

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING

CAMRA

No:
118

TIMES

FEBRUARY 1994

STILL
FREE

CROWN, HEATON LANE WINS PUB OF THE YEAR

After a vigorous debate in which it was a pity that any of the leading contenders had to lose, the much sought after Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Year Award has been won by the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport.

This is an astonishing achievement for a pub which has only been run in its present form for little over a year and can be put down to both the foresight of the Boddington PubCo who own the pub but most of all to licensee Ken Birch.

The Crown has always been a good pub and indeed in its previous incarnation was also a Pub of the Year winner for 1986. However, despite the efforts of the hard working licensees, trade had tailed off and Boddingtons decided a change of direction was necessary to restore the pub's fortunes. The "Ale House" concept had already been successfully tried out in Salford and Birkenhead and the Crown became the third in the chain. A limited and successful refurbishment together with the installation of a battery of handpumps set the scene. But of course, in this type of set up, the licensee is the most important component and to take on this vital job in came Ken Birch, former regional CAMRA stalwart and beer enthusiast.

Ken has been given pretty much a free hand in the running of the pub and the result has been a triumph - well-kept, interesting beers, imaginative live entertainment and a crackling atmosphere have all gone to make the Crown an institution on the local drinking scene.

The Crown feels as though it has been run like this for years although it's just over a year old. That in itself is tribute to Ken and his staff who are already looking forward to receiving their award. The presentation will be on Saturday 19th March and all are welcome. Just get there early as it promises to be a busy night.



Stockport Beer & Cider Festival '94

Yes, Believe it or not planning is already underway for this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, the eighth. The Stockport Express Advertiser have once again agreed to sponsor the festival which will be held in the Town Hall Ballroom.

More beer and cider than ever is promised and the organisers tell us that plans have already been laid to avoid some of the teething problems that occurred with last year's move to the new venue, in particular hot food, quieter entertainment and more beers available at busy sessions. The dates for your diaries are 2nd to 4th June. We will be covering the festival in more depth over the next few issues.

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PUB of the Month February

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					

The February Pub of the Month award goes to the Crown in Northenden. A classic locals pub the Crown is the oldest, smallest and probably the busiest pub in Northenden.

Until 1978 it was at the end of a row of terraced houses, but now stands alone next to the police station built on the site of the houses. The pub's old nickname was the "Corner Pin" being at the junction of Ford Lane and Boat Lane, both of which lead down to the nearby river Mersey and riverside walks. Looking across from the door of the pub to the church it's easy to imagine Northenden as a Cheshire village before it was swallowed up by the City of Manchester and the outskirts of Wythenshawe.

The pub itself comprises a small basic public bar and a pleasant lounge which is subdivided to provide an intimate and homely atmosphere.

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Licensee Simon Lyons and his brother Jimmy have been responsible for the pub since 1987 having taken over from their father who had been licensee for 2 years. As with many Boddington PubCo pubs in Manchester, their customers are extremely loyal to Boddingtons beers and Simon's and Jimmy's attempts to introduce alternative cask beers alongside Boddingtons Mild and Bitter have not met with great success. It is a measure of their success, however, that on a recent "Stagger" around Gatley and Northenden the Crown was considered to have the best beer of the night against very stiff competition from the Hydes pub in Gatley and the improving Farmers Arms down the road.

It is in recognition of this excellent beer and the first class local pub that they run that we shall be presenting the Pub of the Month Award to Simon and Jimmy on Thursday 24th February. This is the first time a Northenden pub has been given the accolade and a good night should be had by all.

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The Station, Cheadle

There is one pub in Cheadle that can be overlooked by anyone searching for a pub lunch in the area. Overlooked, because it is not in the centre of Cheadle and because it can easily be missed, being hidden below the level of Manchester Road and out of sight to all but those who are observant enough to spot the pub sign as they drive past.

I had heard on the grape vine that for January the Station was offering lunches, two for the price of one, and so it seemed like a good bet for an economic mid week pub lunch. Formed from the old Cheadle railway station, the pub is a long narrow building with a central island bar and with a glass conservatory type extension built onto the old platform. In common with most of Banks's pub conversions a lot of money and care has been spent to create a pub that feels like a pub and one that most pub goers would be happy to visit.

The fabric of the pub is pleasant and functional without it being tacky or too gimmicky. There is a good menu with meals ranging from Jacket Potatoes with various fillings (£1.25 to £2.75), Cottage Pie and Liver & Onions (both £2.65), Chilli Con Carne and Spicy Pork Casserole (both £3.65), and Steak & Kidney Pie and Lasagne (both £3.90). Cooked specially to order today were Vegetable Chilli (£2.95), Cumberland Sausage (£3.65), and Gammon (£3.95). For those that still have room after eating the main course, sweets are also available and include Gatteau and Apple Pie.

I went for the Gammon whilst my partner chose the Steak & Kidney Pie. The piece of Gammon was thick covering a large part of the plate and was served with a ring of pineapple, chips, garden peas and salad. The Steak and Kidney Pie was served with roast potatoes, peas, carrots, and swede. Both meals were good quality and generous helpings representing excellent value particularly with the two for the price of one special offer. We washed our meals down with the Banks's Bitter (£1.36) and Banks's Mild (£1.29), the latter being extremely good. Too few milds these days have real character but Banks's Mild when properly kept can be very good indeed. Marstons Pedigree was also on sale at a somewhat overpriced (£1.63) a pint, but when I tried it I found it to be in disappointing condition probably not helped by the fact that I appeared to be the only person drinking it. The Station for some time now has struggled to find its own niche in the Cheadle pub scene. To some extent I am still not sure what market it is aiming for. In the evenings it can get busy with the younger clientele, some of which are no doubt attracted by the bank of video/fruit machines along one wall. I did find the constant beeping and flashing of these machines a little irritating. At lunchtimes however it can be busy with local people and business men in search of a good lunch. I would ask the licensee if he could make the dining area non smoking as smoke from nearby tables can unintentionally drift across and in my case impair on the enjoyment of my meal.

SB

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

FEBRUARY '89

The possible fate of the Red Lion in Cheadle was considered in detail on the front page. The licensee was due to retire in April, and it was rumoured that Playmaster Leisure were going to take over - they already leased four of Robinson's pubs. The Red Lion was an excellent example of a community pub with active darts, football and rugby teams, a good cross-section of customers of all ages, and last but not least, the elusive Robinson's "ordinary" Bitter. Cheadle Civic Society were concerned that the feared development would spoil the character of the community, and attract undesirables - another Playmaster run pub, the Puss in Boots in Offerton, had long endured a depressing reputation for violence. There was no confirmation yet that the pub was to go to Playmaster, but the regulars were anxious to keep the pub as it was. So it looked like a case of wait and see what happens.

There was information on three Milds :-

Hyde's Anvil Mild has caramel added to produce a darker mild for some outlets. Their Best Mild has now been re-styled Anvil Light (it is lighter than the Anvil before the caramel is added.)

Robinson's Dark Best Mild, produced by adding caramel to Best Mild, is now found in only two pubs - the Old Pack Horse in Chapel-en-le-Frith, and the Red Lion in Lower Withington, near Macclesfield.

A new Tetley Dark Mild is being test marketed, but there are no outlets in Opening Times circulation area, but it can be tried at the Smiths Arms in Ancoats.

"Broken promises and broken breweries" was the heading of a hard hitting article about Greenalls - there was a reference to the use of fake handpumps to mislead customers, and their history of brewery closures - Northgate Brewery, Chester; Magee Marshall; Groves & Whitnall; Simpkins; Wern, and Davenport - all closed since 1969. (Of course Greenalls have stopped brewing altogether now, and their sudden unannounced demolition of Tommy Ducks will rankle for years to come.)

