

OPENING TIMES



No:
114

OCTOBER 1993

STILL
FREE

What Goes In...

At long last it looks as though brewers will soon be forced to tell drinkers exactly what goes into their pints. Whilst the brewers have become more open about what they put in their beer in recent years this has usually been more to do with seeking to promote sales of cask beers by stressing their traditional values rather than any sudden conversion to the cause of openness.

What goes into many keg beers and lagers as well as the multitude of 'designer' drinks on the market remains shrouded in mystery. Beer writer Roger Protz, who has scored some notable successes in getting reluctant brewers to say what goes into their beer in his Real Ale Drinkers Almanac, believes some drinkers could be shocked when they find out what ingredients go into beer: "Drinkers have this cosy conception that beer is just barley, hops, yeast and water but a lot of other ingredients are used as well, particularly on packaged beers."

He suggests that it could force some brewers to clean up their act, as happened in the United States when similar legislation was introduced.

CAMRA is also in favour of the move, believing that it will help consumers make an informed choice. Campaigns Manager Steve Cox explained "what we would like to see is ingredients listed at the point of dispense. Low alcohol beer dispensers have to state ingredients so it would certainly be practical to do so for full strength beers."

The move to ingredient listing comes from proposals being discussed by European Community ministers and could be implemented next year if agreement is reached soon. Certainly the UK Agriculture Minister, Gillian Shephard, is in favour of the move as part of a plan for cutting down on red tape in the food law sector.

The Government's drive for deregulation could however have an adverse effect on your pint - at the moment draught beers etc have to be sold in third, half or full pint measures. The proposal has been floated to abandon this requirement and let pubs adopt metric measures if they so choose. The possibilities for confusing and misleading drinkers here are boundless - luckily the chorus of disapproval from all sections of the licensed trade which greeted the report make it unlikely that it will proceed.

Sold! To The Highest Bidder

It came as no great surprise when Grand Met announced the sale of their Chef & Brewer operation at the end of last month - the only surprise was when the buyer was revealed to be Scottish & Newcastle.

The £830 million purchase transforms the Theakstons and Youngers combine into a truly national brewer with over 3500 pubs. Whilst many of the outlets are in London and the South East, a fair few local outlets are also involved with landmark pubs such as the Chestergate Tavern, the Withington Ale House and, in the City Centre, the Brunswick and the Shakespeare now changing hands.



By virtue of their increased size, S&N now come within the ambit of the government's beer orders and are to dispose of some 748 houses, 462 of which are to come from the Chef & Brewer estate with the balance from existing properties. It is therefore possible that local operators such as the Boddington PubCo or Greenalls could pick up some of these.

On the plus side, the beer orders mean that S&N tenants and leaseholders will also be able to stock a guest beer, a right previously denied them. One added complication is the contract GrandMet had with Courage for the supply of beers to the Chef & Brewer estate. As far as we know this still stands although it is due to expire in 1995 and it is difficult to see any extension being granted by S&N who will be keen to push their own beers, particularly Theakstons, on the national stage. In short, 2 years hence there will be about 1600 fewer outlets for Websters Yorkshire Bitter (which most GrandMet pubs sell). Is this the end of the Halifax Brewery?



In October's OPENING TIMES

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PUB of the Month October

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
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The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month award for October goes to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. The Crown has long been a favourite watering hole with local drinkers right back to the early 1980's when its Good Beer Guide entry described it as "a spotless museum piece with awesome view of the viaduct from the outside gents". The pub subsequently gained a local CAMRA Pub of the Year award and, latterly, under the stewardship of Jim Mulvey it gained quite a reputation for its live music.

Tom Thumb's

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WILSONS MILD

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However times change - the gents are now indoors and there has been a very slight opening out of the interior but the major change has been the transformation of the pub's fortunes since February when the Boddington PubCo turned the Crown into one of their 'Ale Houses' and installed former regional CAMRA stalwart Ken Birch as licensee. In that short period of time the Crown has become an institution on the Stockport drinking scene. Usually busy and frequently crowded, the pub features up to 10 different beers drawn from near and far, together with real cider. In addition there is good home-cooked food at lunchtimes and the live music nights in the beer garden have become almost legendary.

The pub feels like it has been run on these lines for years, the fact that it is less than one is testimony to the foresight of the Boddington Pub Co but more importantly the hard work and commitment of Ken and his staff. Join us as we pay tribute to this important addition to the Stockport pub scene and present our Pub of the Month award on Thursday 28th October. Get there early, it promises to be a busy night!

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and try their

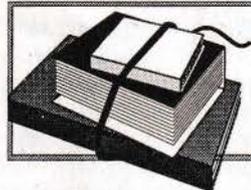


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BOOK REVIEW



by Rhys Jones

The Real Ale Drinker's Almanac, third edition by Roger Protz. Neil Wilson Publishing in association with CAMRA. Softback, 320 pages, £6.99.

Many users of CAMRA's annual Good Beer Guide make greater use of the Breweries Section at the rear of the book than of the pub listings which occupy most of the pages. So the idea of a book devoted to a description and appraisal of all Britain's cask beers is an appealing one. How do the two guides compare?

If you need the full technical detail, the Almanac is the book for you. While a trifling number of breweries (including, surprisingly, such a respected firm as Yates) refused to supply Roger Protz with information on ingredients, for most beers you get precise proportions of pale and crystal malts, details of hop varieties, and such technical data as units of colour and units of bitterness (though for the non-specialist, some further information - perhaps a calibration chart - would help understanding of these last). It's surprising, though, to see no mention of the provenance of any brewery's yeast - while the (generally excellent) technical introduction implies that all brewers guard their yeast as an ancestral secret, in practice many small-scale firms get a regular "top-up" from a friendly larger neighbour.

Tasting notes are similar in length to the GBG's, but are subdivided into "nose", "palate", and a general "comments" section. While the excesses of winespeak are merci-

fully avoided, the Almanac perhaps suffers from a reluctance to criticise; its "easy drinking light bitter" is the 1993 Good Beer Guide's "thin and uninspiring" Flowers IPA.

The keen beer-spotter will no doubt find the odd omission in each volume. In general, however, the Almanac seems reasonably up-to-date, listing for example three Snowdonia beers, though it's odd to see Preston's Little Avenham Brewery listed only as a late entry when it managed to make last year's GBG. Be warned also that in the case of some of the more prolific micros, such as our own West Coast, only a representative selection of beers is described.

Organisationally, the Good Beer Guide wins hands down (I write here of the 1993 edition), with its three-way split of breweries into independents, nationals and brewpubs rendered user-friendly by thoughtful cross-referencing. The Almanac, by contrast, splits England into arbitrary regions with no map to define them and no single alphabetical index of breweries - the only index entry for Hardington Best Bitter, for example, is as one of 21 entries for "Best Bitter", and unless you know that the brewery is listed under West Country rather than South-West England (two terms which I'd always regarded as roughly equivalent), you'll have a long search.

If you only buy one beer book this autumn, it'll probably be the Good Beer Guide (after all, you get all the pub listings for only £2 more). Even so, I've been so impressed by the obvious depth of research that's gone into the Almanac that I must rate it very highly as a reference book for anyone who cares about the beer they drink. So much so, in fact, that ("Opening Times" not running to review copies) I shall be visiting these notes to buy my own copy from the CAMRA bookstall - and you can't get a better recommendation than that!

