

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

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OPENING TIMES

FREE

JULY 1996

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THE BOMB

Only Opening Times readers who have spent the last few weeks on Mars will be unaware of the bomb detonated by the IRA in the centre of Manchester on June 15th. The devastation wrought on the shopping facilities has been well documented. The blast also took its toll of the city's pubs.

Most badly affected, ironically, was 'Paddy's Rat & Carrot - The Irish Pub' situated in the Arndale Centre directly opposite the detonation and which is now an unrecognisable heap of rubble in the framework of the Centre. It remains to be seen what reappears when the Arndale is rebuilt. Formerly part of the Magic Pub Co., the wreckage will now be owned by East Anglian brewers Greene King who have effectively paid over £700,000 for a bomb site. Whether they choose to redevelop or sell it off will depend on the approach they take to their newly-acquired North West estate in general.

Another pub with major damage is the Old Wellington in Shambles Square which, according to a brewery spokesman in the *Manchester Evening News*, has suffered substantial structural damage and is likely to be closed for some time to come. Astonishingly, Sinclairs, just next door has escaped relatively unscathed - only 5% damage according to site officials - and duly re-opened for business on Monday July 1st.

It's a similar tale on Cateaton Street where the Mitre remained boarded up as we went to press while the nearby Crown & Anchor is back open, flying the Union Jack and dispensing its usual copious quantities of Holts Mild and Bitter. Another Manchester independent brewer wasn't so lucky, though. Lees' John Willie Lees in the Arndale has been described as a complete shambles and the brewery have no idea when it will be back in business.

In the Corn Exchange, Bouchelles is another major casualty and is likely to stay closed for some times, as is the Corn Exchange itself which took the full force of the blast.

One or two other pubs suffered some broken glass but apart from that it was business as usual and indeed, the city's licensees are to be congratulated in working so quickly to reopen and so restore a sense of normality in the days immediately after the explosion.



The Wellington appears to have suffered extensive structural damage, whereas Sinclairs should have reopened as we go to press



One unforeseen consequence of the Bomb, however, is slightly more disappointing. The Royal Exchange Theatre Company have relocated to the Upper Campfield Market whilst rebuilding work is carried out at the Exchange. They were due to do this for eight months in 1997 when a refurb took place, but this now looks likely to last beyond February 1998. Although the Theatre do go on tour, the reduced revenues from their smaller portable theatre mean a likely enforced stay in Manchester during that time, which more than likely rules out other major events happening there for a couple of years, and would put a sad and premature end to the hopes for the 1997 (and presumably 1998) Manchester (Castlefield) Beer Festivals.

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WIN YOUR OWN PUB
Robbies' Competition on Page 5
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

There is little that can be said about the Manchester bombing that hasn't already been covered elsewhere. As we report this month, the city's pub stock didn't escape unscathed but we should be thankful it wasn't a lot worse. Only one pub is likely to be out of action indefinitely, the frankly, unlamented Paddy's Rat & Parrot. The city's licensees are to be commended over the way they quickly cleared up and reopened thus helping restore normality. It's the small things like that do so much to rebuild morale after disasters such as the one to strike our city last month.

★ ★ ★ ★

The Government's proposals to extend licensing hours on Friday and Saturday nights is most welcome and yet another small step on the road to civilised drinking in this country. Surely it can't be long before we have total deregulation here. Some in the licensed trade are most definitely not in favour, fearing it will force all pubs to open the extra hours, whether they really want to or not, for fear of losing custom to competitors who do take advantage of the extension. The answer to this is quite simple - allow pubs to open when they want (with necessary safeguards to protect residents from nuisance) without restriction. This would let each pub tailor its hours to the needs of its customers rather than be bound by a straightjacket. To some extent this has happened on Sunday afternoons where pubs open for all manner of different hours rather than blindly following the pack and opening all the way through.

John Clarke



Hydes Anvil

The launch of the new IPA has been slightly delayed but it should still appear in the Hydes estate by the end of this month. Meanwhile the popular Billy Westwoods Bitter has been withdrawn.

Whitbread

The latest seasonal beer from Whitbread is 'Chiswells', a cask-conditioned lager, or so they reckon. In point of fact, it's not half bad, being a pale golden quite hoppy, in a lagerish sort of way, quenching beer. It's just right for the hot weather and so far seems to be selling well. The name, by the way, comes from Whitbread's historic Chiswell Street Brewery in the City of London. This has, inevitably, been closed down, and the beer comes from the Castle Eden brewery in the north east.

Meanwhile there are rumours of interesting developments at Whitbread's Strangeways Brewery, aka Boddingtons. Reports reach us of a cask version of the premium, but thus far all-keg, Boddingtons Gold being test marketed. Watch this space for developments.

Marstons

The latest Head Brewers Choice, Rye Beer, was on sale at the Royal Oak in Didsbury as we went to press. Just up the road at the Station, Regimental Ale has made a reappearance.

Fullers

This London brewer has brought out a Summer Ale, both on draught and in bottle. Both versions are on sale at the Bottle Stop in Bramhall where owner Richard Genders tells us it's one of the best beers he's tried. It's a 3.9% brew using continental Saaz hops to give a light but refreshing bitterness - worth the detour, we think.

Legal Lates?

The Home Office has finally issued a consultation document proposing an extra hour's drinking on Friday and Saturday evenings - and offering three different means of achieving this:

- ☆ Permitted hours extended for pubs by one hour on Friday and Saturday. However, magistrates could act on specific complaints from the public and force earlier closing at 11pm.
- ☆ Individual pubs would apply for the extra hours but could be refused only on grounds of disturbance or disorder.
- ☆ Magistrates to have complete discretion whether to grant extra hours.

CAMRA welcomes these Government proposals for more flexible pub licensing. Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox told Opening Times "This is a very modest reform, which will bring licensing hours closer in touch with reality. Pub hours need to be based on how people live and work now, not fifty years ago." CAMRA agrees that the concerns of residents re noise and nuisance must be met. The proposals are not a free-for-all and we favour the first option which assumes the extra time is a right but allows a powerful weapon in the hands of residents and magistrates to deal with problem premises and genuine cases of nuisance. The other options include a large degree of local autonomy and it is inevitable that under such a system we would see blanket bans in one district and a liberal policy in the next. This would give the undesirable result of people 'commuting' across district boundaries in search of late night pubs. The consultation runs until 30th August and comments should be sent to: Dennis Wilmer, Home Office, LGDP Unit, Room 1183, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AT.

Euro-Rip Off

Euro '96 was supposed to be, among other things, a chance for the host cities to display their virtues to an international audience. What a shame, then, that certain pub operators saw it simply as a route to a quick killing. We hear that the Dog & Partridge, Old Trafford, was charging £1.80 for bitter during the tournament (normal price £1.43), and even had the nerve to charge £2 admission! This was apparently not the licensees doing, but imposed by Scottish Courage Retail - shame on them.

Training for the Trade

You will see an ad in this issue of OT for the 'Hotel & Catering Training Company'. This is thoroughly worthwhile organisation seeking to extend professionalism throughout the licensed trade. They are offering the British Institute of Innkeeping's National Licensee's Certificate at a cost of £99+VAT. This is a one day programme covering all related regulations required and a certificate is awarded on successful completion. This certificate complies with the licensing justices' requirements for existing and potential licensees. They also offer a number of courses for adults under Training for Work and if any licensee is interested in offering a placement for the duration of 25 weeks, the cost is £40+VAT per week. The trainees are in placement for 32 hours per week.

Modern Apprenticeship is a new scheme designed for 16-23 year olds and this enables a trainee to undertake a three year programme. Alternatively, if your pub has any staff working full time an earning over £62 per week they can also offer them training under the Modern Apprenticeship programme. By taking on a Modern apprentice, pubs would have staff who will be trained to NVQ Level 3 standard with the addition of Core Skills. The man to contact is Paul Ickeringill at the Manchester Training Centre on 0161 832 7326.

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Pub Of The Month JULY 1996

**Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is
the White Swan, Green Street, Ladybarn, writes John Hutchinson.**

Situated in the centre of the 'village' it is a hugely popular pub within the community. This is down to the hard work put in by John and his partner Brenda who originally hail from St Helens where they worked for Greenalls before moving over to Robinsons.

They have only been at the White Swan for just over six months but in that short time the change has been nothing short of miraculous and the beer quality, only Best Bitter is sold at the moment, is excellent.

The pub itself is an imposing building. As you enter you are confronted by the bar area with a separate pool room at the bottom on the right. To the left and right of the front door are two separate large rooms, that on the left being a games room with darts and crib. What is unique, at least I think so, is the tiny vault, entered by a door near the gents and tucked away behind the bar and served via a hatch in the wall. It took me three years to discover it!

