

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
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CAMRA

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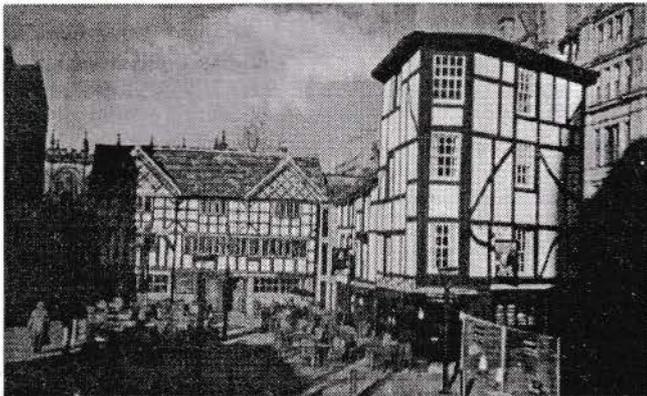
OPENING TIMES

FREE

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END OF THE SHAMBLES SHAMBLES!



Well, they've opened at last. The Wellington and Sinclair's Oyster Bar, removed from their original Shambles site have been reconstructed and rebuilt in their new square by the side of the 'Triangle' (formerly the Corn exchange). The structure of the Wellington is largely the original, though the internal layout is much changed, with a small bar downstairs serving what is now a largely food-driven venture. Its certainly pleasant enough, though the food has yet to be sampled by OT staff. Pricing is on a 'national' basis, so food and beer are not exactly cheap. Worthington, Bass and possibly 'regular' guests are promised. The Bass was perfectly good when sampled. Sinclairs is largely new with as many old elements retained internally (including the marble bar top) as possible. The layout is little changed (a new rear window is overlarge in the back-room, a new - and excellent - snug upstairs, and toilets moved). There's more room behind the bar, the Smiths excellent bottled beers are still available, and the pub feels little different. Sam Smiths Old Brewery was in good form and at a decent price. Like the Sam Smiths architect I met there, I'm pretty pleased with the result. PBH

MARSTON'S MAYHEM Axe Falls In Double-Quick Time

In December 1998 Opening Times was reporting on the take-over bid for Marston's, launched by Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. Now, just 12 months later, the effects of that successful bid on consumer choice are becoming all too clear. And it's not good news.

Bateman's Mild has already gone from the Marston's pubs and Owd Roger barley wine is no longer a draught ale. Last month we reported on plans to extend the axe to the mainstream Marston's Bitter. No sooner had that report appeared Banks's left licensees and drinkers reeling by the swiftness of the beer's disappearance. Marston's pubs throughout the Opening Times area have been affected by this move which seems to have taken place with little or no consultation with licensees, who now have to persuade their customers to drink Banks's Bitter instead. Particularly badly affected is the South Manchester area, formerly one of the Marston's heartlands with some of its best performing pubs, where the replacement has gone down like the proverbial lead balloon, despite frantic efforts by Banks's to promote the stuff with a 'buy four get one free' offer.

If Banks's had taken the trouble to consult with their licensees or even, heaven forbid, their customers, it would have been obvious that there remained a strong and continuing demand for Marston's Bitter. Instead they chose to act with almost breathtaking arrogance and have foisted on their pubs a beer that is wanted by no-one on either side of the bar.

And all this comes just month's after W&D boss David Thompson gave assurances that the beer would be brewed as long as there was a demand. He cited South Manchester as an area where that demand was strong. The demand remains strong but the beer has now gone, showing up Thompson's assurances for the worthless gestures that they were.

Insult has been added to injury by the discovery that the replacement Banks's Bitter has a lower wholesale price than Marston's but pubs are being forced to charge the same price over the bar. So, as well as being treated with contempt, Marston's Bitter drinkers now feel ripped off as well. It should come as no surprise if drinkers vote with their feet and take their custom elsewhere, it's no less than W&D deserve.

Want to make your voice heard? See 'Send A Card For Christmas' on the back page

In DECEMBER'S OPENING TIMES

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A Happy Festive Season
to all our contributors,
distributors, advertisers
and readers from
Opening Times



Due to the Editors taking a well-earned (!) break - The January 2000 edition of Opening Times will not appear until on or after the 12th January 2000

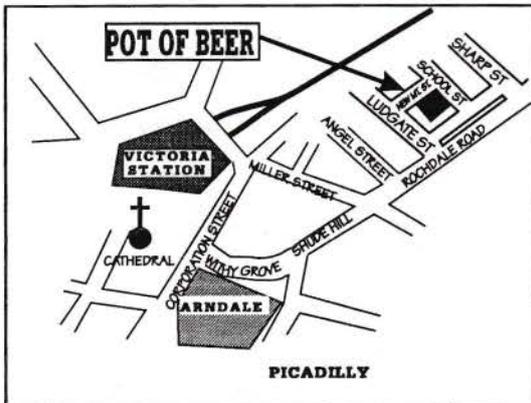
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

It's no exaggeration to say that the withdrawal of Marston's Bitter from their local pubs has been a public relations disaster for Wolves & Dudley.

It's the sheer arrogance that takes the breath away. No sooner has company boss David Thompson given assurances that the beer will continue while there is demand than it's gone from his pubs. Is the man completely out of touch with what his company is doing? Or were his words just so much hot air? On the basis that actions speak louder than words, you don't need a degree in rocket science to work out the answer to that one. They can't even come up with the usual excuse of 'customer demand' as they didn't take the trouble to find out what their customers wanted. They didn't even ask their licensees. There's only one reason this has been done – money. This is made clear in the reply to a letter to the company from one shareholder and which is reproduced on our letter page. It's all about increased profitability – all the more so when you remember the Marston's replacement, Banks's Bitter is a cheaper beer but is retailing for the same price as Marstons.

And just to add the final insult – Marstons is still available to the free trade, and will remain so until next March! There's obviously too much money tied up there, and of course if they upset their free trade customers, they can simply go elsewhere. Wolves & Dudley like to style themselves as 'Unspoilt by Progress'. Perhaps they now need to add 'But Ruined By Greed'.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The march of progress is relentless. As these words were written, the new-look City Centre was opening and of course the 'Shambles' pubs are now back. Despite many misgivings, a reasonable job appears to have been done with both of them but what a contrast in price. Sinclairs, run by an independent family brewer charges just £1.24 for a pint of bitter. The Wellington, run by our old friends Bass, charges £1.90. Just about says it all doesn't it?

Speaking of progress, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA now has an embryonic web site. Access us at: <http://sites.netscape.net/ssmcamra>.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing all those involved with Opening Times – our contributors, our advertisers and most importantly, you our readers, the merriest of Christmases and a very Happy New Year. *John Clarke*

OPENING TIMES ISSUE 188

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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FESTIVAL

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From: Peter Edwardson, Stockport:

I have been a shareholder in Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries for over ten years. Last month I wrote to the Chief Executive, David Thompson, to express my concern about the effect the withdrawal of Marston's Bitter would have on the trade of the company's pubs in South Manchester. I received the following reply:

"Thank you for your letter about Marston's Bitter.

"We have a programme within our managed estate for converting Marston's Bitter to Banks's Bitter, as this has (sic) had the effect, elsewhere, of improving sales and profitability.

"As our marketing support for Marston's brands is focused entirely behind Pedigree, and for Banks's the majority is behind Banks's Bitter, this is the best marketing solution for us.

"However, I note the points you have made about Marston's Bitter, specifically in the South Manchester area, and I thank you very much for drawing them to my attention."

Well, Mr Thompson, it may be the best marketing solution for you, but it is riding roughshod over the tastes and wishes of local drinkers. In their high-handed tactics, Wolves & Dudley are rapidly becoming indistinguishable from the national brewers, and if they continue alienating their loyal customers in this way there must be a serious concern about the long term prospects of the company.

Mr Thompson, with all due respect, you have lost the plot!

From: Local Licensee (1), name and address withheld:

The decision to change from Marston's to Banks's was taken without any consultation with the Marstons managers. We were originally told the changeover would take place in March

2000. The next thing we know is that the new Area Managers informed us that it would be Christmas 1999.

The official policy from the company's view still evades us as to this day we have not received any official information in writing to such a huge change in working environment. There also seem to be very different fields of thought, as different Area Managers are informing their areas of different dates for the changeover.

They (W&D) say they intend to continue to brew Pedigree at the Burton-on-Trent brewery, but how can this be a financially sound proposition? The output of the B-o-T brewery will be greatly reduced thus the cost of production will rise considerably.

The decision to axe Marston's Bitter from their portfolio will affect a great many people, drinkers and licensees alike. The drinkers may end up by looking for a fresh watering hole to decide for themselves their favourite tippie. The licensees will lose valuable customers, which is basically a loss of revenue and of job security for all concerned.

In an area where there are few pubs the difference will be greeted with very little opposition. Places like Didsbury and Withington where there are three Marston's houses, which have had an excellent reputation for years, may suffer greatly. This will be solely due to the customers having a huge array of alternative watering holes and choice of beers.

The people I feel most sorry for are the customers who are about to experience a culture change over which they have no control.

From: Local Licensee (2), name and address withheld:

The change from Marston's Bitter to Banks's Bitter I feel will not affect me personally that greatly. But as a bitter drinker I feel it will affect the majority of Marston's community houses.

I personally will not be drinking (Banks's Bitter) as I feel that although the product looks appetising, it is unfortunately tasteless and bland. Banks's profess to be 'Unspoilt by Progress' and say they are 'genuinely pleased to serve'. If this is the case then why are they removing a proven good quality product?

The fact is Banks's want to improve their beers' position in the league table. But if they are an independent company with the public and customers in mind, then league tables shouldn't matter. They should just be concerned about the sales overall of all their products.