OCTOBER BEERS

ARUNDEL GOLD
OAK MIDSUMMER
MADNESS

CROUCH VALE MILD

HANBY DRAWELL

HANBY BLACK MAGIC

MACLAYS OATMALT
STOUT

JENNINGS CUMBERLAND
ALE

COTLEIGH HOBBY

FREEMINER BITTER

ORKNEY DARK ISLAND

HAMBLETON GOLDFIELDS

PIONEER RED EYE

PIONEER BLACK EYE

COMING SOON:-

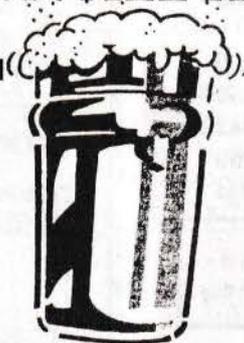
BEER-JOLAIS NOUVEAU &
WINTER ALES FESTIVAL



CROWN ALE HOUSE

HEATON

NORRIS



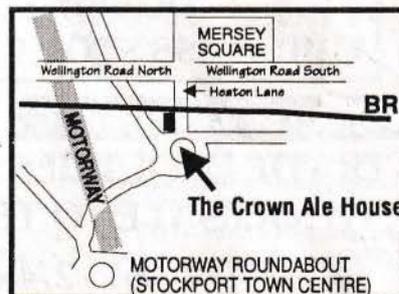
GUESS HOW MANY DIFFERENT REAL ALES WE HAVE SERVED BETWEEN RE-OPENING ON FEB 9 UNTIL OCTOBER 21. GALLON OF BEER FOR WINNER PLUS NEAR MISS PRIZES. ENTRIES TO BE HANDED IN BY 8.00PM 21 OCTOBER

OCTOBER EVENTS

THURS 7 - MUSIC WITH "STILL LIFE"

TUES 12 - FOREIGN BEER TASTING - TICKETS FROM PUB £5 (12 - 15 FOREIGN BEERS) 8PM START

THURS 21 PUB OF THE MONTH - SPECIAL CONTEST (SEE BELOW)



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Stockport Tel: 429 0549

10 HAND-PULLED CASK ALES

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From : Richard Hough

The EC bigwigs are causing more trouble than they realise. Not content with outlawing curved cucumbers and labelling carrots as fruit, not vegetables, they are trying to ban bar towels on the grounds that they are unhygienic. Surely a tray, which simply holds the beer as it becomes more and more germ-ridden in a pub atmosphere, is worse than a towel, which will soak up the beer from overspill (providing of course they are changed and washed regularly). In addition, no bar tray will remove all drips from the underside of a glass as a towel or drip-mat will. This results in a stale mixture of various drinks being transported to any surface on which a drink is placed, as well as dripping on the floor, your shoes, your trousers, newspaper and so on. Obviously they know best...

From : Chris Wainwright

Here's a little snippet that may be of interest to the "green" drinkers in our area.

On Little Underbank a new delicatessen has opened called Banarberries (opp the Queens Head) whose off licence section comprises a small but expanding selection of organic and vegetarian beers and wines. They also stock Dunkertons Perry and Cider. At the moment the beers are all imported lager types but I shall suggest to the partners that there are good English ones to be sold as well.

(Editor's note: Indeed a welcome addition to the local scene. The bottled range has in fact now been extended to include the Flag Brewery's Porter and Viking Ale along with Caledonian Brewery's Golden Promise.)

From: Kim Rampley

Re "Metrolink Mayhem" (OT August) and proposed pub closures due to the Metrolink extension. I am, of course, completely against these, furthermore, I am NOT one of those who is 100% delighted with Metrolink. Consider the following:

1. Once former BR lines have been converted to "light rail" they can no longer be used for trains - freight or passenger.
2. Quality of ride. I have ridden on 30 year old electric and diesel units (e.g. to Hazel Grove or Rose Hill) on BR with better quality of ride than Metrolink trams, especially on the Bury line. So much for "state of the art" technology!
3. Unlike the trams, virtually all BR trains have toilets.
4. Standard fare. £10 is payable by those without a ticket - however far they may have travelled. This in spite of stations having no staff. BR do not do this - if you do not have a ticket you are charged one single fare. Do Metrolink believe their passengers are less honest than BR's?
5. Fare levels. Metrolink costs £2.40 just to go from Manchester to Bury or Altrincham and back. Yet for just £2, after 09.30 I can travel ALL DAY on BR within Greater Manchester - from Hall i'th'Wood to Hazel Grove, Mossley to Marple, Wigan to Woodley etc. Which, I wonder, is the better value?!? Over-critical? What do other readers think?

(Editor's note: I'm not altogether sure that this is within the remit of O.T., however opinions will be welcome...)

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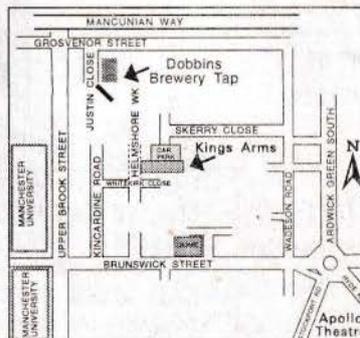
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From : Peter Edwardson

Your correspondent in September's "Opening Times" is incorrect to state that the Cheadle Cafe Bar can open longer hours than Cheadle pubs because it has a "cafe bar licence". Currently there is no such thing, although the government is thinking of introducing one.

The Cheadle Coffee Bar, I am sure, has a normal full on-licence and it makes use of the provisions of the law to serve alcohol to diners only later at night and on Sunday afternoon. Any revellers coming out of the White Hart at 11 p.m. on Friday or 3 p.m. on Sunday would be given short shrift if they tried to order a pint in the Cafe Bar.

The reason that other pubs in Cheadle do not open these hours is because they choose not to, not because they can't. Having said that, the Ashlea at least does stay open all Sunday afternoon for food.

The Orion



As we trailed last month, it can now be confirmed that Manchester brewers Joseph Holt have purchased the Orion in Withington from Whitbread.

This should see a transformation in the fortunes of the pub although the downside of this is the effect on other nearby pubs. Local beer writer John Turrell has already speculated on the effect that this will have on the Waterloo, "the final nail in the coffin", and the Victoria. To this list, we think, can probably be added the Albert. The Waterloo and the Albert are of course both Grand Met pubs and in theory could compete by taking Holts as a guest beer although we understand the latter are rather reluctant to supply to non-Holts pubs within a certain radius of their own houses and this avenue would therefore seem to be closed.

Holts are due to take over the Orion on 5th of this month and will presumably be refurbishing the pub in due course - more news on this when we have it.

The Orion was in fact part of a package of three Whitbread pubs bought by Holts, the others being the Chapel House in Denton and the Volunteer in Sale.

IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

In common, I expect, with many readers, I was saddened by the IOC decision to award the 2000 Olympics to Sydney rather than Manchester.

Now that feelings have cooled, however, it is perhaps worth looking at the upside of Manchester's failure, small consolation though this will be to many. In the short term, the threat to the future of the public houses to the rear of Piccadilly station - the Jolly Angler, White House and Moulders Arms - is immediately lifted as the Olympic Village development which promised to sweep them away was entirely dependent on Manchester securing the Games. Indeed with the proposed development of accommodation for several thousand students in the immediate vicinity these pubs can perhaps look forward instead to a major revival in their fortunes.

And what of the Little Bradford, threatened by landscaping work associated with the main stadium, perhaps it, too, will be reprieved? Not a bit of it - in documents released by the council the claim is made for 'the need for the whole site', Olympics or not. This is justified as "allowing the development to spread to the natural edges of the site as defined by main roads etc enable the development to be seen as one coherent unit and provides the opportunity for a high quality frontage to those main roads, uninterrupted by other, older, lower quality development."

