraceful. This is the behaviour we have come to expect of the national brewers. We thought better of a small family firm like Hydes. Time to bring back Dr. Jekyll perhaps?

## O.T. £5 PRIZE CROSSWORD

Entries to the editor, John Clarke c/o Opening Times, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, SK3 9HD, by 29th February, please.



### ACROSS

- 8. Brewery
- 9. Covering
- 10. A Jonathan Swift race
- 11. Fruit
- 12. Condition
- 14. Drum accompanying a fife
- 16. Simultaneity
- 17. Brewery
- 19. Tough thin cord
- 20. A thin covering
- 22. A CAMRA campaigning group
- 23. (and 23 down) Stretches across the page

### DOWN

- 1. Brewery
- 2. Shock
- 3. Brewery
- 4. Having human form
- 5. Resourceful
- 6. Brewery
- 7. Reluctance to rely upon
- 13. More than enough
- 15. Farmyard noise
- 18. Jumps
- 19. Anatomical pouch
- 21. Long-handled hammer
- 23. See 23 across

Answers to January's Crossword:  
 Across: 1 Gravity, 4 Rowarth, 9 Nairn, 10 Fault, 12 Veldt, 13 Tan, 14 Ken, 15 Inn, 17 Car, 18 Wye, 20 Castle, 21 Tiviot, 23 Tea, 26 Uni, 29 Nee, 30 Ale, 31 Mac, 33 Shady, 34 Royal, 35 Stout, 37 Yiddish, 38 Station. Down: 1 Griffin, 2 Vault, 3 Tun, 5 Own, 6 Arden, 7 Hatters, 8 Midway, 11 Tam, 12 Vex, 16 Naafi, 17 Crown, 18 Wet, 19 ETA, 22 Nursery, 24 Elgood, 25 Red Lion, 27 Ply, 28 Bar, 30 Added, 32 Coast, 35 sus, 36 Tot

Apologies to all those attempting our crossword last month - you will have noticed that we carefully forgot to print the clue to 9 across. Despite that, one brave soul did have a go and so, for sheer determination in the face of overwhelming odds our £5 is on its way to James Beeson of Didsbury. Hopefully, this month should see all the clues in place.

## Hydes Force Landlord Out

The Horse & Farrier in Gatley has been in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for 13 years - a tribute to the beer-keeping skills of licensee George Bennison and something that you would imagine owners Hydes would be justly proud of. Apparently not for George is being kicked out in March and, since the change of licensee coincides with the selection of entries for the next Guide, the 13-year run will come to an end.

Just what has George done to deserve this fate? As readers may have seen in the local press, George was prosecuted and fined £1500 for food hygiene offences. Now, CAMRA doesn't condone dirty kitchens but it does seem that this all came about due to a combination of extreme domestic pressures and some structural failings in the kitchen area which, as George pointed out, it was the brewery's responsibility to put right in the first place. Despite this, it is George, it seems, who is having to carry the can. Cynics may wonder whether Hydes just used this as an excuse to get rid of him, we have certainly heard rumours that the brewery was dissatisfied with the pub's lunchtime performance. If this is true it smacks of the worst excesses of the major brewers and certainly not what we would expect from a small family firm such as Hydes.

## Brewery Swap, Shakeout

The shakeout from the Courage/Grand Met pubs-for-breweries swap continues to gather pace. On the national scene it looks very much as though the Ruddles Brewery together with its two brands, Best Bitter and the flagship County will be sold to the Dutch family brewers, Grolsch. Whilst both sides are remaining tight-lipped, a Courage representative has admitted that it was talking to Grolsch about the future ownership of Ruddles. Both Ruddles beers feature prominently in the local Websters/Wilsons estate and it is unlikely that this will change should the sale go ahead. What it would be welcome to see a change in is the quality of the beers which in the opinion of many drinkers are pale shadows of their former selves.

Closer to home we learn that the premium Websters Choice has been axed with last deliveries being made on 1st February. Opening Times has been predicting the demise of this beer for some time now - its long term future was always threatened by Ruddles County and, following the swap had a competitor much closer to home in the shape of the, vastly superior, John Smiths Magnet Ale. Let's hope that those pubs looking for a replacement don't just go for Ruddles County instead - Magnet must be the obvious choice for those wanting to stay 'in-house' and the guest beer market offers many suitable alternatives - Moorhouses Pendle Witch to name but one.