They say they have a limited advertising budget and it has committed it to Banks's Bitter, but Marston's Bitter hasn't, to the best of my knowledge, been advertised for several years. Bitter drinkers look for quality products and Marston's has proved it is capable of selling itself. It's the age old adage of 'if it's not broken, why fix it?'

From David Howles (via e-mail):

I would like to congratulate Ian Casson on maintaining the superb beer quality at the Beer House.

Those of us who frequent the place on a regular basis were concerned when the wonderful Idy and Sal announced their intention to leave, but our fears proved to be unfounded. Ian is obviously a real ale enthusiast, a quality which needs encouragement as it is becoming increasingly rare these days in people on the other side of the bar.

What is more, the Crescent is only down the road, providing us with a chance to see Idy and Sal work their magic in a new pub. So let's give Ian a real Manchester welcome rather than sniping at him within days of his arrival.

OPENING TIMES ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING RATES: 1/8 page (60mm x 85mm): £30; 1/4 page (120mm x 85mm): £50; 1/2 page (horiz: 174mm x 120mm; vert: 240mm x 85mm): £85; Full page (175mm x 240mm) £140. Surcharges apply for back page. Discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design & origination usually free of charge unless large costs involved. Ring 0161 477 1973 for details. Artwork should be submitted as hard copy (positive bromide) or pc compatible *.eps, *.tiff or *.cdr (Corel Draw versions 3, 5 or 7 - please state which AND you MUST include hard copy back-up). The majority of other cdr variants prove to have readability or type problems on printing.

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			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	31	



Didsbury is one of the most upmarket and trendy 'villages' in Manchester. It is dominated by theme pubs, wine bars, bistros and student haunts. Few of the pubs that remain could be described as genuine locals, serving the local community with good beer at a fair price. A handful of such pubs remain, and one of these, the Nelson, on the corner of Wilmslow Road and Barlow Moor Road, is the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for December. Joe and Pat Slattery have run the Nelson for the last 13 years, in itself something of a record, as many of the local operators tend to move their managers on once they have gained the hectic Didsbury experience. Joe and Pat are now by a long way the longest serving licensees in the village.

The Nelson is unashamedly aimed at local drinkers and is that increasingly rare thing, a good basic boozier. Clean, well-run, with no gimmicks and no food. It was refurbished last year, at Joe's expense, and this smartened the pub up but lost none of its character. Just the way it should always be done, in fact. There is also a strong emphasis on pub games and the Nelson boasts one of the most successful darts teams in the area, having won the Altrincham premier league championship for the last three seasons.

The pub started out as a Wilsons house and now, after successive changes of ownership is now owned by the Unique Pub Company. The beer range has reflected these changes and for some time has been a standard range of Websters Bitter and Holt's Bitter - easily the cheapest pint in Didsbury. These have now been joined by a rotating guest beer. This has been a popular move, with all of the guests selling well. It is in recognition of the hard work put in by Joe, Pat and all of the staff in running such a good, locals pub over many years that this award is being made. Get Christmas off to a flying start and join us for the presentation on Tuesday 21 December, for what should be a great night.

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

Letters to Opening Times are welcome either by post to The Editor, Opening Times, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport. SK3 9HD or via the internet to otletter@opentime.u-net.com

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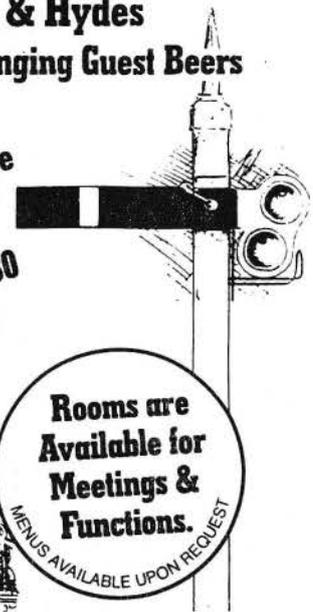
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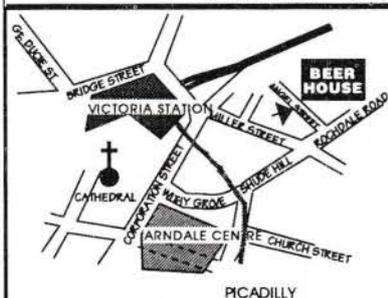
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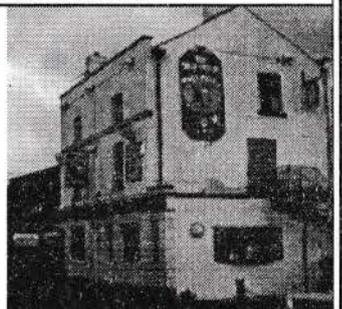
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Out and About in Offerton

Our Offerton Stagger began on a miserable, wet Friday night when half a dozen die-hards met at the Wrights Arms on Marple Road.

It was several years since my last visit and I was pleased to find that, in the main, the original layout of this fine old pub has been maintained. Mirrors and pictures are used to good effect to complement the warm furnishings in the lounge area, and there is a separate vault for cards and darts. Only two real ales were available; Theakstons Bitter was average as was the Robinson's Best Bitter, although this latter was coming to the end of the barrel.

We avoided the now steady rain by taking advantage of a passing bus to **The Golden Hind**, only to walk in and straight back out again as the three handpumps on display now dispense no real ale (unusual for a pub owned by Greene King). A further walk took us to **The Strawberry Gardens** which now also has no real ale, although this was less of a surprise given that it is a managed house run by Scottish & Newcastle. A combination of the long walk, the now heavy rain and the lack of beer (only half a pint so far) was becoming depressing. Maybe staying on the bus would have been a better option but fortunately things were to improve.

The **Gardeners Arms** on the corner of Banks Lane and Marple Road struck me as a clean, well-run pub with a large comfortable lounge enhanced by good use of atmospheric lighting. The vault is equally large and both were busy at the time of our visit. Five handpumps dispensed a decent pint of Boddingtons Bitter.

Suitably refreshed, we moved on to **The Fingerpost**, our 8.30 meeting point. Standing imposingly at the crossroads of Hemphaw Lane and Dialstone Lane, this impressive Robinson's pub retains most of its original features, including a multi-room layout. Strong support for Stockport County is evidenced by numerous pictures and much memorabilia in the "Hatters" room. A busy vault also houses a lot of sports trophies. In this busy and ever popular pub we enjoyed the best beer of the night so far with both Best Bitter and Hatters Mild in excellent condition.

It was still raining heavily as we entered **The White House** on Hemphaw Lane. Obviously very popular on a Friday night, a very busy lounge had a karaoke in full swing, which was a good reason for most of us to opt for the much quieter vault. Neither the pool table nor the dartboard were in use. This former Wilsons house now serves only Boddingtons Bitter on handpump. This was uninspiring.

Backtracking onto Hall Street, **The Emigration** was next on route, and the busiest pub so far. Not very large but obviously extremely popular with not an empty seat in the place. Standing room only to enjoy Robinson's Best Bitter and Hatters Mild, both in very good form, the mild having the slight edge, in an excellent atmosphere. A short walk across the road (still raining) and into **The Victoria**. With its distinctive white frontage, this relatively small Greenalls pub has a very pleasant, clean interior. The lounge and vault are separated by the bar and seemed as popular with the locals as the

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previous pub. Justifiably so with the best selection of beer so far. Four real ales were on offer; Greenalls Mild, Greenalls Bitter, Stones Bitter and a guest beer – tonight Flowers Original. No-one tried the Stones but the other three were all in excellent form.

Continuing down Hall Street and onto Chchurchgate, **The Thatched House** was our next refuge from the still pouring rain. This former Vaux house, which has undergone several changes of layout and management over the years, is now, I understand, mainly used as a live music venue at weekends, and tonight was such a night. Feeling conspicuous walking in with a soaking jacket and dripping broly in hand into what is predominantly a 'bikers pub'; I was surprised at the comfortable atmosphere that was generated in the room. It was totally different from all the previous establishments, with low lights and a club atmosphere. Worthington Bitter and Stones Bitter look like the regular beers but neither was tried as we all went for the guest beer – Elgood's Barley Mead (4.8%). This went down as beer of the night, being in superb condition. The live band (named I.Q. Zero, I believe) started their last session during our visit and sounded excellent. I was at the point of leaving when the intro to Honky Tonk Women resounded from the speakers. I was immediately transported back to the summer of '69 (Stones in the Park), to a time when I had hair, and had to delay my departure until the song was finished (excellent rendition). Well worth a visit.



Back out into the rain and the final port of call, **The Waterloo** on Waterloo Road, yet another Robinson's pub. For me personally, being a fan of "Robbies" beer, particularly Hatters Mild, to finish here was a pleasure. The relatively new landlord maintains a very smart, clean pub with a great atmosphere. There's a busy vault to the left, a pleasant lounge to the right and a small snug at the back, although I never had the chance to see this. On the beer front, both Hatters Mild and Best Bitter were in excellent form.

The bad start and a rainy night were forgotten at the end of the evening, after a succession of good pubs and fine beer; I would recommend the Stagger, especially from the Gardeners onwards, to anyone. Having said that, this is of course just a snapshot of what we found on one particular night, why not call in some of these pubs yourself and form your own views.

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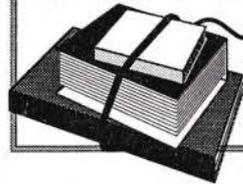
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8

CHRISTMAS BOOK REVIEWS



City Life Food & Drink Guide to Greater Manchester 2000. Diverse Media, £3.50

City Life magazine has quietly insinuated itself into the fabric of life amongst Manchester's chattering classes as an essential fortnightly guide to what's on and where. Equally well-established is the annual appearance of its guide of where to eat and drink in Greater Manchester and once again this presents something of a mixed bag for the beer drinker and pub-goer. There are six sections in all covering restaurants, café bars, coffee bars, delicatessens (new for this issue), pubs and country pubs with the biggest section unsurprisingly devoted to the many and varied restaurants to be found in and around Manchester. In common with all of the guides sections each entry is concisely described with details of all you need to know about price, opening times and the food itself. The only criticism that could perhaps be levelled is the very cursory coverage given to the curry houses of Rusholme and Shudehill, which get no individual entries but just a page a plain text apiece.

