

**STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA**

OPENING TIMES

CAMRA
FREE

**No:
97**

MAY 1992

Go Mild in May

May is the month during which CAMRA traditionally promotes the delights of that much overlooked drink - mild.

If the plight of traditional beer in general was bad 21 years when CAMRA was formed, the mild situation was particularly dire, and indeed, during much of CAMRA's subsequent history, the situation has not improved much.

Mild has suffered greatly from the "clean and new" lager invasion. Mild, the people's drink during the early part of the century, saw its image tainted by tales of "it's where the slops go" and "it's what grandad drinks", which didn't help the cause during the go-ahead 70's and the yuppie 80's.

And being cheaper than its rivals, breweries were happy to see it decline in favour of thin, more profitable products. Locally, several brews have disappeared over the past years - Boddingtons, Lees and Greenalls all used to brew not one but two milds but these have been rationalised into a single brew from each. Hydes still produce two, but in what seems a laudable attempt to introduce a more fashionable image, have renamed their Best Mild "Anvil Light". Robinsons Dark Best Mild clings on in its two remaining outlets in Chapel-en-le-Frith and Lower Withington. Wilsons Mild is hardly ever seen these days but in any event is but a shadow of its former self.

Today though, we are seeing a great resurgence of interest in mild. Local brewers West Coast and the Flea & Firkin have both introduced new milds with great success. Stockport's Stanley Arms has commissioned two house milds from the small Ryburn brewery to great acclaim and across town, Ye Olde Woolpack has seen sales take off with the introduction of weekly guest milds.

So what has happened to arrest the decline? Public awareness of mild and its attributes - low gravity, subtlety, the fact that it's "different", even a certain nostalgia - have all played a part. Mild drinkers in much of the country are no longer the cloth-cap-and-muffler brigade but discerning drinkers of all ages who have discovered the delights of mild. A further factor has been the influence of the new wave small brewers, many of whom (including those locally) have a mild in their portfolios. -

The revival continues and this means a greater variety, not just for the specialist drinker, but for every pub-goer. CAMRA has played its part in the revival and will continue to do so in the belief that as long as there are discerning drinkers then mild will continue to flourish.

Discerning drinkers will of course be flocking to Stockport Beer Festival at the end of the month where amongst other delights, no less than 11 milds can be enjoyed. Old favourites like Taylors Golden Best and Dobbins Dark are joined by rarer brews like Mclays 60/-, Goachers Light and Hanby Black Magic, to name but a few.



This month sees the big event in the local drinking calendar with the sixth Stockport Beer & Cider Festival opening its doors at 5.00pm on Thursday 28th. Once again we will be at the Masonic Guildhall on Wellington Road South (A6).

The finishing touches have been placed to the beer order and this year we will have over 70 different brews on offer together with one of the widest ranges of traditional cider and perry in the country for a festival this size.

With 11 milds, 10 stouts, 8 old ales and a vast collection of bitters, there will truly be something for every taste. Old favourites from Taylors, Titanic and Orkney will be joined by newcomers from Lion Original, Dent, Hardington and many others. Among the exotic brews will be such delights as Black Bat, Old Groyne, Sonofabitch and Exmoor Beast.

As shown by the advert on page three, there will be entertainment at every session with a wide range of styles covered, with Jazz, R'n'B and Traditional Irish just to name but three. In addition we will have our usual range of side stalls, from the ever popular tombola and the CAMRA shop. Festival T-shirts are always popular and you can in fact order yours before the festival. They come in blue, green and yellow with sizes medium, large and extra large. To get yours now send a cheque for just £4.25 (made payable to Stockport Beer Festival) to Jim Flynn at 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel.

Also available this year are group bookings for the festival - which will both guarantee you entry and save money. For groups of 10 or more, advance tickets can be bought for Thursday night and the organiser will get in free. For details and/or tickets, write to Jim Flynn at the above address. The price per head, excluding the organiser is £1.50 per head.



PUB of the Month April

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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	5	6

Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA's May Pub of the Month at the Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme gives the lie to the widespread British belief that the Australians suffer an inbred cultural malformity when it comes to beer. Tony and Elaine Wilson have certainly proved that they have the talent to keep an excellent drop of cask conditioned beer and run a good British pub. They have raised the profile of the Old Mill among real ale drinkers from an also-ran to that of an excellent pub with a good variety of very drinkable beers.

During their time they have added Burton Ale, Jennings Bitter and Cains Bitter together with one or two guest beers to the existing Tetley Bitter. A sign of Tony's skill is his 5th place in the national Burton Ale Cellarmanship competition and, with the recently successful beer festival you certainly feel the pub is going places.

The Old Mill itself is not actually an old mill but the careful use of recycled bricks and the open rafters certainly give you the feeling that it is a genuine conversion - it is, of course, a brand new building. There is one bar but the interior is broken up by a change of floor areas and several small cosy quasi-rooms. Near the main entrance is a no-smoking area, which with an ever increasing awareness of the dangers of secondary smoking, can only be a plus point for the pub (others please note!) Outside flows the Ladybrook stream and with fair weather early arrivals can hopefully enjoy a pleasant pint overlooking the water.

The Old Mill is on Ladybridge Road just behind the Ladybridge Garden Centre so come early on Thursday 21st May to try the full range of beers and have a chat about British beers with a genuine antipodean pair of licensees (fully bronzed, no doubt, following their return from down under earlier that week!). The 369 bus from Stockport will drop you close by.

