

Shopping Folly

The New Year could see the end of the only pub on Market Street in the City Centre.

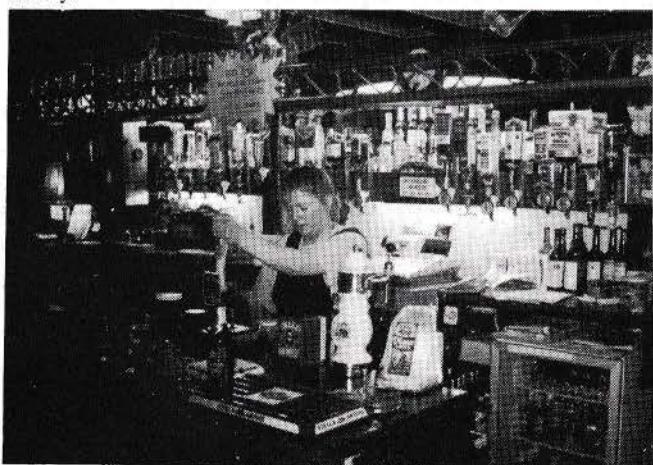
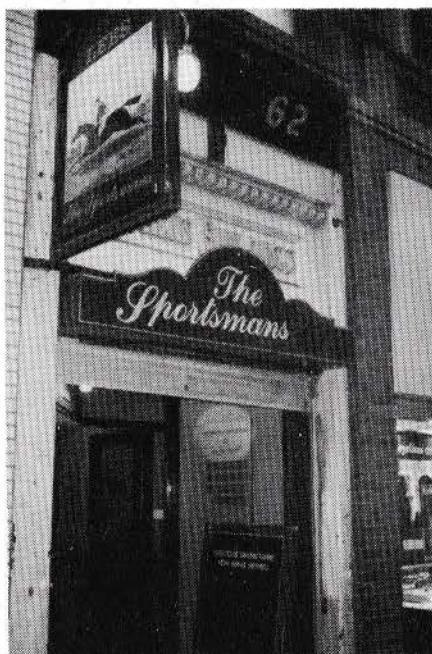
The Sportsman is threatened by a supermarket and office development by Tesco who plan to open one of their new smaller city centre supermarkets on the site. The Sportsman, and the neighbouring Market Centre, will be replaced by basement storage and car-parking areas.

The Sportsman is the only pub there has been on Market Street for as long as anyone can remember. It remains a traditional ale-house when most nearby pubs have either been transformed into wine bars, cafe bars or fake real ale theme pubs. That is those that remain of course - many pubs in the area succumbed to the various post-war redevelopment schemes. The Sportsman is well-run, well-used and well-liked. It is one of just three City Centre outlets for Lees beers.

The last thing the city centre needs is another supermarket. What it does need is a good range and number of pubs to cater for the different groups of people who use the city and it is to be hoped that the planning officers and councillors feel the same way too. To get the message across, landlord Brian McCausland has joined forces with the Market Centre Traders Association to fight the plans. City councillors have been lobbied and a petition has been drawn up. Visitors to the City Centre might like to pop into the Sportsman to add their signature and enjoy a fine pint of Lees Bitter at the same time. In addition readers might like to put their objections in writing. Letters should be sent to: Mr T Kitchen, Chief Planning Officer, Planning Dept, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2JT. The Planning Application numbers to quote are 046417/FO/CITY/94 and 046419/FO/CITY/94. The planning application may be heard this month although Opening Times understands that a January date is more likely.

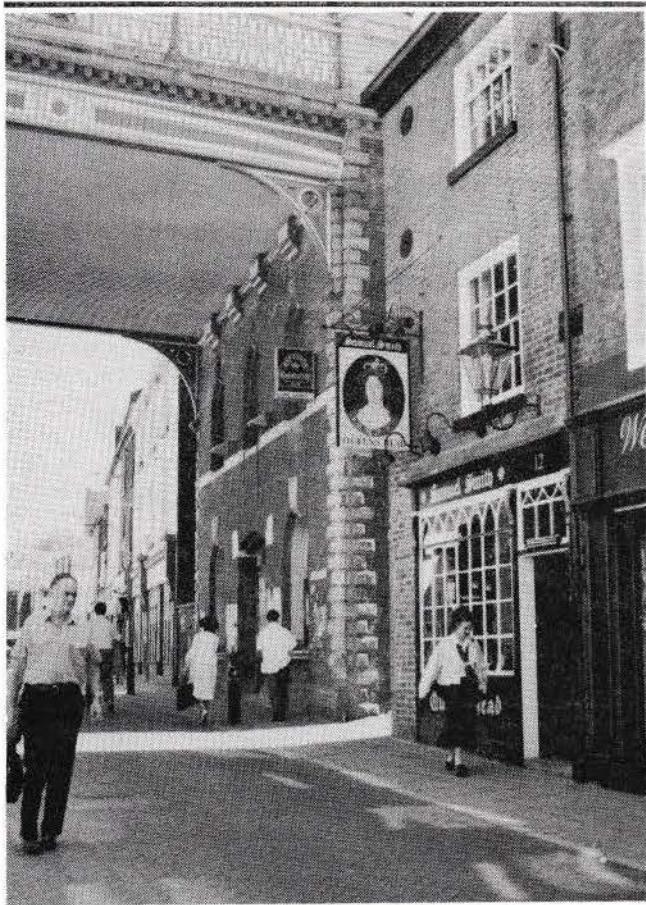
There is better news of the Hyde Road scheme, which regular readers will recall threatens a number of fine pubs, notably the Travellers Call and the listed Plough. We now hear that the City's road funding bid to central government for 1995/96 does not include this scheme. This will in any event give the threatened pubs a further 12 months breathing space. More importantly, the scheme itself is to be reviewed and possibly modified with greater emphasis on traffic calming measures and public transport. The results of the review are due to be reported to the council's Highways & Cleansing Committee by February. More news when we have it.

* Yet another pub has been given statutory protection. The Alexandra, Northgate Road, Edgeley, Stockport has been listed by the Dept. of National Heritage as being of historic and architectural interest.



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PUB of the Month

DECEMBER

The much-coveted award for the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for December has been won by the Queen's Head, Little Underbank in Stockport. Long a favourite with local drinkers, it is one of the few pubs in the area that really can be called a gem.

David and Paula Harris have been at the helm of the Queen's Head for fifteen months now, and have succeeded in improving it from being one of the better pubs in Stockport to one of the best in Greater Manchester (or even the country?).

It is known locally as Turners Vaults, since it used to be the tasting room for Turners Wine Vaults next door. Evidence of this can still be found on the bar, where twenty-eight original spirit taps remain. These were fed by pipes which were hidden in the central pillar on the bar. But this is by no means the only interesting feature of this fascinating little place. The tiny middle room, known to many as 'the horsebox', has daily papers on the brass rails, and is the perfect haven from the hustle and bustle of every-day life.

The haunted room upstairs is home to a friendly ghost, while perhaps the most famous feature in Turner's is the renowned 'Compacto', the world's smallest gents', which has enough room for 'one thin gentleman'.

But the hard work and commitment of David and Paula and the rest of the team are what makes an interesting pub like Turner's something special. Samuel Smiths beers feature on the bar; Museum will be dropping below the £1.40 a pint mark imminently, while Old Brewery Bitter has remained at £1.08 a pint for the past five years. This represents one of the cheapest beers around, and without doubt the best value-for-money pint in central Stockport. The pub couldn't fail to be in the Good Beer Guide 1995, and if Dave and Paula continue the good work, it should be in for a fair few years yet. And not forgetting, of course, the fine home-cooked food from Paula's kitchen.

It is a truly awesome combination, and this richly deserved Pub of the Month award will be presented on Thursday 22nd December (yes, celebrate Christmas early!) at around 9pm. Bearing in mind the less-than-spacious nature of the Queen's Head (Small is Beautiful) it would be advisable to get there early; the pub opens at midday.... Everyone is, of course, most welcome to attend this auspicious occasion.

THE QUEEN'S HEAD

(TURNERS VAULTS)

12 LITTLE UNDERBANK,
STOCKPORT ☎ 480 1545

Paula and David and their loyal team would like to wish all their customers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thanks for supporting us throughout the year, helping us to gain the CAMRA Pub of the Month award for December.

Handpumped
Old Brewery Bitter 4% at £1.08
Museum Ale 5% now at £1.38 per pint

Bookings being taken for Christmas Meals, Buffets and Hot-Pot suppers. Function Rooms Come and Join us in the Community Pub with History & Style in the heart of town



OPEN MON - SAT 11.30 - 11pm, Sun 7-10.30pm

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

DECEMBER '89

Concern was expressed over the somewhat uncertain future which appeared to be in prospect for the Briton's Protection on Great Bridgewater Street in Central Manchester. Tetleys planned to replace the present, highly successful tenants with a manager, and there was even talk of building a hotel on the site, as the adjacent building belonged to Tetleys, and there was also land available behind the pub. The proximity of G-Mex, and the possibility of an international concert hall, conference centre and shopping centre in the locality were likely to influence alterations to the pub, which was considered to be quite up-market enough, with Tetley Bitter being the cheapest beer at £1 a pint.

There was a complete report on the recently re-opened Cheadle Hulme (former Junction); "a vast improvement" was the verdict, even though the public bar had been lost, and of course the snooker table. There had always been a wide range of customers, from the Cheadle Hulme yuppie to the traditional Holts drinker, and the hope was expressed that both would be satisfied.

The launch of "Ale of Two Cities" was announced. It had been produced by the Manchester CAMRA branches, and was the first ever comprehensive guide to every real ale outlet in Manchester and Salford. 550 outlets were listed, and 100 of the best had been selected for a more extensive write-up.

A lot of space was taken up by Seasons Greetings from many of the pubs in the branch area, and another regular item to appear at this time of the year gave the recipes for several mulled ales, and for Robinson's Old Tom cake.

Finally, a couple of items from the back page: The Stanley Arms, Newbridge Lane, Stockport was due to re-open on 6th December, following fire damage. New licensees had taken over the King's Head in Ardwick - Scottish & Newcastle beers were to remain, whilst breakfasts and food on Sundays were to be re-introduced.

Pub Crisis Deepens

The scale of the crisis facing Britain's pubs has been starkly revealed in the new edition of one of the drinks industry's standard reference books.

The 1995 Drink Pocket Book, researched and published by Public Attitude Surveys and Stats MR, shows how far pubs have fallen in popularity since 15 years ago.

Then, beer made up nearly 60 per cent of Britain's alcohol intake. Today, it's only half. In the same period, the public's spending on liquor has stagnated, down in real terms by just one per cent, while consumer spending overall has soared by 40 per cent. Some 15 per cent of adults today claim to be teetotal and 25 per cent never go to the pub.

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Contributors to this edition: John Clarke, Rhys Jones, Paul Hutchings, Richard Hough, Phil Levison, Peter Edwardson, Paul Felton, Brian Carey, Tom Lord, Tim Jones, Frank Wood, Ben Ziernik, Jim Flynn

COPY DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER ISSUE THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER



THE HINDS HEAD

Your hosts Alan and June Preston invite you to call in and enjoy their friendly atmosphere and service

TRADITIONAL HAND PULLED BEERS

Castle Eden, Marstons Pedigree, Chesters Mild & Bitter

Regular Guest Beer

AT THE INN WITH THE REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENT FOOD AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

Extensive new menu including lighter meals and snacks, younger childrens menu also available

TRADITIONAL SUNDAY LUNCH £4.25

Home roasted joints served with all the trimmings

in addition to the full menu

OPEN FOR LUNCHES AND EVENING MEALS

7 DAYS A WEEK

Large car park and lovely beer garden. Heatonian magazine 'Pub of the Year'

Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month April 1994

MANCHESTER ROAD, HEATON CHAPEL VISA
STOCKPORT, TEL 061 431 9301

Alan and June wish all their customers a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

The Pomona

Reddish Lane, Gorton
Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
To all our Customers
Cask Ales
Function Room Available
Tel 231 0473



The Thatched Tavern
Reddish
Sid and Ann
wish all their customers
A very merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year



GREY HORSE

Happy Christmas
from Dave and Joan
at The Grey Horse,
Reddish
Boddingtons Ales



The Navigation

Heaton Norris
Peter and Norah would like to wish
everyone
A Happy Christmas
Entertainment throughout the Xmas period
Happy Hour between 2 - 7pm
Websters 99p
Guest Beer available. Parties catered for

IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

Witnessing Grand Met's attempts to disentangle themselves from the Inntrepeneur fiasco, it is easy to scoff. Hearing the news of their belated recognition that a licensee is more than the custodian of a business asset which has to be made to sweat, it's easy to say 'we told you so'. Those tempted to gloat, and it's certainly a strong temptation, should pause and reflect on the damage that this whole sorry exercise has inflicted on the British pub scene. The concept of pub leases, which Grand Met pioneered with Inntrepeneur, have sent countless licensees into bankruptcy, hastened the demise of possibly hundreds of pubs, and, with the financial demands placed on those leaseholders who have tried to make a go of it, have been indirectly responsible for the huge escalation in beer prices in the last five years.

