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Volume 16 Issue 12

OPENING TIMES



DECEMBER 2000 No:200

6,700 CIRCULATED EVERY MONTH

FREE

YE OLDE WOOLPACK IS REGIONAL CHAMP

STOCKPORT LOCAL IS GREATER MANCHESTER PUB OF THE YEAR

For the fifth year in a row, the Regional Pub of the Year title for CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, in Greater Manchester has gone to a pub in the Opening Times area. Ye Olde Woolpack on Brinksway, Stockport, scooped the award despite a strong challenge from two times winner, the Sportsman in Hyde.

Famously in the shadow of the Co-op Bank's giant blue pyramid, the Woolpack has had a chequered history. Fifteen years ago it was a failing Greenalls' pub and this was followed by a spell as an equally failing free house, 'The Hague' (which presumably didn't have enough closures who drank 14 pints a day...). Just when permanent closure seemed inevitable current owner Bob Dickinson rescued it from oblivion and since then it hasn't looked back.

It is one of those pubs that tells you it is well-run the moment you walk through the door. It's clean, well-maintained and with a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere, and despite having been opened out slightly, it retains very much a multi-roomed character.

While many reasons may be cited for the pub's popularity – the atmosphere, the comfortable surroundings, the good home-cooked food, it is on the beer front that the Woolpack really excels. The core beer range has varied slightly over the years and currently comprises Theakston's Bitter, Marston's Pedigree and Grays Dark Mild. In addition there are two ever-changing guest beers, usually new and/or obscure beers from micro-brewers. Needless to say, with the attention to detail prevalent here, beer quality is always second to none as evidenced by the pub's almost permanent place in the Good Beer Guide.

Bob took over the pub in 1988 and his hard work has been recognised in the past with three separate Pub of the Month awards from Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA. The last award, in October last year, was followed up by the branch Pub of the Year award and from there the pub went on to the Regional contest. It now goes forward to the next stage of the national Pub of the Year competition.

Winning the Greater Manchester Pub of the Year award is the culmination of over a decade of maintaining the highest standards and will be presented on Saturday, 9th December



FULL MEASURE VICTORY

Well, by 2003... er, possibly...

In a welcome move on Friday December 1, Trade & Industry Secretary Stephen Byers announced that time was finally being called on short measure. This will be achieved by introducing compulsory lined oversize glasses to every pub, and ensuring that local Trading Standards Officers prosecute anyone consistently selling 'pints' with less than 95% liquid in them (excluding froth/head). Ministers say that a pint should be 100% liquid and fines of up to £1000 are to be introduced. Hurrah!

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale has been campaigning on this issue for several years, but, Hurroo...the pub owners are to be given two years to introduce the new glasses, and prosecutions will not start until 2003. Predictably the Pub Owning Groups are squealing. Mark Hastings of the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association claimed it was a "classic case of excessive, disproportionate and unnecessary red tape." He then went on to make two ludicrous assertions: first that 'the government' had in any case only recieved 23 complaints about short measure (or one for every 256,000,000 pints served) and secondly that the change will cost the 'industry' an extra £500 Million. Since I have sent five complaints about individual pubs and groups serving short measure, and the reluctance of local Trading Standards to act because the law is unclear, to members of this administration, I wonder who the other four complainants are....it beggars belief. Secondly, the life of a pub glass is averaged at 18 months in a quiet rural pub, and 11 in a city centre venue. With a little bit of organisational know how, cost to the industry - exactly zilch. PBH

IN DECEMBER'S OPENING TIMES

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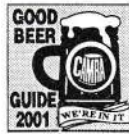
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

TO ALL OUR READERS,
ADVERTISERS, CONTRIBUTORS
AND DISTRIBUTORS

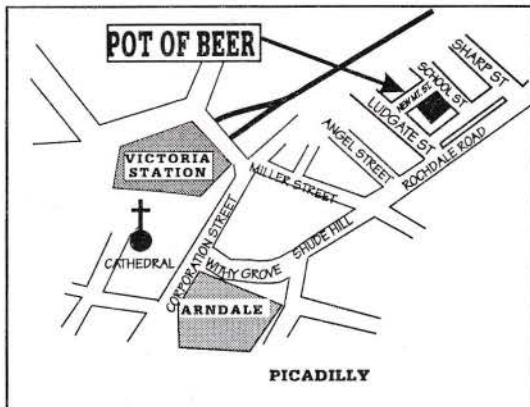


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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

At this time of years it's usual to look back over the last 12 months but so great has the turmoil been that there is no room in this small column to do the events of this year any real justice. Perhaps the most striking thing has been the sheer unpredictability of events. This time last year we were attacking Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries for their decision to axe Marston's Bitter. Who would have thought that just 12 months later W&D would have put itself up for sale and be facing dismemberment?