Finally, the Junction at Cheadle Hulme has at last closed, and major alterations are expected to take at least six months to complete.

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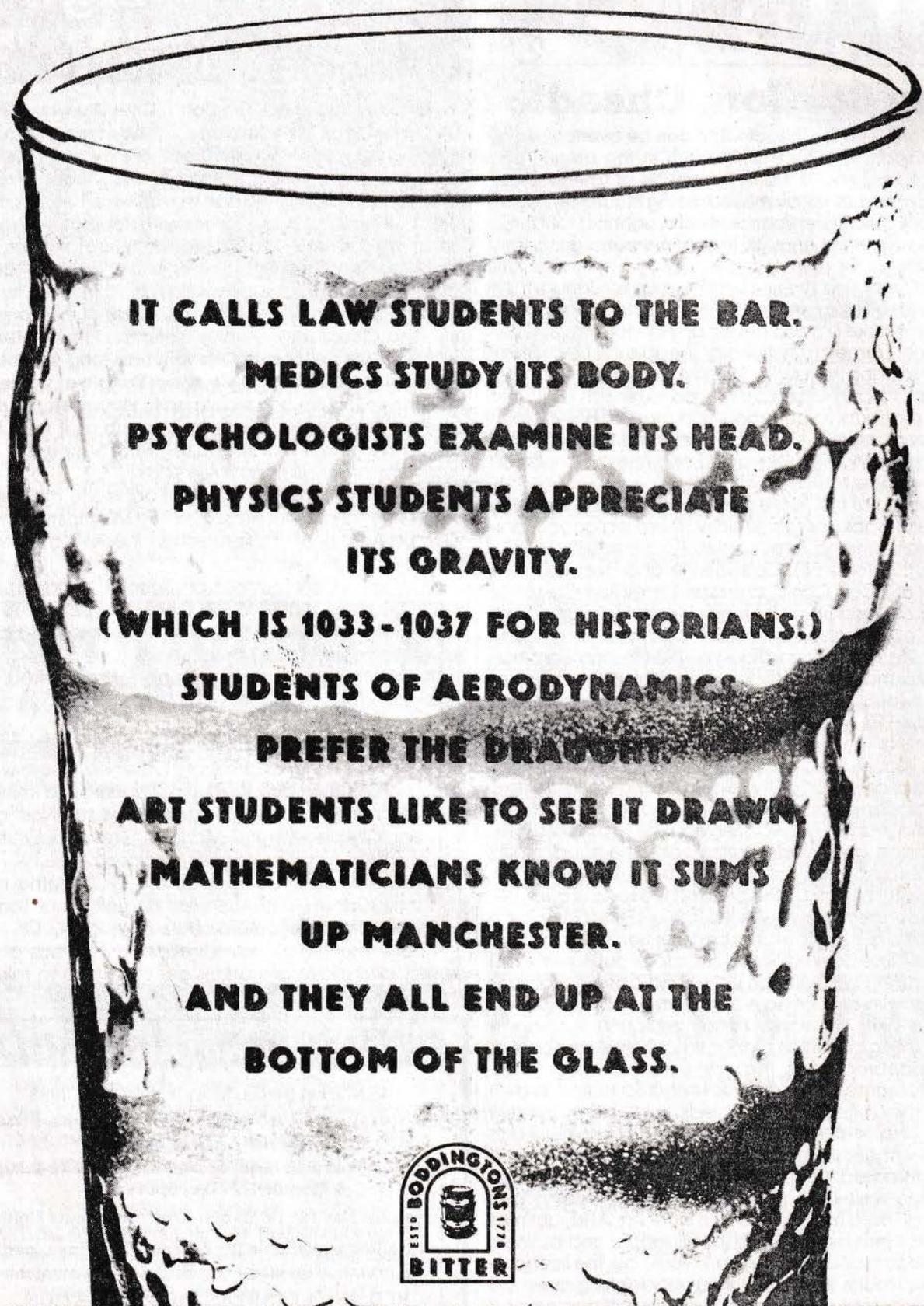
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OPENING TIMES

LETTERS



From Rhys Jones

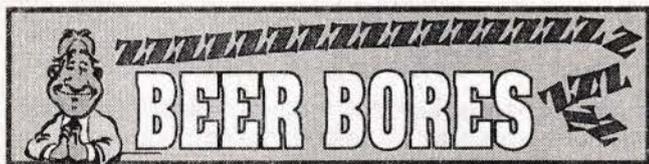
"Curmudgeon" last month drew attention to the surprisingly high price of keg Guinness. My own attention was drawn to this on a recent Sunday lunchtime when, finding myself in Wigan, I visited the Orwell at the Pier and found West Coast Brewery's Yakima Grande Porter on sale. This superb beer - on tip-top form, creamy and mouth-puckeringly-hoppy - cost £1.60 a pint, quite reasonable for a 5.5%ABV beer in an upmarket venue. Also on the bar was "Draught" Guinness, and, out of curiosity I asked the price - this beer of a mere 4.1%ABV, benefitting I suppose from the economies of scale of a large company, cost a thumping £1.64! I continued to drink porter.

From Jim Mulvey, licensee of the Swan Hotel, Shaw Heath

Regarding your article on the Jolly Crofter, can I applaud your sentiments in commending Jane and Roy for weeding out the "difficult" customers. More coverage should be given to this problem in the Edgeley area. In my 12 months at the Swan, this has been the biggest problem. Now that the Crofter has the same policy as myself perhaps the area may be restored to its former more respectable reputation.

From Richard Hough

Is the 'Best Before' date on bottled beer of any significance? Surely bottle-conditioned (i.e. real) beer improves with age? (Editor's note - the 'best before' date is, I believe, an EC requirement and as you imply, in the case of many bottle-conditioned beers is fairly meaningless.)



Continuing our occasional series featuring the worst verbal excesses of the pub and beer scene. This gem comes from Manchester listings magazine City Life who sent reporter Matt Greenhalgh to review the Old Monkey, Holts new pub in the City Centre. Now read on....

"There's also something very macho about the Holt's ale house experience, it's a hard drinkers venue, you go there to get legless and that makes you hard. Thus the murky, unforgiving, unrelenting bitter liquid with a dangerous malignant froth, served in a thick-skinned pot takes on the persona of a pit-bull beer. It's all very phallic, which is why I can see this place becoming popular on match days."

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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

Michael Heseltine's Deregulation Bill, published last month means bad news for consumers.

It was already taken as read that the Bill would consign to the dustbin the Government's pre-election pledge to implement Section 43 of the Weights & Measures Act. However, not content with letting drinkers continue paying millions of pounds a year for the froth on their pints, the Bill attacks other consumer rights:

- ★ Pubs will no longer be obliged to display a price list
- ★ they will not have to give information about the strength of the beers sold
- ★ there will be no obligation to display opening hours

All axed in the name of attacking bureaucracy.

The real attack is on drinkers rights - it will be interesting to see how many of our local pubs continue to do the decent thing and provide the basic information that pub-goers should be entitled to expect.

We were planning to run a feature on pubs serving hand-pumped beer into lined glasses, thus ensuring their customers a full pint. The Grapes in Hazel Grove seemed a prime candidate having used lined glasses for years. No longer - brim measures are now the order of the day. Do any pubs out there pull beer into oversize glasses? We'd love to hear from you if you do.

John Clarke

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Perfect Pint - Imperfect Measure

Last month the Government published its long-awaited de-regulation bill and, as expected, confirmed that the pre-election pledge to implement Section 43 of the Weights & Measures Act, the so-called full pint clause, had been ditched.