Not that we should be surprised at anything Grand Met would do to their pubs. Just look at the track record - the Watneys Red Revolution ended in ignominious retreat (and was one of the spurs which led to the foundation of CAMRA); the Host Group - an almost complete disaster. With a track record like that the brewing and pub industry is well rid of this company.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

As we report this month, yet another pub is under threat. This time it's the Sportsman, one of the few good honest boozers left in the city centre. It might not be an architectural gem but it's a damn fine pub all the same. The city centre has lost too many pubs - the sorry state of the Coach & Horses and the Imperial testify to that. Just this once let's hope that common sense prevails - don't forget to help by either signing the petition or writing to the Planning Office. Speaking of the Imperial, this has now been bought by the Development Corporation who promptly fenced it off with warnings of a dangerous building. Given that Manchester United were formed here, why hasn't there been uproar about the way this pub has been neglected? With a background like that the money-spinning tourist potential of the place should be enormous.

And with that thought, all that remains is for me to wish all our readers, advertisers, contributors and distributors a very merry Christmas. See you all in '95.

John Clarke

Stay Safe

- Don't drink and drive
this Christmas

As a reader of Opening Times you will know that alcohol is very much part of the world we live in. Have one drink too many and the only things that normally suffer are your head and stomach.

But combine driving with your drinking and you have a lethal cocktail which could have a lasting effect - on your own and other people's lives.

Each year in Britain some 800 people die in road accidents involving drivers or motorcycle riders over the legal limit. Up to 19% of all drivers and riders killed are over the legal limit; and around 50% at night between the hours of 10pm and 4am.

The more you drink, the greater the problem. Just one drink will impair your driving performance. Twice the legal limit of alcohol in your blood and you are at least 30 times more likely to have an accident.

Contrary to popular opinion, alcohol is a depressant. It slows down the processes occurring in the brain and makes you less alert but at the same time gives you a strong but false sense of confidence.. The more you drink, the more your brain is affected and the greater your chances of having an accident.

★ Alcohol slows down your reactions

★ Alcohol affects your judgement

★ even one drink will affect your performance

Those who believe sticking to beer or cider will stop them going over the limit are sadly mistaken. That's because it's not the type of drink that's important, it's the TOTAL amount of alcohol it contains.

Alcohol takes effect quickly and wears off slowly.

Once you've had a drink, there is **nothing** you can do to reduce the level of alcohol in your blood.

★ Exercise doesn't work

★ Nor black coffee

★ Nor medicines of any kind

★ nor vitamins

The only thing that will reduce the level of alcohol in your blood is time. And a long time at that.

The body gets rid of alcohol from the blood stream at a very slow rate - equivalent to about half a pint of beer every hour. If you have been on a long or late drinking session, you might still be over the limit on the morning after, or even at lunch time.

HOW TO AVOID THE PROBLEM

★ Plan in advance. Take a minibus or taxi. Use public transport.

★ If you can't arrange a lift home, then fix up somewhere to stay.

★ If you are in a group decide amongst yourselves that whoever will be driving will not drink for the evening.

★ Drink soft drinks

Don't be a statistic this Christmas. Don't drink and drive. For once the cliche is right. Drinking and driving really does wreck lives.

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

The Farmers Arms

Northenden

**Happy Christmas to
All our Customers**



From Lynn and Pete



*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
from all at*

The Crown

Northenden

Boddingtons Ales

Travellers Call



**GLOSSOP ROAD
MARPLE BRIDGE**

**Robinsons Beer at its
Very Best**

Good Home Cooking

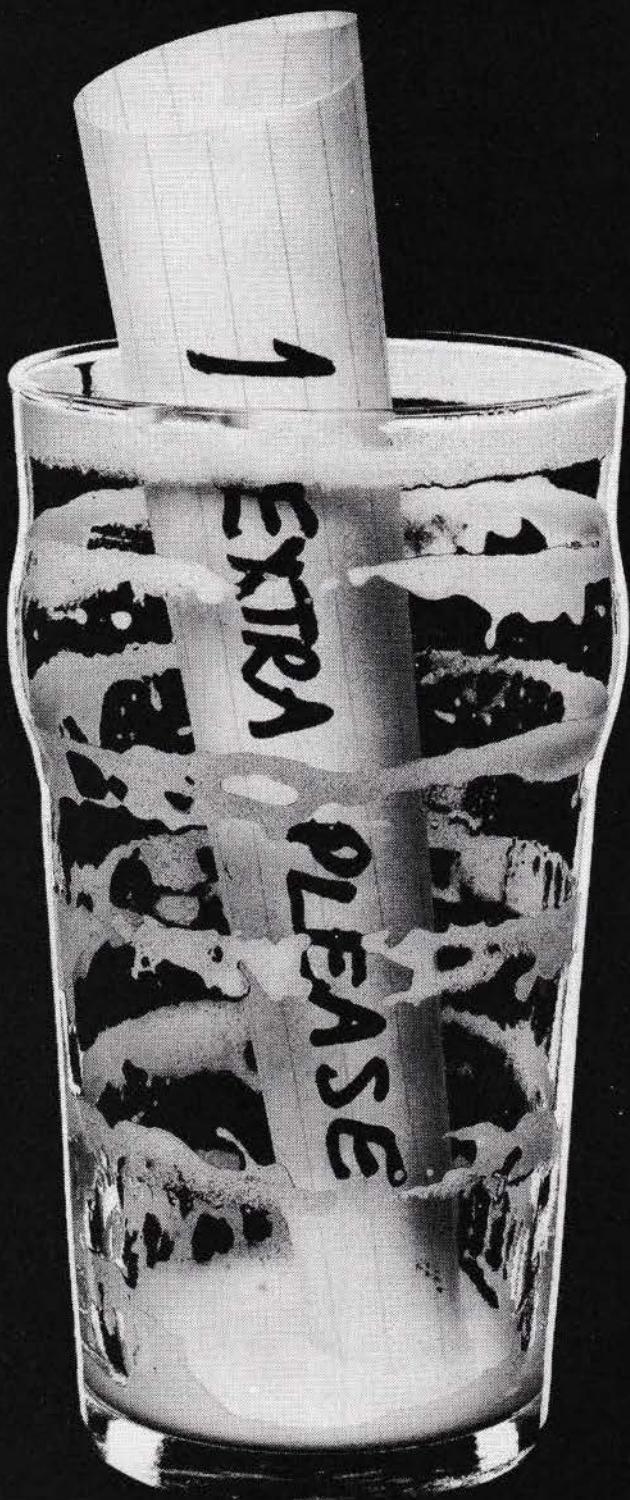
Open 12 - 11

Monday - Saturday

**Merry Christmas to
all our customers**

from Tony & Diane





THE CREAM OF MANCHESTER.

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



LETTERS OPENING TIMES

From : Peter Edwardson

Your anonymous correspondent in November's issue makes a facile equation between pub car parks and a drink-driving clientele which is very wide of the mark and quite frankly an insult to responsible licensees and pub customers. Surely he is aware that people visit pubs by car for a wide variety of legitimate reasons which may not even involve drinking alcohol at all, for example eating meals and playing pub sports. It is a rare pub nowadays that can get by purely by appealing to heavy drinkers.

Maybe in one or two cases the planners have insisted on overlarge car parks for urban pubs - the Longsight in particular springs to mind. But I can assure him that the car park at the Three Bears which he questions is fully used at busy times and not, I think, by lawbreakers. Would it help road safety if they all parked on the road? The pubs he mentions without car parks which "never attract a drink-drive public" are all in city-centre locations, and it is fatuous to suggest that it would be practical for suburban or rural pubs to follow their example.

It would be desirable in many ways for society to be less dependent on the car. But it's a fact of life that people do travel to pubs by car, and in the vast majority of cases they're doing nothing illegal or immoral. If all pub car parks were shut, it might or might not lead to less drink-driving, but it would certainly make it impossible for many pubs to survive. And why should pubs be singled out for special treatment? Surely the same factors apply equally to social clubs, hotels, restaurants, leisure centres and indeed anywhere else with a bar. Drink-drivers don't all drink in pubs by any means.

From : C.J.Hellin, Head Brewer, Frederic Robinson Ltd. I must respond to Mr Walker's letter in the October issue of *Brewing Times*, which commented on our premium cask conditioned beer, Frederics.

When Frederics was first launched, we were very surprised at the volume demand, and for a few weeks it is quite possible that beer was leaving the brewery sooner than we would have wished. However, in no cases should it have been "thick and yeasty" as beer in such a state should never be offered across the bar. Perhaps there were occasions when landlords, too, misjudged their sales and tried to sell it too soon after receipt. Judging stock levels in the pub is not something we have control over, and is never easy, especially with a new product. Adequate maturation time is now normal, so any quality problems will not be due to this, unless, as with any other product, someone in the supply chain, including wholesalers, is wrong-footed with their trade predictions.

Concerning price, Mr Walker states that, at about £1.50, Frederics is hardly likely to appeal to bitter drinkers. I agree; Frederics, at 5% ABV, was not expected to appeal to session drinkers, either on price or strength grounds. There was never any intention or thought that it would do so. However, for the non-session drinker, Frederics is good value, when one considers it is brewed from an all malt grist and only from whole aroma hops.

As far as lager drinkers are concerned, again I have to agree that a large number are fickle in their fads. However, there is evidence that some volume has switched from premium lager to Frederics - it's certainly better value! Furthermore we are not the only brewer to have introduced a lightly coloured, premium ale, at least in part to tempt the lager drinker back to quality English brewed ales.

There is no question of trying again! Sales volumes clearly show that Frederics is here to stay, and we are not going to compromise on the malt and hops policy for this brew. We have a premium formula for a premium brew, and it fits well into our range of ales.

From : Kim Rampley

Regarding Durty Nelly's (OT November - both "Pub News" section and Rhys Jones paragraph). I called there last week and tend to agree with Mr Jones; the guest beers available are welcome but the same can most certainly **not** be said of the prices. Also, as Yates' s Wine Lodges went, I didn't see much wrong with it as a wine lodge.

Regarding the prices. It has long been my belief - since my time at university - that 'student' type outlets (either near colleges etc or halls of residence) are almost **always** on the high side price-wise. Two points to mention:

1. Don't students realise they are being overcharged - to use the vernacular "ripped off"?
2. I believe it ill behoves students to do all their drinking in these high priced outlets and still moan and whinge about grants, loans etc and their (supposed) inadequacy? Whilst a student, I made a point of seeking out better value outlets (subject to quality of course) always mindful of the fact that students are often keenly observed by other drinkers, licensees etc.

Am I in a minority of one, or do any (ordinary tax-paying) members agree with me?

From : Mr P B Robinson, Chairman,
Frederic Robinson Ltd

White Hart, Hazel Grove

It really is time that Rhys Jones (*Stagger November edition*) got his facts right before rushing into print to criticise yet another of our altered pubs. I can only assume that the beer was so good in the numerous Robinsons houses that he visited in Hazel Grove that he did not bother to enquire what the recent alterations at the White Hart involved. If he had, he would have learnt that the arches which he apparently dislikes so much were formed many years ago, and the alteration that has just been completed simply involved a new toilet block and a new bar counter, and also extensive alterations to the domestic quarters upstairs, including the removal of a private staircase which used to be in the middle of the dining area.

The fixed seating which he also apparently is not keen on, was done entirely by our licensee.