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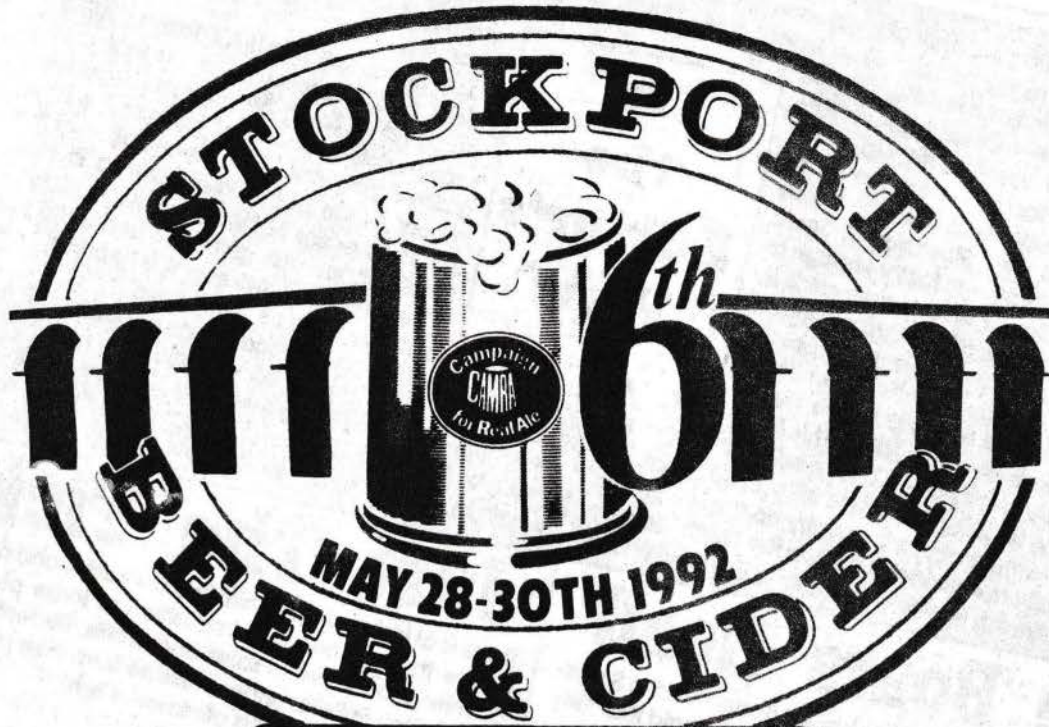
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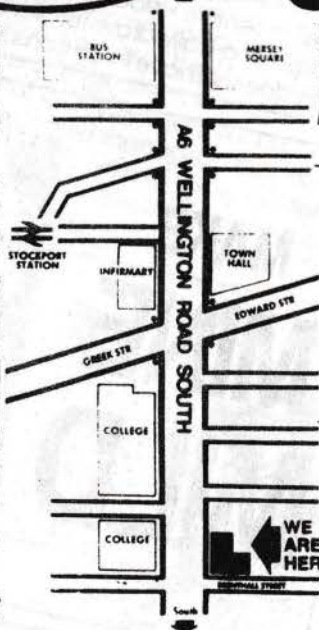




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ADMISSION PRICE	DATE	OPENING HOURS	ENTERTAINMENT
£1.50	Thurs 28th May	5.00pm - 11.00pm	God Hone & The Dixie Boys
FREE	Fri 29th May	11.30am - 3.00pm	Rob Grays Little Big Band
£2.50	Fri 29th May	5.00pm - 11.00pm	Atlantic Roots
£0.50	Sat 30th May	11.00am - 4.00pm	Acoustic Irish Music
£1.50	Sat 30th May	6.00pm - 11.00pm	The Best Band

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Signal Radio = 104.9 FM =
Cheshire = 96.4 FM =

This month we are having our annual promotion of mild ales - drinks that too many people either ignore completely or dismiss as thin and tasteless. Those in the know, know better. Despite some losses over the years, there are still a large number of milds available locally - from the mally richness of Halls to the more subtle qualities of Robinsons Best. The Stockport & South Manchester area has been lucky enough to see the introduction of several new milds in recent years - the specially commissioned Stanleys and Ollies from Ryburn, Dobbins Dark Mild and, perhaps most remarkable of all, given the nature of the pub, the Flea & Firkin "Full Mash Magical Mild". This latter must also surely qualify as the cheapest beer in the country, retailing in the pub at just 75p a pint.

Whilst in some part of the country cask conditioned mild is virtually non-existent, here in the North West we have a continuing tradition of loyalty to this most under-

rated, by some, drink. CAMRA believes that mild beers are an essential part of our brewing heritage so, this month, if you're not already a mild drinker, why not give it a try - you may be pleasantly surprised.

Last month saw CAMRA's national AGM in Bristol and it's good to report that we in Stockport & South Manchester achieved some notable successes. Perhaps the most gratifying of all was the presentation of the "Local Guide of the Year" award to Rhys Jones as editor of "Viaducts and Vaults" - the Stockport pub guide we published last year. Opening Times sends its heartfelt congratulations to all concerned.

The other success was a motion put forward by the local branch condemning the practice of many brewers advertising their canned beer as if it was real ale. Opening Times will be covering this at some length in a future issue - look for our special feature.

In the Editor's View

by John Clarke

The Boars Head

Sam Smiths unveiled their refurbished Boars Head in Stockport Market Place last month and it has to be said that they have carried out their usual professional job.

So good is the work that it is difficult to see what is new. The bar area however looks noticeably less cluttered and while this is brightly lit, the rest of the pub has comfortable low-level lighting that adds to the feeling of intimacy.

New seat covers, wall coverings etc have all been carried out with commendable restraint and the concert room has been given a very welcome spruce up. The ceiling fans are a particularly welcome addition.

