

# OPENING TIMES

CAMRA  
FREE

APRIL 1992

## Full Measure ... Poured Slowly!

In our January issue we reported that the Government had at last decided to act to ensure that all beer is served in oversize glasses, to help prevent short measures. They have now announced that this will become a legal requirement from April 1st 1994. This gives pubs a very generous timescale for changing their stock of glasses but does at least mean that any claims that the cost of new glasses will push up the price of a pint will be totally groundless. We look to our more enterprising local brewers and licensees to demonstrate their commitment to customer service by bringing in the change earlier than they are legally required to. There is no reason why drinkers should have to wait another two years for a square deal.

Meanwhile, according to some national brewers and their mouthpiece, the Brewers' Society, the whole business is a doomsday, end-of-civilisation-as-we-know-it scenario. If the Government - let alone drinkers - demand a full pint then handpumps will be ripped out and replaced by electric meters, they say. Add to this the proposal that brim-measure glasses should be replaced by over-size ones and the predictable howl goes up: "The price of beer will have to increase!"

The Brewers Society, which has been behaving like a headless chicken over this issue, has warned of beer prices rising by as much as 14 pence a pint to cover the cost of electric meters and large glasses. On the contrary; as there is now a large body of evidence that drinkers have been short measured and short changed for years, there is a powerful case that beer prices should fall by way of compensation.

During the two-year introduction period, glasses will have been replaced several times in every pub in the country, in any event. This also gives ample time for brewers to train their staff to ensure a full pint is served through a traditional handpump.

This astonishing hullabaloo by the big brewers resembles nothing more than a tantrum that might have been expected from a 5 year old caught with his hand in the biscuit tin. Their threats are baseless - glasses will be replaced come what may and as for the supposed threat to handpumps, well even the Brewers Society has not been able to quote a single brewer who has said on the record that they will go down this route. Indeed, local brewer Robinsons have told CAMRA that for them, the possibility of removing handpumps was "untenable".

The message to the brewers is clear; stop bellyaching and start aiming to give us your customers what we've been entitled to, and paying for, for years - full measure!



Plans are now well advanced for the sixth Stockport Beer Festival which will once again be held at Stockport's Masonic Guildhall over the last weekend in May. The vital dates for your diary are Thursday 28th - Saturday 30th May.

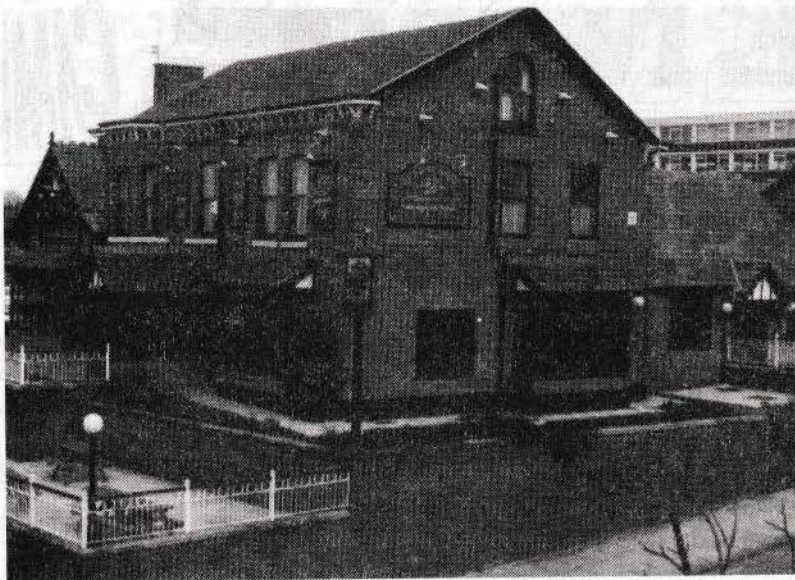
The beer order is almost finalised and expect to see not only the return of some old favourites but also new beers from far and wide. Once again we will be concentrating on the new-wave micro-brewers who have sprung up over the country in the past years ranging from our very own Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery to Dent in Cumbria and Broughton in the Scottish Borders.

There will also be entertainment at every session with all musical tastes catered for, from Irish Folk to sweaty R'n'B. Full details will be in next month's Opening Times.

With souvenir glasses and T-shirts thrown in, this will be an event that is not to be missed. In previous years we have been packed out on the Friday and Saturday nights so this year why not avoid the crush and come along on Thursday. Our thanks go to Signal Cheshire Radio for sponsoring this year's event.

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# PUB of the Month April

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	<b>23</b>	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for April goes to the Cheadle Hulme, a Joseph Holts house, sited next to Cheadle Hulme station. This is the second time that the pub has received this much sought-after award but anyone who attended the last presentation in October 1985 and has not been back since would not recognise the place today. In those days the pub was the Junction and despite selling, then as now, excellent beers, was truthfully past its sell by date.

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welcome you to the  
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The retirement of a long-serving licensee was followed by the pub being thoroughly gutted in 1989 and its re-emergence as the Cheadle Hulme. This included the addition of a restaurant and a definite move upmarket which sadly involved the loss of the vault. However, despite the money spent on the pub, it still retains a traditional Holts 'feel' and the brewery are to be congratulated for keeping the prices down when the rest of the local pubs are far higher priced.

The current licensees, Bryan and Veronica Armstrong were originally at the Red Lion in Prestwich and moved to the Cheadle Hulme in July 1990. Their arrival has heralded a period of much-needed stability and the beer is now consistently excellent. Such is the volume of business from both pub and restaurant that Bryan has handed over the control of the cellar to his brother-in-law, John Grundy, who must be applauded for the standards set. No wonder that the pub has been selected for CAMRA's 1993 Good Beer Guide.

The presentation will be on Thursday 23rd April which should see a good night out with great beer at the right price. The last train back to Manchester (all stations) is at 23.08 and Stockport only at 23.50.