From : Richard Hough

If a customer returns his/her empty glass to the bar and orders another pint (i) in the same glass and the bar staff oblige or (ii) and the bar staff ask "Same glass?" and the customer says "Yes, please" what is the situation regarding hygiene laws (which I must stress are not always in the best interests of the customer). Is anyone liable? - and if both the licensee and the customer consent to the same glass being used again, are they contravening hygiene regulations at all? [this stems from the recent proposal to outlaw re-using glasses, especially where a swan neck is used, to reduce contamination caused by the edge of the glass coming into contact with the bar dispense]. And is silly red tape coming between us, the consumer, and what we regard as "good service"? Another one, same glass, ta.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to: John Clarke, Editor, *Opening Times*, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD or by FAX to 061 432 8384

STAGGER

with Paul Felton

The evening of Friday 16 September was the occasion of our latest jaunt, this time around the heavily-pubbed village of Didsbury.

We met at the **Gateway**, the large Hydes pub on the crossing of Kingsway and Wilmslow Road in East Didsbury, almost isolated at the end of a V-shaped spur between the roads. Several years ago it was changed from a multi-roomed local into what might be unkindly described as a posh 'piano bar'; they have the piano, and the decor went upmarket with carpet everywhere, plush fittings and, if I remember correctly, one of those strange light-reflecting metal balls you see suspended above dancefloors at discos and ballrooms. It must be admitted that this does make the place sound rather worse than it actually is. As usual with Hydes pubs two beers were available, bitter at £1.26 and (this time) the darker, ordinary mild at £1.18. Both were rather good.

Taking our lives into our hands by dashing across Kingsway (there is a pedestrian walkway for those of either faint heart or more sense), we wandered up Wilmslow Road to the **Didsbury**. The exterior is reasonably impressive, with steps up to the front door, but the interior, which is quite ordinary, lets it down a little. As many as four beers were available, three from the amalgamated Courage/Grand Met. range (John Smiths Bitter, Courage Directors and Websters Bitter) along with Theakstons bitter. Unfortunately we encountered a few problems with the service; prices had recently gone up, but apparently had not yet been fed into the computerised tills (nor was there a price list to be seen), with the result that the barmaid had to add everything up by hand, a long and laborious process. Furthermore, while our beer was topped up when requested, it was done with little grace. Nor was the beer particularly good.

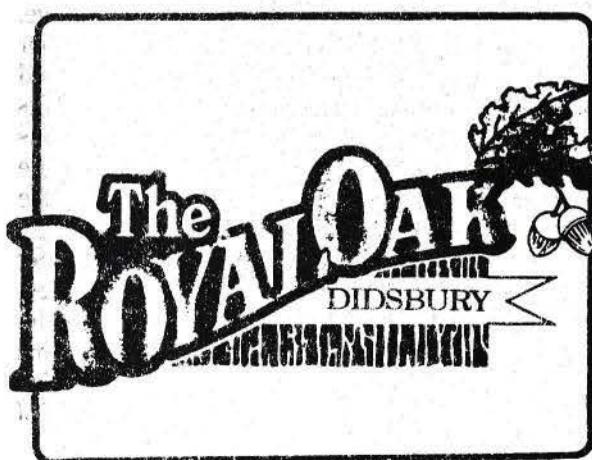
The **Old Cock** is opposite, a large, bare-boarded Whitbread Ale House with an L-shaped drinking area, presumably designed to appeal to the younger drinker



(compare with other Whitbread pubs, such as the Tut'n'Shine in Heaton Chapel and the White Lion in Stockport). While there are Whitbread beers available, the range was none-the-less excellent: Whitbread's own Fuggles IPA Imperial, Mansfield Old Baily, Rydale Bitter, Eldridge Pope Royal Oak, Broughton Oatmeal Stout, Jennings Cumberland Ale; but the prices...! £1.60 for the Broughton, a comparatively reasonable £1.40 for the Jennings; but £1.70 for the first four beers mentioned! £1.70 for Rydale bitter? Extracting the proverbial somewhat. The quality of the beer was generally above average, although Fuggles was felt to be a little past its best.

Then on into Didsbury itself. The **Crown** is the first of the Greenalls pubs in the village, with an attractive low exterior. It has been refurbished over the past few years, and extended at the back as well. It has several distinct areas as opposed to rooms, and some interesting tiling and old prints of Didsbury. Three beers were on sale, Greenalls Bitter at £1.38, Stones Bitter at £1.41 and Greenalls Original at £1.57. The Stones was average, Greenalls ordinary bitter a little above so; the surprise was the rather good quality of the Original, a decent beer so often found in less-than-perfect condition.

As many of you will know, the famous **Royal Oak**, just across the road, was the subject of a fire-bomb attack earlier this year. This was my first visit since its reopening after refurbishment, and it has to be said what a marvellous job all concerned have done; spirit vats, theatre flyers, they're all there, and you really can't see the join. Four



Jim and Sheila at
The Albert

Walmer Street, Rusholme

Wish their customers
all the best for Christmas
and a prosperous
New Year



OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1994



Royal Oak

beers were available: Batemans mild, Marstons Bitter (which was good) and Pedigree, along with the latest in Marstons Head Brewer's Choice beers, Regimental Ale. This was a 5.5% beer, very well received, which one of our party suggested tasted as the vastly-overrated Pedigree OUGHT to taste. As ever it was packed, as ever the service was exemplary, as one would expect with legendary licensee Arthur Gosling in charge. One of my colleagues ordered two pints of the Regimental, only for the barmaid to express her uncertainty as to whether it was available; our hero corrected this mistaken belief with the immortal line, "Course it bleeding id"! But the most remarkable single item of the evening was surely the astonishing, pre-Raphaelite auburn hair exhibited by one of the young ladies working behind the bar.

The **Albert** is tucked around the back by the dairy. It's another Hydes pub, serving (ordinary) mild at £1.30 and bitter at £1.35. There's a pool room on the left, with another more secluded area tucked away on the back right of the bar itself. The walls are festooned with pictures of movie stars and the like. For some reason, opinion was split within our party between those who thought it is a reasonable pub and those who do not like it at all. Both beers were above average, with the bitter being preferred.

The Boddington PubCo.'s **Parrs Wood** is a few minutes' walk east up School Lane to its intersection with Parrswood Road. It's a very large, imposing building (the PubCo.'s Managed House Division is based upstairs). It was refurbished considerably a few years ago, resulting in the creation of separate vault and lounge rooms. We went into the lounge, a large open space with some peculiarly out of place 'candy twist' columns in the centre of the room, raised areas (including a reasonably large but not enclosed no smoking space) and as a saving grace a particularly impressive staircase. Four beers were on sale: Boddingtons mild and bitter, Theakstons bitter and as a somewhat surprising guest beer Hartley's XB (now brewed at Robinsons in Stockport rather than Hartley's in Ulverston, of course). With the exception of the Theakstons, all the beers were felt to be above average. And for those who religiously follow this column's public service announcements, one of the ladies in our party reported that the women's toilets offered lipstick, lighters and jewellery (mostly earrings) as well as condoms and Lilets, but no hairspray.

So it was back down School Lane and across onto and a few yards up Barlow Moor Road to the **Nelson**. This is a small force-your-way-to-the-bar one-room Grand Met. (or whoever) pub, with the old green Wilsons tiling outside, usually busy, often very smoky (on this particular evening it was both; it's difficult to describe a pub where you can't see the walls for people). The Nelson's main attraction is perhaps that it serves Holt's Bitter as a permanent guest beer, by a considerable way the cheapest pint in Didsbury. And it was pretty good at that.

The **Dog & Partridge** on the main road is the village's other Greenalls pub. It has recently been converted into a cask ale house (as ever, Greenalls jumping late onto the bandwagon). It has been criticised in these pages for selling keg Scrumpy Jack cider on handpump; it is refreshing to note that this had gone by the evening of our visit (real cider may be planned). It's quite a reasonable if predictable conversion (wooden floors, in fact wood everywhere, you know the sort of thing); usually peanuts are provided, the shells of which are to be thrown onto and trodden into the floor to 'season' it, but not on this evening. Various non-Greenalls beers were available: Draught Bass and Worthington Best bitter (best?); Wadworth Farmer's Glory (pretty good); Orkney Skullsplitter (definitely past its best) and Jennings Bitter (okay). Worth a visit.



The Station

The final port of call was Marston's **Station**, just a little up Wilmslow Road. This is a splendid little pub, down-to-earth and friendly, quite possibly the best in the village, narrow but with successive rooms going back further from the road than you might at first expect, bedecked with railwayiana, particularly attractive in summer with its displays of hanging baskets. Bateman's Mild and Marstons Bitter were okay, and no one tried the Pedigree, but the pick of the beers here, indeed possibly the pick of the beers throughout the evening, was the Regimental Ale.

There are a variety of decent pubs in Didsbury selling an interesting range of real ales; but as ever, the greatest problem associated with drinking in the village was the very high prices asked, although it must be said that this did not particularly seem to be a problem on this Friday night, as many of the pubs, particularly in the latter half of the evening, were extremely busy.

**Merry Christmas &
A Happy New Year
To All Customers and Friends
from Phyllis, Wendi & Stuart**

THE PRINTERS

Cheadle

Robinsons Best Mild & Best Bitter

*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
to all our customers and friends
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Public House and Restaurant

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To All Our Friends*

Simon and Rose

THE CHURCH INN

Cheadle Hulme



Crown Inn

Cheadle

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Jean & Ralph welcome everyone



Student Corner

Last month witnessed one of the heaviest indulgences of the year since the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The UMIST Rag Real Ale Festival lasted four days, and offered an impressive 56 different beers and ciders from all over the country. While it was hardly a 'tickers and spotters' festival the accent was firmly on the independents, with only Directors and the Theakstons beers coming from the big six. Prices ranged from 60p to 90p a half, which may seem pricey, but careful choosing meant there were some bargains to be had. The strongest beer on offer (and therefore popular with students) was Christmas Noggin from Hoskins, a hefty 10% knife and fork job. The better beers tended to be the darker ones; Taylors Ram Tan, Lees Moonraker and Mauldons Black Adder were pretty good.

The star of the show was without doubt Batemans Victory Ale, better than I have tasted it in several months. But we all rued the demise of Dobbins, who last year had a whole bar devoted to their beers. That was something special! Banks's took the 'biggest advert' award with a couple of sizeable banners, (and some rather good mild to boot). And the 'nice to see you, to see you nice' prize went to Alex, last year's festival organiser, now here just for the drinking. Nice to see you....

The highly successful UMIST events juke-box was present once again, raising stacks more dosh for charity. A small donation got your request played (loud) to the rest of the revellers. We were more than encouraged to put some tunes on by the insistence of the DJs to play rather awful heavy metal or the abysmal Man United song when business was slack.

But why 56 different brews? Every March the MASS (Manchester & Salford Students) Rag walk the Bogle Stroll, a 55 mile charity walk (and I've done it!). The challenge was to 'drink the Bogle' - half of each over four days; until, that is, one more beer was donated. Ah well, such is life. 56, hic!

Every year the UMIST Rag Real Ale Festival raises several hundred pounds for charity, while ensuring that everyone attending has a damn(ed) good time. But now you've missed it. Till next year. And until then, if anyone has any comments or contributions to make, don't hesitate to contact me:

Richard Hough, (Student Liaison Officer for CAMRA)
91, Lowfield Road, Shaw Heath,
Stockport, SK3 8JR
Till then, then, cheers a'mighty.



Griffin Hotel

Heald Green 061 437 1596

SERVES EXCELLENT HOLTS BEERS
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BEER GUIDE, BUT WE STILL WISH ALL
OUR CUSTOMERS A VERY MERRY XMAS
AND HAPPY 1995

YOUR HOST
MARK HERRINGTON





BOOK REVIEW

Cardiff's Pubs 1995, Lakeside Publishing, 52 pages, £2.99.

With a classic regional brewery slap-bang in the city centre, and a well-respected micro (Bullmastiff) in the suburbs, Cardiff is one of Britain's greatest drinking cities. CAMRA's South Wales guide is now seriously out of date, so this new, independent and comprehensive publication, meets a real need.

The first thing to say is that the guide doesn't tell you which pubs sell real ale! This isn't quite so much a problem as it sounds - pubs are identified by brewery or owning group, all-keg pubs are now rare in Cardiff, and a number of pubs are identified in the description as having no real ale. Even so, in a guide whose symbols even include a (quite witty) logo for a condom machine, you'd have thought a handpump symbol could have been accommodated.