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BATEMANS

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- ★ Bowling Parties Catered for - Details on request

Hydes  
Anvil Ales  
Brewers of  
Traditional  
Cask  
Beers

Always in  
good taste

# STAGGER

with P.B.Hutchings

Stockport & South Manchester Camra traditionally undertake two Staggers in Hazel Grove. One runs from Hazel Grove back to Heaviley on the A6, and this tour - which starts at the southern end of the borough boundary - represented in this case by The Rising Sun, comes back towards Stockport up the A6 (with a single diversion along Commercial Road to the Royal Oak) back to the A6 and finishes at or about the Grove.

A small bunch of stalwarts met in the Rising Sun, an 'opened out' Wilson's pub, catering largely to a lunchtime market. Wilsons Bitter and Ruddles Best were on offer (no Websters - hurrah!), and both beers scored better than average, though at £1.22 a pint, it should be. The bar is plush and comfortable, with 'realistic' large pot plants in abundance, and some very naff art nouveau lamps.

The Rising Sun, however, is infinitely preferable to The Bull. This Wilsons emporium 'welcomes' you with ghastly plastic (perhaps plaster - but they look plastic) Bulls' heads on the outside walls. Inside - after navigating ones way round the outside of the pub, over an ill-lit step and into the car park, you find the only entrance. Confronted inside by numerous and noisy gaming machines and pinball; tacky 'rancho' style room dividers that are so crude and basic they look like the refuse from a fire damaged sale at a downmarket DIY shop, and a colour scheme featuring a particularly virulent red, we couldn't wait to taste the beer - Ruddles. The general opinion was that it matched the decor, scoring from very poor to poor though one cynic claimed it was 'average' for Ruddles. The spacious

darts area is by far the best bit of the pub. If trying to gain access - beware the dummy doors.

The 'Greenalls' Red Lion over the road, remains a proud bastion of the keg revolution, now serving keg Tetleys. Further up and on the same side as the Bull, is The White Hart. At last, a real pub. This is a true Robinsons house, complete with the near obligatory fake arch, and partially suspended ceiling, but it retains a real and lively pub atmosphere. Furnishings are comfortable plush stools and benches, and while it has a one room layout, this is divided successfully into 'areas'. Bandit, too prominent games machine and television, but a friendly popular pub with the Robinsons Best Bitter declared quite good to good. The mild was not tried. Decor, red (again) but darker and better.

Back to Wilsons at the Horse and Jockey, but at the more reasonable price of £1.10. Unfortunately on the night the beer scored consistently below average, being almost totally without taste. Are we now seeing re-usable Halifax malt grains, as well as the infamous re-usable Halifax hop? No mild. The (almost) inevitable predominantly red decor more subdued.

From now on it was to be Robinsons all the way. First the Grapes, featuring a well appointed vault, called for some reason a public bar. The large lounge is (red again!) split into a multi-room layout, while the comforting (green and brown) public bar has active darts and like the lounge very good beer. Scores for both mild and bitter were the best of the night so far, the bitter scoring very highly.

Next door is the Three Tunnes, which retains much of its pleasant old world charm and true multi-room layout. A horse-shoe bar serves two lounges, a busy 'circulation area' and a vault, with active darts section and (mercifully) only a single games machine. There is a second public-bar 'ish' area level with the vault at the back. The old waiter call buttons are still in place (happy days!). A busy, but very good pub. Beer scores nearly as high as the Grapes. Guess what the predominant colour is - yes, red! Well worth a visit to both the above.

## THE BEER HOUSE



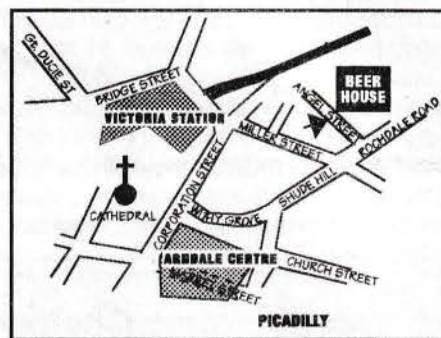
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HOLTS BITTER 4.0% ABV

DOBBINS BEST BITTER 4.0% ABV

and eight other British ales.....