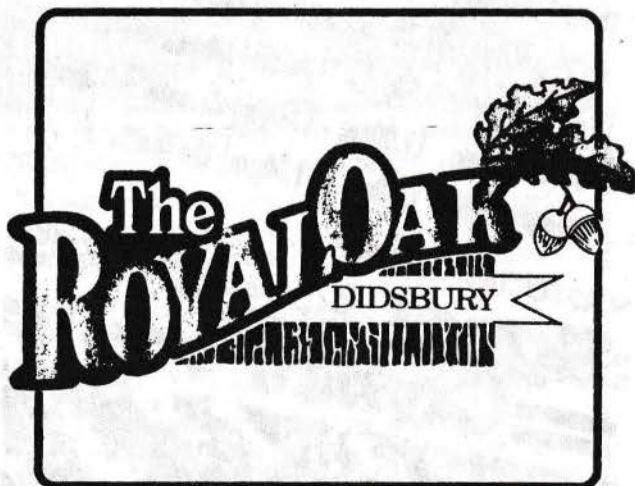
All in all, this is an example of how to refurbish a pub in the traditional manner without resorting to the "Queen Victoria's Railway Carriage" style of decor that seems to be so popular at the moment. Rather than being a monument to bric-a-brac, the Boars Head is a good functioning pub. Both Old Brewery Bitter and Museum Ale remain available on handpump.

Just The Ticket

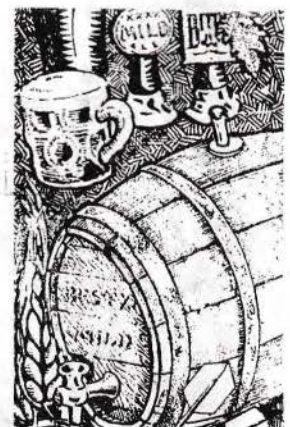
There is at last perhaps a hint that breweries and pub chains realise that the frequent imposition of large price rises is counter-productive to sales and profits. Recent moves by Boddington PubCo, under pressure from their pub managers certainly suggest this glimmer of light.

An experiment in recent weeks at the Grey Horse, Reddish, Three Crowns, Heaton Norris and elsewhere produced an increase in turnover during the day. A customer buying a pint between 11am and 6pm was given two tickets entitling him/her to 15p off the price of their next two pints. This brought the price of a pint comfortably below £1. Alan Eames at the Grey Horse, one of the managers who has badgered the PubCo, reported daytime sales up by as much as one third. This proves his point that if he can offer value for money then customers will turn up in force.

The latest incentive - each pint bought before 6pm earns a ticket for a daily draw for a gallon of beer. (This presumably does **not** have to be consumed that session!)



MAKE
MINE
MILD





One of the most popular series that Opening Times has run was "Pub Grub". This month it returns on an occasional basis with Keith Lingard visiting the Royal Oak in Didsbury...

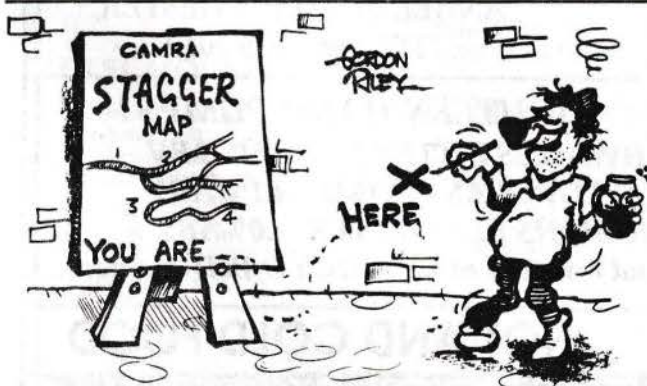
On entering the Royal Oak, I was immediately impressed by the friendly and bustling atmosphere; the pub was very busy indeed. Our first objective was to order two pints of the Marstons Best Bitter, an objective easily achieved thanks to the legendary efficient service at this pub - despite the crowds, few were waiting to be served. After finishing our pints we turned to the main business - the famous Royal Oak Cheese Lunch.

My companion was first at the cheese bar where the waitress suggested he try the crumbly Lancashire - obviously a popular choice looking at the other diners' plates. Declining this, Cheddar with Stinging Nettle was suggested. "I don't want any of that" he demurred, I've been stung enough by the beer prices" (groan! - ed.) Joking apart this is a fair point, like the rest of the Didsbury pubs, beer at the Royal Oak, though of good quality, is not cheap.

Choices made, we squeezed into a corner of the lounge and waited patiently for a table. A word of warning here - most lunchtimes the lounge area is packed with people and you may sometimes have to wait a while before a table becomes available. The width of choice is matched by the quality of the cheese which was very good indeed. Also impressive was the amount of wholemeal bread which accompanied it, although the butter pats presented something of a challenge as they were quite hard & difficult to spread, but this is a minor quibble.

My companion returned to the bar and came back with a variety of "extras" - Piccalilly, Branston Pickle and gherkins completed the bread and cheese perfectly. Neither of us could manage more than half the cheese but the pub also thoughtfully provides doggy bags to cater for this - obviously a common occurrence! We both remarked on the good value of the lunch. For just £2.50 we each got several large slabs of different cheese, about five rounds of crusty wholemeal bread and as many "extras" as we could manage.... excellent value.

I would recommend Opening Times readers to visit the Royal Oak and try the cheese lunch - for quality and value it takes some beating.