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By the time most OT readers see this, the election will have been and gone, much to everybody's relief, I suspect.

As I typed this the result was still very much in the balance and doubtless the final outcome will have had some of our readers enjoying a celebratory pint and others perhaps drowning their sorrows. Regardless of what party is in power, I doubt whether the drinker can expect the Chancellor to leave us alone in future years and the prices of our pints will continue their upward climb.

What we can hope for, however, is some action to stop the carnage that is currently ripping through the brewing industry and the future of the know it. Long sees are being scrap - heap sure continue some doubtless recession but simply victims brewers' greed. a half - politi-right and cen-

## In the Editor's View

by John Clarke

Derek Shoff's letter in OT has certainly caused a storm of protest. The question has been asked whether the letter should have been published - well, while Derek's words may have perhaps been a little injudicious, they did represent a strongly held view which I thought deserved an airing. OT has never been afraid of controversy and certainly, we've got it by the bucketful this time....

Where Derek did get it very wrong, however, was in his reference to Brendan's political views. I thought long and hard before printing that part of the letter, and on reflection that part alone should not have appeared in print, not least for the very good reason that the comments made have absolutely no foundation in fact. OT is never afraid to admit when it gets things wrong and we do so here - I have apologised to Brendan in person and now do so in print.

threatening pub as we serving licen-throw on the and pubs clo-unabated - victims of the many more of the big it is time to call cians, left, te take notel

Hayward - last month's

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# PUB OF THE YEAR 1992

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# OPENING TIMES LETTERS



**From: Miss C Ibrams, Secretary Wadeson Road Tenants Association**

*I am writing to you in response to Derek Hayward-Shott's letter. I must on behalf of the local tenants association complain in the strongest way at his derogatory remarks concerning the Kings Arms, management, staff and customers.*

*Obviously as an "infrequent visitor", I believe he has visited the Kings Arms twice, he is not in a position to downgrade the pub in this way.*

*Brendan and Simon have worked extremely hard to build up the Kings Arms into a pub which everyone is welcome to enter, be they businessmen, ladies or an OAP who just wants a bit of company. There are not many pubs who would cater for a complete cross section of customers, most cater for a certain type and do not involve themselves in the local community, but at the Kings Arms they cater for everyone.*

*At the Kings Arms our association is made welcome and every effort has been made to help the community surrounding the pub. We have our committee meetings in the 'back' room (which, by the way, does have carpets). Present at the meetings are councillors, housing officials, Police Officers etc and ladies. Would we hold our meetings there if the language was as bad as Mr Hayward-Shott has written?*

*Does Mr Hayward-Shott think that the ladies who enter the Kings Arms, accompanied or unaccompanied are not respectable? I can assure him that we are respectable ladies and how chauvinistic of him to suggest otherwise.*

*All the customers, male and female, are incensed by his letter, even more so by being called the 'rough trade'. WE are not 'rough trade', and how dare he pass such a patronising opinion on people and an area. WE do not have sawdust on the floor nor do we have bouncers at the doors.*

*As for Brendan's political views, neither I nor anyone I have spoken to, have heard Brendan voice any political opinion of any kind.*

*The Kings Arms might not be decorated up to Mr Hayward-Shott's standards, but what are his standards? How would he react if someone wrote derogatory remarks regarding his local?*

*Perhaps it is a case of sour grapes because his local (which I believe was in the running for Pub of the Year) did not win.*

*The judging panel's decision was balanced and fair. Mr Hayward-Shott should accept the decision and retire gracefully. We are not biased and the Kings Arms management, staff and customers can accept fair criticism, but not when the criticism is unbalanced and prejudiced. We await Mr Hayward-Shott's written apology to Brendan, Simon, the staff and to the customers, male and female, of the Kings Arms public house.*

**From Rhys Jones**

*The day Opening Times becomes a bland consensus paper is the day I cease involvement with it. Nevertheless I question whether the cause of good beer - or the simple truth - was served by printing, even in what I understand was an edited form, the extraordinary letter from Derek Hayward-Shott (letters March).*

*Admittedly, the editorial response went a long way towards the not difficult task of exposing the baseless nature of DH-S's ramblings. Nevertheless, a few specific points need to be made;*

*1) While carefully avoiding direct accusation DH-S plants the suggestion that late drinks are served at the Kings Arms - an accusation which, were the authorities gullible enough to believe it, could have very serious consequences for licensee Simon Finch's livelihood and for the future of the pub. As a regular user of the Kings Arms I place on record my confident belief that this casual slur is entirely unfounded.*

*2) As CAMRA's liaison officer with West Coast Brewery, I probably have as much contact with Brendan Dobbin as most CAMRA members. With the exception of the internal politics of the brewing industry - and the very particular case of a one-off and somewhat tongue-in-cheek bottled beer - I have never heard him give the slightest hint of any political opinions he may hold. DH-S's comments are not just inaccurate but inflammatory and potentially dangerous - on this point at least, a retraction is needed. Ideally it should come from DH-S rather than Opening Times, but come it must.*

*3) Where DH-S takes respectable ladies is his business. I can assure him that many entirely respectable people, gentlemen and ladies, frequent the Kings Arms. Agreed, not too many of them sport a pinstriped suit or twin-set and pearls. DH-S might not realise this, but many people on inner-city estates can't afford to maintain the sort of wardrobe they might like.*

*4) DH-S has missed the fact that beers from breweries other than West Coast are frequently sold at the Kings. That they are not permanently is entirely due to customer preference for the extraordinarily wide range of West Coast beers.*

*5) Doing my best to ignore DH-S's cheap 'rough trade' jibe, yes, I have heard people 'eff and blind' at the Kings Arms. I've heard similar language in pubs in far more salubrious surroundings - but perhaps it's OK if you're in the Stockbroker Belt? If DH-S had been concentrating, he'd have noticed that a prime reason for the Pub of the Year award was the improvement Simon Finch has brought about to the atmosphere of the pub; this applies as much to the bad language "issue", such as it is, as it does to more weighty matters.*