The section covering coffee bars is a strange animal which seems to have been bulked out with all manner of establishments whose sole claim to 'coffee bar' fame is that by chance they happen to sell coffee - I imagine, for example, the owners of Bailey's Teashop in Ramsbottom and Misty's Vegetarian Café in Longsight will be bemused to find themselves listed here. The Deli section by contrast, is well thought out and spot on.

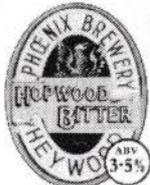
It's when we get to the area of licensed premises that things go a little astray. The café bar section seems to be uncritically comprehensive and does give the impression that more importance is attached to the concept than its execution. It is however the sections devoted to pubs that will be of prime interest to readers of Opening Times. The main section has been edited by the redoubtable Paul Mason, who knows his pubs and beer, and his introduction is pithy and spot-on. The listings are the usual mixed bag with most of the usual suspects present but once again there is the usual string of high-profile omissions. Where are the Blossoms, Stockport; Grey Horse, City Centre, Kings Arms, Salford, and the Church, Uppermill, for example? However, those pubs that are listed are covered very well. There's a colour photograph of each one, excellent descriptions and full details of addresses, phone numbers, opening hours and beer ranges. Everything you need, in fact.

Despite its aspirations, City Life is firmly skewed to the south Manchester metropolitan elite. It serves their needs and knows their patch. If you fit the bill then this book is for you. If you don't, well, it's still worth £3.50 of your money but expect to be disappointed as well as delighted.

John Clarke.

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**Stuck for a last minute Christmas present?
Or perhaps you fancy a little light reading
while the rest of the family watches
The Sound of Music...again.
Well here's the solution to your problem as
Opening Times reviews a selection of beery
books to liven up the most jaded palate.**

**The Beer Cook Book by Susan Nowak.
Faber & Faber, £9.99**

For anyone who ever thought that adding a bottle of Guinness to a beef stew was living on the culinary cutting edge, this book is a real eye-opener.

The Good Pub Food writer's collection includes everything from soups, like Otter Chowder – made with Otter Bright beer – to main courses like Coq a la Biere, Mutton with Beer, and Rhubarb and red Onion Tart Glazed with IPA, and even salads, puddings, cakes and pickles. All are presented with useful suggestions about what beer would be best to serve with the finished meal.

And just to prove that beer cookery really is becoming mainstream, rather than the bizarre pursuit of a handful of eccentrics, she has even managed to persuade top chefs like Keith Floyd, Sophie Grigson, Albert Roux, Delia Smith and Rick Stein to part with their favourite beer dishes. One of the most difficult things for any recipe writer is how much detail do you spell out? In other words do you follow the "put the meat in the oven and take it out when it's cooked" method or Saint Delia who begins with where to find the kitchen. Thankfully Susan Nowak is somewhere in between.

But for me, the acid test of any cookbook is will it sit on my kitchen bookshelf gathering dust or will I actually use it? Well, I can report that having had the book for just two weeks, I've made two dishes. The first was Carrots in Honey Beer and Tarragon, which got a huge thumbs up. And the second was Roast Plum Tomato and Pepper sauce with Red Basil, Plum Beer and Penne, which suffered from my "never let a lack of good ingredients get in the way of a good recipe" approach, but still tasted good. I'll be making it again if I ever track down any plum beer – which is presumably why the book ends with a comprehensive list of specialist beer shops. **Lynne Pearce.**

**The Great Micro Beer Guide by Hugh Madgin,
Published by Hugh Madgin in association
with The Taste!, £2.50**

Hugh Madgin wears a suit to work. He is a senior professional person. By every measure known to marketing, he ought to be a lager zombie. But he ain't.

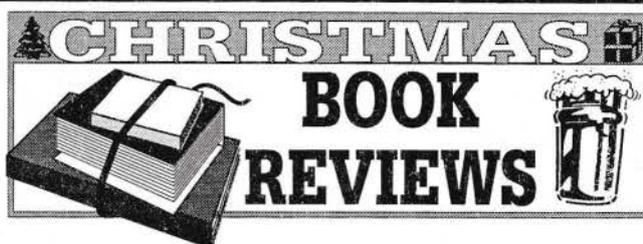
Hugh Madgin is editor of The Taste!, easily the best of all attempts to bring a lively appreciation of beer and pubs to high street newsmagazines. And Hugh Madgin likes his ale. So much so that he has put his hand in his own pocket to bring you a listing of all Britain's microbrewers, their ales, and every pub he can track down that stocks their beers.

Sadly, the micro scene changes so fast that any list of this sort is out of date by the time the disk arrives at the printers. Shortage of money means no space for descriptions of beers or pubs and even addresses are often too brief to be useful – "Lincoln: Slippers", for example, isn't going to get the pilgrim seeking King & Smart's Lincoln Ale to the pub. It's also partial: it lists only those pubs directly supplied by each micro – and, in the maddening way that micros have, not all of them filled in Hugh's questionnaire, so it falls short even of his intent. And yet it's a book no travelling beer enthusiast should be without. For all its shortcomings, it does list hundreds of pubs which stock something from a micro.

Perhaps this is the stuff web-sites are made of: cheap, readily expanded and updated, available at the touch of a button and financed by the grateful advertiser, rather than the consumer. Hugh – this is good stuff, and I shall use my copy, but get it on the net, mate!

Ted Bruning.

Copies can be obtained from Hugh at Full Blast Publishing, 4 Baker Street, Stevenage, SG1 3AL or by calling 01438 21440



**Cider's Story – Rough and Smooth
by Mark Foot, privately published, £9.99**

Mark Foot lives at Nailsea in Somerset, former home of Coates', and shares his father David's love of farmhouse ciders.

Both his grandfathers would test him on "Somerset's wine", and tell him about country characters, most of whom had some connection with cider. All this subconscious information from his early days has been blended with a great deal of detailed research to produce one of the best books on bygone rural life that I have ever read. Cider's Story – Rough and Smooth is a wide-ranging and affectionate celebration, not just of cider through the ages, but of the people who produced it.

Did I say people? I meant richly-varied characters who illuminate the pages of this remarkable social history. There are too many wonderful anecdotes to relate, but my favourite, from the 1920s, is of a Crewkerne man who was said to be able to drink a gallon of cider without stopping. When offered a shilling by some "foreigners" to prove it, he insisted on going outside for a minute or two, and when he returned, downed the gallon in one go. Asked to explain his absence, he explained he wasn't sure he could meet the challenge as he had drunk a fair amount already, "so I upped wi' a gallon and emptied it. Then I knowed I could win me shilling!"

There are fascinating chapters about the history of cidemakers past and present, not just in the West but in other parts of the country as well. The Long Ashton Research Station, from its founding to its sad demise in 1986, is also here.

The book contains more than 80 splendid photographs, many of them dating back to the early years of this century. There is even one of the late Adge Cutler and The Wurzels, who were noted for cider's most popular drinking song, "Drink Up Thee Zider".

Mr Foot published this beautifully-written book himself by means of subscriptions from a large number of interested parties. Those who failed to subscribe when asked must be regretting that they missed the opportunity to be involved in a work that must rank alongside Lark Rise to Candleford or Akenfield as a classic of English social history. **Roy Bailey.**

Cider's Story – Rough and Smooth is available from the author at 8 Kingston Drive, Nailsea, BS48 4RB.

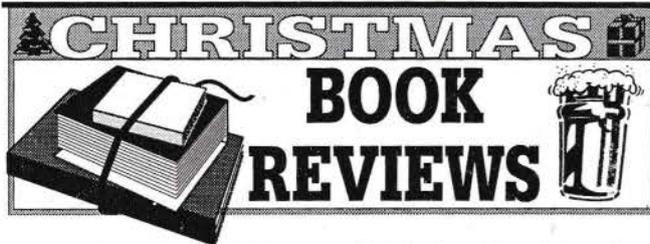
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CHRISTMAS BOOK REVIEWS



Brewing Was A Way Of Life by Neal Hyde. Bridge Books, £9.99

The publication of this very welcome book happily coincides with the 100th anniversary of Hydes arrival at what is now the Anvil Brewery, and is the story of 135 years of this family brewery, written by a member of the fourth generation of the Hydes brewing family.

Neal Hyde is probably better qualified to write about Hydes' than anyone else, having worked there for half a century, joining the company in 1948 and retiring in 1997 (although he remains company President).

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Brewery histories tend to fall into either the 'broad sweep' or 'detailed account' categories. Given that Neal has had ready access to company records and, perhaps more importantly, family correspondence and reminiscences, this book understandably falls into the latter. It does literally tell you everything you could wish to know about the company, its staff, beer and pubs and it perhaps more appropriately looked on as a reference work than a bedtime book.

That's not to say it isn't a good read at the same time. Admittedly the wealth of detail does become a little relentless at times but there is a welcome leavening of anecdotes. My favourite concerns brewery matriarch Annie Hyde being chauffeured over the 'Cat & Fiddle' pass in a snowstorm. Family members travelling in the other direction were amazed to see her bowling along with the rear hood down, sitting bolt upright with umbrella raised to ward off the snow! They don't make them like that any more.