To counter the uproar when the climbdown was first announced, last October the Brewers Society produced "Guidance notes on the dispense of draught beer", which had this to say:

"Licensees should ensure that their bar staff are fully trained in the law and this guidance and are committed to ensuring that, having regard to the reasonable preferences and expectations of their customers with respect to a head...on beers, they will receive at least 95% liquid."

While this will still be paying up to 10p for the froth on your beer, most people would doubtless be happy enough with that much head on their pint. Compare this however with notes issued by Whitbread on "how to serve a perfect pint" of Boddingtons Bitter. This includes the following nugget: "You'll know that it has been poured to perfection when the head, **which should be at least 15mm deep**, laces the glass evenly as the beer is drunk."

Depending on the type of glass we calculate that with a 15mm head you'll only get 85 or 90% liquid in your pint at most. We look forward to hearing that Whitbread will be correcting their dangerous advice, in the meantime any licensee attempting to serve a 'perfect pint' to Whitbread guidelines stands a very good chance of being reported to the nearest Trading Standards office.

Out of Line

We are also hearing reports of trade representatives telling pubs that lined glasses 'are no longer being made available' and recommending that they switch back to brim measures. We think that this is down to individual salesmen trying to make money by encouraging unnecessary changes of glassware.

According to Autobar, who are the biggest dealers in glasses in the country, all UK manufacturers produce lined glasses, they are still on all price lists and indeed many manufacturers have invested heavily in new plant to make lined glasses. Opening Times can certainly confirm this as local suppliers Stephenson's are to supply several hundred lined glasses for the next Stockport Beer Festival.

Perhaps it was the blandishments of a smooth-talking salesman which led the new licensees of the Grapes in Hazel Grove to abandon the lined glasses that have been in use there for years and go back to brim measures. We trust that the Brewers Society Guidelines are now being scrupulously followed by the bar staff. Funny isn't it - we were told that the changeover to lined glasses would be prohibitively expensive and yet pubs can convert back to brim measures without batting an eyelid.

RHYTHM and BOOZE

Chilly out, isn't it? How better to get warm than with an evening of live music, and where better to go than Band on the Wall? It is one of Manchester's top music venues, where a great time is guaranteed; it is also a real ale outlet, with Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope's Burton Ale. Not a very exciting range you may think, but I'd rather pay for fine (if predictable) beer than obscure stuff which can disappoint as easily as delight. It is worth remembering too that BOTW is first and foremost for live music; beer takes a second place for once. Having said that, both beers, although pricey, were in tip-top condition.

As a venue it is hard to beat; a proper stage and a real sound system can make a good band into something special. And if you don't feel like dancing about at the front of the crowd you can retire to the upstairs balcony for a grandstand view of the action. So-called fringe music is the order of the day, where second-rate pub rock or cover version freaks are never seen. Latin-American, Blues, Folk, Jazz and Soul, it's all here, but Friday is Dub-struck night, and that means the most crucial Reggae rhythms around. Not surprisingly, the Anti Nazi League were present; black and white united to fight racism.

A party atmosphere prevailed as DJ Prince Tony spun the discs. He's a guy who knows his stuff and no mistake. What a bonus to hear some classic ska as a warm-up! Then to the cheers of the crowd, C-Charge took the stage. The beat was strong; the floor throbbed, the walls sweated and the crowd got down in a big way. From skanking rhythm to mellow dub and beyond, with percussion well to the fore. The melody is picked out by keyboards and chattering guitar, which gives the music a funky edge. The first set ended well with the C-Charge classic "Search Search Search". I gave up trying to get another drink at the bar so I turned my attention once more to Prince Tony for some rub-a-dub stylee direct from Manchester's hottest turntables.

C-Charge songs contain powerful lyrics of Nazi violence, drug wars and gangland killings, and one song "Take a Stand" about the murder of Benji Stanley. There's no boy-meets-girl stuff here. There was some hot toasting in "Armageddon Time", and various tributes to the likes of Miles Davis and Wilson Pickett. The final song of the night namechecked Jimi Hendrix, and whipped the crowd up into a sweaty frenzy. So ended a superb night, and one of the best gigs I've seen for a while.

Richard Hough



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STAGGER

with Rhys Jones

A filthy January evening saw just two of us in at the start of an exploration of the pubs of Longsight. After confirming that the Midway and the Victoria on Stockport Road still sell only keg beer, first call was Whitbread's Farmers Arms, opposite the Midway. Opened out somewhat but still with two "sides", this boasted a noisy jukebox and even a noisy smoke extractor (which did, however, appear admirably efficient). Handpumped beers were Chesters Bitter, Trophy and Boddingtons and we enjoyed above-average Chesters (which does seem to be better now than when Whitbread brewed it). Thumbs down, though, for the misleading "handpumped" keg Scrumpy Jack cider.



Pausing briefly at the **Crown**, which turned out to have stopped selling real ale, we hurried up the steps and into the pleasant surroundings of Tetley's **O'Connors**, formerly the Springbank. Despite a degree of opening out, the refurbishment carried out here has been very successful. What's more, it resulted in the return of real ale to a pub which had been keg for years. The only real ale is handpumped Tetley Bitter, but it was served in above-average condition in what I rate as one of Manchester's most improved pubs. Notable amongst the wall decoration was Ireland's national anthem "A Soldier's Song", in both Irish and English.

De Olde Vic

Chatham St.
Edgeley

STOCKPORT'S PREMIER
FREEHOUSE

Guest Beers Weekly

TAYLORS
MARSTONS



BATEMANS

Passing Greenall's **Mad Hatter** ("closed until further notice", read the posters), we cut back to Holt's **Garratt** on Pink Bank Lane. By contrast with most Holt's houses, this is a starkly utilitarian post-war establishment, and as the lounge was not opening till 8.30, we were confined to the particularly utilitarian and smoky vault. A distinctive feature here has been the etched windows depicting locally built Garratt locomotives, but only three of the original six remain. Both Holt's draught beers are on handpump; the bitter, while preferred to the ones drunk earlier in the evening, failed to reach the heights this beer can achieve.

The monsoon having abated, another staggerer met us in the vault of Banks's **Longsight** on Kirkmanshulme Lane. This mid-80s pub is wearing well, with two large and well-contrasted rooms. The vault is large enough to accommodate pool table, football and darts without stinting on seating or drinking space yet also without creating an unpleasantly cavernous impression. While handpumped Camerons Strongarm was not available - sales have been erratic, it seems - Banks's Mild and Bitter were on electric pump, and both were good. Indeed, we were to drink no better beer all night - at least not in the pubs officially mapped out for the stagger.

Mind you, for a while it looked as if we were going to drink no **more** beer all night. The **Bay Horse** on Stockport Road was shut, though with lights inside, and the nearby **Ducie Arms** was "regulars only - there's been a bit of bother in town", so we crossed the road to Greenall's **New Victoria**. Here we came under scrutiny but passed muster, and entered to join a busy and varied throng, from grizzled Cyclopean veterans to multiracial youth. The presence of a pounding disco propelled us to the bar, where handpumps dispensed Greenalls Bitter. This provided welcome refreshment but little in the way of flavour, and halves were quickly downed.

A detour to the **Railway** on Rona Walk, in the estate that lies between the A6 and the railway line, proved fruitless (it was closed) so it was back to the main road, and to Vaux's **Lancaster**. Here again it was "regulars only", but they were kind enough to identify us as non-troublemakers, and so we had the chance to enjoy a very pleasant pub. Friendly regulars (including Oscar the cat) and some pleasing internal features in an obviously well-cared-for pub made this a great find. The only real ale is handpumped Vaux Samson and though none of those present were great enthusiasts for this beer, we all praised this example - on a par with the Longsight's Banks's as the best of the night so far.

