

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

No:
107

OPENING TIMES

MARCH 1993

CAMRA
STILL
FREE

Ducks Downed at Dawn



They demolished one of the most famous pubs in Manchester - with unseemly haste - and, when questioned, a Greenalls spokesperson said they did not understand what all the fuss was about! Tommy Ducks was not the sort of place you would go for a good pint (there are more attractive beers available in the vicinity) but it was a popular pub of character with some historic interest. Famous for its past theatrical associations, its topless barmaids in the 1960's and a collection of knickers strung around the place, the pub became a tourist attraction and was regarded with much affection by Mancunians and visitors alike.

It was not architecturally distinguished so it could not be listed. It was, ironically, just outside a Conservation Area and a slight change of boundary would have given a measure of protection. The pub was formed out of a row of terraced cottages on East Street, a surviving bit of the old Manchester street pattern. It did look a little incongruous surrounded by the grandeur of the Midland Hotel and the concrete office blocks around but it is this sort of quirkiness which contributes to the character and attractiveness of the city centre.

Greenalls, being a property company these days, wanted to demolish the pub and build an 11 storey office block (yes another one!). The planning application was vigorously opposed by CAMRA, the Victorian Society, the Manchester Industrial Archaeology Society and many concerned individuals and has yet to be determined.

Greenalls say the pub was not a commercial success (they would wouldn't they?), that a survey revealed structural faults and that they had to demolish the building to avoid the cost of repairs. They hand delivered a notice of their intention to demolish the pub "at the earliest opportunity" to the City Council late on Friday 19 February. The pub was trading on Saturday but by the early hours of Sunday it was gone, pulled down on top of much of the fixtures and fittings.

The demolition was technically in contravention of the 1984 Building Control Act and Manchester City Council have instructed their legal department to take action, but if any fine is eventually imposed it is likely to be a minimal amount.

We have not only lost a pub; we now have a blighted site in a prominent position. Is it going to become a car park for the next decade or so as did the Oxford, Oxford Street, the Manchester Arms, Long Millgate and many others?

For the record, the other party involved in this sordid affair is the agent and business partner for Greenalls, Limewood/Metier of Albert Square.

The main response from pub goers, Manchester City Council and anyone who cares about our city is anger and frustration that Greenalls can act so outrageously and get away with it legally. The City Council have resolved to make representations to the Government about the inadequacies of planning legislation in respect of demolition. As far as pub goers are concerned perhaps the only action we can take is to remember Tommy Ducks if we are ever inclined to cross the threshold of a Greenalls-owned pub or club - and go somewhere else.

Peter Barnes

In MARCH'S OPENING TIMES

Pub of the Month	2	Crown	10
Brewers Arms	3	Peak Pub News	12
Editor's View	5	High Peak Pub	13
Letters	5	Camra Calling	14
Stagger	6	Cheadle Wine Bar	15
Five Years Ago	8	Manchester Matters .	17
Cider Corner	8	Stockport Festival	18
Pub Grub	10	Pub News	19



PUB of the Month March

Su	M	Tu	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	30	31			

The Pub of the Month award for March goes to the Plough on Hyde Road in Gorton. This splendid pub boasts one of the most unspoilt pub interiors in the Manchester area, with a wealth of filing and a particularly fine bar fitment. The quality of the surroundings is complemented by a warm and friendly atmosphere in what is very much a community pub. Time was when the Plough's great strengths were too often let down by the quality of beer. However the arrival of current licensee Bob Voigt has put that to rights. The improvement in the standard of Robinson's Mild and Best Bitter has been nothing short of dramatic.

Regular readers will know that the Plough is under threat from the Hyde Road dual carriageway scheme. We hope the Pub of the Month award will focus people's minds on the importance of saving this very special pub. The presentation night is Thursday March 25th, when all "Opening Times" readers will be made very welcome. Buses along Hyde Road (203,211 etc) pass the door, and Belle Vue, with its railway station and 53 and 169 bus routes, is not far away.

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Brewers Arms - a Whitbread Cask Ale House

Whitbread, for some time now CAMRA's bete noir, are showing their commitment to the resurgence of interest in real ale by opening a nationwide chain of pubs devoted to a continually changing range of beers.

The pubs are dubbed a "Cask Ale House" and the first to open locally is the Brewers Arms on Ladybarn Lane in Fallowfield which opened to the public on Friday 19th February.

The pub has been completely revamped inside and is essentially one large L-shaped room with an additional snug area to one end of the bar. The theme is "rustic" with a capital R but having said that it all does work very well. The floor is basically bare-boarded with the judicious addition of several rugs which successfully stave off an over-basic look. There is much exposed brickwork and natural wood adding to the effect, although the star attraction must be the three real fires, one in the small snug area, which make the pub very welcoming and homely.

Of perhaps more interest to Opening Times readers will be the beer. The Brewers was previously all-keg but no more. Real ale has been introduced with a vengeance. When Opening Times called six cask ales were on handpump - Chesters Bitter, Boddies Bitter, Castle Eden Ale, Clarks Hammerhead and Taylors Landlord and Ram Tam. The latter three were all in fine form and, just as important these days, the prices were right, too - Landlord at £1.30, Chesters Bitter £1.05 for example. A seventh ale, Chesters Mild, was expected shortly.

The supervisor Kath explained that all beers are available in 4-pint jugs as well, which will all bring you a 5% price saving - worth remembering if you're there with a group of friends. Another nice touch is the introduction of small taster glasses to help those unfamiliar with some of the beers try a sample without splashing out on a full pint only to find the beer isn't to their taste. A nominal 25p charge is made for the taster, with the proceeds going to local charities.

Landlady Julie O'Shaughnessy told us that beers are currently obtained from Boddington subsidiary Ogden Wade, although she and partner Paul Batty have a free hand to get



beers from whoever they choose - it is planned to ask the locals for suggestions as to what to try next. A beer festival is also planned for sometime in March when 25-30 beers will be on offer over the course of a weekend.

Some might say that it's all a gimmick, well, perhaps, but if so, it is one that is carried off well and with conviction. More to the point, under the evidently committed stewardship of Julie and Paul the Brewers seems set fair to become a real ale landmark in that part of the city. The Brewers is at 151 Ladybarn Lane, tel. 224 5576.



6th
Beer at the Pier

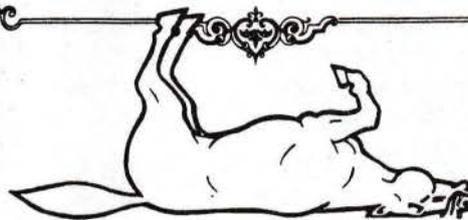
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18 - 20

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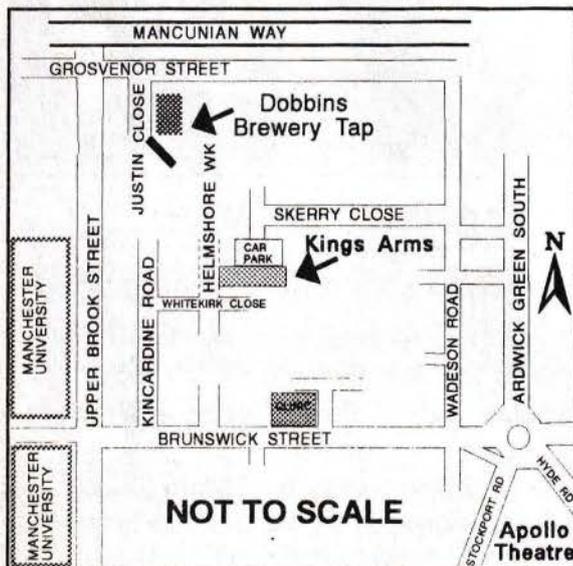
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

Not content with scything through the brewing industry of the North West and the Midlands, Greenalls now seem intent on taking an axe to our public house heritage.

