

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

No:180

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Issue 4

OPENING TIMES

FREE

APRIL 1999

6,700 CIRCULATED
FREE EVERY MONTH

BODDIES MILD AXED!

Whitbread have announced the de-listing of Boddingtons Mild, whose quiet disappearance from many tied houses was already being noted in national Good Beer Guides as long ago as 1991.

Spokeswoman Stephanie O'Hara said the only surviving Whitbread cask mild was now the contract-brewed Chesters, adding: "We have had to make this decision because demand is declining to such a level that it is compromising our ability to produce consistent quality."

The declining demand is however something that has really been self-generated by Whitbread who have made no efforts to promote the beer at all. We are not talking about the multi-million pound budgets that have been thrown at Boddingtons Bitter but even a little modest in-pub promotion would surely have been enough to maintain demand at a viable level.

Instead, recent years have seen the steady erosion of the beer in its heartlands. In Stockport, still something of a mild drinking bastion, it has vanished from pub after pub with Edgeley's Greyhound and the nearby Comfortable Gill perhaps the last regular outlets. The beer was in fact still available as we went to press but these are clearly its last days.

This is the latest in a series of blows to cask mild in the North West, one of its remaining heartlands. In the space of a few weeks we have seen Burtonwood axe cask mild, with remaining outlets being "invited" to switch to a keg version. This was followed by Greenalls which has axed a range of seven milds from its pubs, cutting back to just one brand – Burton-brewed Greenalls Mild.

Increasingly, the fate of mild is in the hands of our independent brewers who not only show commitment to the style, but also have no problems in either making it available to their pubs but also in actually selling the stuff. This is evidenced by the almost total absence of mild beers from the national operators in the pubs taking part in this year's Mild Challenge, when in the past there would be at least a scattering of outlets.

The message is clear – if you want choice and if you want quality, not only must you 'ask for cask' but also make sure it's from a local independent brewer.

In APRIL'S OPENING TIMES

Editors View	2	Brewery News	10
Pub of the Month	3	Book Review	11
Stagger	5	Beer Monster	12
Letters	6	Kens Kitchen	15
Coming up	7	CAMRA Calling	16
Pub News	8	Fistful of Arrows	18
Curmudgeon	9	MILD Challenge	19
Five Years Ago	9	Manchester Matters ...	23



Beer Festival Latest

Making Music

Details of the entertainment on offer at this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival have now been released and we are able to bring you this exclusive preview. Several of the bands have played at the festival before and have been so well received that we just had to have them back. Many are well-known professional bands of years' standing from local areas. From a jazz band to a jug band to a ceilidh, we have music for all.

Thursday Night – The Chicago Teddybears Society Jazzband. Formed in the early 1970s and based here in the North West. Extremely popular with audiences both here and on the continent. Their repertoire ranges from New Orleans through Dixieland to mainstream.

Friday Lunchtime – Slim Prospx. Slim produces great music in a relaxed, jazzy style. A rich mellow voice blending humour and romance combines with a rhythmic guitar to bring a new slant to songs by Cole Porter, Gershwin, Fats Waller, Hoagy Carmichael, and many more.

Friday Night – Biggles Wartime Band. Now firmly established as festival favourites, we are again fortunate to have this very popular band that gets the Festival going with a swing, or two, especially Graham in his kilt! Although classified as a jug band, their music is a concoction of blues, ragtime, swing, pop, punk, folk - almost anything in fact. Exuberant music resulting from skilful arrangements.

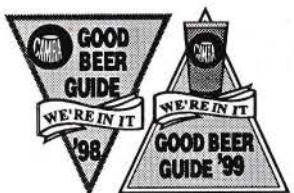
Saturday Lunchtime – This is our quiet drinkers session, which has proved so popular in recent years. The highlight of the afternoon will be the announcement of the winners in CAMRA's National Cider & Perry Championships, together with the chance to try the winners.

Saturday Night – Enoch's Hammer. Formed 6-7 years ago, this popular band plays for a second time at the Festival. Like many ceilidh bands they began playing for Morris dancing but now they normally play for traditional country dancing. Their lively and infectious music will certainly see us out in style.

Next month we will preview some of the highlights from the beer, cider and perry on offer – and there are certainly some treats in store there! Don't forget those important diary dates – June 3-5 at Stockport Town Hall.

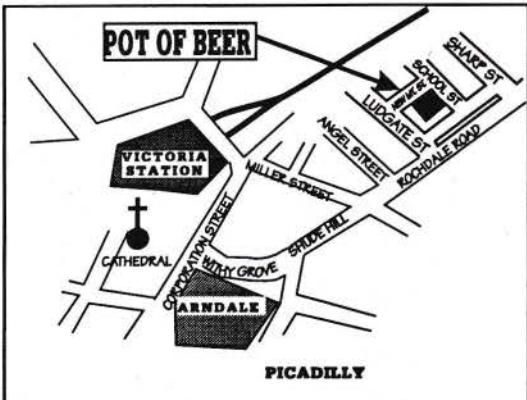
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

How ironic that as we launch our Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge comes news of a major reduction in the local choice of cask mild ales. If anything illustrated the need for action to save what is now clearly a threatened beer style, this is it.

What mild needs is promotion. Hopefully we can make a modest contribution with our Mild Challenge, but it needs much more than this. The national operators have virtually abandoned the style themselves, often buying in mild beers from other producers to satisfy the demand where it still exists in their pubs.

Which means it's all down to the independent brewers—and even they may have a fight on their hands. One Robinson's licensee declined to take part in this year's Challenge on the grounds that mild drinkers were all dying—perhaps he should try running that one past Peter, Dennis and David Robinson, mild drinkers all! But this is symptomatic of the problems that mild has. It needs to shake off its 'old man's drink' image and that means some fairly radical promotion. If our local brewers are serious in their commitment to this beer style, and I have no doubts at all that they are, then they really do have to get their act together—and soon. It might mean a pooling of resources to promote their beers—in the press, on billboards and even on local TV. It might mean jointly run in-house promotions and roadshows. Whatever—something must be done.

Mild is unlikely ever to achieve again the volumes of the past but we can stop the rot and reverse the decline. But only if the will is there. So I ask our local brewers—is it, and what are you proposing to do about it?

John Clarke

OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS

OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA—The Campaign for Real Ale. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editors: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ (0161) 477 1973; Paul Hutchings, 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport Cheshire, SK4 2NP. ☎ & Fax (0161) 432 8384. News, articles and letters welcome. All editorial items may be submitted in most popular WP formats or preferably ASCII on IBM-PC format 3.5" disks (which will eventually be returned!) or via e-mail to johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com. Adverts or photos should be "hard copy" or in CorelDraw 3.5 or 7 (*.cdr) format or TIFF or EPS files (submit printed proofs for checking and ensure that any "include all fonts" options are on). Letters to the editor on otletter@opentime.u-net.com. All editorial items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged. All Advertising images are copyright the respective design sources (Largely CPPR, but all other copyrights and trademarks acknowledged).

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Pub Of The Month

APRIL

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

1999



This month the Pub of the Month award has been won by the Red Bull on Hillgate in Stockport. The pub itself dates back to at least 1765 and has been described by other writers as Robinson's country pub in the heart of Stockport. The pub is a warren of small rooms and drinking areas, unusually served by two bars, and retaining original features such as stone-flagged floors and oak beams. Paintings and drawings of Stockport scenes by local artists add to the effect. This is not the first time the Red Bull has been presented with the Pub of the Month Award, having won twice before, in 1991 and 1985 (when it went on to win the local Pub of the Year award). So why has it won again? What has changed? In short the answer is very little, as the pub still exhibits the very highest standards in terms of beer quality, superb food, and excellent hospitality. This is a story of consistent high standards over many years rather than one of change. As the saying goes, "if it ain't broke then why fix it?" Brian Lawrence has been licensee at the Red Bull for the last 19 years and he is only the second licensee in the past 40 years. Tenure of this length is increasingly rare these days and speaks volumes about the pub, its licensee and its customers. While this is a remarkable achievement, mention must also be made of senior barmaid Linda, who can better this, having worked at the pub for an incredible 36 years.

On the food front, the Red Bull has its own chef and enjoys a reputation second to none for its quality home-cooked food and a busy lunchtime trade as a result. Of course, beer quality is vital, and both the Hatters Mild and Best Bitter are kept in tip-top condition by head cellarman and barman, Kevin, who had many years of experience at the nearby Waterloo.

To summarise, the Red Bull is a pub that manages to do just about everything right. Over almost two decades Brian and his staff have maintained the highest standards in running this pub and this much-deserved award gives this fact due recognition. Why not come along on the presentation night, Thursday 29th April and join in the celebrations? SB

The local branch of CAMRA decide on a Pub of the Month by a democratic vote at the monthly branch meeting.

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COPY DATE FOR THE MAY ISSUE OF OPENING TIMES IS APRIL 23

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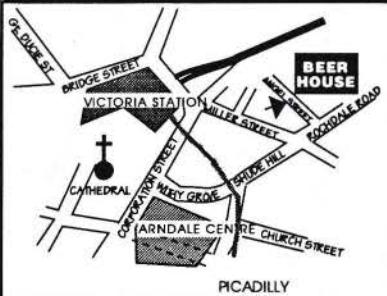
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STAGGER

with John Clarke

This month's Stagger is unusual in that it took place on a Monday night and covered the pubs at the southern, "top" end of Hillgate, and visited many pubs that this writer has previously only visited on busy Friday nights. It would be interesting to actually get a good look at some of these places for a change.

There was however nothing unfamiliar about our starting point, the ever-excellent **Blossoms** on the A6 near the Hillgate junction. Local CAMRA Pub of the Year, this is everything a traditional local should be - multi-roomed, good food, superb beer and that indefinable atmosphere that characterises the British pub at its very best. At 8 o'clock on a Monday night, the pub was reasonably quiet, with a small crowd of locals around the bar and in the superb smoke-room at the back of the pub. A Robinson's house, (the first of many tonight) we declined the gravity-served Old Tom, choosing instead the safer options of Hatters Mild and Best Bitter. The latter was enjoyable, but the Mild was superb and not bettered until the end of the evening.

On to Hillgate proper and the first pub was the **Wheatsheaf**, originally a Wilson's house (well, really originally owned by Showell's Brewery on Hempshaw Lane, but that's another story) and now in the hands of Vaux. Or should that be The Swallow Group, as they have now renamed themselves in anticipation of the disposal of their breweries and 350 pubs (of which this is not one). Anyway, the pub was very nicely refurbished the other year and is essentially a two-roomer with vault to the left and a slightly odd two-part lounge to the right - there's a sort of wall in the middle that splits it into two. Caricatures of regulars adorn the walls and it's obviously a well-used pub, although it was fairly quiet tonight. Two cask beers are sold - Sunderland-brewed Vaux Samson and Wards Bitter from the threatened Sheffield brewery. We all tried this and very pleasant it was too, although not at the peak of its form by some way.