The pub hosts a variety of events and numerous clubs and societies meet there, including a chess club. A warm welcome is always guaranteed as readers will discover if they come along on the presentation night, Thursday 25th July.

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

The 22 bus runs past the pub from Stockport and Withington. It is also only a 15-minute walk from Wilmslow Road served by many buses in each direction.

Eastern Viewpoint

Gill and I are the Liaison Officers for the Colchester CAMRA Branch and we decided to go on safari to Derbyshire in search of exotic beers while attending Glossop Jazz Festival in the evenings. We also fitted in as much walking as possible. The people of Clacton are very reserved so our first culture shock was to find that everybody speaks to everybody else in the Peak District and what's more they make you feel completely at ease and at home.

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Our landlady, Linda Nelson, immediately took pity on us easterners and decided to do all she could to fatten us up with enormous breakfasts while we stayed with her! On the Friday night we popped into the George Hotel. The bar staff were friendly but there were no exoticales. Theakston's Bitter and Moreland's ubiquitous Old Speckled Hen - but at least the latter was not £2.00 a pint as it is in Clacton. Gill and I both drank the Theakston's and thought it to be distinctively flavoured and eminently drinkable. We wondered how long it would be before this S and N house will be pulling a fast one by offering Courage's Directors as a guest beer? We spent one session with the Jazz at the George and then meandered down the road to the Blues Club. 'No real ale here,' we thought. The low, windowless building was fascinating as it was decorated with electric guitars of many makes and also a whole variety of jazz instruments all of which looked well used. The bar staff were young girls with blue baseball caps. They were impeccably polite and always under pressure especially on the late Saturday night session. But we were wrong - there was real ale - Tetley's.

As it is a regular in many pubs in the Tendring area it does not qualify as exotic.. I groaned but bought a pint. Again I could not believe it - less than £1.50 for a pint. Much to my surprise I found it to be the best pint of Tetley's I'd had since a pub crawl in Otley in 1963. The music was interesting but why did the lady play the trumpet with her black gloves on? By this time we had a copy of Opening Times and copious advice as to where to go from Linda. So up the Snake Pass we went and wondered mightily at the gravity defying walls climbing the peak sides, and those little dots with black heads which were precariously clinging to the cliff face must have been sheep. We went down the Derwent Road, abandoned the metro and walked along side the nearly empty reservoir. We scooped one skylark, numerous martins, a chaffinch and a blackbird feeding a cuckoo fledgling much bigger than itself. Then it was on to Shines Inn, a classic wayside pub catering for everyone. Inside it was dark, gloomy and cool and very obviously a Whitbread house - nothing exotic here, except perhaps for Natalie(?) behind the bar. Flowers IPA was on handpump and served as a nitrokeg.

We could not believe it! Gill chose Boddingtons and we almost had

a pint of it. It was crisp and refreshing. We sat in the snug, smoky public bar where all the action took place. There had been a row behind the bar and the next punter who asked for a pint of Boddingtons had two inches of foam on the top of his glass. I also had a tangy, citrus tasting Castle Eden Ale - my first exotic ale. Surprisingly good. We moved onto uncharted territory as far as my map was concerned and found yet more reservoirs. At one we watched five large pike thread their way through a number of fishing lines with complete disdain. We returned once more to the George in the evening and I found a second exotica. I spied a second nitrokeg font labelled Theakston's Mild - brewery conditioned.

I checked with the cuddly barmaid but she did not understand CAMRA language. I bought a pint of it and Gill settled for the Theakston's bitter. The mild had a pleasant reddish hue, no nose but it did taste vaguely mild like before blandness subsumed all. I feel confident that nitrokeg mild will not bother us in eastern England where heavily disguised milds are growing in popularity especially with the ladies who have weaned themselves off cider. We called in on the Norfolk on the way only to find a venue filled with young people having a good time but there was no real ale for the jazz fans. So it was back to the Blues Club and Tetleys. A Colin Bowden seven minute drum solo brought the evening to a fitting climax. On Sunday we went to church for the jazz numbers and then set off on foot to the GBG pub in Old Glossop - the Bull's Head. An end of terrace building with barely enough room to swing a cat but bags of atmosphere. We booked an evening meal and had a pint of Robinson's bitter - a first class entry in the exotic section. We had a chat with another CAMRA member and with the delightful staff. Mind you you have got to do something while you are waiting to top up a pint.

From there we set off for Whaley Bridge as recommended by Opening Times. This time we soon tracked down the Shepherd's Arms which is in the GBG. We were staggered to see that it did not sell food. I failed completely to get Banks Mild but I did get their bitter which was excellent and Gill approved of the Marstons Pedigree. There was much banter when we arrived about full pints and we were soon involved in it. We walked towards the canal and noticed an off licence called Goyt's Wines, we found exotic Belgian beers galore and we stocked up on them. We had a good walk along the canal and also did a bit of gentle climbing on the wind gathering ridge before returning to the Bull's Head and curry and Old Stockport Bitter which proved to be just a little too thin for my taste. The pubs were busy around Glossop and we thought we would have a pint of Thwaites in the only Thwaites house we found - the ? Cupboard - and guess what we walked in and out in thirty seconds as there was no sign of a hand pump. So we popped into the George for a predictable but good pint and then on Monday it was back to sunny Clacton and a return to organising the CAMRA Clacton Beer Festival for the first weekend in July ... but we'll be back next year for the Edale Bluegrass Festival.

LETTERS OPENING TIMES

From Alan Williams, Rainhill

I would like to contribute to the debate on Stockport pubs. As a resident of Merseyside this may appear presumptuous but my wife and I work in Stockport and escape on every justifiable, and the occasional, unjustifiable occasion to the pubs at lunchtime.

After an intensive four-year search involving the crummy, the noisy, the very noisy, the posing, the themed, the surly and the expensive (list available on request!), I would like to commend CAMRA for its occasional recognition of the Crown on Heaton Lane. This is a comfortable, friendly place with a dramatic ever-changing choice of real booze, supported by honest good-value food at lunchtime.

What surprises is its relatively low lunchtime trade despite its position so close to the centre, bus station, car parks and office. However, this does mean we can occupy a regular table and hear ourselves talk. On reflection please ignore this contribution to the debate on Stockport pubs - the Crown may get too busy!

From Rebecca Pendlebury:

Dear Disgusted of Hazel Grove, in response to your letter (OT, May) I have just one or two points to raise.

I appreciate your views on the quiet "talking" pub, but feel you may have misunderstood my comments on the Hazel Grove Stagger. I am not trying to say that a pub cannot have an atmosphere without a jukebox or disco, indeed I have a soft spot for such pubs. Throughout the branch area there are many fine examples of unspoilt pubs which just exude atmosphere without modern aids; take for example the Circus in the city centre, runner up for Pub of the Year. A wonderful pub, thankfully free of juke boxes, fruit machines and the like. But on the night in question, the pubs in Hazel Grove for the large part just did not match up to this. I am not disputing that the local pubs in the Grove have their attractions, but they were not at their best on that particular evening. Maybe you could suggest a better time or night on which to call.

Being a resident of the Grove myself, I am well aware of the abundance of Robbies in the area. But why should the discerning drinker put up with average beer, as many of the pubs we sampled that night were serving. Robinsons brew excellent bitter - so we should demand it!!

From Happy Customer, Anchor Inn, Hazel Grove:

Reference the letter signed "Disgusted of Hazel Grove", I must jump to the defence of Jan and Dave who do an extremely good job of running the Anchor Inn, Hazel Grove, not only keeping a moderate volume on the music but also controlling the truculent customers on the very rare occasion it occurs. I am 71 years of age and would not attend this friendly hostelry if very loud music blared out.

From R B Williams:

Your news on page 20 (Opening Times, June 1996) covering the Romper at Ringway informs me that Tony and Beryl of the Four In Hand plan no major changes in their new pub.

Planned or not, the fact is that the catering is now in the hands of Greenalls management (you pick up a nasty little green ticket, like at the Crown in Didsbury). The net effect is that the barm cakes have gone and the replacement rolls are £1.60 to £1.80 instead of the £1.25 by the Currrans.

Yours readers should know this.

Win Your Own Pub For a Day

Robinsons are giving customers of the Emigration, Hall Street, Offerton, the opportunity to take over the pub!

A competition is being held as part of Pub Week, a national initiative organised by the Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association, to celebrate the great British institution - the pub. The winner will take over the Emigration for the day.

Entrants have to answer questions about looking after cask conditioned beers, like Robinsons Best Bitter and Hatters Mild, and give their suggestions about how they would run the pub.