At least that is the message that comes through loud and clear after their disgraceful actions over Tommy Ducks. The company limply claim that structural faults (not specified, you will note) were uncovered and the pub was demolished to avoid the cost of putting them right. The demolition took place in the early hours of a Sunday morning to avoid disruption during the week, we are told. The pub wasn't trading profitably, we are told.

What nonsense! Presumably there were 'structural faults' in the tables, chairs, and even the pictures on the walls, which were left in the pub as it was knocked down, such was Greenalls unseemly haste. Presumably Greenalls planning application to replace the pub with an 11 storey office block, played no part in this sordid affair.

It seems to us that the only "structural faults" facing Greenalls were the welter of objections to their plans for the site, which were still being considered by the City Council. Certainly, Greenalls actions have outraged city planners and councillors alike and it seems that legal action is to be taken against the company. We urge the council to pursue

this to the bitter end, even if only a nominal fine is imposed. A once great name in British brewing has now been reduced to acting like a shady property developer - we hope they are proud of themselves.

On a brighter note, it seems that the Stockport & South Manchester area is about to be hit by a wave of (almost) free houses, courtesy of the Boddington PubCo and, surprisingly, Whitbread. The PubCo's Crown on Heaton Lane is already trading well and we understand a similar setup is proposed for a pub in the Trafford area. Whitbread, however, have really got the bit between their teeth - the Cock in Didsbury was the forerunner and this has now been joined by the Brewers in Fallowfield, reviewed in this issue. Just as we went to press the George & Dragon in Hazel Grove opened its doors and work is already underway at the White Lion in Stockport Town Centre. The Unicorn in Altrincham is also to become one of these Cask Ale Houses. Meanwhile the Chapel House in Heaton Chapel closes this month for conversion into a "Tut n' Shive", which on other examples of this type, will probably end up resembling a licensed junk shop with guest beers - but more on that in a later issue. The interesting thing about all of these pubs is that, although the licensees are company managers, they have almost complete freedom to obtain whatever beers they want from whoever they choose. These are certainly welcome developments and deserve to succeed.

John Clarke

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From : David Sheldon

Dear Sir,

In response to Jim Bracken's letter praising the beer festival at the Flea and Firkin, I would like to raise a couple of points.

I would agree that in keeping with previous beer festivals at the Flea and Firkin all the beers that I tried were in excellent condition.

Unfortunately, as was the case on previous visits, the music was deafening and rendered conversation impossible.

Additionally, empty beer glasses were seldom collected and ashtrays rarely emptied.

Although the long tables and pews in the Flea and Firkin are ideal for the mainly student clientele, they do tend to become rather 'water-logged' from beer spillage and this is never wiped away.

Perhaps the absence of more CAMRA members is because they recognise that there is more to a good beer festival than just beer.

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STAGGER

with Chris Stone

This month's stagger was a "stagger on wheels", as we took to a minibus to explore the delights of the Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme districts of Stockport.

The first pub to be visited was the **Shady Oak**, situated in the midst of a rambling estate on the Bramhall/Davenport border and catering mostly for the younger clientele. It was built about 8 years ago, and refurbished 3 years ago to create a large split interior, with a central bar and separate comfortable drinking areas. We sat to the rear of the pub where there is a mock kitchen, complete with old range, open brick-work, pots and pans and dried flowers. The real ales on offer were Tetley Bitter, Marston's Pedigree, Thwaites Bitter and Boddington's Bitter. We tried the Thwaites, which was good and the Boddingtons which was above average.

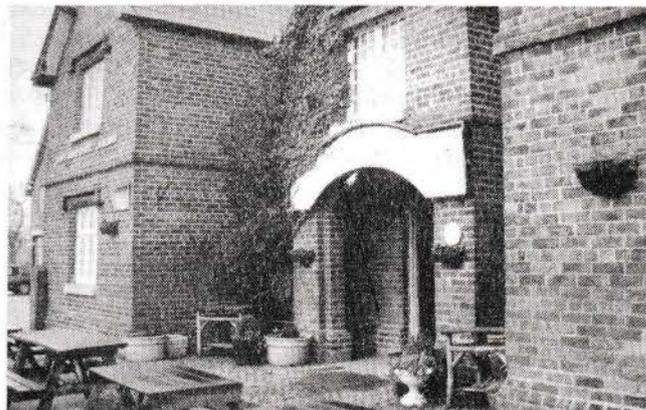
Next we went in search of the **Bromale**, a modern pub, hidden away in a mature residential area in Bramhall. Having lost valuable drinking time arguing amongst ourselves about the best way to find the pub, we were pleasantly surprised by the smart and tasteful decor. The large lounge area features dark wood panelling with ornately etched and coloured glass screens between the seats, comfortable upholstery and subdued lighting. The brass bar rail was held in place by brass elephants trunks. Unfortunately the beer range was not as exotic or interesting as the interior design scheme, although the two usually bland beers on offer, Stones Best Bitter and Worthington Best Bitter, were described as being in good condition on our visit.

Onwards to the **Ladybrook**, situated close to the Bramhall Hall roundabout. This extremely large mock-Tudor pub has room for a full-size snooker table, and the large, high ceilinged interior, has been partitioned into many individual drinking areas, including a small enclosed snug area around the fireplace in the main lounge. On this visit, the pub was crowded, and the mostly young clientele chose to stand. The bar staff were unable to cope with the quantity of customers, and this resulted in a lengthy wait at the bar, which rather tried everyone's patience. Boddingtons Bitter

and Mild were on offer (guest beers also we believe - but not on the night of our visit). We all tried the mild which was average.

Next stop was in Bramhall Village centre where we visited **Bramhalls**. This is a small, split level pub, with the appearance of a comfortable wine bar (which indeed it once was). The walls were decorated with notices advertising forthcoming entertainments, which included a hypnotist. The beers on offer were Worthington Bitter, Bass and Stones Best Bitter, all of which were sampled and described as 'okay'. The most memorable and disappointing thing about this pub was the extortionate price our driver was charged for orange cordial - a staggering £1.28, which was more expensive than a pint of Worthington! No encouragement to stay alcohol-free!

The **Victoria Tavern** is situated just round the corner close to the new shopping centre. This modern ugly pub with bookcases and plastic plants, was quite crowded and offered Boddingtons Mild and Bitter. We were fairly pleased to see Theakston's Bitter being served. Unfortunately we all tried this, only to find it in quite poor condition.