*While I have not had the honour of making DH-S's acquaintance, I believe he's been a follower of the local real ale scene for some years. I suggest his views might carry more weight if he were to test them against the experience of other drinkers at a CAMRA meeting (you don't have to be a member to attend). Perhaps, though, he finds it more congenial to sneer at the lower orders from his ivory tower.*

**Editors note: Derek Hayward-Shott has certainly stirred things up with his comments. The only point on which I would like to comment is the subject of Brendan's political views. It was with some hesitation that I printed even the edited version of DH-S's letter, as I for one had certainly never heard Brendan express the opinions DH-S suggests he may hold. I have subsequently spoken to both Brendan and DH-S and am happy to put on record that the implication in the letter was entirely without foundation. I also understand that DH-S has sent a letter of apology.**

# OLD ALES

by  
Peter Soane

This month we have the second part of our occasional series which looks at the area's former breweries. This time we look at one of the last to disappear - Clarke's Reddish Brewery. Driving up to Reddish via Lancashire Hill, few will realise that just past the roundabout at the top of the hill they will be passing through the site of the last Stockport brewery to disappear as a result of the 1960's merger-mania - Clarke's of Reddish.

Richard Clarke was born at Butley near Macclesfield in 1832, came to Stockport at the age of 16 and worked at the Bakers Vaults where he served his apprenticeship. After a short period running the Sun Inn in Stockport Market Place he moved to the Ash, Reddish in 1860 and was brewing by 1864 at the attached brewhouse. His stay there was short-lived and the next move was to a site in South Reddish, near St Annes school, where he established himself as a common brewer.

Business must have boomed as by 1873 the brewery had been outgrown and plans were drawn up for the Reddish Brewery on Sandy Lane which was completed the following year. Richard Clarke was at this time living at Stanley House which is still standing today near to the Triangle Church on Sandy Lane.

Richard's son John (no relation! - ed.) joined the business and served his apprenticeship under his father. As John became more involved in the business, Richard was able to devote more time to public affairs, becoming a JP and being elected to the Town Council. He was also a devoted church-goer and presented a clock and bells to Christ Church, Heaton Norris. Richard died in 1899 and left his shares to his sons, two daughters and son-in-law Robert Lyons.

The company continued to prosper, both buying and building public houses, including the Ladybrook Hotel in Bramhall, the George & Dragon, Heaton Chapel and the Grey Horse in Reddish. Alarm bells started ringing in the early 1940's when talks were held with Bells brewery with a view to amalgamation. This idea was shelved when Henry Bell died but during the 1950's and 1960's takeovers became the rage and in December 1962 Boddingtons offered £1 million for the company. By January 1963 the offer had been accepted, the head of the company, Sir Douglas Clarke JP describing the takeover as "a very friendly affair". Boddingtons were only after the tied houses and at the time - a company spokesman said their beers would be on sale in Clarke houses within 6 months.

Sure enough, on 20th June it was reported "the last bottle of Clarke's beer left the century old brewery in Reddish on Friday and a few hours later the company.....closed down for good. The stocks held by the 60...houses taken over by the Manchester brewery are the last Clarke's beers available..."

Many Opening Times readers may remember Clarke's beers, certainly their mild, nicknamed "Clarke's Blood Mixture" has passed into local legend. Evidence of Clarke's ownership on local pubs is difficult to detect: the Black Lion on Stockport's Hillgate has 'RC & CO' etched into the glass on the door, the Greyhound in Edgeley, one of the last pubs to be built by Clarke's has a tray advertising 'Clarke's Jaguar Ales' but that apart it is almost as if the company had never existed.



## Competition Corner

We hear from a source highly connected with the Boddington Pub Co that they are looking to change their name - presumably to play down the Whitbread connection.

OT is of course, only too happy to assist, so lets have your suggestions as to an appropriate new name for PubCo. The editor is a sensitive soul so keep it clean(ish)!

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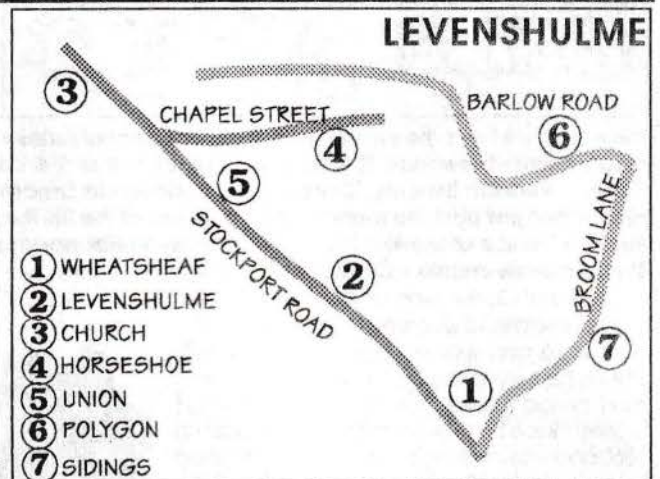
# STAGGER

with Rhys P. Jones

This month's Stagger reports an exploration of Levenshulme. Early comers gathered in the Wheatshaf, a large two-room Greenall's pub and a fairly recent convert to real ale. Greenalls Original was not on tonight, and an average pint of Greenalls Bitter was served. Though nothing special in terms of decor, the large vault, probably formed from two rooms at some time in the past, had a good down-to-earth atmosphere; we were unable to sample the lounge, as this room, housed in a single storey extension in a manner reminiscent of many London pub layouts, was still closed when we left at around 7.30.

Northwards now to the Levenshulme. Fairly recently redecorated, this is a one-room pub but with well-contrasted areas - lino vault side, carpeted lounge. It was good to see food available in an evening session (only rolls, but they looked to be well-filled). Another plus point was availability of local free paper the Levenshulme News. Handpumped beers are Websters and Wilsons bitters; nobody tried the Websters and the Wilsons was distinctly below average. This, plus the much sparser clientele did the pub no favours in comparison with our starting point. A pity, for it does have some praiseworthy features.