There have been some welcome developments, too. Robinson's have finally taken the plunge into the seasonal beer market, and with increasing success; Hydes' continue to expand on all fronts; Lees and Holt's both progress solidly. Our micros continue to thrive too, although the loss of Bridgewater Ales was a serious blow, with new ventures continuing to come on stream. Indeed the next year should see new breweries in Altrincham, Moston and, possibly, Denton to name but three. Indeed it is to the local, family and micro-brewers that we must look to safeguard our cask ale and public house traditions. Let us hope that they continue to thrive and prosper. In its small way, Opening Times will do everything it can to ensure that happens.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We are now well and truly in the digital age. Locally Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA has dragged itself into the 21st Century and has both a web site and an e-mail list for announcements about branch activities. To visit the web site log on to <http://sites.netscape.net/ssmcamra> and if you would like to join the announcement list, then just send an e-mail to: ssmcamra-subscribe@egroups.com. And on that hi-tech note could I just wish everyone connected with Opening Times and you our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Clarke

It was nice to see the year, and to purists, the millennium end with a CAMRA victory, for there have been precious few recently. On the face of it, Stephen Byers determination that existing Weights & Measures legislation is powerful enough to force pubs to serve a minimum 95% liquid in a pint or face 'enforcement and prosecution', is clearly long overdue. All this to begin by January 2003, with standard use of oversize, lined glasses, to allow time for the new glasses to be brought into use. The industry bleats - "It'll cost us £500 Million!". Nonsense. It would be nice to see shatterproof safety glass used as well, but this clearly asking too much. Let's just hope it remains government policy after the forthcoming election and is not quietly forgotten. Anyway, best wishes to one and all for the forthcoming festivities, and drink safely. *P.B. Hutchings*

OPENING TIMES ISSUE 200

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 23!



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OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From Michael Holliday, Knutsford:

I am not a Camra member. Perhaps I should join but I don't get out enough. Having lived in Knutsford for 11 years, I have only lately found a pub that serves a real variety of good beers, the Cross Keys.

The Camra campaign to get a full pint is, I am afraid, mis-guided. In a supermarket in Germany or France, you can buy a 500ml bottle of quality lager for 30p. In a pub, it will set you back £2, a 6x mark-up. The £2 / pint in a UK pub is maximum 2x mark-up against shop price. The 5-7% short-fall is negligible in comparison. On the other hand, the industry is selling itself short as most of the 5-7% is probably lost in spillages in trying to fill the pint glass. Camra's campaign against globalisation and for quality is the right way. Support local brewers and encourage them to improve. When in Budweis, drink Budweiser.

I can recommend a 'local' brew from Devon. In The Volunteer in Lyme Regis in the summer, I enjoyed a quantity of 'Own Label' made by Branscombe Vale Brewery, Seaton, Devon. The beer was poured direct from the cask / keg in the bar. It was not flat but at a perfect temperature and you got a full pint! Really memorable are the aroma (even my wife liked this), flavour (tasting was a bridge too far) and the lack of hangover.

From Gordon Thorburn, Buxton

It's about time somebody with common sense pointed out the inevitable consequences of this silly campaign for the so-called 'full pint'. The price of beer is based on the pint as currently defined. If the pint is redefined, as 20 fluid ounces of liquid plus whatever froth there might be, then the price will go up, probably more than accordingly.

A lengthy correspondence I have recently had with a government official more or less confirmed this when he gave up trying to justify the proposed new legislation.

When the half pound was adjusted to 250 grams, the price went up of all products thus measured, many of them by more than was strictly necessary, and this is what will happen if the 'full pint' is introduced.

So, the whole business will achieve nothing positive. We shall have to drink out of nasty glass buckets, it will be nigh impossible to get a pint with a proper tight head - what will happen to a pint of Guinness? - and we'll probably be paying more for our beer in real terms.

This is a campaign mounted by people who don't realise that a pint is more than just a measure. It's a thing of beauty, a tradition, and something not to be spoiled by those with the sensitivity of the weights and measures inspectorate.

In light of these strongly held views, our front page article on Mr Byers' decision makes interesting reading. A reply of sorts is also made by the Beer Monster on page 19. Ed(2).

From Ron Elder, Penicuik, Midlothian:

I read with interest your leader and editorial in the November issue of OT on what Punch Taverns have done to beer choice in the Waters Green Tavern.

As a frequent visitor to Macclesfield for some years, I always make a point of visiting this pub; it has some of the best quality and choice of real ales I have experienced.

Whilst the landlord has been "Punched", he is by no means down or out. On a recent visit I found on sale the following beers supplied from Punch: JW Lees Bitter, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Jennings Cumberland Ale, Greene King IPA and Tetley Bitter. Apart from the Tetley Bitter, which was in the best condition possible for a lack lustre beer, I am sure that you would agree that what was on offer is a very reasonable selection of tasty ales. In addition, the always available and ever-changing guest ale sourced by Brian and Tracey included ales from Rooster/Outlaw, Abbeydale, Phoenix and Passageway.