"The competition should give customers an insight into what it takes to run a pub and show what care is needed to keep a good pint," says licensee Noel Burrell. "Everyone has their own idea about what makes a pub successful so it will be interesting to see some of the suggestions."

The competition starts on opening day of Pub week, 1st July, and runs to 14th. So, if you fancy a go at running the Emigration for the day here are the questions:

1. What is the correct cellar temperature for Robinsons cask conditioned beers?

A) 35-40F, b) 41-46F, c) 47-52F, d) 53-58F, e) 59-64F, f) 65-70F

2. How long should Robinsons cask conditioned beers be left between delivery and tapping?

A) 12 hours, b) 1 day, c) 2 days, d) 3 days, e) 4 days, f) 5 days

3. Once opened a cask should be sold within:

a) 1-2 days, b) 3-4 days, c) 5-7 days, d) 8-10 days, e) 11-14 days, f) 15-20 days

4. Good hygiene is essential in the cellar for real ales. Pipes should be cleaned:

a) once a month, b) every 3 weeks, c) every 2 weeks, d) every week, e) twice a week, f) every day

5. Only the finest quality ingredients are used to brew Robinsons traditional beers. Which of the following is NOT used?

A) hops, b) wheat, c) well water, d) cane sugar, e) barley, f) yeast, g) crystal malt.

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Also suggest any ideas on how you would run the pub and include your name, address and telephone number. Send your entries to: Emigration competition, Barry Hook Associates, 94 Churchgate, Stockport, SK1 1YJ.

Swings and Roundabouts

Closures, sales and re-openings have been the order of the day on the Stockport pub scene recently.

Two shock closures - the Crown on Higher Hillgate has been shut for a few weeks now. The pub had been very quiet for some time and seemed to be struggling to survive. We understand that Vaux are looking for fresh tenants. Perhaps more of a surprise was the sudden closure of the Gladstone, also on Hillgate. Despite a shaky start, the pub seemed to be finding its feet and it certainly sold some of the best Burtonwood beers around. Once again we believe the closure is for financial reasons. Sold, are both the Stanley Arms on Newbridge Lane and Byrons on Great Portwood Street. Both were pubs with a lot of potential yet we understand both have been sold with change of use in mind. However, some you lose and some you gain - last month saw the re-opening of the White House in Offerton, in a blaze of publicity, and in rather more muted fashion, the Pineapple on Castle Street, Edgeley. A full report on both next time.

STAGGER

with Roger Wood

We started our evening at the **Woodstock** on Barlow Moor Road, now a Bass house, having been converted into a pub after previously serving as the British Council headquarters. This popular student venue had a very busy 'early doors' trade which wasn't entirely confined to students. A party booking saw the no-smoking room reserved and we watched a procession of punters being turned away, proof that no-smoking rooms work well in the right pub. Three guest beers were available in addition to the normal Worthington Best Bitter and Draught Bass. Worthington plus two of the guests, Greene King Abbot Ale and Batemans XXXB, were tried and all thought to be fairly good.

After a struggle crossing the busy road, we went to the **Barleycorn** opposite. In contrast to the Woodstock the number of customers was much less, as was the number of beers on sale - Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale. Both were at best average.

Our next stop was another recently converted old building primed for the student market. The **Four in Hand** on Palatine Road. This pub was nearly empty however. As it was a fine evening we sat outside in the attractive beer garden. Opinions about the bitter at this Banks's house varied from below to above average and the Cameron's Strongarm was rated above average by the one person who tried it. The mild was keg.

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Along Lapwing Lane to the **Midland**, once a haunt of local low-life, now very much improved. There were pictures of old Withington and West Didsbury on the walls - a common feature of the pubs on this stagger. However the pub aims at the younger market, the interior of the lounge being described as like a licensed amusement arcade by one of the party, so numerous were the games machines. Two cask beers were on sale - Bass Toby Light was returned to the bar as being undrinkable and exchanged for Boddingtons Bitter which was better than average.

The **Railway** opposite sold no real ale so it was on to the **Old House at Home**, a recently refurbished and extended Whitbread house with six cask beers available. A Berni food menu was noted here as was a colourful collection of bottles on the wall behind the bar. Two beers were tried - Whitbread's seasonal Spring Hops and Burtonwood Top Hat. Both were comfortably above average.

Walking past the site of the demolished **Waterloo** we arrived at the **Orion** near the end of Burton Road in Withington village. This was once a Whitbread pub which has been keg since Adam was a lad. Now it is a wonderful Holts emporium where a refreshing pint of Joeys was had. The Orion reverberated to the lively sound of a Friday night's conversation, there being more people in here at 8.45 than in all of the previous pubs (Woodstock excepted) put together. Friday night had started at last! Unlike the previous pubs which had largely been aimed at a younger market, the Orion was very much a traditional local. Its Holts beers, Bitter and Mild, were among the cheapest of the night at £1 and 94p respectively. Both were well though of, apart from myself who thought the mild below average. A downside was the gents toilets which were in poor condition.

Heading south along Didsbury Road we ignored the keg-only **Turnpike** to go in the **Red Lion** where we found a table to ourselves in the tiny vault where there was room to sit. By contrast the lounge was overflowing with wall to wall people. It is to Marstons credit that the vault is retained as a haven for locals amongst the hustle and bustle of the main pub. I tried the fine outdoor area where a bowling match was in progress. The Marstons 'Head Brewers Choice' beer, Ditchingham, was thought to be better than average to good, the Bitter, excellent. No-one tried the Pedigree.

Further towards Didsbury was the **Manor House** which was clearly aimed at the weekend market yet was half empty. A blackboard advertised two guest beers but none were available. Only Tetley Bitter which admittedly was better than average.

We then went slightly off the beaten track to the **Cotton Tree** on Cotton Lane, a proper local close to more well known trendier outlets. The Greenalls beers, Festival (at 99p), Bitter and Mild were all rated good. As time was getting short we missed out the **Withington Ale House** and called in the **Albert**, an Irish flavoured pub in the centre of the village. The Wilsons Bitter was well above average while the rare Wilsons Mild was excellent, the best beer of the night. Although beers such as Greenalls and Wilsons are poorly regarded in some CAMRA circles, there was proof tonight that almost any cask beer can be good or excellent when well-kept. Apologies to Hydes' **Victoria** a few doors away but we were close to the 11pm curfew!

So ended yet another varied night with beers mostly of a good standard in a whole range of differing pubs. Of course this article can only be a snapshot of what we found on one particular night and can't be taken as a once and for all judgement of either the pubs or their beers. As ever, why not try some of them yourselves and see how much you (dis)agree.

The Old Pint Pot Brewery

No 2 Adelphi Street, Salford

Pete Cash Reports.

All being well, by the time you read this, Salford's latest home-brew pub should be selling its own beers. The first mash took place on 19th June and it was planned to have the beer coming on sale about a week later.

Visitors to the former Adelphi pub, perched on the edge of the River Irwell below Salford's Crescent, will have noticed a glass conservatory has been built into an external corner of the pub. Inside there is much stainless steel, tanks and pipework, along with a wooden-clad mash tun and copper. From street level, an elegant bridge leads down to the river, where the Old Pint Pot, owned by Honeycomb Leisure, is separated from the water's edge by a patio with benches for outdoor drinking. The manager is Ben Gleaves and prior to the home-brew coming on stream, "Ben's Best" (rumoured to be Matthew Brown Bitter,) at £1 a pint offered very good value.

In fact, the student population is very much the target of this venture; you are invited to share a jug of Carlsberg at £3.99 for four pints (5-7pm). Regular meals are £3.75 for two burgers and salad, scampi, mixed grill or fish & chips, with salads at about £3. There is even a "Grantstretcher Menu" between 3.30 and 7pm with Chilli, Veg Curry or Italian Chicken at £1.75.

The carpeted area along the outside walls gives way to bare floorboards which front the bar. The whole is roughly L-shaped, with the short arm housing a pool table. Old bottles in display cases and framed beer bottle labels complement the chalk and blackboard humour, comprising cartoon-like drawings and witty sayings.

The brewery, also visible from inside through the pub windows, has a 10-barrel capacity. In charge is Robert Woodman, with Dave Smith acting as technical consultant. All the brews are full-mash (no malt extract) though the malt will come ready crushed. Local water has been analysed and appropriate adjustments made to achieve a satisfactory brewing liquor. Hops (whole, not pelleted) will include familiar varieties such as Goldings and Challenger.

I am not allowed to say much about the yeast, except that it comes from another (larger) brewery, and that it is hoped the finished beer will have some of the character of that company's product. I would expect it to be pale in colour and quite hoppy, but I may be wrong.