We promptly left the Victoria Tavern, and set off with some anticipation to the **Davenport Arms** in Woodford. This regular Good Beer Guide pub has the appearance of a country inn, with separate rooms (including one no-smoking room), no music, no pool table and real fires. As expected, the pub was crowded, especially around the bar area. Although it was very difficult to reach the bar the service was first class. The pub serves Robinsons Best Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom in winter. The bitter at £1.18 a pint was very good and the Old Tom was described as "perfect". As we had managed to find a seat and the beer was so good we decided to stay for another!

Ye Olde Vic Chatham St.
Edgeley

STOCKPORT'S PREMIER
FREEHOUSE

Guest Beers Weekly

TAYLORS
MARSTONS



BATEMANS

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1998
GOOD BEER
GUIDE

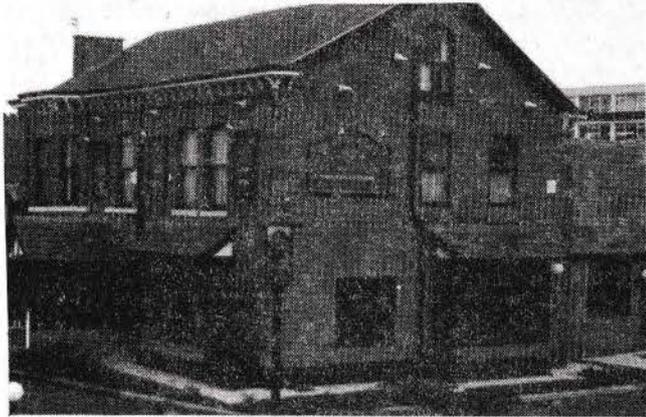
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Brewers of
Traditional
Cask
Beers
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good taste

Heading back towards Stockport, our next port of call was the **Church** in Cheadle Hulme. This Robinsons house has the appearance of a picturesque cottage from the outside. Inside there are two distinct areas, a comfortable lounge with brases and beams and a small vault. The lounge was so extremely full that we abandoned the struggle to reach the bar, and instead tried the vault where we were served immediately. We all tried the Best Bitter which was very good.



Our final port of call was the **Cheadle Hulme**, close to the railway station. This Holts pub has a large lounge and a first class restaurant to the rear. The pub was looking very smart, having just been redecorated. Both the Holts Bitter and Mild were sampled, and both were declared to be very good.

So ended a very interesting night with an interesting choice of pubs and beer. As ever an article like this can only present a one-off "snapshot" of the pubs so the comments should not be taken as definitive. Why not try some yourselves and see how much you (dis)agree!

MAXIMS

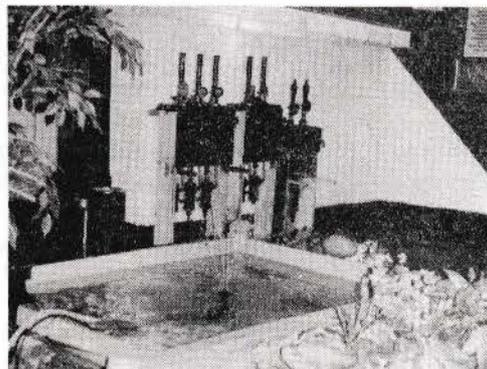
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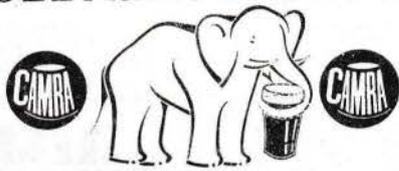
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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

MARCH '88

For the second month running, Oldham made the headlines - this time, it was **OLDHAM BREWERY, - THE FIGHT IS ON.** - there was to be a protest march through the town, and later in the month, a mass "handing in" at Boddingtons Brewery of the petitions that had been in every Oldham Brewery pub, and at CAMRA meetings. In contrast to previous brewery closures, the Trade Unions worked closely with CAMRA to fight this one - there had been industrial action at both Manchester and Liverpool to protest against the redundancies on the distribution side.

There was an item headed Wonderful Worthington - this was a reference to Worthington White Shield, the bottle-conditioned beer produced by Bass at Burton-on-Trent. Believed to be still fairly widely available in the area, there was a request for readers to let Opening Times know if it was in the local pub - a lot of Greenalls and Robinsons pubs stocked it, and some Hydes pubs, and it might even be in Bass pubs. (Bringing this item up-to-date, White Shield is now passing through what can only be described as a period of change. It is now brewed at Sheffield, with yet another move in the offing, and a recent re-vamp has changed the yeast, the packaging, and the price - upwards of course.)

Grand Metropolitan "stunned the Brewing industry" by announcing the sell-off of 700 of their pubs, being offered in three lots - the very size of the lots appeared to be putting purchasers off, added to which the pubs on offer seemed to represent the bottom of the range of the Grand Metropolitan estate. (At this stage, who could have foreseen the much greater changes that would follow in the wake of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on The Supply of Beer, which was expected to appear in 1989.)

Finally, a few snippets of pub news from the back page :- Work in progress at the Queens Head (Turners Vaults) on Underbank, Stockport, and cask beer was promised.

Station, Didsbury to be extended.

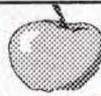
The new free house, the Beer House, has Linfit English Guineas Stout at 90p a pint - better value than the keg stout



The Beer House - off Rochdale Road, still going strong

with a similar name!

Industrial action at Boddingtons lifted the tie at the Crown, Heaton Lane - Robinsons and Stones was on sale.



CIDER CORNER



If it's Spring it must be Cider Festival time. CAMRA's national Cider and Perry Exhibition returns to London's Camden Centre on Bidborough Street (handy for Euston Station) from 27th-29th May. If you're already a cider fan, it's a chance to try that obscure make you've been hearing rumours about - if you're not it's a good way to get converted.

If you can't make it down to London, then our own cider and perry extravaganza takes place the next week with the 7th Stockport Beer & Cider Festival at the Town Hall. This year the cider and perry order is bigger than ever (200 gallons plus) and we hope to feature some of the better and more interesting products available in London the previous week.

Wales 10, England 9 (Five Nations Rugby Championship, Cardiff, 6th February). The unfancied side met Europe's best, dripping with glory and garlanded with trophies. England, though, were sponsored by Scrumpy Jack - could this be why they got no nearer to a third Grand Slam than "handpumped" Scrumpy Jack does to being real cider.

Still on the Scrumpy Jack front, it's good to report that the Plough on Shaw Heath, Stockport, has swapped its fake handpump for a much more obvious keg dispense system, so removing the only cloud over this excellent little local.

