



OPENING TIMES



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FREE

BASS BOUGHT OUT!

Belgian Giant Grabs One Third Of UK Brewing

Belgian beer giant Interbrew last month completed a lightning double swoop on Britain's brewing industry, following its £400 million purchase of Whitbread's brewing operations with a £2.3 billion acquisition of the Bass breweries.

Interbrew's lightning strike, following Scottish & Newcastle's takeover of Kronenbourg earlier this year, means that within the space of a few months, Britain's brewing industry has been transformed from a national to a global one.

The acquisition of Bass Brewers on top of the company's purchase of Whitbread gives the company a market share of well over 30 per cent. It will take some weeks to clear and will undoubtedly involve shedding several brands, probably including Heineken, to satisfy the regulators. Currently there are plans for Whitbread to lease 50% of the Salmesbury brewery back from Interbrew until they can find an alternate home for the lager.

Interbrew said the two companies, Bass Brewers and the Whitbread Beer Co - now renamed Interbrew UK - would continue to operate independently as "focused brewers, committed to the UK beer heritage and offering a rich portfolio of both ales and lagers". Which, given their track record in recent years, should prove something of a culture shock for both of them!

Seeking to allay the fears of British consumers, Interbrew has described itself as "the World's local brewer", and chief executive Hugo Powell said: "Beer is a local business. Therefore our local strength, our local brands and our local people will be the key to success." He reinforced this in an interview with *The Guardian*, explaining "In aggregate the UK market is declining but, if you concentrate on local products in different regions, it's a different story." Given that both Bass and Whitbread have been obsessed with national brands for years this would appear to turn their previous corporate philosophy on its head and it will be interesting to see how this pans out in practice.

The takeover of Bass Brewers was accompanied by an invitation to CAMRA to meet Interbrew bosses, and Head of Campaigns Mike Benner said: "We are very encouraged that Interbrew has asked us for an urgent meeting. We are remaining open-minded - and given that neither Bass nor Whitbread showed any commitment to real ale over the last few years, we might even see this as an opportunity. Interbrew is a family-owned brewer which has shown a measure of respect for Belgian beer styles. We will be grilling them over their plans for the promotion of their cask brands, and if they really respect our beer heritage as they say they do we will be urging them to put their money where their mouth is." He added that CAMRA would still be seeking to have the deal referred to the competition authorities as the combined company would have a market share of 32 per cent or more.

THE GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL 2000

It is now not long until that greatest of all beer events takes place. From the 1st - 5th of August, London's Olympia gets turned into the biggest pub of all.

Despite the huge success of 1999 the event will improve and grow this year, we are open longer, the entertainment goes from strength to strength and there is a speciality bar to bring out the patriot in all of us! For the first time ever you can now enjoy all that the GBBF has to offer all day on Thursday as well as Friday. This means that the true devotee can spend a whole day sampling at a time when there are fewer crowds. Naturally we have beer stocks to cope with these longer drinking hours, over 700 different real ales, ciders, perries and imported beers will be on offer, therefore even if you can only make it down on the Saturday, you are still guaranteed a choice that it would take you a month to get through!



Although drinking good beer is an unbeatable pastime in itself, at the GBBF you have a full range of activities and entertainments to choose from. There are, of course, the old favourites of pub games, tombolas and the quiz, but also a wide variety of music. Headlined on the Friday night with T-Rextasy, playing all of Marc Bolan's classics, there is full supporting line-up throughout the week covering most musical tastes from classical to jazz to swing to a showcase of up and coming talent from the Parlophone/EMI record label.

Many brewers these days bring out new beers to mark special events or anniversaries and this year a momentous anniversary happens during the GBBF. Her Majesty the Queen Mother will be celebrating her one hundred birthday and we have a whole bar dedicated to beer celebrating this event. The bar will be decked out in her racing colours of red and mauve and sponsored by Young's of Wandsworth (who have had a close relationship with Her Majesty over the years.) Don't forget to raise your glass and say "Happy birthday Ma'am."

If you are not sold on the idea already then don't forget there is a great food range encompassing many different world styles, a family room with live entertainment for the children, a lounge exclusively for CAMRA members to drink their beer in peace and a friendly atmosphere that is guaranteed to have you making new friends before your visit is over.

More details, including how to book advance tickets can be found on the official website at www.gbbf.org

IN JULY'S OPENING TIMES

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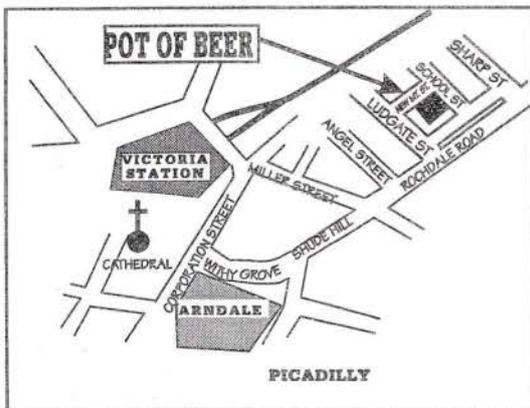
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

Whether we like it or not, Interbrew, a company most drinkers had never heard of just a few weeks ago, now controls one third of this country's beer market. It's easy to rush in with knee-jerk condemnations and indeed takeovers have a history of being bad for beer drinkers with choice and variety invariably eroded.

However, it is necessary to stand back and consider the alternatives. Much like the Wolves & Dudley takeover of Marstons, if the alternative was leaving Bass and Whitbread in the hands of its previous owners then their takeover was one of the least worst options available. Similarly, none of the other brewing multi-nationals in the frame could lay claim to the tradition and respect for local brands claimed by Interbrew. On the other hand let's not get carried away with any attempts by Interbrew to paint themselves as a cuddly family brewer, albeit a very large one. True they do own 180 brands worldwide. Also true they do make some very respectable local beers for the Belgian market, including one or two world classics. They also churn out a large amount of pretty bog-standard lager as well.

Make no mistake this is no organisation of benign sentimentalists. Their onward march has been pretty relentless and as Tim Webb memorably records in his Good Beer Guide to Belgium & Holland, "a typical collection of Belgian breweriana consists of relics from successful and well-loved breweries whose souls are now buried in the concrete piles beneath Leuven No. 2 mega-brewery".

Having said all that, their track record when it comes to producing minority beers for local markets is one that puts the likes of Bass and Whitbread to shame. Unlike their erstwhile UK counterparts, and now subsidiaries, they do genuinely seem to have tried to strike a balance between national branding and local products. If this philosophy is now bolted on to the Bass and Whitbread brewing operations, we could be in for some interesting times indeed.

John Clarke

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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). 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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Fight for Consumer Choice in Pubs - Join CAMRA now - see page 19!

PUB OF THE MONTH JULY 2000

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The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Old Monkey, Portland Street, Manchester City Centre.

One of the newer Holt's pubs but very much in the traditional style, the Old Monkey occupies a prominent position on the corner of Princess Street and has recently benefited from a recent major refurbishment. This has resulted in the pub attracting a great deal of new trade giving it a broader customer base with a more welcoming atmosphere.

The continuing traditional style and atmosphere is all the more remarkable for a relatively new pub in a prominent position in a city centre where café bars and other 'style' venues are increasingly the norm. This happy state of affairs which can be put down to Holt's who are the only one of our local brewers not to dip their toes in the waters of the 'bar' trade, although, giving credit where it is due, the traditional values are also maintained by the Monkey's near neighbours the Circus (Punch Taverns) and Grey Horse (Hydes).

The beer's good, too. Holt's Mild and Bitter are now back on form after last year's terrible quality problems and are usually served impeccably in the Monkey.

Of course it takes more than bricks and mortar, and a decent product to make a good pub. This is down to those who actually run the place and in the shape of management couple Theresa and David Bailey, ably assisted by their friendly bar staff, Holt's have licensees who are perfectly suited to the traditional values embodied in the Old Monkey.

Their continued hard work and dedication make this a very well deserved award, which will be presented on Thursday 27th July. Given its location, the Old Monkey is well served by public transport from all points of the compass so it promises to be a busy night. JH.

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

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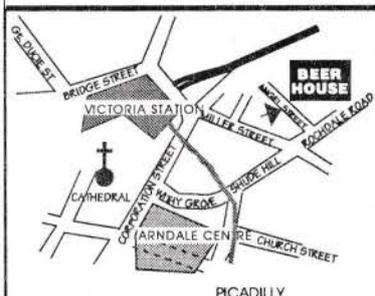
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STAGGER

with Jim Flynn

Gatley & Cheadle at the Gallop

These two prosperous suburbs of Stockport boast a wide variety of pubs, most of which serve cask beer so tonight's Stagger had to push on at a fair old pace. No time for distractions either so we gave the brash and keg-only Red Lion in Gatley a well-deserved wide berth and made our way to the *Prince of Wales* on Gatley Green.

This multi-roomed country-style pub is always a very pleasant place to drink with low-ceilinged, comfortable rooms within and outside an extensive drinking area overlooking the green. Hydes' Mild and Bitter are the cask beers, both on electric pump, and on good form to boot.