The book is also well illustrated with many black and white photographs of the brewery, family members and brewing staff, and many of the pubs. Numerous old price lists are also reproduced and these make for fascinating reading. There's in-depth coverage of all the beers that Hydes' have ever made, too - I like the sound of the 1056og Best Bitter Beer, which surprisingly was still brewed until quite recently, albeit just to keep the yeast strain going. And did you know that Hydes' first ever pub was none other than the Hare & Hounds on Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton?

For anyone with any interest in the local brewing scene, Brewing Was A Way Of Life is an essential purchase and will be a welcome addition to many a bookshelf. Highly recommended. Histories of Holt's and Robinson's have already been produced - all we need now is a history of Lees to complete the set! **John Clarke.**

Brewing Was A Way Of Life should be in most good bookshops or may be obtained for £9.9 (plus £1.50 p&p) from Bridge Books, 61 Park Avenue, Wrexham, LL12 7AW. In addition all of the books reviewed here (apart from the City Life guide) should be available from Beer In Print, Long High Top, Heptonstall, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks., HX7 7PF. (The reviews by Lynne Pearce, Ted Bruning and Roy Bailey come courtesy of What's Brewing.)

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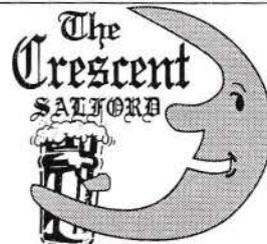
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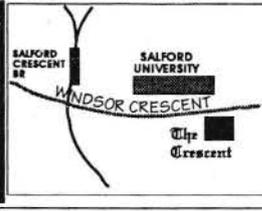
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A Subtle Form of Prohibition

Reading a book about the brewing industry in the Fifties, I was struck by the heavy consumption of alcohol that was a way of life back then. Of course, we're much more sober nowadays. The long boozy business lunch is a thing of the past, and most industries where thirsty workers went straight from the shop floor to the pub and downed ten pints a night have been closed down. Scarcely a week goes by without reading stories in the press about executives being refused employment because they drank the equivalent of a couple of pints a night, local authorities banning outdoor drinking, or organisations introducing random breath tests for their employees. In every other celebrity profile you read, they self-righteously announce that they never touch a drop nowadays.

But the statistics about the actual amount of alcohol we drink tell a different story. Beer consumption may be slowly declining, but it's still more than half as much again as in 1959. At the same time, we're drinking twenty times more wine, making total alcohol consumption twice as much as it was in the Fifties. Back then, far more people were teetotal for religious reasons. Most families would not drink in the house except at Christmas and New Year, whereas today they think nothing of having a bottle of wine with a meal. Most importantly of all, in those days the 18-25 age group did not tend to be regular drinkers, and saw pubs as places for the older generation, preferring coffee bars and the like. Now, of course, it's commonplace for them to get wrecked on a Friday night, and there are large numbers of pubs specifically and cynically targeted at young people. We are drinking more than at any time since before the First World War yet, paradoxically, even the moderate consumption of alcohol is becoming less and less acceptable to the politically correct. Before too long the two trends will find themselves on a collision course. There's no serious prospect at present of Scandinavian-style anti-drink legislation. However, the way we are heading, even though alcoholic drinks are easily available and relatively cheap, the social pressures will be such that the responsible, respectable and ambitious will effectively be prevented from drinking alcohol at all, except on occasions when they know they will not be required to do anything requiring thought or concentration for many hours, and even then only in very modest quantities. For example, we saw last month official warnings against going anywhere near fireworks after even a single drink. In twenty years' time, will regular moderate drinkers be regarded as feckless, irresponsible and unsuitable for most types of employment, in much the same way as cannabis smokers are today?

Millennium, What Millennium?

Pedants the world over will be keen to point out over the next few weeks that the forthcoming millennium celebrations are all a fraud. Since there was no Year Zero in the calendar, we will not mark the completion of two thousand years until the end of the year 2000, in just the same way as you're not considered eighteen until you've finished your eighteenth year, not just started it. Looking on the bright side, it could give an excuse for double celebration. But the true curmudgeon will of course see it as a golden opportunity to cast a dampener on things two years running. A merry Christmas, and happy new Millennium to you all! Bah Humbug!

Curmudgeon Website News

Since the Curmudgeon website was launched at the beginning of October, it has been steadily improved and many new features added. There's a full update each month just before "Opening Times" is published. The contents now include a complete indexed archive of 1999 and 1998 columns, and a selection of the best columns between 1993 and 1997, including the very first column in May 1993. Some have been overtaken by events, many are even more relevant today.

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

DECEMBER '94

The front page carried a picture of Lees' Sportsman on Market Street - a supermarket and office development was imminent, and both the Sportsman and the neighbouring Market Centre were to be replaced by basement storage and car parking areas. Older drinkers would remember that the Sportsman used to be Auld Reekie, with Younger's products (once rare in the City Centre), and believed to be the only pub on Market Street. Readers were invited to put their objections in writing to the Chief Planning officer at the Town Hall.

There were some depressing statistics from the 1995 Drink Pocket Book, one of the industry's standard reference books, researched and published by Public Attitude surveys and Stats MR. Fifteen years previously, beer had made up nearly 60% of Britain's alcohol intake, but it had fallen to 50%. Also, about 15% of the adult population claimed to be teetotal, and 25% said they never went to the pub.

There was news of a major restructure in Innpreneur, the controversial pub-owning company, jointly owned by former brewer Grand Metropolitan and current brewer Courage. The pubs were to be run by new independent management teams, aiming at a more traditional "brewer tenant" relationship. Courage owners Fosters, described as the cash-strapped Australian parent company, were said to be anxious to dispose of its British brewing arm - both Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle had been tipped as potential buyers.

After years of saying it couldn't be done, Joseph Holt's had finally produced a draught, cask-conditioned version of their Sixx strong ale. Initially on an experimental basis, just fifty 220gallon containers had been produced, which were to be sold in only six of the brewery's tied houses. Although 6 per cent ABV, 79p a half wasn't quite the value that Holt's offered on their other beers. The experiment hasn't been repeated since.

St Albans Pizza Hut was selling "real ale pizzas" - but What's Brewing food writer Susan Nowak didn't believe that the "winter warmer" Cumberland sausage and onion pizza with real ale gravy advertised by the Whitbread actually contained a drop of cask-conditioned beer. From Susan's tip-off, the local Trading Standards dept brought a prosecution, and Pizza Hut was fined £1000 after admitting falsely applying the term 'real ale' to the Gold label barley wine the pizzas actually contained.

There were several items referring to the use of mixed gas dispense (carbon dioxide and nitrogen) which was described as an innovation, although Guinness had been doing it for years. Caffrey's Irish Ale had been one of the first to appear, and it had been joined by mainstream brands such as Theakston's and Tetley's. Whitbread had initially claimed that their new style Flower's IPA and Boddingtons which were pasteurised and served using mixed gas, were not keg, but a "wholly new beer style". However, Whitbread backed down from this claim, just as they had done after introducing their "draught beer in a can".

Finally, there was the usual pre-Christmas flurry in the City Centre. Rothwells was due to open on December 1st, Sawyers was still being refurbished, Metz was due to open, and the former "Archies" was to re-open as part of the Jabez Clegg empire.

There are also numerous links to other interesting sites, plenty of non beer related stuff (some of which may surprise you) and the opportunity to send in your comments. If you haven't taken a look yet, or haven't visited for some time, it's well worth paying a call. And if you're not on the Internet yet, what's holding you back? The URL is <http://members.tripod.co.uk/Curmudgeon/> - don't forget that capital C. Make sure you bookmark it for future reference.

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Holt's Hike

The annual increase in Holt's prices took place early in October. Bitter is now £1.14 a pint - and in Stockport at least has now lost its crown as the cheapest widely available bitter. Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter costs precisely the same in both the Queens Head and the Boars Head. The continuing problem with Holt's remains beer quality, which has been taken on board at the brewery. New equipment is being installed, particularly in the coppers and mash tun areas. A new laboratory is also being set up. This should help with quality control matters, since until now samples have had to be sent out to a local lab for analysis and sometimes the results arrived too late for the brewers to act upon them.



Lees' Launches

John Willie Lees have launched not one but two new cask beers. One is the latest in their seasonal programme and is the millennium offering, MM. This weighs in at 4.7 per cent alcohol and, it has to be said, is a rather odd beer, although not an unpleasant one. The taste is initially quite sweet and this remains throughout but is accompanied by an unidentifiable perfumy fruitiness. There must be more than just malt and hops in it, but just what the added extra is remains a mystery. Its companion is rather more mainstream. This is the promised cask version of the bottled 'Manchester Championship Ale', which recently won the Tesco bottled beer competition. It's 5 per cent, with a smooth maltiness underpinned with a hoppy dryness that lingers to the end of the pint and makes it a very moreish beer indeed. It would make a superb permanent addition to Lees' range, nicely filling the gap between Bitter and Moonraker.



Phoenix New Brews

Phoenix Brewery continue to perform well with a constant stream of first rate beers. The new seasonals Snowbound (4.3%) and Christmas Kiss (4.5%) are to be joined by old favourite, Humbug. This powerful (7.2%) winter ale is the strongest beer in the Phoenix portfolio and is always an enjoyable pint. Richard 'Suttie' Sutton (from the Footage & Firkin) is now firmly ensconced as the new Phoenix brewer and is starting to spread his wings. His first creation is Sutties Special Stout (4.3%) which, he tells us, "has flavour climbing out of the glass". It made its debut at The Crescent's Real Lancashire Beer Festival at the end of last month. Next year should see what will effectively be the first Phoenix pub. The new Heywood Station on the East Lancs steam railway is due to open next autumn. This is directly opposite Phoenix Brewery and so owner Tony Allen is converting part of the premises to a bar. Look for a feature on this later next year.