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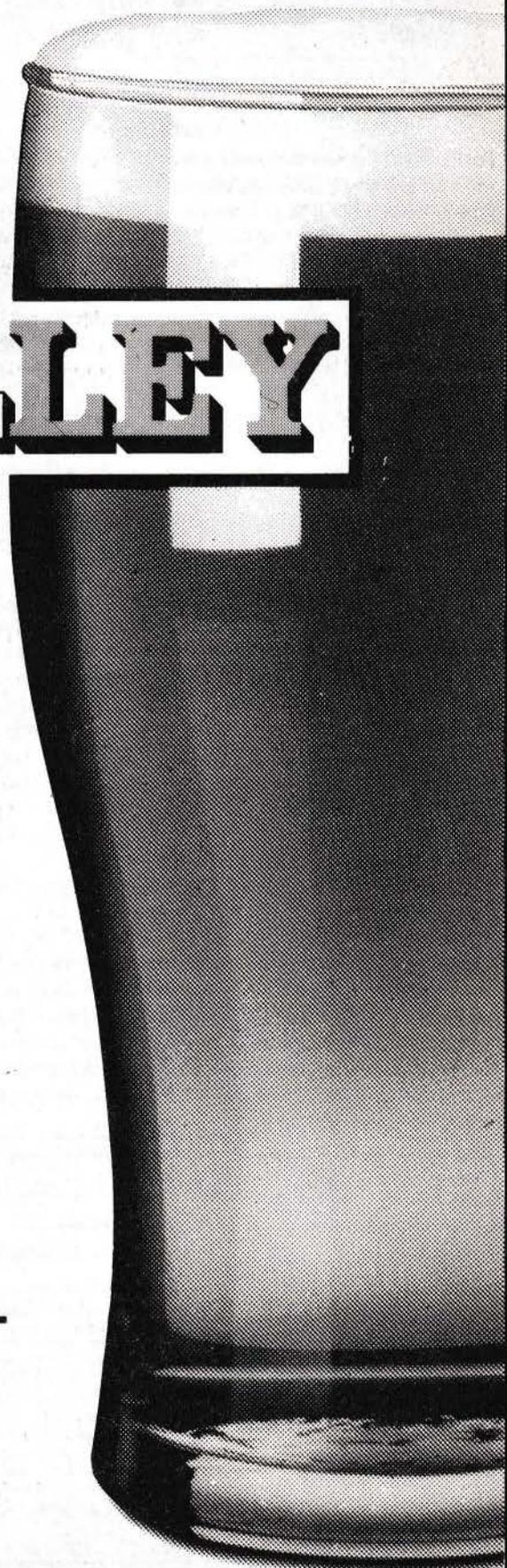
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LOVED BITTER**





by Stuart Ballantyne

This month for Pub Grub I headed into Manchester, my destination the Queens Arms on Honey Street (off Red Bank and Cheetham Hill), and one of the more successful freehouses in the city.

Approaching the pub, the first thing that strikes you is the impressive tiled exterior advertising the long-defunct Empress Brewery of Stretford. That concern was taken over by Peter Walker of Warrington who in turn became part of Tetley Walker and shortly thereafter Allied Breweries. Like many national brewers, they ultimately couldn't make a go of this inner city pub which is now thriving in the free trade in the capable hands of Dave Glass who has restored the pub's fortunes. Dave is very much a beer and curry enthusiast and both are reflected in the pub. On the beer front, 12 cask ales are on offer including, usually, the full range from Lincolnshire brewers Batemans and several from Timothy Taylors of Keighley. As to the food, the menu often features curries and other spicy dishes, but more of that anon.

On arrival at about 12.30, I was initially not sure whether the pub was open as no lights seemed to be on. Venturing in, I found the pub open alright. Indeed, it was a hive of activity with people rushing about, clearing up, washing glasses and someone making loud clanking noises under the bar! Most of the rushing about was in fact being done by the barmaid, who consequently seemed a little fraught. However, service was pleasant enough and our glasses were topped up without us having to ask - always a sign of a good pub. Drinks ordered we sat and pondered the extensive menu.

And extensive it certainly is. The meals range from snacks (e.g ham barm at £1.25) to proper meals, such as Chilli at £3.50, which include vegetarian options. Other dishes included kebabs, burgers, toasties, salads, omelettes, jacket potatoes and curries. All seemed reasonably priced with £3.50 being about top whack. I chose Red Bank Ruby Curry with rice (£3.25) which was a medium beef curry (strengths vary on request) with chick peas and salad. My partner went for the Continental Casserole (£3.30) with baked potato and salad.



Whilst waiting for the meal to arrive we were able to turn our attention to the beer. Taylors Porter (£1.24) was excellent with Batemans Dark Mild only slightly less well thought of. Guest beers included Fullers London Pride, Gales 5X Old Ale (both pretty good), Gales HSB, Charles Wells Bombardier and Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew. Real cider is also available - Westons Medium Sweet on this occasion. Half way through our drinks the lights came on and our meals appeared. The Continental Casserole - spicy sausages, pork, chickpeas and vegetables - was apparently an instant success as it disappeared from my partner's plate remarkably fast and his verdict, "that was very good", left no doubts as to whether he had enjoyed his meal. As for my Ruby Curry, I had a little difficulty in being as enthusiastic, whilst the meal was perfectly good and filling, it was not outstanding in any respect.

There was just time for a quick second drink after which, suitably refreshed, we ventured out, dodging the thunderstorms and returned to work.

In summary, the Queens is an excellent free house serving a good range of cask conditioned beers complemented with a wide and interesting range of food at reasonable prices. It's certainly worth the short trek out of the City Centre to seek out.

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BAR MEALS AVAILABLE



Crown, Heaton Lane



As trailed in last month's Opening Times, the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport, opened with a flourish as the Boddington PubCo's latest "Ale House" on February 9th.

"Reopened" is perhaps the wrong word as the pub never closed in fact, despite an extensive, and much needed interior refurbishment. About £30,000 has been spent on the pub, including new padded leather-style seating, new furniture and a thorough redecoration, with new carpets and flooring. In short the work has been cosmetic rather than structural but has made a big improvement, and the end result is a pub which is solidly traditional without any of the over-the-top Victoriana so beloved of pub designers at the moment.

The big change, of course, is in the beer range with the bar now sporting no less than 10 handpumps selling a range

of beers from far and wide. Boddingtons Bitter seems to be the only permanent feature with the rest of the range constantly changing - Kelham Island Celebration and Dent Old Top Porter have been two particularly memorable of the guest ales.

Licensee Ken Birch is well known to many CAMRA members and was himself the CAMRA Regional Director for Greater Manchester some years ago. A continuing variety of interesting beers should therefore be guaranteed. Ken also has a catering background and hot food is available from 12-2.00pm, with snacks always available.

Trade is already up and the pub is well placed to fit into the local beer drinking circuit. Certainly it deserves to succeed and Ken has our best wishes.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE**

FROM

THE OLD OAK CASE



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HULL GUVNORS
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A Fist Full of Arrows

by
Brian
Carey

The last Karaoke machine will have been laid to rest. The final alien will have been zapped. The video juke-box will have ground to a halt.

But in "real" pubs, the familiar sound of the arrow hitting the dart board will continue to be heard. Long may it be so.

This most universal of the "traditional" pub games remains in a remarkably healthy state. Despite the well publicised troubles of the professional game, at grass roots level, darts still reigns supreme.

Nowhere more so than in Stockport. The town currently boasts the UK Champions of Champions, playing out of the Bobby Peel. Most of the Cheshire County side play in Stockport leagues and it's on the cards that a top tournament will be hitting the town later this year.

Ken Brown, an official with the Stockport & District League, was surprised at the number of requests he has been receiving from all over the area to field teams in the new season. "We've even had tentative enquiries from pubs more known for their younger end clientele," said Ken.

This bodes well for the future.

As a pastime, darts has been around for a long time. A Bury carpenter, Brian Gamlin, devised the present familiar numbering system in 1896. The first known throw of 180 - the maximum possible with three darts - was thrown by a John Reader at the Highbury Tavern in Sussex in 1902.