After fermentation, conditioning takes place in tanks under top-pressure, after which it is racked into conventional casks and dispensed (via handpump and no extraneous gas) in the CAMRA approved manner.

Initially two beers will be brewed, at ABV 4% and 3.6%. A portion of each will be blended to yield a 3.8% hybrid. No names have been ascribed; it is likely that customers will be asked to "name the beers" with appropriate prizes for the winners. Sales will be confined to the pub itself, at least to begin with.

There have been several teething troubles in setting up the brewery, but at last all looks set to add three more ales to the "must try" lists of all you beer tickers out there.

Pete Cash is CAMRA's Liaison Officer with the Old Pint Pot Brewery.



Phil Welcomes You To The *Arden Arms*

MILLGATE, STOCKPORT

Robinsons Traditional Ales



BITTER, MILD, OLD TOM
ON DRAUGHT

Open ALL DAY Fri. / Sat.

BAR MEALS AVAILABLE

7

THE PLOUGH

Heaton Moor Road, ☎ 432 5563

NOW FEATURING UP TO

5

REAL ALES

**Tetley Bitter,
House Bitter,**

**Robinsons Best Bitter
and introducing**

**THE
TAPSTER'S
Choice**

TRADITIONAL "HANDPULL" BEERS

A regular guest beer changing every fortnight

**Lunchtime Food available
7 Days a Week**

**including serve yourself salad bar
Your Hosts Alan & Kath**

Visit the Bottle Stop, Bramhall for your Fullers Summer Ale, in bottle and on Draught (containers provided)



THE CREAM OF MANCHESTER.

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



CARRY OUT

Didsbury boasts a collection of good pubs and now is also becoming the place to go if you want to drink at home. The reason for this can be summed up in just one word - Carringtons. Externally this is a fairly unassuming wine and beer shop situated on Wilmslow Road, just across from O'Neills. Once inside however you are in a veritable Aladdin's Cave of alcoholic delights.

Half the shop is devoted to wine (and some pretty damn good wine at that) but of more interest to OT readers will be the enormous range of bottled beers available. Apart from an impressive selection of Belgian brews, which include rarities from the likes of the Mad Brewers alongside old faithfuls like Chimay and Timmermans, what really catches the eye is the huge number of British beers, many bottle-conditioned and all of them interesting.

But first, who and what are 'Carringtons'? The names behind the business are Martin Salter and Mike Keane who opened the first Carringtons shop in Blackley back in 1990. This was, and still is, a beer shop and with the success of this venture on the north side of the city a natural area of expansion was South Manchester and so, 2½ years ago, the second Carringtons opened in Didsbury and has gone from strength to strength with a growing and loyal band of customers. The beer range has been built up over the past couple of years and is still growing. The Belgian range will expand and Martin and Mike are looking to source some German beers but it is in the field of British beers that the real expansion is planned, the aim being to stock every UK brewed bottle conditioned ale, plus a large selection of other interesting British beers. In short, to become the biggest British bottled beer specialists in the country. To accommodate this, the shop is to be rearranged later in the year and the sales area extended to the rear. Note that there isn't enough to go on as it is - a quick browse along the shelves revealed the likes of Butterknowle Conciliation, RCH Firebox and Old Slug Porter, Freeminer Speculation, Ash Vine Penguin Porter and Hop & Glory, Titanic Stout, Fullers IPA and Black Sheep Rigwelter to name just a few! As Martin puts it "If you're serious about being a beer specialist you can't just pay lip service to the range and only stock the top sellers, you have to try everything".

The beers are sourced by Mike who is prepared to travel a long way to get what he wants and is pleased that so far all the beers have sold well. Indeed Carringtons seems to be tapping into a growing market for quality and distinctiveness in the take-home beer trade. Sales of canned beers have dropped away since the bottled range was built up, "and that's good" says Mike.



The autumn expansion will also see the introduction of guest draught beers, probably two or three 9-gallon containers at any one time to start with to further expand their carry-out market (and carry out jugs will also be sold). This will bring the Didsbury branch in line with the Blackley shop which sells draught beer (and even sometimes has a 4%ish house brew from Oak - 'Carringtons Manchester 9').

Another string to the Carringtons bow is the customer mailing list. From Sept there will be specialist beer tastings for those on the list (OT readers wanting to get on the list should write or call in) together with brewery visits, the latter probably on Wednesday afternoons. Carringtons is one of the most enterprising ventures in the south Manchester off-licensed trade for a long time and deserves its success. OT will of course report on developments as they happen.

* Carringtons is at 688 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, M20DN. Tel 0161 445 1002. Opening hours are 10am-10.30pm Sun-Wed; 10am-11pm Thur-Sat. The Blackley branch is at 1110 Rochdale Road, Manchester M9. Tel 0161 740 8408.



9

**TONY & JEANETTE
WELCOME YOU TO THE**

TOM THUMB'S

54 KING STREET WEST, STOCKPORT

★ KARAOKE - WED, FRI, SAT ★
★ DARTS & POOL TEAMS - both Mens & Ladies ★
OPEN DARTS K.O. - THURSDAY NIGHTS
FINAL JUNE 13
£2.00 ENTRY - £1000 PRIZE MONEY

Pubfile

AROUND the HOUSES
...every month

Pubfile Diary

...fortnightly

THERE'S EVEN MORE PUBNESS IN THE



- EVERY WEEK FOR 18
RECORD-BREAKING YEARS

"The silliest thing I ever read"
- Turrell's mother-in-law

SOUTH MANCHESTER
REPORTER

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FIVE YEARS ON AND THE BEST JUST GOT BETTER

**ONLY
£3.95**

VIADUCTS & VAULTS 2

THE GUIDE TO STOCKPORT PUBS



10

- ★ EVERY PUB IN STOCKPORT WITH THEIR BEERS
- ★ DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF NEARLY 90 FEATURED PUBS
- ★ PHOTOGRAPHS
- ★ ILLUSTRATIONS
- ★ ARTICLES ON THE BREWERS, BOTTLED BEERS, VANISHING VAULTS, CIDER IN STOCKPORT & OTHERS
- ★ DETAILED MAPS
- ★ FULL INDEX OF EVERY PUB
- ★ PUBLIC TRANSPORT DETAILS FOR EVERY FULL ENTRY
- ★ DETAILS OF FOOD SERVED
- ★ THE SUCCESSOR TO THE AWARD WINNING VIADUCTS AND VAULTS IS AT LAST AVAILABLE - AND ITS BEEN WORTH THE WAIT ☆

HOW TO USE

An example entry follows:

Locality:

Pub Name: (Map Letter no.)
Address:
Directions:
Public Transport:
Telephone number:
Opening hours:

Real ale and Ciders, with method of dispense:
G = gravity
H = handpump
E = electric pump

Facilities:
Food availability:
Pub Description:

FACILITIES: THE
Bed and breakfast •
we make no return
and •
Children's certificate
and •
Family room/play
area, outside, or a room
where children are
allowed •
Outdoor drinking
area •
Harmless •
No smoking •
times only •
Open fire - a proper
fire in our rooms
available •
Valet - or public bar •
Simply furnished rooms (or area), usually fire.

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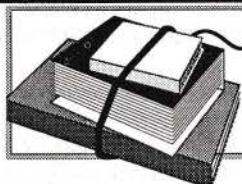
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BOOK REVIEW



The Concise Guide to Lakeland Pubs,
CAMRA Westmorland Branch, 72 pages, £2
 If a front cover is what sells, this latest guide to Lake District pubs should be going like hot cakes. So sharp and detailed is the view of Great Langdale, you could imagine yourself there on a sharp, crisp morning, just ready for a pint in the Dungeon Ghyll.
 Look inside, and you'll find brief but informed descriptions of hundreds of pubs within the Lake District National Park (whose boundary is stretched a shade to include naturally related areas, notably the whole of the Cartmel Peninsula including Grange-over-Sands). Occasional photographs and line drawings break up the pub entries, but these are generally too small to make much impact - a side-effect of the guide's rucksack-friendly small format.
 Produced to an accurate but no-frills standard, this guide may have trouble holding its own on the shelves of Cumbria's tourist shops. But seek it out - if you've ever felt like a pint in the Lake District, this is the book for you! I only hope that this splendid venture will be followed by guides to the parts of Cumbria it doesn't cover - Carlisle, West Cumbria's "marrerland" of Workington and Whitehaven, and Furness. Until then, however, this guide is highly recommended. RPJ.

The long awaited and unbiased review of Viaducts and Vaults 2 will appear in the next issue!