We passed a few pubs now, for Fiddlers Green, the Packhorse and the Railway sell only keg beer, and we were to return to the Union as a mid-evening meeting point. So it was that we found ourselves in the Church.



Sadly, we found very little to recommend it. A real ale convert at about the same time as fellow Greenalls pub the Wheatshaf, it's been given a mock-Victorian treatment whose only attraction is the chance you get to see how incompetently it's been done - bench seats without adjoining table (are customers supposed to juggle their drinks?) and a fake library with all of four books! Neither did it seem particularly well kept, with some far from pristine upholstery. Handpumped beers are Greenalls Bitter and Original; they were the two worst beers of the night, with Original marginally worse than Bitter.

After this it was a relief to find the Horseshoe, a Wilsons pub with central bar separating lounge and vault. What's more alongside Websters and Wilsons bitters was the first real mild of the night, Wilsons. We all tried it (you don't often get the chance nowadays) and it was above average. The pub had by far the best and most welcoming atmosphere we had encountered so far. I for one would be glad to have this pub as my local.

## THE BEER HOUSE

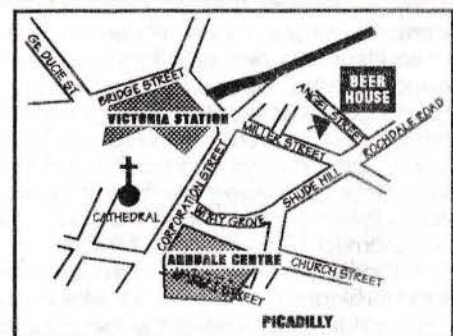


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Now it was time to meet the 8.30 shift at the Union. This is now the only unspoilt old-style pub in Levenshulme, and has plenty of character. Multi-room layout, etched glass and a real fireplace all contribute to an environment that could only be a pub - refreshing in these days when so many so-called pubs look like estate agents offices with a couple of beer pumps. Boddingtons Bitter here has recently been joined by the weaker Old Shilling, brewed for Boddingtons pubs by Mansfield Brewery; we all tried this, and what good beer it was - striking proof that beer need not be strong to have lashings of flavour.

Pausing only to confirm that the Victoria (keg for years) and the Midway (which lost real ale last year) still sold nothing of interest, we called at the Farmers Arms, a two-room Whitbread pub. As the lounge was hosting a noisy disco, we - along with the majority of the pub's customers - used the vault. This seemed a pleasant enough room, but was really too busy to be wholly enjoyable. I have the impression that under more normal conditions, this is a perfectly decent and well-run pub. Chesters Mild was not on this evening, leaving as the sole real ale Chesters Bitter which we found below average. To be fair this probably says more about the intrinsic quality of the beer than about the licensee's skill in the cellar.

Whatever the reason, things looked up when we reached the Polygon on Barlow Road. Here a well executed Boddingtons modernisation complements a handsome interior. The skilful use of dark-stained wood was particularly commented on, and this was another pub that many in the party could happily have claimed as a local. Pints were topped-up without needing to ask - a reliable sign of a good pub. As in the Union, the beers were Boddingtons Bitter and Old Shilling. Both were above average, though Old Shilling was not quite as good as in the Union.

We ended the night in that favourite venue the Sidings on Broom Lane. With this Joseph Holts have really done Levenshulme proud, producing a modern pub with the traditional virtues. Not altogether surprisingly, the Sidings produced the best beer of the night. We rated the bitter slightly higher than the mild, but the difference was trivial; whatever our preference, we were content to round off the evening over splendid beer in convivial and congenial surroundings.

All in all, then, a mixed bag of pubs - something to commend almost everywhere, but one clear winner on the night. But of course, it **was** only one night, and they **were** only our opinions. Why not follow in our footsteps and see whether you agree?



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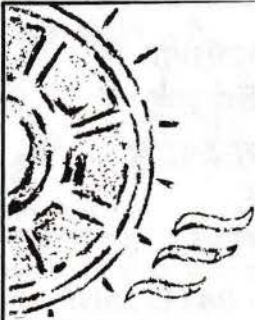
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# RHYTHM and BOOZE

By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

This month's quest in search of "Rhythm & Booze" sees us, for the first time, venturing outside Stockport & South Manchester.

The destination of our journey into foreign parts was the Kings Arms on Bloom Street, close to Salford Railway Station. Although the pub is owned by the Boddington PubCo, it is run as a traditional freehouse with a large range of independent beers, real ciders and a large selection of imported bottled beers.

On alternate Sunday evenings, the Kings plays host to the Roach Twins Blues Band - in their own words "a blues band with a difference"! One drizzly Sunday, we arrived at the Kings Arms fairly early, so that we could have an unobstructed view, only to find that the pub was heaving. Was the reason for this mass of humanity half price beer? No, simply the reputation of the Roach Twins Blues Band was enough to bring in the crowds. There was standing room only (and not much of that) available - partly due to the 7-piece band, plus guests, plus equipment, not to mention the rows of occupied seats, rearranged to give a good view of the band. We retired to the corridor, along with a good few others to enjoy the show.

The Roach Twins Blues Band originated in Walkden, west Manchester from where the twins, Guitar Tony and Billy (vocals and lyrics) hail. The band have been playing for a number of years, notably a residency at the Duke of York in Eccles but have now moved into larger venues in the City Centre and will be appearing at the Band on the Wall on Saturday May 2nd.