It was in the Lancaster that we received an explanation for the numerous closed or "regulars only" pubs we had encountered - a long story involving a Romany funeral - and sure enough, the nearby Gold Cup was closed as well. We had traversed Longsight and it was not yet 10 o'clock, so the obvious move was to hop on a bus down to Ardwick Green for West Coast beers at the **King's Arms**. It's no disrespect to the earlier pubs to say that the beers here were the best of the night, for they are among the best you'll find anywhere; what was equally pleasing was the bubbling but harmonious atmosphere that prevailed in the pub's two rooms. A great way to end the evening!

As ever, this stagger simply records the opinions of a (this time small) number of CAMRA members on one particular night. Try the pubs for yourself (the entry difficulties we encountered are quite exceptional!), and come to your own opinion.

New Brew News

Continuing our New Year look at the fortunes of the local micro-brewers, this month we look at those in counties surrounding Greater Manchester whose beers can often be found in the local free trade.

Titanic: based in Burslem, near Stoke, are one of the older established micros with a range including such beers as Lifeboat and Captain Smiths Strong Ale. The brewery continues to consolidate and before Christmas purchased its second tied house, the Stafford Arms, close by Stafford station. Formerly a free house the pub continues to sell varying guest beers alongside four from the Titanic range. A stout was brewed for the first time last year and this was to be repeated at the end of last month. Apart from that the only new beer on the horizon is the annual Anniversary Ale, timed to commemorate both the founding of the brewery and the sinking of the Titanic. This 1050og beer will be available in March/April.

Rising Sun: based at the pub of the same name at Shraleay Brook near Audley just off the M6, this brewery has been in operation since 1989. A wide range of beers is currently produced ranging from the summer-only Sunlight at 3.5%ABV to the powerful winter brew Solar Flare at 11.5%. Sales are continuing to progress and the pub was boosted by winning the "Home Brew Pub of the Year" accolade in the Which Good Pub Guide. This month will see the introduction of an as yet unnamed strong mild at og1047-1050.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

North Wales has become quite a stronghold of the new brewery revolution in recent years, and all continue to prosper. The existence of the breweries is even being noticed in the national press- such as Oz Clarke's recent article in the Daily Telegraph!

Snowdonia: this brewery, based at Gellilydan near Blaenau Ffestiniog, sprang to local prominence when its Mel y Moelwyn Bitter won the Beer of the Festival award at last year's Stockport Beer Festival. Since then the brewery has continued to expand both its sales and its range. Last year saw the introduction of Merion at 4.5%ABV and the stronger Cwrw Twog at 7.5%. Merion has been very successful while Cwrw Twog is to be relaunched on 1st March as Celf with the strength increased to 8% and available bottle conditioned as well as on draught. The brewery also produces a 5% Wheat Beer to order.

Dyffryn Clwyd: this is a near neighbour of Snowdonia, being based in the old Buttermarket at Denbigh. The brewery only opened last summer but has already established a reputation with its Cysur Bitter (4%) and Castell (5%). A third beer, Druid Ale (3.9%) joined the range in November and has sold well. Plans for this year include the possibility of a stronger 4.4% beer in the summer or perhaps a porter towards Christmas.

Manod: rumours of brewing either underway or about to start at this Blaenau Ffestiniog freehouse have been circulating for some time. For the time being at any rate they can, unfortunately, be scotched. The intention was to install a brewing plant, however the building next door came onto the market and the opportunity was taken to buy this and extend the pub. Plans to install the brewery have therefore been put back for at least 12 months and it could be spring 1995 before the first beer is rolled out.

Plassey: this is the oldest established of the North Wales 'micros', in production since 1985 at Eyton near Wrexham. There are no immediate plans for expansion or additions to the current range of three beers. However brewer Ian Dale will be full-time later this year at which stage it is hoped to build a new brewhouse and expand production. Ian is also currently brewer at the Finch & Firkin home-brew pub in Liverpool. This along with other ventures in Liverpool, Lancashire and Derbyshire will feature in the concluding article in this series next month.

Eagle eyed readers will recall that this was originally to be a two-part series - it turned out there were just too many breweries to fit into two articles! A last note - also with a Liverpool flavour. Cains have apparently brewed a new, strong, porter (believed to be 5.0% plus) which is being distributed for the first time as we go to press. One of its first local outlets will be our Pub of the Year, the Crown, Heaton Lane.

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Favouring Curry - Part 2

Can most people honestly understand Indian Restaurant menus? Can you tell a Bhaaji from a Bhajee? What does methi gosht mean or murgi masalam? Shall I have a side dish of bhindi or okra or ladies fingers, order any one, they are the same.

Let's go through a basic menu:

Starting with Gosht, you see it all over the menu, it means lamb or sometimes goat, but usually means anything the restaurant wants to use up, e.g. pork, beef or lamb.

Now we will split up bhaaji and bhajee - A **bhaaji** is a deep fried fritter made usually with onions, but can be various vegetables and is sometimes called Pakora. **Abhajee** is a dryish vegetable side dish e.g. bhindi bhajee (okra fried with spices).

Bhoona is a well established dish but they vary so much, usually a medium hot curry, quite rich with tomatoes - but bhoona just means "fried in oil".

Dopiazza is a classic Indian dish if made correctly. Dopiazza means 'double-onions' fried first to make a puree with spices and then more fried onions added near the end of cooking to give the dish an exquisite sweetness.

Jalfrezi is a dish for those who like it hot, Jalfrezi literally means 'stir-fry' and is usually chicken breast cooked with green chillies, lamb or beef can be used but these are always pre-cooked.

Kahari anything cooked on a huge oval steel pan (usually on view) always a good bet in Indian restaurants, a dish of medium hotness and always very fresh.

Dhansak lamb or chicken (quite often on the bone) covered in lentil and vegetable puree and **NOT** cooked with pineapple.

Keema is mince meat.

Korma to most restaurants this means a mild curry, but in fact

it should be rich with cream, yoghurt and nuts and fragrantly spiced with saffron and aromatic herbs.

Madras There is no traditional recipe for Madras curry, it is another restaurateurs invention, but in saying that the Indians in the south of the country do eat hot curries.

Makhani a traditional dish of chicken in a butter and tomato sauce.

Masala just a mixture of spices, particular to that dish.

Methi are the leaves of the fenugreek plant e.g. methi gosht - lamb with fenugreek leaves, a unique flavour, nothing like coriander leaf, but this is added near the end of cooking as it can turn bitter if cooked too long.

Moglai Evoking memories of a grand style of cooking named after the Moghul emperors, whose chefs took Indian food to the heights of gourmet cuisine. Alas nobody offers that standard these days. These dishes are too expensive and time consuming for restaurateurs today.

Mulligatawny literally means 'pepper water' a Tamil dish of watery soup.

Murgh Chicken.

Murghi Masalam is whole chicken marinated in yoghurt and spices for a day, then stuffed and roasted.

Phall another invention of the restaurateurs for those who like their curries on the incendiary side.

Pullao Rice and meat cooked together.

Rogan Josh This dish is quite often spelt a dozen ways - literally means 'Red Juice'. A Northern Indian dish of lamb marinated then cooked in tomato, butter and spices. a

Sambals a Malaysian word for describing side dishes accompanying main meals.

Thaali A tray holding a complete meal served in individual bowls (katori).

Vindaloo Traditionally a fiery dish of pork marinated in vinegar and cooked with potatoes (aloo) brought to Western India by the Portuguese. In restaurants these days it has come to mean any very hot dish and is sometimes called Binaldoo or Tindaloo, which is usually hotter.