Almost next door is the newest addition to the Gatley real ale scene, **Gothic Bar**, the Robert Cain Brewery's only local outlet, and indeed their only pub outside Merseyside. They have a reputation for impressive refurbishments and when you see what they have done to this essentially unpromising building, it really does put the Red Lion down the road to shame. Five cask beers were on handpump - Cain's own Mild, Bitter and FA plus two guest beers Mordue Workie Ticket and Moorhouses Thunderstruck. We tried the Mild and both guests and all were well worth drinking, albeit a touch too cold for some of us. On the evidence of this visit, Gothic certainly deserved both its recent 'Pub of the Month' award and 'Cask Marque' accreditation.

Down the road now to the **Horse & Farrier**, another delightful Hydes' pub at the junction of Gatley Road and Church Road. This was the busiest pub so far and was already quite full. Inside you are struck by the rambling multi-roomed layout with ornate leaded glass in the screens between the rooms, all happily preserved during the latest refurbishment. The pub is well worth a visit but tonight the Light and Bitter, whilst perfectly acceptable, were not up to this pub's usual high standards. Jekyll's Gold is also available but we didn't try this.

It was tempting to hike down to the excellent **High Grove** on Silverdale Road, the third Hydes' pub in Gatley but time was pressing so we hopped on the next bus to Cheadle where more Hydes' awaited us.

The first pub/bar you come to is **Carpe Diem**, tired-looking, all-keg and surely due yet another metamorphosis into the latest money making wheeze of the marketing whiz kids. We preferred a proper pub and headed for the **Crown**, the third Hydes' pub of the night. To me this pub always feels as though it was initially designed as a shop rather than a pub (*it was, I think - ed*) but the latest refurbishment has made the best out of what is essentially an L-shaped box. The Mild and Bitter were in excellent form but I am afraid to say that same couldn't be said of the Jekyll's Gold which was distinctly below par.

Over the road now to the **White Hart** which was full, with a mainly young clientele. The pub is not without character with plenty of wood panelling and traditional fittings, although it has been knocked about a bit over the years, largely to its detriment. The sole cask beer was Boddingtons Bitter which was OK. Top-ups had to be requested, though - licensee please note!

Walking past the **Muse** (previously the *Vine*), all-keg and, according to one of our party, recently bought by new owners, we progressed to the **Old Star Inn**, our fourth Hydes' pub of the night (is there any other pub crawl where you could drink so much Hydes' beer?). I always think that the ornate exterior with the large 'Hydes Queens Brewery' sign makes the interior of the pub something of an anti-climax, although given the comfortable lounge and traditional vault this is probably unfair. We tried all the beer with Jekyll's Gold and *Clever Endeavour* (the then-current seasonal) above average, and the *Light and Bitter* both on good form.

We reluctantly moved on down the High Street to the **George & Dragon**. Another very crowded pub with a young clientele and, I have to say, not my favourite port of call tonight. The décor is a bit of a hotch-potch and the dark green wallpaper a definite no-no in my opinion. Having said that, the staff were numerous and obviously well-trained so there were no problems with service, despite the crowds. Greenalls Bitter received mixed reviews; Tetley Bitter was unavailable although the pump-clips weren't turned round.

It was getting late and we headed up Manchester Road to the **Ashlea**, which was almost empty. I suspect that this is because the pub is a 'Henry's Table' concentrating on food, so presumably the diners had already departed (or had they never arrived in the first place?). There's just one cask beer, Boddingtons Bitter, which had about as much flavour as the pub had customers.

At this point we split up, dependent on buses home. My party called at the **Cheshire Lines** on Manchester Road, a pub as empty as the last one, and perhaps for much the same reasons. Owners Wolverhampton & Dudley have endeavoured to make this pub, housed in the old Cheadle Station, an upmarket eatery and from what the bar staff told us, the pub attracts a lot of car-based custom at lunch-times. There were two cask beers - Banks's Bitter and Marston's Pedigree - and both were above average. Full marks too, for the lined glasses ensuring full pints.

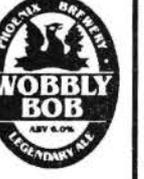
Our colleagues went down Stockport Road to visit the hugely improved **Royal Oak**. They report a buzzing, welcoming pub with a warm comfortable atmosphere. It's a Robinson's house with Hatters Mild, Best Bitter and Old Tom on handpump. All three were in tip-top condition, with the Old Tom making for a particularly potent night cap!

Altogether an interesting night with a varied selection of pubs and beer. On a personal note I think those in Gatley were more to my taste than the Cheadle offerings but very few of the pubs disappointed. And of course this article can only reflect the impressions gained on one particular night and can't be taken as a once and for all judgement of the pubs or their beers - as ever why not make the journey decide for yourself.





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MORE CHOICE BETTER BEER

 1998 International Brewing Awards
Wobbly Bob awarded Silver Medal

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OPENING TIMES

LETTERS

From Jim Flynn, Heaton Chapel:

As organiser of the Stockport Beer & Cider Festival in June, I would like to thank everybody who made the event the success it undoubtedly was.

I would firstly like to thank all my colleagues on the Festival Organising Committee without whom there could have been no festival, and to all of the volunteer unpaid staff who worked so hard throughout the week. I am grateful to our licensee Paul Stanyer for having the guts to entrust us with his license.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who came as drinkers and customers to the festival without whom the whole thing would have been totally pointless.

From Mervyn Reeves, Community Fundraiser, St Ann's Hospice:

I wanted to say a big thank you to you, Dave Hanson, Roy the Beer Manager, and all your stewards for their help at the Festival. We are very pleased with the contacts made, the lessons learnt and for the fundraising, which realised £1150 after paying for the soft drinks and chocolate. We are very grateful to the visitors, to Richard Bazen of Bridgewater Brewery and to Ted Jones the cider maker for their generosity. So we are already looking forward to next year taking on board all that was said and learnt, with some new ideas and having experienced a very enjoyable Festival.

Please pass on my personal thanks to all concerned.

From Nigel Stevenson, James Clay & Sons, Elland, West Yorks:

We were interested to read The Beer Monster's comments on the demise of Manchester's Belgian beer supplier and how it would affect choice. However it is most definitely not the case that the choice of Belgian beer has to be reduced.

James Clay & Sons import beer directly from a multitude of brewers, not only in Belgium, but also from Holland, Germany and the United States. This gives us full brewery support to include glasses, publicity material and a first class installation

for draught beers. Any publican can source from us draught beers from: Achouffe - including the rare seasonal beer as well as the normal beers; De Koninck - Antwerp's finest ales; Riva - home of Liefman's fruit beers, Dentergem wheat beer and at least six other interesting beers; Timmermans - draught lambic fruit beers; Westmalle - the only Belgian trappist beer available on draught; Kwak - a quirky Flanders brew; La Trappe - Dutch abbey/trappist beers on tap.

Not to mention - Anchor Steam - from San Francisco, the granddaddy of micro brewing and Erdinger - German wheat beer. Add to that 200 beers from Belgium and around the world, surely enough even to keep the Beer Monster happy.

(Well actually.....no! I have no objection to the free advert for Clays masquerading as the letter above. After Martin Kinderman ceased trading, Clays is veritably the only realistic option for draught Belgian beer (except for Interbrew products (ex Whitbread) such as Hoegaarden & Leffe). No draught Delerium Tremens, special winter brews like Kasteel Triple (a previous Beer of the Month), no K8 (the only draught krieb I drink by choice) and indeed no St Loui's Krieb (far, far better than Bellevue). Whilst I quite like Timmermans peche the frambozen is disgusting, Dentergem Wheat is so bland even the slight cloying sweetness is welcome (though I was no great fan of Vlaams Wit, it must be said). In any case, virtually all of the above beers were already permanently or regularly available in one or more of the main foreign beer outlets in town, so what we are suffering is a reduction of choice, and more unwelcome duplication. Martin is in fact now associated with Carringtons, but although some draught products are available through them prices are nearly prohibitive. While Clays are banging their own drum though.... Why is their German list so utterly wretched? Draught Erdinger (possibly the blandest wheat beer in Germany - mass marketed at places like airport bars, and made bland so as to be unobjectionable) and a handful of safe mainstream bottled products, a few gassy northern lagers and a handful of well known wheat beers. I presume that the short shelf-life of unpasteurised German products (mainly less than 9, or in some cases 6 months) as opposed to use by dates of 2002/3 for mainstream Belgian bottles puts them off. And as for Anchor Steam, well its now about as original to San Francisco as the Village People were all Gay. Still despite unwholesomely large glass/crate deposits James Clay are fairly reliable, very fairly priced and can be contacted on 01422 377560, e-mail info@jamesclay.co.uk. There's also a web site at www.beersolutions.co.uk - The Beer Monster, deputising for ed(2))

From Steve Costello (via e-mail)

As a regular at the Lass O' Gowrie. I was somewhat mystified by your front page article concerning this establishment.

The pub has in fact previously been unbranded from the Hogshead stable, a move which will allow Jamie Bell not only to continue brewing, but to more fully utilise the brewing facilities to produce other fine beers to run alongside the always excellent LOG 42.