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Bottle Choice Safe

Recently the national press has started more scare stories regarding further consolidation of the beer industry - but this time as a result of axing all but the top selling brands from the supermarket shelves. The big grocers reportedly planning to cut your choices to approximately 15 leading brands in the run up to Christmas. This cut back is aimed at ending stocking of secondary brands such as Skol, Harp and Kestrel with the winners being Stella, Carling, Budweiser, Carlsberg, Fosters, Miller, Tennants etc. A spokesman for Tesco admitted as such to a national paper. And it won't be just Tesco that follows this policy, it will be at Asda, Sainsbury and Safeway too.

And depending on how you interpret this news it could also affect bottled real ales too!! And this coming from a company that sponsors the latest issue of the CAMRA "Good Bottled Beer Guide". Upon further investigation a Tesco spokesperson told me "This is not true for real ale!! However, in any business there has to be a constant evaluation of products and sales and if certain lines are not selling it is difficult to justify stocking them. Tesco is committed to supplying the bottled real ale that its customers want and presenting them in an attractive and relevant way". Tesco has an active programme of support for local brands such as Otter, Daleside and Broughton and also holds its own Beer Challenge which is going from strength to strength with JW Lees, Harviestoun and Youngs amongst the previous winners - the next competition is to be judged in January. Tesco also supports the British Guild Of Beer Writers Annual Dinner and is trying to get the message about good beer through to the public with in-store publications such as "Beer Buff on a Motorbike" and "Around the World in Eighty Beers". The bottom line is bottled real ale in the supermarket is safe. And the story is similar at the other large chains too. A quick visit to my local Tesco confirmed this with a healthily stocked shelf with plenty of variety and choice.'

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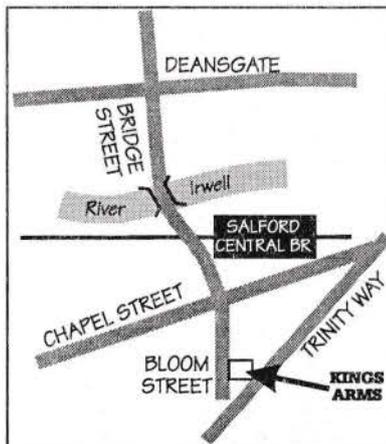
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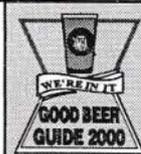
and so is a new collection of Christmas and Winter Ales 6 Belgian and 6 German Extra Special Beers - available from the end of November to include De Dolle Xmas, St Feuillon Red, Brigand Xmas

along with Santa Claus Ale from Bank Top

John and Carmen wish everyone a terribly profitable 2000 so they can spend more time in BAR FRINGE



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Idy and Sal at the Crescent are now through two festivals in as many months and Ian Casson at the Beer House is starting his second (millennium a month early) as we hit the streets. Beer quality at all these has been excellent - all the beers going as fast as they could be put on. Well done to both pubs, keep up the good work in 2000.

The Bury CAMRA Festival was quite fun, with pretty good quality throughout, and a handful of new beers, but returning to Manchester to fests at both the Beer House and the Smithfield Hotel in Swan St, where there were a veritable cornucopia of brand new beers, was a bit too much for my kidneys and I was suffering on the Sunday. Preview of the January Winter Ales Fest and a detailed breakdown of what all the pub take-overs mean in January.

The Beer Monster's British Beer of the Month: Youngs Winter Warmer (5%) abv

Very much an old and much loved seasonal favourite, rather than a new beer, but I like it anyway. Difficult, warm and complex, fruity, malty and slightly sweet but perfectly balanced. Oddly enough the best place to try it is very definitely NOT the Youngs heartland of South London, where it is treated with over-familiar disdain by many and is therefore left over-long in the cellar. It actually doesn't keep for long without developing sour and winey overtones. In the free trade and outlying Youngs houses (mine was in the Kings Arms in Oxford) it doesn't last so long and is usually superb, a classic of the Winter style.

The Beer Monster's Foreign Beer of the Month: Draught Kasteel Trippeel (11%)abv

If the Paulaner Oktoberfest beer I described last month was my beer of the year, then this must be the runner-up. Now there is no doubt that it tastes strong, but nothing like the 11% it is. A few of these, and the pale, full, but not-too-sweet liquor slides down like the proverbial silk in a glass, but with bags of complex yet subtle flavours teasing your tonsils on the way. Then you get off your stool and the floor moves. Wow! Tried as a special guest at Bar Fringe, Swan Street. Get me more!

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Stay Safe For 2000!

Don't Drink and Drive This Christmas

As a reader of "Opening Times" you will know that alcohol is very much part of the world we live in. Have a few drinks too many, and the only things that normally suffer are your head and stomach. But combine driving with your drinking and you have a lethal cocktail which could have a lasting effect - on your own and other people's lives.

Each year in Britain, some five hundred people die in road accidents involving drivers and motorcycle riders over the legal blood alcohol limit. Fifteen per cent of all drivers and riders killed are over the limit and around 50 per cent at night between the hours of 10pm and 4am.

The more you drink, the greater the problem. Some people's driving performance may be affected even below the legal limit. Twice the limit, and you are at least twenty times more likely to have an accident.

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

Alcohol slows down your reactions and affects your judgement

Those who believe that sticking to weaker drinks will stop them going over the limit are sadly mistaken. It's not the type of alcohol that's important, it's the total amount of alcohol the drink contains. Alcohol takes effect quickly and wears off slowly. Once you've had a drink, there is nothing you can do to reduce the level of alcohol in your blood.

Exercise doesn't work, nor does black coffee, nor available medicines of any kind, nor vitamins.

The only thing that will reduce the level of alcohol in your blood is time - and a long time at that. The body gets rid of alcohol at a very slow rate - equivalent to about half a pint of beer in every hour. If you have been on a long or late drinking session, you might still be over the limit the morning after, or even at lunchtime.

How To Avoid The Problem

Plan in advance. Take a minibus or taxi. Use the bus, train or tram. If you can't arrange transport home, then fix up somewhere to stay. If you are in a group, decide amongst yourselves that whoever will be driving will not drink for the evening. Drink soft drinks.

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

THE SPREAD EAGLE

(Lower Hillgate, Stockport)



**Robinson's
Brewery Tap**



*Val and Noel Wish All Their
Regulars and Friends A Very Merry
Christmas and a Happy New 2000*

**= STILL SERVING =
PROBABLY THE BEST
ROBINSONS ALES
IN THE WORLD**



**CAMRA Stockport
& South Manchester
November 1999
PUB OF THE MONTH**



Contributors to Opening Times Issue 188

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Peter Edwardson, Dave Meynell, Stuart Ballantyne, Phil Levison, Tim Jones, Anthony Firmin, John Hutchinson, John Tune, Ken Birch, Paul Moss, Dave Nunn.

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The Caledonia Hotel

Robinson's
'CHEF of the YEAR'
1999 - 2000

*Come and try our 'Award Winning' dish
that earned us 'Second Place' and
'Highly Commended' certificates in the
Robinsons 'Chef of the Year' competition.*

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*The first and only pub in Ashton to sell Frederic's premium 5.0% since it was brewed.
Robinson's Best Bitter and Hatter's Mild all on hand pump.*

*Excellent home cooked food served:
Monday - Saturday 11.30 - 2.30 lunchtimes
Tues, Weds, Thurs 5.00 - 7.00 evenings
Friday & Saturday 5.00 - 8.00 evenings
12.00 - 3.00 Sunday. 3 course special plus full menu*



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welcomes
you to ...

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Macclesfield

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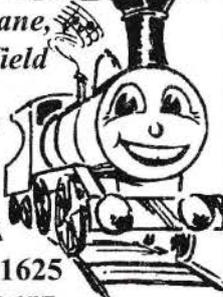
6 GUEST BEERS ☆

☆ QUIZZES ☆

☆ BAR GAMES ☆

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Opening Times Competition

Last month's competition attracted considerable interest. As ever many thanks to Paul Stanyer of The Railway, Portwood, for setting the questions and providing the prize.

1H	A	R	T	L	E	Y	2S	U
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G	9E	X	P	R	E	S	I	S
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SR	O	11K	R	I	P	N	J	
E	T	C	E	H	S	R	H	N
T	S	O	B	G	N	I	E	3E
L	K	A	E	H	8T	R	A	M
O	B	G	O	4D	L	A	R	E

There was a 'slight' argument about a name in the November grid, an extra 'e' creeping in, but Ron Pearson of Brinnington saw through this problem, and is the winner!

December Competition

Paul has set us a similar competition this month. Using your knowledge of beers (or a Good Beer Guide), complete the grid in a clockwise spiral. The last letter of an answer is the first letter of the next. We have given you the first letter. The prize this month is a copy of the latest Good Pub Food Guide. Entries to: OT Competition, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. Closing date for entries is Christmas Eve, Friday 24th December.

1, O				2				
				7				3
6				10				
						12		
	9							
5				11				8
								4

- 1) Brewed in Cumbria you could get high on this.
- 2) Childish plaything from Manchester? Careful you don't lose it!
- 3) Say always solid for this Narborough brewery.
- 4) How much does the riders seat cost?
- 5) Drawwell comes from here.
- 6) Do American cockerels brew this ?
- 7) EXORCISEL (Anagram) should get you this Yorkshire beer.
- 8) Swaying pigs from Cambridgeshire?
- 9) Spuds weigh loads in this brewing vessel?(Two words)
- 10) ATTACKER NJ may get this amphibian beer
- 11) Ventnor's marsupial?
- 12) This brewery may run AMOK HA! In Cambridgeshire.

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Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,
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AND FINE BEER IN
A CLASSIC PUB



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Including the Railway's exclusive Beer:-

Railway Sleeper

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National Winter Ale Spectacular

The world will come to Manchester next month when the city hosts CAMRA's fourth national Winter Ales Festival and Champion Winter Beer of Britain Competition.