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Stockport

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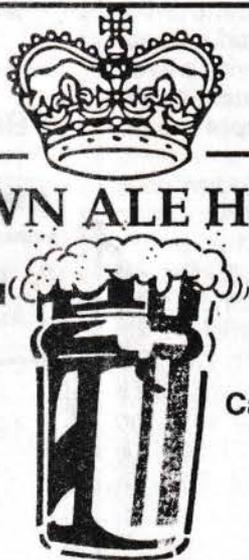


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FEBRUARY GUEST ALES
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Cains Mild
Jennings Mild
Jennings Cumberland Ale
Batemans XB



Special Events at the Crown

WEDNESDAY 9 FEB - WINTER ALES CONTEST SPECIAL DRAW (nb FEB 9 IS A WEDNESDAY!) SPECIAL DRAW 9PM

WEDNESDAY 16 FEB - FREE HOLIDAY DRAW (8PM ONWARDS)

SATURDAY 26 FEB BOTTLED BEER COLLECTORS MORNING

(12 noon - Bring your Rare Bottles along and have them valued)

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Phil Levison's Letter from Anglesey

The Island of Anglesey is a popular holiday destination for many people in the Opening Times circulation area. Whilst its attractions are many and varied, the beers scene has not, until recently, featured amongst them. Now, however, things are looking up and our man on the island, Phil Levison, gives a foretaste of what to expect.

Just over a year ago, the number of breweries supplying their products to the island had increased from 12 to 16, with the "newcomers" being Boddingtons, Felinfoel, John Smiths and Theakstons. Nothing there to get very excited about. But now the numbers have really gone through the roof, due very largely to the appearance of guest beers at the Victoria in Menai Bridge, and the 79 in Holyhead, with wholesalers Keegans of Holyhead being the main supplier.

The Victoria has had Draught Bass for many years, joined fairly recently by Boddingtons, but the recent guest beers have come almost entirely from the independents and micro-brewers - Banks & Taylor, Blackawton, Bunces, Cains, Chiltern, Denbigh, Everards, Exmoor, Fullers, Gibbs Mew, Hop Back, Jolly Roger, Maclays, Marstons, Oak, Charles Wells, Woodforde, and Wychwood. Courage Directors and Old Peculiar came from the Nationals.

The 79 had had Theakstons XB for some time, and like the Victoria, was joined by Boddingtons. Guest beers have come from Adnams, Banks & Taylor, Batemans, Brains, Cottleigh, Eldridge Pope, Exmoor, Fullers, Goldfinch, Mansfield, Marstons, Mitchells, Morrells, Shepherd Neame,

Smiles, Timothy Taylors, Thwaites, Wadworth, and Charles Wells. Theakstons was the only representative of the National brewers.

Marstons have also played their part by making guest beers available at the recently re-vitalised Bedol (Horse-shoe) at Penysarn, just outside Amiwch. During a period of about three months, Adnams, Batemans, Fullers, Greene King, Morlands, Thwaites and Wadworths have joined the resident Marston's Pedigree and/or Bitter. Across Anglesey towards Holyhead, the White Eagle at Rhoscolyn has been the only local outlet selling Marston's Head Brewer's Choice (a different

brew every two weeks), in addition to guests such as Boddingtons and Morlands.

The Ship at Red Wharf Bay has been contributing to the variety, with a succession of what might be called Carlsberg-Tetley "in-house" beers, which of course now include Greenalls, Shipstones, and Davenport's, in what might be described as their re-in-

carinated form. Finally, the Boathouse at Holyhead has had John Smiths, Courage, Ruddles, Youngers and Marstons.

So now, thanks to the efforts of a mere half dozen pubs, it's possible to sample an extremely wide range of ales, that otherwise could probably have only been tried by travelling to local beer festivals, or possibly even further afield.



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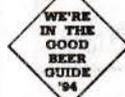
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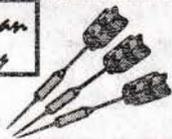
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Fistful of Arrows

By Brian
Carey



Many local dart players tuning into the televised Embassy World Championships were surprised to see so many new faces. The nature of the championship has always been geared for good county players to win through qualifying tournaments to gain the chance to meet the professional players. But the lack of publicity given to the nation's most popular pub and club sport, has meant that few would have realised that the most recognisable names and faces would have been missing.

The split between the British Darts Organisation and the World Darts Council meant that previous champions Eric Bristow, John Lowe, Keith Deller, Jocky Wilson, Phil Taylor and Dennis Priestley were missing from the competition.

Of the 32 players who contested the first round, only Bobby George, Steve Beaton, and perhaps Kevin Kelly or Paul Lim would be familiar to the vast majority of viewers.

Make no mistake, it was vital for the future of the game that the 1994 Embassy received massive viewing figures. The future of the game, as even a minority TV sport, depended on the ratings.

As it was, the live final, between Canada's John Part and Bobby George, was in competition with strong family viewing in 'Noel's House Party' and 'Blind Date'. Both high in the ratings.

It is not surprising that the figures were down on the previous years match between John Lowe and Alan Wariner.

It is ironic, that even with so many new faces, the standard of darts was as high as ever. But the public are interested in personalities rather than abilities. That Bobby George is a "showman" is something of a cliché, but it proved that darting ability alone will not pull in a mass audience. Sad, but true.

For the good of the game the BDO and the WDC must come together, forget their squabbles and put the game of darts first. The future of the game rests with young players. In the north youth darts is almost non-existent. So it is exciting to report that the Northern heat of the Red Dragon Youth Classic will be played at Reddish Leisure Centre.

Organisers JR Darts of Middlesex, will be holding other heats in Edinburgh, Bristol and Welwyn. Entry is for youngsters of either sex, aged between 14 and 21. There is a top prize of £250 for both males and females, and the last 16 in each heat are guaranteed cash prizes.

Heat winners will go forward to the National Finals in Great Yarmouth.

Both the winning male and female will have the use of a caravan for the weekend of the finals, with a further £300 on offer for the eventual winner.

The Reddish heat takes place on February 20th, starting at 12 noon. The closing date for entries is February 17th. Entry fee is £4 per player. Further details from me on 061-4329518.

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CURMUDGEON



It's depressing to see the number of new "draught beers in a can" launched recently - Theakstons, Stones, John Smiths, Tetleys, to name but four. CAMRA may have successfully convinced the discerning drinker that ordinary "finnies" have little to recommend them, but the big brewers have hit back by persuading people, apparently with great success, that drinking this stuff is much closer to the genuine article on draught in the pub.

Nothing could be further from the truth. These beers are filtered, carbonated and pasteurised just like any other canned beers. And then they are subjected to a highly artificial process involving the use of nitrogen, a gas which has no place in real ale dispense, to simulate the appearance of a pint pulled through a tight sparkler to give a creamy head.

Appearance is all they do simulate, though. They have to be served at refrigerator temperatures, rather than the 13 degrees Centigrade appropriate for real ale, thus killing almost all the flavour. They also have a very "soft" character, which may suit Draught Guinness but totally lacks the crispness given by the condition in real ale. At their best, they taste like very tired, flat cask beer, pulled through an over-tight sparkler to

give a thick head while knocking all the condition out. At their worst, well... the libel lawyer forbids!

If you want a decent drink of beer, the best advice is to go to the pub. But if you do drink at home, don't imagine for a minute that "Draught Boddies in a Can", or whatever, bears any more relation to a pint of real ale than any conventional packaged beer, because in reality it is an even more artificial and processed product.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For years we have been bombarded by so-called health advice insisting that if we drink more than 21 units of alcohol a week if we are men, or 14 if we are women, the risk of all kinds of health problems will be dramatically increased. Now an in-depth study carried out by Sir Richard Doll, the respected medical scientist famous for proving the link between smoking and cancer, has shown that, in a sample of over 12,000 men, the healthiest group were those consuming between 20 and 29 units per week. In other words, that is those routinely drinking more than the officially recommended maximum limit.