The band also includes Dangerous (Guitar), Wreckless Tex (bass), Big Vern (drums), Mad Mark (fiddle and sax) and the Professor (bag pipes, Jews harp and bombard - we think this sounds like a snake-charmer's pipe, but could be wrong!) A look at the instruments will give a good clue as to the "difference" between the Roach Twins and many other blues bands. We were impressed

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by the raw raucous style of the band, who play numbers which are mostly self-penned, performed with an air of professional tightness and confidence. "Built for Comfort" and "Crawling King Snake" were a couple of the classics we recognised cooked and served to the Twins' individual recipe of course!

The style of the band varies all the way from slow, sleazy blues to almost sixties psychedelics and all the way back across the spectrum to rock. They are definitely worth seeing - but beware the faint-hearted - the Twins mean business! The band have recorded a very high quality live cassette, which captures the atmosphere of a gig and this, along with an information leaflet containing contact numbers etc, is available at all gigs and limited record outlets. Incidentally, we hope the person who has our car stereo and our copy of the tape "Look after Yourself" appreciates it - we certainly did for the few days it was in our possession. Obviously, a much sought-after recording!



The Roach Twins - Tony on Guitar and Billy on Vocals of the immensely popular Roach Twins Blues Band during their performance in Salford.

## West Coast News...

As we bid farewell to Don Burgess (who is currently heavily involved in establishing a new brewing venture in the South West - more details when we are at liberty to reveal them -), let's welcome as Brendan Dobbin's new second-in-command Nick Astbury, formerly of Clifton Inns' Orange Pub-Brewery in Pimlico, London. Despite his 5 years experience in the industry, Nick was, not surprisingly, impressed by the range and quality of the beers produced at West Coast's relatively small site. He told Opening Times "I came North to brew beers with a head on them" - we look forward to his new ideas.

The latest product from West Coast is a light-coloured premium ale unsubtly called Big Heavy Jimmie; at 1045og/4.5%ABV, the beer fills one of the few gaps in the West Coast range, and we wish it well. It's on sale at the Kings Arms and available to the free trade.

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# 5 Years Ago

## APRIL 1987

by Phil Levison

The front page story was about Germany's Reinheitsgebot, the ancient pure beer law which lays down that only malt, hops, yeast and water can be used in the production of beer. The European Court of Justice ruled that this was a restraint of trade which prevented foreign brewers from competing in the German market. The Germans are extremely proud of the purity of their national drink, and are unlikely to welcome foreign beers with open arms - but the European Court insisted that they allow the import of the foreign beers. It's an interesting thought that before this ruling Guinness was one of the few foreign beers that could be sold in Germany.

Also on the front page was a column on the first Stockport Beer Festival, to be held later in the month at the College of Technology on Wellington Road South. Beers include Leadboiler, Titanic, Moonraker, Pendle Witches Brew, Miners Arms Governors Ale, English Guineas Stout - over 30 beers from 20 breweries as far afield as Scotland, Somerset, Herefordshire, and Middleton Junction!

Bass North West told CAMRA that conversions of pubs to cask ale were continuing apace, so it was all the more surprising to see the Old King, Portwood, advertising "the only traditional Bass beers in town". (Now in 1992, apart from the Old King, you still have to search for them.) There was also a separate news item on the same pub reporting that a cask of Robinsons Old Tom had been seen on the bar - apparently this was a fairly short lived experiment in selected Bass houses.

The monthly pub crawl covered the village of Cheadle, appropriately described as prime pub crawling territory - there was one keg pub, but nearly all the others could be visited without leaving the main road through the village. (Some readers may remember the "other" Cheadle crawl in pre-motorway days - Cheadle was a notorious bottle-neck for traffic homeward bound after a hard day at the office.)