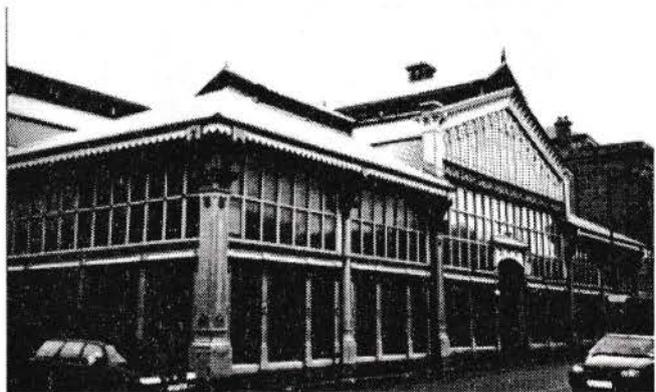
The festival moved to Manchester last year, from its original home in Glasgow, and was a runaway success with beer selling out by 7.00pm on the Saturday night. There will be plenty more beer this year to make sure that doesn't happen again and this will be a truly national festival with well over 100 real ales on offer.

It won't all be super-strong winter warmers, either. These powerful beers will be out in force but there will be plenty more sessionable milds, a huge range of bitters, and stouts and porters from independent brewers all over Britain.

As last year there will be an international flavour to the event too. Last year's spectacular foreign beer bar will be back with an unrivalled range of German and Belgian seasonal specialities plus,

if current plans come to fruition, a range of real ales from the Irish Republic rarely seen in the UK, and draught and bottled American Winter beers. A good range of ciders and perries will also be available, this time from an individual bar.

This year there will be two food stalls - Idy of the Crescent running both a hot food bar, and a seperate butty bar. The three day event runs from 20-22 January and is again being held in the historic Upper Campfield Market, a Victorian market hall in Castlefield, just off Deansgate in the City Centre and only 4 minutes walk from Deansgate BR, and G-Mex Metrolink stations. This really will be an event that no beer lover can afford to miss. Get those dates in your new millennium diaries now - 20-22 January.



National Winter Ales Festival Manchester 2000

Upper Campfield Market 20 - 22 January 2000

PLEASE USE ONE FORM PER PERSON



Name _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Phone _____ CAMRA Membership No _____

CAMRA Branch (if Known) _____

Please tick the sessions you are able and willing to work, along with the nights you would like accommodation. Please note - accommodation cannot be guaranteed

Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19	Thu 20	Fri 21	Sat 22	Sun 23	Mon 24
0900			0900			0900	
1300			1600			1300	
1300			1600			1300	
1800			2300			1800	
Accommodation Please			Accommodation Please			Accom Please	
Setting Up			Festival Open			Take Down	

Have You Worked at a CAMRA Beer Festival Before? _____

Please List any special skills you could offer to the Festival

(continue on reverse as necessary) _____

Do you have any current first aid qualifications?

(if yes give details on reverse) _____

Please use the back of the form for any other information you feel could be of use to the staffing officer in allocating jobs at the festival

Send your completed form to: Staffing, Paul Marsden, UMIST PO Box 88
Manchester. M60 1QD. Telephone 0161 200 3325/ 0973 384 333

CAMRA Volunteers Needed

An event of this scale requires a great deal of volunteer help to run, so we are appealing to any current CAMRA members who are readers of Opening Times to devote some time, no matter how little, to give us a hand. Please complete the adjacent form and send it in!

We must emphasise that legal and insurance requirements mean that only fully paid up members of CAMRA are permitted to work.



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IN THE SAME FAMILY FOR 70 YEARS
A Merry Christmas to all our Customers
from Yvonne & Alison

*Robinsons Traditional Draught Beers
at Their Best*



**GOOD BEER GUIDE 1988 - 2000
THIRTEEN GLORIOUS YEARS!**

CAMRA GREATER MANCHESTER
PUB OF THE YEAR 1997

18

Jayne & Bryan Welcome You to The

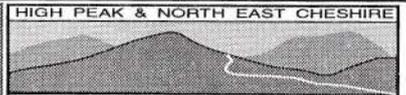
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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

CAMPAIGN CAMRA
FOR REAL ALE

First some news from Ashton. The Station has changed hands again. After a short time shut, the Station has reopened under the new ownership and management of David Bradley - a regular when it was owned by John and Sylvia (now of the Buffet Bar). When I visited the range of beers was the most varied and best since the surprise sale, with Boddingtons Bitter, Hydes' Bitter and Lees Bitter as regulars, a Hydes' mild (alternatively Light and Mild), and four guests (Holdens XB, Hydes' Jekylls Gold, Belhaven St Andrews and Jennings Cumberland) there would appear to be something for everyone. David intends to re-start the regular beer festivals which have been missed and is hoping to link up with the Buffet Bar - much the same as before. I am sure we wish David every success and that he can restore the pub's reputation as a free house where unusual and well-kept beer can be enjoyed.

In Hyde, the White Lion is missing its fine lamp. It's been removed for refurbishment by Robinson's (who were surprised to find that it's actually made of copper!) who intend to reinstate it once this is complete. Up the road in Mottram-in-Longdendale (OK, Hattersley), we are promised an 'exciting new' pub as part of the development at the roundabout at the end of the M67 (I'm not holding my breath though). Over in Strines, the Royal Oak has a new licensee. Ken Moon (formerly landlord of the Sportsman up the road) has taken over the Robinson's outlet and the familiar face of Wee Jamie can be seen behind the bar. The Hare & Hounds in Otterspool is due to open shortly after extensive refurbishment. It will be interesting to see what's been done to this prominent pub.

In Glossop, the Globe Inn on High Street West has been bought by Jennings as one of six purchases in the north west area. This has been welcomed by local members (who are well off for choice as it is). The Sparrows on Glaston Street has a guest beer policy in place. An unremarkable start saw Grays Bitter followed by Speckled Hen! The Glove Works has extended its licensed opening times to midnight on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, although this is mainly aimed at regulars and entry may well be tricky after 11pm.

In Old Glossop the Bulls Head (Robinson's) is extending into the next door house. It is intended to make this the kitchen for the excellent Indian restaurant. The existing kitchen is to be converted to another lounge/snug eventually.

In Buxton, rumours change at frightening speed. The latest scenario has the Ashwood becoming a Wetherspoons outlet while the Eagle (Market Place) - last month's 'Wetherspoons' - is now rumoured to have been bought by Hydes!

Finally, some news of New Mills. The Hare & Hounds (Robinson's) now has Old Stockport and Best Bitter alongside the Hatters Mild. The Queens (also Robinson's) has Hartleys XB on handpump while Hatters and Best remain on electric dispense. The Peaks on Market Street has a regularly changing guest beer.

The New Mills information came from a survey undertaken for the new Derbyshire Beer Guide which will be available in the Spring. More information shortly.

THE UNION

Reddish

Dermott and Ellen

*Thank All Our Clientele For Their
Custom In The Past Year*

*Wishing You All A Happy Xmas
And A Prosperous New Year*



Robbies News

Top Bar and Cellar

Judging is now complete in the 1999 'Best Kept Bar & Cellar Competition, run by Robinson's - and the top pubs proved to be the same as in 1998, albeit in a slightly different order. All 420 Robinson's pubs competed for the title in the second year of the competition devised by Oliver Robinson, who is among the latest generation to join the family business.

The first stage of selection was conducted by district managers who drew up a shortlist of 12 pubs from which Head Brewer Chris Hellin and Oliver Robinson has the difficult task of selecting the eventual winners. Nine of the finalists were included in last year's shortlist and each showed an improvement on their previous high standards.



Each of the 12 houses was visited and every aspect scrutinised, from the cellar upwards, with points awarded along the way. Particular attention was given to standards of hygiene and the quality of beer in what was an extremely close fought contest.

First place went to Peter and Jan Burns at the Church, Edgeley, Stockport, where the presentation evening was staged. The couple who have been with Robinson's for four years earned 389 points out of a possible 400 to beat Syd and Jenny Hampson of the Masons Arms, Denton by just 3 points. Opening Times grabbed a cellar tour on the night and it must be said the cellar at the Church is the most impeccably kept we have ever seen - and we've seen quite a few!

Joint third position was awarded to the Queens Arms, Cheadle, run by Andy and Eunice Wilson, and last year's winners the King William, Wilmslow, where Billy and Denise Parkin are licensees. Congratulations are due to them all.

Sandbar Beer Trading

Sandbar owners Simon James and Steven Gingell have combined forces with Alle Biere Company's Paul Walsh to form Sandbar Beer Trading Company Ltd.

Paul Walsh has imported and exported from Germany for the last 30 years, and has over the last few years specialised in German beers. Through Paul's well tasted expertise, Alle Biere Company's huge selection of beers has been well received and the business has outgrown its premises.

It made sense for Paul to approach his biggest customer, fellow German beer fans Sandbar, to help cope with and deliver a larger and better service. The stocks have been significantly increased and customers can now browse at the Sandbar before selecting their preferred case of German beer.

Sandbar has always worked very hard to offer an interesting range of draught and bottled beers, and currently features in the Good Beer Guide. In a similar vein, Sandbar Beer Trading will provide the best of the not so common bottled beers.

Until now ninety per cent of German beers have not been available in this country. This new set up will specialise in premium brands not destined for export, beers produced almost exclusively for consumption in the domestic market. Over seventy brands are now stocked.

As well as supplying wholesale, Sandbar Beer Trading will operate a full case off licence and home delivery service for all the brands that are currently stocked. Tariffs remain the same, £38 per twenty-bottle case delivered anywhere in the UK. Those collecting in person will pay £28-£32. They also offer a full recycling service. Returned cases and bottles are refundable and a deposit of £2 paid back to customers. The bottles and cases are then taken back to Germany where they are reused.