While this does no more than prove what anyone with any common sense knew already, it's reassuring to have some scientific proof to back up one's gut feelings. Rather than trying to impose ludicrous maximum limits on millions of moderate drinkers, the health campaigners should concentrate their efforts on helping those who really do have a drink problem.



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BAR MEALS AVAILABLE



Pub Pets

by Richard Hough



What is it that makes a pub? Is it the architecture or the customers? Possibly it's the bar staff, or the beer. Occasionally there is something extra that gives a pub its individuality. And sometimes it is the animals in a pub which form part of its character (apart from the penguins found at the door...). This is certainly true of the Blossoms in Heaviley, where two large dogs are as much a part of the 'team' as the landlady herself. Zola, the younger female, and her uncle Minder, are distinctive Rhodesian Ridge-backs, which were originally bred as lion fighters. The landlady, Barbara, used to be a self-confessed German Shepherd addict until she acquired Raffles, the first of five Ridge-backs. In her time Raffles was Best of Breed winner at Crufts, as well as giving birth to Minder some ten years ago.

Barbara maintains that her dogs are primarily guard dogs and, although she loves them to bits, she says they will never make cuddly pets; "If I'd wanted a pet I'd have got a poodle..." Despite their considerable size the dogs eat a standard doggie diet of a tin of Chum and some biscuits each day (with the odd piece of toast for breakfast). This, plus a daily walk with Barbara's son Simon, keeps the dogs fairly healthy, and their coats are as golden as the Robinsons Best Bitter that the Blossoms is famed for (although Minder is going a little grey).

Minder has been described as the typical male, lounging about on the settee all day, snoozing in front of the fire or getting his dinner put before him. It's a dog's life, as they say.

Zola, on the other hand, is a typical female, inquisitive to the point of nosiness, but quite affable really. She is also a stringent time-keeper; when the 11 o'clock bell is rung she grabs the pool triangle so that no games may be played after hours. In addition they both know many of the regulars, and Zola will keep certain seats free until they have been occupied by familiar customers. Neither dog is often seen in the room known as the Eleven Pence Ha'penny Club, for some reason, but Blossoms would not be Blossoms without Zola and Minder, and all their cheeky charm.

West Coast Update

Last month's mention of "bottled draught" West Coast beers requires a slight amplification. Should these beers, as hoped, achieve national distribution, they will in fact be pasteurised to ensure freshness; unpasteurised versions will be available in the local market. Bottle size will be 550 ml, approximately a pint.

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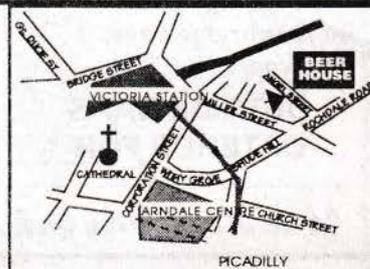
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THE BEER HOUSE





February Featured Pub

The Royal Hotel, Hayfield

The Royal has made great strides since Colin Hazelden took over in summer 1992. Formerly a Wilsons house run for several years by Bob Hadfield, it is now free of tie, and has two guest beers, usually premium brands, on at all times, along with the standard lines, John Smiths Bitter, Websters Bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

A characterful, large pub, with a large central bar and four sizeable rooms around it, it is surrounded by oak panelled walls and old church pews bought from a closed-down church in the Manchester area. Indeed, it has religious connections itself, being twice a parsonage. It was originally built by parishioners of St Mathews church for their vicar in 1755. The Rev. J Badley was a friend of the great John Wesley, who stayed there often. When the Rev. Badley died, his wife found the deeds were in her husband's name - so she sold the property and it became The Shoulder of Mutton.

50 years later it became a vicarage again, until 1863 when an argument over who should succeed the old vicar ended with the landowner refusing to let the successful candidate move in - as he favoured the other candidate. It then became the Royal Hotel.

Currently the most popular pub in the village, it has a function room for 120, an extensive bar meal list and an a la carte restaurant, with special Sunday lunches. Ideal for walking up Kinder Scout, accommodation is available. A recent addition is live jazz music on Sunday lunchtime.

In the autumn Colin held a beer festival, in the perfectly sized function room, an occasion that was very much appreciated locally.

Hayfield can easily be reached by G.M.Buses or the Glossopdale Bus Co. - but, for walkers, an alternative is to travel to New Mills by train and walk three miles up the Sett Valley Trail, Hayfield's former branch line, taking in extensive views of Lantern Pike.

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New 'Countess' at Wortley

Following on from High Peak Branches trip to Wortley a few months ago, the Wortley Arms has introduced a new beer to its range.

The Countess of Wharnccliffe has helped launch the strong "Countess", brewed at the pub's micro-brewery which belongs to the Wharnccliffe estate. It has been brewed by the pub brewer Brian Hulme and has a strength of 5.5% alcohol, and a deep coppery colour. The Countess Ale is now being sold alongside the pub's bitter and Earls Bitter (named after the countess' late husband the Earl of Wharnccliffe). Lady Wharnccliffe recently sampled the first batch on the bar and commented "I am delighted that it has been linked with the Wharnccliffe family. My late husband Carlton always had a special interest in the pub and I am pleased our names are linked with the pub's beers."

The Wortley Arms is best reached by Woodhead, turning right at the Flouch Inn and going onto the Stocksbridge by-pass towards Sheffield. It is the second turning off, signposted Wortley 1/2 mile.

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PUB GAMES

BY TOM LORD

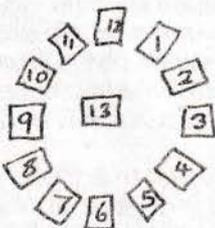


Pub Game 6 - Clock Patience

This is a game which you can play while in a pub on your own while waiting for mates, girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband or whoever.

Be warned, however, like all games of patience it can leave you tearing your hair out in frustration. The statistical odds against this patience working out will mean that you will always remember the last time you managed to do it.

The first twelve cards are dealt out face down as a dial shape of a clock and the thirteenth card placed face down in the centre.



The remaining cards are dealt out similarly, so you finish with four cards in each position - all face down.

11 o'clock is represented by a Jack, 12 o'clock by a Queen, 1 o'clock by an Ace. The others are represented by their numbers e.g. 7 = 7 o'clock etc.

The first card of the four in the centre is turned up. If it is a King it is discarded and the second card of the centre four is turned up. When the card turned up in the centre is not a King it is placed alongside the relevant number of the clock i.e. a 4 would be placed alongside 4 o'clock and the top card in this position is turned up. This card would be placed alongside the relevant number and that's top card turned up etc. If a King is turned up for any of the 'time' piles it is discarded and the next centre card used.

The object is to cancel out all the hours of the clock before the last King turns up.

Good luck, I admire your bravery for trying this one! If things like this bother you, then please don't start it and that way you will keep your sanity. If not you had better get used to the phrase "Just one more try!"

The Robin Hood

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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE
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Hyde - The Globe on Lumb Road has opened after a recent refurbishment after a time closed. The refurb has definitely enhanced the pub which now serves John Smiths Bitter and Websters Yorkshire Bitter on handpump.

Marple - The long-serving landlord at the **Bulls Head**, Market Street, Sam Flaherty is due to retire at the end of February after 25 years at the pub.

Glossop - John Stocks, landlord of the **Manor Inn**, High Street is leaving having done a lot to build up the pub's trade. He will be missed by the locals.