The pub descriptions, though, are clearly the work of a caring and well-informed team, and pull no punches - in one pub on a troubled outer estate, "the clientele are slowly destroying the pub". The book's organisation, too, could teach most CAMRA guides a thing or two - excellent maps make it very clear where the guide's defined areas begin and end, while an index of pubs enables you to track down that splendid Brains street-corner pub you ended up in last time.

Compiler Dave Matthews has clearly researched his pub lore - what other book will tell you that in 1947 the Bute Dock's landlord was killed by his wife, then put into a taxi to Barry? I also liked the panel that identifies Cardiff pubs which offer distinctive features - parrots, pickled eggs, that sort of thing.

Some CAMRA purists may hate this book - it doesn't count handpumps for Heaven's sake! I welcome it as a personal and personable guide to an endlessly fascinating city. But for the next edition, can't Cardiff CAMRA get together with the publishers to ensure that readers are told what beers are on sale?

Footnote:

It should be made clear that the guide is "sponsored" by Brain's Brewery. While there is no suggestion of any editorial interference by the sponsors, it's a shame that their back-cover advert pushes their "widget" can, not real ale!

THE WELCOME

Hythe Close, Rusholme
Roy and Brenda
wish all their customers a
very Merry Christmas and a
happy new year



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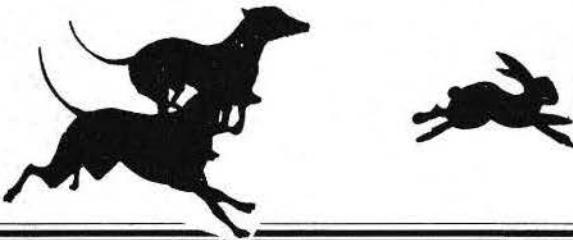
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John and staff

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O'Shea's II



The new O'Shea's (or O'Shea's II, the sequel revisited) is situated between Ireland and the first O'Sheas, on Chester Street (off Oxford Rd, opposite the BBC). I'll make no comparison between the two, other than to say they're sort of different, but sort of the same. Sounds Irish? You bet it is. The predominant colour is green, which extends to the lighting. The menu is wholly Irish, and the piped music is Irish, too. But it has been tastefully done, and there is no gimmicky Irish theme bar feel. Although you feel you are in an Irish pub in Manchester, and not in Dublin, it is definitely, well, Irish (I think we get the message -ed.)

The bar has rather average Tetley Bitter (at a more than average £1.45 a pint) and Burton Ale, better value at £1.50. But people don't go to O'Sheas to ponder indifferent cask ales, but for a slice of genuine Ireland. And that, to many people, means Guinness. Here it's the Dublin gas mix on top of the Park-Royal brewed version (the taste is not quite right for the true Irish brew) and amongst the best in town. It's also £1.80 a pint, but there you go. The bar staff are smart and friendly and make you feel very welcome. This place certainly does the business when it comes to customer care.

It is refreshing to see a group of eight or so students in a pub drinking coffee. It's that sort of place. The only intrusion is the big screen telly, but it is essential in such a pub as this to cover important events like the All-Ireland Hurling final or the Gaelic Games. But it can be avoided thanks to the numerous small seating areas. Worth a visit.

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Here we go again

Inntrepreneur, the controversial pub company co-owned by former brewer Grand Metropolitan and current brewer Courage, has embarked on a major restructure which will see management links with GrandMet severed.

While GrandMet and Courage will continue as co-owners, the pubs will be run by new independent management teams and it is intended that a more traditional 'brewer-tenant' relationship will be the order of the day. A company source has indicated that in future licensees will be treated by the new teams as people who run pubs and aren't just custodians of bricks and mortar. The whole Inntrepreneur adventure has been a public relations disaster for GrandMet and, even worse, has seen many long-time tenants either driven out of their pubs or into insolvency by punitive leases. For too many pubs and licensees common sense has dawned rather too late in the day.

In another sign that they eventually intend to quit the pub business altogether, GrandMet have also put up for sale 320 Chef & Brewer pubs currently leased by Scottish & Newcastle. A buyer is rumoured to be poised to snap these up and whether it will mean yet another brewer emerging in the former GrandMet estate or whether S&N will continue to run the pubs, along with the 1200 or so Chef & Brewer pubs they bought outright remains to be seen.

There's turmoil at Courage as well with Fosters, the cash-strapped Australian parent company reportedly anxious to dispose of its British brewing arm. Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle have again been tipped as potential buyers, although any move by either would surely attract the attention of the Monopolies Commission. What is certain is that the Courage breweries are effectively up for sale and any purchaser is likely to indulge in a fair amount of 'rationalisation', City-speak for shutting breweries and throwing their employees on the dole. The Websters plant at Halifax is considered especially vulnerable.

Good Beer Guide

Run out of ideas for Christmas presents? Well, for any beer drinker, the ideal present is the 1995 Good Beer Guide at only £9.99 (incl. p&p). Send your cheque (made payable to Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA) to:

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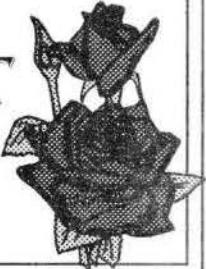
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all our customers

from Barbara, Rick & Simon
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Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
to all our customers old and new
Mike and Betty

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Robinsons Fine Ales



Dave and Sandra at

The Grapes

Castle Street, Edgeley
wish all their customers
a very Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year



RHYTHM and BOOZE

with Richard Hough

First and foremost, major apologies for a lack of a proper review this month. But at the opening of O'Shea's II, I had a little too much Guinness and my pen wouldn't work properly. There, a bad workman always blames his tool when it won't work. (No need for filth and smut, thank you - ed.) Then I ventured up to the Kings Arms in Salford for some Sunday night blues, only to find Right Band Wrong Planet in; since I have already reviewed them twice, I put my pen away, and had a pint instead. But rest assured the Kings will get a review in 1995.

Pubs without juke-boxes are rare indeed, and very often they are the best places to enjoy a pleasant pint and a 'proper' pub atmosphere. People are forced to make conversation, some of it intelligent, and spend their hard-earned cash on liquid nourishment rather than on tunes other people may not want to hear and which are over in about three minutes. Value for money? I think not. But if we accept that juke-boxes are a part of the pub furniture (and we may have to) a few observations can be made.

The volume. While you will never find a quiet jukebox, some are so overbearingly loud they make the glass-ware rattle and any form of conversation impossible. Juke-boxes do not need to be that loud, not least because distortion may be created at excessive volume. It's also bad for your hearing. A safer bet for less intrusive music is if it is piped. It is often the licensee's choice (but they may be open to requests of course) and it will almost certainly be at a sensible volume. But it can be rather indifferent 'restauranty' type stuff, which can be a bit tiresome.

The choice of tunes. Ones to avoid here tend to be the ones specialising in current chart or dance stuff. Apart from the fact that a lot of it is fairly poor musically, it tends to be found in less desirable pubs where either the clientele or the pub or the beer quality leaves a lot to be desired. The Manchester Arms in Stockport is a boisterous biker-friendly pub that is proud of its Top-40 free jukie. But if you



The Manchester Arms

don't like decent rock music (my words) you probably won't go in. A pub with an ever-changing wide selection of sounds will be popular. And the same is true of course of pubs with an ever-changing wide selection of beers. But quality counts in both respects. The Grapes In Edgeley is one of my personal favourites, which has a great 50's rock-and-roll section. Where else, for instance, could you find "Doop" from Doop (the Charleston take-off) alongside "Three steps to Heaven" from Buddy Holly?

The actual juke-box itself can be influential. A CD-only offering with a few "greatest hits" albums from popular artists is a bit yawn-worthy. But an enterprising choice of vinyl singles (so you can select lesser known B-sides) also offers scope for new bands to get their stuff played to a wider audience. Copperfields Bar on Cale Green, for instance, used to have an original all-vinyl Wurlitzer, but that has sadly disappeared.

And I'd rather be able to choose from 'Revolver' (The Beatles), 'Ziggy Stardust' (David Bowie) and 'Goats Head Soup' (The Rolling Stones) than, say, 'Past Masters', 'Changes Bowie' and 'Rolled Gold' from the same three.

Another minor point is that the applause for the records is cut off sharply if it is on CD. But CD does offer noticeably the better quality. Having said all that, (and these are just a few personal observations), my favourite juke-box in any pub in the land is one that is not on. This may sound strange for someone who lives for their music, but I prefer it live. Real music and real beer go together famously.

£1,000 Fine for 'KEG' Real Ale Pizza

Sharp-eyed Susan Nowak won the praise of local trading standards chiefs after spotting "real ale pizzas" for sale in St Albans Pizza Hut.

The "What's Brewing" food writer, who also edits the St Albans Review, didn't believe for one minute that the "winter warmer" Cumberland Sausage and onion pizza with real ale gravy advertised by the Whitbread-owned chain actually contained a drop of cask-conditioned beer.

And as well as making the front page of February's "What's Brewing", Susan's complaint got star billing at St Albans magistrates' court, where Pizza Hut was fined £1,000 after admitting falsely applying the term "real ale" to the Gold Label barley wine the pizzas actually contained.

Susan's tip-off won her a letter of thanks from the Hertfordshire Trading Standards Department, which brought the prosecution.

Clive Horton, prosecuting, told the court that to fit the definition of real ale accepted by CAMRA, major brewers and other experts, the ale would have had to contain live yeast whereas in fact it was pasteurised.

He accepted Pizza Hut had not intended to mislead but it had committed an offence by not checking into the proper definition of the term real ale.

CAMRA Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox said: "At the time people thought it was a bit of a silly story but it has now proved to be one of the most significant claims ever made by the Campaign to trading standards officers."

"We will now seek prosecutions whenever anyone applies the term real ale to a pasteurised product."

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Pub Grub this month finds itself in Cheadle Hulme, an area where the majority of pub goers might be described as "well heeled" and consequently where, if you are prepared to pay the going rate, you should expect to be served good quality pub food. The Old Mill at Cheadle Hulme is a long standing CAMRA favourite, not least because of its reputation for selling good quality real ales. As a result it has justifiably found its way into the latest edition of CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide.

The design of the pub is such that you either love it or loathe it. Purpose built a few years ago, the building is in the form of an old mill and comes complete with all the gimmickry that you would expect from such a theme. There are plenty of old sacks, ropes, winches and unpainted timber around. That is not to say that the pub is spartan. Indeed not. It is clean, richly carpeted and the seating is functional without being over comfortable.

The Old Mill is one of Tetley's guest cask ale houses and as such has a range of ever changing guest beers. Regulars will tell you that you are never too far away from a mini beer festival at the Old Mill, and they now seem to host several every year. Personally what I have found to be disappointing is the unadventurous choice of guest beers on sale - there never seem to be any rare or unusual guest



The Old Mill, Cheadle Hulme

beers from the mini/micro brewers on sale, it always seems to be beers available from the established, safe and widely available but less interesting breweries. This is definitely not a pub for beer spotters.

The beers on sale today included Mitchells Bitter, Old Hookey, Charles Wells Bombardier, Wadworths 6X, Thomas Hardy Bitter, and Tetley Bitter. All the guest beers were priced at £1.55 which, whilst it no doubt makes things simpler for the pub, does not represent particularly good value for the weaker beers. We tried the Mitchells Bitter and the Old Hookey, both of which were in good condition and both of which were topped up (twice) without us having to ask.

Food seems to be a big line at the Old Mill. There is the standard menu card on every table and the daily specials which are displayed on a board facing the bar. The Old Mill is a Tetley 'Big Steak Pub' which means that steaks feature heavily on the menu. There is everything from a modest 5 oz rump steak at £4.50 to a whopping 32 oz rump steak at £11.95. The steaks come with potatoes or chips and garden peas, sautéed mushrooms and onion rings.

Other dishes on the standard menu include a selection of starters, fish dishes from £3.95, a couple of vegetarian dishes from £3.85, ploughmans £3.75, Chicken Kiev £4.75, Marinated Turkey Steak £4.60 and a steak and scampi dish at £5.75. There are also sweets available, mostly priced around £1.80 and all sounded to be not too good for the waistline. Chocolate Fudge Cake, Knickerbocker Glory and Toffee Pie are all there to tempt the weak willed.