But there is evidence that the game is very much older than that. A fifteenth century French painting shows two cherubic figures throwing darts. The arrows are said to look remarkably similar to the French wooden darts, still encountered today.

Some believe that the derivation of the game evolves from the days when Archery was compulsory as a military exercise. Broken arrow shafts were used as projectiles. It is also more than likely that the pilgrims played darts to pass the time while on the "The Mayflower" in 1620.

In the middle of the last century "puff darts" were popular in some parts of the country. In fact, that variation is still played in certain areas to this day.

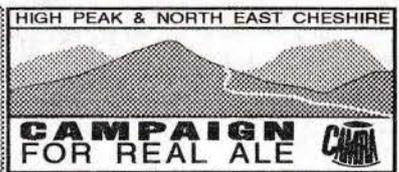
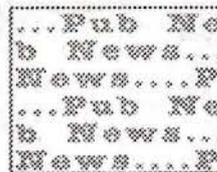
In our part of the world you are likely to encounter two kinds of board. The most familiar is the London board. This is the one seen in all major tournaments and international matches. Although most competitions are 501 down, finishing on a double, games of 301, 401 or even 1001 can be found. "Slip-up" or round the board is also popular.

Still refusing to die in this area, and even, some say, making a comeback, is the Manchester board. The "log-end", as it is affectionately known by its devotees, is smaller in size, has no trebles, tiny doubles and a miniscule bullseye.

Afficionados of the log-end believe that a player must be more skilful to play the board. Typically slip-up would be the game played on this board.

A more than healthy sized league caters for the Manchester board, many houses fielding teams in both standard and log-end leagues.

Despite what you may have read in the popular press, the game is alive and well and, certainly in Stockport at least, on the way back.



We've has a welter of information regarding the whereabouts of Marston's Head Brewers Choice so for your information here is - to the best of my knowledge and in no particular order - a comprehensive list of pubs currently taking the beers. Please let me know if there are others I have missed:- *White House, Stalybridge; Cherry Tree, Stalybridge; Station, Ashton-U-Lyne; Lord Nelson, Hurst, Ashton-U-Lyne; Woodcock, Ashton-U-Lyne; Dog & Pheasant, Ashton-U-Lyne; Napoleon, Ashton-U-Lyne; Oddfellows, Chinley; Bowling Green, Droydsden; Kings Head, Buxton; Robin Hood, Buxton; Sun, Buxton; Bull's Head, Buxton; Nineteenth Hole, Buxton; Horsehoe, Buxton.*

News on other subjects begins in Glossop. The *Fleece*, a GBG listed pub has recently changed hands and there are rumours that it will no longer be free. If this is true it will be a sad loss in the area.

In Chinley, with bad news predominating in recent months, things are beginning to look a bit brighter. On top of the news that the *Oddfellows* is taking the range of Marston's beers comes news that the *Old Hall Inn* has recently re-opened. Things are definitely looking up.

Closer to home, The *Romiley Arms* on Compstall Road, Romiley has closed. Now the bad news. It is rumoured that it will be refurbished (again!) and will re-open shortly. Further down the road the *Duke of York* has changed hands (again!) but reports are that the beer is still on form.

One final piece of news is that the *Cheshire Cheese* is on the market. Sadly this report could be about any number of pubs and reflects the depth of the recession and the abject failure of the recent attempts of the Government to make tenancies more secure.

In Furness Vale, the *Soldier Dick* on the A6 is now a free house. Beer range is unknown at present but we do know that the pub has taken a delivery of Lloyds Porter.

The Robin Hood

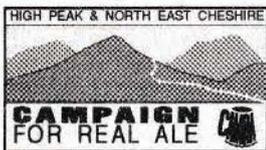
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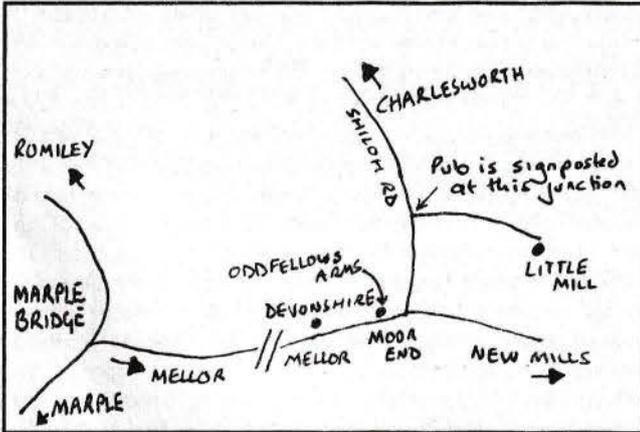
Your hosts Janet & Peter Blissett



Featured Peak Pub

MAR
93

High Peak and N.E.Cheshire Featured Pub for March is the Little Mill Inn at Rowarth just over the Greater Manchester border in Derbyshire near New Mills. Since the pub is a little off the beaten track the first priority is a map showing its whereabouts.



For those who do not already know the way, the pub and its surroundings are a just reward for the effort of finding it either by car or on foot walking through pleasant hill country.

Its location means that it is not a pub which can easily be reached by public transport but the walk from the nearest bus stop on the Marple Bridge; Mellor - New Mills Road is worth it. (No 363 bus operated by Glossopdale Bus Co. - infrequent service - check with GMT, alight at Shiloh Road; 25 minute walk.)

The Little Mill is a free house, of sturdy build dating from 1762 when it was formerly a candlewick mill.

Its origins as a mill are being revived with the construction of a new waterwheel, driven by the stream alongside the pub. There is an excellent beer garden and a well equipped adventure park for children. The pub also doubles as a local Post Office!

The interior is comfortable and spacious with settle benches and a real log fire. The pub parrot and cat appear to live in perfect harmony with each other.

Good home made food is served and there is also a separate restaurant for more full scale dining.

Live music on some evenings is also a feature of this busy, convivial pub.

A range of handpumped cask-conditioned beers, including guest beers complete the picture. At the time of writing the beers were Camerons Strongarm, Hansons Bitter, Banks' Bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

This pub definitely has something for everyone, and is a pleasant place for a cosy evening out, or on warmer days and nights a spot of outdoor drinking.

Fact File: Little Mill Inn, off Shiloh Road, Rowarth, via Marple Bridge, Derbyshire. tel 0663 743178.

Word Square Answers

The word square in our last issue proved more difficult than imagined with no completely correct solutions being received. The words we were looking for are shown below:

Of the two nearest Mrs J Dickinson of Norris Bank found 19 of the listed words, as did Thomas Donoghue of Manchester 14, but both were pipped by Anne Egerton of Kendlegate Wine who found 23. A fiver is on its way to Anne, meanwhile look out for more competitions in future issues of Opening Times.



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HIGH PEAK AND NORTH EAST CHESHIRE CAMRA

CAMRA CALLING!

Once again a mixed bag of events starting on Friday 5th with the Pub of the Year presentation at the Blossoms. By the time most of you read this it will be time for our social on Monday 8th at the Stanley Arms, Newbridge Lane, Stockport. In common with all Monday socials, this starts at 9.00pm.