Moving on, and another very short diversion to the **Bowling Green** on Charles Street. Another ex-Wilson's pub (still bearing the livery) but now owned by one of the pub companies that has inherited the old Wilson's estate. The Bowling Green has set itself up as very much a music venue and from personal experience I can say that it works very well in this guise. The music room is to the right, and tonight the stage was occupied by a karaoke, which seemed to be getting a high level of participation from the small group of regulars. Apart from this there is a brightly-lit vault, which occupies the front of the pub, and, at the back, there's a small snug area which I had never spotted before. There was just one cask beer - Webster's Bitter which fortunately proved to be a rare tasty example of this generally bland brew. Surprisingly good in fact - could they actually be putting more malt and hops in it?

Back onto Hillgate and the **Royal Mortar**. Although an old building, the pub has been knocked about quite a bit over the years and is now largely open-plan with a large pool room at the back and a bright, comfortable lounge at the front. There are some nice old photos of the pub on the walls and the whole place had a comfortable, relaxing feel. This may have been down to what was obviously a Monday night lull, not only here but in many of the pubs we visited. Robinson's Hatters Mild and Best Bitter are on electric pumps and both were OK in an unexciting sort of way.

Across the road is the **Flying Dutchman**. Several years ago now this pub was knocked down and rebuilt by Robinson's and was finished off in their typical mid-eighties style. Thus it is quite open plan with lots of light wood and really has more of a café bar appearance. It's never really been to my taste and has had its fair share of ups and downs over the years - although to be fair, the pub it replaced was really grim so it's definitely an improvement overall. Now in the hands of a keen and conscientious licensee, it

is clean and well-run, with a friendly bunch of locals if the small crowd tonight were anything to go by. Again Hatters Mild and Best Bitter, and again both OK but nothing special.

Passing the site of the **Shakespeare** and noting the long closed Daniel Clifton's Royal Oak Brewery we paused at **Cottons** before moving on. This used to be the **Rams Head**, a Wilson's pub in which I had several truly disgusting pints but now it's a bar-cum-club and all keg. So it was on to the **Star & Garter**, our penultimate call and the last Robinson's pub of the night. It's an imposing building and was also extensively altered some years ago, again in Robinson's house style of the time, so it manages to be both comfortable but at the same time just a little too brightly lit and strangely featureless (compare and contrast with the more recent work at the Dog & Partridge, Great Moor, for example). It's a big pub with several well-defined drinking areas and had quite a good crowd in for what was evidently a quiet night locally. The usual suspects - Hatters Mild and Best Bitter - graced the bar and yet again both were pleasant but dull.

So it was we reached our finishing point, the **Crown**, affectionately known as the 'Corner Cupboard'. This is yet another Vaux pub (and another they're hanging on to) which used to be part of the Wilson's estate. It's only since the arrival of 'Big Al' Roebuck as licensee that this pub has been rescued from years of decline, and his efforts were rewarded by a first class refurbishment by Vaux. The pub is now better than it has been for years with a comfortable lounge at the front and a very well-used darts and games room at the back. Indeed it's something of a centre for darts locally. Two cask beers - sadly the tasty Vaux Mild is now keg - in the form of Vaux Samson and Waggledance. The latter is a five per cent alcohol premium beer brewed with honey and has become something of a winner for Vaux - it's one of the best selling bottled beers in the country, apparently. It was certainly on form tonight just taking the honours for top beer of the evening.

So, an interesting night, albeit a quiet one for many of the pubs. This undoubtedly meant we didn't see them at their very best, but all were clearly well-run with loyal crowds of regulars. Perhaps it was the slow trade that kept some of the beer off top form too, but then again some pubs did manage to serve up good and even excellent beer which does just make you wonder why the others couldn't quite hit the mark. Nevertheless all are well worth a visit - why not give them a try?

5

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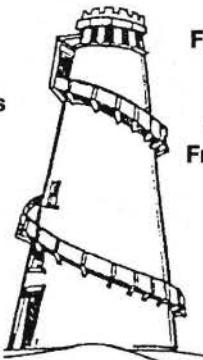
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the aroma and taste. The finish is
malty, fruity and dry.



THIRSTY MOON
Light brown bitter. Strong hop aromas.
The slight maltness is dominated by a
full crisp bitterness giving a dry and
satisfying finish.



BONNEVILLE
Light brown bitter. Malty character with a
soft rounded hop balance.



DOUBLE DAGGER
Pale brown bitter. Full flavoured hoppy
bitterness. More pleasantly dry and light
than its gravity would suggest.



WOBBLY BOB
Amber beer. Malty fruity aromas.
Strongly malty and fruity flavour.
A slight sweetness yields to a dry finish.

LETTERS OPENING TIMES

From Deborah Lee, Mellor:

Re Ken's kitchen (March Opening Times), and the recipe for Ram Tam – Yam Yam: might there have been an error in the amount of water recommended (approx. 4 pints)? Because, after half an hour of vigorous boiling to reduce this to half, as instructed, there remained far too much liquid, and the vegetables were disintegrating. The problem was exacerbated by the addition of the requisite pint of Ram Tam, and the end product was more of a soup than a spicy vegetable medley which the recipe had led me to expect.

(Oops! This arrived too late for me to get a comment from Ken but I'm sure he'll address the problem next month - JC.)

From Ken Birch, Bridgewater Ales:

Firstly, thanks for 'Beer Monster's' accolade, however you have no doubt spotted that he referred to 'Navigator' as 'Navigation'. I hope you will be able to notify your readers of this slight error. Secondly the 'confusion' bit! Our new 'stout' has been launched and is called Delph Porter (1053 og - 5.2%ABV), but the first two nines sold had the title 'Stout'. The original Delph Porter was intended to be, as it is now, 5.2%ABV. However due to a mistake in judging the water volume, this turned out at 4%ABV. There was still one nine of this ale being sold and so this is why we launched the beer as Stout.

The reason we have now reverted to the original name is that we feel the beer has more of the characteristics of a porter, and anyway, we will soon be producing a one-off celebratory stout. I don't know whether this information illuminates like a searchlight or stirs up an already muddy stream, but you now have the facts. (Thanks Ken - I can't wait to try the celebratory stout..JC)

From Brian Wray (via the internet)

Some time ago I sent a letter to OT describing an incident of mind-bogglingly appalling customer service in one of Stockport's town centre pubs (which since the incident was over a year ago may as well remain nameless). When this letter did not appear in the next couple of issues of OT, I was told that it had been delayed to allow the landlord of the establishment in question to respond. To the best of my knowledge neither my letter, nor the response has yet appeared in print.

I was therefore most shocked to see the "Beer Monster's" column in March 1999's edition of OT, wherein he veritably slates the customer service of the Bradford Beer Festival and tops it off with an egregious insult to the organisers. I scanned the magazine from cover to cover several times, but was unable to find any space allocated to a response from said organisers. I trust, in view of my experience, that this omission will be rectified within the pages of April's OT. Was it just an oversight, or could it be that the editorial decisions of OT are unduly influenced by the income from, or personal relationships with, the advertisers (one of whom is the pub that I wrote about). (As we found out, there was a distinct possibility of legal action between the pub and those offending, and we did not want to be dragged into a court case. The landlord in question told us that this problem had been rectified (the staff in question no longer being there) before the letter could have been printed, so as I told Brian subsequently, there was no point in rubbishing the pub when the matter was sorted, and indeed the original letter went beyond fair comment and was [to say the least] bordering on libellous. Not printing it had nothing to do with advertising, and as advertisers frequently withdraw support after criticisms in this publication, as Brian well knows, that is a fairly absurd suggestion. As to our columnists, when their comments are within the law, they are largely left to their own devices, their views being their own. The comments about this article - from those who were actually at Bradford on the Friday - have been overwhelmingly supportive. Any criticism seems to come from those who were not. CAMRA campaigns for decent and equal treatment for all consumers and MUST be seen to uphold the highest standards at its own events... PBH)

Events Coming Up

A look at one or two events that will interest our readers

The Victorian Pub: Past, Present and Future

A talk by Geoff Brandwood, English Heritage & CAMRA Historic Pubs Caseworker and Victorian Society National Committee Member.

Geoff has written in "What's Brewing", CAMRA's newspaper: "Don't miss Manchester's city centre treasure trove". The Victorian Society echo that, and invite members of CAMRA and their friends to this exciting talk and update on pub conservation.

Pubs are often thought of as unimportant buildings, common to every city centre. But historic pubs are important treasures and an endangered species. Geoff - working at the front line of pub preservation - will highlight the many pubs that are Victorian gems in Manchester's city centre, what not to miss and why they are under threat.

Manchester city centre has six pubs listed in the CAMRA National Inventory including the Circus tavern, a rare example of a small, untouched city centre beerhouse, the Peveril of the Peak, a wonderful 1890s remodelling, and the Briton's Protection, Great Bridgewater Street. Geoff highlights Mr Thomas's Chop House, 52 Cross Street built in 1901, with its opulent turn of the century architecture, and the Hare & Hounds on Shudehill as well as the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road, with its ornate wall frieze.

Geoff's task is to revise the statutory listing descriptions to reflect the quality and importance of the interior arrangements, so that they give a guide to the special qualities of each building, especially in relation to planned alterations.

All CAMRA members are invited to this talk at the special members rate of £2.00.

7.00pm for 7.15pm, Wednesday 28 April, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Central Manchester (near the Town hall and Albert Square).

Macclesfield Beer Festival

This CAMRA/Macclesfield Round Table joint venture returns for the fifth consecutive year at Macclesfield Rugby Club, Priory lane, Macclesfield.

Friday 7th and Saturday 8th May. Opening times: Friday 7-11; Saturday 12-3 and 7-11. Evening admission £7.50 including commemorative glass, programme and first pint; CAMRA members get extra free pint. Saturday lunchtime £2.50 including programme and glass; CAMRA members also get free pint. 50 real ales, ciders and bottled beers. Wine also available. Bread and cheese available. Full programme of entertainment each evening; quieter session on Saturday lunchtime with Irish folk band. Evening admission by ticket in advance only from Mr David Morris, Beer Festival Chairman, 14 Harrington drive, Gawsworth, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9RD. Cheques payable to "Macclesfield Beer Festival".