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**Hydes
Anvil Ales**
Brewers of
Traditional
Cask
Beers
**Always in
good taste**

I chose the Cajun Chicken (£4.95) whilst my partner went for the 5 oz Rump Steak. When my meal arrived there did not look to be much of it on the plate for £4.95. Although the chicken steak was a good size, the vegetable portions were tiny and the chips so well cooked that they were brittle. The steak arrived in pieces and the fried mushrooms that accompanied it could have been hotter. I have to admit that I did not really enjoy my meal and that I have had much better meals elsewhere, cheaper.

Of course every pub likes to have efficient staff but in the case of the Old Mill this is taken a bit too far. Five minutes after last orders (at 2.30) we were instructed to "drink up now" rather than being asked if we could "please drink up now". We proceeded to drink up but just having bought a pint at last orders I did not want to gulp it down. Five minutes further on we were told again "look, drink up now, you've had your ten minutes". Two minutes later we stood outside the pub with its front door firmly locked and bolted feeling most aggrieved at being virtually ejected from the premises. I had to ask myself, "was there any real need for such aggressive behaviour?" This behaviour is something I will not forget next time I am in the area and seeking refreshment.

Price Cuts to Save Tie

A leading competition lawyer believes the forthcoming European Commission review of the UK tie could lead to lower pub rents and beer prices.

Geraldine Tickle believes brewers may be forced to make the reductions to save the tie.

She says the Commission expects a "Special commercial or financial advantage" in return for the various restrictions implied in renting a pub - an advantage which may have existed in 1983 when the tie was reprieved but is more doubtful today.

She said the tie put the brewers in a position of power over publicans and consumers to which they were not entitled.

But some Independent Family Brewers of Britain members are beginning to feel more sanguine about the review due in 1997 believing the Commission will leave the tie alone for fear of revealing similar deals in other industries.

Christmas Greetings from Irene and Toni

The Greyhound

Bowden St., Edgeley

Boddingtons Mild & Bitter
Theakstons Bitter
guest beers changed weekly

A warm welcome guaranteed
CAMRA Pub of the Month May 1993

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
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Shambles Square

Central Manchester's Sam Smiths Pub
Cask Conditioned Sam Smiths
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Food Served 12-2.30 Mon - Fri
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Good home-cooking available all day!

Families welcome
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SKY SPORTS ON SATELLITE
CHILDRENS PARTIES CATERED FOR

YOUR HOSTS

Steve & Dorothy

Ye Olde Vic

Chatham Street, Edgeley



Kay and John
wish all
their customers the
very best for Christmas
and the New Year



Changing guest beers every week



Harry and Jessie Curran
wish all their Customers
a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year



The Romper

Pinfold Lane Ringway

Boddingtons Mild & Bitter

Theakstons Bitter

Draught Bass and Guest Beers

The Coach & Horses



Belle Vue St., Gorton
(opposite Showcase Cinemas)

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Happy New Year
from Beryl

Hatters Mild, Best Bitter and
Old Tom Ale are all on
handpump

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11 WOODFORD ROAD, BRAMHALL, STOCKPORT

'Fake' Tap Row Hits Guinness

Pubcans asked to install the new Guinness keg fount are being warned it could ruin their chances of getting into next year's Good Beer Guide.

Guinness is spending £10 million to convert 70,000 stockists to the new founts before the end of 1996, but already the programme has hit trouble.

For the fount incorporates a tap resembling a handpump complete with pumpclip-style badge which could fall foul of both CAMRA and trading standards officials.

CAMRA policy is that pubs selling keg beer or cider by misleading dispense such as the notorious Scrumpy Jack "handpump" will not be included in the GBG or local guides.

CAMRA defines misleading dispense as "any visible or apparent method of dispensing brewery-conditioned beers or keg ciders which implies they are cask-conditioned ales or real ciders."

And it adds: "CAMRA as a consumer organisation cannot recommend any pub where the customers are likely to be misled."

Guinness marketing director Rob McNevin denied the new-style fount was misleading. He said the tap was far too small to be taken as a handpump.

"You can clench it in your fist and the brass knob on top will barely stand proud," he said. "We don't believe that we are in any way implying that draught Guinness is hand-pulled and our research did not show any such confusion."

CAMRA Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox said "It is up to branches to say whether the fount is misleading, and they should consider it in the light of other possibly misleading circumstances - for instance whether Guinness is being promoted with the real ales on the pub's blackboard."

The new fount is modelled on the one used in Ireland and comes at a time when a growing number of drinkers are making unfavourable comparisons between Dublin Guinness and London Guinness and when Beamish is billing itself as the UK's only Irish stout actually brewed in Ireland.

Mr McNevin said: "People who have been to Ireland recognise it as the Irish tap, and those who haven't say it has a much more traditional feel to it."

But Guinness's bid to reinforce its Irish heritage looks like breaching the Institute of Trading Standards Administration's policy on misusing real ale imagery.

Earlier this year ITSA accepted that the term "draught in can" was not misleading provided that the real imagery - specifically the handpump - was not used to promote such beers.

An ITSA spokesman said the design of the new fount seemed to encroach on the principle contained in the policy and was a direct parallel to the constant reference to butter in margarine advertisements, which ITSA was also against.

"There is a stronger and stronger connotation that this is as good as the real thing," said the spokesman. Brent, Ealing and Harrow Trading Standards Office, Guinness's home authority, has received a complaint about the new tap and is investigating.

Meanwhile Mr McNevin says licensees unhappy about the new founts can stick with the old ones.

OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1994

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Last month's diary format seems to have been very well received so we will be making this a permanent feature, starting as usual with the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA diary.

December

- Thursday 8th** - Monthly branch meeting at the Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heaviley. As usual we will be featuring the annual Christmas Quiz. Starts 8.00pm.
- Monday 12th** - Social, Dog & Partridge, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. Starts 9.00pm.
- Friday 16th** - the famous annual Hillgate crawl. Start 7.00pm at the Queens Head (Turners), Little Underbank or join at 8.30 in the Black Lion, Hillgate. Finishing at the Blossoms.
- Monday 19th** - Cheadle Social, Vine 9.00pm; Crown 10.00pm. Both on the High Street.
- Thursday 22nd** - Pub of the Month award to the Queens Head, Little Underbank, Stockport (see page 2). Starts about 8.30-ish.
- Friday 6th Jan.** - trip to the West Riding Licensed Refreshment Rooms at Dewsbury Station. Catch the 6.50 train from Piccadilly.

December

- High Peak branch cover Romiley, Marple, Bredbury, Woodley and all points north. They have notified OT of the following events:**
- Monday 12th** - Monthly branch meeting at the Pineapple, Marple. Aim to get there by 8.30pm.
- Saturday 17th** - Christmas trip. Contact Frank Wood on 0457 865426 for details.
- Friday 28th** - All day(!) pub crawl in and around Manchester Centre. Meet 11am at the Beerhouse (leaving at about 11.30). Chinese meal at about 8.00pm. Contact Frank Wood. Faint-hearts need not apply.
- Sunday 8th Jan** - Woods Walk. Meet New Mills bus terminus 9.45am. Taking in Little Mill, Lantern Pike and Royal Hotel (Hayfield) - informal pub survey.
- Friday 15th** - Advance notice: mini-bus survey trip to Buxton. Contact Frank Wood.

Members of both branches are of course welcome to attend each other's events.

CAMRA Members - Get Your '95 Good Beer Guide

This year Stockport & South Manchester Branch are offering its members the chance to buy the 1995 Good Beer Guide at a special discounted price. Not £9.99 the cover price, not £6.50 the CAMRA national members price but £5.75 (almost half price). With Christmas coming up fast - get yours cheaper than the bookshop price!

So send your cheque made payable to CAMRA, Stockport & South Manchester to Jim Flynn, 66, Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 5EG and your copy will be despatched. N.B. If you live outside the branch area please add 50p for p&p. This offer is not available to non-members, so if you feel aggrieved - then join! (Form on inside back cover!)

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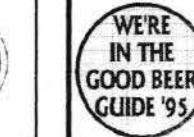
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Robinsons Traditional Ales

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Badge Beer Blues

Whilst staying in Portsmouth recently, I called in at the Good Beer Guide listed Wine Vaults on Albert Road, Southsea and was delighted that there were two beers I had not seen before, namely "Whippersnapper" and "Offyatrolli".

Despite questioning the bar staff as to who brewed these (they both had the same design pump clip), I wasn't able to gather any information, so, after a pint of Ringwood Best Bitter, I decided to try them. Luckily I got into conversation with a local who informed me they were house names for Courage Best Bitter and Courage Directors - so I chose to try something else instead.

Does anyone know CAMRA's policy and views on pubs calling beers by a house name? It is not the first time I've almost been duped into buying a pint of beer that I wouldn't have chosen if the name had been correctly displayed. One instance that springs to mind was in the Romper at Marple Ridge when the landlord refused to tell me what "Romper Bitter" was. Again, I found out and quizzed the landlord why he gave this name to Boddingtons Bitter. His reply was "If people knew what it was we'd have all the riffraff coming in"!

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New Brew News

After years of saying it couldn't be done, Joseph Holts have finally produced a draught, cask-conditioned version of their Sixex strong ale.

Initially on an experimental basis, just fifty 22-gallon containers have been produced which will be sold in only six of the brewery's tied houses in the run up to Christmas, when the position will be looked at again. Initial verdicts have ranged from "smooth and rich" to "woody and off" so you pays your money and takes your choice. Speaking of money, although the beer comes in at a hefty 6% ABV, it doesn't offer quite the value that Holts are famous for with their other beers, retailing at 79p a half (it's only sold in halves but apparently there is no objection if you order two halves and an empty pint pot!). The six selected pubs are a somewhat mixed and scattered bunch: the Crown & Anchor, Cateaton Street, City Centre; Derby Brewery Arms, Cheetham Hill; Melville, Stretford; Roebuck, Urmston; Cleveland, Crumpsall and the Old Bulls Head in Eccles.

A recent trip to the Derbyshire breweries revealed all to be going strong: Whim have introduced Magic Mushroom Mild and revamped their seasonal ale, Black Christmas which now weighs in at 6.5% ABV. The first tied house has also been purchased in the shape of the Wilkes Head in Leek. This should feature the full range of Whim ales plus guest beers. To celebrate the change of ownership at the end of November Giles Lichfield produced a one-off Damson Beer - Whim Special refermented with Damson syrup. Interesting or what? Down in Fenney Bentley, Black Bull have retained Dovedale Bitter as a permanent addition to the range - it was meant to be a seasonal summer ale but its popularity was such that it's been kept on. A 5% version of this beer may also be in the pipeline. Nearby at the Bentley Brook Hotel, the Leatherbritches Brewery has a new brewer, with over 20 years experience at Bass and Marstons. The beers have certainly improved enormously and the third, stronger ale - Tarebrain - has been promised for New Year's Eve.

Meanwhile closer to home, beers from the Millgate in Failsworth should be on sale at the pub soon. Problems with some of the early test brews have led to the involvement of a consultant - one Brendan Dobbin who, we are told, has been adjusting the hop rate of the beer.....and speaking of Brendan, rumours continue to circulate about the impending reappearance of one or two West Coast beers, Green Bullet and Yakima Grande Pale Ale have been mentioned. More on that one when we have it.

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OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1994

Bull Curry

High Peak CAMRA dine out in style

One of the delights of both visiting and maintaining an interest in pubs is when you chance upon somewhere that bit different or occasionally, the truly memorable, the completely unspoilt tap room in an otherwise unremarkable place, the refurbishment that has turned some interior designer's cerebral vomit into somewhere that looks, feels and works like a pub, and suchlike.

When one of our Glossop members first told the branch in our pub news round-up though that a well respected, and previous Good Beer Guide entered pub near where he lived had been turned into a restaurant, unrestrained joy was not the dominant emotion. Explaining further, it appeared that actually no alterations had taken place other than the tables being replaced with dining tables (and tablecloths, wow!), and that the excellent public bar and drinking corridor remained, as did the Robinsons beer. Our fears were further allayed when it was made clear that there was no compulsion to eat, you could still play bones unhindered by the passage of gastronomes, and the rather good Ordinary Bitter (sorry - Old Stockport Ale), was now available. Then came the clincher - the menu was prepared by a refugee from curry canyon, and was already attracting favourable reports.