PUB OF THE YEAR 1992

The King's Arms

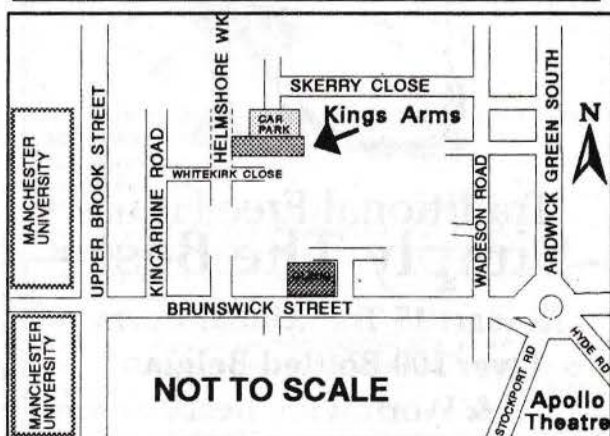
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**WARNING: Excessive Intake of Alcohol is
NOT RECOMMENDED**

STAGGER

with Tom Jackson

The March stagger was inaugurated by three of us meeting in the **Chapel House**, a large brick built Whitbread pub on the A6 in Heaton Chapel.

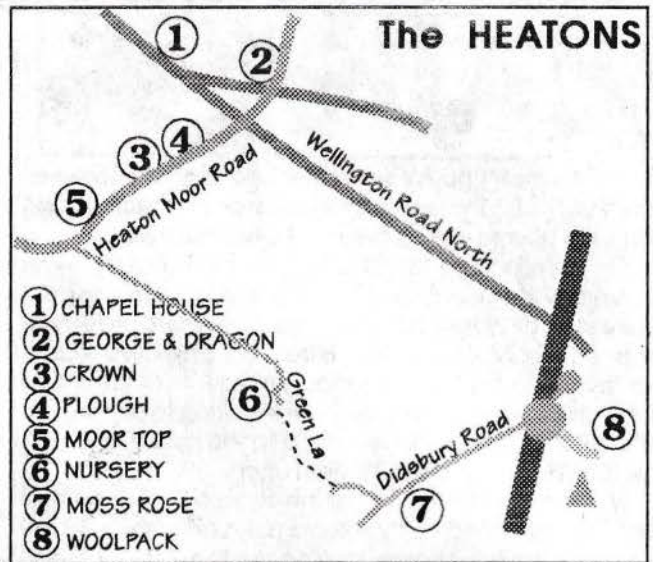
It was described several years ago as like drinking in a bathroom, due to all the chrome, mirrors and potted plants. It seems to have mellowed since then, although still fairly soulless. The only real ale available was Boddies bitter, which was duly supped and rated reasonable - a vast improvement compared with previous offerings.

So-down Manchester Road a 100 yards to the **George & Dragon**, a deservedly popular Boddies pub. Architecturally interesting on the outside, the inside has been modernised but still has a solid traditional feel to it, with a separate vault and a snug just off the main bar area.

Our party, now numbering six, rated both the Boddies mild and bitter as good. Moving back on to the A6 we headed south (seven of us by now) to the Rudyard Hotel. The bar usually sells Bass beers, but on this occasion no real ale was available! The place has an air of aspiring gentility, but as none of us fancied discussing Proust over Campari and Sodas we retraced our steps back up the A6 to Heaton Moor Road.

Passing Greenalls Elizabethan keg emporium we entered the **Crown**, a Boddies pub.

The inside has a curious layout, with an interesting wooden quasi island bar dividing the lounge on the left



from the bar and snug on the right. This allows patrons in one room to stare at patrons in the other room staring back at them! Both the bar and lounge have dart boards, which were in full swing (or should that be throw?) during our visit.

The Boddies Bitter and (with one exception) the Mild were rated as good.

Next door almost then, to Tetleys **Plough**. This is a long narrow pub, which has been substantially Bric-a-Bracified. The clientele were towards the younger end of the scale, but there was no loud music blasting out and the real ales were proving popular - it can be done. Beers sampled were Robinsons Bitter (O.K.) and Jennings Bitter (excellent - and at £1.21 it should be).

Further down Heaton Moor Road, towards Didsbury Road, we arrived at the **Moor Top**.

THE BEER HOUSE

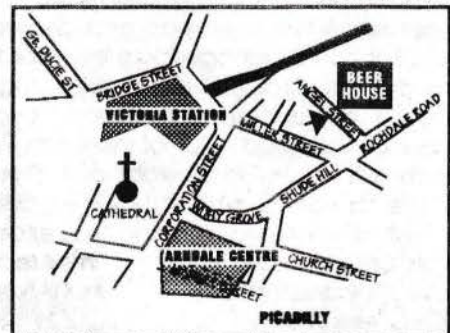


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HOT AND COLD FOOD

This pub has had a bit of a chequered history (appropriate for a Wilsons pub - ho ho) so we were eager to find out what it was like in its current manifestation. The sign outside proclaiming a 'wide selection of Lagers' was a bit of a give-away. The open plan layout was emphasised by the lack of customers, it seemed very quiet for a Friday night. Beers sampled were Ruddles County (75p. per half) rated good, Ruddles Bitter rated poor (as much for lack of taste as bad taste) and Websters bitter which rated very poor indeed.

A brisk walk along Green Lane brought the nine of us to the **Nursery**, a large, popular, multi-roomed traditional Hydes pub, that very much retains the atmosphere of a true local, and has a very active vault. Beers sampled were Hydes bitter - rated very good, and Hydes mild, rated excellent (the second best of the night in fact).