The **Star Inn**, Howard Street - opposite the Station and the latest Boddingtons Ale House, had its official opening on Friday 28th January. Having opened with only a couple of beers there are now seven (on handpump). The range varies but there is always a good mix of session beers as well as the "headbangers".

* Just out of the High Peak area, in Foolow the **Lazy Landlord** has changed its name back to the original **Bulls Head**. The new landlord decided to get rid of the rather twee name when he took over at the end of last year.

Stalybridge - At the **White House** the range of beers, already good, seems to be getting more unusual examples and McClays Amber Ale is expected soon.

Tintwhistle Pubs

Frank Woods Goes Walkabout

An outpost of High Peak branch that is pretty neglected is Tintwistle so some of our Glossop members checked it out last month and had a pleasant Sunday lunchtime.

Descending off the moors, after a three hour stroll, the **Bulls Head** was reached in good time - five past twelve to be exact. The choice was Draught Bass, Bass XXXX mild, Tetley Bitter and Toby light. However, I spotted Worthington BB around the corner and it was more welcome for the 8 miles walk than it would be normally. On my last visit some six weeks before I recall the T. Taylor Landlord where the Tetley was - the landlady commenting that they did change about sometimes.

A brief walk and a half of Sam Smiths bitter at **Claptons** where it was the only real ale available and mediocre at that. Primarily a music club, keeping the beer up to scratch obviously isn't their priority. At the **Liberal Club**, the choice was Banks Bitter, Mild and Hydes Light, the latter being quite thirst quenching, and only 96p. The **Tory Club** was the best place in the village - Thwaites Bitter at 97p was fine as was the Craftsmans. The place was packed with card schools, pool, darts, cards and bingo all going on.

The two pubs on the main Manchester Road were the end to this village crawl. The **Church Inn** had on Stones Bitter (£1.26), Theakstons XB (£1.48) and Old Peculiar (I didn't dare ask) - the XB in good nick. Finally in the **Old Oak**, a Burtonwood pub, I was surprised that they didn't sell Bitter. Instead they had Top Hat Bitter (£1.36) and Forshaws Bitter (£1.26).

After this, surveying complete, the real reason for being in Tintwistle - a third annual all-afternoon barbecue bash which was well attended - and I sat with food and drink and wrote out this little survey, particularly recommending the friendliness at the Tory Club.



CIDER CORNER



Rhys Jones

From a Jack to a Con - the story of Scrumpy Jack

When I was a child in Herefordshire, there was a little cider mill just down the road, in a place called Stoke Lacy. The Symonds family had made cider in Herefordshire for over 200 years, and had moved to Stoke Lacy back in 1939. You'd walk in, and the grown-ups would be greeted by old Bill Symonds, looking a bit like a Hereford bull with his mane of hair and weatherbeaten face; there were six draught ciders to choose from, three draught perries, to say nothing of the country wines, and you just had to tell the grown-ups which one you liked best. It was a timeless scene - the way things had been done for generations in that sweetest and least known of English counties. No wonder the hop-pickers from Llanbradach used to come back tiddly!

In 1984, Bill Symonds sold up - to the aggressive Warrington brewery Greenall Whitley (well, it was a brewery then). The old cider mill became "Europe's most modern cider factory", capable of churning out twenty times as much as old Bill Symonds had ever made. The tankers clogged the A49 north to Warrington, and tasteless fizzy "Symonds" cider appeared all over North-West England. And then Greenalls had a marketing idea: let's kid people our new keg cider is still the real thing - let's pull it through fake pump! The brand they chose for this deception was Scrumpy Jack - it had a more eye-catching name than the rest of the range - and sure enough, within months hundreds of pubs were using an imitation hand pump to serve keg cider - a clear deception.

However, Greenalls soon tired of this new toy, and broke with their usual custom of closing down their acquisition, to sell it in 1989, to those vast and world-famous cider makers, Bulmers of Hereford. Things are looking up, the firm is in the hands of cider makers, and Herefordians to boot - surely now the con will stop. How wrong can you be? For Bulmers too had been corrupted by the "marketing" whizz-kids with cellphones for souls. Prattling of national brands, segmentation and promotional spend, they used Bulmers' long-standing links with brewers large and small to get Scrumpy Jack - often, though not always, on fake hand pump - into pubs throughout the land.

It was time for CAMRA to fight back. The Campaign's existing boycott of the fake handpumps was reaffirmed and applied specifically to cider. Bulmer's ciders were barred from all CAMRA's dozens of local and national festivals, and pubs using fake handpumps were deleted from CAMRA guides like the Good Beer Guide. They didn't like it (nor, be it said did one or two CAMRA branches who came under pressure to drop a favourite pub!) but it worked. Word soon got round that conning the public could seriously damage your business, a lot of pubs switched Scrumpy Jack to "honest" keg dispense, and it's fair to say that the only pubs still using fake hand pumps are the real no hopers.

So, we may slowly be winning. But there's still a lot of fake Scrumpy Jack out there, in the pubs run by the more unprincipled - or gullible - breweries and pub chains. Remember - Scrumpy Jack is a keg cider - any hand pump used to serve it is a CON. Don't drink it, and if you see it on your travels, give CAMRA the details of the offending pub, so that we can do our best to have it removed. (The ambiguity in the previous sentence is deliberate.) We'll never bring back the Symonds of my childhood, but at least we can stop the public being conned!

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CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Once again we have a fairly busy month in prospect, with hopefully, something for everyone.

We start on Monday 7th with a social at the Parrswood on Parrswood Road, Didsbury. In common with most Monday socials this starts at 9.00pm. The same week sees the branch meeting which will be held at the Blossoms on Buxton Road, Heaviley. This is an important meeting as we will be choosing the entries for the 1995 Good Beer Guide. The meeting starts at 8.00pm.

The following Monday there is a two-way social in Edgeley starting at the Jolly Crofter at 9.00pm and moving on to the Grapes at 10.00. Both pubs are on Castle Street. Two days later on Wednesday 16th there is a visit to Marstons Brewery.

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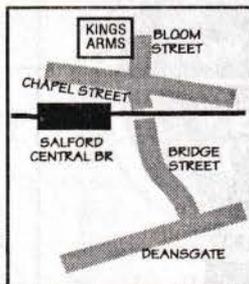
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This is an afternoon visit and we will be leaving Stockport at about mid-day. There were one or two places left as we went to press so if you are interested phone Dawn on 445 0872 for more details and to book your seat. A busy week ends with a Stagger on Friday 18th. This covers Reddish and Heaton Chapel. We start at the Pomona on Reddish Lane at 7.00pm or you can join at 8.30 at the Fir Tree on Gorton Road.

On Monday 21st the social is at the Old House at Home on Braemar Street which is off Moseley Road in Fallowfield. The same week sees our Pub of the Month presentation to the Crown in Northenden on Thursday 24th - see the article on page 2.

Moving to the end of the month there is the first Awayday of the year on Saturday 26th and this is to Fleetwood Beer Festival, catching the 9.12am train to Blackpool North from Piccadilly (NB this train runs from the Airport and not Stockport - to make the connection catch the 8.40 from Stockport and change at Piccadilly). Finally on Monday 28th the month closes with a social at the Griffin, Finney Lane, Heald Green. Hopefully the next Opening Times will be out that week but if you don't catch it then, you may want to note that the next social event will be on Saturday 5th March with another Awayday - to Wigan Beer Festival catching the 10.50am train from Manchester Victoria.