#### HOT AND COLD FOOD



*The Grapes & Three Tunnes in Hazel Grove*

The **Bird in Hand** is an L-shaped pub with a small bar. A brownish theme to the decor with red curtains. Like many Robby pubs in the area it features electric dispense into oversize glasses, so you get a full pint. The darts area is not separated from the lounge, and the decoration and ambience is somewhat basic. The bar has a nice brass footrail but is a horrid pale coloured wood. Beer (best bitter) well above average, but not as good as the previous two.

The **Royal Oak**, the one pub not on the A6, was reached by a diversion through the cold fog. We could definitely have gone on a better night, as there was a Karaoke system being set up in the lounge. This led to a hurried exit, after sampling handpumped Robinsons Best Bitter that was overchilled and lacking in flavour. One of us gave it the worst score of the night. The pub does have an excellent and attractive vault, but my image of the place was coloured (red, red and red again - like the decor) by the poisonous influence of the Karaoke.

The Baker Street Wine Bar being (fortunatley) shut, we repaired to **The Cock**. The pub was very crowded, but there was enough room to see that each of the three rooms contained some original woodwork, and there is some quite good etched glass. Beer scores were high, the pub is very, very popular and justly so.

So at last to The Grove. In fact not, because I alone adjourned first to the **Anchor** and the **Woodman** opposite, which although really part of the 'other' Stagger in this area, I felt deserved a look. Both are very busy pubs, popular with a sort of 25+ age group. The modernist blue decor (with a token art nouveau light) in the Woodmans makes a pleasant change. Despite the pub being packed, the service was excellent, and the beer (bitter) good. The Anchor seemed to have a marginally older clientele, a particularly ugly carving on the bar, marginally better beer and the same level of polite and efficient service despite it being noisy and packed. Though my visit was swift, I came away impressed by both these pubs which are clearly well run and deservedly popular.

So at last to the **Grove** (again!), by now the rest of the party were well and happily esconced. Recollections of this stage of the evening are slightly hazy, but what did come across is that beer (Best Bitter) got the best scores of the night, and the mild rated an 'excellent'. My predominant memory of the Grove is of arches, arches everywhere, and only Robinsons to drink. Perhaps the decorations are due for renewal, but this is a tiny criticism of an excellent pub, with good service, good atmosphere, and first class beer. Even on a busy evening it retained a pleasant, friendly feel. A good place to finish and relax. Needless to say, the opinions expressed about pubs and beer reflect what the group found on the night, and should on no account be taken as gospel. Try them for yourself and see how far you disagree.

**THE CLASSIC  
CASK  
CONDITIONED  
BITTER**



As reported in Issue 92, one of the most exciting developments on the South Manchester real ale scene for some time must be the opening of Jabez Clegg phase 2 on February 7. This massive enterprise - to be followed by a full night club development in phase 3, comprises a vast beer hall, where 4 house and four rotating guest beers will be served, alongside the smaller (phase 1) bar which will continue to offer live entertainment, but with the advantage of a 2am club licence (until phase 3 opens). 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, situated in the heart of the University precinct, seems set to be a roaring success.

This enormous building had lain disused for some years until 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 very high quality conversion of this old Catholic Centre. Phase 1 has now been open for some months, and very popular it has proved. The launch of the larger phase 2 on the weekend of 7-9 February is expected to be spectacularly busy - especially with selected beers at £1 per pint. For the present, the area behind the long bar, which will eventually become a restaurant, is being set aside as a drinking area, - to compliment the split level main hall.

Plans are afoot for a range of live acts, with the promotion of alternative comedy in the smaller bar a distinct possibility on some nights. The huge beer hall will provide an excellent extra watering hole for real ale drinkers. We have been told that the guest beers will be rotated, and among the first to be featured will be Moorhouses excellent Pendle Witches Brew. The conversion itself is most impressive, with masses of traditional wood panelling, complimented by brickwork. As with the smaller (but still large) phase 1 room - the barn-like shape, once stripped back to natural wood and brick manages to convey a cosy, almost rustic feel.