On Thursday 11th we are holding our monthly meeting, this time at the Kings Arms, Helmshore Walk, Chorlton-on-Medlock. This starts at 8.00pm. The next day there is an evening trip to the Preston Brewing Company. Phone Dawn or Duncan on 445 0872 for details of this.

On Monday 15th, the social is at the Mosley on Ashton New Road, Beswick. A recent-ish real ale gain, this, so please try and come along. That week ends with our Stagger on Friday 19th. This time we are covering Stockport Town Centre and will be starting at 7.00pm at the Crown on Heaton Lane. The 8.30 meeting point was to be the Imperial on Chestergate but, assuming this is still closed at that time, we will meet instead at Little Jack Horners on Wellington Street.

The social on Monday 22nd is at the Cotton Tree, Cotton Lane, Withington and on 25th we present our Pub of the Month award to the Plough in Gorton (see page 2). The month finishes quietly with two Monday socials - on 29th it's a two-way social on Portland Street in Manchester City Centre - 9.00pm at the Grey Horse and 10.00pm at the Circus and, into April, on Monday 5th the social is at the Moss Rose on Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris.

Finally, advance warning of Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's AGM which will be on Thursday 8th April at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. All local members should try to attend this important meeting.

If you live in the Marple, Romiley, Woodley and Bredbury area you fall into the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch of CAMRA. In March their monthly meeting will be at the Crown, in Hyde on Monday 15th, and in April at the Railway in Dove Holes on Monday 19th. If you want more details about High Peak activities then your contact is Geoff Williamson on 0663 765634. Members of both branches are of course more than welcome to attend each others events.

Barry at 'Turners'

A very belated welcome to Barry Forbes, new(ish) licensee of the Queens Head, better known as Turners Vaults, on Underbank, Stockport. Barry took over last autumn following the departure of Carol Butterworth. Barry has been in the trade for 9 out of the past 11 years, although the two years prior to his arrival at Turners were spent as a chef. With this catering background, it comes as no surprise to learn that the pub now features home-cooked lunches every day bar Sundays. An offshoot of the food side has been the introduction of a no-smoking room at the pub. As it is a fairly small room, it was decided to make the rear lounge no-smoking during lunchtime but this has now been extended to evenings as well and, Barry tells us, has been very well received. The beer, Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter and Museum Ale on handpump, has also been very good of late - all the more reason to visit this excellent little pub.



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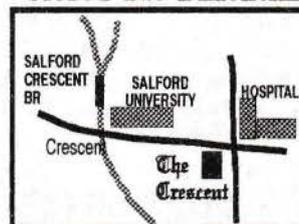


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Real Ciders
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* Pinball *
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* Pub Games ***



Cheadle Wine Bar



Despite ferocious local opposition, Tetley's have succeeded in their plan to convert the old video shop in the centre of Cheadle Village into, it has to be admitted, a very attractive cafe bar.

Whether Cheadle needed another licensed outlet is a moot point, but having said that, this is a very stylish addition to the local drinking scene. The layout consists of a series of interconnecting areas around a central bar, each with its own character, and all reeking of what must be the very large pile of cash that's been thrown at the place.

The fittings can best be described as sumptuous neo-Victorian with much polished wood, elaborate light fittings, and much ornamentation including an elaborate carved figure which forms the centrepiece of one area. There is even a brass plaque sunk into the floor bearing the legend "Cheadle Wine Bar 1992". Some will see it as an exercise in high camp kitsch, but it does seem to work, strangely enough.

There is an extensive, and not **too** pricey, menu with dishes ranging up to about £8.50. Opening Times called on a Sunday lunchtime when the menu featured a Sunday Toast - a variety of rolls, muffins, preserves, orange juice etc and Sunday Brunch, basically the Sunday Toast plus a large fry-up. Given the large quantities of food being carried around, these looked good value for money. Coffee is available, as, it seems, are a selection of the Sunday papers. On Sundays food is in fact available from 10.30am - so if you fancy a breakfast and browse over the papers, this is for you.

Perhaps surprisingly, three cask beers are also available, Tetley Bitter and Cains Bitter at £1.34 and Ind Coope Burton Ale at £1.46, not cheap but not unreasonable for this type of place. In short, leisure-time luxury for the Cheshire set is the name of the game here and provided the lager louts can be kept at bay, the Cheadle Wine Bar should prove to be a welcome and stylish addition to the local drinking scene.



Brookfield Re-Opens

It was many moons ago that we learnt that Vaux had bought the Brookfield, then known as "Brookers Bistroteque", on Wellington Road South in Stockport. Indeed such was the subsequent inactivity it began to look as though the story of its purchase was just one of the many such rumours that circulate in the licensed trade.

But no more, a flurry of activity over the past couple of months culminated in a grand reopening on Monday 22nd February. Now back to its original name, the pub also looks like the Brookfield of old, although in a distinctly smarter form.

On the right is a long bar and to the left raised seating surrounds a dance floor. Promotional posters advertised a variety of disco and live music nights and indeed the pub has retained its 2.00am license on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Upstairs there is a function room available to hire and tucked away at the back of the pub is an eating area on the left and, down a corridor on the right, a games room with table football and pool.

Cask beers available are Vaux Bitter and Samson, both on handpump, which are a distinct improvement over the old place. By no means a pub to suit everybody's taste, but nevertheless it's good to see the old place back on the Stockport scene.

Vaux Seek 400 Pubs

Independent brewers Vaux of Sunderland, whose expansion locally has been charted in the pages of Opening Times, have announced that they are looking for another 400 pubs in the North West over the next 5 years.

The company are expecting more brewery sell-offs and possible disposals by some of the new pub owning companies. Commercial director Jack Clark added "we are prepared to acquire sizeable packages of pubs should they come onto the market.... we expect to become one of the biggest regional brewers with a spread of pubs across the North West, Yorkshire and the North East.