As a real cider is also sold, there is something for everyone and the pub deserves the continued support of the OT readership - I only wish that this quality and range of ales were available in many other parts of the country.

From Ian Shaw, Norton, Stoke-on-Trent:

Recently enjoying a pint in the Beartown Tap, Congleton, I picked up a copy of Opening Times for a quick butchers at what's going on in Cheshire. Reading through I noticed that the Setter Dog at Walker Barn gets a mention. I have used this pub on many occasions, usually in the summer months.

I was a little miffed at the mention of motorcycles causing a nuisance to the pub and its customers. I have been a motorcyclist for the past 23 years and I have to say that I don't wish to be tarred with the same brush as the boy racers, using cars as well as bikes, that race past the pub.

These "Power Rangers" (that's what they look like in their flash multi-coloured leathers) cause problems in other areas too, generally giving motorcyclists a bad name. I don't use the Macc-Buxton road as a raceway, but I do enjoy the ride and scenery. Next summer I hope to visit the Setter Dog with my mates, and I hope to receive a warm welcome. As well as enjoying motorcycling we also appreciate real ale and enjoy nothing more than an evening's run out and a pint of decent ale (though we don't condone drinking and driving and always stick to one pint), especially in a pub surrounded by such fantastic scenery.

So please don't associate every motorcyclist with "Power Rangers" or born again bikers, with too much money, who endanger and annoy everyone with their pointlessness and reckless driving. There are bikers out there who are responsible and experienced, and don't need to go everywhere at 100mph-plus to enjoy riding!



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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	🍂🍁					



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for December, the Arden Arms (Millgate, Stockport) is a classic pub by any definition. Apart from a sensitive alteration to bring an old kitchen into public use, this Grade II listed building has remained essentially unchanged for 150 years or more. It was with considerable sadness that local drinkers watched as the pub entered a spiral of decline, culminating in the eviction of one set of tenants by Robinson's. Happily those days are now firmly in the past and the pub has been restored to its former glory - a much used cliché which just happens to be true in the case of the Arden Arms.

Those responsible for this transformation are Joe Quinn and Steve King who took over the pub in late 1999. They made an immediate start with a thorough redecoration and spruce up, and followed this with a comprehensive programme of restoration which has now sees the pub gleam and sparkle much as it did during its heyday under the long-term tenancy of Jack May.

Joe and Steve made their names when they owned That Café in Levenshulme, which became something of a gastronomic oasis under their tenure. Unsurprisingly then, a high class food operation as recently come on stream at the Arden where well-cooked and imaginative food now adds to the pub's many attractions.

Foremost amongst those attractions has to be the superbly kept Robinson's ales. Best Bitter and Hatters Mild are the mainstays, although they have been joined by Old Tom for the winter months. It is also possible that Frederics will be on for the Pub of the Month presentation. In short Joe and Steve have rescued one of the town's classic pubs, not only returning it to the pub mainstream but creating a flagship for quality and excellence on all fronts. Their reward has been a strong upturn in trade as old regulars return and new customers appreciate the pub's traditional values.

This very well deserved award will be presented on Thursday 21st December from 8.00pm onwards. An excellent night is in prospect, getting the festive season off to a flying start. **JC.**

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

CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 200:

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Peter Edwardson, Phil Levison, Ken Birch, Pete Soane, Jim Flynn, Rick Caveney, Anthony Firmin, David Williams, Tim Jones, Steve Bray, Mark McConachie, Stuart Ballantyne, Rhys Jones, Paul Stanyer, Alan Hurdle, Chris Walkden, John Cresswell.

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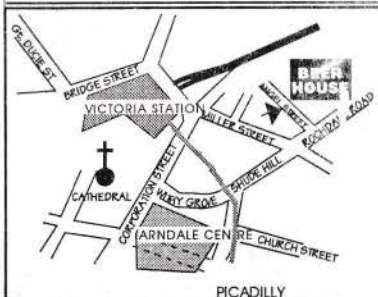
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STAGGER

with David K Williams

A Tour of the Heaton's

The venue for the October Stagger was around that group of Stockport suburbs known collectively as the "Heaton's". There's Heaton Chapel, Heaton Moor, Heaton Mersey and Heaton Norris; Norris Bank is also part of this group. It is an area with a strong variety of pubs - and a variable quality of cask ales.

The Stagger kicked off at the **George & Dragon** on the junction of School Lane and Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel. This ex-Boddingtons pub still has Boddingtons Bitter as the sole cask beer (alongside keg Greenalls Mild). I ordered my Boddies and joined the rest of our group, one of whom told me that the G&D once boasted a vault with lots of football trophies in it - sadly this is all gone. A recent refurbishment has resulted in an open-plan pub with eating area and much-hyped big-screen TV. The Boddies, we thought, was average or even below par.