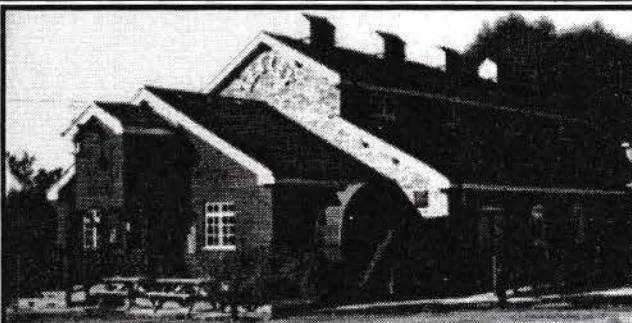
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Your hosts Jon & Judi invite you to

The Old Mill

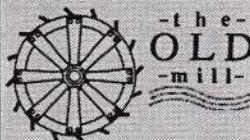
At least 10 different guest beers per week

Quiz night Tuesday & Thursday

Great food served daily till 10pm
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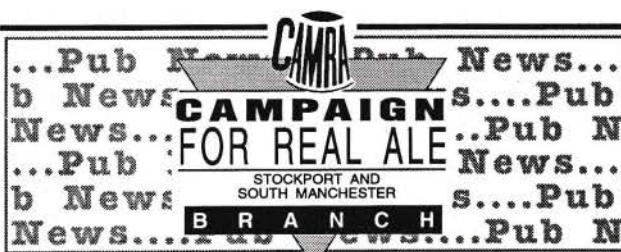
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In Didsbury, the new licensees at the Dog & Partridge are Rick and Joanne from the Puss in Boots, Macclesfield. There is to be a new menu and a greater emphasis on food and dining. Luckily, the beer range is also to be maintained along with the cider, Weston's Old Rosie, as this is very popular.

Just over the border into Cheshire, Thwaites' Grape & Grain opened in Wilmslow on 24 March. A conversion of several closed shops, it extends from the Swan round the corner to the main road. Very much a pub-cum-restaurant, with meals from lunchtime to early evening, it seems firmly pitched at the high-spending 'Cheshire set' with a ham sandwich costing £3.25. Beer prices are similarly high – while the Thwaites Bitter is keg, cask ale is available in the form of Bloomin' Ale and Daniels hammer which will set you back £1.90 and £2.40 respectively. First impressions are OK but nothing exceptional (apart from those prices, that is!). Worth a look if you are passing.

In Gatley, Whitbread have refurbished the Red Lion to give it a lighter, more spacious 'bar' feel. Pitched firmly at the younger end of the market, it no longer sells real ale, making it the only pub in Gatley that doesn't offer its customers the choice of cask ale should they want it. Unsurprisingly, it's also the only pub in the village owned by one of the national operators.

Staying in Gatley, the Gatley Wine Bar, now a tied house of Liverpool independent brewer Robert Cain, is closed and in the middle of a conversion into 'The Dispensary' which promises to become something of a local flagship for the respected Merseyside concern. Their previous track record indicates that the new-look pub should be pretty impressive when it reopens. Next door, Hydes' Anvil have applied for permission to install a new hanging sign at the Prince of Wales, so presumably the pub is in line for a refurbishment. This country-style pub has bags of character and is very popular, so presumably nothing too drastic is planned.

In Edgeley, the Armoury on Greek Street has recently had some minor remodelling. The old off-sales area directly opposite the main door has been removed to create a slightly bigger lounge with more room at the bar, and more importantly, a slightly longer bar. The bar has been revarnished, and the lounge tastefully redecorated to retain its character and warm atmosphere.

Still in Edgeley, the Gardners Arms on Northgate Road has...you've guessed it, changed hands again. This time, however, Beckvale

Management have finally done the decent thing and relinquished the tenancy. As of 11 March, the new tenants are John and Linda Howes (yes, real people instead of a pub management company). No major changes are planned, although the place is likely to get a lick of paint and new carpets. The beer range will remain hand-pumped Tetley's and John Smiths, but this may change once trade improves.

At the Greyhound in Edgeley, Irene Morris will be leaving the pub on 14 June, although we understand that the pub's owners are somewhat keen, desperate even, for her to stay given the absence of anyone suitable to take it on after she leaves. Meanwhile the run of interesting guest beers continues and in the next few weeks will include Polar Eclipse stout from Beartown, a Rye & Coriander beer from Hop Back, Strawberry Blonde from Kitchen and Hill Billy from Bateman's.

The Victoria in Offerton has scored top marks in a 'mystery customer' audit. Almost 60 different categories were checked and the pub came through with flying colours. In particular it was the pub's well presented exterior, clean surfaces and tremendous customer care which swung the decision. Congratulations to all concerned.

...Pub News...
News....P
...Pub Ne
b News...
News....P

HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE
WITH TIM JONES
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CAMRA

In Stalybridge, news of a "new" pub has been confirmed. Dave Connor (Q and White House) is beginning to re-convert a plumbers merchants near Caroline Street Bridge. The building was the Old Bridge pub, closed in 1934. Dave has a licence and is now getting on with the refurbishment works. More news when it's available.

The Wooley Bridge Inn is now fully open – that's the good news. The bad news is that recent visits have revealed it to be keg only. In recent months it was reported that the Chieftain in Hadfield was selling Hydes' Bitter and Light – it is now selling the dark mild as well.

Over in Bredbury, a recent visit to the Roaring Winds (Bredbury Green) confirmed that it is all keg – so no chance of a change of name! The Hare & Hounds on Dooley lane, Otterspool, is selling Marstons Pedigree on handpump.

Up on Marple Ridge, the rumours that the Romper has been purchased by Jennings have been confirmed. On a recent visit the Bitter and Cumberland were available with Snekclifter waiting in the wings.

Finally, in Ashton-u-Lyne, some more details of the Station. The new licensee has been less than happy with the less than favourable reports recently and (after a mild physical assault) I thought it prudent to set the record straight. The guest beer range is not tied to Tetley Tapsters Choice and there have been well over a dozen guest beers over the few months since they took over. The regular beers of Tetley Bitter, Marstons Pedigree and Taylors Landlord have been joined by beers from the likes of Lloyds, Outlaw and Roosters with Phoenix beers expected soon. The Tapsters beers that appeared initially were a "stop gap" while the new owners found their feet. Perhaps we were too ready to compare the "before and after" Station and not view it as any other 'free house'. A pub regularly serving Taylor's Landlord and Pedigree alongside Tetley's 'session' bitter, and at least two guest beers would be welcomed by real ale drinkers in any town. Perhaps we should make comparisons in a few years.

Tom Lord adds – the Lowes Arms, Broomstair Road, between Hyde and Denton, has been refurbished by the new licensees, formerly of the Printers, at Thornsett, Birch Vale. The beer range at the time of my visit was Old Speckled Hen, Boddingtons Bitter, Castle Eden, and Wadworth 6X. Several guests have featured in recent weeks and I just missed the Magic Mushroom Mild. A further report will follow in the next edition of Opening Times.

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Making the Marque

A number of independent brewers including micros such as Ringwood and Black Sheep as well as established regionals, have set up a scheme called "Cask Marque" which aims to give accreditation to pubs consistently serving real ale in good conditions. Pubs have to pass stringent tests, and over 40 per cent of those being inspected are currently failing, the chief faults being serving the beer too warm, and having too many beers on the bar to ensure a quick enough turnover. This scheme has to be applauded as a serious attempt to improve the overall quality of real ale by bringing the average pub up to the standard of the best - as "Opening Times" has often said before, the worst enemy of real ale is not nitrokeg or lager, it is the bad pint of real ale.

The Cask Marque inspection is available to free trade outlets as well as tied houses of the participating brewers, so it would be interesting to see if some of our well-known local multi-beer alehouses made the mark. So far, certainly, none have gained the award, and I doubt whether any have tried. If they passed, that would be a real feather in their caps. However, if they failed - and I suspect most would - it would show clearly that they needed to review their cellar management and stock rotation policies very carefully to ensure that they served up a consistently good pint every hour of every day they were open.

This also raises the question of whether, in the future, entry into the Good Beer Guide should be dependent not only on the judgement of local branches of CAMRA, but also on pubs passing this kind of objective test. While the vast majority of pubs in the Guide thoroughly deserve to be there, anyone who has used it regularly will know that there are a few which don't consistently serve good beer, and have been included for reasons other than beer quality. A Cask Marque type assessment would help weed out these duds and improve the overall standard.

Green Bottles

The huge choice of bottled beers available today is matched by the variety in design of the bottles themselves, which are often highly elaborate and distinctive. It always seems a terrible waste to dump these into the bottle bank after they have only been used once. In comparison to British bottles, German imports often seem a touch dull, as most of them use the same design of tall, slim bottle with a curved neck. There's a valid reason for this, though, as the bottles are designed to be interchangeable so they can be returned and reused by different breweries.

I know it can be argued that the energy expended in transporting, cleaning and refilling bottles may well exceed that used in making new ones, but it must be right to use things again if possible, rather than throwing them away, and it would create much-needed unskilled employment. Many Continental countries have legislation to encourage or insist on reusable drinks containers. Surely we should be following their example in the UK, particularly for beer, even at the cost of a more standardised look on the bottle shelf.

Contributors to Opening Times Issue 180:

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Phil Levison, Ken Birch, Peter Edwardson, Tom Lord, The Beer Monster™, Tim Jones, John Hutchinson, Brian Carey, Pete Brown, Stuart Ballantyne, Lorraine York, Mark McConachie, Jack Lyons .

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5 Years Ago

APRIL '94

by Phil Levison

The front page was once again given over to Pub Preservation, or lack of it. The Plough on Hyde Road had been threatened with demolition from a road-widening scheme, but seemed to have been saved by its listing as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The problem now appeared to be "what happens next?" - it was virtually unknown for a building affected by a road scheme to be listed at such a late or advanced stage in the planning process. The road scheme would still go ahead, but what would happen to the Plough? There was no reprieve for two other pubs - the long-closed Waggon & Horses in Longsight had finally been demolished, and the Little Bradford had been closed and was awaiting demolition.

Opening Times extended a hearty welcome to Idy Phillips and her partner Sal, who had just taken over the Beer House - Idy was already bringing some of her ideas into play with a half price menu on Monday lunchtime, free chip bars between 5 and 6 on Wednesdays, and low priced doubles of a range of single malts. A separate half-page advert offered 12 real ales from 95p a pint, six ever-changing guest beers, plus ciders, and Belgian beers on draught and in bottle.

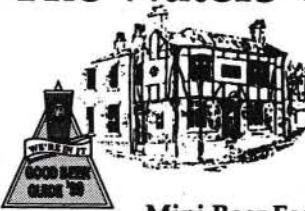
There was reference to a product being advertised in the trade as the "Norgren BD-AVI Aspirating Valve" - this was in fact a variant on our old friend the cask breather. Apparently designed for dispensing "Traditional Ales", this device maintained a blanket of carbon dioxide over the beer, albeit at atmospheric pressure. The makers claimed that it "meets the requirements of the most influential Real Ale organisation in the UK." If this was supposed to mean CAMRA approval, then licensees were being misled, as any beer dispensed with the assistance of CO₂ gas, at atmospheric pressure or otherwise, was NOT real ale.