These callous words, describing, as they do in the case of the Little Bradford, both the home and livelihood of licensee Peter Hallam and a well used amenity of the local population, shows just how out of touch with the wishes of the local people those behind these grandiose plans are. Disturbingly, they also show that the failed 'slash and burn' approach of the 1960's is still alive and well in the minds of our planners.

These are issues which merit serious discussion both in dialogue with the planners and in the local media. The hype and hysteria prior to the IOC decision prevented this - hopefully we can now look forward to a more positive approach.

John Clarke

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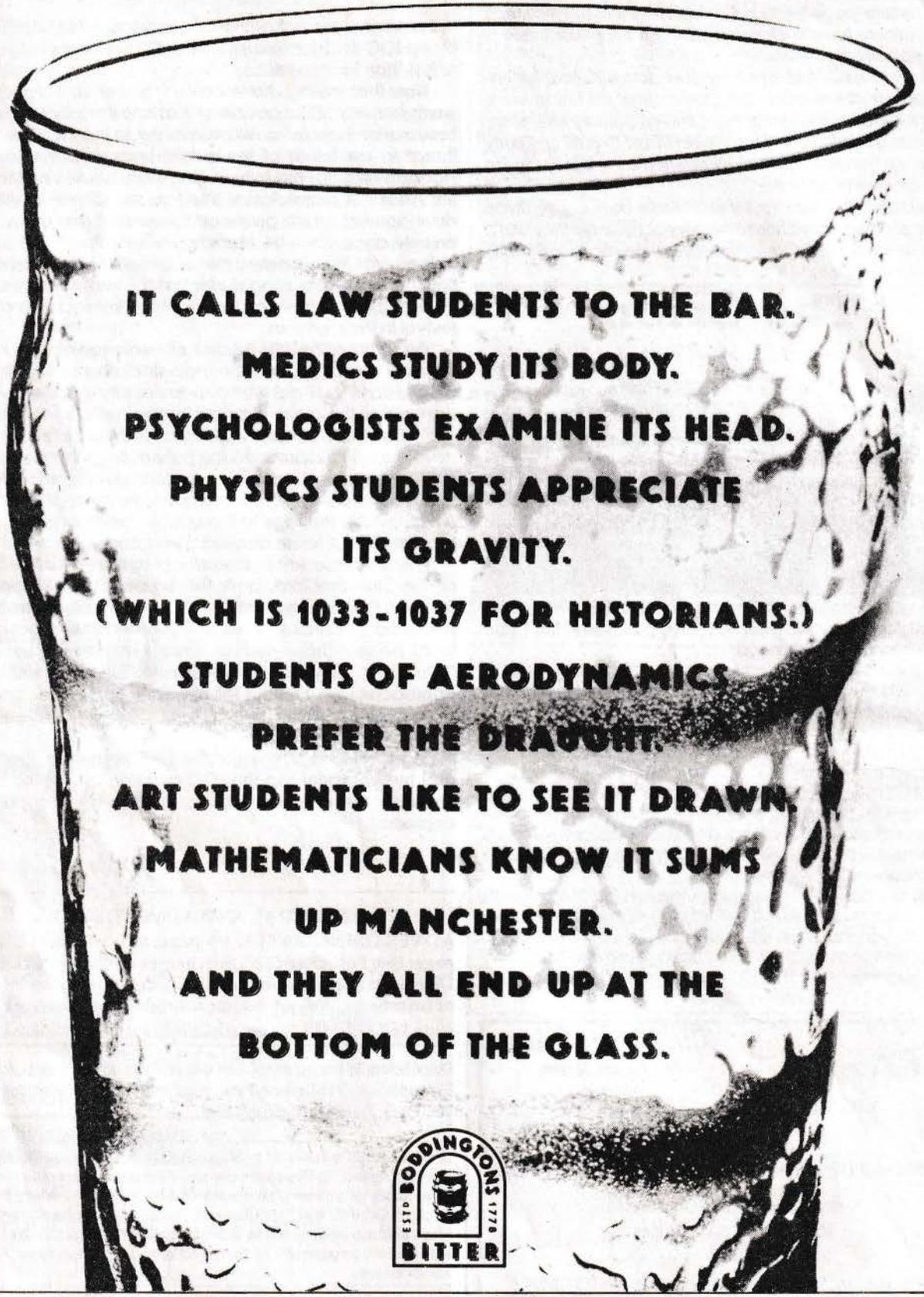
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RHYTHM and BOOZE

It's decision day and Manchester have lost the 2000 Olympics to Sydney. (Strewth Bruce what a rippa! Cripes cobber etc etc). To console myself I thought I'd go and see a good local band. I made my way to the Star & Garter on Fairfield Street: bastion of frequent live music and reasonable beer. The Boddies bitter was perfectly acceptable; the next pint was the eagerly awaited Hydes Light. And very good it was too. I can also recommend the tasty hot pot if you (like me) ever need a good feed.

The first band on were Birdroom, a five piece from Oldham with a blonde bombshell lead singer. The sound quality wasn't brilliant but they are fine performers. It is so refreshing to see a rhythm guitar in a band too. The noise created reminded me of the group Shampoo. As a support slot they were ace; if they can progress from this they will be utterly cool. Then I tried the Ruddles Best. Oh dear. Ruddles not-so-best, it must be said. The Flowers IPA was not too bad though.



Subtopia also hail from Oldham. After two years of experimenting with drummers they seem to have settled down; the current line-up has been together for eight months. They are influenced by The Damned, Iggy Pop and The Misfits. Indeed one of the band played with The Damned many years ago. As musicians, you can hardly fault them. But as raucous rock'n'rollers they need a little more, well, oomph. The line-up, consisting of two guitarists, one bass player and one on skins, performed well, but still lacked that certain something that makes a good band into a special one. Apart from that, the wholly self-penned set deserves appreciation. And appreciation is what the small crowd gave them. The sound was great. The potential was there. These boys could be big. But not, unfortunately, tonight.

Sydneys of the night: Birdroom and Hydes Light. Manchesters were Subtopia and the Whitbread beers.

Richard Hough

Hayfield Festival

The Royal Hotel at Hayfield will be staging the 'Hayfield Oktoberfest' beer festival from 22nd to 24th of this month.

Opening hours will be from 6.00pm Friday, all day Saturday and Sunday lunch. There will be live entertainment Friday and Saturday night plus 14 different real ales including Butcombe Bitter, Wychwood Hobgoblin, Youngs Special and Taylors Golden Best. This is a new departure for Hayfield and deserves both success and support.

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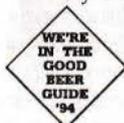
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THU 12 - 3	FREE	5 - 11	(5-7pm) 50p (7-11) £1.50	THE FLYING SQUAD (BLUES ROCK)
FRI 12 - 3	FREE	5 - 11	(5-7pm) 50p (7-11) £2.00	
SAT 12 - 4	£1.00	6 - 11	£1.50p	FRESH AIR FRED (BLUES ROCK)

STAGGER

with Rhys Jones

A pleasant August evening saw us sampling the pubs of Hyde Road - a once legendary crawl, this is now sadly depleted, and regular readers will know there is far worse to come when the road goes through.

We started at the **Star** opposite the Bus Depot, a pleasant and well-kept three-roomer. The advertised Bank Holiday lunch special of bacon, cabbage and soda bread suggests an Irish clientele, but this was not in evidence when we visited. Beer is electric-pumped Banks mild (£1.13) and bitter (£1.15) - both good, the mild marginally preferred.