Walking down School Lane and crossing the busy Wellington Road we glanced at both the **Rudyard** and the **Chapel House**, both former real ale outlets and now keg. Carrying on down Heaton Moor Road, the **Elizabethan** is keg-only as well, as is a 'trendy' café bar called "town:" (with a small letter 't' and two : dots after it). Finally we reached our next port of call, the **Plough**.

The Plough has an attractive sandstone frontage and stained glass windows, although inside there has been a thorough knock-through and the garish peach or turquoise walls are liberally covered with paintings. On the cask beer front was Tetley Bitter or Marston's Pedigree. One surprise was the uniformed barmaid asking whether we wanted "cask or keg" Tetley's. There should be more bar staff like that. The Tetley's was considered above average while the Pedigree wasn't so good and was described as disappointing.

A few doors down is the **Crown**. This pub always has a display of pumpclips on the wall - a reminder of the interesting guest ales it used to sell. Until recently, it also served a good pint of cask Greenalls Mild but this is now keg. This leaves a real ale choice of just Boddingtons Bitter and Greenalls Bitter. The Boddies was OK, but as for the Greenalls...although well-kept it was thin and tasteless. This was a shame as the Crown is an extremely pleasant multi-roomed pub with a games room at the back. Great pub, shame about the beer (well, tonight anyway).

Down the road is a 'John Barras Group' (i.e. Scottish & Newcastle) pub, the **Moor Top**. Boddies Bitter and Courage Directors were the two cask beers. Most of us tried Directors - and promptly sent it back as it was well and truly 'off'. The beer was changed without too much bother and the pump-clip reversed after we had complained. On the plus side, we all agreed that the Boddies was extremely good. The pub itself is a pretty ordinary open-plan affair, although I'm told it's now a huge improvement on its pre-Barras days when it was one of the roughest pubs in the area.

Next there followed a long walk down Green Lane to Heaton Norris, and the **Nursery**. This is a classic, cosy 1930s pub and is a Hydes' house. A good range of Hydes' beers was on - Bitter, Mild, Jekyll's Gold and the seasonal, Henry's Hampton. Most of us tried the seasonal and all agreed that it was first class, while the Jekyll's was very good, with the mild and bitter also in good form. I could see and taste why this pub has won so many awards.

There followed a tortuous journey to the junction of Green Lane and Didsbury Road from where it is a short walk to the **Moss Rose**, another Hydes' pub. This 1970's building is famously ugly on the outside, but inside is a cosy, welcoming local. Hydes' Light and Bitter were on electric pumps, and there is a long-disused Jekyll's Gold Handpump, too. We all agreed that the Bitter and Light were both excellent, with some suggesting they were the best beers of the night. The final stop was at the **Woolpack** on Brinksway, a short walk across a motorway bridge. The pub is 1930s and stands proud amongst the modern architecture of car showrooms, motorway and glass pyramid. Five beers are on handpump, with Pedigree, 'Grays' Mild and Theakston's Best as the regulars, complemented by two guests. Tonight one of these was Abbeydale Moonshine from Sheffield, which everyone went for. We all agreed it was a very

good pint and some hurried their pints to get one more before the "time please" bell went.

Overall, the Heaton's Stagger saw us visiting a wide variety of pubs. The quality of the beer started off quite badly but improved, as did the choice, with almost every pub we went in after that (a notable exception being the Greenalls in the Crown). Opinions varied over which of the last three pubs had the best beer, but they were all good (the Nursery was my personal choice). Indeed this is one Stagger that I would recommend to anyone up to the challenge.

EURO-BEER

Euro-beer is the new kid on the Manchester Northern Quarter block, a new company selling Belgian beers via the internet.

Its owner John Spedding conceived the idea back in April after being made redundant. Having gained an "excellent working knowledge" of Belgian beers whilst working in Brussels, he came upon the idea of selling Belgian beers and breweriana over the Internet.

It's quite a simple idea - the company offers over 300 different Belgian beers and about 100 different designs of glasses to match them, and can supply in quantities from as small as 6 x 25cl up to gargantuan 3 litre bottles.

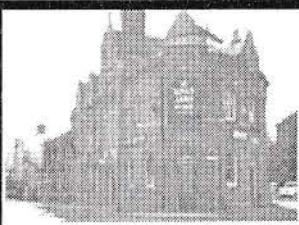
The website is due to go live early this month (www.euro-beer.co.uk) and will offer several Christmas specials. We are also assured that the site will be extremely secure using credit card processing that is at the forefront of technology, so customers know their personal details are protected. There will also be facilities for telephone and mail order.

The aim is to eventually expand the website to be more than just a shopping site and become an interactive source of information. For example, customers will be able to record their reviews, good or bad, of the beers they have bought.