"Beer Bores", an occasional series featuring the worst of the verbally challenged, came from Oz Clarke, probably best known for his appearances on BBC2's 'Food & Drink' programme. This time he was writing in the Daily Telegraph, and describing one of Snowdonia Brewery's beers, which had won Beer of the Festival at Stockport in 1994. "Mel y Moelwyn is a light beer, packed with fascinating flavours. The honey is there, and there's smoke and the dark sweet meat from next to a kipper's spine, and then a great thwack of hops. Lovely stuff."

Dave Porter with his Rossendale Brewery was the latest microbrewer to appear, at the Griffin Inn, Haslingden - he was producing two bitters, a mild and a porter. Now, in 1999, with mild seemingly becoming less and less available, it comes as a surprise to learn that at Dave Porter's Stockport pub, the Railway, mild is the best seller.

9

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BREWERY NEWS

J W Lees started a new programme of seasonal ales last month with the arrival of Archer Stout, made with roasted barley. At 4.8 per cent alcohol it retails at a bargain £1.45 and last year received rave reviews by local drinkers. The programme continues in May with LEES Fudger Cream Ale (4.5%) made with a little fudge added during the brewing process. Apparently the fudge will come from Anglesey to mark the company's Welsh connections. Next up is Summer Scorcher in July. At 4.2% this is described as a light golden beer "with a citric fruit aroma and a wonderfully refreshing hop finish". In September Lees make their first venture into the fruit beer sector with Sloeberry Fruit Beer (4.4%) and the programme finishes in November with, almost inevitably, MM Millennium

Ale. This takes its name from the Roman numerals for the year 2000 and is to be "a real winter warmer with bags of flavour and a big finish dominated by a nutty hoppiness". Moorhouses Brewery in Burnley is on the expansion trail. MD Malcolm MacDonald has stepped down from his production and sales role to supervise a new pub acquisitions programme. The brewery currently runs six tied houses in Lancashire but now aims to cast the net wider at venues where there is a proven market for quality cask beers. The aim is to build up the estate to around 20 pubs. Moorhouses Black Cat mild is a regular at the Olde Woolpack on Brinksway, Stockport.

Our Anglesey correspondent Phil Levison, brings news of a new micro-brewery for the island. Bragdy Ynys Mon was granted planning permission in February and financial assistance arrived in mid-March. Phil spoke to brewer-to-be Martin Lewis after he had just been to collect his brewery with a 7½ ton truck, an estate car, and various helpers! He has bought the former Cambrinus Brewery, Knowsley, virtually lock, stock and barrel - hot liquor tanks, mash tun, copper, fermenting vessels, pumps, wiring etc, and over 100 casks. Apparently the site of the new brewery is similar in size to the old Cambrinus premises so Martin hopes he'll be able to fit all the pieces together like a jigsaw. So his programme now, apart from the jigsaw, is to be test brewing in April, and on stream in May. He also has his eye on festivals at Chester and Frodsham. Hops will be British Fuggles and Goldings, and he is planning to use a Welsh maltster. First beer will be Seiriol, a 4.2 per cent ABV bitter, followed by Amnesia, 5 per cent-plus (for Festivals), and a Black Dragon Stout later. More news on this as we get it.

Hydes' are currently scoring a great success with their current craft ale 'Owd Oak'. It's smooth (in the best sense of the word!), full-bodied and full flavoured but at the same time immensely drinkable. They have apparently run out of it a couple of times; such has been the demand. Get it while you can. Another craft ale will be out before the launch of the new premium beer later in the year. This will be Ruby Ratchet's Ebony, a 4.2% very dark mild. Strong milds are beer with quite a history and it is pleasing to see the style being revived in this way.

On the local micro front, look out for the new 'Monkey' beers from Phoenix, mentioned last time. The Monkey Town Mild was on sale at the Oldham Beer Festival and was a deliciously refreshing beer. There have been two changes to the Marble Brewery beer range. IPA has been dropped for the foreseeable future, and Liberty IPA has been reduced from 5% to 4.6%, partly to cover the loss of IPA and to give an even spread of beer strengths throughout the range. Forthcoming beers from the Firkin Brewery sound interesting. Out now is Dragons Blood a 4.8% ruby red ale brewed to celebrate St George's Day. Next month will see Blacksmith's a 4.1% dark, malty mild brewed in the Black Country style and in June there will be a 4.7% ginger and lemon beer - this should be on sale at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival.

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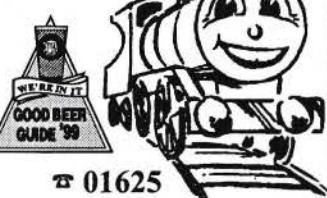
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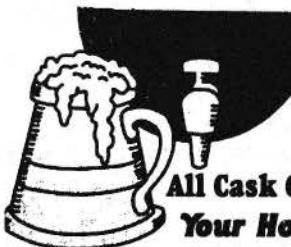
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BOOK REVIEW



Heritage Pubs of Great Britain, James Belsey/Mark Bolton; CAMRA Books, £16.99
If you take real ale out of a pub, it can easily be put back in again. But if you destroy a traditional pub interior, it is lost forever. In recent years, CAMRA has become increasingly alert to the fact original features and layouts are being lost at an alarming rate in the rush to "improve" pubs. To highlight this it has put together a National Inventory of classic unspoilt pub interiors and is working with English Heritage to get as many as possible given statutory protection of listed building status.

So far, the National Inventory has only existed as a dry list in the pages of the "Good Beer Guide", but it has now sprung to life in "Heritage Pubs of Great Britain", a lavishly illustrated large-format book with photographs by Mark Bolton and text by James Belsey, now on sale at £16.99. The book lists all the pubs currently on the National Inventory and selects 26 for an extended photographic portrait. They range from one-room country alehouses to richly decorated city gin palaces such as the Philharmonic in Liverpool. The photographs are mostly of interiors and, as well as showing general views of beamed and panelling bars, dwell lovingly on small but significant details such as door knobs, stained glass and the patterns of wear on ancient settles.

Although it may have got in the way, the one thing missing is any real record of the pubs actually being used. As the authors point out, these are still genuine, working businesses, not museum pieces. Because of this, a visit to an unspoilt classic pub can be far more rewarding than looking round a National Trust mansion preserved in aspic – and you can get a pint too!

It is a book which can be savoured by the fireside, but at the same time really makes you want to go out and explore the pubs. And you'd better do it as soon as you can, because changing drinking patterns and the retirement of elderly licensees mean that many of these pubs, particularly the simple rural ones, have a very uncertain future. Indeed, one of those featured, the Berkeley Hunt at Purton in Gloucestershire, closed its doors for the last time during the production of the book, so these photographs are all we have left of it. The book's only real fault is that it concentrates on the two extremes of the spectrum of unspoilt pubs – the basic rural gems, and the elaborate city gin palaces – and ignores the urban pubs in the North and Midlands which form the major part of the national Inventory. Places such as Turner's Vaults in Stockport and the Blue Bell in York form a major strand in the evolution of pubs and surely deserve a place in any celebration of classic unspoilt survivors.

Despite this, it is a magnificent book and an essential purchase for anyone who cares about our pub heritage. It should also be compulsory reading for all brewery directors before they embark on their latest round of destructive "improvements". PE



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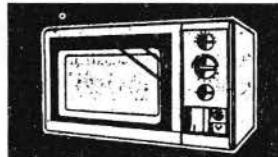
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SKY SPORTS TV
CAMRA Pub of the Month
March 1997

12

ARMOURY INN SHAW HEATH



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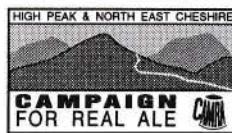
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April
Featured Pub:
The Old Sun Inn,
Market St, Buxton

From the north of the branch area last month, we move to the other end of the branch area to have a look at the Old Sun Inn in Buxton. The pub is situated at the south end of Market Street and is a welcome addition to the drinking scene in Buxton, which has been pretty stagnant for some time.

"The Sun" as it used to be known always did sell a good pint of Marstons and to that end has been a previous Good Beer Guide entry. During the latter part of 1997 the brewery closed the pub for refurbishment and transformation into what was to be the first of their 'Union Taps' alehouses.

When it reopened it was barely recognisable inside. However, the transformation was sympathetic and in keeping with the age of the pub. There are now eight separate drinking areas, all served by a central bar which is itself divided into three separate serveries.

Now a word about the beers, which are all served on handpump. Not surprisingly Marstons beers have a strong presence with their Bitter, Pedigree and Head Brewers Choice being available. Next there is beer from the excellent local Whim Brewery at Hartington, with Magic Mushroom Mild having a permanent presence accompanied by one other beer from their range. Last but not least there are three ever-changing guest beers from the length and breadth of the country. There have been two beer festivals a year and special weeks where brews from a single county are featured.

The pub is open all permitted hours and if you are hungry there is an excellent menu of freshly prepared dishes supplemented by some interesting daily specials to choose from. Landlord Graham is to be congratulated, not only for obtaining the first Cask Marque in Buxton, but also for achieving a maximum score in doing so. All things considered, Marstons have created an excellent alehouse, which is proving very popular with the locals. Let's hope the new owners, Wolverhampton & Dudley (who have just bought out Marstons) let the pub flourish and go from strength to strength.SG.



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I was hoping to bring you a long, photo-rich and detailed report about the 3rd All Ireland Independent Brewers Festival in the Porterhouse Dublin, but over half my space has been guzzled by the round table.....

So a summary only, with a fuller report next month. It was brilliant, 29 beers from 10 micro-breweries in competition. (Two more breweries are in process of opening up as I write this). Michael Jackson, the Beer hunter, not the surgically challenged chimp-lover, was the judge, and an enjoyable, though difficult job he had. The Dwan (Tipperary) Ruby Red (my BoM in Feb) won the Irish Ale, Brew No1 (Irish Brewing Co) the lager, Porterhouse Red the Cask Competition, and Plain Porter (Porterhouse) won best Stout and overall champion. As it walked off with the award from the International Brewing Awards at Burton in '98, this was not too much of a shock. Oliver Hughes hosted the event really well and it was a tremendous boost for the profile of Irish micro-beer generally. The newish products from Franciscan Well in Cork, Dwan (Thurles, Co. Tipperary) and Messrs McGuire's on Burgh Quay in the centre of Dublin were very well received. Not so welcome was Guinness' new venture - not frozen Guinness on a stick - though it must be close, but Breo - a new 'wheat' beer. Its like poor imitation Hoegaarden, sickly, lemony and lacking in any discernable 'beery' characteristic. Yuk. In fact its a bit like Hoegaarden would be if Whitbread were to start brewing it under licence (see below)..

Beers to seek out....