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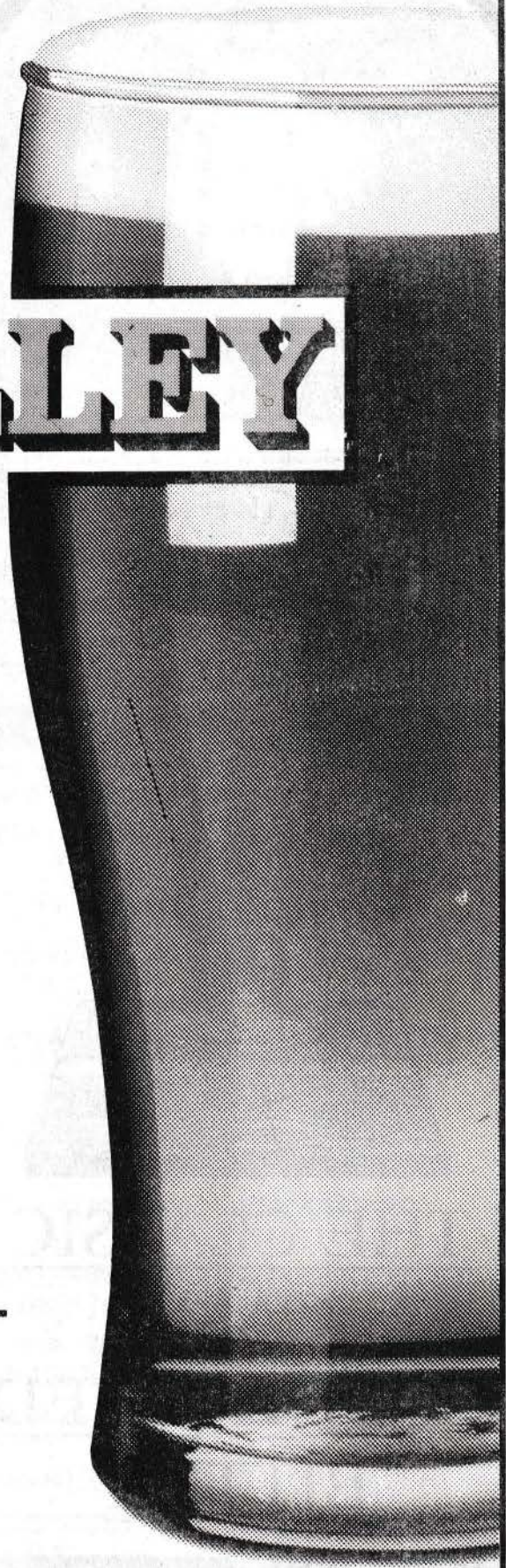
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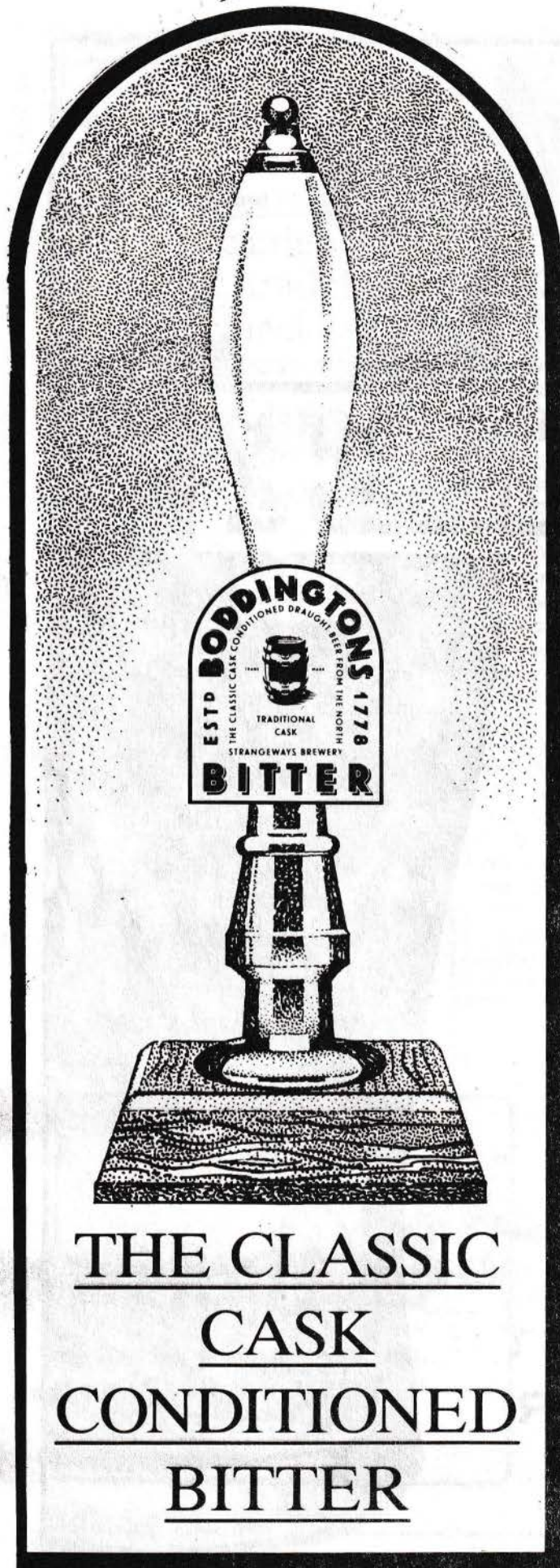
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## Pub of the Month

Each month we intend to feature a pub in the Bredbury, Romiley, Marple area of Stockport as the Branch Pub of the Month. Occasionally we will take pubs from just over the border into Tameside and Derbyshire. All types of pubs will be featured from locals to restaurant style establishments with one common pre-requisite: good beer!

We begin with a look at the Pineapple in Marple town centre at the corner of Market Street and Church Lane. The existing building was opened in 1902 when the earlier pub on the site was knocked down. It is a good sturdy building typical of many built at the start of the Edwardian era.

The present tenants Ian and Claire Beecham, have been at the Pineapple for about a year now, during which time they have set about refurbishments designed to appeal to all tastes. They are well on the way to achieving this.

A disappearing feature of many pubs these days are the broad imposing staircases which could be found leading from the bar area to the upper floors. The Pineapple still has its staircase and Claire has spent long hours restoring it to its former glory. Planned for the near future is a real fire for the lounge and the old wooden fire surround is currently undergoing renovation and will be re-installed shortly.

The vault is roomy and comfortable and has the traditional busy and well used atmosphere of all good vaults and is well equipped for pub games players.

The beers are Robinsons Best Mild and Best Bitter on handpump and Hartleys XB was introduced on March 20th - another beer to add to variety in the town.

The Pineapple is also building a reputation as a meeting place for many local organisations. This is helped by the fact that the pub possesses another increasing rarity these days - a room with a door on it - so all the pub does not have to join in the meeting. The pub has its own quiz, cards and darts teams, and a pool team is currently being organised, as is a weekly tote.

Bed and Breakfast is now available and the pub is registered with the English Tourist Board.

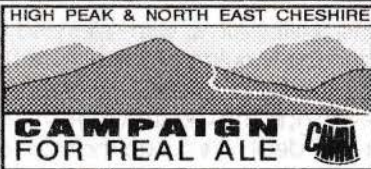
Claire is presently expanding the catering and a varied menu of good value pub lunches and other meals is available, this includes pizzas served in the early part of the evening from 6.00pm onwards. Another innovation which has proved to be popular is the free 'Sunday Sausages' at 1.00pm. Functions are also held in the pub with catering provided.

All in all, the Pineapple adds up to an example of a good welcoming pub; the type which is the backbone of many communities and which often do not get the recognition which they deserve.

FACTS: Pineapple, 45 Market Street, Marple. Tel 427 3935  
 Licensees: Ian and Claire Beecham

Hours of Opening: 11.30am - 11.00pm, Normal Sunday hours.

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Handpumped keg Scrumpy Jack cider has now gone from the Bowling Green in Marple, as has Wilsons Bitter. Two Courage beers have however been added to the range and the present line-up is Wilsons Mild, Websters Bitter, John Smiths Bitter and Magnet Ale, and of course, Holts Bitter.