If you live in the Woodley, Romiley, Bredbury or Marple areas you fall under the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch of the Campaign. High Peak have advised us that on Monday 14th February they will be holding their monthly meeting at the Andrew Arms in Compstall. Good Beer Guide entries for 1995 will be selected at this meeting - aim to get there at 8.30pm. The High Peak meeting for March will be held in the Crown, Glossop on Monday 14th March. Members of both branches are of course welcome to attend each other's events.

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

In a quiet month after the Christmas rush, it's pleasant to report a keenly priced real ale gain in the City Centre, where the Cotton Tree on Great Ancoats Street has Chesters Mild and Whitbread Trophy, both on handpump and both £1 a pint. The Centre's other two real ale gains are less worthy of note - Oscars on Cooper Street only has Websters Bitter on handpump, while at Ronnies Cafe Bar on St Ann's Square, while Wadworths 6X and Boddingtons Bitter on handpump are fair enough (though not cheap), "handpumped" Scrumpy Jack Cider is, as always, keg, and discerning drinkers will therefore wish to avoid the place.

In West Gorton, the Nag's Head on Hyde Road has, as expected, re-opened, little changed and still with handpumped Boddingtons Bitter as its sole real ale. And in Beswick the handpumped range at the Mosley is now Chesters Mild and Whitbread Trophy - both, as at the Cotton Tree, just £1 a pint.

In Longsight, the Farmers Arms has lost handpumped mild but gained Trophy and Boddingtons Bitter on handpump. Sadly, though, it now also sells keg Scrumpy Jack cider on a "handpump". The Crown further into town on the A6 is now all keg, not much loss, it was only Websters before! And at the Longsight, Belle Vue, Camerons Strongarm has been absent for some time, and may well be a permanent casualty.

The Crown & Anchor on Hilton Street in the City Centre reopened at the end of January as the Beer Engine. This appears to be the latest sub-species of Whitbread Ale Houses - the Duke of York in Eccles, and the Adelphi by Blackburn Station, sharing with the Crown & Anchor pioneering honours in this field have already had the treatment. The physical changes at the Crown & Anchor are fairly superficial, involving principally bare boards (though not throughout), jokey chalked notices, and sacking (perhaps hop sacks) on the ceiling. On the beer front, the policy is to have 11 real ales on at any time - eight on handpump and four from casks stillaged behind the bar. The only duplicate appears to be the ubiquitous Boddingtons Bitter. Old favourites such as Taylors Landlord have been retained, and the temptation to overprice has been resisted - early offerings included Lion Original Bitter at £1.30 and Dent Owd Tup at £1.65, and the Landlord, for the moment at least, remains at £1.40. Altogether, while ultra-purists may find it a touch gimmicky, this

is a more than acceptable re-style for a much respected pub. The alcoves still have carpets and comfy benches, the area at the front of the pub still has a lounge-like feel, and the pub now has a working real fire.

The Boardroom in the City Centre has added John Smiths Bitter and Courage Directors, both on handpump, to its existing range of Ruddles and Websters.



The Tiviot Hotel

The ghostly resident of the Tiviot was brought to my attention when Martin Mills and I conducted a series of Haunted Pub Trails for Robinsons, during their pub week last year.

Strange events had actually been reported though in 1958 in the Stockport Express, when a bluish coloured "spook light" regularly appeared to the landlord Mr Haslem, in the cellar. Preceded by an icy chill, the apparition always floated towards an old tunnel, which was rumoured to lead all the way to Lyme Park.

The current landlord, Dave Walker took over the pub in 1968, and there have been many unexplained events to puzzle him and his staff. Beer taps have been switched off by unseen hands, and one member of staff saw the disembodied face of a child staring back at them from the bottom of the cellar steps.

Following the ghost tours, a group of us "ghostbusters" spent the night in the cellar, early in October 1993. We heard ghostly footsteps from empty rooms, and loud crashes from the vicinity of the cellar door.

Later in October we conducted more ghost tours, and whilst speaking to a group in the cellar one night, the lights went out and a member of the public had a nose stud ripped from her nostril! She said it was impossible for anyone to have been playing a trick, as it is very difficult to remove. When the stud was found later on, it had been bent totally out of shape, and could not be repaired even by a jeweller.

This account and many others can be found in my book "Dark Tales of Old Cheshire" due to be published later this year, and further information discussed at the Stockport Ghost Society meetings, held at the Bridge Inn every month.

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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





We welcome Roy Preston as the new licensee of the Derby in Fallowfield. Roy took over two weeks before Christmas and tells us that he is trying to liven the pub up with the introduction of quiz nights and Karaoke. The Holts Bitter, available as a permanent guest beer, continues to sell well and, indeed, gained rave reviews from one of the locals who contacted Opening Times.

Another new face on the local scene is Brian Hamnett who has taken over the **Comfortable Gill** on King Street West, Stockport as a manager. This is very much a Boddies stronghold with both Mild and Bitter available.

At the Cheadle Hulme we welcome Bryan Armstrong back behind the bar following a spell of ill-health. This excellent Holts house also features in CAMRA's guide to good pub food.

In Edgeley's **Bobby Peel**, the pub food continues to impress, all the more so with the arrival of an in-house chef and improved kitchen facilities. The beer's good too, the Greenall's Mild was particularly enjoyable on a recent visit.

The Florist on Shaw Heath is to have a small catering kitchen installed along with new toilet facilities. We understand that no other internal alterations are planned. We hope Robinsons also take the opportunity to clean the facade of this handsome building.

Work should be starting soon on the long-promised alterations at the **Hole i'th'Wall**, Stockport. Amongst other things, this will involve the partial removal of the wall separating the upstairs room from the main bar. The work has been in the pipeline since the middle of last year, although the final go-ahead has only recently been given. Licensee Steve Sherlock has found the delays particularly frustrating as the pub could do with a general redecoration but until the structural work is complete that has to be put on hold.



The second half of this month will see another in-house beer festival at the Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme. The festival opens on 17th and runs through until 26th. Many beers new to the pub will feature including Harviestoun, Titanic and Woodfordes.

Student Corner

Hi Gang! How's the studying going? All those nasty assignments, essays and projects to get finished and all those exams to look forward to. I'd go to the pub and get a pint or two if I were you. No doubt you've tried a few already, both pubs and pints, and by now you'll have found your favourites. But make sure that you aren't missing something darned good. Are you familiar with Lees, Holts, Hydes AND Robinsons? And have you checked out the West Coast range from Dobbins Brewery? As for pubs, there are some sad places around which people frequent because it's all they know.

There are, of course, some genuine classics which should not be missed by anyone, and guaranteed there is a pub to suit every taste within the local area.

The average length of a course for students, three years or so, is just enough for you to be able to find the best pubs and beers in the area, but wouldn't it be better to find them NOW rather than late 1994, or even eighteen months or two years from now?

Listed within these pages is a CAMRA Branch diary of forthcoming events where you can meet people with a genuine interest in decent beer and pubs, and not just a penchant for getting plastered on the nearest overpriced rubbish available. Everyone is welcome, and you'll get to know of the best places to go for fine beer. In addition, you are pretty certain of having a good time, you will meet some great people and you just might find the favourite you've been looking for. Make a point, if you can, of attending at least one CAMRA meeting this month, and see how it goes. You won't know until you've tried it! And we'd love to see you.

Finally, many thanks to Alex, Rachel and all the gang at UMIST for the Beer Festival in November. If you missed it, UNLUCKY! It was a great bash, with a solid three days all-day drinking. But watch out for details of future beer festivals, where a fine time can be had by all. Until then, then, happy (hic) studying.... If you have any news, views, problems, or you just fancy a pint, please don't hesitate to contact me: Richard Hough (CAMRA Student Liaison Executive), 91 Lowfield Road, Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK3 8JR.

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