The Beer Monster's British Beer of the Month:

Hopback Rye & Coriander(4.8%) abv

This should be fairly widely available through various guest beer lists. (I found some in the Turf Tavern, Oxford (a Hogshead)). Very pale - much more so than German Rye beers, with a hint of coriander seed in the aroma, malt and slight dry hop in the body and a bone dry finish with more coriander coming through. Remarkably good.

The Beer Monster's Foreign Beer of the Month:

Klosterbrau Braunbier

Bamberg is famous for its (almost) unique smoked beers - (haven't I read this before? ed.) amongst other things - but the Klosterbrau brewery in the old town produces some excellent stuff that is not smoked at all. Possibly most famous for its black beer, Klosterbrau reproduced the old Braun Bier a few years ago, and it is now a popular staple. I've only had it on draught at the brewery tap in the old town, but I was pleased to find that Olaf had brought some to London Drinker. This is a beer that Graham Lees' guide to Bavaria denies the existence of. With any luck, some might surface at the Beer House German festival next month.

..and one to avoid? - Hoe to Go...

Rumours of Whitbread trying to brew Hoegaarden appear to be true (according to sources in a retail chain associated with the company). They no longer deny that it is brewed in the UK, though at the big lager plant, not Strangeways. I am informed that the way to tell is (a) whether it comes from Whitbread (UK) or Cave Direct (still supposedly sourced from Interbrew in Belgium), and if the deposit per keg transfer is still on the keg (genuine) or missing (UK). The same kegs and dispense are in use. The UK stuff looks slightly different, tastes as though lemon has been added before pouring, and should be avoided. You cannot trust anything these days, talk of killing the goose... Whitbread will be sorry!

Beer Festival Notes

I am pleased to say that the Leeds (Pudsey) Beer Fest went down very well with the visitors (Bradford take note) so no complaints there whatsoever. Closer to home, Oldham moved (as I believe a one-off) to the QE Hall in the centre. Hmm. Beer quality was excellent, and the range, though a bit pedestrian, certainly contained some very fine beers. The Phoenix Celebration beer brewed for the festival was particularly good. Sadly the attendance was not all it might have been, and there seemed to be as many staff as customers at lunchtime. Going from 40 to 150 beers and leaving the advertising to the council was probably a mistake. A great pity because I did enjoy it. The same weekend, London Drinker was the exact opposite - too packed to move in an undersized hall. Sadly I got hijacked by the foreign stuff and have no idea what the Cask beer was like....mea culpa. Bar Fringe had a hectic three day Belgian fest at the same time. Good atmosphere, food and beer, but a few more 'new' small bottles (as well as the 75cls and draught) might have gone down well. Still a good time was had....

Beer Festival Diary

Not a lot in April, though for those who are eschewing the CAMRA National AGM (like me) there is a potentially good medium sized (70 beer) festival at Walsall (15-17 April) in the town hall. The following week the Smithfield Hotel on Swan St in Manchester starts a two week festival, with the Stalybridge Buffet and the Beer House hosting major events on the Bank Holiday weekend. Reports next month.

13

Leigh Round Table



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Monster Rock Fest

Over 50 traditional cask bitters milds & ciders

Many Beers from Micro Breweries

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Includes commemorative glass and program*

**In association with Camra at
The Royal British Legion, Windermere Road, Leigh.**

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Doors open 7.00pm

For further information call David Hutton 01925 224681

ATTENTION ALL FREE HOUSES!

Following the huge success of award winning Plassey Bitter at The Sportsman, Hyde, Geoff is now able to offer all Plassey products at realistic prices with free delivery to selected other Publicans (who would be willing to take it regularly) in the Stockport, Tameside. High Peak and Greater Manchester areas only. Please ring Geoff on:- 0161 368 5000, fax 0161 366 1365.

CAMRA REGIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR 1998

THE SPORTSMAN

57 MOTTRAM ROAD, HYDE
Geoff and Carmel Welcome You To



A GENUINE
FREE HOUSE
WITH EVER CHANGING
REAL ALES AND
TRADITIONAL CIDER

Regular Beers include
Hartington Bitter, Plassey Bitter,
Taylors Landlord and
Magic Mushroom Mild and
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Bottled Belgian Fruit Beers

Special Vegetarian Wholefood
Menu Now

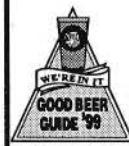
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25p OFF all
Draught Beers
Sunday
12 - 4pm



"I wish to register
A COMPLAINT!"



So begins the famous Monty Python "Dead Parrot" sketch, perhaps one of the most quoted of all time. John Cleese certainly had a point; often we have cause to complain. The Campaign for Real Ale was formed to complain, and went on to become the most successful consumer organisation in Europe. We certainly saved traditional beer, but the fight is far from over. Bad beer, adulterated beer and short measure still trouble us on occasion.

You, the customer, are in the front line and we all know it can be all too easy to do nothing; "I don't like to make a fuss"; "No-one else is complaining"; "Perhaps it's supposed to taste like this"; "I might get barred" - the excuses for inaction are endless. Remember the point though: if you've paid good money for something which is substandard, then you've been swindled - so complain!

Once you've decided to do something, the question remains, how? Opening Times offers a few words of advice and technical points:

★ **Be Polite** - if you create a conflict, you've lost. - the licensee has home advantage!

★ **Be Discreet** - no licensee wants to draw attention to a problem

★ **Be Reasonable** - if the beer has reached the end of the barrel, you can tell at once. The landlord may not be drinking and be unaware of this.

★ **Be Diplomatic** - "I think this might have gone" is less of an insult to the cellarman's craft than "this tastes foul!"

★ **Be Sensible** - a tiny shortfall in volume isn't worth the fuss, but perhaps nearly an inch is worth a polite request to "squeeze a drop more in".

★ **Be Decisive** - bad beer should be returned promptly. Struggling valiantly through 3/4 of a pint will undermine your case.

★ **Don't** - complain to an outside body (see below) without first trying to gain satisfaction in the pub.

★ **Don't** - accept the guff that "real ale is supposed to look like oxtail soup and taste like vinegar" or that old standby "no-one else has complained". Stand your ground.

Remember that the law on "full measure" is currently something of a shambles. The head is legally part of your pint but the Brewers Society guidelines say that your pint should be 95% liquid and short measures should be topped up with good grace. Trading Standards officers may still be prepared to take action where these guidelines are consistently flouted.

Beer which tastes bad is "goods unfit for the purpose" under the Trades Description Act and you have a statutory right to redress. You could ask for your money back, but a replacement from another barrel is the best solution.

You should be able to read the price list without binoculars or a stepladder. What do you mean "what price list"?

If you **don't** get satisfaction from the licensee, contact:

The Trading Standards Officer (for consistent short measure or missing price list)

The Environmental Health Officer (for sour beer or unhygienic practices)

The Brewery/Pub Owner - (for poor beer in a tied house or poor customer service)

The local branch of CAMRA (who will certainly check up on any horror stories)

Luckily none of the above is relevant in most of the pubs in the Opening Times area. Normally we find a full measure of good beer served by polite staff in pleasant surroundings, and that any minor niggles are dealt with in a quick and friendly manner. With your help, that's how things will stay, and we hope that the occasions on which you have to "register a complaint" are as scarce as the famous dead "Norwegian Blue Parrot".

Local Trading Standards Contacts are:

Stockport - 0161 474 4248

Manchester - 0161 226 8283

JOIN CAMRA NOW! • SEE FORM ON PAGE 23



Hot or Cold Beer Soup

As I warned last time, this month's recipe may come as a bit of a shock to some of you. It is a cold beer soup, which may be served hot if my forecast of a warm, sunny spring proves somewhat less than foolproof. In this unlikely event, I recommend you to save the recipe until the halcyon days appear, but if a cold snap is blown in by some bellicose spirit, then you may feel justified in serving this warm. Before I list the ingredients, I have devised an easy method of measuring using a pint glass (for 6-8 portions) or a half-pint (3-4 portions). I am using the half-pint in this instance - just double up for twice the amount of soup.

Ingredients

6 oz of either green split lentils, red lentils, split green peas or a mixture of all three.
3 cloves of garlic
6 basil leaves
3 limes or 2 dessert spoons of lime juice
½ pint light ale or a light coloured bitter
½ pint cider
4 wheat crackers
2 oz cheddar
salt and pepper (to taste)

Method

1. De-gas beer and cider, if necessary, and place on one side.
2. Place the lentils and basil leaves in a half-pint glass.
3. Crush and finely chop the garlic into 1 teaspoon of salt - then add

to the glass.

4. Add the lime juice - then top up with cold water.
5. Place the contents of the glass in a 4-pint saucepan (or larger) and gently bring to the boil stirring constantly. Reduce to a simmer.
6. Add the beer and cider and again gently bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring briskly 5-6 times.
7. Slice the cheese and place on crackers - grill until melted.
8. Cool the soup for 30 minutes and then chill for at least 1½ hours.
9. Spoon into bowls (with ice cubes if you like) and break the cheese covered crackers into thumbnail sized pieces to garnish. For the sceptical, I give you my guarantee that on a hot spring or summers day, nothing is as satisfying. If you don't agree, contact me (c/o OT) and I'll buy you a pint of Bridgewater!

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Jo and Pat and the staff from the NELSON INN Didsbury

welcome all their customers old and new
Fine Cask Conditioned Ales

Websters & Holts

Cheapest Beer In Didsbury - Open All Day

Tuesday night Karaoke
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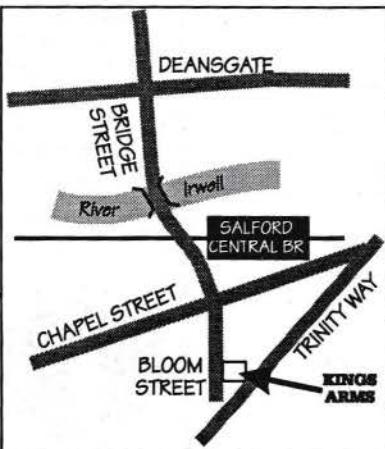
15



NEWLY REFURBISHED

**WATCH OUT
FOR OUR NEW
FOOD RANGE
VEGETARIAN,
SNACK MEALS,
SANDWICHES**

soon available every day



**Beers From
BRIDGEWATER ALES,
Salford's
Newest Brewer,
always on Sale!**

**Navigator (3.8% abv)
Exclusive To us!**
a warm welcome from all
at the Kings Arms



CAMRA CALLING!

Diary

April 99

Saturday 10th – Minibus trip to Sheffield. Depart Crown, Heaton Lane 10.30am. Lots of great pubs and good beer in prospect. Book with John Hutchinson on 434 7177.

Monday 12th – Social: Kings Hall (Wetherspoons), Cheadle Hulme. Starts 9.00pm.

Friday 16th-Sunday 18th – CAMRA National AGM and Conference, Hove Town Hall. Will the branch's motion succeed?