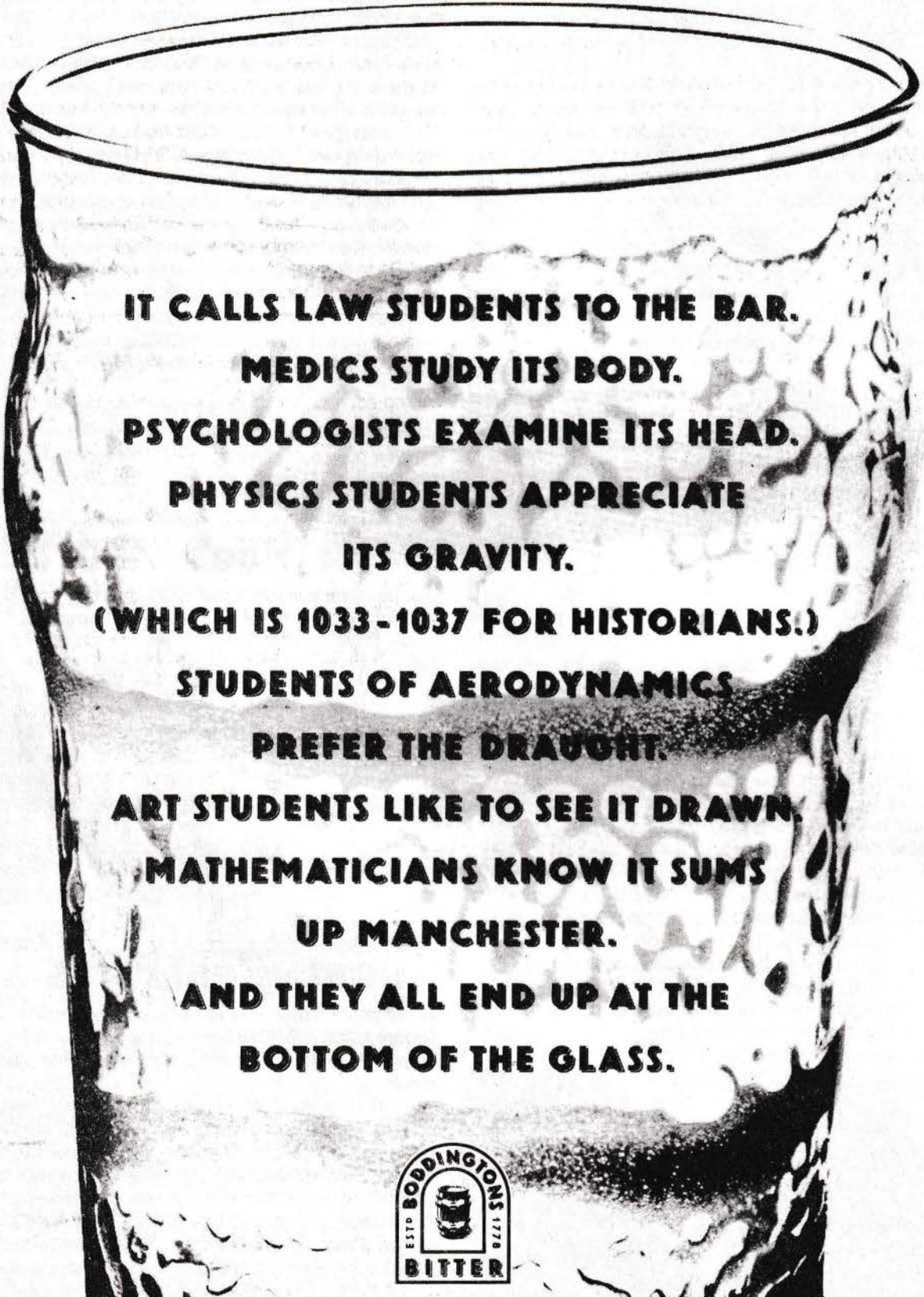
A new regional HQ is to be built on a greenfield site at Rochdale and this will include a number of hi-tech features, including temperature controlled cask beer storage facilities.

Lost Festivals....

Apologies to those of our readers who ventured to either the Square Albert in the City Centre or the Barleycorn in Didsbury in search of the Tetley beer festivals we mentioned last month.

Neither in fact took place, indeed the Barleycorn was partially closed for refurbishment (although the cellar bar remained open). Details of the refurbishment (which appears to be fairly major, though without significant structural alterations) will be found in OT's next issue. We cribbed the information from an ad that Tetleys themselves placed in Mersey Drinker, the CAMRA mag for the Liverpool area, and so naturally took this as a reliable source (slapped wrist time!).

Of the two that did take place, that at the City Arms seems to have been a roaring success, the pub continually having to re-order beer, and that at the Old Mill was still underway as we went to press - more on that one next time.



**IT CALLS LAW STUDENTS TO THE BAR.
MEDICS STUDY ITS BODY.
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ITS GRAVITY.**

(WHICH IS 1033-1037 FOR HISTORIANS.)

**STUDENTS OF AERODYNAMICS
PREFER THE DRAUGHT.**

**ART STUDENTS LIKE TO SEE IT DRAWN.
MATHEMATICIANS KNOW IT SUMS
UP MANCHESTER.**

**AND THEY ALL END UP AT THE
BOTTOM OF THE GLASS.**



BODDINGTONS. THE CREAM OF MANCHESTER.

Boddingtons Draught Bitter. Brewed at the Strangeways Brewery since 1778.



MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

The curse of the fake handpump strikes again (see also "Cider Corner"). The Cheshire Hunt at Belle Vue, a "free" house which for some considerable time sold keg John Smiths bitter on fake handpump, is closed and boarded up. The Abbey Hey in Gorton is another former Bass pub to pass to Centric Inns; Bass Light has been dropped, and while Theakstons Bitter was tried briefly, Stones Bitter is now the only real ale. There must be a real chance here for Centric to show some enterprise and go for a really good beer to develop the potential of this very attractive pub. In Bradford,

the Little Bradford has continued selling Westons Old Rosie cider from the polycask after its success at the Pub-of-the-Month presentation - yet another reason why this fine pub must not be swept away.

Finally, apologies to the Royal George in the City Centre, which has not been acquired by Vaux, as I stated last month. The beer range, though, is a Vaux/Courage hybrid; the handpumped beers are Vaux Bitter and Websters Bitter. P.S. A recent outlet for our local West Coast beers has been the White Horse, Bedford Street, Rhyl, recently voted Pub of the Year by the Vale of Clwyd branch of CAMRA; a selection from the range - Guiltless Stout and ESB are apparently particular favourites - has been on sale there for much of this year. Worth remembering for holiday time, or when visiting Rhyl Beer Festival (April 29th-May 1st) - the venue is just around the corner.

Young People Prefer Pubs

In a survey of more than 1000 young people aged 18 to 25, eight out of ten said going to the pub is their favourite night out. The survey was carried out for the Portman Group which promotes sensible drinking and revealed that the young people interviewed were quite choosy about where they drink. Eighty four per cent favoured the pub for a night out but most are repulsed by drunks and loudmouths. Three quarters of those questioned indicated the landlord as a key factor for a pub visit, two thirds were discouraged by rowdy houses and half would not enter a pub with too many games machines.

Fifty nine per cent are discouraged by cigarette smoke and would favour designated areas for smokers. CAMRA of course while delighted with the results of this survey, which show the 18 to 25's with a discriminating attitude to pubs, have been saying for years that the British pub is a unique venue for relaxing, drinking and socialising. As Portman Group Director Dr. John Rae puts it: "The research demonstrates that the vast majority of 18 to 25 year olds are discriminating pub-goers who seek out top quality traditional venues for socialising". Right on John.

No More Duty!

A rising tide of angry calls for cuts in excise duty are being made, just weeks after the barriers came down. Since January 1st alcohol allowances have increased hugely from the E.C. and Customs officers are already arresting one person a day for illegally selling imported goods. M.P.'s, led by Sir Ivan Lawrence, M.P. for brewing capital Burton-upon-Trent are calling on Norman Lamont to cut rates in the budget. Miles Templeman, managing director of Whitbread Beer claimed brewing industry losses could amount to at least \$200 million, putting jobs and breweries at risk. Spokesman Mike Ripley for the Brewers' Society said that 8% of U.K. beer consumption was from cross-Channel shopping even before January 1st. This was the equivalent of a substantial regional brewery.

He added that a similar situation had existed between Denmark and Germany but the Danish Government had successfully introduced a gradual duty reduction programme.