Sandbar is on 120 Grosvenor Street, All Saints. Phone 0161 256 1396.

JEKYLL'S GOLD

NEW from Hydes

a beer with twice the character

Hydes' new Premium Ale, Jekyll's Gold, is a rich, traditional ale with an elegant, light colour. At 4.3% ABV, it's both strong and sessionable.

Jekyll's Gold is extremely moreish and is ideal for the discerning drinker who wants a beer with real body and a more interesting flavour.

- Twice the body
- Twice the flavour
- Twice the satisfaction

Jekyll's Gold is now available in your local Hydes pub - Try it!

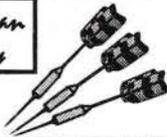
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Fistful of Arrows

By Brian
Carey



Imagine the scene:- It is a crucial league game, towards the end of the season; the final score will determine a vital relegation issue; the score is three apiece and both teams have their last man on. Both are determined to keep their team in the higher division, and both are down to a double. The tension is so thick that you could plait it. There is complete hush as the home team player comes to the oche, his eyes fixed on double 16. His hand visibly shakes and his mouth is dry. He raises his arrow to take aim, holds his breath and is just about to release the missile when somebody's mobile starts to play a silly tune. The tension is broken, and both players know that there is no way that the player is ever going to hit his double, he might as well put his arrows back in the case and retreat to the bar. Of course, I have just made up the details, but there is no doubt that the ubiquitous mobile phone is fast becoming a nuisance to darts players. It is impossible for a pub darts match to played in a silent vacuum, nor should it be desirable. But the irritating nature of the mobile phone to others causes as much distraction as a noisy fruit machine, someone walking across the oche on the way to the lavatory or the drunken buffoon in the corner shouting "Good darts" after every 26. It is not asking much for mobile phone users to switch off their instruments, at the least for the duration of a game.

In the darts world, most of us are pretty quirky over our equipment. The weight of the dart, the shape of the flight, even the tungsten/nickel ratio is a matter of personal taste. Once we find the combination we like, it is unlikely that we can be persuaded to change. For myself, I have always liked longer plastic shafts. I have flirted with aluminium and other materials, but always graduate back to the common or garden plastic, readily available behind the bar. Most people, including the professionals also use plastic. But I do not know anyone who has suffered like I have. The first time was about four years ago. While playing in a match at the George and Dragon in Heaton Chapel, my shaft snapped off. Not an unusual occurrence I thought as I took a spare out of my dart case. I hadn't realised that it the screw part of the stem was still stuck firmly in the barrel. I finished the game with

borrowed arrows. I can't remember if I won or lost, but judging by my form at the time I probably lost - and just as probably - put the blame firmly on the borrowed darts. It took ages to extricate the offending material. In fact the darts were never quite the same, and I had to acquire a new set. Fade out - fade in. The scene changes to the Blarney Stone four years later. After the match I'm playing a quick game of Slip-up, with a teammate. I'm just left with treble and bull to hit, when my darts instead of sliding into the board, falls miserably to the floor. It's happened again. The game is abandoned. I start to try to remove the bit of stem left in the dart. No joy. My wife tries, still no luck. Various members of the team all have a go, but there is no way that the small piece of plastic is going to budge. It took ten days of persistent fiddling to remove, using nails, screws, a gimlet, a bradawl, scissors and any other implement that I could lay my hand on. I didn't expect lightning to strike twice in the same place, and certainly not for a third time. Two weeks later, and practising on the board before an away match, the same thing happened again. This time a colleague managed to clear it before the game, but I wonder what the odds on it happening to the same player three times. As I mentioned earlier, I do not know anyone that this has happened to once, never mind three times. If you know different, please let me know so that I don't have to suffer alone. Incidentally the away match when I broke my stem for the third time was at the George and Dragon. Spooky, eh?

The game of darts recently received the best TV exposure since the heyday of Eric Bristow and Jocky Wilson. ITV showed the head to head challenge match between Phil Taylor and Ray Barneveld from the Wembley Conference Centre - and it was live! Believe it or not, it is twelve years since that channel dropped the game from the schedules. I hope that the viewing figures were sufficient to warrant other such games being broadcast. The game was between the two players who claim the title of World Champion, Taylor holding the PDC crown, while Dutchman Barneveld is the BDO/WDF champion. The fact that it was Phil Taylor who won the game (and the £60,000 purse) is not the point. When I started writing this column players from the factions were not even allowed to be in the audience at opposing events, a ridiculous state of affairs which nearly killed off the game at the highest level. Now, more or less, we are almost back to a level playing field (if that is not to much of mixed metaphor). I also like the idea of head to head games, rather than knock-out tournament. After all, that is the traditional way the game developed. The champion of one pub would challenge the best player in the next house. True, the purse was considerably less than the money that Taylor and Barneveld were playing for, but the principle was the same. I hope that we are on the verge of the renaissance of the game. Fingers crossed.

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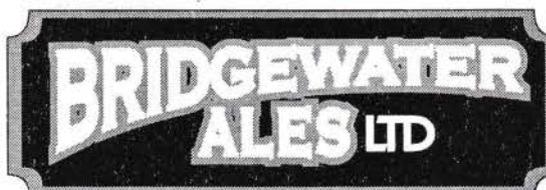
**1999 Stockport CAMRA
Beer of the Festival -**

Delph Porter

5.2% ABV

Barton Ale

4.3% ABV



Navigator*

3.8% ABV

Available Now...

Blondie

4.7% ABV

(American style Ale)

*Regular Outlets - Lowes Arms, Denton; Bar Fringe, Swan St, Mcr;
Albert Vaults, Salford; Old Pint Pot, Salford; Millgate Failsworth; Kings Arms, Salford*

Tel: 0161 831 9090 Fax 0161 950 6561



An Alternative Christmas Dinner

Here is a vegetarian alternative to roast turkey, etc., using different beers to impart a richness of flavour. Firstly there is a cheese and tomato soup, followed by a pulse and nut roast and to finish a traditional Christmas pudding. All recipes serve 4.

Cheese & Tomato Soup

6 beef tomatoes
1 medium onion
4 oz flour

4 oz grated cheese
1 bottle (½ pint) pale ale of
Hapkin Belgian Ale

Method

- Place grated cheese in a bowl and pour the beer over. Leave to soak.
- Slit the tomatoes at the head and place in boiling water for 1 minute. Cool and remove the skins.
- Heat a little oil in a 2-3 pint saucepan, finely chop the onion and sweat until golden.
- Stir in the flour to make a roux and stir in until going brown. Gradually blend in the cheese/beer mix until all has been absorbed.
- Finally, make up to 1 pint using water, milk, or water and cream as desired, until a thick creamy consistency is achieved.
- Remove the core and pips from the tomatoes and roughly chop the flesh. Add to the sauce, stirring well in.
- Adjust the seasoning and then thin to a soup consistency using water. Heat to just below boiling and simmer on a low light for 5 minutes. Serve with croutons.

Pulse & Nut Roast with Beer Gravy

8oz dried red lentils
8oz dried red kidney beans
8oz dried black eye beans
410gm tin chick peas
8oz crushed mixed nuts
4oz flour

2 medium onions
teaspoon chilli powder
teaspoon fenugreek
1 pint porter or stout
2 eggs
salt and pepper

4 cloves garlic
(You can of course use dried chick peas but they take far longer to cook than the other pulses. Red lentils on the other hand cook very quickly and should be cooked separately from the beans.)

Method

Soak the pulses overnight. Drain; boil rapidly for 10 minutes and the more gently until soft – about 45 minutes but test after 30. Drain well and place in a large mixing bowl with the drained chick peas. Roughly mash. Then blend in the eggs..
Finely chop the onions and garlic and blend in (you can soften them in a little oil first, if you wish)
Then add the nuts, chilli and fenugreek. Mix well using the hands and gradually add the flour until a stiff dough is formed.
Add the stout or porter, using the hands to work it in.
Form into a log shape, foil wrap and cook in a medium oven for 25 min.

Beer Gravy

1 medium onion
2 veg stock cubes
2 oz flour

1 pint porter
A little oil

Method

Finely chop the onion and sweat in a little oil. When soft, gradually add the flour to form a roux. Crumble in the stock cubes and stir well until a rich brown colour is achieved. Gradually stir in the porter until a creamy consistency is reached. Serve with the roast.

Christmas Pudding

Buy a Christmas pudding 2-3 weeks before Christmas and pierce several times with a skewer. Pour in a nip bottle of Old Tom or Moonraker (if you can't get a nip, you will have to use a half-pint and save a generous swig for yourself!). repeat the process each 3-4 days and after each soaking, cover with foil. Do this about 4 times, the final soaking should be 4 days before serving.
See what a difference it makes. Serve with rum sauce and flame with brandy. A tip here: place the brandy in a shallow pan on the stove. Turn off the heat as soon as it bubbles at the edges and as you pour it over the pudding the heat from the pan sides should ignite it. If not, use a match. Yule Love It!! All the best – I'll see you next century.

A Happy Christmas and prosperous 2000
from Terry and Kath at the

Circus Tavern

Manchesters Smallest Pub
No Music, No Jukebox,
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21

ATHERTON & TYLDESLEY

ROUND TABLE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAMRA
PRESENT
THE



27th 28th 29th January 2000

FORMBY HALL, ATHERTON

ALL PROCEEDS TO LOCAL 2000 FUND RAISING EVENTS

THURSDAY 27th JAN. 6.00pm ~ 11.00pm ~ £3.50

FRIDAY 28th JAN. 6.00pm ~ 11.00pm ~ £4.50

SATURDAY 29th JAN. 12 noon ~ 4.00pm ~ £3.00

And 7.00pm ~ 11.00pm ~ £4.00

CAMRA MEMBERS £1.00 REDUCTION ON ENTRANCE FEE
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Millennium Eve at the Waldorf - £2.50 including first
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- NUMBERS LIMITED

A Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year from
Wayne and all the staff

Function Room Available



CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak and Macclesfield

Diary

December 99

Monday 6th - Social: Sun in September, Burnage Ln, Burnage. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 9th - Monthly branch meeting and Christmas Quiz: Blossoms, Stockport Rd, Heavily. Starts 8.00pm.