Phase two is an enormous old church hall converted into two large rooms by the simple(?) device of inserting a floor half-way up the walls. The lower room becomes

the beer hall, with wooden floors, large wooden tables and church pews. There ample stage area will feature live music seven nights a week, with smaller acts performing in the more 'lounge' atmosphere of the back room. This latter should also, fairly soon, be available for hire for private functions of 80-100. In fact the owners, and manager John Anderson, late of the Flea & Firkin, are looking to keep the site very busy outside of term term, as well as when the area is saturated with students. Uses for the small room, and the projected night club during the day are being rigorously investigated. John is very much a real ale man. There were still some details to be finalised in the beer range at time of going to press, but Marstons Pedigree, Boddingtons Bitter, and Flowers Original (this last not, perhaps the most inspired choice, coming as it does from the Whitbread factory), should be joined by Courage Directors and the four guest beers (look out for Dobbins!) The aim is to keep prices down and in the phase 1 bar these have been 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 throughout the day, an idea likely to succeed if the lunchtime crowd in phase 1 is anything to go by! Real cider will also be introduced in the near future.

For those who missed the last article - the name Jabez Clegg was the hero of Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks' book of 1876, the Manchester Man.

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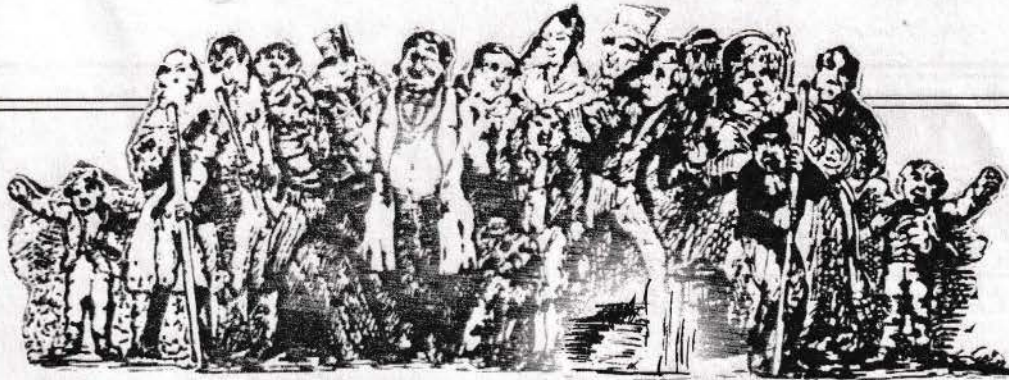
## Timothy Taylor's Championship Beers



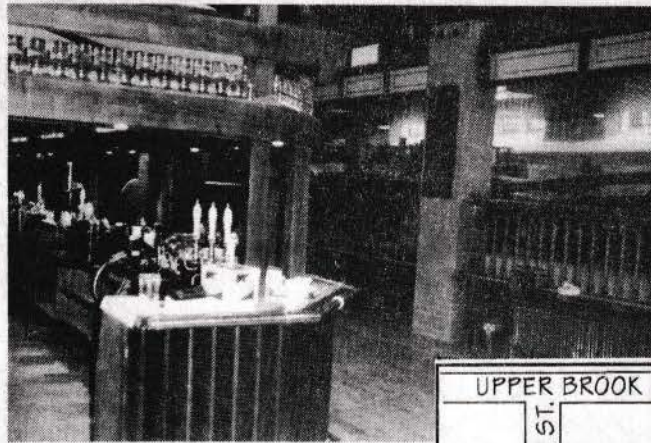
**LANDLORD**

*like beer used to taste!*

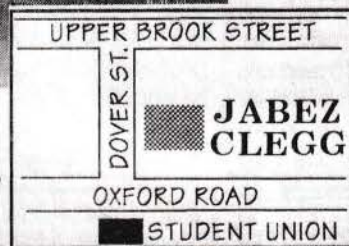




# JABEZ CLEGG PHASE II



MANCHESTER'S NEWEST  
& BEST  
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MUSIC VENUE  
SMALLER BACK BAR  
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# RHYTHM and BOOZE

By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

This month's Rhythm & Booze is rather different to our previous features, as, for the first time, we feature a pub music venue for which a small charge is levied. The pub in question is the White Swan Hotel in Ladybarn/Fallowfield and the featured band is the Tony Mann Quartet.