Passing the Bulls Head (derelict), the Wellington (keg), the City Gates (derelict - but for sale!), and the Junction (closed and boarded - though it may have reopened by now), we found with some relief the **Dolphin**, a couple of steps along Clowes Street. This somewhat characterless modernised pub should at least be praised for its admirably visible price list, and sold Boddingtons Bitter (£1.20) and Castle Eden Ale (£1.30). Both were above average, the Boddingtons very marginally preferred.

Passing the site of the Horseshoe and overshooting our planned 8.30 rendezvous at the Travellers Call, we next explored the **Nags Head**. This large Boddingtons pub has been substantially opened up over the years but does manage to retain a number of separate areas - a plus point was the totally separated area for pool, a minus the distorted jukebox. Handpumped Boddingtons Bitter (£1.19) is the only beer here, and we were divided over its quality - certainly a very different flavour from the Dolphin's Boddies, and I for one found it a great improvement.

Round the corner now to the **Imperial**, a small freehouse on Birch Street. This was the busiest so far, its pleasant and bustling atmosphere, with darts in full swing, doing much to atone for the major and fairly uninspired remodelling of a few years back. Sadly, the Mitchells Bitter usually offered was not on tonight (when it is, the price is a bargain £1.05), so the choice was Chesters Mild (£1 - and issuing from the Mitchells pump) or Boddingtons Bitter (£1.14); both were above average, the mild slightly preferred.

Now it was time for the **Travellers Call**, where Larry and Margaret Mason, licensees for the last four years, were within days of leaving. One of Manchester's greatest little boozers, the Travellers deserves to be preserved for all time, complete with fixtures and fittings, customers, the lot - which is no doubt why the roadbuilders will be knocking it down in a couple of years. The beer is Hydes, mild (£1) and bitter (£1.10) on electrics; mild was good, bitter was even better, running out eventually as the best beer of the night; rarely for a stagger, we stayed for a second pint - it's that sort of place.

Passing the site of the Rock and the closed Victoria, we made for the **Coach & Horses**, which mercifully has been saved from the road scheme. As the vault was busy, we found room in the lounge. As usual, a friendly atmosphere prevailed in another very fine traditional pub. Robinsons mild and best bitter are on handpump here, at £1.08 and £1.17 respectively. We all had the bitter which was excellent - runner-up to the Travellers Call's bitter as beer of the night, though only by a tiny and statistically inconsequential margin.

As we finished our drinks in the Coach, we noted with some surprise that it was already 10 o'clock (must have been that second pint in the Travellers!). It was obviously time to be selective, so off we hurried to John Willie Lees' **Suburban** near Gorton Market. Another very busy pub, but we found room in the little snug known as the Morris Room - the most interesting room in what is throughout a pleasant pub, with its memorabilia of the local (and still flourishing) morris dancers. The one of our number who tried the mild found it only average, though this is probably more a reflection on this often disappointing beer than on the pub; the bitter was well above average.

For what was to be the final pint of the night, we took the short walk to Robinson's **Plough**, on the corner of Wellington Street. Once again, this is such a fine pub - particularly the vault, the strongly beating heart of the pub, in which we sat and where a game of chess was in progress - that it comes as no surprise the roadbuilders want to knock it down. However, as regular readers will know, we are still hopeful that this historic pub, dating back to before the Victorian era, can be saved. The beers are mild and best bitter or electric pump. Both were well above average; the bitter might have been even more highly thought of had it not been for a touch of the sulphury Robinsons nose so often found in summer.

So ended a crawl covering a wide variety of pubs and beers, in which, while only a few places scaled the very

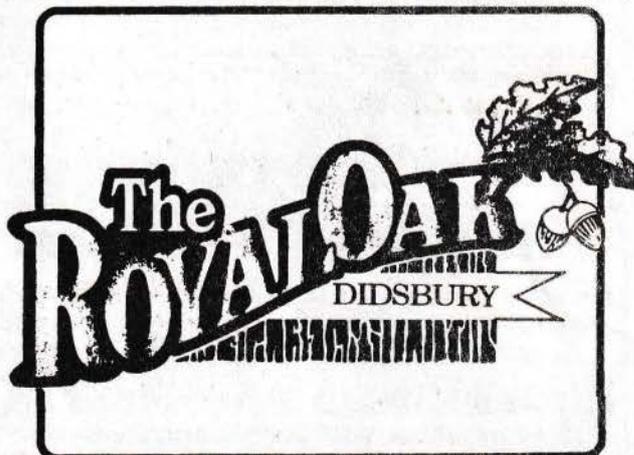
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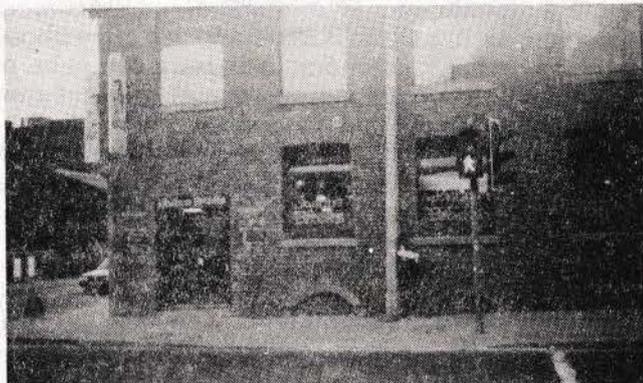
BATEMANS



heights, perfectly acceptable beer and a decent friendly welcome were received everywhere.

Of course, the comments above simply reflect how we found things on the night. To find out for yourself, visit the pubs - some of them won't be there for very much longer!

Joshua Brooks



As we exclusively revealed last month, Manchester's newest pub duly opened its doors to the public on the evening of September 24th.

The Joshua Brooks is sited on the corner of Charles Street and Princess Street in the premises of a former print works. The style is very much that of its sister pub, Jabez Clegg, near the University and, like Jabez, this too seems aimed fair and square at the student market.

The pub operates on two floors - the ground floor bar, it has to be said, is a rather characterless affair being mainly just one big room with a bar at the end. The cellar bar is, in theory, reached via a spiral staircase in the centre of this room but until agreement to its use can be reached with the health and safety people the route to take is the fire exit off the main entrance. This works much better with its flagged floor and brick vaulted ceiling lending a vaguely ecclesiastical air to the place, enhanced by the pew-like seating. The room is nicely divided up and also has a pool room off.

A variety of food is available at lunchtimes and this looks to be both of good quality and value. The beer has also been pretty good so far but as to value, well that's another story - the current range is Boddingtons Bitter, Marstons Pedigree and Flowers Original with the promise of guests to come, however, with the Boddies at £1.40 and the Pedigree at £1.70 those student grants won't go far...

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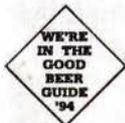
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CAMRA

CAMRA's flagship publication, the Good Beer Guide, comes of age this month with the appearance of the 21st edition in the nation's bookshops on the 18th of this month. First published in 1974, over 50,000 copies are sold each year and the Guide has become part of the established publishing calendar, alongside the likes of Whitaker's Almanac, Wisden and Who's Who, making an excellent birthday or Christmas present.

The Guide is split into three parts. The main section is given over to pubs, chosen on the quality of the beer they serve. The pubs are selected by CAMRA branches at a local level. Branches also provide all the information on pubs, collected freshly each year in the annual survey. Around 5,000 pubs are included, arranged county by county, in all parts of the UK, with county maps to help locate each pub. Entries give details of the real ales served, plus information about general facilities such as family rooms, no-smoking areas, accommodation and meals. The Good Beer Guide is therefore also one of the leading pub guidebooks, ideal for holidaymakers and business people, as well as beer enthusiasts.