Customers will be able to collect orders from Euro-beer's central premises or they will be delivered via Parcelforce.

Euro-beer is at 23 New Mount Street, Manchester, M4 4DE. Phone 0161 953 4063 or Fax 0161 953 4059. E-mail info@euro-beer.co.uk.





Mike & Chris
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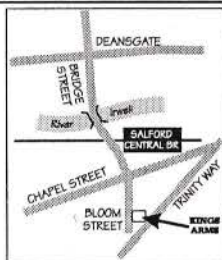
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This month Rick Caveney visits Bar Centro

It's been quite a while since I last ventured into what has now become known as 'The Northern Quarter' of Manchester. This is the area around Oldham Street, Tib Street and Swan Street, more famed for Blobs, Special Brew and dodgy characters than real ale. With the exception of course, of the Castle on Oldham Street, which used to be a personal favourite and serves some excellent Robinson's ales.

Well things are certainly changing. The dilapidated buildings of Oldham Street/Tib Street have been given a facelift and are now home to Yuppie flats, apparently selling for £100,000 upwards. Bohemian style coffee houses, numerous bars and sex shops advertising 'peep' shows are giving this area a definite Soho style atmosphere.

Today though I'm here to visit Bar Centro. I visited this bar a while ago when it was named Straight Eight's and cannot say I was particularly impressed. Now however Bar Centro has been taken over by Linda and Tony from The Pot of Beer down on Mount Street and in the five months since, has come on leaps and bounds. The bar is accessed on Tib Street, fitting snugly in-between an art gallery and love boutique. It spreads over two floors and has seating for 60 or so people. The walls are brightly coloured and covered with original artwork. Apparently they put up exhibitions from local artists that change very two months.

The house ale is Hydes Jekyll's Gold which, Linda explained, is also used to flavour the barbecue sauce. The guest ales were Hydes Henry's Hampton and Titanic Premium (which went down a treat). Other beers of note were Pilsner Urquell, Lindeboom, Hoegaarden and an American import from San Francisco, Anchor Steam Beer. The food is a mixture of American Deep South and English and spreads over three separate menus, Day, Dinner and Bar. Linda being a Southern America Chef oversees the cooking that is served from 12 noon - 11:30pm Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon - 12:30am Thursday to Saturday. This must make it one of the latest food outlets in the Northern Quarter.

The nibbles menu consists of fried cheese, fried veg platter, sweet tater P'itters and Cajun toast all at £2.95. There are also an amazing five different strengths of Cajun chicken wings, ranging from the super mild for the beginner 'Bayou Baby', to the only for the experienced 'Fire Ant'. We went for the number two 'Baby Gator' which were spicy but easy enough to handle. The wings can be bought in lots of eight £2.95, sixteen £3.95 or a whopping thirty-two £5.95, offering a real bargain, all served with a choice of house dips. The day menu consists of Seafood Gumbo plus a soup of the day £2.00. A selection of salads £2.50 plus add a topping for an extra pound, chicken, ham, Creole shrimp, spicy sausage, tuna, Billy goats cheese. Numerous sandwiches £2.95 and numerous burgers £3.95. I noted that the burger toppings, bacon, cheese, chilli etc were included in the price and any extras on the side, Cajun tater wedges, Creole rice, home made chips could be added for an extra pound. These side dishes were £1.95 when ordered separately. Baked potatoes were also available at £2.25 with an extra pound for toppings.

The Dinner menu was where things got really interesting. With dishes like Shrimp Creole £9.95, made with monstrous sized prawns, meaty, spicy and delicious, although you have to be prepared to get rather messy as you pull them apart. Something my colleague, Will, was struggling with. Although when I peeled them for him he certainly had no problem munching them down.

Imperial Crab £9.95 again these were delicious but my favourite had to be the Sticky Ribs £8.95 huge racks of pork ribs smothered in barbecue sauce (remember the Jekyll's gold). Other choices on the menu were Sirloin steaks ranging from the 'Baby Bubba' 8oz £10.95 to the seriously monstrous 'Big Daddy' 16oz £14.95. Louisiana Chicken £8.95 which is stuffed with crab but which I was unable to try as I was also stuffed with crab. Swamp veg casserole £6.95 and Cajun fish of the day, blackened, spicy or grilled and sold at market price. Also worth a note was the Jambalaya £2.50 which was a kind of rice based Cajun 'bubble and squeak' and was a very tasty winter warmer. A big Thank You to Linda, who after noticing me struggling with what to pick, made me a platter of bits of nearly everything on the menu. I must say it was all delicious and fun to eat.