On the strength of this, and having a slot in the branch social diary, a few tables were booked for a Saturday evening. The branch met in the Star close to Glossop BR Station, a BodPubCo "Ale House" serving the regular Whitbread Boddingtons Bitter and Lees Bitter, both in good form. Better though was the choice from Hardy Country Bitter, Otter Ale, Snowdonia Choir Porter and Exmoor Gold. Some members assembled a little earlier than the rest, starting the previous night in fact, with a judicious break for sleeping, though we all managed to make an impact on the beer stocks. A short taxi ride, (necessitated by time and a large hill), took us to the Bulls Head in Glossop for our meal, which came as we were enjoying the beer at our tables. Complimentary pappadoms were followed by well cooked and prepared starters from a good selection on the menu, the mixed tandoori starter being particularly good, both generous in portion and minus the usual quantities of cold, bulking, salad. The main courses were the equal of the starters, and as good as a dedicated Indian restaurant, our table having a selection from dopiazza, rogan josh and karahi gosht, with a mixture of rice and breads.

At around ten pounds per head it represented good value for money and left us replete. After another pint of Robinsons, some of the group returned to the Star for last orders or trains, some stayed in the tap room for more beer and bones and to nurse a smile.



CURMUDGEON



November's Opening Times reported the opening of Durty Nelly's in Fallowfield, an Irish theme bar targeted at students, selling a 4.3% ABV beer at a staggering £1.80 a pint. This is only the latest in a stream of new pubs which have opened in "student-land" over the past few years, such as the Flea & Firkin, Jabez Clegg and Joshua Brooks. These places, along with long-established favourites like the Lass O'Gowrie, seem to do tremendous business slaking the thirsts of Britain's largest student population outside London. But at the same time students keep telling us how hard up they are, and how cutbacks in grants mean it's ever harder to make ends meet. What they say just doesn't stack up with that they do.

Undoubtedly some students, particularly those who get no parental support, do find it a struggle to manage, but at the same time it's obvious that many others have plenty of spare cash to pour down their throats. It's not as if they even drink in the Grafton where the beer's cheap. When you see the crush at the bar of the Lass or the Flea, you can understand why the general public - many of whom work hard all their lives and never reach a "graduate starting salary" - find it hard to have much sympathy with the predicament of "penniless students".

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The latest fad for those drinkers too immature to use a glass is "Ice Beer" which has been introduced by such renowned brewers as Labatts, Carlsberg and Fosters. Apparently this is brewed at a normal strength of 5%, but then chilled so that ice crystals form in the beer. Removing these has the effect of concentrating the brew and ups the strength to 5.6%. Wow! The objective is claimed to be to create beer of "unparalleled smoothness". Unparalleled blandness, more like. It's perfectly feasible to brew a 5.6% beer by normal means without "ice brewing", but if you did that maybe the taste would intrude too much. If you're pouring beer from a bottle straight down your gullet, you don't want anything like a good smack of hops to get in the way.



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A much more serious and worrying product innovation is the use of mixed gas dispense (carbon dioxide plus nitrogen) for keg beers. Rather than the conventional gassy keg beer, this produces a much smoother, creamier pint not unlike "draught beer in a can". We first saw this with Caffrey's Irish Ale in Bass pubs, but now the brewers are introducing it on mainstream brands such as Tetleys and Theakstons. They claim it's only meant as an alternative to keg in outlets which would never stock real ale. But, knowing the big brewers, it's hard to believe they don't have a hidden agenda of whittling away at the distribution of that awkward stuff real ale by replacing it with mixed-gas keg in the more marginal outlets. While the new kind of keg may be slightly more palatable than the old, it's still a dead, bland, pasteurised beer with nothing like the flavour and character of a well-kept real ale. But this threat makes it even more important than ever that pubs look after their real ale properly. A few pints of sludge or vinegar, and the alternative of smooth, creamy keg Tetleys might begin to look appealing.

5 Years Ahead

by Paul Hutchings

DECEMBER '99

Lead story in OT will be the first £5 pint - of Holts. Prime Minister Portillo seems to have finally given in to the European Union Health Fascists, and raised duty to 75p per percentage point of alcohol. With last year's abolition of the pint/half pint in favour of litres, things will be looking bad.

More pub closures. In Stockport the brewers have closed another 76 pubs converting them into virtual-reality arcades, where all the illusion of drinking can be had for a five pound coin - but no alcohol, only electrical stimulus direct to the brain's pleasure centres.

It was announced that Robinsons were to buy the remaining brewing interests of Bass, the Highgate Brewery, now a shadow of its once grand self, and its remaining estate of 33 pubs. The mayor of Stockport is forced to resign his day job, having been found with alcohol traces in his blood from less than a fortnight before after attending a CAMRA function - (against EC employment law), he is threatening to sue CAMRA on the grounds that he thought all real ale was both vegetarian and non-alcoholic.

Sad, if slightly amusing news, a Stockport resident has died in a night club after swallowing a tablet of new Japanese Ice-glass-beer. He apparently thought it was a standard brewery product - and would rehydrate to a half-litre of premium lager in his stomach, quickly releasing the alcohol. Idiot - ALL the new Japanese polymer beers have a widget to create a rehydrated designer glass around the beer as you add the water - this is, after all, the latest in designer 'retro' chic.

Low alcohol take-out 'cask-ale' like beertables are now available from Whitbread in small tubes like smarties - just as good as the real thing, they insisted. Peter Robinson writes a letter claiming that Stockport's remaining 22 pubs are safe from the threat of foreign competition and cheap beer imports. Once again CAMRA launches a campaign to promote Mild, but with little hope of success as it is now brewed by only the most traditional micros. They, however, are both still confident.

OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1994

Climb Down Over Nitro Keg Claims

Whitbread has backed down from claims in the drinks trade press that its new "draught-in-can-on-draught" ales are not keg.

Ales and stouts marketing director Mike Dowell had described the new-look Flowers IPA and Boddingtons, which are pasteurised and served under a nitrogen-CO₂ mixture as "a wholly new beer style".

In an interview in the Licensee he was reported as saying: "It is neither cask nor keg, nor is it a substitute for the latter."

But under attack from CAMRA Mr Dowell retracted the claim.

He told "What's Brewing": "It is brewery-conditioned, and I was not talking about the technical difference in terms of method of dispense because clearly it is the same as keg."

He said the neither-cask-nor-keg claim related to the presentation of the beers rather than the means of serving them.

"The draught-in-can style has now become very acceptable and what we have done is to make it available in the on-trade," he said. "The counter-mount has been designed deliberately to resemble the can."

Mr Dowell also promised that sales reps had been specifically directed not to put the new-style keg products into cask ale houses.

"You have my categorical assurance that the sales team will not be trying to convert real ale houses," he said. "We regard cask ale as the gold standard, and developing it is the way forward."

Mr Dowell has also angered some leading real ale licensees by saying there were some landlords who couldn't manage cask ales.

Anita Henderson of the Prince Albert at Stow-cum-Quy, Cambridge, who has served more than 1,000 different guest ales in eight years said: "If you hear of licensees who can't manage cask ale it's only because they aren't interested in it."

"With a little common sense - and provided the beer is properly brewed and delivered - a five-year-old could do it."

And Sid Searle of the Elephant at Faversham, Kent - guest ale 1,000 due around Christmas - said: "You don't set a bus-driver to fly an airliner, and anyone who can't be trained to keep ales properly should be in a different job."

CAMRA Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox called for the beers to be clearly defined as "better-quality keg".

"If Whitbread is saying this represents a third way then these beers will take sales from cask," he said. "We are with Tetley here. They are selling their mixed-gas ale as improved keg, which is what it is."

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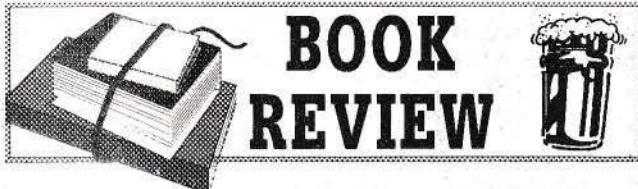
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BOOK REVIEW

Michael Jackson's Pocket Beer Book, Mitchell Beazley, 192 pages, £7.99.

Quite different in style from the lavishly illustrated tomes with which "The Beer Hunter" first made his name, this latest edition (after a three-year gap) of Michael Jackson's slimline gazetteer of beer, from Aass of Norway to Zum Verige of Dusseldorf, will be warmly welcomed. Though much of the text is identical to the previous edition, new material has been added to cover new breweries and also a greater selection of recommended drinking places (a feature which has been weak in previous editions, though in this reviewer's view there is still room for improvement.)

With no illustrations save for four very basic maps of prominent brewing nations, the book has few frills. However, the handy pocket format packs in a wealth of information with snappy assessments (Budweiser uses famous hop varieties "in such small quantities....that their influence is barely perceptible") and the now famous star ratings (Boddingtons gets one star, Lees Harvest Ale three and a half - which seems fair enough to me).

At times one wishes that this dauntingly well-informed author would stand back a little from the detail and devote some consideration to longer-term trends in a particular region - perhaps, say, the now worrying erosion of diversity in the brewing culture of Bavaria. But perhaps this is asking the author to write a different book.

The book we have is a splendid guide for anyone who travels the world of beer, whether your journeys span the globe or just the shelves of the local specialist off-licence. Thoroughly recommended.



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or GARDEN
- IN SHORT - A REAL PUB
- WARRINGTON ST. ASHTON-U-LYNE NEXT TO BYPASS

Barney McGrew's



Well, what to make of Barney McGrew's? It's obviously a student pub, sited on Oxford Road, under the Phoenix and opposite the RNCM it could be little else. What it's not is yet another Irish pub as we suggested last month. No, this is a 'Trumpton Pub' selling 'Trumpton's Finest Ales'. Honest. It says so outside.

Inside, well it's yet another of your shiny wood, bare board 'real ale pubs'. No sign of Trumptoniana but the usual bric-a-brac that you know so well. It bears a passing resemblance to H R Fletchers which is not surprising since it comes from the same stable. That's right, 'Trumpton's Finest Ales' are in fact Bass, Worthington 'Best' Bitter, Hillgate Dark and a few guests - St Austell Hicks Special and Wells Bombardier when OT called. A not unpleasant pint of Bass was a not too excessive £1.52 and the pub was certainly busy, and this at 6pm.

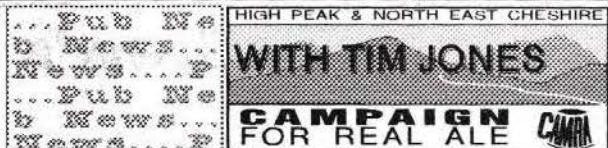
It's nicely laid out and seems to be working well although even just a couple of weeks after opening it was already starting to look a little frayed at the edges. But, and there's always a 'but', despite doing quite a lot right, or at least having a fair stab at doing it right, there is one fatal flaw. It's the old keg cider/fake handpump scam. Not Scrumpy Jack for a change but the latest addition to the 'Hall of Infamy', Arthur J Moores Cidermaster. Despite the fancy name it's still keg junk and until that handpump goes anyone who objects to being conned in this way should give the pub a wide berth.

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Ales
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In Glossop, the Manor is back in full swing now new landlord Alan Gough has got into his stride. Alan and his wife Eileen had the Vine at Dunham Massey for almost 20 years before Sam Smiths made them redundant. More recently they won plaudits in OT while running Hydes' Moss Rose in Heaton Norris. At the Manor they came in almost as troubleshooters after a drastic decline in trade, put down to poor beer quality. Old customers are now returning as not only is the beer vastly improved but the pub is noticeably cleaner and friendlier. Alongside Boddingtons and Oldham Bitters there is a rotating guest with Wadworths 6X, Greene King Abbot, Higsons and Brakespeares all featuring in November.

Hartington Magic Mushroom Mild has been spotted in the Swan at Buxton, a pub which seems to be getting more adventurous in their guest beer range.

The shabby New Inn at Hollingsworth closed for the first few days of November to convert into Royal Freehouses latest acquisition. The Glossop-based pub group plan to gut the pub in the new year. This is perhaps one pub that would benefit from such drastic

treatment and is good news for locals. Royal also own the House of Blues which has been buzzing of late with some big-name bands playing the venue. The Climax Blues Band recently starred and legendary lunatic John Otway is booked for the new year. It is also rumoured that a regular guest beer will shortly feature alongside the well-kept Tetleys.