**Gill & Vince & staff
would like to welcome
customers old and new**

**BUSINESS AS USUAL
NO CHANGES**

ROYAL OAK, DIDSBURY



**GREEN LANE,
HEATON NORRIS,
STOCKPORT**
432 - 2044

- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- ★ Lunches every day including Sundays for families in our Dining Room.
- ★ Beer Garden with Eating Area
- ★ Bowling Parties & Function Room.
- ★ Egon Ronay Guide, AA Best of British Gd
- ★ CAMRA Good Food Guide 1994

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

Magic Sell-Out

In a move that surprised many, but not those familiar with his track record, Michael Cannon last month sold the Magic pub Co. to Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, based brewers Greene King in a £197.5 million deal.

This works out at about £713,000 per Magic Pub, a pretty mind boggling figure when you consider some of their local outlets. Greene King Chef Executive Tim bridge thinks it's a good deal, though. "We think we've paid a fair price," he said, "It's being valued on the profit it's capable of producing." To help this along, one of the first changes Magic customers will notice is an increase in food prices as Greene King believe "there is room to increase food prices a little while remaining competitive in the market."

Greene King's estate is now up to 1139 pubs, the vast majority concentrated in East Anglia, London and the South East. Indeed the company have made much of the fact that the two estates fit neatly together. Well, not quite. As regular readers will know, there is a clutch of 20 or so Magic Pub Co. houses locally and which are now looking decidedly out on a limb. Will they be kept or sold on? If the latter then some of these pubs will have had about 5 owners in as many years.

Apart from the hike in food prices, other changes in the Magic estate are likely to be gradual. With the exception of three senior directors (including Michael Cannon who will pocket around £77 million from the deal), all the operational staff are to be kept on and the current intention is to retain Magic's separate identity within the enlarged company. Greene King do however intend to increase the sale of their products in the magic estate from 1% to 15% in three months - the best known brand locally is Abbot Ale, a regular guest beer on many bars. It plans to do this by increasing the availability of its beers without affecting the pseudo free-house style and range of other beers in the Magic outlets

11

The Red Lion **WILMSLOW RD
WITHINGTON**



**Mon. - Sat. 11 - 11
Handpulled Marstons Pedigree
Burton Bitter and Banks Mild
plus
Marstons Head Brewers Choice**

**★ LUNCH ★
7 DAYS A WEEK
EVENING MEALS MON - THURS
★ 5.30 - 8.30 ★**



The Nursery Inn

**GREEN LANE,
HEATON NORRIS,
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- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- ★ Lunches every day including Sundays for families in our Dining Room.
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**Jo and Pat from the
NELSON INN
Didsbury**

**invite you to try their
Fine Cask Conditioned Ales
Websters & Holts
Cheapest Beer In Didsbury
Open All Day
Come and Try our Quiz nights
(Tues) & Music Quiz (Thurs)**

5 Years Ago

JULY '91

by Phil Levison

A few months ago this column gave full details of the GrandMet and Fosters tie-up with their pubs for breweries swap. Such a major change was bound to be referred to from time to time, and this month it was the effect it would have on Webster's Halifax brewery. The new Fosters Brewing Group had acquired about 20% of the UK brewing capacity, with arguably, too many breweries and beer brands, and Fosters had been conducting a three month "fundamental review" to consider their position. One of the problems appeared to be that Websters and John Smiths, although both members of the group, were actually in direct competition with each other. Two Yorkshire breweries were producing similar products, with Websters well below capacity - it all pointed to the probable demise of Websters.

It seems that five years ago was a period when many changes were taking place in the brewing industry - I suppose it could be said that there is never a time when changes are not taking place. The Boddington Group had failed in their attempt to take over the West Country brewer Devenish, which prompted the long expected announcement by Devenish that they were to cease brewing by August, with the closure of their Redruth brewery unless a buyer could be found.

Then came another announcement, this time by Robinsons, who said that their Hartley's subsidiary would cease brewing later in the year. There was little detail available, but it seemed

the intention was to brew the Hartley range of beers in Stockport, and use the Ulverston site as a depot and administration centre.

Finally, there was a thank you to the "over 3000" people who went to the Stockport Beer Festival, and helped drink "over 12500" pints without any sign of trouble. A mention was made of Viaducts & Vaults, "the very first guide to Stockport's pubs produced by CAMRA" which had sold over half the print run within two weeks of its launch at the end of May. (In the just launched Viaducts & Vaults 2, that first guide is described as "an award winning if controversial first edition".)

... Pub News...
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In Stalybridge the *Buffet Bar* is closed and boarded up - but not before the windows were put through! No comment necessary. The official position is that British Rail Properties Board (or whichever name it is currently sporting) is looking for a suitable tenant.

In Hyde - the *Commercial* was recently only selling keg beer and not from Marstons (the name on the sign). It is hoped that this is not permanent.

Also in Hyde, the *Lamb in Gee Cross* (Bass) has no real ale. It appears that the experiment with cask beer has been abandoned - keg Stones only available.

The *Godley Hall Inn* (Vaux) has recently been getting some interesting guest beers which have been kept in good condition. Ridleys and Wadworths 6X have been among them.

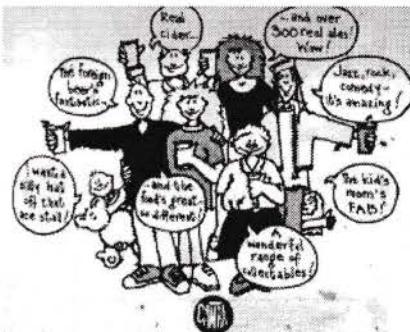
The *Oddfellows*, Hyde - which recently and incredibly changed hands and closed just as it appeared on the front of the local beer guide "Nine Towns Bitter" - is being prepared for re-opening. Work is in progress at this very moment.

Over in Denton, the *Bowling Green* has recently had Lees Bitter on as a guest and in Glossop the *Sparrows* (bought from Whitbread) has been sporting beers from Bass - with Stones and Draught Bass on handpump.

Meanwhile in Strines, the *Sportsman's* future is still up in the air and questions remain unanswered. Is it up for sale again or is Ken Moon staying?

Three local pubs were on the market as we went to press. In Glossop, the *Wheatsheaf*, Wellgate, was on offer at a guide price of £120,000 and the *Shoulder of Mutton*, Broadbottom was up for £75,000. In Hayfield, Enterprise Inns are selling the *Bulls Head*, a keg Tetley pub (one of the few all keg pubs left in the area) - and here £80,000 will get you the freehold.

Great British Beer Festival



OLYMPIA, LONDON 6 - 10 AUGUST

CROWN ALE HOUSE

HEATON NORRIS

WE'RE IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE '96

Boddingtons Bitter plus
9 ever changing Guest Beers
Real Cider or Perry always available
Many Interesting Continental
Bottled Beers
Home Cooked Lunchtime Food
Your hosts Lorraine & Steve James
Heaton Lane, Stockport

High Peak Featured Pub JULY 96

This month we make no apologies for returning to Hayfield which is blessed with an impressive range of beers and a fine collection of good pubs, one of which is the *Kinder Lodge*.

The pub is situated on New Mills Road (A6015) just a minute or so from the village centre on the Birch Vale side of the bypass road.

Its former name of the Station gives the clue that it is close by the site of the former Hayfield railway station -now a car-park, alas, and also the bus turn round point. This is also the start of the Sett Valley trail along the old railway track bed to New Mills. So the *Kinder Lodge* is a good start or finish point for this leisurely walk.

The pub is an attractive stone-built three storey building very much in keeping with the local architecture and there is a pleasant stone-walled outdoor drinking area in front. The interior is open-plan but still retains atmosphere with a comfortable lounge and bar area. On the right as you enter is the former tap-room, happily still fulfilling its function with dartboard and other games.

The beers available are Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale both on handpump, and by the time this article appears in print a regular 'Tapsters Choice' guest beer will have joined the range.

The *Kinder Lodge* also provides bed and breakfast all year round with a good range of light pub food, sandwiches and snacks. There is also a growing reputation for social activities with quizzes and occasional live entertainment.

This is an improving pub with a warm welcome, well worthy of a visit - an asset to the pubs and beers of Hayfield.

The *Kinder Lodge* is on New Mills Road, Hayfield. Tel. 01663 43691. Buses 358 (Stockport-Hayfield), 361 (Glossop-Hayfield-Disley-Stockport).

BEER TENT at CANAL FESTIVAL

Portland Basin, Ashton-u-Lyne, 12 - 14 July

Fri 7-11, Sat 12-5 & 7.30-11,

Sun 12-5 (or when Beer Runs Out)

30 Different Beers over weekend including Porters, Oak, Hydes, Black Bull, Leatherbritches. Cider & Perry. Evening entertainment requires small entry fee, Folk on Friday, Jazz on Saturday

Your Hosts
Graham &
Vera welcome
you to ...