I am sure CAMRA will not only be keen to set the record straight, but will endeavour to support Jamie in his efforts

(The Lass O' Gowrie is indeed a fine pub. The problem is, if Whitbread wish to become a pure pub company and so free themselves from the provisions of the Beer Orders, as they currently stand, then they will have to divest themselves of all their brewing interests. In that event it is highly unlikely that the Lass O' Gowrie would be sold but its brewery would certainly have to go - ed(1). I have tried to catch Jamie a couple of times in the last month without success, because I know he has been hoping to move to full mash brewing. I very much hope he does, but in all likelihood circumstances look likely to confound him. I can confirm that the Lass was not included in the Whitbread brewing assets sold to Interbrew, that part of the rationale was to free the pubs of the Beer Orders, and that Whitbread have only now remembered the brew pubs very existence. Sadly we have to stand by our predictions in the last issue - ed(2).)

From Rhys Jones, Aberystwyth:

Paul Hutchings (Letters, June) describes CAMRA as having "less marketing know-how than the average gnat". This is grossly unfair to gnats, who have got their pee into thousands of pubs up and down the country.

Many a true word....ed(2)



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WHITBREAD - A LOOK BACK (IN ANGER?)

Over 250 years of brewing history came to an end when Whitbread sold their brewing interests to Interbrew last month. This article briefly traces that history on the national stage and here in the North West

Early Days

Most of today's brewing giants grew from humble beginnings and so it was with company founder Samuel Whitbread whose entry into the brewing world took place on 11 December 1742. This was the date on which he went into partnership with Godfrey and Thomas Shewell to acquire the Goat Brewhouse on the corner of Old Street and Whitecross Street in the City of London.

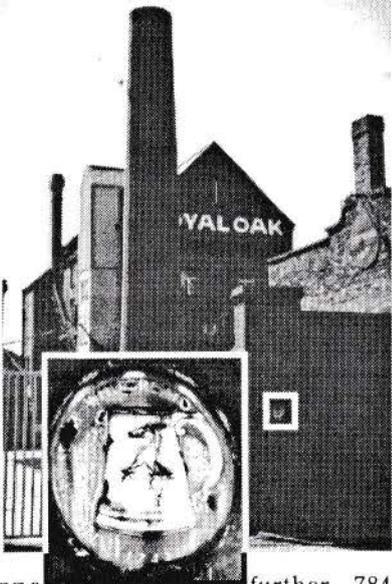
This coincided with the emergence of porter as the main drink of London's working classes. This was a beer which required long maturation and consequently it wasn't long before the economies of scale implicit in porter production made themselves apparent. No one saw this potential more clearly than Whitbread and so in 1750 a new brewery was built in Chiswell Street, again in the City. Henceforward the company's history is one of continuous expansion. By 1758 Whitbread and Shewell had become London's largest brewers and by the end of the century the Chiswell Street Brewery had expanded to become one of the wonders of London.

The business became a private limited company in 1889 and shortly thereafter the first brewery take-over took place when H V Nicholl's Anchor Brewery in Lewisham was purchased. The next 30 years saw a steady stream of similar purchases, culminating with the 1929 acquisition of Jude, Hanbury & Co, a Kentish company which also brought into the fold Mackeson & Co, producers of the famous sweet stout. This swiftly became a nationally available product and by the early 1960s accounted for about 50% of Whitbread's total output. Still, though, Whitbread remained just a large regional brewery based in London and the Home Counties. It was only in 1948 that the company was floated on the stock market and even then the ruling families kept control by means of a 'two tier' share structure. It was then, under the chairmanship of Colonel Bill Whitbread that the company began its inexorable expansion into a national giant.

Into the North West

One of the first acquisitions, and one that goes unmentioned in many brewery histories, was in Stockport. The old Daniel Clifton Royal Oak Brewery on Hillgate was bought in 1946 to brew beers for the north of England, subsequently closing in 1957. To this day the Whitbread plaque can still be seen on one of the gateposts.

Tennant Brothers of Sheffield were bought in 1961, which brought a clutch of north Derbyshire pubs into the Whitbread fold. Tennant's Exchange Brewery survived for another 32 years, only closing in 1993. The most famous Tennant's product, and one that is still with us today, was Gold Label Barley Wine. Dutton's Blackburn Brewery was the next major purchase in the North West, bringing a



further 784 pubs into the Whitbread estate. Duttons operated as Whitbread West Pennines Ltd until closure in 1978.

For local drinkers the big one came in 1967 with the £24 million take-over of Threlfalls Chesters. This company had been formed just six years earlier with the merger of Chesters Brewery of Ardwick and Threlfalls of Salford and Liverpool in 1961. The Ardwick brewery had already closed (1966) at the time of the takeover which brought over 800 local pubs into the Whitbread empire. The Cook Street Brewery lasted until 1989 and the listed tower is currently undergoing restoration, the rest of the premises having been demolished. The famous Chesters Mild was the last of the old local brews to survive, a ghost of a beer hawked from brewery to brewery until its ignominious end last year.

There was of course one last take-over in the pipeline. As Cook Street closed, Boddington's Strangeways Brewery was bought with the intention of making the famous Boddington's Bitter, already emasculated prior to the take-over, into a national brand. That they succeeded is in no doubt but at the expense of what little character remained in the beer. With the take-over came the Higsons Brewery of Liverpool which was swiftly closed although it lives on today as the Robert Cain Brewery. Boddingtons had already taken over and closed the Oldham Brewery in the 1980s.

Such has been the pace of brewery closures by Whitbread that the Strangeways Brewery was the group's last cask ale plant and has now passed to Interbrew along with the keg-only brewery at Salmesbury in Lancashire. It remains to be seen what sort of future beckons.JC.

BEERS OF THE FESTIVAL Top Award Goes North of the Border

A highlight of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival is the Beer of the Festival competition, voted on by festival customers and staff. This year the voting was particularly close in all categories, and closer still in the run-off for overall Festival Champion, with only a handful of votes separating the top places. The winner in the Speciality Beer section, and overall Beer of the Festival, was Fraoch Heather Ale from Heather Ales of Strathaven, south of Glasgow. Fraoch (which is Gaelic for heather) is made with flowering heather following an ancient tradition and combines a floral, peaty aroma with a spicy, herbal, woody flavour and proved a big hit with this year's festival goers. Bruce Williams, who started producing the beer back in 1992, was "astounded" when he heard. While his beer has picked up 'beer of the festival' awards in the past they have all been from Scotland. As a direct consequence of the award, Fraoch should be more widely seen locally.

In the Mild category, honours were shared between Phoenix Monkey Town Mild, last year's category winner, and Swale Black Marigold Mild. The Bitter and Premium Bitter classes were combined this year and were won by the superb Nettlethresher from the Barge & Barrel brewpub in Elland. In fact it was a double win for John Eastwood's Barge & Barrel brewery as Black Stump won the Stout/Porter category too.

It was two years on the trot for the winner of the Old Ale class as well with local favourite Old Tom picking up the honours again, reinforcing its reputation as the classic beer of its type. *Particular thanks are also due to Robinson's for supplying a number of Old Tom and Frederics T-shirts which were won by lucky Robinson's drinkers throughout the Festival.*

Festival Winners - At A Glance

Mild - joint winners Phoenix Monkey Town Mild' Swale Black Marigold Mild; **Bitter/Premium Bitter** - Barge & Barrel Nettlethresher; **Stout/Porter** - Barge & Barrel Black Stump; **Speciality Beer and Overall Champion** - Heather Ales Fraoch; **Old Ale** - Robinson's Old Tom; **Cider** - Coombs Kingston Black; **Perry** - Gwatkin Oldfield Sweet.



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New Ales From Robbies, Hydes and Lees

At last, Robinson's are experimenting with seasonal beers, admittedly without much in the way of a fanfare. Whistling Will, named after a 19th Century local eccentric, is a 4 per cent ale, well described as a summer ale having a smooth, clean and refreshing palate. It is also a touch sweeter, and less hoppy than the norm for Robinson's, too.

You might have to search for it, though. The new range of seasonals, there will be one every other month for the next year, is initially being brewed for the Beer Seller wholesalers although it will also be going into many of Robinson's managed houses (Its on in Cobdens on the A6, Offerton and perhaps the Dog & Partridge, Great Moor) and a handful of tenancies. Among these is the Caledonia in Ashton, the Castle on Oldham Street in Manchester City Centre and Stockport's Swan With Two Necks. If we can get a full list we'll let you know.

More well established are the seasonal ranges from both Hydes and Lees, and both have new beers out this month. From Lees it is their well-established summer favourite, Scorchor (4.2%), a tasty, quenching beer. Rain Bar in the City Centre should be a guaranteed outlet. From Hydes, it's the latest in their "T'Ale of the Century" range with Your Bard, an excruciating pun commemorating William Shakespeare. It's a 4 per cent, easy drinking beer for the summer, and should be available in many of their pubs.

Cheap Pint Champion Dies

Peter Kershaw, Chairman and Joint Managing Director of the Joseph Holt Group, died on 31 May, aged 85. He was the great-great-grandson of Joseph Holt, who set up the Derby Brewery in 1849. Peter Kershaw went to work in the brewhouse after the Second World War and became brewery manager in 1953. He became Chairman when his uncle, Sir Edward Holt, died in 1968. In the 1960s and 1970s, when keg beers were being promoted by many brewers, Peter Kershaw preferred to maintain production of traditional beer at low prices. In 1971 he wrote, "I believe that the public have realised that many independent breweries brew what might be called an old-fashioned draught beer, as opposed to keg and tanker beer, and that the price is considerably less. It is, of course, more trouble to look after, but I believe, something the customer is looking for."