These four jazz musicians have a Friday night residency upstairs, away from the main drinking area - which is normally very crowded and bustling. The White Swan itself is a multi-roomed Robinsons house on Green Street, about 10 minutes walk from Mauldeth Road Station and has long been popular with a wide cosmopolitan clientele, with a strong student contingent in term time. In addition to the Quartet, the pub also plays host to a changing selection of folk musicians, who cover the whole spectrum of that genre, who play on Wednesday nights.

The Tony Mann Quartet has been together for over four years, and they are masters of contemporary jazz. The line up is Tony Mann (drums), Chris Williams (alto sax), Joe Palin (piano) and Dave Lynane (bass). All of these are highly respected musicians who have played in a variety of jazz ensembles over the years, Tony having spent eight years in the company of Humphrey Lyttleton. The vast



musical experience certainly shows and all four display an enthusiasm for their music which leaps out to the audience. All four contribute equally to a 'complete' sound although there are regular solos from each musician, accompanied by words of encouragement and congratulation from the other three. The skilful playing is consistent throughout, from slow moody ballads to up-tempo compositions in which the pace becomes almost frantic.

By the end of the evening, we were clapping after each solo and nodding with the true enthusiasts. If you are a follower of contemporary jazz then the quality and professionalism of the Tony Mann Quartet will not be news to you. But, if your experience of jazz is limited, then go along and support some local musicians who really deserve to play to a full house every Friday night. You



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couldn't have a better introduction and may well end up hooked. We'll certainly be retracing our steps to the White Swan and, if Friday's performances are anything to judge from, a visit to sample some folk music on Wednesdays is also a must.



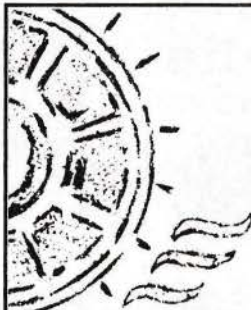
## Squirrels at Chinley

The Squirrels at Chinley, which featured in our 'Pub in the Peak' series last year, continues to impress with its range of guest beers. Landlord Drew now tells us of another venture in this direction - over the next few weeks his guest beer selection will feature a range of milds. Yet more proof of the resurgence of interest in dark beers, we wish this mini-festival of milds every success. The Squirrels is situated close to Chinley station and so would be ideal for a night out.

## Cask Gain . . Pub Loss

Another local conversion to cask ale came late last year in the shape of the Harvester in Offerton which is now selling Greenalls Bitter, Original and Stones Bitter on handpump. The conversion came in the wake of a refurbishment which, we are told, has left the pub looking something like a cross between an Arab's tent and a Gypsy caravan (the mind boggles - ed.)

As we went to press, the Jolly Crofter on Castle Street, Edgeley was closed. A sign in the window indicated that the lease was for sale.



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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

# FEBRUARY 1987

The front page story in February 1987 was about CAMRA's leaflet going in to the Bradford pubs - it was produced by the Bradford branch, and was aimed at the young lager drinker, in an attempt to convert them to drink real ale. There was no later report of a dramatic drop in lager drinking in the Bradford area, even though much of the lager available was over-priced for its strength - part of that over-pricing going towards the huge costs of advertising the stuff. About that time, Bass announced they were over the 50% mark with lager. (Now, five years later, according to the 1992 Industry Report in "Publican", approximately 55% of Bass sales is represented by lager. An increase of about 5% in 5 years is a very different story from lager's earlier years - from only 1% of beer sales in 1960, it had jumped to 25% by 1977. So perhaps the tide has been stemmed.)

Re-furbishment of the Old Garratt on Princess Street, Manchester was mentioned last month, and this month it was the venue for one of the regular Monday night socials, to sample the Boddingtons, Oldham and Higsos. (Now, in 1992, whilst the Boddingtons is still there, it has now been joined by Theakstons and Cains - the latter, of course, is brewed at what was Higsos's Brewery before Whitbread closed it.

There was more news of Stockport's "very first" beer festival, due to take place at the College of Technology on Wellington Road South, towards the end of April. One very interesting beer expected to arrive (weather permitting) was coming all the way from the Bove House Brewery on the Isle of Lewis - Britain's most northerly brew house. (The brewery did move "South" the following year, due to transport problems, and its new home is now north-west of Aberdeen - of its original location, it was said that the local drinkers just used the beer to wash down the whisky!)