Tony came over for a chat and explained that there was a real community being built around 'Real Ale' in the area. A Halloween fund raiser was being planned between Bar Centro and Bar Fringe while we were there and they are planning numerous Northern



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National Winter Ales Festival - Castlefield, Manchester January 18 - 20, 2001

Quarter ABV 'Alternative Beverage Venue' tours, taking in 'The different worlds' of Bar Centro, Bar Fringe, The Castle, The Smithfield, Hogs Head, Beer House, Marble Arch, Pot of Beer and even reaching up to The Queens Arms. It was really uplifting to see real ale flourishing in this area when so many new bars are selling crap ales at high prices. Keep up the good work folks and I shall be visiting you again soon.

Bar Centro, 74 Tib Street, Northern Quarter, Mccr. 0161 835 2863



This month rather than doing something FOWL, (makes a change some would say), I've opted for an alternative which could make a change for Post-Christmas or, ideally, a New Years Day treat. I tried this dish for the first time on Tuesday 28th November at my second Beer Banquet at the Pot of Beer and received favourable comments, so, with best wishes to all my readers (yes, both of you), here it is.

Kriek Smoked Ham Pie with Peche beer sauce. (for 4 people)

Ingredients (Pie)

3lb. (approx) of smoked gammon
2 bayleaves
3 cloves + 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
2 sachets gelatine powder
1 1/2 x 25cl bottles of Kriek (Cherry beer)
1 1/2 - 2 sheets of frozen short crust pastry

(Sauce)

6oz plain flour
1 teaspoon clear honey
1 x 25cl BOTTLE Belgian Peach beer (Timmermans)
1 small onion
1 small tin of peaches
1 pint milk
salt and pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil

Method (Pie)

Cut the Ham (gammon) into 1" cubes and GENTLY fry in a little oil with the bayleaves, pepper and cloves for about 3 minutes, turning frequently. Mix the gelatine according to the instructions and place in a large bowl. When cool(ish) add the Kriek beer and mix in well, then add the meat. Place in a large roasting dish or casserole and cook for 30 minutes in a medium (200 degrees) oven.

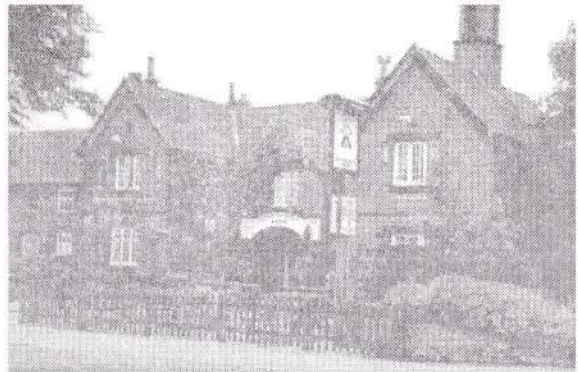
Roll out the pastry and when the meat is ready carefully cover the top of the roasting tray /casserole sealing the sides with a little eggwash (1 egg mixed with some milk) then turn the oven to 230 degrees and bake for 25 minutes. Use the remaining eggwash to brush the pastry with, and return to the oven for another 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

Method (Sauce)

Gently heat the oil in a saucepan, finely dice the onions and sweat until golden, slowly add the flour to make a golden roux then slowly combine the liquid thus:- a small measure of milk, stir in - a small measure of peach beer, stir in. Gradually increase the amounts of liquid, always ensuring a smooth sauce is evolving. About halfway through, remove from the heat and add the finely diced peaches, honey and seasoning. Return to the heat and carry on adding the liquids until the consistency of thin single cream is obtained.

Serve in a separate dish or sauce boat, with the pie.
Timmermans Peche or Kriek beer are obtainable from Carringtons Euro-Beer or the SandBar Trading Co.
As a footnote alternative Kriek beers are Lindemans, Belle Vue or for the wildly extravagant - Liefmans; other Krieks may be either too sweet or too sour for this dish.