We next continued down the muddy footpath-only section of Green Lane to Didsbury Road and thence up to the **Moss Rose**, a peculiar looking Hydes pub - which perhaps looked very modern when it was built (late 50s?) (& which rumour has it is in for a major facelift soon - ed). The inside looks a bit like a very smart British Legion club, all tables and chairs. The Hydes bitter was O.K. and the Hydes Light was very well thought of.

The final pub of the night was the **Woolpack**, (a two times winner of the branch Pub of the Month award) the freehouse just by the blue glass pyramid on the other side of the motorway. The Woolpack is a pleasantly furnished and comfortable pub, with two lounge rooms divided by half height walls off the serving areas and a separate vault.

Despite being very busy, the service was, as is usually the case, very fast and efficient, with pints being topped up as they settled. Of the wide range available, which include constantly changing guest bitter and mild, the beers chosen were Theakstons bitter - rated very good, and Felinfoel Double Dragon which was splendid and the best of the night.

The views expressed are those of one group of people on one particular night and should not therefore be taken as definitive, especially in these changing times, so why not go and try them yourself!

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Truly "extra" stout; deep and rich roasted character with complimentary dry bitterness.
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Very pale, very smooth and very dry. Balanced in the mouth, this premium strength bitter has an excellent long lasting, dry, and profoundly bitter finish.

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RHYTHM and BOOZE

By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

"If you want Jazz - you need Ged Hone." That's the message from the information leaflet, so when we heard the rumour of a new jazz residency at the Dog & Partridge on the A6 in Great Moor, we just couldn't resist.

When we say residency, Ged Hone and the Dixie Boys have played at the Robinsons house on the last Thursday in four of the last six months, so with any luck they will become a more permanent feature.

It was a lovely Spring evening, so we decided to stroll to the pub in good time and settle down with a basket meal in front of four extremely talented musicians, masters of Dixieland and New Orleans jazz. Many readers will probably have heard of, or indeed have seen, Ged Hone, for he has been playing his trumpet-cornet and singing, to great acclaim, with various jazz ensembles in the Manchester area for the past thirty years.

Now "in retirement", what was previously just a part-time leisure activity has become a full-time profession, for Ged now leads a variety of lineups which cater for promotional and private functions, as well as appearances at the Hayfield Jazz Festival. You may have seen one of these at last year's Stockport Beer Festival, where the Dixie Duo (Ged joined by the tenor banjo/vocals of Tom "Spatts" Langham) played at the opening session.

Back at the Dog & Partridge, the Dixie Boys consist of Ged and Tom, with Tenor Sax/Clarinet (Colin Ball) and sousaphone (Jeff Hallam). The foursome are beautifully matched, with each instrument combining to make a rich full sound that is a delight to hear. The sousaphone provides a steady backbone, around which the flesh is added by the other instruments and its depth is especially prominent on the slower numbers, such as the tear-jerker "I ain't got nobody". The Dixie Boys play a cross section of tempos from funeral march to Charleston, some instrumentals, some with the vocals of Ged or Tom. Tom's

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vocals on "Nobody loves you when you're down and out" conjure images of sepia photos, straw boaters and striped blazers.

The word is already spreading that the Dixie Boys are in town. A group of ardent followers appeared during the performance, shouting out requests for "Pasadena" which had already been played. There were cries of disappointment and the band duly obliged. It was, if possible, even better the second time around, and received cheers from everyone, especially the latecomers.

The audience ranged from teenagers to pensioners and everyone was having a great time - including the band. We certainly hope that the residency continues to flourish and hopefully will attract lots of support in the future. But if you're thinking of going to see the Dixie Boys on Thursday May 28th a word of advice - the Dixie Boys will be playing in Stockport that evening, a few hundred yards down the A6 at the Masonic Guildhall. The band will be performing at the opening session of this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival - so please make it if you can. There will be first class beer, cider and of course, first class music on offer. What more could you ask?



The FLEA Goes Real !



In a welcome move by the new owners Allied Breweries, the Flea & Firkin at All Saints should, by the time you read this, be using a new dispense system for its tank beers. Known as a "nitrogen demand valve" system, the apparatus dispenses beer by nitrogen gas in a manner similar to that initially in use at West Coast Brewery's nearby Kings Arms. Whilst in theory nitrogen-based systems are under long-term investigation by CAMRA's national technical Committee, at local level the system has been found clearly acceptable. You can now confidently drink in the Flea in the knowledge that all the handpumped beers - not just the increasing number produced in conventional cask form - can be classed as real ale.

There is also yet another new beer at the Flea. Named in celebration of Manchester's Olympic bid (though not, we feel certain, at the destruction of pubs to which certain versions of the Olympic plans would lead), Olympic Gold (1048OG/5.1%ABV) is a strong dry-hopped bitter brewed from 100% pale malt. It's been selling well and should remain on sale at the Flea for the whole of the summer if not longer.

STOCKPORT BEER FESTIVAL 28th - 30th MAY
COPY DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE
OF OPENING TIMES - 20th MAY

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by Phil Levison

MAY 1987

There were two items sharing the front page of Opening Times in May 1987 - Prices, and Mild. CAMRA's annual countrywide prices survey can generally be relied upon to come up with good news for drinkers in the North-West, and this year was no exception. The area was again well up among the cheapest areas in the country to drink, with the usual specific mention of Holt's beers as the cheapest - 61p. for Mild and 64p. for Bitter (Managed House prices.) Other facts which emerged - beer from the big brewers is generally dearer than that supplied by the independents, and the South is generally dearer than the North.

Mild was referred to as becoming increasingly difficult to find in many pubs - the brewers blame this on "lack of demand", but the real reason is that they are not giving mild any backing. It's not much of a money-spinner, and lager promotions can be much more profitable. North-West drinkers are fortunate again so far as Mild is concerned - virtually all Robinsons pubs sell it.