Another "coming event" was the announcement of CAMRA's 1986 Pub of the Year, this prestigious award going to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. The presentation was to be made on the 10th of March, 1987.



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# LOCALLEY

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# Guest Ales & Breweries

The two local pub owning chains, Boddingtons and Greenalls seem to be taking markedly different approaches to the guest ale market.

The Boddington PubCo have recently made Ind Coope Burton Ale and John Smiths Bitter available to their tenancies and furthermore intend to introduce a guest beer scheme with the aid of Boddingtons subsidiary, Liquid Assets. The latter also acts as a beer wholesaler and we understand that the intention is to offer pubs a different guest beer each week for a three month period at a time. In addition Cains Bitter seems to be more and more widely available in PubCo pubs and there are also plans to extend the availability of Old Shilling, the low-gravity bitter specially commissioned from Mansfield Brewery. All in all some nine different bitters are currently available to PubCo tenants.

Contrast this to Greenalls who, when they exited brewing made a great play of the fact that they would then be the largest free house chain in the country. There is sadly precious little sign of this at present. Most of their pubs offer the standard range of Greenalls Mild, Bitter and/or Original with perhaps the exciting option of Stones Bitter as a guest beer. Admittedly some 60 managed

houses are taking beers from the new Coachouse Brewery in Warrington and it was recently announced that 30 Merseyside pubs would take Cains Bitter - a pretty poor showing from a company that has over 1000 pubs in the North West. Meanwhile pubs like the Bobby Peel in Edgeley, Stockport are only too keen to sell something different but all Greenalls can limply say is that they believe in a gradual approach or it's a matter of 'internal politics'.

The company is, however, about to undergo a restructuring which will see the Greenall family shareholding reduced from 53% to 17% and at the same time chairman Christopher Hatton will retire. Let's hope these changes at the top lead to changes in the pubs.

## Robbys Expand but Axe Beer

Stockport brewers Robinsons bought 19 pubs from Bass last month, a move which brings their total estate over the 400 mark. Many of the pubs are in areas where the brewery has not traded before, although one is the previously keg-only Railway on Hyde Road, Woodley. January also saw the annual Robinsons price rise with 5p going on best bitter and 4p on mild. Lastly on Robinsons, the closure of the Hartleys Brewery in Ulverston has seen two casualties in that brewery's beer range - mild has been axed and Fellrunners Bitter is now a keg-only beer called Fellrunners Gold.

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# CAMRA CALLING!

Once again this month there is a wide programme of events. We kick off on Monday 10th with a social at the Claremont, Claremont Road, Moss Side. This large Holts pub has recently been refurbished so it will be a chance to see what Holts have done to the place. As with all Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm.

The branch meeting is in the same week, on Thursday 13th. This will be at the Blossoms, Buxton Road (A6), Heaviley, Stockport. We will be selecting the entries for the 1993 (yes 1993!) Good Beer Guide at this meeting, so come along and have your say. It will be a busy night so we aim to start at 8.00pm prompt. A 192 bus will drop you outside.

On Monday 17th, the social is at the Coach and Horses, Mersey Street, Portwood, Stockport and this is followed on Friday 21st by our monthly Stagger which this time is in Levenshulme. There is a 7.00pm start at the Wheatsheaf, Stockport Road (A6) or you can join at 8.30 at the Union, also Stockport Road. A chance to sample the new Old Shilling Bitter here, as well. Later that weekend, on Sunday 23rd we are having another of our popular lunchtime mini-crawls followed by a Rusholme curry. We meet at noon at the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, 1.00pm at the Grafton, Grafton Street and 2.00pm at the Whitworth, Moss Lane East.

On Monday 24th the social is at the Friendship on Hyde Road, Gorton. One of the few Marstons pubs in the area. Thursday 27th is Pub of the Month at the Hare & Hounds, Abbey Hey Lane. A minibus will run leaving the Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.30pm. Phone Tracey to book a seat. Lastly for that week we are having a day out in Liverpool on Saturday 29th. The train leaves Stockport station at 10.27.