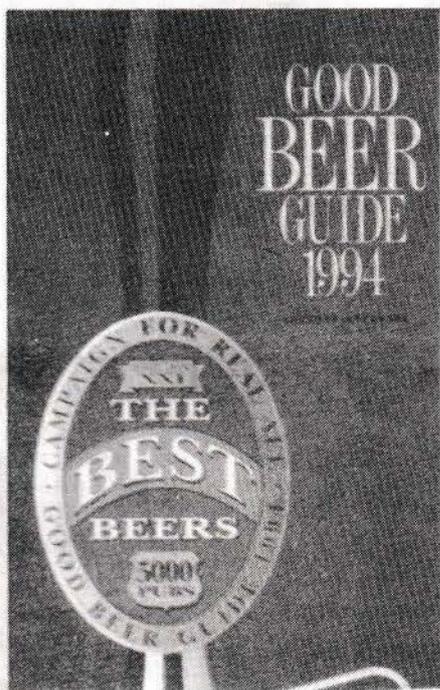
The breweries section of the Guide divides into four parts. Primarily, the focus is on The Independents, the independently owned and run breweries of Britain, large and small. Then come The Nationals, Britain's giant breweries, followed by Brew Pubs, pubs which brew their own beer. The last section is given over to Pub Groups, companies which do not brew but operate large numbers of pubs across the country. For all breweries, information is given about the beers they brew, and tasting notes are supplied to help readers choose which ones to try. A unique beers index matches beers to breweries.

A number of pages are also devoted to entertaining editorial features, some lighthearted, others of a campaigning nature, allowing CAMRA to expose important issues in the brewing industry.

This year well over 30 new breweries and brew pubs feature in the breweries section of the Guide, an indication of how real ale has become the drink of the nineties. The Independents section has grown by over 30% in just two years. Around one-third of the pubs have also changed. There are many new entries, and some old favourites have reclaimed their place in the Guide. This reflects the changing nature of today's pubs and the expansion in the guest beer market. It proves how using old editions can lead to disappointment. Amongst this year's editorial features is 'Beer around Britain', a traveller's guide to enjoying the local flavour of British beer. The Guide also reveals its Beers of the Year, and the Beer Festival Calendar is once again included.

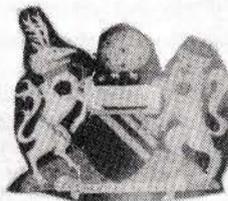
With so much turmoil in the brewing industry, beer fans cannot afford to rely on last year's facts. Order your copy now by simply sending a cheque for £8.99 (post and packing is free), made payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Branch, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG.

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1994



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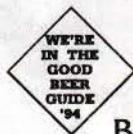
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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

OCTOBER '88

Two items shared the front page - licensing hours, and Greenall's "hitch" - There were comments on the new extended licensing hours, saying that the Press seemed to be giving the impression that comparatively few pubs were making any use at all of the new hours available. It was suggested that perhaps people opposed reform, such as NALHM, the pub managers' union, and anti-alcohol groups, were trying to suggest that reform had been unnecessary.

The other item concerned the promised new premium bitter from Greenall's, Thomas Whitley - the launch to be delayed until April or May next year. The strength is likely to be about 1044 OG, which must put a question mark over the future of Original, which is the current premium beer.

Pub of the Month award (how fitting!) went to the Crown on Heaton Lane, which has taken on a new lease of life following a much-needed refurbishment. There were the usual arguments as to whether the pub has lost some of its character and cosiness as a result of the alterations, but it's overwhelmingly popular with its customers, and is busier now than it has been for many years. Three hand-pumped cask beers - Boddington's Mild & Bitter, & Higson's Bitter.

Robinson's refurbished Bull's Head on Stockport Market came in for some criticism - moving the bar has left the old vault as a cavernous lounge area, whilst the light decor and bright lighting make it strangely soulless. However there were compliments for the new bar with its inset dark green tiles, and handpumps, - unusual for a Robbies refurbishment. Local Brew, an occasional series covering the brewing scene in Greater Manchester, gave details of Robinson's, past and present. It's an appropriate time, as the Brewery has just celebrated its 150th Anniversary, although actual brewing didn't start until a few years after 1838, which was when William Robinson bought the Unicorn Inn, now the site of the present brewery offices. Expansion was slow at first, and the company only owned about a dozen pubs by the turn of the century. But during the 20's, Schofields Portland Brewery, Ashton, and Kays Atlas Brewery, Longsight, were taken over; then, a major acquisition was Bell & Co. in 1949, and finally, Hartley's of Ulverston was bought in 1982. Further investment in the Lake District Brewery suggested that its future was safe. (But is any brewery "safe"? Robinson's closed Hartleys in October 1991, and then planned to demolish some of the buildings, including a listed chimney. The only Hartley beer now being brewed is XB - at Stockport of course.)

CURMUDGEON



Tony Wilkinson wrote a lighthearted article on it in September's "Opening Times", and it was a point well made, but it's a serious issue which doesn't get the publicity it deserves. What is it? Disappearing public toilets, of course. In the past year, Stockport has closed about half the toilets in the borough. There are now only about 15 in the whole of the City of Manchester.

This may only be a minor inconvenience to drinkers (but it may also be an inconvenience to others if they are forced to relieve themselves elsewhere). It can, though, severely restrict the activities of groups in society such as the elderly, pregnant women and mothers with young children, often those who are disadvantaged in other ways too. I know local authorities aren't exactly flush with money, but no-one can tell me that, even so, they don't waste money on fripperies which would be better spent on basic necessities like loos.

A large local pub has recently been refurbished and half the lounge turned into a no-smoking area. The result is that, even when it's pretty busy, the customers cluster in the smoking area, as hardly any of them are in wholly non-smoking groups. They only occupy the no-smoking zone as a desperate measure late in the evening. Is this responding to demand, or forcing a trendy no-smoking policy down people's throats?

In the past ten years we have seen a highly effective campaign against smoking, to the extent that it is rapidly being confined to something done in private between consenting adults. There are disturbing parallels with the campaign now being increasingly waged against those who enjoy alcoholic drinks. I don't smoke myself, but that connection worries me.

O.K., if customers demand no-smoking areas in pubs, the brewers should provide them, in the same way as they provide Taboo and Mirage and tomato sauce crisps. But drinkers should regard any surrender pubs make to the dreary killjoys of the "health" lobby with a healthy dose of scepticism.

Maybe such views are "politically incorrect", but I'm sure I wasn't by any means the only person in Greater Manchester to breathe a sigh of relief when it was announced that the 2000 Olympics were to be awarded to Sydney!

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PUB GAMES

BY TOM LORD



This is another card game which unusually can be played by larger numbers of people; in fact the more the merrier, perhaps with an upper limit of a dozen.

Each player is dealt one card. Cards are kept face downwards, except a king of any suit. This card is turned face upwards and left on the table, in front of the player. Each player has three lives and a score needs to be kept of the number of lives lost. Each time a life is lost a player contributes to the kitty. After losing three lives the player withdraws from that game.

Play rotates from the dealers left and the object is to avoid being the player with the lowest card at the end of one complete rotation.

The first player at the dealers left looks at his card and decides if its value is high enough for him to 'stick'. If it is low enough for him to wish to discard it he passes it to the player on his left, who gives him his card in return. You may get a card higher than the one you are passing on, but you may be handed one of a lower value e.g. a three for a five.

The second player then has to decide whether to 'stick' or pass the card he holds (or the one he has received) on to his neighbour etc. and so on in rotation, except that the rotation cannot move past an upturned king. The player to the right of an upturned king is stuck with his card or one passed on to him in rotation.