Holts became a limited company in the 1950s but more recently the issue of shares on the open market was considered to be of no benefit for the future of the brewery. Earlier this year there was initiated a process to bring it back into the control of the family and other directors, with Peter Kershaw as president of the new company. The continuing success of Holts in the 21st Century owes much to his influence. **SR.**

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Troubled Times At Bridgewater

As we went to press, brewing had stopped at Bridgewater Ales, the last brew of Navigator having been put through on 23 June. Hopefully though, the brewery may bounce back, for this hiatus is nothing to do with financial problems (the company has been trading successfully) but is the result of a parting of the ways between the main figures involved.

All the directors have tendered their resignations, thus leaving the company in a state of limbo. Brewer Richard Bazen and salesman Danny Bates are off to Phoenix Brewery to carry on the same work there, and indeed should be firmly ensconced as you read this. We understand that Receivers may be appointed at Bridgewater but this will really be a technicality. The only real creditor is Bailey Instruments, owned by Tim Bailey who has been involved with the brewery since its inception and it is likely that it will now pass back into his hands. OT does understand that Tim Bailey is looking to put a new team together and has already asked a Gary Short, a former keen homebrewer, to take on the brewing side. Clearly, it's early days yet and hopefully the position will be clearer next month. Let's hope we have not yet seen the last of what has so far been an excellent brewery.

More Micro News

It is meanwhile, business as usual at the other small brewers in the area. The ever-reliable Phoenix Brewery are producing a range of 'White' beers, in a style which seems popular with all generations of drinkers. Out so far are White Tornado, a 4.3 per cent wheat beer, and White Typhoon, a 5 per cent strong, golden, hoppy brew. OT can testify that this latter is truly superb and is a classic of the style - get it while you can! To come is White Hurricane (it was in the fermenting vessels at the end of June), which will be 4.5 per cent, light, bitter and "very, very hoppy". By contrast, the less bitter Struggling Monkey (4.7%) is coming back by popular demand and also look out for Midsummer Madness, a seasonal regular from Phoenix but this year on particularly good form - "not to be missed" says Phoenix's Tony Allen.

There's quite a lot of work going on tidying up the imposing Phoenix Brewery building, too. Once this is complete, work should start on the on-site bar at the end of August. This has been prompted by the re-opening of the railway to Heywood by the East Lancs Railway. Steam trains should again be using the station (which is directly opposite the brewery) by next Easter.

Having gained rave reviews for the June special, Summer Solstice, Rochdale's Pictish Brewery is producing Siren for July. This is a 4.1 per cent wheat beer brewed using coriander seeds and orange peel, in the Belgian style, although this will be a clear beer rather than the cloudy version favoured by our continental colleagues.

There's a new beer from Bank Top, too. This is the oddly-named Bungee Jump, a 4.5 per cent bitter brewed to commemorate a 200-foot bungee jump by (not exactly slimline) brewer John Feeney on 5 July. The beer was initially going into the Wrights Arms at Belmont, venue of said jump, although it should appear elsewhere in the free trade. The Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport is a regular outlet for Bank Top beers these days. We understand that Bank Top may also be looking to produce a dark mild.

Congleton's Beartown Brewery has a new beer out too. This is a quaffing ale called Goldie Hops, a 3.5 per cent, light, hoppy bitter. This will be permanently on sale at the Beartown Tap in Congleton as their session beer. Look out for 'Beartown Tap' T-shirts, too - more details about these next month.

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CIDER FRENZY

Stockport Festival Cider Manager Charlotte Bulmer reports from the front line

Firstly, to those of you who arrived midway through Saturday evening expecting to enjoy some cider or perry: my apologies. Never before in the history of the Festival has the cider run out before the beer. In spite of starting our first session on Thursday evening with 220 gallons, of 26 different ciders and 11 different perries, and reaching Saturday evening with 9 different ciders and 6 different perries still available, we had completely sold out by quarter past 9! I'm sorry to those of you who were disappointed - we'll try and make sure that there's enough for everyone next year! You, the customers, voted for the Perry and Cider of the Festival. The winners are:

Cider of the Festival: Coombes' Kingston Black
Perry of the Festival: Gwatkin's Oldfield

In the autumn, at cider-making time, we shall be visiting Chris Coombes (near Highbridge, Somerset) and Dennis Gwatkin (Abbeystead, Herefordshire), and presenting them with plaques to mark their achievements.



And more awards: once again, we hosted the CAMRA National Championships for Cider and Perry, organised by APPLE, the special campaigning group within CAMRA which is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of traditional ciders and perries, and run locally by opening Times co-editor Paul Hutchings. Unlike the Stockport Cider and Perry of the Festival, which are voted for by the Festival customers, the National Championships are judged by a panel of cider makers, writers and enthusiasts, who taste each cider and perry blind, marking them for flavour, aroma, aftertaste etc. The judges this year were clearly sweet-toothed - only one of the winners is a dryish style. The awards were judged

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The serious business of Cider & Perry judging in progress...

and announced on Saturday, and are as follows:

Cider

Gold Award: Weston's Old Rosie (for the second year running)
Silver Award: Gwatkin's Yarlinton Mill (also for the second year running)
Bronze Award: Luscombe dry cider

Perry

Gold Award: Dunkerton's
Silver Award: Weston's
Bronze Award: Gwatkin's Oldfield

Congratulations to all the winners. You will be able to try them all again at next year's Festival, I hope, along with many others.

It's enormous fun, and very hard work, running the cider bar: my particular thanks to Rhys Jones and Applejack Dundee, who ensured that everything ran smoothly behind the bar, and that the customers enjoyed their drinks. Thanks also to Inn-Cider Trading, and Merrylegs, who sourced most of the excellent ciders and perries. We look forward to more of the same next year. And thanks to all of you, who drank the bar dry!





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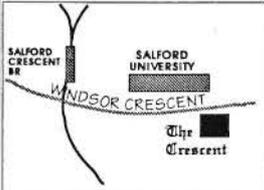
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Who Owns Your Pub?

A major trend of recent years has been the way the big brewers have sold off their tenanted estates to new pub companies such as Pubmaster and Enterprise Inns. You're now more likely to find your local owned by a Japanese bank than a local brewery. You may wonder what interest a Japanese bank may have in running pubs in England, and the answer is none - their interest is purely in making money, and they look at their pubs as a property portfolio. The same is true to some degree for all the other new pub companies. Their aim is to spend as little money as they can get away with, and raise the rent as high as they can, so long as the tenants can manage to struggle on in business.

And they will find that struggle ever more difficult. The big brewers have kept the cream of their estates for themselves, and spent a lot of money on them developing branded concepts from Chef & Brewer to All Bar One. At the same time, new operators, notably Wetherspoon's and Yates's, have themselves invested heavily in developing their own brands. You may not think much of these concepts, but at least they give the pub goer a clear view of the style of pub to expect, and they are undeniably successful.

In the past, pub tenants would at least know that they came under the umbrella of a brewery who had an interest in selling their beers through their pubs, would spend money promoting their brand and who would assist tenants with business plans. But nobody cares which faceless pub company owns their local, and they certainly won't spend any money advertising the fact. Pub company leaseholders, however hard they work at the job, are going to find it increasingly hard to compete against the big boys with their expensively-promoted pub brands and lavish investment budgets. The pub companies usually also deny their tenants the one weapon they could use to fight back - the right to stock a range of interesting real ales as well as the dull mass-market brands you can find in all of the big boys' pubs too.

More Equal than Others

A number of new office developments in London are apparently incorporating unisex toilets, as seen in "Ally McBeal", so how long will it be before we see this phenomenon spreading to pubs? It's certainly common in foreign bars, but it's generally seen as an indicator that foreigners are less civilised than we are. It should help reduce queues in the ladies - and also ensure that there's a seat and a supply of loo roll if a man needs to use "the trap". But, on the other hand, there have been numerous objections from women on the grounds that the toilet is a vital space for gossiping, and they don't want to be exposed to men's noxious smells and general lack of hygiene.

There is, of course, a sound natural reason for having different kinds of facilities. However, there seems to be a growing dog-in-the-manger attitude that, as women can't use urinals, men shouldn't have them either, even though they are quick and convenient. This has led to the disappearance of the male-only public urinals which were once common in our towns and cities. (I think there may still be one in Glossop, but, there again, Glossop's way behind the times anyway). Help may be at hand, though, as a Swedish sanitary ware manufacturer has struck a blow for equality by developing a special female urinal that has appeared in at least one trendy London nightclub. But somehow I think it will be a long time before we see them in the Holt's estate.

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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JULY '95

The main front page headline was "Be Independent - Support Your Local Brewers". This drew attention to CAMRA making every July 'Independents' Month' - this time there were no less than 350 independent brewers, and a new one had opened every week during 1994.

The independents could be relied upon to emphasise choice, quality, and value for money:

Choice - they were producing 1100 real ales, brewed to local tastes for local markets.

Quality - during the judging of the Good Beer guide "Beers of the Year", 43 out of the 46 awards went to the independents, and the (then) five national brewers won only three awards between them (and two of those were for bottled beers).

Value for Money - tied pubs of independent brewers were consistently cheaper than tied pubs of national brewers - and generally cheaper than many free houses, too.