Monday 19th – Social: Gateway, Kingsway, East Didsbury. Starts 9.00pm.

Wednesday 21st – Brewery Visit to Joseph Holts. Trip full at press date. Details from John Hutchinson 434 7177.

Friday 23rd – Minibus Stagger round Bramhall and Woodford. Depart Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.00pm. Book with John Hutchinson on 434 7177.

Monday 26th – Social: Sun & Castle, Hillgate, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 29th – Pub of the Month presentation to Red Bull, Hillgate, Stockport.

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

Monday 12th – Monthly Branch Meeting: Royal Hotel, Market St, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 17th – Weekend trip to Lake District micros and pubs.

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries
Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak, Macclesfield & Trafford & Hulme

April 99

Sunday 25th – Woods walk: meet New Mills (Newtown Station) 9.45. Will include Dog & Partridge, Bridgmont.

Tuesday 4th May – Committee Meeting: Red Lion, Stockport Rd, Denton. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 10th – Monthly Branch Meeting: Sportsman, Mottram Rd, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.

Apart from Macclesfield & 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 events:

Sunday 11th – Social: Oakwood, Brook Ln, Alderley Edge. Starts 8.00pm.

Monday 19th – Committee Meeting: George & Dragon, Rainow Rd, Higher Hurdsfield. Starts 8.00pm

Monday 26th – Monthly Branch Meeting: Waggon & Horses, Wellington Rd, Bollington. Starts 8.00pm.

COMING SOON

13th Stockport Beer & Cider Festival
June 3 -5 1999,
Stockport Town Hall

To Do
What's On
Meetings
Anniversaries
CAMRA 53
Plans

16

Dave and Sue welcome you to

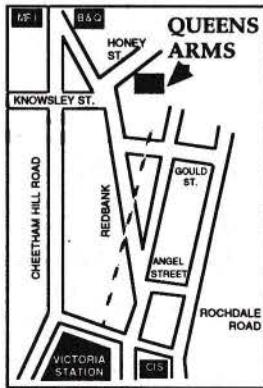
THE QUEENS ARMS

HONEY STREET, CHEETHAM

Try the fine range of beers supporting independent brewers in their excellent free house!

Taylors Landlord - Bantam Bitter £1.15 a pint
St. Louis Kriek Belgian Fruit Beer on draught
plus weekly guest beers.

Open: 12 noon - 11.00 p.m. Monday - Saturday
12 noon - 10.30 p.m. Sunday



Beer Garden

Families Welcome

Hot & Cold Food

*We're in the
Good Beer Guide '99!*

Telephone:
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Claire and Howard welcome all their friends and customers

**Coming in April
(among others)**

Nethergate Umbel Ale, Augustinian and Old Growler; Fullers Chiswick and ESB; Tomintoul Cailee, HopBack Best Bitter, Harviestoun Lochinvar, Cains Traditional Bitter, Youngs Dirty Dicks; Batemans Jollys 6 Wives, Spring Breeze, McClay Ruadh; Federation Rupert, Tetlow's Tummy Tickler; Smiles April Festival, Heritage; Shepherd Neame Early Bird, etc...etc...



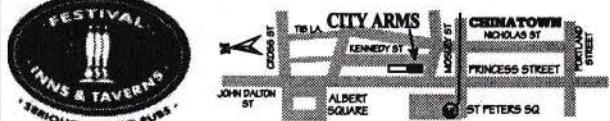
**KENNEDY STREET
THE CITY
ARMS**

**8 HANDPUMPS
6 GUEST ALES**

**LUNCHTIME FOOD
11.30-2.30
and 11.30 - 2.00
Saturday**



**EARLY EVENING
MEALS NOW
SERVED!**



Time Called On Pub Name Changes

Over the past 20 years, changing pub names has become much more common – and more controversial. In the 1980s, pubs were either given individual themes – such as the unlamented Far Pavilions in Stockport – or received supposedly trendy names usually ending in 'S' with the aim of attracting younger drinkers, so we had the Golden Hind becoming "Drakes", and other similar abominations.

Now, in the 1990s, we see a new trend, with pub operators developing standardised brands which they then proceed to roll out across their estate, eradicating all traces of individual character. Around here, for example, the Brunswick in Manchester City Centre has become Finnegans Wake, and the Lloyds Arms in Chorlton has been turned into Edward's. Now Congleton MP Ann Winterton is aiming to stem the flow of changes in pub names. She says that large measures of British tradition and history are being poured down the drain as public houses are given new names. She argues the current fashion by pub owners to use the same name in different places around the UK is killing off a pub's historical roots, leading to "bland standardisation" and upsetting customers. She has launched a Private Member's Bill in Parliament which would force pub owners to seek planning permission, thereby giving local people a say, before enforcing a name change.

Mrs Winterton said: "Many local and traditional names have long, historic connections and are well-liked locally. The new theme public houses will lead to the 'McDonalds-isation' of public houses. It's a farce, quite frankly. Everyone knows why chains are giving them the same name – it's to maximise returns. We need to preserve our traditional heritage. Many of the names pre-date the public houses themselves even if the meaning of names are lost in the mists of time." Mrs Winterton's husband, MP Nicholas Winterton, put forward the same bill nearly three years ago. It was unsuccessful then, but she believes the issue is important enough to keep up the pressure. The MP has the backing of CAMRA, which has been talking to pub chain bosses in a bid to halt the trend.

"You can go to a Slug & Lettuce in Durham and one in Bournemouth

and they will be exactly the same," said CAMRA spokesman Ian Woolverton. "We broadly support the bill, although it's not so much the loss of names we oppose, but the implications. Owners are homogenising pubs. They will become bland and themed, which nobody wants." He believes that giving drinking houses the same name around the country is a marketing gimmick, aimed at attracting under-25s. He says a change of name goes deeper than just a sign outside – it hits at the heart of customers' feelings for their local. He regrets that downgrading of pubs, so they are aimed less at traditional regulars and more at drinkers perceived to have the highest disposable income. Character is being lost in the process, he fears. "Pub names often have connections with folklore or have strong historic links to the area. Giving them themes is unreal – it has no reference to the place or people."

But CAMRA's own record is not entirely spotless – when it welcomed conversions of the Hogshead and Tap & Spile chains for increasing the choice and quality of real ales available, should it not at the same time have objected to the eradication of the pubs' original names? While you may like some individual themes, the whole concept of theming is inherently wrong. Another factor that is often overlooked is that pubs are landmarks, used for giving directions and locating where you are. If you tell someone to turn left at the Dog & Duck, and its turned into a Slug & Lettuce, then they're likely to end up lost. This underlines the fact that a pub is something that has an existence over and above the particular business that is carried out within it.

Branding seems to be here to stay in the pub market, whether you like it or not. But there's no reason why pubs can't keep their original name alongside the brand – people have no problem with seeing, say the Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme both as itself and as a Big Steak pub. But if you take all the names away and turn every pub in a chain into an Edward's or an All Bar One, it devalues them and turns them into mere retail outlets. Nobody is proposing that pubs should never change their name under any circumstances. It's hard to object, for example, to new names which have a distinctive, local significance. But the name of a pub is something more than the name of a shop, and if the owners want to change it they should have to think very carefully and formally apply for planning permission. If you agree with Ann Winterton and CAMRA that pub operators are far too keen to change names to make a quick buck, and that it destroys history and tradition and leads to bland standardisation, then write to your MP and ask them to support the bill. PE

17



Alan and Louise welcome you to the

CALEDONIA

Warrington St. Ashton-under-Lyne

"The long-established comfortable pub"

Recently fully refurbished - and our beer garden
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We also now have three twin en-suite letting bedrooms

Robinson's Fine Ales

Hatters Mild, Best Bitter
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Good homecooked food available at lunchtime
11.30 - 2.30 Monday - Saturday, 12 - 3 Sundays
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Try our 3 Course Sunday Roast Special for £6.95

Open all day Monday-Saturday, 12 - 4 and 7 - 10.30 Sundays

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Fistful of Arrows

By Brian
Carey



There are several natural stages in the development of a darts player. Apart from those of us who were allowed as teenagers to put a cheap board on the bedroom wall, most will first encounter the game in the local pub. For the vast majority, that will suffice. A couple of games of 501, Slip-up, Tactics or Loop of an evening with a mate, both using borrowed brass darts, is all that most would aspire to. Some may consider playing for the local pub, and the gifted player would certainly look to performing at Super League, or even county level. But I bet even the most humble and modest of players, must at some stage have thought, even if only fleetingly, of playing for his or her country. But for a tiny minority of amazingly gifted individuals that ultimate goal is not only realistic - it is almost inevitable. It just needs that extra piece of luck to make it impossible for the selectors to deny them a place. For our own Tony O'Shea, it looked as if, after years of knocking on the door, his much desired England place was finally going to be offered. The only Cheshire based nomination for the 1999 squad, it looked as if the call-up was only a formality when Tony hammered home a superb game against Humberside with another per dart average over 30. However, at the time of going to press, it looks like Tony's effort have, once again, been overlooked. I hope that my information is wrong, and Tony achieves his ambition of pulling on an England shirt. It would not be before time.

The game has received a boost, with the release of government statistics on sport and leisure. Perhaps surprisingly, darts was revealed as the fourth most popular participation sport in the country for 1997. Almost ten and a half million people played the game, whether at home or in the pub and club. A remarkable two million plus have an "avid" interest, while almost four million are "enthusiastic". One third of those

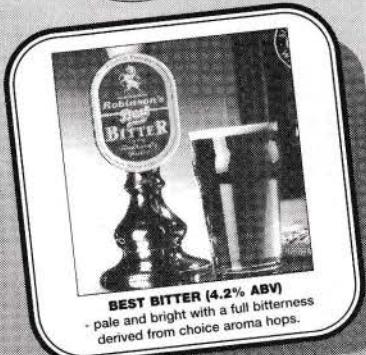
playing the game were women, and half of all players were aged between 25 and 44. The North of England, followed by the Midland and East Anglia, were the hot beds of the game. Food for thought for anyone thinking of removing the dart board from their premises.

Despite these figures the game is still not classed as a sport, the Sports Council still refusing to acknowledge darts as a sport. Sports Minister Tony Banks has played lip service to darts - over twelve months ago he was saying that darts had "a true friend in the government". He promised to do his best to give recognition in the near future. The British Darts Organisation, one of the two governing bodies of darts, has kick started their campaign for official recognition. The Sports Council issues an eleven point criteria for recognition. These come under various heading such as physical skills; physical effort; accessibility, rules and organisation, strategy and tactics etc. The BDO has issued answers to all these points, with differing levels of credibility. I suppose that the biggest stumbling block is the physical effort part. But given that angling, croquet, bowls and pool are all recognised, then I see little reason why darts should not have the same accreditation. The national media has done much to belittle the image of darts, constantly sniping and stereotyping the average players as overweight and beer-bellied. True there are some big lads and lasses playing the game, but there are just as many skinny bods chucking arrows at all levels. In any case why should weight matter? Gazza, for all his faults, can still be a football genius, and I would rather play on the same side as Ian Austin than oppose him. Many years ago the Sports Council ran a campaign called "Sport for All". Perhaps they should practise what they preach.