DAVENPORT ARMS (THIEF'S NECK), Woodford



GOOD BEER GUIDE 1988 - 2001

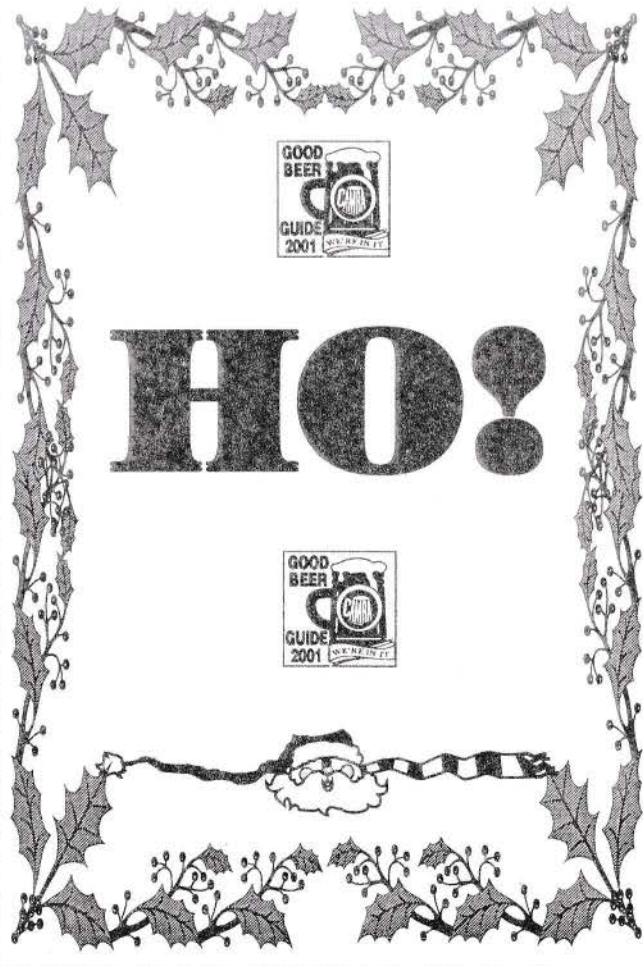
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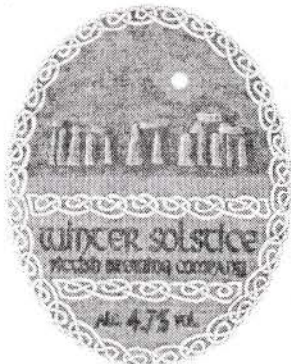
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Marble Manoeuvres

Mark Dade of Marble Brewery has resigned and will start out on his own new brewery in the first week of January. Mark's place at Marble is to be taken by a West Midlands man who currently works at an unnamed brewery in Ireland. No change to beers or recipes or organic/vegan ingredients are envisaged. Mark and his backers have sourced the necessary equipment and casks to begin production in January in a large industrial unit sited on Clough Road, Moston, Manchester. The new venture is called the Boggart Hole Clough Brewery, this is named after the neighbouring park in Blackley, Boggart Hole Clough. As a 'boggart' is a mythical, mischievous character expect to see beers with appropriate names coming out. The range of beers at first will be a 3.8% bitter, a 4.2% premium bitter and a 4.4% dark beer (no further indication of what style this would eventually be was forthcoming). The taste of the beers will be entirely different from that of the Marble range (with no specific organic restrictions). Expect to see the beers in the second week of January as Mark and his team have already reached agreements with a goodly number of outlets; Mark will be doing the deliveries too, and is keen to deal with other brewers on a swapping of product basis as the premises he has have temperature-controlled facilities to maintain cask ale in good condition. Mark, as one might expect, is full of enthusiasm for the project and seems to be brimming with confidence about its success.



Hydes' Happenings



The latest of the brewery's craft ales is now in the pubs. Rocket Fuel is a dark-ish full-bodied, warming beer. Just right for winter so look out for it. More seasonal still is the powerful XXXX, Hydes' strong old ale (6.8%) which is making a welcome return this year after several years' absence. Only one, limited, brew is being done and in fact the beer was brewed last month. We expect it to be in a limited number of outlets only but it will certainly be worth the search. (but it may well be on sale at the National Winter Ales Festival where Hydes' are again having their own bar. Hydes' have also announced their craft ale programme for 2001 which again will have a theme. This time it's 'enjoy quality time with Hydes' and the beers will bear the names of pub sayings. The range is to be: January/February - 'Quick One' (4.8%); March/April - 'Down The Hatch' (4.2%); May/June - 'The Usual' (4.4%); July/August - 'Hits The Spot' (4%); September/October - 'One To Unwind' (4.5%); November/December - 'Dutch Courage' (5%).

Other Seasonals

Lees and Robinson's both introduced their latest seasonal beers last months. From J W Lees we have Plum Pudding, a 5% dark brown beer with a distinctive but indefinable fruitiness about it. It is in many ways reminiscent of a Belgian beer and very palatable. Rain Bar in the City Centre is a guaranteed outlet. Robinson's have Robin Bitter, again a dark brown beer but very different in palate from Plum Pudding. Robin is a very malty beer but this is balanced by a long dry finish to make for a satisfying, moreish pint. The Castle, (Oldham Street, City Centre) and the Swan With Two Necks (Princes Street, Stockport) will have the beer, as hopefully, will many other Robbies pubs.



More From The Micros

As might be expected, Phoenix Brewery have a whole raft of seasonal beers out. Among those to look out for are Bob Cratchitt (4.2%), Christmas Kiss (4.5%) and the powerful Humbug (7%). The wonderful Phoenix Porter (5%) is also available again - this has long been one of the very best of the brewery's products and is well worth seeking out. Pictish Brewery has two specials out this month. Winter Solstice (4.7%) is a companion beer to its summer namesake, although it is





a deeper gold in colour with a touch of chocolate malt adding a subtle flavour. Pictish brewer Richard Sutton is also reviving the popular Rudolphs Rocket Fuel from his Firkin Days. At 7.3% this is a dark and full-bodied winter ale, using lots of crystal and chocolate malt. Approach with caution!