The independent brewers based in or near Greater Manchester were listed: Robinson's, Richard Cobdens (Stockport); Hydes Anvil, Holt's (Manchester); Lees (Middleton Junction); Oak (Heywood); Millgate (Failsworth); McGuinness (Rochdale); Burtonwood, Coach House (Warrington); Porters (Haslingden); Beartown (Congleton); Weetwood (Tarporley).

Hydes' Anvil had long been thought of as the sleepest of the local brewers, but this opinion had now changed. Victory Ale had been introduced for the VE day celebrations, and it sold about five times more than expected. Summer Ale was to follow in early July, and something else was planned for early autumn. Brewers up and down the country were discovering that one-off and seasonal beers were a way of increasing interest in their pubs and beers generally. This has certainly happened in Hydes' case.

There were some comments on the proposed merger between brewing giants Scottish & Newcastle and Courage, and the effect it was likely to have on the brewing industry and drinkers alike. After considering brewery closures, loss of brands and jobs, the last word went to CAMRA's Steve Cox: "This merger is grossly anti-competitive. It will give one brewer up to a third of the UK market. We believe that it will mean higher prices for customers and less choice. It will reduce significantly competition in the free trade, and place increasing pressure on smaller brewers. Scottish & Newcastle are gross hypocrites. When Courage bid for them in the 1980's, they argued any merger of the two companies would be against the public interest. We are entitled to ask just what has changed since then." Finally, there was good news about the future of Mr Thomas's Chop House - "a magnificent Edwardian survivor with a superb tiled interior complementing the impressive terracotta façade." After two years in receivership, it had been bought by the Boddington PubCo. The two regular cask beers (Boddingtons Bitter and Flowers Original) had been joined by a guest - this was '125' which had been "specially brewed" at Castle Eden to commemorate the pub's 125th anniversary.



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- ★ CAMRA Good Pub Food Guide 1999
- ★ CAMRA Pub of the Month April 2000

Hydes Ales
Brewers of Traditional Cask Beers
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City Centre Merry-Go-Round

No sooner have we digested the news that Tony & Linda from the excellent Pot of Beer are taking over the management of Bar Centro on Tib street, and have put a well known face in as their presence in the Pot, than she's gone and Tony & Linda are dividing their time between both. By the time you read this, the situation may be different yet again.

What IS certain is that Tony and Linda are putting a real ale stillage and handpumps in the Centro. This will be supplied by Hydes, so Jekylls and the Hydes seasonals are certainties, plus others. The timescale is the next two weeks, I am told.

The Beer House has got a new menu, and there is some loose talk of a couple more handpumps - it will get back to the old standard of Pete's days at this rate....and it may pay you to pay particular attention to some forthcoming changes at the Square Albert (in Albert Square). Despite this being a Punch-owned establishment, informed rumour has it that some well liked faces may soon be in command, and an extensive ale range is on the cards. A rare bit of good news.

I'm holding off on proper festival reviews for a month, to let the dust settle on Stockport. One aside I will make now though, is that if you want sensible results from cider and perry judges - pick enthusiastic amateurs (ie the people who actually drink the stuff) rather than makers, distributors or senior CAMRA apparatchniks. For the second year running, the finalists were put in virtually the reverse order to the results of the heats, and the preliminary results were (imho) a darn sight fairer than the finals. Oh, and don't include any stray scotsmen in the judging panels!

Festivals

Just a line to congratulate Ian (Beer House) and Idy & Sal (Crescent) for their sterling efforts last month, very good indeed. Remember Ian has another one in mid July. Catford was so good I even worked there.... Bhurtpore is coming up - see next page, and of course the Great British Beer Festival (Overpriced, understaffed and too much American beer...no, I jest, its an excellent (if pricey) do with something for everyone) is in the first few days of August. After missing it last year for the first time in memory, I will report from the front next month, must go, I'm off to Derby beerex.

Joint Beers of the Month

Kitchen Grimacing Grapefruit (4.3% abv)

As is well known, I do like Kitchen beers, but often the 'point' or fruit taste is lost. The last one I really liked was the Satsuma, but this was truly glorious. Pale and dry with a nose of hops and citrus, a lightish body is dominated by light and dry malt flavours, with some bitter hop hints and then - bang! A massive citrusy finish that really does taste of grapefruit on the back of the throat, all the way down, drying out from sharp to bitterness. Superb. (Found in the Smithfield Hotel)

Salopian Heaven Sent (4.5% abv)

This was a welcome surprise after a fairly disappointing day. A pale, almost lager-coloured beer, with a slight floral hoppy nose. A sharp bite moderates to a fine balance of pale malt and hop, leading to a short crisp dry finish. There is a slight, almost tantalising sweetness that comes and goes in the middle. Refreshing, delightful and moreish. The very essence of summer. Martin Barry deserves a slap on the back. (Tried in the Pot of Beer)

Robinsons Whistling Will (4.0% abv)

This would get a recommendation whatever it tasted like, just because Robbies have finally seen fit to launch a seasonal range. Hooray! In fact, its actually very nice. I wasn't expecting to get hold of any until after publication, but to my shock, I found it in (of all places) Cobdens in Stockport. It was a little green (though I prefer my beers on the young side) and I think the sweetish finish will moderate in time, nevertheless, light, thirst quenching, a good rounded though not powerful flavour, with a short clean finish. Not much hop, or aroma, but a very accessible and pleasant summer pint. Well worth a try.



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The first and only pub in Ashton to sell Frederic's premium 5.0% since it was brewed.
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Parties catered for -
hot and cold buffets
and theme nights

12.00 - 3.00 Sunday. 3 course special plus full menu

Festival News

There will be a special beer for the Bhurtpore Inn Beer Festival. Crewe & Shrewsbury Passenger Association Chairman John Cresswell is currently negotiating with Norman Pearce, landlord of the Sun Inn, Corfton, South Shropshire, to bring a barrel of Norman's Secret Hop beer to the Bhurtpore from Craven Arms by train. Negotiations are also underway with Wales & West Trains Ltd for permission to transport the beer by train. Wales & West kindly agreed to similar arrangements last year for a barrel of beer from the Tomos Watkin Brewery at Llandeilo to be transported to Wrenbury.

The Secret Hop beer is brewed using a new variety of dwarf hop to 4.5 percent ABV. These experimental hops are usually snapped up by regional brewers, but Norman Pearce has managed to obtain a supply. Festival goers are reminded that this year through trains from Piccadilly to Wrenbury depart at 11.33 and 14.33 on Sat 15th July.

High Peak & North East Cheshire CAMRA will be running the 3rd Real Ale bar at the Glossop Rugby Club 7-a-side Competition Weekend from Friday 25 August to Sunday 27th. The venue will again be at Hargate Hill Lane, Charlesworth, Glossop and the opening hours are 7-11 Friday, 12-11 Saturday and 12-10.30 Sunday. Admission will be free during the day and in the evenings CAMRA members will only have to pay £1. Twenty different beers and ciders are in prospect.

HAZEL GROVE GOES MISSING

Some of the sharp eyed among you may have noticed the rather glaring error in the advert for the Three Tuns, London Road Hazel Grove in the 14th Stockport Beer & Cider Festival Programme, it had apparently relocated to Heaton Chapel. Now I know where it is, and there were three proofreaders - who ALL know where it is...so, having failed to contact Mulder & Scully for an explanation, I can only offer humble apologies. PBH

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George and Dragon, Higher Hurdsfield

This month Rick Caveney joins the Opening Times team as our pub food correspondent. Rick will be mainly covering the Macclesfield area and Manchester City Centre. Other parts of the OT area will of course also be covered by other occasional correspondents.

Follow the Hurdsfield road from Macclesfield centre up the steep Rainow road where the country and town meet. There, resting peacefully at the top of the hill, sits 'The George and Dragon'. A beautiful old style pub split into three separate rooms; there's the large bar/eating area, a smaller back (snug) room and separate pool room. The background music is quiet and laid back and although there is a fruit machine it has the sound (thankfully) turned off.

There are three guest ales on tap although Courage Directors seems to have become a permanent fixture recently. Other ales of note include Fullers London Pride, Charles Wells Bombardier, several of the excellent Storm Brewery products and a rather tasty newcomer (to my taste buds anyway) Salopian Brewing Company's Minsterley. This is just a tiny section of what has recently been on offer, a casual gaze over the beer mats surrounding the bar area shows the huge array of real ales that have been happily quaffed. The menu itself is quite basic, offering delicious traditional home cooked food in large portions. The term 'Like mother used to make' certainly springs to my mind. Roast chicken, Cumberland sausages, steak & kidney pie, liver and bacon all served up with huge quantities of home cooked real chips not the pale limp excuses for chips that you see so often nowadays.

The breakfast special is one for the Extremely Hungry at £3.95 consisting of sausages, bacon, eggs, tomatoes, beans, oatcakes and of course those tasty chips. The oatcakes make a tasty meal in their own right coming in a range of fillings, the bacon and melted cheese a personal favourite. There's also a good selection of sandwiches, toasties, burgers, jacket potatoes and also a specials board that's

worth checking out. Tea and coffee can also be purchased.

Food is served from 12:00 - 2:00

The George and Dragon can be found at: 61, Rainow Rd, Higher Hurdsfield, Macclesfield, Cheshire. Phone: 01625 424300.

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERBREW

Despite being a multi-billion pound international brewing group, it is still a private company owned by the de Spoelberch, Van Damme and de Mevius families.