The Lees GB Mild in the Travellers Call, Bredbury is now keg. The only real ale is now Lees Bitter which on a recent visit was not only on excellent form but good value at only £1 a pint.

Its always good to see a club converting to real ale. This time it's Marple Conservative Club which now offers a beer from the Courage range (with Directors Bitter being the preferred choice) and Hydes Mild.

The Talbot on Market Street, Stalybridge, for many years a keg Tetley pub, has been taken over by expanding Tameside pub operators the Woodley Hall Pub Co. Licensees are CAMRA's good friends Bob and Madeleine Gregory, best known for having propelled the Railway at Ashburys into the Good Beer Guide and our Pub of the Year Award, and who have recently been responsible for the dramatic improvement in beer quality at the Swinging Sporan in Central Manchester.

Initial range is Tetley Mild and Bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale and Jennings Bitter; don't be surprised to see guest beers once trade picks up. Definitely a pub to watch.

## 15th Ashton Canals Festival Beer Tent

The year's Ashton Canals Festival will take place at Portland Street Canal Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne, on 10th, 11th and 12th July. Thereby giving local drinkers ample time to recover from the Stockport Beer Festival to be held six weeks previously.

As usual there will be a wide selection of beers on offer including such delights as Yates Bitter, Blue Anchor Spingo Special, Dent Bitter and Malton Double Chance, plus 17 others. In addition there will be a selection of traditional ciders and perries.

Last year's event disposed of 6500 pints of beer and 1500 pints of cider and perry. Additional supplies were drafted in on Saturday evening for the Sunday session!

More news in future Opening Times. The High Peak branch contact for the event is Tom Lord on 427 7099.

## Stalybridge Station Buffet

The Buffet Bar is no longer under immediate threat, and will continue to serve the public. The buildings, not listed by the DoE, are not considered to be of "sufficient architectural merit". The campaign to save the Buffet was well publicised and supported. As a result, BR chose to reject the one genuine offer made and take the buildings off the market. At present the younger Ken Redfern (who now holds the lease and licence) is arguing with BR over external improvements and car parking - so some things between tenant and landlord never change.

This said, the Buffet will remain a potential target while it is on a short lease, is as successful as it is, and while BR is due for privatisation. The local branch is keeping an eye on things, and will man the barricades in the event of a rematch, and owes a debt of thanks to all those who helped in terms of time and effort, posted the cards and signed the petition.

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HARTLEY'S XB BITTER ON DRAUGHT

# MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

Two more pub closures this month - the Brewers' Arms in the City Centre is to become an extension to Boddingtons' staff canteen, while the General Birch in Beswick, a very pleasant traditional pub, too often overlooked by travelling drinkers who make straight for Holts Seven Stars a few doors away, is up for sale.

In the City Centre, the Crown on Deansgate has replaced the now deceased Websters (or should that be Hobsons?) Choice with handpumped John Smiths Bitter; the Crown & Anchor on Hilton Street has added Fullers Chiswick Bitter on handpump; and the Old Grapes is selling guest beers, though whether they venture far beyond the Whitbread range remains to be seen. Speaking of Whitbread the Blackstock at Victoria Park now has handpumped Boddingtons Bitter as its sole cask beer, while in the free trade the Little Bradford in Bradford no longer sells Chesters Bitter.

The Burtonwood lease of numerous Tetley pubs has had little effect locally. Noteworthy, however, is the passage to Burtonwood of two of the best pubs in Ancoats -

the Smiths Arms, with mild and bitter on handpump, and the Moulders Arms with bitter only but making up for this by a splendid Irish music session on Sunday evenings. The Clayton Arms in Clayton is also included in the deal - it's a pub that's flirted with real ale in the past, so perhaps Burtonwood will be able to make a go of it.

In Chorlton-on-Medlock the Salutation is now selling handpumped Tetley Bitter but this beer is no longer on sale at the Boddington PubCo's Parrswood in East Didsbury. The Whitworth in Rusholme has discontinued its trial of Marstons Mild, which didn't sell in sufficient quantity (though the pumpclip was still there on a recent visit) and the beers at Marstons Friendship in Gorton are now on handpump. Finally the Victoria in Burnage is the latest Boddington PubCo house to sell handpumped Old Shilling from Mansfield Brewery.

**Stop Press: Another casualty of the withdrawal of Websters Choice, the Church in Ardwick, hopes soon to be selling Courage Directors Bitter in its place.**

## CAMRA CALLING!

As usual there is a full programme of events for April. On Sunday 12th, for those not attending CAMRA's AGM in Bristol, we have one of our popular crawl and curry lunches. Meet twelve noon at the Whitworth, Moss Lane East, 1.00pm at the Albert, Walmer Street and 2.00pm at the Osborne House, Victory Street, Rusholme. This will be followed by a curry in one of the nearby restaurants.

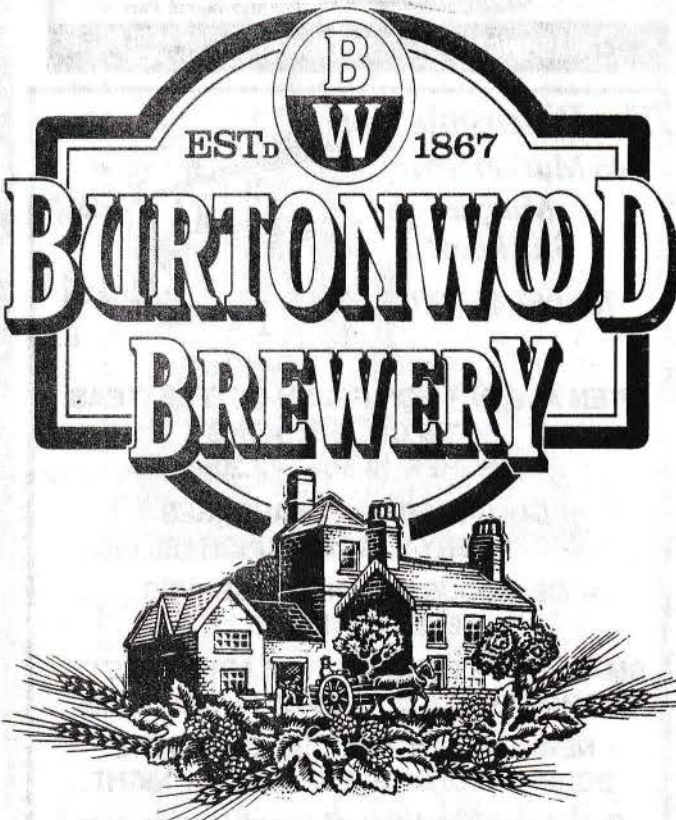
On Monday 13th there is a social at Jabez Clegg, Dover Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. As with all Monday Socials this starts at 9.00pm. On Friday 17th (Good Friday) there is a City Centre Stagger. Meet at the Bulls Head, London Road at 7.00pm or join at the Grey Horse, Portland Street at 8.30.