CAMRA has also joined in the fray and presented a 65,000 signature petition to Parliament calling for a freeze in excise duty on beer in the coming budget. Locally, brewers Robinsons are also doing their bit for the beer drinker by forgoing the annual price rise which normally comes into effect in February. The brewery say prices will not be reviewed until the Budget on March 16th.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

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

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

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

Student Membership £5

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

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

AGE: 18-21: 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 Over 65

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

Chris Stone / Sue Tittensor, 80 Bexhill Road, Davenport, Stockport, SK3 8UZ

those wishing to join CAMRA who live in the Marple, Bredbury, Woodley or Romiley areas, should write instead to:

Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple, SK6 6JH

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £5



Festival Frolics

As the Regional Beer Festival Season gets into full swing, We are pleased to announce that The Express/Advertiser Group, publishers of the Stockport Express/Advertiser and the Stockport Times have kindly agreed to help by sponsoring this year's festival. We are particularly pleased that the Festival, which is becoming one of Stockport's institutions, more so with the move to the Town Hall this year, is associated with one of Stockport's other great institutions, publishers of multi-award winning newspapers.

Preparations for the Festival are well under way, and the beer lists (and cider & perry lists) are close to finalisation.

There will be at least two (and probably three) ales unique to the festival, the most unusual of which will be featured in the next two issues of Opening Times. As usual there will be a mixture of Milds, Stouts & Porters, Bitters, Premium Bitters and a few very Strong Ales. There will be live entertainment on each evening of the festival, and (pace the Chancellor doing something utterly disgusting to excise duty in this month's Budget) we are endeavouring to hold entry, souvenir glass and beer prices to last year's levels.

The Festival takes place at the beginning of June, from the evening of Thursday 3rd June to Saturday 5th, open lunch-time on Friday and Saturday, and each evening. Why not take the opportunity to join CAMRA now - and get into the Festival Free of Charge!

Additionally, you could take advantage of free admission (for members) to other local CAMRA festivals. This month sees Festivals at Wigan and Oldham (details page 3), and in April (21-24) there is the largest of our Regional Events (though Stockport is catching up!) The 7th Great North Western Beer & Cider Festival in the Sports Centre, Silverwell Street, Bolton - less than 40 minutes train ride from Stockport (only £2 on the train).

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival '93

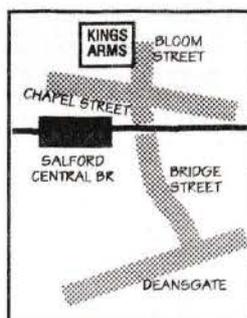


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THE KINGS ARMS BLOOM STREET, SALFORD

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13 HANDPUMPS

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News of a dramatic price DECREASE just outside the OT circulation area in Macclesfield. On 9th January, the Three Crowns opened as a Holts managed house. Prior to this it had been owned by Carlsberg-Tetley as part of its Peter Walker estate. The immediate result for drinkers is the reduction in the price of a pint of bitter from £1.25 to 93p - a hefty 32p drop! Mild is also available at 88p. However, cheap though they may be, Holts 'Regal' and 'Hottenbrau' lagers are not to the liking of local lager drinkers, weaned on the nationally marketed brands! The Queens (opposite Macclesfield station) will re-open in April as a Holts pub, after extensive refurbishments to make it a traditional Holts-style house.

At 5.00am on the last Monday in January, all three etched glass windows at the front of the Griffin in Heaton Mersey were smashed by vandals. Temporary glass is currently in place but Holts plan to replace the original windows with replicas, at considerable cost.

A mini wave of pub closures has hit Stockport over the past couple of months. In December Greenalls keg-only Red Lion in Hazel Grove closed, for good it seems as the site has apparently been sold for development as a supermarket. In Edgeley, the Pineapple on Castle Street is, again, closed and boarded up. This is the second closure for this pub and its long-term survival must now be in doubt. Finally, the Imperial on St Petersgate in the Town Centre closed in late January - rumours abound as to the reason for this, with the possibility of redevelopment as offices being mooted.

Staying in Stockport, the Castlewood on Bridge Street Brow has been renamed the Hole i' th' Wall and has also been redesigned by Vaux. New licensee Jacqueline Sherlock wants the pub to become more a part of the market scene and hopes the new beers and name will give it the boost it needs.

Over in Cheadle, the Queens is now selling Robinsons Best Bitter on handpump alongside the rare "ordinary" Bitter. The addition to the range has been made at the request of some of the regulars.

News from Didsbury now and Times Square - keg only of late - was recently closed and in the process of yet another revamp. Let's hope that real ale is reinstated when the place reopens, although given that it is owned by Bass, this cannot be taken for granted. Nearby, the Nelson was offering Websters Yorkshire Bitter at only 90p last month. Holts is also on sale, at £1, and even at 10p more will remain the choice for discerning drinkers.

The Metrople, Rylance Street, Beswick is closed and boarded up - the effect on the pub's takings is expected to be minimal.

Late January saw the departure of popular licensees Ian and Gwen Parrot from the Midway on Newbridge Lane, Stockport. A combination of a large rent increase and the discovery that the downstairs disco, a major source of revenue, was installed without planning permission and may have to close, proved just too formidable a combination. The pub has been taken on by Caterwell Consultants Ltd and is being run for them by Phil Stringer, Phil is no newcomer to the licensed trade, having run pubs in Ross-on-Wye and latterly, a steakhouse in Rotherham. He tells us that he has "big plans" for the pub which could well include the introduction of guest beers although, sensibly, he just intends to settle in at first and get the measure of the pub and its customers. The Midway is a regular Opening Times outlet and we will let you know of any changes.



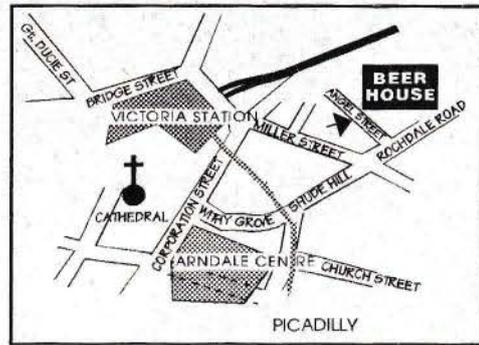
Greetings also, this time somewhat belated, to Mr and Mrs Logan, former licensees of the Moston, a Whitbread house situated in the area of the same name, and now at the Blackstock on Upper Brook Street, a former Whitbread house now owned by pub chain "Moor Inns", who also own the City on Oldham Street. The Blackstock is now selling Coachmans Best Bitter at £1.20 a pint alongside Boddies Bitter. Draught Bass is also to be introduced.

Hot on the heels of the Brewers in Fallowfield (see article), Whitbread are in the process of opening two more "Cask Ale House" outlets locally. In Hazel Grove the George & Dragon was in an advanced state of preparation and may well be open when you read this. A feature there will be three guest beers served direct from barrels stillaged behind the bar - an interesting idea, but some in-cask cooling will surely be necessary if the scheme is not to come unstuck in hot weather. Beers for opening night were scheduled to be Wobbly Bob, Clark's Hammerhead and Fullers ESB from the cask and Boddies Bitter, Preston Pride, Batemans Mild and Coach House Blunderbuss Old Porter from handpumps. More on this one next time. Work has only just started on the third outlet - the White Lion on Underbank in Stockport Town Centre - again, more news when we have it.

COPY DATE FOR APRIL ISSUE IS FRIDAY 19 MARCH

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