When the rotation reaches the dealer he can either stick with the card he has had passed to him or change it for the one from the top of the deck.

All cards are then revealed and the player with the lowest card pays to the kitty and loses a life. If more than one player has the same lowest card i.e. 2 threes, both pay and lose lives. The winner is the last person with a life.

Great merriment can ensue from the game provided it is played for small stakes and after a few pints, with the whole top room taking part.

Metrolink The Axe Lifted?

We reported recently the threat from Metrolink's proposed Ashton-under-Lyne extension to the Grove and the Sir Humphrey Chetham in Clayton. We now learn that a re-routing has been proposed which passes behind the pubs and relocates Clayton station, originally planned to replace the Grove, on vacant land nearby.

While it's too early to be complacent - the re-routing has not yet been approved, and does nothing to save the also-threatened Auld Lang Syne in Ancoats - there is at least a chance that common sense, backed by local opinion and pressure from CAMRA and Holts' Brewery, may have won the day. If so, the Grove looks set to become the pleasantest waiting room on the entire Metrolink system! More news when we have it.



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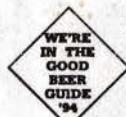
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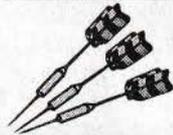
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Fistfull of Arrows



by
**Brian
Carey**

Two of Cale Green's array of county stars took individual honours. Darryl Fitton hammered home 10 maximum scores, while colleague Phil Kerr's 11 darter against Coral Leisure's Brian Lynch, was the best chuck of the season. Lynch, though, gained no little compensation in throwing a

Like it or not, the Olympic decision has been made. And this time (again) Manchester lost the vote.

Whatever the outcome for the city may have been, a number of sporting bodies will be fighting for the right to become an Olympic sport. It is quite possible that darts could be among them, and might even be a demonstration event at the 2000 Olympiad.

The generally held impression is that darts is very much a British game, and, of course, to a certain extent that is true. We do dominate the game by sheer size of numbers. There are millions playing every night in pubs the length and breadth of the land. But the sport is popular in many other parts of the world.

No less than 60 countries have been invited to send their champions to the Winmau World Championships later this year. Four of those countries have been invited for the first time: Latvia, Faroe Islands, Slovakia and Uzbekistan.

Surprisingly, the move to include the Games does not come from one of the Home Countries. In fact it is Fiji who are pushing for inclusion. So it is clear that it isn't only the Brits who are darts obsessed.

There are certainly one or three local players who are good enough to represent their country at the highest level.

The Stockport Licensed Houses Super League has drawn to a conclusion, with Cale Green Social Club finishing the season unbeaten. Dilke Sports 'A' were the runners-up, with Magnet, the Knock-out winners, finishing third.

maximum 170 finish. Magnet's Dave Tracey also achieved the same feat.

Levenshulme's Sidings won promotion to the Super League from Premier 'A' Division at the first attempt. Edgeley's Bluebell were Premier 'B' winners.

Cheadle Sports and Social took both the General Division league title and were also Slip-up winners. After being league leaders until the last match of the season, Reddish's Union had to be content with the second spot. The Railway, Heaton Norris were Slip-up runners-up. General Division Cup Winners Bungalow beat Pineapple, Heaton Lane, by the odd game in a closely fought final.

All local throwers have the chance to prove themselves against the best on Friday nights at the Bobby Peel in Castle Street. Teletaxis are the new sponsors of the Stockport Individual Open, the title currently held by Cheshire Open champion Tony O'Shea.

Eight weekly heat winners will go forward to the November final. The eventual winner will pick up a cool £200 plus the Teletaxis Trophy. There will be cash prizes for all eight finalists.

In addition, every competitor will be entered into a free draw for a weeks accommodation in Torremolinos, thanks to the generosity of Bobby Peel landlord John Parkin.

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**HIGH PEAK
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**OCT
93**

The Commercial Inn, Glossop

The Commercial Inn at Glossop is this month's choice as High Peak Branch "Pub of the Month".

Situated at the East side of the town near Manor Park, it is a corner terraced Whitbread house that has been altered extensively inside since the mid-seventies when it was a multi-roomed inn. Firstly it was made more open plan, then, following fires on two occasions, it was refurbished several more times.

These days it is back to stability, landlord Brian Greenwood being at the pub for six years. Beers on offer are Marstons Pedigree, Boddingtons Bitter, Whitbread Summer Ale (shortly changing to Higsons bitter) and a guest beer that is usually Taylors Landlord, Flowers Original, Abbott Ale or Speckled Hen.

A most extensive menu including Children's menu, Sunday lunch, sandwiches and Vegetarian should cater for all tastes, served in a separate room not overlooked from the main bar area. It is an ideal place for a family meal, with also a separate function room for 60 upstairs.

With the Prince of Wales in close proximity, it is a part of Glossop worth seeking out, with three other nearby pubs in Old Glossop Village. From the railway station, it is little more than five minutes up High Street East.

Lass O'Gowrie

The popular city centre pub-brewhouse has just been repainted and, as part of the exterior refurbishment a plaque has appeared on the end wall marking what is claimed to be the site of Manchester's oldest 'Pissotiere',



last used, it would seem, in 1896. And indeed, if you lean over the parapet of the Medlock bridge you can see the site of this historic installation - a better view will be available from the balcony of neighbouring Joshua Brooks when this is brought into use.

There have also been a couple of changes in the drinks range at the Lass - traditional Bulmers cider has been replaced by Biddenden from Kent (CAMRA's Cider of the Year) and the Chesters Bitter has been swapped for Castle Eden Ale, although this latter is due to an occasional rotation of the Whitbread beers rather than being a permanent change.

Heard at a beer festival - and said with all seriousness after consuming 10 pints - "This Real Ale stuff 'll never catch on!"

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b News...
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Pub news is quite extensive this month and includes a walk around Mossley reported to me by the inestimable Geoff Lees:

Starting off in a new addition to the hostelries of Mossley - the former Woodend WMC has been transformed into the **Woodend Tavern**. It is a free(?) house and was at the time of Geoff's visit serving Marstons Bitter and Pedigree and Robinsons Best Bitter all on handpump. It is encouraging to see this open as a pub after the building and associated land had been earmarked for residential development. We wish the proprietors success in this venture.

The next port of call was the **Tollemache**, a long time stalwart of the GBG where the beer was found to be in its usual excellent form. On to the **Roaches Lock** where Marstons Pedigree, Boddies Bitter and Thwaites Bitter were on handpump.

Moving relentlessly on, the **Commercial** (by the Station) was next to be the subject of the party's scrutiny. It was serving Worthington Bitter and Light and Matthew Browns Dark Mild to the accompaniment of a throbbing Disco. It was not discovered if any stuff was strutted by our correspondent. The next stop, the **Friendship** displayed three handpumps

but only one was in use, dispensing Vaux's Samson, and a diversion to the **Britannia** and a pint of Marstons Bitter rounded off the evening's entertainment in one of the branches farthest-flung outposts.

Back in more familiar territory, the **Duke of York** in Romiley is now serving Marstons Pedigree and Cotleigh Bitter alongside the usual John Smith's Bitter and Directors. These are welcome additions as are the handpumps which have recently been fitted in the upstairs restaurant.

The often overlooked **Otterslodge** in Marple is serving **Boddies Bitter and Flowers IPA** for those who may want a change from the **Holts and Coachhouse** available down the road at the **Bowling Green**.

Back in Tameside, the **Royal Albert** (Hyde) which has been on the market for some time does not have a 'For Sale' sign displayed. Whether this is simply vandalism or something more interesting has yet to be discovered!