Easter Monday sees a two-way Stockport Social - 9.00pm at the Bulls Head and 10.00pm at Yates Wine Lodge, both in Stockport Market Place. On Thursday 23rd it is Pub of the Month at the Cheadle Hulme.

On Monday 27th the social is at the Barleycorn, Barlow Moor Road, West Didsbury. Into May now and on Saturday 2nd there is the first of our annual Awaydays. This is to Leek and Waterhouses. The 201 bus leaves Manchester Piccadilly Bus Station at 8.45am, Levenshulme Albert Road at 9.00 and Stockport Mersey Square at 9.10. Finally on Monday 4th May the social will be at the Griffin, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey.

Turning now to the High Peak Branch who cover Marple, Romiley, Woodley and Bredbury, they will be holding their monthly meeting on Monday 13th at the Prince of Wales, Glossop. Get there for 8.30pm. On Tuesday 28th April there will be a branch social at the Pineapple, Market Street, Marple. This starts at 8.30pm approx. For more details about High Peak, contact Geoff Williamson on 0663 765634.

For more details on Stockport and South Manchester events, contact Tracey Clarke on 456 6354.



**A FAMILY TRADITION OF FINE BREWING**



Bass have refurbished the Midland at Belle Vue dumping chrome and neon in favour of mock Victoriana but the beer is still keg. It is difficult to imagine any other brewery undertaking a major revamp without introducing real ale; once again, Bass reveal themselves as the most out-of-touch brewer operating locally.

Real ale drinkers should no longer flock to the Rudyard Hotel in Heaton Chapel (did they ever?) - real ale is no longer on sale. Not far away, the Chapel House no longer sells Chesters Bitter.

The Old House at Home, Fairfield Road, Droydsden, referred to recently is open again - but best avoided, as the only handpumps are Websters Bitter & KEG Scrumpy Jack cider.

At the Crown, Heaton Moor, Burton Ale is no longer available. Apparently problems were experienced with it coming into condition - it could be very good but was often 'green'. A likely replacement is Marstons Pedigree.

The Hare & Hounds on Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton, put on handpumped Chesters Mild in late February for a trial period of a month or so; this increase in choice is just another reason to visit this splendid little pub. Speaking of the Hare & Hounds, the recently presented Pub of the Month plaque has recently been stolen by person or persons unknown. What anyone should want with this is a mystery but if you should happen to see it, you know where it belongs.

At the Grey Horse, Old Road, Heaton Norris, Stones Bitter is no longer available, leaving Greenalls Bitter as the only real ale.

In Openshaw, the Lord Wolseley on Ashton Old Road appears to have become the "Queen Anne Freehouse". Formerly a Whitbread pub it would be nice to think that a local entrepreneur is following the trail blazed by the much lamented Railway on not-too-distant Pottery Lane. No further information was available as we went to press but hopefully more next month.

In Stockport, the Plough on Shaw Heath has now introduced John Smiths Bitter alongside the Wilsons. It is apparently selling well and was certainly in good form when recently sampled. On the down-side however, the mild here is now keg.

The Angel in Gorton has been pleasantly redecorated and may soon be offering regular live music after a "trial run" last month. What could really make this pleasant and friendly pub take off would be selling the excellent Coach House Beers from Warrington, now available - at least in theory - to Greenalls licensees. How about it Greenalls?

More real ale in clubs - at Heaton Moor Rugby Club Boddingtons Bitter or Marstons Pedigree are available on match days in the playing season and at social events.

It is reported that during the University summer vacation all the beers at the Flea and Firkin will be cask conditioned; at other times capacity considerations are likely to dictate that the cellar tank system will continue to be used, at least for the Scratch session beer. The Flea probably also has a higher price differential between mild and standard bitter than any other pub or brewery in the country. The Full Mash Magical Mild currently retails at 75p a pint, while the Scratch is a hefty £1.25, a full 50 pence dearer.

Just out of Opening Times' circulation area the Loyds Arms in Chorlton is a recent convert to real ale in the shape of handpumped Draught Bass.

The beer at the Horse & Jockey, Hazel Grove has rarely had a good write up in these pages ("..almost totally without taste..." - OT Feb.) and yet that could be about to change as we hear that this is one of the latest outlets to take Holts Bitter as a guest beer. If nothing else, this is a welcome element of choice in the Robbies dominated Hazel Grove beer scene.

In Rusholme, the Lord Lyon on Claremont Road has taken out Holts Bitter - the guest beer in this otherwise keg-only Bass pub is now Mitchells Bitter sold at a not unreasonable £1 a pint.

The Boar's Head on Stockport Market Place is currently closed for major refurbishment - re-opening 17th April. Owners Sam Smiths have a generally positive record on pub refurbishments as shown by their work at the nearby Queen's Head (Turner's Vaults), which won CAMRA's 1991 Pub Conservation Award, so we expect they should make a good job of it. We will certainly let you know how it turns out.

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