The New Inn on the corner of Greenside Lane and Scott Road in Droylsden, perhaps best known for its fine thirties exterior, has Worthington Best Bitter on handpump.

Talks on Pub Hours

A top-level CAMRA delegation is to meet junior Home Office minister Michael Forsyth to discuss the way forward for licensing hours.

The delegation will also meet Mr Forsyth's Labour opposite number in what looks like the opening round in the government's last push on ending restrictions on Sunday trading.

The omission of licensing reform from the Queen's Speech surprised some observers.

But in an earlier debate in the Lords peers hammered away at the "absurdity" of supermarkets being allowed to open from 10am-6pm on Sunday but having to rope off the liquor aisle from 12-3.

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5400, and an increase in size to a regular
24 pages. We look forward to bringing
you bigger and better editions
throughout 1995.**

Festive Fun

As is traditional at this time of year, Opening Times brings you a variety of festive food and drink for you to make at home.

One old favourite is Robinsons Old Tom Cake. All you need is:

- 4oz Butter
- 4oz Sugar
- 1 cup dried mixed fruit
- 1 bottle of Old Tom
- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 level teaspoon mixed spice

Preheat the oven to gas mark 4, 180C/350F. Soften/melt the butter in a saucepan, add the sugar, bicarbonate of soda and mixed spice. Stir well and then add the flour and Old Tom, stirring all the time. Boil and stir for 3 minutes and then add the mixed fruit. Transfer to a 1lb loaf tin and bake for 70 minutes in the centre of the oven. Cooking time may be reduced or increased for a slightly stodgier or drier cake.

This can be eaten cold, spread with butter, or warm with cream or custard as a pudding.

Another pudding long associated with the use of beer is Christmas Pudding. If you fancy making one yourself, why not try the Opening Times special recipe. "Just take":

- 8oz fresh breadcrumbs
- 6oz brown sugar
- 6oz currants
- 8oz seeded raisins
- 6oz sultanas
- 1oz mixed peel
- 8oz shredded suet
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- grated rind of one lemon
- 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 pint milk
- 1/2 pint stout

(a bottle of Titanic will do nicely)

Take a large basin and mix together all the dry ingredients. Stir in the lemon juice, beaten eggs, milk and stout. Mix well and turn into either one large or two smaller pudding basins. Tie over cloths and let stand overnight. Steam for eight hours checking from time to time to make sure there is enough water in the pan. Either eat straightaway or let cool, recover with a clean cloth and store in a cool place.

SHADY OAK

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5 REAL ALES

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+ REGULAR GUEST
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LUNCHTIME & EVENING
7 DAYS A WEEK

Your hosts Phil & Julie



Wood's Travels

High Peak Branches trip to Sowerby Bridge two weeks ago began with a quick look round the site of Ryburns new brewery. Housed in the town centre, when finished it will be four times the size of its former premises. Brewing should commence soon, at present they are keeping customers supplied from stock.

Following this, we had sandwiches at the brewery tap, the Rams Head, up the hill on Halifax Road, sampling a variety of their drinks. Of the ones tried Old Stone Troff and Rydale Bitter were the favourites of that particular day.

The next pub we tried was the Moorings, down on the Rochdale Canal where lovely views of the canal basin are enjoyed from a balcony. Moorhouses Premier Bitter was voted excellent. Next, at the end of town, King William IV, listed in the GBG, had a good selection - I found Dalesman Old Ale to my palate. Our final call was to the strangely named Puzzle Hall. A one-time GBG entry, it is a very old building hidden in a valley of old mills and well worth looking into.

The group split roughly into two here, the first group going straight back to Manchester (Beer House, etc), the others having a two hour stop at Hebden Bridge, where we had fine beer and food at the Nutclough House Hotel (GBG listed). As on my last visit, Exmoor gold was as good as ever.

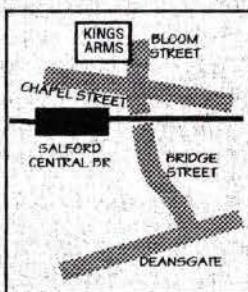
We then taxied sheerly upwards to the Mount Skip from where the views of Calderdale are unrivalled by any other GBG listed pub in the area.

Whilst on the subject of Hebden Bridge - I spent a weekend there in the summer and it is a decent drinkers' town, with several pubs clustered round the centre. The other GBG entry I like is the Fox & Goose, half a mile west of the centre and a short bus ride up to Heptonstall and its cobbled streets; or Jack Bridge where the New Delight Inn has a bunkhouse in which we spent the night. It was sufficient for our needs - with a piled-up breakfast thrown in for £8 (tel : 0422 842795). Trains are every hour from Victoria, Manchester - and this includes Sundays. Next month, hopefully, an account of our visit to Hartington Brewery.

THE KINGS ARMS

BLOOM STREET, SALFORD

Dave and Sue Price welcome you to enjoy
the fine range of beers, ciders and foods
in Salford's Premier Ale House



13 HANDPUMPS
HIGHEST QUALITY
&
TIMOTHY TAYLORS
CONSTANTLY CHANGING RANGE OF
GUEST BEERS & TRADITIONAL CIDERS

The War is Over- CAMRA won?

Ralph Warrington sees no cause for complacency.

A frivolous headline obviously - or is it? There are many beer drinkers, including CAMRA members, who will stop, think and muse that perhaps there is a ring of truth to this bold statement, after all real ale is available in most, if not all pubs, even the keg bastion of the club trade is wilting under the pressure of consumer awareness of the real stuff, and all thanks to the vision - and yes, hard graft - of the Campaign over the past twenty plus years. So that's it folks, the job's done and it's slap on the back time and a few celebratory bevvies.

Well, not quite. You see, CAMRA very quickly ceased to be a single issue campaign, and broadened to become both interested and involved in all aspects of beer, (and our other indigenous products cider and Perry, more of which later), and also beer drinkers and the places where they drank it. Here the picture is far less rosy. Consider if you will the following problems affecting us all out there in Real Ale World.

- ★ In many parts of the country, the price of beer is now so high that credit card service cannot be long delayed.
- ★ Too many free trade pubs keep and serve beer in poor condition.
- ★ Breweries continue to close.
- ★ Some brewers alter the palates of their cask beers in a misconceived attempt to make them blander and more acceptable to less discerning drinkers.
- ★ Rumours of further mergers and take-overs rumble beneath the surface of a troubled industry.
- ★ Too many pubs are closed, robbing small towns and villages of the hubs of community life.
- ★ There are still areas of the British Isles that are short of choice or even cask beer at all.

Surprisingly, all the above are real and present threats to the product we so enjoy, even the last one; try getting choice in the Channel Islands or large parts of East Anglia, or even real ale at all in most of Northern Ireland. More surprising still was that these seven points were deemed

weighty enough to feature in the opening editorial of the Good Beer Guide's tenth edition - 1983. Still these problems remain unresolved, many are worse, and still more urgent challenges can be added to the list: take-over by foreign companies of our breweries, the threat to the tied estate, licensing issues, massive discounting of 'beer' to the take-home/supermarket trade, designer drinks, legally endorsed short measures, the illegal importation and resale of cheaply imported beer from the continent, etc. etc.

We have been dubbed the most successful consumer campaign ever, and have rejoiced in that since it first appeared in print, yet even our initial target, and the one we are most proud of, the re-establishment of cask-conditioned beer as the drink of choice of the majority of the drinking (particularly pub-going) public may not be as complete as may appear. It is true, particularly in the North West where we have long been fortunate in respect of our choice and the value of real ale, that the overwhelming majority of pubs now stock at least one traditional cask conditioned beer, thanks in no small measure to the instructions of the Beer Orders, in the formulation of which the campaign played a large part. However, the choice is very limited as the brewers like to control the supply of all wet products to their own and to their contracted customers, even where the landlord is legally able to exercise a choice. More importantly, however, the quality of these beers is often poor. It is simply not the case that selling real beer requires a handpump on the bar and a ten minute chat from the suit from the brewery. Stocking and selling cask-conditioned beer in consistently good condition requires training, skill, conscientious application, turnover and experience, which is why the good cellarman deserves your respect. If any of these is lacking then it will be reflected in the overall quality of the pint in your hand. If the quality product is either foisted onto a lazy, untrained or unwilling landlord, or put into a pub that cannot sustain an adequate turnover, it is better not to put it in at all until conditions allow, even if that means leaving more keg pubs at present, because people are spending less money in pubs and if the quality of the real beer served does not improve on a large scale, we risk a tremendous backlash from consumers avoiding the inconsistent and going for the pasteurised.

DAVENPORT ARMS

(THIEF'S NECK), WOODFORD
IN THE SAME FAMILY FOR OVER 60 YEARS

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR
CUSTOMERS FROM
YVONNE & ALISON
Robinsons Traditional Draught Beers
at their best

GOOD BEER GUIDE 1988 - 1995

Best Wishes at Christmas
and Happy New Year
to all our customers from
John and Kath

The Grey Horse

Heaton Norris



As far as choice goes, the big six brewing companies with a large estate that featured in the 1983 Good Beer Guide have now become the not quite as big five, Grand Metropolitan having opted to become a pub owning company, swapping its breweries with Courage for much of the latter's tied estate. Also, Allied Breweries has now been bought out (though officially referred to as having been merged) by one of the world's largest brewers, Carlsberg.

As a result these large combines with their trading deals, large estates and determination to control the market have meant that bars are now stocked with pumps dispensing a limited range of bland national beers, best described as inoffensive, so that where once there was Gauntlet, Trophy, Double Diamond and Worthington E there is now Tetley's, Boddingtons, John Smiths and Worthington 'Best'. Also worrying is that many people who have dealt with real ale over a number of years have noticed a change in the handling characteristics of many beers in recent years, particularly a general decline in the vigour of secondary fermentation, as evidenced by a reduction in the activity when the cask is vented.

This is often accompanied by a reduction, in some cases to nil, of the sediment left in the cask when all the saleable beer has been drawn off. The explanation would appear to be that the brewers are adjusting their recipes to make the product more cellar-friendly, and ease the job of the inexperienced cellarman. Unfortunately, the ways that this is achieved i.e. having less fermentable material available for secondary fermentation in the cask, not to mention the possibilities of adjuncts being used to preserve the beer etc. are precisely those which affect taste and individuality. Particularly worrying is the appearance of these traits in beers well known and respected for their distinctive flavour. Even the well liked, and presently Champion Beer of Britain, Timothy Taylor's Landlord has been the subject of much recent discussion regarding inconsistencies, flavour alterations etc. and broaching a cask no longer required techniques akin to bomb disposal.

The situation regarding two other traditional drinks which may claim a longer history than real ale as we know it, cider and perry, is even worse. Ignorance regarding the traditional products described by these appellations is so

poor that I had better explain for those who have never heard of perry before that it is a drink fermented out of very scarce varieties of English pears, the juice being pressed and then left to ferment in wooden vats. Most of the populace consider that cider is cold and fizzy, as that is all they have ever had, when in reality it is mainly still, probably hazy and with a taste as different from the mainstream products as can be. The general ignorance about perry can be judged from an article which appeared in the Sun newspaper in May 1992 which purported to give ten 'key' facts on cider, mainly trivia about East Africans considering it an aphrodisiac etc., but including one which stated "cider has a sister perry, made from pears", enlightening eh?

So what are we to do in order to solve these problems? Well, if you aren't already a member, come and join the 45,000 plus in CAMRA. Then all members need to get active, come to meetings, gather the facts and figures about the pubs in your area that serve crap and publish them, but also praise the deserving. Write to your MP and MEP about duty, market rigging in the take-home trade, the flood of illegal re-saleable beer from the continent, the archaic licensing laws and so on. Make real beer and real pubs an ISSUE! Return to the bar every under measure or bad pint. Report to the Trading Standards ass instances of stainless steel buckets disappearing into cellars full of beer and returning empty, pubs have sinks at ground level for pouring away slops. Most of all be aware of the pubs in your area and visit them. Not only will they welcome the custom but you can put the CAMRA case across effectively and proactively, though avoid preaching and instructing staff, (you may know, or may think you know, everything about keeping and selling beer but I doubt it), and don't forget that the local branch can supply leaflets detailing licensees rights for guest beers and useful outlines (only) on cellar craft. So don't just sit there - do something, and do it now.