Friday 10th - Sunday 12th - Trip to Peterborough to present 1998(!) Beer of the Festival award to Oakham Ales.

Monday 13th - Withington Social: 9.00pm Orion, Burton Rd; 10.00pm Victoria, Wilmslow Road.

Friday 17th - Famous Annual Hillgate Stagger: 7.00pm Queens Head (Turners Vaults), Underbank; 8.30pm Red Bull, Hillgate; finish Blossoms.

Monday 20th - Social: Queens Head (Turners Vaults), Underbank, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

Tuesday 21st - Pub of the Month presentation to the Nelson, Barlow Moor Rd, Didsbury.

Monday 10th January 2000 - Social: Sand Bar, Grosvenor St, All Saints. Starts 9.00pm.

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

Monday 6th - Committee Meeting: Royal Hotel, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 11th - Branch Xmas Social: The Crescent, Salford Crescent. Starts 8.00pm.

December 99

Monday 13th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar. Starts 8.30pm.

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

Monday 13th - Committee Meeting: Railway View, Byrons Ln, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm.

Monday 20th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Railway, Station Rd, Handforth. Starts 8.00pm.

Wednesday 29th - Social: Waters Green Tavern, Macclesfield. Starts 12 noon.

REGIONAL EVENTS

Sunday 12th December - 12.30pm National Winter Ales Festival 2000 organising committee meeting Beer House, Angel St. Mcr.

Saturday 8th January - Regional Meeting Wheatsheaf, Market St. Atherton, Starts 12.30pm

Diary Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 99 Planner

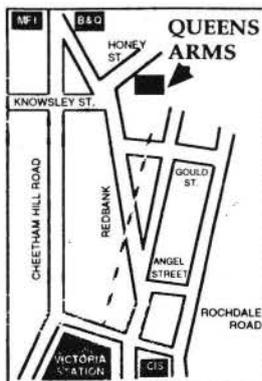
Dave and Sue welcome you to

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



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Good Beer Guide '99!

Telephone:
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Claire and Howard wish all their friends and customers a festive Xmas and prosperous 2000

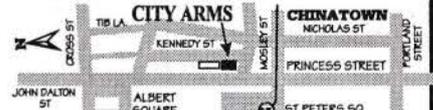
Among Our DECEMBER BEERS

Among our guests:
Batemans Jesters IPA,
Jollys Dome Ale;
Ridleys Y2K;
Mansfield Millennium;
Adams Millennium,
Old Ale; Lloyds Old
Father Time;
Weltons Wenceslegless;
Greene King
Milleniumbug;
Fiddle & Bone Bone Ale;
Hop Back Winter Lightning;
Cottage Santas Strong
Ale; Maclays
Thrapplewarmer;
Fullers Old Winter Ale
and many more...



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!

MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

Looking back at my December 1998 column, there was a frenzy of activity to report with many new openings and refurbishments in the run-up to Christmas. By contrast, there is very little happening this year, although there's plenty in the pipeline for 2000.

The main news, though, is the reopening of the old Shambles pubs now located in what has been dubbed the 'Medieval Quarter' (Ugh!). I must say that despite many misgivings on my part, a reasonable enough job of work has been carried out - I know that sounds grudging but try as I might I just can't work up any more enthusiasm. As you might expect, Sinclairs is the better of the two. Not just because it's run by an independent brewer, Sam Smiths, and not because it offers a good value pint (£1.24), but because it is first and foremost a proper pub. The Old Wellington is now essentially a restaurant with a bar grudgingly inserted on the ground floor. The new manager has gone on record stating that he sees the Wellington as now an essentially food-driven operation. Well, he's welcome to it. And with Worthington Best Bitter at a rip-off £1.90 a pint, I suspect many others will feel the same.

Elsewhere, there's not much to report, I'm afraid. There's a new Henry's Café Bar in the Greenalls development on the site of Tommy Ducks. Don't even think about real ale. I've not been in either of the Firkins since the Punch Taverns/Bass takeover but am reliably informed that Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale are the order of the day. Ho hum.

In Rusholme/Moss Side, Whitbread are selling the Parkside - a snip at £345,000. God knows who'd buy it. The Orange Grove in Fallowfield (ex-Buchanans, ex-The Sherwood) is as grim as it looks and again sells no real ale. Down in Didsbury, there's bad news, too. Apart from the Marston's Bitter debacle, I was disappointed to learn that the Parrswood no longer sells guest beers. Apparently they didn't sell so it's now just Boddies Bitter and Greenalls Mild on the handpumps.

A recent visit to Northenden was equally dispiriting - there's now no real ale in the Jolly Carter, Tatton or Church. Thank God for the Crown, which was as good as ever, with a lively crowd and a serviceable pint of Boddingtons.

Finally, there's good news from Chorlton. The new Wetherspoons on Manchester Road should be opening soon, and will be called the Sedge Lynn. No, I don't know what it means either. Nor do any of the locals I have been able to speak to. No doubt all will be revealed in due course.



"I wish to register
A COMPLAINT!"



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. Remember the point though: if you've paid good money for something which is sub-standard, then you've been swindled - so complain! So 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 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 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 that" or that old standby "no-one else has complained". Stand your ground. The law on "full measure" is currently something of a shambles - the head is legally part of your pint but the Brewers Society say that your pint should be 95% liquid and short measures should be topped up with good grace. Trading Standards officers may be prepared to take action if these guidelines are consistently flouted. Beer which is "off" 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 usually 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.

Local Trading Standards Contacts are:

Stockport - 0161 474 4248, Manchester - 0161 234 5600
Tameside - 0161 342 3477, Derbyshire - 01629 585858
Cheshire - 01244 602500, Trafford - 0161 912 2274

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Fight for Consumer Choice in Pubs - Join CAMRA now - see back page!



CAMRA

The Beer Drinkers' Champion

Do you want good beer, served in pleasant, friendly surroundings at a fair price? So do we! After all, it doesn't seem a lot to ask. But beware: these things cannot be taken for granted. Pubs and beer are big business, and there are those who would have us all drinking overpriced, bland national products in tacky theme bars. That's why CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, continues to fight on behalf of Britain's drinkers.

CAMRA's Campaigns

Good Beer: CAMRA promotes greater appreciation of traditional ales through awards to those who brew or sell them at their best, through 150 annual beer festivals, and the best-selling Good Beer guide.

Pubs: CAMRA supports sensitive and appropriate alterations to pubs, but fights against the crass vandalism and expensive, unnecessary theming that is all too often seen. We help obtain listings for historic pubs, and promote the importance of the "local" to the community it serves.

Consumer rights: CAMRA campaigns for a fair deal for the customer, on issues such as full-measure legislation and licensing reform. We act as a vigorous consumer voice in Westminster, Whitehall and Brussels.

Choice: CAMRA promotes the independent brewers, and fights for licensees' right to stock guest beers.

Join The Fight!

CAMRA has achieved many important victories for the rights and choice of ordinary drinkers. But today, traditional beer and pubs, together with the quality, choice and value they represent are more under threat than ever. The impact of CAMRA's efforts is down to the support of the 54,000 plus members who fund our work and lend weight to our voice. The more members we have, the bigger difference we can make. If you support what CAMRA is trying to do for Britain's drinkers, why not help by becoming a member?

Limited Offer - Join CAMRA for just £12

Until 31 December 1999, the Campaign for Real Ale is offering £2 off the standard membership rate. Not only that, but if you decide to pay by direct debit, we'll give you an extra **THREE MONTHS FREE**. And Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA offers its local members the new Millennium edition of the best-selling Good Beer Guide at a remarkable £7 - that's a discount of £4.99 off the cover price.

If you want to take advantage of this offer you'll find a membership form below. Alternatively, why not come along and meet us on the evening of Tuesday 21 December, when we'll be presenting our Pub of the Month award to the Nelson in Didsbury.

Send A Card For Christmas

Make Your Voice Heard

Angry about the loss of Marstons Bitter? Want to make your point? Well, since this is the Christmas issue of Opening Times, why not send W&D boss David Thompson a Christmas card?

We're friendly folk here in the north west and for little more than the cost of a stamp, Marston's Bitter drinkers can send David Thompson a Christmas card with seasons greeting. Why not add him to your Christmas card list?

Whilst doing so you might take the chance to express your concern to him about Marston's Bitter being axed for no better reason than to line the pockets of his shareholders. You might mention that no-one was consulted about the move. You could point out the Greater Manchester is lucky in having a number of breweries serving many different beers and that if Marston's is axed you can vote with you feet and drink elsewhere. And of course, if you go elsewhere your friends go with you.

The one thing that will make David Thompson sit up and take notice is if drinkers hit him where it hurts - in his corporate pocket. So when you send your card, make sure you tell him that if Marston's Bitter goes, then so do you - right out of his pubs. Now that's something that might concentrate his mind! The address is below but remember - this is the season of goodwill so don't forget to wish David a happy Christmas as well!

Here's where to send your cards:

David Thompson, Chief Executive,
Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries PLC,
PO Box 26,
Park Brewery, Bath Road,
Wolverhampton, WV1 4NY.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £8

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 188)

VALID UNTIL
DEC 31 1999
ONLY

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~~ £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £17

UNDER 26 YRS or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8

Paul Moss, 60 Adelaide Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 1LU

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.