THE RAILWAY VIEW

Byrons Lane, Macclesfield

GOOD FOOD

Now Being Served on

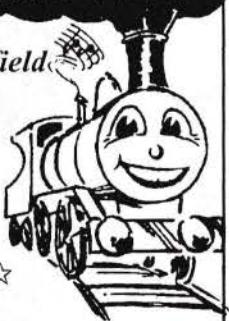
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6 GUEST BEERS ☆

☆ QUIZZES ☆ BAR GAMES ☆

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REAL ALE £1.10 MON NIGHT



The High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch Contact is Ralph Warrington
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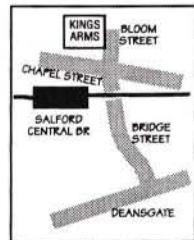
THE KINGS ARMS BLOOM STREET, SALFORD



REAL ALE
SALFORD

Dave and Sue Price invite you to try the fine range of beer and cider in

**Salford's
Premier Free House**



Constantly
Changing Range of
Beers
on 13 handpumps

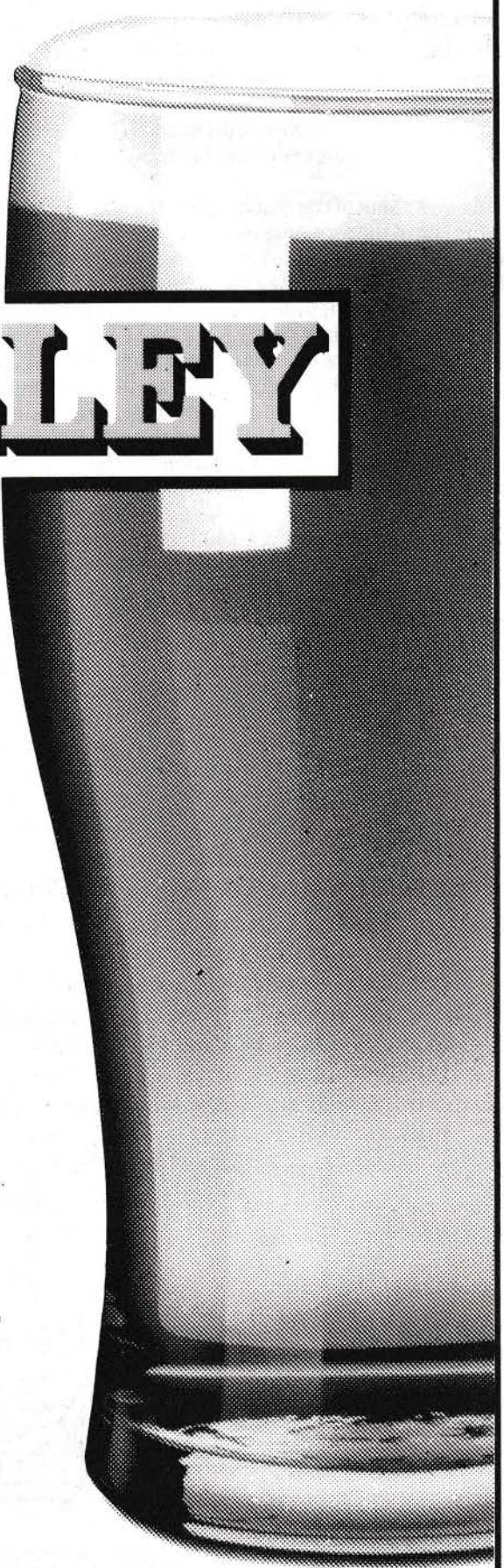


WARRINGTON STREET ASHTON-U-LYNE

LOCALITY

TETLEY
BITTER

BRITAIN'S BEST
LOVED BITTER





More Freedom, Less Choice

July is traditionally the time to celebrate the independent breweries, something particularly relevant today when their survival may be threatened by the European Union review of the tied house system. But is the tie such a good thing anyway? If you live in Hazel Grove, eight out of the twelve pubs on the A6 are Robinsons and apart from the single appearance of Old Tom, none offers any beers other than Hatters Mild and Best Bitter. Not much choice there. If only they could break the tie, and free them up to choose from all the distinctive, quality beers produced by the micro-breweries...

The reality would be very different from the vision. The key point to remember is that, for most independent brewers, the value of their pubs is far greater than that of their brewing business. They wouldn't sell off their pubs, they'd hive off their breweries and become pub companies. As we have seen with Greenalls, pub retailers can control the range of products on sale in their pubs just as tightly as any brewery. With no brewery to support, they would be free to sell national brands, and no doubt the big brewers would offer some tempting discounts. The "choice" you would get wouldn't be Whim and Passageway, it would be Caffreys and Boddingtons Bitter. And what would be the rationale of the Robinson's pubs without the brewery? It would be just another pub chain, and one very vulnerable to being snapped up by predators like Greenalls. The future for the "freed-up" breweries would be equally bleak. Those with strong brands like 6X or Pedigree would be quickly grabbed by Bass or Whitbread - and how long would they keep production at places like Devizes? On the other hand, those like Robinson's or Hydes, which are not nationally known and have relatively little free trade, would find their sales dwindling as

national brands wormed their way onto the bars of the pubs they once supplied. It would be very surprising if, after ten years, the number of substantial breweries still operating in independent hands was more than could be numbered on the fingers of one hand.

Make no mistake, ending the tie would be a disaster for beer and pubs in this country. It would lead to both the brewing and pub retailing markets being totally dominated in each case by a handful of giant national or multinational companies, far more than is the case today. The tie may offend those who believe in unfettered competition, but it allows the continued existence of significant independent brewing and pub-owning businesses providing much-needed diversity and choice in the market, which must be of benefit to the consumer. The natural tendency of completely unrestrained competition is for the big fish to swallow the little ones and dominate the pool.

And never forget that, in the 60's and 70's, the tie saved real ale in this country. While the likes of Robinsons were sticking to what they knew best, the multi-beer freehouses of the day served Worthington E and Younger's Tartan. Even today, the tie is holding up the march of nitrokeg - there's none in any Robinson's, Hydes, Holts or Lees pub, and long may that continue. Are Hazel Grove folk really deprived because it's hard to get a pint of Caffreys in the village?

Suit You, Madam?

"Would that half-pint be for a lady, sir?" You can imagine the suggestive tailors from "The Fast Show" making great play with this question if they were transferred to bar work. But it's still very common to hear it asked, as the widespread view persists that it's unladylike for a woman to drink beer out of anything other than a half-pint glass with a stem. Beer must be about the only kind of food or drink that is routinely served in a different container depending on the sex of the consumer. It's quite right that pubs should offer their customers a choice of different types of glass - mugs and stems as well as the usual sleeves. But in the 1990s the concept of the "lady's glass" is old-fashioned and patronising and deserves to be laid to rest.

15



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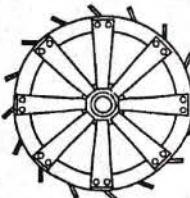
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CAMRA CALLING!



Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak and Macclesfield. Members of all branches are welcome at each other's events!

Dairy

July 96

Saturday 6th - Independents Day Pub Hunt. This is a Greater Manchester CAMRA event so a good turnout please. Starts 12 noon at the Beer House, Rochdale Road.

Monday 8th - Social at the Smithfield, Swan Street, Manchester City Centre. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 11th - Monthly branch meeting at the Kingsway, Levenshulme. Starts 8.00pm.

Saturday 13th - Stagger round the walls of York, visiting local hosteries and, hopefully, the new York Brewery. Minibus leaves Crown, Heaton Lane at 10.00am. Phone 477 1973 to book a seat.

Monday 15th - Social at the Old Mill, Mill Lane (off Ladybridge Road), Cheadle Hulme. Starts 9.00pm.

Friday 19th - Edgeley/Brinksway Stagger starting at 7.00pm, Alexandra, Northgate Road and calling at the Woolpack, Brinksway 8.30.

Monday 22nd - Two-way social in Withington. Orion 9.00pm, Old House at Home, 10.00pm. Both on Burton Road.

Thursday 25th - Pub of the Month presentation to the White Swan, Fallowfield.

July 96

Saturday 27th - Day out to Yorkshire. This will include a visit to Tomlinsons Brewery in Pontefract. Minibus leaves the Crown, Heaton lane at 10.00am. Phone 477 1973 to book a seat.

Monday 29th - Two-way social in Didsbury. Albert 9.00pm, Station 10.00pm.

High Peak Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all points north. They have advised us of the following events:

Monday 8th - Monthly branch meeting at the Duke of York, Romiley. Starts 8.30pm.