Information was requested on clubs in the area which were known to sell cask beer - two British Rail Staff Association establishments were mentioned, with the Piccadilly Branch in Store Street selling all three Chester's Beers - and prices here were described as reminiscent of a Holt's pub with Trophy at 65p. a pint. The Heaton Moor Rugby Club also got a mention, with its handpumped Matthew Brown Mild and Theakston's Bitter at 71p. and 76p. respectively. (They are obviously still carrying on the good work, as Boddington's Bitter or Marston's Pedigree are now available on match days in the playing season, and at social events.)

Boddingtons again put in for planning permission to re-vamp the Romper - this time the alterations could be described as "reasonably restrained", possibly because a previous application for quite major changes was thrown out. (Now, in 1992, the Romper is still virtually unchanged, so this second application must also have been turned down. There is a present day bonus - for some time Draught Bass has been available alongside the Boddingtons, and Ind Coope Burton Ale has now appeared as a second guest beer.)

There had been reports in Stockport newspapers that the old brass and ceramic spirit taps in the Queens Head (Turner's Vaults) had been stolen. However, Sam Smith's reported that the taps had been recovered, and were in store "for future re-use", but there was no definite information when the planned refurbishment was likely to be carried out - apparently, unforeseen difficulties had arisen. (But it obviously all came right in the end, and the Turner's Vaults is now referred to as "award winning" after receiving CAMRA's coveted Joe Goodwin award to mark 1990's finest example of sensitive conservation of a community local.)

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CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 1990



BURTON BORN

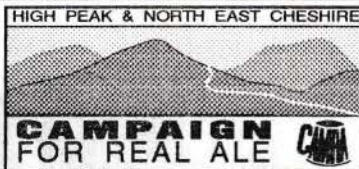


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Pub of the Month

The Pub of the Month for May is the Duke of York, Stockport Road, Romiley. This is an old pub in an old part of Romiley and dates back to the late 1700's. It was originally a coaching inn and has provided a watering hole for many generations of Romiley people, particularly in the earlier part of the century from the now defunct Robinsons Hat Works and Elder Mill.

It is now a very popular local and is a distinctive Romiley landmark set back off the main road close to the Peak Forest Canal.

The pub is now owned by John Smiths but was in former years a Yates' house. For many years under the John Smith's banner the pub served only keg beer. However, several years ago, when John Smiths began brewing cask-conditioned bitter again, it was put into the pub on handpump and this is still available together with Courage Directors, also on handpump.

The Duke of York has figured in the National Good Beer Guide for several years now and so the transformation has been made from a keg-beer only pub to a pub with top-class cask conditioned beers.

The pub itself is an attractive low two storey building with low ceilings, cosy rooms and alcoves and an outside drinking area. It also has a fine and well-used vault with a stone-flagged floor and a back door through the archway to Bonnyfields. Mind your head if using this way in!

All in all a pub well worth a visit.

TAMESIDE CANALS FESTIVAL UPDATE

The beer tent at the Tameside Canals Festival is hoping to stock bottles of Rauchbier all the way from Bavaria. With its unique smoky taste this is one to look out for. Only available while stocks last - if we can get any past the beer staff!

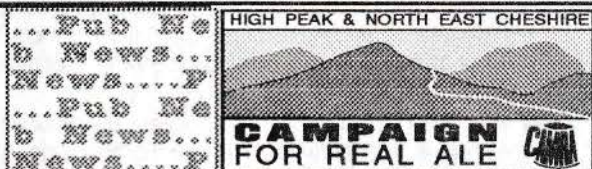
The year's Ashton Canals Festival takes place at Portland Street Canal Basin, Ashton-under-Lyne, on 10th, 11th and 12th July (giving local drinkers ample time to recover from the Stockport Beer Festival six weeks previously).

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.





The Rising Sun, Bredbury, has now added John Smiths Bitter to its range which also includes Holt's Bitter.

Thanks to Alan Gough, temporary licensee of the Oddfellows, Stockport Road, Mellor, for giving us an update on the pub, which is owned by the Texas Group of Raglan Street, Hyde. Cask Stones Bitter is to be removed and in its place cask Bass XXXX Mild will be joining Draught Bass and Boddingtons Bitter on handpump.

The Pennyfarthing in Denton now sells Thwaites Craftsman Ale alongside dark mild and bitter.

The Shoulder of Mutton, Broadbent has started taking guest beers.

Whitbread are to build a new pub/eatery close to Hartshead Pike. More news when available, but don't expect too much from the big brewer.

At the Talbot in Stalybridge, reported last month as a very welcome real ale gain, the Tetley Mild on offer is in fact the Dark Mild - widely considered to be superior to the brewery's "ordinary" mild.

APPEAL

Can anyone provide information on two defunct pubs which were close to the Duke of York, Romiley, i.e. the Craven Heifer and the boathouse (on the canal towpath by the road bridge). Please contact Tom Lord on 427 7099. The information is required for future articles on the lost pubs of Bredbury, Romiley and Marple.

DANE BANK

Robin Wignall goes off the beaten track

An island in a large estate, the Dane Bank, on Windmill Lane, Denton, lies just inside the High Peak branch area, but is only a brisk walk from the main road in Reddish and is a better bet than some of the Reddish pubs.

The Dane Bank is a community pub for the estate of that name. Formerly a Bells house, (the front doorstep has a fine mosaic bell) it is now a Robinsons house serving Best Mild and Best Bitter. On a recent visit the Best Mild at £1.06 in the room made pleasant drinking.