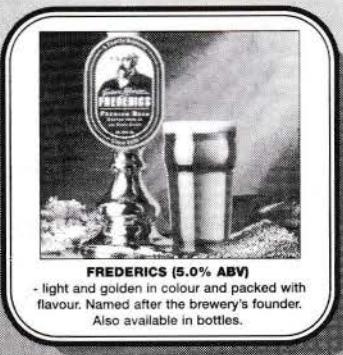
I was extremely sorry to hear of the passing of Stewart Minshull. Stewart was a very talented and enthusiastic player. Whenever a tournament was being arranged in the area, you could always guarantee that Stewart would support it. He was capable of playing the game at a high level, but was equally at home playing against those who were merely pub players. May I offer Stewart's family my sincere sympathies. Darts in Stockport is the worse for his passing. He will be missed on the oche.



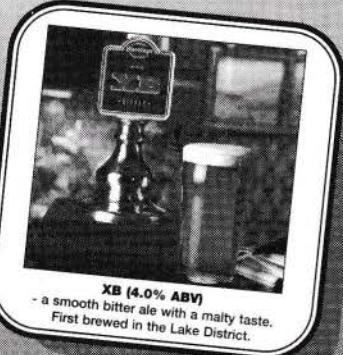
THE Robinson's COLLECTION



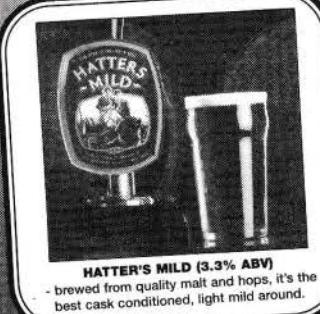
BEST BITTER (4.2% ABV)
- pale and bright with a full bitterness derived from choice aroma hops.



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



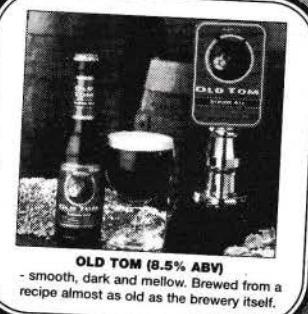
XB (4.0% ABV)
- a smooth bitter ale with a malty taste. First brewed in the Lake District.



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 (8.5% ABV)
- smooth, dark and mellow. Brewed from a recipe almost as old as the brewery itself.



STOCKPORT & MANCHESTER MILD CHALLENGE 1999

After an 18-month break we have once again teamed up with the Stockport Express to bring you another Mild Challenge, and this year we have stretched our wings to include not only parts of Manchester but also two or three other pubs further afield. The previous Challenges have been a great success and if you haven't taken part before, try and have a go this time. It's fun and it's easy. It's also a chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and, of course, to win some great prizes. The Challenge runs from Thursday 1 April to Sunday 9 May and offers everyone taking part the chance to win something. All completed entries will receive either a free entry ticket for the 1999 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival or, if you're member of CAMRA, a voucher for two free pints of mild at the Festival.

We are also again featuring the **Mild Challenge Extra** – visit a participating pub in 12 different areas, using the heading shown on the card, and you will win a special Mild Challenge T-shirt; visit all participating pubs and you will win a specially engraved pewter tankard. This year we are also especially grateful to Hydes' Brewery for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go into a draw and the first 10 pulled out will win a visit to the brewery to see how Hydes' Mild and Light are made. Too good to miss out on? Definitely! So, what do you have to do? It's easy...

★ Firstly, get a card. All participating pubs have a stock or you can use the version printed as pages 21 & 22 of this issue of Opening Times. Additionally you can get one from the Mild Challenge address: 30 Lonsdale Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3FL. ★ When you buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part, ask the bar staff to stamp your card. Remember, though, you can only get one stamp from each pub.

★ When you've filled the card (you'll need 12 different stamps from 12 different pubs) send it to the Mild Challenge address on the card and, after our closing date we will send off your prizes.

Simple isn't it? Happy Drinking!

The High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch Contact is
Tom Lord (0161 837 4474 (h) 0161 427 7099 (h))

Mild – Who Brews What

Many of our local brewers still brew real mild and two, Robinson's and Hydes' Anvil, still produce two. Here we give a run-down on the milds available in Stockport & South Manchester with the alcohol by volume given in brackets. Those marked* are available on the Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge:

Robinson's: Hatters Mild* (ABV 3.3%) – a light mild with a refreshing dry, malty flavour.

Dark Best Mild* - Hatters Mild with added caramel. Fruity, malty and a rare find – although two Challenge pubs (the Pot of Beer and Castle in the City Centre) sell it.

Hydes' Anvil: Mild* (ABV 3.5%) – dark and dry, an all-malt brew. Light* (ABV 3.7%) – lightly hopped session beer. Refreshing and fruity with a dry finish.

Holts: Mild* (ABV 3.2%) – very dark with a complex taste. Very bitter for a mild with a long satisfying aftertaste.

Porter: Dark Mild* (ABV 3.3%) – rich and full-bodied with a roasty aftertaste.

Moorhouses: Black Cat* (ABV 3.4%) – rich and tasty prize-winning beer.

Whim: Magic Mushroom Mild* (ABV 3.8%) – well balanced with a complex mix of flavours and a sweet finish.

Vaux: Mild (ABV 3.4%) – brewed by Vaux in Sheffield. Roast malt taste with a hint of chocolate. Slightly sweet finish.

Cains: Dark Mild (ABV 3.2%) – smooth, dry and roasty.

Coach House: Gunpowder Strong Mild* (ABV 3.8%) – full bodied and roasty, malty aroma and full finish. Often available at Crown, Heaton Lane.

Banks's: Mild (ABV 3.5%) – often sold as plain "Banks's" or "Banks's Original". Amber coloured and well-balanced.

Bateman's: Dark Mild* (ABV 3%) – complex beer with roast malt aroma and hoppy bitter finish.

Everards: Chesters Best Mild (ABV 3.5%) – brewed for Whitbread. Dark, rich with satisfying finish.

Lees: GB Mild (ABV 3.5%) – malty and fruity with a dry, malty aftertaste.

Timothy Taylors: Golden Best* (ABV 3.5%) – clean tasting and refreshing with a hoppy, bitter finish. Another Crown regular.

Carlsberg-Tetley: Tetley Dark Mild (ABV 3.2%) – fruity and dark. Less distinctive than it was.

Tetley Mild (ABV 3.3%) – well-balanced taste of malt and caramel with good bitterness.

Greenalls Mild* (ABV 3.3%) – thin and undemanding.

Scottish Courage: Theakston Mild Ale (ABV 3.5%) – rich and smooth with a creamy body.

Websters Green Label (ABV 3.2%) – thin and bland. Sometimes sold as a 'budget' bitter.

In addition several pubs on the Mild Challenge (notably the Beer House, Manchester; Sportsman, Hyde and Crown, Stockport) will be offering a variety of guest milds during the Challenge. Milds missing this year are Burtonwood Mild (now only available in 'smooth' form), Wilson's Mild (axed) and Boddingtons Mild (axed).

THE CASTLE

OLDHAM STREET, MANCHESTER
NOW SERVING THE COMPLETE
RANGE OF ROBINSONS CASK BEERS!

Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
Hatters Mild, Dark Mild,
Frederics, Old Tom and Hartleys



A WARM WELCOME
AND FINE BEER IN
A CLASSIC PUB



Mild Challenge Extra

This year, those wanting to try the full Mild Challenge Extra and visit all participating pubs (and so win a pewter tankard), may have to travel a little further but their journeys will be well-rewarded.

Our coverage runs from the north of Manchester City Centre out to the Peak District, but don't be deterred, there are treats in store and all the pubs are within easy reach of public transport.

To the north of the City Centre we have the well-known Beer House and Pot of Beer. The former always has a different guest mild while the Pot of Beer sells the rare Robinson's Dark, as does the participating Castle on Oldham Street where you will have a choice of both the dark and light versions of Hatters Mild. Making up the City Centre quartet is the Old Monkey on Great Portland Street, which sells a cracking pint of Holt's Mild.

Further afield, the Sportsman in Hyde is an enthusiastic newcomer to the Challenge and the current CAMRA Regional Pub of the Year for Greater Manchester. Mottram Road is only a 5-minute walk from the Bus Station and owner Geoff Oliver will be offering additional guest mids alongside the regular Whim Magic Mushroom.

The Masons Arms in New Mills is a short walk from Central Station and the Bus Station, and about 15 minutes from Newtown Station on the Buxton line. In a quieter part of town this Good Beer Guide listed pub offers a fine pint of Robinson's Hatters Mild.

The last of our 'out of town' entries is the superb Shepherd's Arms in Whaley Bridge. Just a five-minute walk from the station (turn right on the main road) brings you to this timeless country pub. The vault in particular is a treat. A Good Beer Guide regular, the Bateman's Mild is always in excellent form.

20



STALYBRIDGE STATION
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THURS 29 APRIL - MON 3 MAY
We can promise a veritable cornucopia of new and interesting ales
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SATURDAY EVENING: FOLK
MONDAY: MOSSLEY MORRIS
SATURDAY: BREWERYANA SALE

Mild - The Facts

What it is, and why you should drink it

This beer is without doubt on 'red list' species in danger of extinction. Yet if it were to disappear from our pubs it would be a great shame. Even though it may be seen as a beer without 'street cred', and colloquially the one you were warned off early in your drinking career because of what unscrupulous publicans might be putting in it. Not least because it was usually dark coloured and would therefore conceal the evidence from view!

back in 1959, mild accounted for over 40 per cent of beer brewed. Twenty years later it was down to ten per cent, and today it is just a fraction of that.

Initially this steep decline was largely the result of selective advertising on bitter beers, but until the late 1970s most brewers produced at least one mild. It's last strongholds are now the Midlands and here in the North West, although even in parts of Greater Manchester you will still have to look long and hard to find it.

Its popularity here was perhaps typified by Chesters' 'Fighting Mild' as it was endearingly known. Once a delicious dark mild, so dark that the first time you walked into a pub selling it, you would be convinced everyone was drinking draught Guinness. Its reputation lingers on and it now remains the sole mild produced for (not 'by', mind you) Whitbread.

Unlike in many parts of the country, all our local brewers still produce cask mild today, and indeed Hydes' and Robinson's produce two. Elsewhere, many breweries today produce only very small quantities of cask mild, some just as a seasonal beer, or none at all where its popularity has diminished through a vicious circle of no promotion, restricted availability and hence declining demand.