The **Woodman** on Oldham Road in Ashton has **Holts Bitter**, **John Smiths Bitter** and **Magnet** on handpump and the **White House** in Stalybridge has added **Morlands Old Speckled Hen** to its range.

To round off in Oldham, the **Hogshead** on Union Street has been getting good reviews and has been outshining its more illustrious neighbour, **The Beer Emporium**, recently.

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

A busier month than many recently has brought a clutch of openings and real ale gains. To start with perhaps the most unexpected, West Coast Brewery's Best Bitter is now on handpump in the Arndale Centre! It's at the Checkpoint Charlie cafe bar on Barbirolli Mall, adjacent to the Corporation Street entrance to the centre, and is normally priced at £1.20 a pint. However, the bar's location means it is subject to the Arndale "curfew", so evening opening hours are severely restricted and Sundays non-existent.

There's no Sunday opening either at the Roadhouse in Newton Street in the City Centre, but six days a week the pub is open from 9pm to 2am, with handpumps dispensing Marstons Pedigree and guests, and a stage dispensing live music, often with a rhythm-and-blues influence. There's a door charge, and beer prices are in the range £1.50 - £1.70, but it's nevertheless a pleasant place to while away the night hours for those of us who got a taste for such things during last month's brief extension-hours experiment.

The Beer House in Angel Street is about to undergo a major refurbishment. The pub will remain open throughout - a brave decision - with somewhat reduced facilities. The new high quality bar (which can only be got in by knocking a huge hole in the wall (the mind boggles) will reduce the range of handpumps to about 14, but substantially increase the customer area. Work starts on the 10th, and should be ready for a grand re-opening by October 22nd.

A new student year brings the conversion to real ale of yet another college bar - this time it's the main bar of the Royal Northern College of Music on Booth Street West. With Boddingtons Bitter and Flowers IPA on handpump, it's open

to concertgoers, and indeed passing members of the public, as well as to students - who may find £1.50 for a pint of Boddies something of a strain on the grant.

In Gorton, the Steelworks on Gorton Lane has re-opened, with handpumped Worthington Best Bitter the only real ale in a Bass-supplied range, and the same beer is on handpump at Bass's Woodpecker on Selstead Road in Wythenshawe (next to Woodhouse Park Labour Club, and not far to walk from Manchester Airport station.)

The Junction on Hyde Road in West Gorton has re-opened, though I've not yet sampled the range of beers.

And let's not forget Joshua Brooks on the corner of Princess Street and Charles Street in the City Centre, which was due to open - after frenzied building work - on Thursday 23rd September, in time for Manchester's Olympic consolation party. Expect Boddingtons to be the main attraction here.

There are beer changes at both the City Centre's main railway stations with Victoria's Station Bar gaining Stones Bitter on handpump while Bonaparte's on Piccadilly Station, gets rid of Websters in favour of handpumped Tetley Bitter. Elsewhere in the City Centre, the City Arms has dropped Moorhouses Premier (shame!) in favour of handpumped Tetley Imperial, while the range on handpump at the City Road Inn is now Boddingtons Bitter and Ruddles County.

At the Milestone in Burnage, cask-conditioned Banks Mild is once again available on electric pump, while in Fallowfield the range at the Queen of Hearts is now Boddingtons Bitter, Greenalls Original and Tetley Bitter, all on handpump.

Finally, best news for years for Withington drinkers is the take-over of the Orion on Burton Rd by Holts, from October 5th. It can be safely predicted that mild and bitter will be available on handpump; it can also be safely predicted that the pub's fortunes will be revolutionised!

THE BEER HOUSE

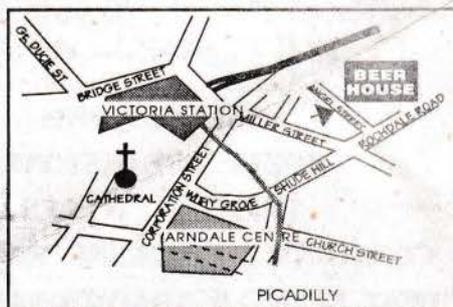
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

BETWEEN 10th & 21st OCTOBER THE BEER HOUSE IS UNDERGOING MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND AT CERTAIN TIMES (MAINLY AT THE START OF EACH WEEK) ONLY THE UPSTAIRS BAR WILL BE OPEN WITH A RESTRICTED RANGE OF BEERS AVAILABLE. HOPEFULLY THE NEW IMPROVED BAR WILL BE FULLY FUNCTIONAL QUICKLY, CREATING MUCH MORE SPACE FOR CUSTOMERS. WE WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGISE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE THE DISRUPTION WILL CAUSE!

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CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Once again we have a month packed with events, starting on Friday 8th with a minibus trip around some of the more interesting pubs in East Manchester. If you want to book a place phone Dawn on 445 0872.

On Monday 11th the Social will be at the Crown, Vallance Close, West Gorton. In common with all Monday socials this starts at 9.00pm. This is followed on Thursday 14th by the branch meeting at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. This starts at 8.00pm.

Monday 18th sees a social at the Thatched House, Churchgate, Stockport and the following night we are holding the first preliminary meeting to organise the 1994 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The meeting will be in the upstairs room of the Blossoms, Heaviley from 8.00pm onwards. A heavy week finishes on Friday 22nd with a Stagger around West Didsbury and Withington. We start at 7.00pm at the Barleycorn on Barlow Moor Road and we will be at the Waterloo on Burton Road at 8.30. This will also be a chance to sample the Holts in the Orion!

The weekend of 23rd/24th sees a trip to the West Country to present the Cider and Perry of the Festival awards from the last Stockport Beer and Cider Festival. Last year's trip was quite memorable and if you're interested this time give Dawn a ring.

The social on Monday 25th is a two-way affair in Levenshulme; 9.00pm at the Union on Stockport Road and 10.00pm at the Sidings on Broom Lane. On Thursday 28th we present our Pub of the Month award to the Crown on Heaton Lane (see page 2) and the week is rounded off on Sunday 31st with a leisurely lunchtime drink in Rusholme (12 noon Welcome; 1.00pm Osborne House; 2.00pm Albert) followed by a curry.

If you live in the Romiley, Bredbury, Woodley and Marple areas you fall under the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch who have notified us of the following events: the monthly meeting will be on Monday 11th at the Dog & Partridge, Denton, aim to get there at 8.30. On Wednesday 20th there is a social and Good Beer Guide presentation at the Oddfellows in Ashton. This starts at 8.00pm and sandwiches will be provided. On Saturday 23rd there is a coach trip to the Wortley Arms micro-brewery and environs. For details of this phone Tom Lord on 427 7099 (home) or 837 4474 (work). On Sunday 24th there is a stroll starting at the Hayfield Visitors Centre and finishing at the Royal Oak in Hayfield which will be staging a mini beer festival. Details of this can be had from Frank Wood on 0457 865426. The contact for other High Peak information is Ralph Warrington on 236 2131 (work) or 368 3624 (home). Members of both branches are of course welcome to attend each others events.

Robinson's

Search for New Image

To celebrate Brewery Month 1993 Robinson's is inviting local artists to submit work depicting its brewery, beers, public houses or their atmosphere. There is a cash prize of £250 for the winner with runners-up prizes of trays of Robinson's Best Bitter.

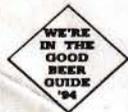
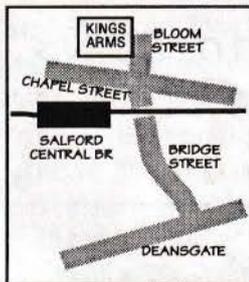
Any type of visual image may be submitted and it is hoped that the best entries will form a travelling exhibition visiting a number of pubs in the Robinson's estate.