There is a separate vault, busy each evening. The best room is a large opened-up room, but there is an additional side room, so that much of the pub's multi-roomed character remains. Darts and Crib teams represent the pub and there is a monthly quiz night, well supported by the local community.

If you are looking for somewhere different for a decent pint, then perhaps give the Dane Bank a try.

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BED & BREAKFAST

CAMRA CALLING!

Once again we have a wide range of social activities this month and we start on Monday 11th May with a social at the Sun in September, Burnage Lane, Burnage. In common with all Monday socials, this starts at 9.00 pm.

On the following Thursday, 14th, there is our monthly branch meeting which this time is at the Midway, Newbridge Lane, Stockport. Be there for 8.00 pm. Two days later on Saturday 16th we will be having an evening crawl around Oldham. Please phone Tracey on 456 6354 for details.

Monday 18th sees a social at the Imperial, St Petersgate, Stockport - one of the few local GrandMet pubs to take interesting guest beers, and on Thursday 21st we will be presenting our Pub of the Month award to the Old Mill at Cheadle Hulme (see page 2). The very next night sees our monthly Stagger, this time paying a long overdue return visit to Edgeley. We start at the Royal Oak, Castle Street at 7.00 pm or you can join at the Sir Robert Peel, also Castle Street at 8.30.

The following week sees the social event - Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. Open from Thursday 28th to Saturday 30th, this is not to be missed. Do try and get along. We recover from the Beer Festival on Monday 1st June with a social at the Albert, William Street, Didsbury and the following Monday there will be a two-way social in Edgeley - 9.00

pm at the Gardeners Arms, Northgate Road and 10.00 pm at the Bulkeley Arms on the corner of Northgate Road and Brinksway.

If you live in the Romiley, Woodley, Bredbury and Marple areas, you fall within the area of the High Peak Branch who will be holding their monthly meeting on Monday 18th May at the Old Clubhouse in Buxton (an easy train journey from Stockport and Manchester). Aim to arrive by 8.30. On Friday 22nd there will be a pub crawl in the Romiley and Bredbury area, phone for details.

Social contacts - Stockport & South Manchester: Tracey Clarke 456 6354 & High Peak & N.E. Cheshire: Geoff Williamson 0663 765634

MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

In a quiet month, a bright spot has been the appearance of Sam Smiths Old Brewery bitter on handpump at the Boddingtons at the Imperial in West Gorton - and at a very reasonable £1.05 a pint.

Staying in East Manchester, it does not look as if the Duke of Edinburgh on Mill Street will be reopening. The situation of the pub makes it virtually impossible to relieve it from the Inner Relief Road scheme and we understand that the owners, Tetley, have no interest in keeping it going.

In Burnage, Banks's Mild at the Milestone is now keg - or "brewery conditioned" as the pump cowl puts it. At least Banks's do almost invariably manage to tell the customer what he or she is getting.

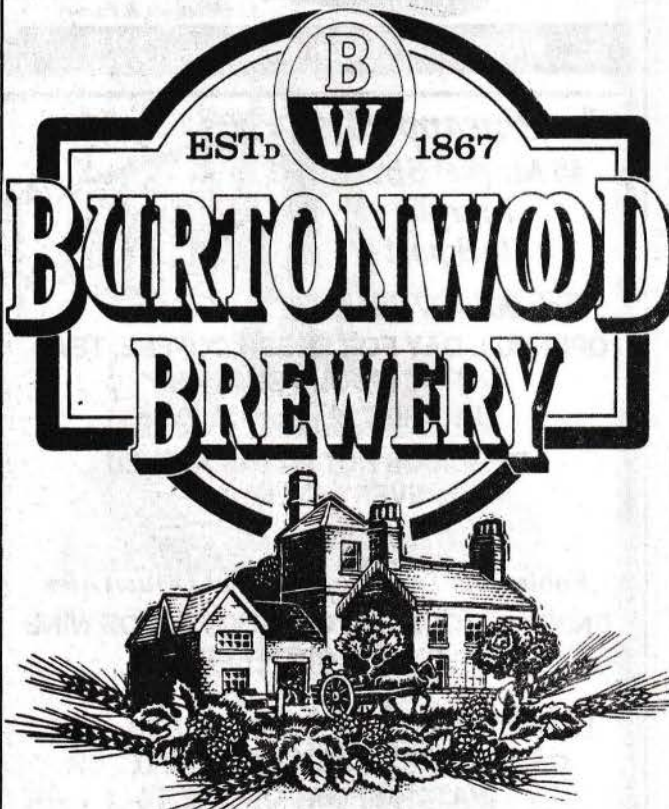
In the City Centre, mild at the New Union is now keg, while the Granby has gained handpumped Marstons Pedigree. As we went to press the Shakespeare was in the process of being gutted - we'll let you know what it turns out like. There is no sign of any activity at the Imperial on London Road, though, despite this pub having been closed "for refurbishment" for many months now.

OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ 477 1973 (home) 831 7222 x 3411 (wk). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.

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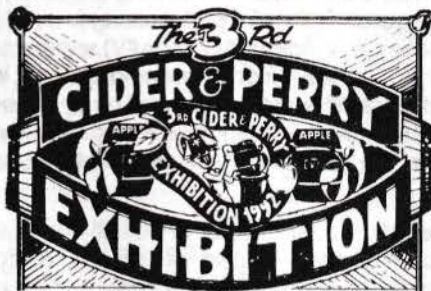
CIDER CORNER

The Different Drink

One of CAMRA's most unusual and enjoyable events takes place in the middle of May. Once again, we bring you the biggest assemblage of farmhouse cider and perry under one roof at CAPE III - the third National Cider & Perry Exhibition - at the Camden Centre in Biddborough Street, London WC1 (handy for Euston Station.)