Lastly, two dates in March for your diary. On Wednesday 7th there is a trip to Hardy & Hansons Brewery in Nottingham. The coach leaves Stockport at 4.00pm. Again phone Tracey to book. And, of course, one of the annual highlights for CAMRA locally - on Saturday March

7th we present our Pub of the Year Award. This time it's to Simon Finch at the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock. For more details or to book seats, phone Tracey Clarke on 061 456 6354.

Of course, if you live in the Marple area you fall into the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch of the Campaign. They have a branch meeting at the Andrew Arms, Compstall on Monday 10th where the 1993 Good Beer Guide entries will be chosen. The next branch meeting will be on 9th March at the Travellers Call, Bredbury. Both meetings start about 8.30pm. The branch is also planning a Games Night for Mid-March. For more details, contact Geoff Williamson on 0663 765634.

## MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

**As usual, New Year has been a quiet time on the pub scene, but there are a final two pre-Christmas openings to mention which I didn't get round to in time for last month's copy deadline.**

In Ancoats, the Cock Robin (formerly Crown) on the corner of Old Mill Street and Weybridge Avenue is now open, selling Burtonwood Mild and Bitter plus Lees Mild and Bitter, all on handpump. As well as serving the local community, it's also handy for the new retail sheds along Great Ancoats Street.

In West Gorton, former Greenalls pub the Locomotive on Ercall Close has re-opened as the Manchester Frog and Firkin. With no connection to the Firkin chain to which the Flea and Firkin at All Saints belongs, the Frog and Firkin has an essentially Whitbread beer range with handpumped Boddingtons Bitter as the sole real ale; however, this is not always available and, while I should be delighted to be proved wrong, it is difficult to see the pub prospering. In Greenalls hands it was for some time regularly closed for two or three days in the week.

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**STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA**



Landlord Dave at the Strawberry Duck in Clayton tells us that his Holts Mild is showing a big increase in sales as he is now selling five 22-gallon containers a week. Yet more evidence that mild generally is on the upturn. The pub itself continues to thrive despite the closure of some factories in the area.

Tony Wilson, the antipodean landlord of the Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme, recently came fifth in the national Master Cellarmanship Competition run by Allied Breweries which is open to all licensees selling Burton Ale. At the Old Mill itself, Tony has added Cains Bitter to his range, bringing the number of real ales on sale to four (the others being Tetley Bitter, Jennings Bitter and Burton Ale).

Licensee Ian, late of the Gorton Arms in Gorton, has moved on to the Old House at Home on Fairfield Road in Droylsden, a former Wilsons house which appeared to be shut when recently surveyed for the East Manchester Pub Guide but is now apparently run by a pubchain. The Gorton was capably run by an experienced relief couple over the busy Christmas/New Year period, but a permanent manager could well be installed by the time you read this. We understand that there have been several applications.

We understand that one cask of the prized and rare Dobbin's Old Soporific from West Coast Brewery (the winter's second and final brew) is likely to go on sale at Robinski's Wallet in Fallowfield early this month.

The Gardeners Arms in Offerton is another Boddington PubCo pub to offer a guest beer, this time in the shape of Ind Coope Burton Ale.

More news on real ale in clubs. The Cheadle Hulme Conservative club sells Robinsons and Banks's Mild and Bitter plus Boddingtons Bitter (which seems a lot for a club which is only open evenings and weekends). They have been having a guest beer, too, for the last year or so, during which time they've had about 20 from all over the country - Eldridge Pope, Coach House, Pedigree, Jennings, Brains. Apparently they've all been very drinkable, apart from the last mentioned which was the most recent, and sour!

At the Three Crowns, Heaton Norris, licensees Jon and Margaret Boslem are grateful to their customers for rallying round to set the pub on its feet again. Darts and pools teams are again thriving. A soccer team is now installed, and there may be a rugby team in the near future. On the beer front there is still no news of the new beer, but it is expected that the Three Crowns will be one of a number of Boddington PubCo pubs to have a rolling programme of guest beers. Let us hope that the PubCo show some originality in their choice of guest beers.

The Boddington PubCo have sold the Kings Arms on Great Portwood Street, Stockport to a local entrepreneur who intends to reopen it as a pub after necessary remedial work. Scaffolding was already going up as we went to press. Just around the corner on Tiviot Dale we believe the Kings Head may be sold to the sitting tenants.



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