...coming next month...

**more complaints about Badged Beers
The Scratches Bible reviewed
& The Great Vegetarian Con!**

SIR ROBERT PEEL

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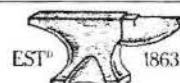
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HYDES TRADITIONAL ANVIL ALES
AND A WARM WELCOME AT

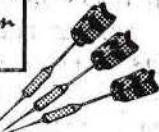
THE MOSS ROSE
DIDSBURY ROAD, HEATON NORRIS

*Gladys and Graham wish
A Merry Christmas
to all their customers*



Fistful of Arrows

By Brian Carey



Cheshire picked up their first victory as a Premier League county when the men's 'A' squad shaded their match with fellow newcomers Surrey.

After a disastrous opening encounter with Lancashire, followed by a brave defeat at the hands of international packed Glamorgan, things were looking pretty bleak in the Cheshire camp.

Macclesfield's Brian Nolan came back from dead to take the opening game in the first ever match against Surrey. He lost the first two legs against Andy Waugh in 15 and 19 darts, but dug in to win in 18, 20 and 19 to give Alan Roebuck's side the lead.

Three straight wins, including a 154 finish from England international Dave Askew gave the southerners a 3-1 lead.

Local here Tony O'Shea showed his class, taking the "man of the match" award with 17, 16 and 15 dart legs. New signings from Merseyside, Alan Wilcox and Steve McNally both registered wins either side of a victory for Surrey to make the score level at four apiece.

Although Mark Cairney suffered "double trouble" against the experienced Lionel Sams, locals Darryl Fitton (18, 15, 17) and Andy Wright (17, 17, 14) put Cheshire ahead at 6-5. Jimmy Lawton took the winning game after dropping the first two legs against Peter Munt for a 7-5 victory.

The ladies "A" game saw Cheshire come back down from 0-3 down to draw the match. Local girls Sue Hambleton

(26, 32) and Gill Moult (32, 26) won games five and six to make it 3-3.

The men's "B" match was drawn 6-6, with John Hollins picking up another victory. With the ladies "B" going down 2-4, the overall result was a tie, giving Cheshire their first ever Premier League bonus point.

★ ★ ★ ★

Darryl Fitton and Tony O'Shea were the main protagonists when the Teletaxi Individual Open Finals were staged at the Bobby Peel recently.

A strong field of qualifiers, including county players from Cheshire, Lancashire and Warwickshire, was reduced to the two local rivals. And it was Darryl who took Tony's title away from his old mate. Played in front of a packed house Fitton won all five legs in the final, including a 15 and a brace of 14 darters.

★ ★ ★ ★

Both those fine players will be in action in Don Roebuck's Christmas Cracker. Taking place on the Friday before the holiday, both Darryl and Tony will be among the finalists plus six other leading players.

The venue is Cale Green Social Club, Dundonald Street. It promises to be a great night, be there for about 8.30 on the evening of the 23rd December.

Finally, best wishes to Darryl Fitton. Dazzling "Daz" is the Cheshire representative for the Embassy world play-offs at the Lakeside Country Club in Surrey. He is just a handful of games away from the big time, not to mention big money. He certainly has enough talent, as Nick Gedney and Ritchie Burnett can both testify. When Darryl gets his game together, there is not a player in the world he couldn't beat. Good luck, Darryl.

SPORTSMANS

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Boost for Cider Growers

Taunton Cider is to plant thousands of apple trees in a bid to boost the English content of its output.

The big manufacturers in the UK cider industry have long been criticised for using too much imported concentrate, and Taunton, which has only a few orchards of its own, wants to extend the size and number of its supply contracts with West Country growers.

Marketing director Chris Milne said: "It's healthy for us to have large quantities of English apples and this plan will help farmers with land to spare to plan a secure future."

The National Farmers Union welcomed the decision.

LIZ & KEITH
WELCOME YOU TO THE

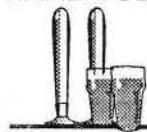
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'SKY TELEVISION

OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1994

MANCHESTER MATTERS

First of all, a hearty welcome to two re-opened pubs - the Lord Nelson, Newton Street, in the City Centre, with handpumped John Smiths Bitter, and the Pack Horse on Ashton Old Road in Openshaw, with Greenalls Bitter on handpump.

Turning to new developments, two more of the establishments aimed at the youth and student market are now trading. The second branch of O'Shea's, on Chester Street in the City Centre will look familiar to anyone who's visited the Whitworth Street original. There's a fuller review elsewhere in OT - suffice it to say that the pub creates quite a Hibernian home-from-home selling vast quantities of Guinness (plus, regrettably, a fair amount of the unspeakable keg Kilkenny Irish Ale) but also handpumped Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale which are both quite good.

Out at Chorlton-on-Medlock (All Saints), Barney McGrew's on the corner of Oxford Road and Booth Street West, is strategically located next to the Business School and opposite the College of Music, which should make it popular with aspirant fiddlers in more ways than one - this doesn't, however, excuse its deceitful practice of selling keg Cidermaster cider from a fake handpump. This is the more regrettable as in other respects the place isn't at all bad. Bizarrely styled "a Trumpton Pub" (what next - Zebedee's Magic Roundabout Bar?), it is in fact a Bass 'Alehouse' somewhat along the lines of H R Fletcher's off Deansgate. I'm not clear why designers have suddenly adopted the fashion of covering pub interiors with quotations, but at least here they've had the taste to use Frank Zappa's classic assessment of rock music journalism - "people who can't write interviewing people who can't speak for people who can't read". The (genuine)



by Rhys Jones

handpumped range is Bass, Worthington Best Bitter, and up to four guests.

Further out on Wilmslow Road, the Birch Villa in Rusholme, now rechristened Hardy's Well, is another Bass attempt to capture the student pound, but this is a much less successful affair even than the flawed McGrew's. The place is unchanged in layout, but redecorated with loud jukebox and that most tired of all pub design cliches, a red telephone box. The handpumped Worthington Best Bitter previously sold has gone up over 20p to a thumping £1.50 a pint, and is now partnered by handpumped Bass - and, once again, keg Cidermaster on fake handpump. Despite extensive leafletting of UMIST Beer Festival in the week before opening, student trade was conspicuous by its absence on my visit, when the most interesting thing in the pub was a desultory scuffle taking place between a couple of elderly customers.

A list of real ciders is now available to Whitbread "alehouse" managers. Though somewhat limited in scope, it features some highly respected names such as Ashwood and Sheppy's. Pubs taking it up include the Old Cock in Didsbury, which featured the award-winning Biddenden cider recently, and the Crown & Anchor on Hilton Street in the City Centre, where the cider's popularity seems to have led to the occasional gap in supply as casks were drained earlier than expected.

Another Whitbread pub to sell an extended range of beer is the City Road Inn in the City Centre, but sadly this again has Cidermaster on fake handpump. However, the alehouse experiment at the Halfway House in Openshaw seems to have gone badly wrong - on a recent visit only Boddingtons was available, despite the presence of pumpclips proclaiming several other beers, and, you've guessed it, keg Cidermaster was on fake handpump.

In the City Centre, Vaux's Royal George is trying "guest" beers from the Vaux range; out in Withington, however, choice has dwindled at the Manor House, where handpumps now dispense just Tetley and (sometimes) Jennings Bitter.

COPY DEADLINE FOR JANUARY IS 22 DECEMBER

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(OT128)

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 _____

ADDRESSSS _____

POSTCODE _____

SIGNATURE _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER(S) _____

I / We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: INDIVIDUAL £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £14

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £6

Chris Stone / Sue Tittensor, 11 Twiningbrook Road, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, SK8 5PU

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, where different terms will apply



STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £6



At the Queens Head (Turners Vaults), this month's Pub of the Month, building work is due to start on a new spirit store in the New Year. We are assured that the pub will remain open throughout. And on the beer front, Museum is soon to drop by about 5p a pint while Old Brewery Bitter will, budget depending, remain at £1.08 until at least August 1995. There's a bargain.

The city centre was witnessing the usual pre-Christmas flurry of activity as we went to press. First off the mark was likely to be **Rothwells**, Marstons development in the old Barclays Bank building at the top of King Street, which was due to open on December 1st. Meanwhile **Sawyers** on Deansgate was closed for refurbishment by new owners Scottish & Newcastle - it was only a couple of years ago that the place was refurbished by Grand Met so perhaps a radical change of direction is on the cards here. Across town a new bridge has been erected across the Rochdale Canal (almost) opposite Manto on Canal Street - this was to enable the basement of the warehouse opposite to be converted into '**Metz**', a new cafe bar which again was proclaiming a December opening. Lastly rumours are that following their Fallowfield knock-back, the owners of the Jabez Clegg empire will be opening their third outlet in the premises of the former 'Archies' next to the Salisbury, just off Oxford Road. Certainly the place was the scene of much activity at the end of November.

Whitbread have been selling off yet another batch of Manchester pubs. This time five have gone on the market including the Blackstock on Upper Brook Street and the Farmers Arms in Levenshulme. Buyers have reportedly been found for at least two of the five.

More real ale in clubs to report - this time it's the **Winton Conservative Club** in Baguley where handpumped Theakstons Best Bitter is now on sale.

Porky Pig's Pie Shop (St Petersgate, Stockport), has reverted back to the Egerton Arms. The beer range remains as OK Boddies Bitter, OK John Smiths Bitter and rather tedious Websters Bitter. Expect the hippies, goths and rockers to return imminently...

The Albert in Didsbury has just been internally renovated. The bar area has been enlarged, doors have been moved and the bar has been replaced with an altogether more handsome replacement. There's a new suspended ceiling and the pub has been repainted. The separate rooms/areas are still there though, which is good news. However the biggest change is on the bar. Formerly Hydes Mild and Bitter were served through metered pumps as is common throughout the Hydes estate. The Albert now has handpumps - only the fourth Hydes pub to have them, we think. This seems to represent a major change of direction for the brewery and it is hoped that more of their pubs in the tied estate will soon follow the Albert's lead.

Dave Baxter and Joan Edwards have taken over as licensees of the **Grey Horse**, Reddish, their first pub. The lounge of the pub is to be redecorated and the vault is to be refurbished with new seating and the darts area moved to a safer location. The good news for regulars - Boddingtons Bitter at £1 a pint is to stay.

The Moor Top, Heaton Moor is another Scottish & Newcastle acquisition from Chef & Brewer, and now has Theakstons Bitter alongside Websters and Ruddles.

It was hard luck on John and Jean Kitching, formerly of the **Surrey Arms** in Glossop, when CAMRA's informal Monday Evening social called in on their new pub, the Blue Bell in Levenshulme - for the brewery had let them down over deliveries, and CAMRA's finest departed dry-throated. Only fair to report then, that when OT called a few days later, the pub was thriving and selling a fine pint of Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter - delivered, in best Sod's Law style, the day after the CAMRA social!

At the Woodman in Hazel Grove, Robinsons Best Bitter is now handpumped; sadly, though, the only mild served is Three Shires keg.

Hydes **High Grove** (Silverdale Road, Gatley) is soon to be extended and refurbished. The layout of the existing rooms will not change; but, giving nearly a third more space, there is to be a new games room (TV and darts), and a family room, which will double as a function room. Landlord Sam Rosenbloom hopes also for improvements to the rather unprepossessing exterior. "Six weeks of hell" start early January, as the pub remains open during the work; late February should see this excellent estate pub back on good form.

The Grey Horse, Old Road, Heaton Norris is now selling Tetley Bitter alongside Youngs Bitter in the lounge. Greenalls Bitter is still on sale in the vault. Youngs and Tetley Bitter are both priced at £1.30 and both are selling well. On a recent visit the Youngs was superb.

The Pack Horse, Stockport Market Place is now selling Tetley House Beer brewed by Tetley at £1.14 a pint. Tetley Mild, Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale are still on sale.



The Unity, Wellington Road South has happy hour(s) weekday afternoons after 2pm. Bingo sessions in the afternoon are proving very popular with pensioners. The licensees are making a positive effort to attract customers to a town-centre pub in the quieter times, and succeeding. On a recent Tuesday afternoon there was an excellent atmosphere in the pub.