The closing date for entries is 31 March 1994 and entry forms may be collected from any Robinson's pub. All enquiries should be directed to Barry Hook Associates on 061 477 0854.

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CALLING ALL STUDENTS

So you've arrived in sunny Manchester. So you've got a term's money to spend. So you like the odd drink, right? So what can Manchester offer you? The truth is, you couldn't have chosen a better place to "study". Greater Manchester is one of the most densely populated areas in the country in terms of pubs, as well as students, and there will be something here to suit every taste. For the first few weeks you will be busy making as many friends as you can, and how better to do this than over a few drinks at a good pub? Nightclubs are okay in their way, but often the music is a trifle too loud to make intelligent conversation, and it is rare to find decent beer in such places. If you do manage to get a good pint, you will more than likely be paying well over the odds for it.

So - you've decided to go to a pub. Where do you go? Anywhere is the answer. If you don't like it, for whatever reason, you can leave and go somewhere else. Next time you go for a drink, go somewhere else. You will soon find places you like. And since each pub is unique, you can choose your pub to suit the occasion. Some pubs are student orientated, and we can all think of a few examples. A few pubs are so notoriously anti-student that you will probably have heard of them already and be studiously avoiding them. But the vast majority are more than happy to have you spend your entire grant or loan over their bar.

But what choice is there? If you stick with Stella or Strongbow, probably the only thing influencing where you drink is the price (but ask yourself why you drink these; is it because it's fashionable, or do you enjoy being ripped off?). But for the real ale tippler, Manchester offers a whole variety of milds, light ales, bitters, premium beers and barley wines to be sipped and savoured. Now that both Chesters and "The Cream of Manchester" itself have fallen under the control of Whitbread, the uninitiated may think the local brewing industry has had its days of glory. Think again! With around six firmly independent breweries operating and doing well, Manchester is still the envy of many areas of the

country. Look out for Robinsons for hoppy and refreshing bitters and mild, and the respected Old Tom (which has the same alcohol content as K cider yet is cheaper), Hydes for a classic pint, Lees famous 'smokey' beers, the whole range of Dobbins award-winning West Coast beers at low prices and not forgetting Holts, the legendary cheapest beer in the country and an excellent pint to boot.

In addition the Lass O Gowrie and Flea and Firkin are brew pubs offering their own ranges of unique beers brewed on the premises.

For a wide range of beers from all over the country try one of the numerous free houses, the best of which are probably the Marble Arch and the Beer House in Manchester and the Crescent in Salford. Look out too for one of the many local beer festivals, including the UMIST beer bash in November, the Flea & Firkin festival, and those in such easy-to-reach places as Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton, Bury, Oldham and, next summer, Stockport.

**CAMRA - THE PUBGOERS' CHAMPION
JOIN NOW !**

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

If you are concerned about what you drink, you will join the Campaign for Real Ale, which is offering student membership for a mere five quid a year. Even if you don't join CAMRA, don't just go to the nearest pub; be discerning, get value for money and decent beer. But most of all, enjoy it! Oh, and good luck with the 'studying'...

If you want any further information, or you have any views on anything aley, contact me.

**Richard Hough
(CAMRA Student Liaison Officer)
91 Lowfield Road
Shaw Heat
Stockport
Cheshire
SK3 8JR**



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: 18-2: 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 Tiffensor, 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





In Edgeley, the Jolly Crofter was undergoing a major refurbishment as we went to press. This presumably means that brewers Vaux have found a new tenant for this often troubled pub. Hopefully more news next time.

It's all change in Bramhall with Simon Eason-Brookes moving from Bramhalls to the Bromale on West Park Road. In total contrast to Simon's previous pub, Bramhalls, this is essentially a neighbourhood pub catering for a mainly local trade. A third beer will be joining the Stones and Worthington currently on sale - Simon is pushing for Highgate Mild which will be a real coup if he can pull it off. There is also the possibility of guest beers which continue to go well at Bramhalls which is now run by Penny Armstrong. Penny has had plenty of experience as a relief for Bass, although this will be her first pub. We understand no major changes are planned for Bramhalls where the guest beer scheme will continue.

In Fallowfield, Yates Wine Lodge has gone back to real ale with handpumped Websters Yorkshire Bitter and John Smiths Bitter. The latter was rather good on a recent visit.

After a short period of closure, Porky Pigs Pie Shop on St Petersgate, Stockport has reopened, currently being run by the same holding company who also look after the Imperial just down the road. Websters Yorkshire Bitter has now gone and has been replaced by John Smiths Bitter on Handpump.

In Edgeley there has been a small change to the beer range at the Prince Albert on Castle Street - out goes Stones Bitter to be replaced by Websters Green Label.

A shuffling of the pack of Sam Smiths licensees now sees Barry from Turners Vaults, Stockport, at the Falcon in Chester. Richard, the summer relief manager, has gone to the Tin Bobbin in Burnley. In his place we welcome Dave and Paula Harris. Stockport born and bred, Dave arrives after 18 months at the Adswold WMC, a rare Banks's outlet. He is a real ale enthusiast who has one aim: to keep up the reputation of Turners as a good traditional pub serving excellent beer. He is also keen on serving quality food at lunchtimes (as was Barry) but he emphasises that the place is primarily a pub, with the accent firmly on beer first, food second. We wish them all the best for the future.

Towards the end of August a guest beer joined the range at the Ash in Heaton Norris. Already on sale were Wilsons Mild and Bitter, and Websters National Bitter, all from Halifax, as well as Ruddles Best Bitter from the Oakham outpost of the Grolsch empire. Holts Bitter now sells at £1.06 and should provide competition for the Wilsons Mild at £1.24 and Websters Bitter at £1.25.

Our report last month that Bass had bought the Queen of Hearts in Fallowfield appears to have been wide of the mark - certainly there was no indication of a Bass presence when Opening Times called recently, the beer range being Tetley Bitter, Boddies Bitter, Greenalls Original and, with pumpclips turned round, Burton Ale.

At the Grey Horse, Old Road, Heaton Norris Greenalls Original has gone from the bar. The recent price increase of 8p took it to £1.40 a pint and customers stopped drinking it. So much for inflation at less than 2%. Perhaps there is a hidden agenda at Greenalls PubCo or Tetley-Walker Warrington which threatens the future of Original. The good news is that the Grey Horse continues to sell a decent pint of Greenalls Bitter (from Tetleys Warrington) and a very good pint of the permanent guest beer, Young's Bitter, both at £1.26. This is a bargain price for the London brewed Youngs.

At the Comfy Gill, King Street West, across the road from the bus depot handpumped cask Boddingtons Mild makes a welcome return.

Little Jack Homers on Wellington Street, Stockport was closed as we went to press. Details are unclear but we understand that this is due to domestic difficulties at the pub. More news when we have it.

Bigger for '93 !

Open:
Friday 12-15.00, 17.00-23.00
Saturday 12.00-15.00, 18.00-23.00

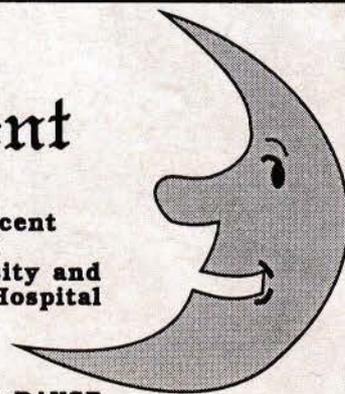


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