There will be a public share offer later this year to replenish coffers drained by the Whitbread and Bass purchases.

The company was formed in 1968 from the merger of the Artois Brewery based at Leuven, east of Brussels, and Piedboef, most of whose breweries have been closed.

Artois claims to have been founded in 1366 although the site is now occupied by a huge modern beer factory.

Although best known in the UK for Stella Artois, its most successful brand is Jupiler, Belgium's top selling beer.

Stella Artois was originally devised as a seasonal Christmas beer in 1926.

Interbrew produces 180 beers world-wide and apart from Stella Artois, is best known in the UK for Leffe abbey beers, Hoegaarden wheat beer and the Belle Vue range of fruit beers.

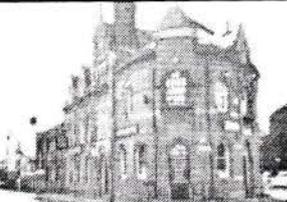
The Chief Executive is Hugo Powell, born in India in 1945 and the holder of both British and Canadian passports. He maintains a home in Toronto where he has built a fully functional pub in his front room.

Prior to the take-over Artois already brewed Whitbread Extra Stout (4.5%) and Bass Pale Ale (5.2%) for the local Belgian market.

Several hundred Belgian staff are to have a sampling of all the newly acquired products. It remains to be seen what they make of such taste-free zones as Carling lager and Worthington Bitter.

14





Mike & Chris
welcome you to the

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Free House

7 REAL ALES

JAZZ

every Wednesday night

FOLK

every Tuesday night

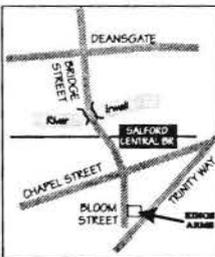
TRIO

every alternate
Saturday afternoon

GROUP

every alternate
Saturday evening

**Draught
Budvar**



A Warm Welcome Awaits Real Ale Lovers at

THE CROWN

Heaton Lane, Under the Viaduct

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Stockport's Premier Cask Ale House

Up to Ten Real Ales

Pub Grub - Bar Snacks
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Every Thursday From July 6

Graham & Jeanette Look Forward
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CAMRA members Discount Sunday Evenings

STOCKPORT & MANCHESTER
Mild
CHALLENGE
2000

**Drinkers Flock to
Make Theirs Mild**

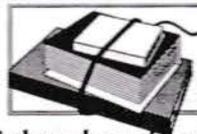
This year's Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge proved to be one of the most successful ever with many participating pubs reporting record levels of interest.

While many more tend to start the Challenge than finish it, this year no less than 92 completed cards were submitted and of those no less than 17 people covered all 64 participating pubs, thereby winning specially engraved pewter tankards. The completed cards alone could account for up to over 2000 pints of mild being drunk as a direct result of the Challenge. Pubs such as the Lass O'Gowrie in Manchester sold mild for the first time ever and found demand such that mild will now feature regularly on the bar. Stockport's Swan With Two Necks stocked Robinson's Dark Mild for the first time and saw sales soar, so much that the pub is attempting to stock the beer on a more regular basis.

Many thanks are due to the Stockport Express for once again sponsoring the Challenge and to Robinson's for allowing us to offer ten brewery trips as prizes. The date had still to be arranged as we went to press but the ten lucky winners, drawn out at Stockport Beer Festival are: Dave Welch, Richard Hough, H Charles, Michael Boardman, L Warburton, B Moorhouse, Brian McLintock, Dave Meynell, Dave Hastie and Steve Smith.

In fact Steve Smith won just about everything going. He covered all the pubs so earned a T-shirt, free mild vouchers and a pewter tankard. He was drawn out for a brewery trip and went on to win the slogan competition with "Dark or Light, It's The Perfect Pint" which will appear on next year's Challenge t-shirts.

Next month, in our final coverage of the Mild Challenge 2000, the Landlady of the Castle Hotel, Oldham Street tells how she and a friend drank mild in every pub on the challenge - and all by public transport (even though one stop was done during a six minute bus turnaround!)



**BOOK
REVIEW**



**Edinburgh and Leith Pub Guide, by Stuart
McHardy, Luath Press, 125pp, £4.95**

Older readers may remember what most pub guides were like before CAMRA came along. Apart from being very few in number, they were generally slackly written and cringingly uncritical, reaching depths of sycophancy seldom seen outside the coverage of royal nuptials. There were exceptions, prominent among them the pioneering Manchester Pub Guide of 1974, but pick up your pint and you'd missed them.

CAMRA's guides were and remain an essential breath of fresh air. Even the best of them, though, lack the space to give a really rounded and discursive view of pub life in their area, and there is undoubtedly room for a fresh approach. In this attractive little book, long-time Edinburgh resident Stuart McHardy gives us a personal view of a selection of over 200 pubs and bars in one of the best drinking cities on earth. Mind you, it's not just his view - many of the entries are enlivened by the thoughts of the mysterious "Man from Fife", described in the blurb as the author's long time drinking partner, though I suspect he may be an alter ego. Whoever he is, his dry observations lend the book wit and edge, and may appeal particularly to devotees of Curmudgeon ("the conversation is brisk and very much of the Scottish sarcastic school, so the Man from Fife was among friends").

Hard-line CAMRA purists should be warned that not all the selected pubs serve real ale, and its presence or absence is not always (though it is usually) made clear. To be certain, you would need CAMRA's Edinburgh guide of 1998, if you can still get hold of a copy - but spending a few days in Edinburgh lately, I found myself using McHardy more and more, CAMRA less and less. In part, that is a function of this guide's vastly superior organisation - where CAMRA's guide (which also covers a wide area outside the capital) includes all the pubs from Leith to south of the by-pass under one vast, sprawling, catch-all Edinburgh heading, McHardy neatly organises the complex city into 11 coherent regions plus a section for outliers and stragglers. Each section contains typically 10 or a dozen main entries of 200-250 words or so, followed by some briefer entries. The pub entries are written with wit and discernment, and are crafted so as to convey the essentials without recourse to symbols, though the opening line of each entry does specify opening hours (I found these to be unfailingly accurate, though admittedly I didn't sample the Leith pub that opens at 6am).

Altogether, this is one of the most attractive and useful pub books I've come across in a long while. Dated 2000, and certainly incorporating changes up to the end of 1999, it's widely available in Edinburgh and can be ordered through good booksellers elsewhere. If you're going to Edinburgh, it's a must. And if you're not planning a trip there, this book might well change your mind. **RPJ.**

Steve and Johanne welcome you to

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



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Hot & Cold Snacks Available

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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE

WITH TIM JONES

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CAMRA

In Marple, the Jolly Sailor on Stockport Road was boarded up as we went to press. According to the sign outside, it is to let through the Unique Pub Co. Also closed is the Whitley Nab in Glossop and the future of the pub is uncertain.

In Buxton, Hydes' have applied for planning permission to redesign the rear of the pub which, I am told, will be closed whilst this major refurbishment is carried out. Staying in Buxton, Whim Ales are brewing a one-off special for the Buxton Festival, held this month. This will be only available at the George in Buxton. The beer in question is Buxton Festival Fringe Frolic Lager. Try saying that after a few! Time was when it would also have been on sale at the Sun... The Beehive, Whitefield, Glossop now has Fuller's London Pride on handpump but on the basis of some you win, some you lose, the Sparrows on Gladstone Street has lost its guest beers.

Finally, news of a major breakthrough. The Bulls Head in Hayfield now has a handpump! OK, it's only Old Speckled Hen but this is a real breakthrough as this has been a bastion of keg for many years. Watch this space!

HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CAMRA

July Featured Pub:

The Royal Oak, Strines

This old established pub dates back to before 1842 when it was listed in records as "house and land". Somewhere between 1861 and 1870 the building was described as "beer house and land" indicating that it had started selling alcohol and the first landlady was one Martha Sumner who died in 1870. The beer house subsequently had many changes of ownership but in 1895 was sold to the partnership of Henry, Alfred and Thomas Bell, a concern that subsequently became Bell & Co. This Stockport brewery was taken over by Robinson's in 1949 and they of course still own the pub today.

A feature of the pub over the years was its long-term occupancy by two families. The Stephens were licensees from 1894 to 1920 but their tenure was surpassed by the Middletons. Fred Middleton Senior ran the pub from 1945 to 1951 and after a three year gap, his son, also Fred took over in 1954 and ran the pub for 29 years until his death in 1984 after which the pub passed to his widow Vera. In 1999 the license was taken by Ken Moon, well known for previously running the Sportsmans Arms just up the road. Aply assisted by son Jamie and his wife, Ken has given the pub a new lease of life.

The quality of the beer is consistently good and must be a serious candidate for next year's Good Beer Guide. Ken's wife cooks good home made food for the pub and there is a small restaurant section. In the vault, the bench seating has been reupholstered and moves are afoot to alter the bar there to give more space. In winter the cosy lounge has a real coal fire to keep the chills away.

The Royal Oak is a good 20-minutes walk from Marple, although the New Mills Bus (number 158) will drop you at the door. All in all a cosy, welcoming pub with Robinson's at its best.

Graham welcomes you to ...