Mild beers in good condition are deliciously tasty and come in a host of varieties. Many are dark in colour but some, like Robinson's Hatters Mild are as lightly coloured as a bitter beer. Some are light and hoppy and others rich and high in gravity. In fact there are still over 100 mids brewed nationwide.

Mild beers are normally characterised by being brewed with less hops than bitter beers and often use darker malts, or sometimes more sugar or caramel, to give their typical dark colour. They are generally light and easy to drink, and usually being lower in alcohol, make an ideal lunchtime pint. They are also some of the best value beers around. So next time you pop out for a pint – make yours mild. You won't be disappointed.

This article is based on an item in 'Alesman', the pub newsletter of the Keighley & Craven branch of CAMRA.

Greenalls Up For Grabs?

Rumours continue to circulate that Greenalls are about to lose their independence, with both Whitbread and Scottish Courage tipped as potential bidders.

Once the country's largest regional brewer, it could be argued that losing its independence would be the natural conclusion of a saga that saw the company lose its way many years ago. It managed to cut a swathe through the Midlands brewing industry, axeing many local brews – just as such beers were on an upturn in popularity. It finally came up with a good, premium beer – and exited brewing just as such beers were becoming market leaders. It has recently disposed of its tenanted and franchised operation – just as such pubs are showing the most growth in trade.

What is left is a rump of 850 'branded' pubs and restaurants. New Chief Executive Mark McQuater is anxious to bring in his own team and has been sacking directors like there's no tomorrow. But it remains to be seen if this is enough to keep the vultures at bay. Certainly, few tears would be shed in these quarters if Greenalls were to finally disappear from the corporate map.

MILD CHALLENGE RULES

- 1) When you buy a pint (or a half pint) of cask conditioned mild in a pub supporting the challenge, get this card stamped by a member of the bar staff.
- 2) Only one stamp from each participating pub.
- 3) When this card has stamps from 12 pubs complete the section below and send it to: 'Mild Challenge' c/o 30 Lonsdale Rd Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3FL, by 12th May 1999. It will be included in the grand draw (to be drawn at Stockport beer & cider Festival). There are numerous great prizes including 10 trips around Hydes Brewery to see Hydes Mild & Hydes Light being brewed!
- 4) You will be entitled to a free ticket to the 1999 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (3rd-5th June). (Camra members, 2 free pints of mild instead) NB if you want a free ticket (or 2 free pints) enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Tickets distributed by 18th May, 1999.
- 5) To join the Mild Challenge Extra get stamps from 12 different pubs in 12 different areas and you will receive a free 'Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge T-shirt' on top of the other smashing prizes.
- 6) If you are brave enough (or daft enough) to send in five cards with stamps from all participating pubs you will also receive a free tankard. Otherwise only one card per person.
- 7) The Mild Challenge runs from 1st April to 9th May 1999 inclusive. All prizes Distributed at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival or as soon as possible thereafter
- 8) The Organizers decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered in to.

Complete for the Grand Draw

Name.....	Post Code.....
Address.....	
.....
Signature.....	Tel. No. (H).....(W).....
Camra Membership No (if applicable).....	
I wish to enter the 'Mild Challenge Extra' and claim my free T-shirt	
I enclose a SAE for my Beer & Cider Festival ticket (or 2 free pints)	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am interested in joining the Campaign for Real Ale	<input type="checkbox"/>

SEND TO: 'MILD CHALLENGE' 30 LONSDALE ROAD, LEVENSHULME, MANCHESTER M19 3FL

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE STOCKPORT & MANCHESTER **MILD** **Express** **CHALLENGE**



(NB Only one stamp per pub - see over for rules)
Fill this card with stamps from 12 different pubs and you will get a free
Ticket to the 1999 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival and entry into a grand
Draw - First Prizes, visits to Hydes Brewery!

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MILD CHALLENGE PUBS

Stockport Express

PUB	LOCATION BRINNINGTON	BEER	PUB	LOCATION HIGH LANE	BEER
Brinnington Inn,	Great Portwood Street, BURNAGE	Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Horseshoe, Robin Hood,	Buxton Road, Buxton Road,	Robinsons Hatters Mild Robinsons Hatters Mild.
Albion	Burnage Lane CHEADLE	Hydes Light	Sportsman,	HYDE Mottram Road,	Magic Mushroom Mild + Guest
Crown, Olde Star, Printers, Royal Oak,	High Street, High Street, Stockport Road, Stockport Road, CHEADLE HULME	Hydes Mild. Hydes Light Robinsons Hatters Mild. Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Railway,	MARPLE Rose Hill,	Robinsons Hatters Mild
Church,	Ravenoak Road, DIDSBURY	Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Travellers Call,	MARPLE BRIDGE Glossop Road	Robinsons Hatters Mild
Station, Royal Oak, Fletcher Moss, Parrswood,	Wilmslow Road, Wilmslow Road, William Street, Parrswood Road, EDGELEY	Batemans Mild Batemans Mild Hydes Light Greenhalls Mild	Old Monkey, Castle, Beer House, Pot of Beer,	MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE Portland Street, Angle Street, New Mount Street,	Holts Mild. Robinsons Dark Mild. Guest Mild. Guest Mild.
Grapes, Church, Woolpack,	Castle Street, Bowden Street, Brinskway, FALLOWFIELD	Robinsons Hatters Mild Robinsons Hatters Mild Moorhouses Black Cat Mild.	Masons Arms,	NEW MILLS Market Street, OFFERTON	Robinsons Hatters Mild
Friendship,	Wilmslow Road, GATLEY	Hydes Mild.	Emigration, Victoria,	Hall Street, PORTWOOD Portwood Street,	Robinsons Hatters Mild Greenalls Mild
High Grove, Horse & Farrier,	Silverdale Road, Northenden Road, GREAT MOOR	Hydes Light Hydes Mild.	Railway, Great	ROMILEY School Brow,	Porters Mild
Dog & Partridge,	Buxton Road , GORTON	Robinsons Hatters Mild	Cow & Calf ,	STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE EAST	Robinsons Hatters Mild.
Plough	Hyde Road, HEATON MOOR	Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Tiviot, Winters ;	Tiviot Dale, Lower Hillgate,	Robinsons Hatters Mild Holts Mild.
Crown,	Heaton Moor Road, HEATON NORRIS	Cains Dark Mild.	Spread Eagle, Bakers Vaults,	Lower Hillgate, Market Place,	Robinsons Hatters Mild. Robinsons Hatters Mild.
Moss Rose, Nursery,	Didsbury Road, Green Lane, HEATON MERSEY	Hydes Light Hydes Mild.	Crown, Royal Oak, Pineapple,	STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE WEST	Guest Mild.
Crown,	Didsbury Road, HEALD GREEN	Robinson Hatters Mild.	Unity,	Heaton Lane, High Street, Heaton Lane ,	Robinsons Hatters Mild Robinsons Hatters Mild.
Giffin,	Finney Lane HAZEL GROVE	Mild		Wellington Road South, WHALEY BRIDGE	Robinsons Hatters Mild
Three Bears ,	Jacksons Lane, HEAVILEY	Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Shepherds Arms,	Old Road, WOODFORD	Batemans Mild
Blossoms,	Buxton Road,	Robinsons Hatters Mild.	Davenport Arms,	Chester Road,	Robinsons Hatters Mild

Protect your Pint and Pub. Join CAMRA

MANCHESTER MATTERS by *Cityman*

Well, I'm not spending much time on Brannigans, the so-called 'super pub' which opened on Peter Street last month. Love 'em or loathe 'em you do at least expect these places to be stylish exercises in design but this place has been executed with an almost total absence of flair and imagination. It's apparently doing well but how it fares when its more interesting neighbours come on stream - and, believe me, this end of Peter Street in and around the Great Northern development is going to be awash with bars - remains to be seen. It hardly needs saying that no real ale is sold. The other new opening to report this month is the Riviera Bar on Deansgate, between the Sawyers Arms and the Hogshead. As you will by now have come to expect, no real ale is sold. There's now no real ale in Nickleby's on Dale Street either, but this is down to the closure of the pub rather than a conversion to keg. The building is to be redeveloped and will not be reopening as a pub. What will be reopening soon are the old Shambles pubs, Sinclairs and the Old Wellington. The wraps came off the Wellington last



month and, externally at least, claims of a careful reconstruction seem well-founded. Time will tell what it's like inside, though. As you might expect, the local press went into gushing overdrive, telling us again how both pubs had been carefully dismantled brick-by-brick, stored in a 'secret' location (which, I think we all know, was the Arndale Bus Station) and then lovingly reassembled. Well, that might be more or less true as far as the Wellington is concerned but it's certainly not the case with Sinclairs which was largely just knocked down and is now essentially a new structure, - albeit a copy of the original - largely built of new bricks and rendered into a mock Tudor frontage (to be fair, so was the original, but many moons ago) and using many original internal fittings.

Still, why let the facts get in the way of a good press releaseer story? Expect more of this drivel when the pubs actually re-open. At least we are reliably informed (by Darren its old manager) that Sinclairs will re-open with real ale. Still no certainty that Bass will do the same with the Wellington, but we can live in hope... Staying in the City centre, the newly-refurbished Forgery & Firkin was unveiled just before this was written. I managed only the briefest of looks but first impressions are of a job very well done. More on this one next time.

There are big improvements to report on the pub scene in Rusholme. At the Beehive on Claremont Road it's a belated welcome to Neil and Nora Brookes, who ran the Midway in Stockport a couple of years ago. They took over at the Beehive and have really transformed the pub. The many undesirables who used the place have been booted out and the Beehive is now a proper locals' pub with a generally 30+ clientele. The vault has been re-done and the large lounge may be partially redecorated as well. As you may expect, the increase in trade has led to an upturn in beer volumes. Mild and Bitter are both available, the bitter being on particularly good form when I called, and if trade continues to increase Neil tells me he may try the Hydes' seasonal beers, too. The Beehive celebrates its 21st birthday this month and it's fair to say that the pub really does seem to have come of age after several years of decline.

Also in Rusholme, Hydes' have also carried out an extremely successful and sympathetic refurbishment at the Albert on Walmer Street. The pool table has gone, there's a new bar counter and back fittings, and the whole pub has been redecorated. The Albert has long been a genuine Irish pub and it is an object lesson to the bigger operators how Hydes' have emphasised this without indulging in the fake, over-the-top gimmickry which typifies so many of the 'Irish' bars around. Full marks to Hydes', not only for their restraint but also for investing in community pubs such as this which the national operators seem so keen to abandon.

23

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(Opening Times 180)

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

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

POSTCODE Date of Birth

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER

I / We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: INDIVIDUAL £14 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £17

UNDER 26 YRS or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8



STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £8

Steve McCarley, 32 Howden Close, North Reddish, Stockport SK5 6XW

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.



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