Friday 12th-Sunday 14th - Beer tent at Ashton Canals Festival, Portland Basin, Ashton.

Apart from Macclesfield and Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have advised us of the following event:

Monday 22nd - Monthly branch meeting at the Coach & Horses, Timbersbrook, Congleton. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do

Address

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Anniversay

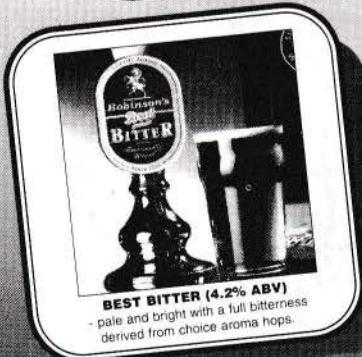
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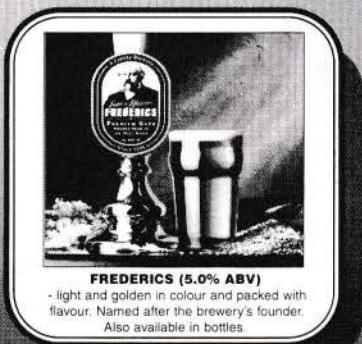
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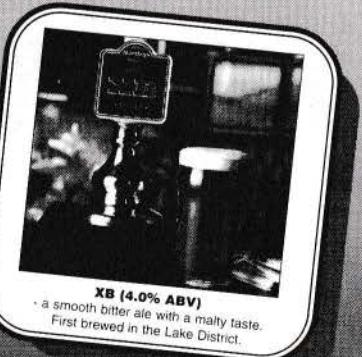
THE Robinson's COLLECTION



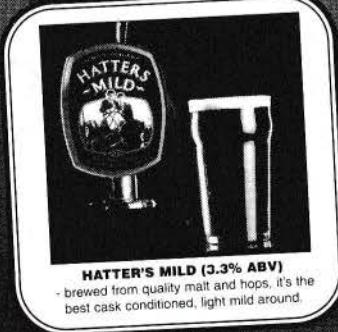
BEST BITTER (4.2% ABV)
- pale and bright with a full bitterness derived from choice aroma hops.



FREDERICS (5.0% ABV)
- light and golden in colour and packed with flavour. Named after the brewery's founder.
Also available in bottles.



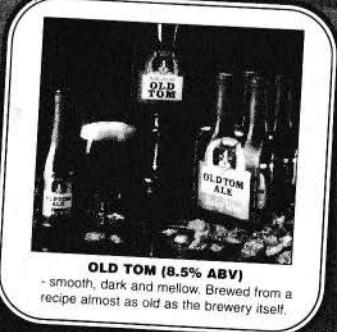
XB (4.0% ABV)
- a smooth bitter ale with a malty taste.
First brewed in the Lake District.



HATTER'S MILD (3.3% ABV)
- brewed from quality malt and hops, it's the best cask conditioned, light mild around.



OLD STOCKPORT (3.5% ABV)
- rich golden body with a refreshingly hoppy taste and lightish alcohol content.



OLD TOM (6.5% ABV)
- smooth, dark and mellow. Brewed from a recipe almost as old as the brewery itself.

C H O I C E B E E R S

Robinsons in Tameside

News about some Robinsons pubs in Tameside is varied, writes Tim Jones. The Albion on Penny Meadow, in Ashton-under-Lyne has recently been refurbished with the loss of the small front room used regularly for years as a meeting room by the Huddersfield Canal society, amongst others. The small corner local has been opened out as is the way with these things when Robinsons "improve" pubs.

But in Hyde, the White Lion on the market has been simply painted inside. However, up the road the Crown is still shut and undergoing a comprehensive refit. It is understood that the various rooms are being opened up. The fine mirrored bar back has been saved and will be moved to the function room unfortunately out of sight of the general public.

Fears that the White Hart in Newton was in line for alteration have been scotched by the brewery who have denied any knowledge of intended refurbishments or alterations.

Disley News

The Ploughboy has unfortunately closed until further notice. This pub has not exactly been busy for some years, but has not been helped by the transfer from Wilsons to Vaux a couple of years ago. Since then the pub had seen a succession of licensees, many of whom were new to the trade and have struggled financially due to the high rent set for the tenancy. It is unfortunate that an increasing number of breweries appear to consider that income from rent is of greater importance than profit from selling beer. While would-be tenants continue to come forward it is a practice which is likely to remain popular with pub owners.

★★★

The Ram's Head has now opened its new bar area within the building that formed the stable block when this was once an important coaching inn on the London to Manchester stage-coach run. The new bar (which was described as a "real ale bar" on the planning application) is a pleasant enough extension to the extensive drinking and eating areas within this large establishment. To call this a "real ale bar" would not be inaccurate as a number of handpulled beers are available (albeit alongside many keg and nitro beers) but yet again the selection is something of a disappointment, featuring the Draught Bass, Boddingtons and Websters Green Label already in the main bar, in addition to Newcastle Exhibition, Toby Light and Robinsons Best Bitter, the latter on offer at 99p at the time of writing.

Live music is usually on offer, particularly at weekends, and the bar has a pleasant atmosphere but surely the Magic Pub Co. can do better than this with its selection of cask conditioned beers. Perhaps the Greene King take-over will see some changes in this area. Let's hope so! GW.

OT in Macclesfield

You can now get Opening Times in the following pubs in and around Macclesfield. If any pub other than those listed would like to take OT then please get in touch with either the local branch or Opening Times direct. George & Dragon, Sunderland Street; Chester Road Tavern, Chester Road; Railway View, Byrons Lane; Waters Green Tavern, Waters Green; British Flag, Coare Street; Boarhound, Brook Street; Filligree & Firkin, Mill Street; Lord Clyde, Clarke Lane, Kerridge, Bollington; Highwayman, Rainow; Admiral Rodney, Prestbury

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Viaducts and Vaults 2 - The Stockport Pub Guide - Now Available - see page 10

Focus on

The Highwayman, Rainow

with Brian Kemp

Greatly encouraged by readers' response to last month's article, I offer you this month another pub in the rural outback of Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch. Within a week of publication last month's offering, the red Lion in Lower Withington, had been visited by at least four Opening Times readers much to the surprise of the landlady who reported it to me.

This month, especially while we seem to be enjoying sunny summer evenings, why not visit the Highwayman at Rainow. It should be easy to find as it is on the main B5470 road from Macclesfield to Whaley Bridge about halfway between the two on the right-hand side just as you are leaving Rainow. Depending on where you live in South Manchester it may be easier to approach by driving down the A6 to Whaley Bridge and coming from the opposite direction in which case, needless to say, it will be on the left.

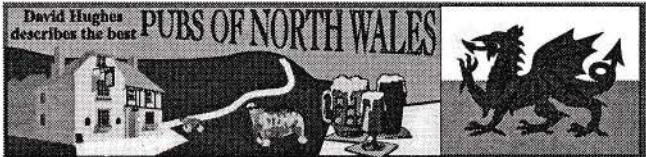
It is one of the few Thwaites pubs in our branch area. It sells only bitter on handpump but is a gem of a pub. On clear days it has magnificent views across the hills towards Manchester and is a maze of small intimate rooms with low ceilings and, in winter, open fires. When I used to work in Macclesfield I would occasionally take American visitors there for lunch and can honestly report that one of them really did say "Gee, this is a real quaint place!".

The OS maps show that it used to be called "The Patch House", named after the area in which it is located. This subsequently became the Blacksmiths (there's still a sign outside) before changing to its present in, I think, the 1940's. This propensity for changing pubs' names is nothing new. At least it's never been called the Pig & Truffle, thank God!

It offers a fairly standard bar menu lunch and evening. The black pudding has always been a favourite of mine. It can be pretty bleak if you go there in the winter as the snow seems to come here before it comes to most places. The long bend in the road just beyond the pub in the direction of Whaley Bridge is regularly the first road in the area to become blocked. However if you are going to get stranded in a pub this has to be a pretty good choice.

One final word of warning to any darts players playing on the board in the back room. Don't try to finish on 'Double 20'! The combination of low ceiling and wooden beam makes it virtually impossible to hit!

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Red Lion, Dinas Mawddwy

In this article I shall take you to the furthest south we have been, in an area maintained by many to be actually Mid Wales. The Red Lion, Dinas Mawddwy lies just off the A470 some 10 miles from Dolgellau. It is right near the borders of Gwynedd, Powys and Dyfed. Dinas Mawddwy is one of those villages that you have passed through before you realise it.

The Red Lion is 200 yards off the main road, it has a large car park and has two separate drinking areas. It is tied to Bass and the present tenants (father and son) have been in the pub for 7 years. During this time the pub has been a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide.