THE RAILWAY VIEW

Byrons Lane, Macclesfield

GOOD FOOD

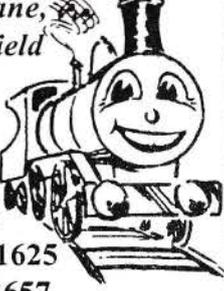
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☆ BAR GAMES ☆



GOOD BEER GUIDE 2000

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REAL ALE £1.30 MON NIGHT





Following last month's 'base dish' - Beer Mushroom Risotto - I would like to introduce two dishes which, I think, make ideal main accompaniments to that dish; one hot, and one cold, as our summer weather is as predictable as Zebedee on coke!

**Pollo Corleone (not my name!)
(Italian Grilled Chicken)**

This recipe is for two people. For more, use extra chicken (s).

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 small chicken | 2 cloves garlic |
| 1 33cl bottle kriel | 2 teaspoons coarse sea salt |
| 2-3 teaspoons olive oil | 1 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 1 tablespoon dried oregano | |

Method

Make a cut completely through the underside of the chicken, then turn it over and score either side of the breastbone, until just scraping the bone. Turn the chicken over again and flatten it out on a hard surface; it may help to use the base of a heavy knife or cleaver. Score the flesh of the legs, thighs and breasts to a half inch depth, then rub the oil, pepper and half the salt well into the flesh. *Finely* chop the garlic into the remaining salt. Pour the kriel into a basting dish large enough to hold the flattened out chicken and then add the garlic and oregano. Place the chicken in this and, again, rub the liquid well into the flesh (yeah! I'm well into the *flesh*). Cover with clingfilm and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight. Remove from the fridge and re-baste. Pre-heat a medium grill and place the chicken on the grill pan. As soon as it starts to brown, turn over and re-baste. Continue until both sides are golden brown and the chicken is cooked through. Serve with a few slices of lemon.

Rodenbach Squash With Fennel

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 butternut squash | 1 tablespoon dried fenugreek leaves (methi) |
| 1 white skin onion | 3 cloves garlic finely minced |
| 1 bulb of fennel | 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper |
| 1 bottle Rodenbach salt | 1 teaspoon lemon juice |

Method

Cut the squash in half lengthways, de-core (take out the stringy bits in the middle), and then cut into two cross-wise, that is separate the neck from the bulb. Peel (this is hard work) with a sharp knife, and cut into half-inch slices. Place on one side. Top and tail the fennel, saving the green fluffy leaves for decoration, and cut into half-inch square pieces - well, as close as you can to half-inch square. Cook the fennel and squash in boiling, salted water (twice as much water as will cover the vegetables) for 8 minutes. Drain and cool under running water. Top, tail, peel and slice the onion lengthways, then cut into quarter-inch slices. Place the Rodenbach in a large bowl then add all the other ingredients except the onion. Mix well but gently then place the onion slices on top. Refrigerate for at least two hours. To serve, carefully remove the onions, drain off any excess liquid and lay the mixture out on a bed of risotto. Decorate with the onions and fennel leaves.

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SATURDAY 22nd JULY

| TIME | ARTIST (S) |
|---------|--|
| 11.30am | THE OPEN DOOR COMPANY |
| 12noon | "BULLEoN" |
| 1.00pm | ALLAN MAYALL |
| 1.30pm | STUART THOMPSON |
| 2.00pm | "BULLEoN" |
| 3.00pm | LYNN & BARRY HARDMAN |
| 3.30pm | OPEN DOOR 85 |
| 4.00pm | ALAN MAYALL STUART THOMPSON MIKE RILEY |

**12 HOURS MIXTURE OF
TRADITIONAL
MUSIC & SONG**

**COUNTRY - BLUES - MUSIC HALL -
BLUEGRASS**

SUNDAY 23rd JULY

| | |
|---------|---|
| 11.30am | ONWARD CHRISTIAN CENTRE |
| 12noon | THE OPEN DOOR COMPANY |
| 12.30pm | MARTIN STIMPSON |
| 1.00pm | STUART THOMPSON & FRIENDS |
| 1.30pm | FRED LOADER & DAVID BURROWS |
| 2.30pm | THE BLACKBURNS |
| 3.00pm | FRED LOADER & DAVID BURROWS |
| 4.00pm | EVERY ONE ON STAGE FOR BIG SING FINISH ANYTHING GOES TILL THE END |

**11 HOURS OF FOLK ROCK, GOSPEL,
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Tameside
Metropolitan Borough



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

JULY 2000

Monday 10th - Cheadle Social: 9.00pm Printers; 10.00pm Queens. Both Stockport Rd.
Thursday 13th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Swan With Two Necks, Princes St, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.
Saturday 15th - Minibus to Bhurtport Inn Beer Festival. Departs Royal Oak, Didsbury 10.15am; Crown, Heaton Lane 10.30. Book with John Hutchinson on 434 7177.
Monday 17th - Social: Sand Bar, Grosvenor St, All Saints. Starts 9.00pm.
Friday 21st - Minibus Stagger around selected pubs in East Manchester. Departs Crown, Heaton Lane 7.30pm. Book with John Hutchinson on 434 7177.
Saturday 22nd - Regional BBQ: Queens Arms, Honey St, Cheetham. Bar opens 12 noon; food served 1.30pm onwards.
Monday 24th - Social: Bakers vaults, Market Place, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.
Thursday 27th - Pub of the Month presentation to The Old Monkey, Portland St, Manchester City Centre. 8.00pm onwards.
Monday 31st - Social: Fab Café, Portland Street, Manchester City Centre. Starts 9.00pm.

JULY 2000

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

Sunday 9th - Branch walk contact Frank Wood (01457 865426) for details.
Monday 10th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Old Gloveworks, George St, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.
Saturday 15th - Trip to Bhurtport Beer Festival. Details from Frank Wood.
Saturday 22nd - Regional BBQ: Queens Arms, Honey St, Cheetham. Bar opens 12 noon; food served 1.30pm onwards.
Monday 7th August - Committee Meeting: Travellers Call, Bredbury. Starts 8.30pm.
Monday 14th - Monthly Branch Meeting: The Sportsman, Mottram Rd, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.
Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have notified us of the following events:
Saturday 15th - Campaigning event at Congleton Carnival. Details TBC.
Monday 17th - Committee Meeting, Hogshead (upstairs), Wilmslow. Starts 8.00pm.
Tuesday 25th - Monthly Branch Meeting and presentation of 10 Year Good Beer Guide Award to George & Dragon, Sunderland St, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Mapped Accessibility CAMRA 93 Planner



Dave and Sue welcome you to

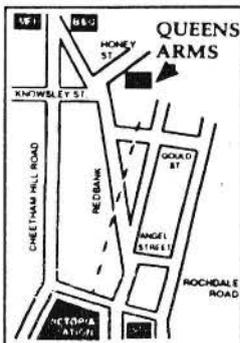
THE QUEENS ARMS

HONEY STREET, CHEETHAM

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SEPTEMBER 9 - PUMPCLIP SALE
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Open: 12 noon - 11.00 p.m. Monday - Saturday
 12 noon - 10.30 p.m. Sunday



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Among Our JULY BEERS:

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 Hydes Your Bard;
 Westons Old Cocky;
 Rebellion Blonde Bombshell;
 Mauldons Dickens;
 Oakhill Charioteer;
 Ash Vine Max
 Headroom; Brakspear
 Hooray Henley;
 Cains Sundowner;
 O'Hanlons Red Ale;
 Cotleigh Hawkshead;
 Cottage Goldrush
 ... and many more

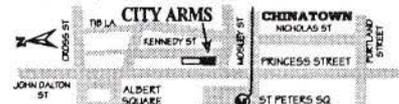


KENNEDY STREET THE CITY ARMS

8 HANDPUMPS
 6 GUEST ALES
 LUNCHTIME FOOD



11.30-2.30
 Mon - Fri
 & 11.30 - 2.00
 Saturday



Great Food from Our Menus & Specials Board

MANCHESTER MATTERS by Cityman

Quiet Month in the Centre

Every month seems to see more license applications for somewhere in the City Centre. One of the latest is for a development in the basement of the former Grand Hotel on Aytoun Street. This is to be something called *Shoeless Joe's* and with a name like that you just know it won't serve any decent ale don't you?

Elsewhere, the first of the new bars in the Deansgate Locks development on Whitworth Street West has opened. This is *Loaf* and very impressive it looks, too. Spacious, stylish and comfortable it's certainly one of the best looking new bars to open in the City Centre. Apparently it's a Bass enterprise which would account for the absence of real ale although at least there's draught Hoegaarden to fall back on

Apart from that it's been a quiet month in the Centre although, as ever, there's plenty in the pipeline. I did however pop into the *City Road Inn*, the self-styled cask ale emporium. Outside it is liberally covered with promotional signs for a variety of cask ales. Inside, though, it's a different story. The bar is now festooned with smooth fonts with one solitary and, on my visit, disused, handpump. A case for Trading Standards perhaps? Reeling from this, I sought refuge in the usually reliable *Rain Bar* on Great Bridgewater Street. Lees' City Centre flagship usually doesn't disappoint but I wasn't over impressed with White Bear, their then-current seasonal. It just didn't taste of much, unusual for a Lees' beer, and at £2 a pint for a 4.2 per cent beer wasn't very good value, either.