What's that? - you don't like cider? May we respectfully suggest that you try more than one - they really do all taste different, and not a bit like the keg cider which is all you get in most pubs. Cider experts, including Good Cider Guide editor David Kitton, and hopefully one or two cidermakers, will be available to explain the finer points. For the terminally unadventurous, there will also be a small amount of beer available on CAPE's Mild Bar, along with unfermented apple juice for the drivers.

With a family room available at all times, plenty of real food, and top-line entertainment including Dorset's favourites the Yetties on Friday night, it's the event of the year for all who dare to be different.



Dates and times are: Thursday 14th May 5-10.30 (admission £2); Friday 15th May 12-10.30 (admission 50p lunch, £2.50 evening); Saturday 16th May 11-6 (admission £2). CAMRA members pay reduced admission charges all sessions - free Friday lunchtime.

Of course, if CAPE whets your appetite, or you simply can't get down to it, there is a cidery treat in store at the end of the month with the 6th Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. We've added cider to the name this year to take account of not only the great amount of interest shown in cider by our customers, but also the fact that at Stockport we probably have a wider range and greater amount of traditional cider and perry than any comparable festival in the country (and probably more than many a great deal bigger!) See ad on page 3 for details.

Here Comes The Judge

Taunton Cider's new Judge Jeffreys brand, mentioned in these pages a couple of months back, has now gone on test market in the London area. Unfortunately, though, it appears to be another instance of keg beer served by handpump.

The good news is that early sales of what the pumpclip oddly calls "conditioned cask cider" (cynics might say this is intended to confuse - ed.) have been disappointing, so its possible it may not survive the test period.

WARNING!



**THIS IS A KEG CIDER
SERVED BY A
FAKE HANDPUMP
DON'T BE CONNED!**



The Thatched Tavern, the Tetleys pub in Reddish, has reopened after redecoration following the water damage to the pub after a fire in the upstairs living quarters. It is very pleasing to note that Tetleys have resisted the temptation to ruin the most characterful pub in the area. As well as a redecoration throughout, new furnishings have been put in replacing the previously overly worn ones and curtains have been added in the lounge. The splendid old picture of the original thatched pub has also been saved and is to be found in the lounge.

The Coach & Horses, Belle Vue, now has a full programme of music, having recruited an organist for Saturday and Sunday evenings to complement the Friday night piano.

The introduction of beers from the ex-Courage empire goes on apace in the south of Stockport with John Smiths Bitter at the Smithy in Cheadle Hulme and the Jolly Sailor in Davenport. At the Hesketh in Cheadle Hulme, Courage Directors is due to make an appearance. These additions supplement the now ubiquitous tired beers from the Websters and Ruddles stables found in these pubs. Why, however, doesn't somebody try Magnet, probably the best beer from John Smiths' Tadcaster brewery. Even better would be to follow the example of Tetleys and put in guest beers.

The Lord Wolseley on Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, which closed last October has reopened as the Queen Anne. The place calls itself a freehouse, but don't be fooled - all the beers are from Bass, and they're all keg. To make matters worse, the pub's character has been largely destroyed by conversion to a one-room bar.

Much to the annoyance of the licensee, the Carousel in Reddish has gone keg again after a brief flirtation with real ale, due apparently to lack of demand. Is it that South Reddish tastebuds are removed at birth with the regulars preferring keg Websters Bitter, or perhaps the brewery should try some decent real ales from one of the independent brewers.

At last the logjam has been broken - after much pressure from licensee John Parkin, Greenalls have finally given way and installed Coachmans Bitter, from Warringtons new Coachhouse Brewery, as a guest beer in the Sir Robert Peel, Edgeley. Quality so far has been high and the beer appears to be selling well. Let's hope that this excellent product now puts in an appearance at other local Greenalls outlets.

Sunderland brewers Vaux recently announced the purchase of 126 pubs, 85 of which came from Intrepeneur Estates (the company that runs the former Wilsons and John Smiths pubs), with the balance coming from Whitbread. The full local picture is patchy but we do know that those bought include the Woodley (formerly Sports) in Woodley, Brookers on Wellington Road South and The Swan on Shaw Heath, both Stockport. The new range at the Swan consists of Vaux Bitter and Samson plus Lorimers Best Scotch, all on handpump. The Vaux Bitter, at only £1 a pint, is selling very well we are told.

The Castlewood on Bridge Street Brow, near Stockport Market Place, now has handpumped Banks's Bitter as a guest beer in place of Boddingtons. The Landlady tells us that the new arrival is selling well.

Interesting guest beers are starting to make their appearance into the Boddington PubCo estate. The White Hart in Cheadle held a mini beer festival over the Easter weekend with all the guests at £1.34 a pint. Bearing in mind that beers such as Bateman's Victory Ale (6%ABV) were among those available, some real bargains were to be had. We understand that the festival is to be followed up by a weekly guest beer although this had not materialised as we went to press. Guest beers are however now available at the Ladybrook in Bramhall.

In Edgeley, the Jolly Crofter on Castle Street has reopened after a short period of closure. Boddies Bitter remains as a guest beer. Not far away at the Windsor Castle, handpumped John Smiths Bitter has joined the Robinsons Best Bitter already on sale.

In February's OT we reported the sale of the Kings Arms on Great Portwood Street, Stockport, by the Boddington PubCo to a local entrepreneur. Thoughts of a new free house have been dashed however as the pub has been converted into an antiques shop.

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