The pub is quite distinctive in that both bars are quite different in appearance. The public bar has red tiled floors, wooden beams and brasses galore - it is comfortable for locals and strangers alike. To the left of the entrance is an open games area, with a pool table and darts board, to the right of the entrance is the bar, an open fire, and seating for around 24 people. Four handpumps grace the bar, serving Welsh Brewers Worthington Dark, Best Bitter, Draught Bass and a Guest beer which comes via an independent wholesaler. All are served with pride.

The lounge is accessible from the Car Park and has obviously been built on to the pub within the last 20 years or so. It does not blend in with the public bar and is used mainly at weekends when there is entertainment. Off the lounge is a separate restaurant which again is used mainly at weekends and there is also a small families room. Cask beers are served via the Public Bar during the week and the lounge just features Worthington Best Bitter and Draught Bass at the weekend, so check the public bar for the guest beer.

There is a ramp between the lounge, public bar and toilets, which means good accessibility for wheelchairs. The food served in both the lounge and restaurant is plain and simple, and of good value. The pub is popular with hill walkers and ramblers at weekends, it is also very popular with anglers and there is a camping and caravan site within walking distance. The pub also does bed and breakfast accommodation on a small scale and the cost is very reasonable. The local hotel 100 yards away serves two cask beers including a guest.

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

A number of pubs were among the commercial premises that suffered severe damage in last month's terrorist explosion in the City Centre. It is hoped that most of them will be able to resume trading, but Paddy's Rat & Carrot, located almost opposite the seat of the explosion, took the full force of the blast, and its future (along with that of the entire Arndale Centre) must now be in doubt. This will now, of course, be a matter for the Magic Pub Company's new owners, East Anglian brewers Greene King, to deal with. Who knows, they might even bring advantage from atrocity by turning the place into a proper pub for the first time in its life.

In Fallowfield, Route 236 is also closed for repairs, but for a more benign reason - a burst water pipe in the basement. There should be ample time to clear that up before the Route's student customers return in the autumn.

Turning to pub openings, the big media attention last month went to the City Centre's latest stylish venue to be seen in, Barca on Catalan Square in Castlefield. Sadly for OT readers, though, there's no real ale, and while I would normally consider draught Hoegaarden witbier an acceptable substitute, at the reported price of £2.80 a pint I might demur! Better, perhaps, to try Boddingtons reopened Brewery Tap on Great Ducie Street. Run by Whitbread Inns rather than the Greenalls/Boddington pub company, it displays its brewery merchandise perhaps a little too blatantly for some tastes, but nevertheless is a reasonably well-executed affair in a two-room layout with a viewing panel into the cellar. Handpumped beers are Flowers Original and Boddingtons Bitter (£1.46) - "smooth" keg Boddies is also available, as is Boddingtons Gold, only available in keg form currently, but the staff seem to have the sense, or the training, to suggest cask if



by Rhys Jones

the customer fails to specify. Hardly worth a special journey, but worth a call if you're in the Victoria area. And a tramride away near Piccadilly Station, things are looking up at two more Whitbread pubs. The Waldorf, already basking in the glow of a well-judged renovation, has been taking guest beers such as Caledonian 80/-, while old favourite the Crown & Anchor/Beer Engine has enhanced its range of guest beers, seemingly without compromising quality - on a recent visit a couple of pints of Hambleton Stallion soothed away the stress of the working day most admirably.

In Levenshulme, both Fiddlers Green and the Railway have lost their real ale. At Fiddlers Green, cask Websters Bitter has been replaced by "smooth" keg John Smiths, while at the Railway "smooth" Boddies has supplanted the real thing. You could, I suppose, read this as the thin end of the nitrokeg wedge; in truth, though, real ale was a marginal seller in both pubs, and they may well not be the shape of things to come. In Chorlton-cum-Hardy, "Bar 2" has opened. Next door to the splendidly monosyllabic "Bar", it has the same owners, the same atmosphere, and a similar product range (including some fairly mainstream real ale - Pedigree and such). But will it do away with the queues? There's only one way to find out!

The Old House at Home in Ardwick now sells only "nitrokeg" Tetleys, though regrettably pumpclips remain on the Tetley Bitter handpumps. At the Townley Arms in Beswick, Boddingtons is now nitrokeg, but two well-kept and strong selling cask beers remain in Whitbread Trophy and Chesters Mild. At Mary D's in Bradford, cask Wilsons Bitter has been replaced by Stones (but Lees is also available - usually), while opposite at the all-keg Crossroads, keg Cidermaster has regrettably appeared on "handpump". In Clayton, the Victoria has replaced Tetley Dark Mild with handpumped Falstaff Bitter, but the Derby Arms is sadly an outlet for "handpumped" keg Scrumpy Jack. Opposite, the Sir Humphrey Chetham appears to have dropped Chesters Bitter.

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OPENING TIMES WORLD WIDE WEB

PAGES ON: <http://www.u-net.com/camramcr/>

(The New Look Opening Times pages will be launched on Aug 1)

CAMRA HQ WORLD WIDE WEB

PAGES ON: <http://www.camra.org.uk>

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(OT147)

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*those wishing to join CAMRA who live in the Marple, Bredbury, Woodley or Romiley areas, should write instead to:
Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple, SK6 6JH.*





The Hungry Horse, Cheadle Heath, has replaced Banks's Bitter with Worthington Best Bitter and Draught Bass with Courage Directors.

John McArt has retired from Holt's Grove in Clayton; John was one of the brewery's few tenants, and in line with brewery policy the pub has now become a managed house. New licensee is Andrew Gorman, and a fine pint of mild was enjoyed there on a recent East Manchester pub crawl.

After 51/2 years, Pat and Irene Griffin are leaving the Friendship on Hyde Road, Gorton. During their tenure, they have managed to convert a pub which had been living on past glories into one of the liveliest ports of call in a tip-top drinking area. The new licensee comes from the Coach & Horses in Denton, another Marstons house which is a regular outlet for Batemans Dark Mild - so hopes are high that this fine beer, often the highlight of a visit to the Friendship, will continue to be served on good form.

The garden at the Crown in Gorton, already an unexpected and attractive feature of this smashing little pub, is being upgraded and extended to take up some of the car parking area. Bench seating is being fixed round the trees, and by the summer's end customers should be able to step out into the garden under an arch of sweet peas. Licensee Derek Shawcross hopes the improvements, along with the longer opening hours now observed at the Crown, should bring greater use of the garden and also tempt new customers into the pub. Since he

also provides those two essentials, a fine pint and a friendly welcome, he deserves to be right.

Two more inner-city locals are up for sale, courtesy of pub chain Enterprise Inns. The Cheshire Cheese in Ancoats is £50,000 for a 999 year lease while the imposing Mosley on Ashton New Road in Beswick is £65,000 freehold. You'll certainly get a lot of pub for your money there. Bass have reopened the newly refurbished Old Bullin Burnage. The pub had previously been keg for years....and yes, it still is - the one 'handpump' on the bar dispenses keg Cidermaster. Nought out of ten for enterprise there, Bass.

Speaking of which, "handpumped" keg Cidermaster now graces the bar of the Shady Oak in Bramhall. As if this wasn't bad enough, keg Scrumpy Jack is on "handpump" at both the Sir Robert Peel and the Prince Albert on Castle Street in Edgeley. Why otherwise good pubs such as these indulge in this type of nonsense is a mystery.

Guest beers are now on sale at the Comfortable Gill on King Street West, Stockport. Landlord Nigel tells us that the first, Cains Bitter, sold out in two days. The Comfy will soon be seeing a new face behind the bar, though. Nigel is off to the Lamp at Hadfield and is to be replaced by Peter Abell from the Crown, Heaton Moor. He, in turn, will be replaced by Bill and Julie from the Lamp. Incidentally, the Lamp will be staging a beer festival over the August Bank holiday weekend with an additional 10 cask beers on sale.

Mention also need to be made of the superb beer festival held at the Crown, Heaton Lane in the first week of June. A collection of beers obscure enough for even the most ardent 'spotter' was assembled and sold in tip-top condition. Thanks also to Steve and Lorraine for once again hosting the Stockport Beer Festival staff party where the beer and food made for a memorable night.

20

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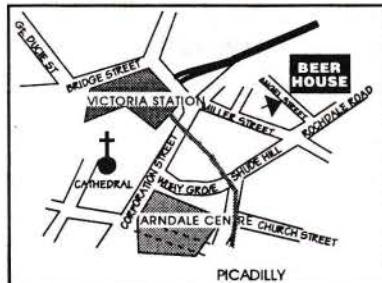
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