Another slightly surprising loss was the removal of *Jekylls Gold* from the *Grey Horse* on Portland St. Apparently it just did not sell (contrary to experience elsewhere in the Hydes estate and the free trade - it has sold very well in *Bar Fringe* and will soon appear in *Centro*) - it just shows what a difference proximity to a Holts pub (the *Old Monkey*) makes to Price sensitivity!

I also see that the *Moon Under Water* on Deansgate is currently closed for what appears to be an extensive redecoration/refurbishment. It will be interesting to see what changes have been introduced. Being able to get served at the bar without an endless wait would be a move in the right direction.

Busy in the Suburbs

Sadly the *Kings Head* on Chancellor Lane, Ardwick, reported as closed last month, remains firmly shut. A major blow to the pub scene in the immediate area, this. There was another sudden closure in *Longsight* where the *Ceili Inn*, formerly the *Crown*, not only closed last month but as these words are written, is also being demolished. Just down the road in *Levenshulme*, the *Church* remains closed but is advertised as to let, as is the *Pack Horse* which, presumably, has undergone some sort of internal refurbishment.

Moving west, I was pleased to see that the *Mawson* on Kincardine Road remains an oasis in the real ale desert that is Chorlton-on-Medlock. On a recent visit the excellent *Tetley Mild and Bitter* had been joined by a guest beer, *Coach House Bitter*, a very welcome development. Nearby on *Dover Street*, *Jabez Clegg* was rather less impressive. One bank of handpumps in the small back bar had had their handles removed which just added to an overall impression of a bar that was once at the leading edge of the student drinking scene now just marking time.

Down in *Fallowfield*, *Hydes'* have carried out a very impressive job of work in their refurbishment of the *Friendship* and I believe this will be reviewed elsewhere in OT. It's certainly good to see that they have kept it as a traditional pub when other operators wouldn't have hesitated in turning it into another student bar. Staying with *Hydes*, there are new people at the *Beehive* on *Claremont Road* in *Moss Side*. *Cindy and Joe* took over in late May and are keeping a fine pint. *Cindy* used to work for *Holt's*, I'm told, but it was *Hydes'* who offered her a pub of her own.

Holt's have, however, refurbished the *Spread Eagle* in *Chorlton* in spectacular style. It took 4 1/2 weeks and the end result was unveiled on 2 June. The pub has been totally revamped with a new raised drinking area in the lounge, pastel coloured walls adorned with modern paintings, and gothic-style light fittings and curtain rails. There are new carpets and furniture throughout, along with display cabinets displaying frosted vases and glasses in a contemporary style which must be unique for a *Holt's* house. While the vault has also benefited from new seating, flooring and furniture it remains essentially unchanged and is still a place for a game of cards. All in all a huge improvement which has given the pub a new, vibrant feel. Needless to say, *Mild and Bitter* remain at *Holt's* usual bargain prices.

CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 195: John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Jim Flynn, John Hutchinson, Peter Edwardson, Charlotte Bulmer, John Tune, Paul Stanyer, Tom Lord, Stuart Jamieson, Tim Jones, Rhys Jones, Jack Lyons, Phil Levison, Rick Caveney, John Cresswell.



THE CASTLE

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NOW SERVING THE COMPLETE
RANGE OF ROBINSONS CASK BEERS!
Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,
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introducing....
Whistling Will
WARM WELCOME AND FINE
BEERS IN A CLASSIC PUB




APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 195)

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

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE Date of Birth

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER

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

UNDER 26 YRS or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8

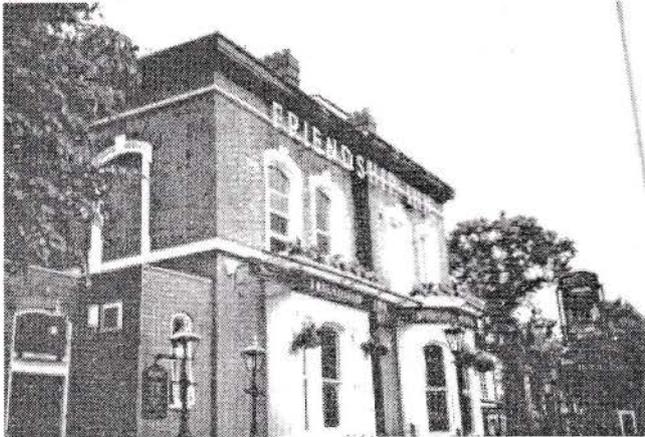
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £8

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.



...Pub News...
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Hydes continue to refurbish their tied estate and recent weeks have seen two more new-look pubs unveiled. The Friendship, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, was first off the blocks and it has to be said this is another first class job by Hydes. The interior now mirrors the pub's Victorian origins in style and décor. There's lots of dark wood and brass both on and around the horse-shoe bar which serves the entire pub. At the front is a raised lounge area and another raised area to the back functions as a vault-cum-games room. The bric-a-brac has perhaps been scattered with a too-heavy hand but this is just a minor quibble for what is a very commendable effort. Full marks, too, for keeping the pub as a traditional local when all around have succumbed to the student/theme market.

The middle of June saw the reopening of the Junction in Hulme and again this has been skilfully refitted to reflect the pub's Victorian heritage. The front of the pub is essentially a large triangular lounge with the bar at the back, although it has been carefully spilt up into several areas, including a snug area near the bar. The vault at the back has also benefited from a makeover. There's markedly less bric-a-brac here, too, and the more restrained approach only serves to enhance the careful refurbishment. They've made sure you can't miss the pub either, as the exterior is now painted orange at ground floor level.

In the City Centre, Tony and Linda continue to run the Pot of Beer, but have now acquired an interest in Bar Centro on Tib Street. The aim to bring this up to the standard they work to in conjunction with the present owners. On the food side, Linda is currently trying out a range of Cajun food, which when finalised will become permanent, and more importantly, the introduction of cask beer is guaranteed, with beers from Hydes and guests already arranged.

Staying in the City Centre, two pubs are currently on the market. On Oldham Street the City can be yours for £150,000 while the long-closed Swan on Withy Grove is also up for grabs, advertised as suitable for a variety of leisure uses.

There are a few high-profile licensee changes in Stockport town centre with departures from Winters, Underbank; Queens Head, Underbank and the Boars Head in the Market Place. Hopefully we will have news of the new incumbents next month.

On St Petersgate, Stockport, Dean Farrah is now getting into his stride as bar-cellarman at the Blarney Stone. Lees Bitter was a guest as we went to press and Dean tells us that beers from the new Pictish Brewery are to follow. Meanwhile Dean's former stamping ground, the Nelson on Wellington Road South remains a keg desert.

In Edgeley, guest beers have gone from the Greyhound, although Marston's Pedigree will remain on permanent sale due to demand. The pub has installed a bar billiards table, though. Also in Edgeley, there is some activity at the currently closed Prince Albert on Castle Street. We understand the pub is undergoing a thorough refurbishment prior to reopening.

Speaking of refurbishments, the Ash, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel, was due to re-open on the second weekend in July. A full report next month.

OT JULY COMPETITION

Last month's competition produced a healthy crop of entries from all over the place. Unusually, though, quite a few were incorrect. One of the correct entries came from Mike Cooper, Moorside Road, Swinton and Paul Stanyer from the Swan With Two Necks will be in touch with details of the prize.

The beers you were looking for were: Zebedee, Eco Warrior, Russian Sturgeon, Newtons Drop, Phoenix XXX, XPA, Amber Gambler, Roasted Nuts and Stonehenge.

Paul has kindly set another competition this month and the prize has been sponsored by Graham and Jeanette from the Crown, Heaton Lane - six pints in the pub plus a Dutch lager football shirt. Entries to OT Competition, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 9HD no later than 27 July.

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All the beers can be found in the 2000 Good Beer Guide, so complete the grid in a clockwise spiral. The last letter of an answer is the start letter of the next. We have given you the first letter.

- 1) 25 December Mallard Noise maker
- 2) This fortification will stop you going over the border
- 3) Wimbledon might give you this joint from Phoenix (2 words)
- 4) This bird shakes its end on the Black Isle
- 5) Say a foot or Robin Hood on Hogs Back
- 6) Male Mallard?
- 7) Get up at 5am in Berkeley (2 words)
- 8) Give her these and you may get to see her Itchen Valley? (2 words)
- 9) Type of pig on the Titanic?
- 10) Does the Dunn Ploughman reign over this?
- 11) They say it only lives for one day, but it Smiles all the time! (2 words)

GROT WATCH

In our third Grot watch, the regular feature highlighting the appalling state of the Chestergate Tavern on Stockport's Mersey Square, we look at the side entrance.

As we have reported, the pub has been largely left to rot over recent years. Inside its tolerable. Outside, well, it's just terrible. Just look at this small door on the pub's frontage. Where do you start? There's the hardboard at the top of the door, the speaker precariously perched on the window ledge, the peeling paintwork and, of course, the obligatory broken drainpipe.



Responsible for this eyesore is Scottish & Newcastle Retail, the pub-owning arm of brewing giants Scottish Courage, a company apparently committed to "ever improving levels of service and quality". To their credit, they have invested strongly in many of their Stockport outlets...except this one. A major refurbishment was promised - that was in January. Just what is going on here? Have they forgotten they own the pub? Or are they just waiting for it to fall down? Answers on a postcard please.