After Christmas – Visit Paradise

The recently opened Paradise Brewery at Wrenbury will be hosting a Beer Festival from Thursday 28 December until Saturday 30 December.

Several brews local to the Shropshire/Cheshire borders will be featured. Also a selection of Paradise Brewery beers. It is anticipated that around 30 beers should be on sale. Entertainment will be provided in the evenings and the Festival will be open from 11am-1pm on each day.



On Saturday 30th, the redoubtable Crewe & Shrewsbury Passenger's Association has 'done a Bhurtpore' and arranged with Wales & West Trains for the 11.33 ex-Manchester to Cardiff train to stop specially at Wrenbury. This train also calls at Stockport (11.42) and Wilmslow (11.50). Also a special stop has been organised on an express at Wrenbury at 17.05 for festival goers who may wish to return by through train to Wilmslow, Stockport and Manchester.

Other services are available to Wrenbury involving a change of train at Crewe. Those using these other services should remember that Wrenbury is a request stop.

As the Paradise Brewery is only three minutes walk from Wrenbury Station, using the train is an ideal way to visit the festival (admission is free, by the way) and have a good time without worrying about the dreaded breathalyser.

Given the current Rail timetable disaster you MUST check that the trains are running!

FUEL PUMP TO BEER PUMP

Britain's beer makers, sellers and drinkers unite to send tax message to Gordon Brown

Britain's beer drinkers are paying nearly seven times more in beer duty than the French. In comparison, duty on diesel in the UK is only double that in France.

Figures released by the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association (BLRA) and Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) show Gordon Brown now charges 34 pence in duty on a pint of beer, compared with a duty rate of just 5 pence for a similar pint in France. When duty and VAT are added together, the Chancellor takes a third of every pint in tax. The difference in beer duty between France and Britain is 29 pence. The beer duty gap is more than two and half times the 12 pence duty gap on petrol and 20 per cent more than the 24 pence difference in diesel duty between the two countries, which sparked the fuel duty protest.

The difference in tax is even more stark when Britain is compared with Germany and Spain, where beer drinkers pay only 3 pence duty on every pint. Beer duty in Britain is now more than twice the European Union average of 13 pence a pint.

Since the General Election, the Government has consistently increased tax on beer, a duty price hike of nearly 10 per cent on a pint. When duty and VAT are added together, the Chancellor is now taking more than £5 billion a year in taxes on beer. That is the equivalent of £228 a year from the pocket of every beer drinker in the UK, or £216 a year from the budget of every household in Britain. Rob Hayward, Chief Executive of the BLRA said, "Every time you buy a pint, the Government takes a third in tax. Compared with France, Britain's beer drinkers are getting a raw deal from our Chancellor, and the current level of beer taxes is damaging the industry's competitiveness. We are looking for a more level playing field with our European competitors.

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns for CAMRA said, "The time has come for consumers and the industry to stand united on this issue and make it clear to the Chancellor that the level of tax on beer is too high. Britain's community pubs are increasingly at risk of closure as they can't compete with the one million pints a day of cheap French fizz flooding our shores. It's an unfair and regressive tax and the Government's high tax policy threatens an industry which supports some 900,000 British jobs."

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THE GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL 2000

Phil Booton Goes Drinking Stateside

275 breweries, 1800 different beers. Rather puts the Great British Beer Festival in the shade doesn't it?! But this is the United States, where everything (?) is bigger and better, even beer festivals. I had the opportunity recently to visit the 2000 renewal (the 19th) of the Great American Beer Festival in Denver, Colorado in America's Midwest, organised by the Association of Brewers.

Denver is one of America's fastest growing cities, famously set a mile above sea level close to the majestic peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Colorado is also the biggest producer of beer in the United States, boasting the largest brewing facility in the world, Coors at Golden, and the Anheuser-Busch brewery at Fort Collins. It is also home to some excellent smaller breweries, part of the new wave of micros which have sprung up all over the USA in the last few years. So it makes an ideal city to host the GABF.

The festival this year had moved just down the street to a new venue, Hall A of the Colorado Convention Center on 15th Street. On entering one has to climb a steep flight of stairs, although there is a lift for the disabled or infirm. A voucher is exchanged for a plastic tasting glass with a one-ounce mark. I was told that the glass has been real glass in the past but, due to the number of breakages it was decided to switch to plastic this year. By the time of opening long queues had formed outside. The festival incidentally is open to the public for somewhat limited hours - three evening sessions 5.30 to 10.00 and Saturday afternoon 12.30 to 4.30.

The stands are arranged in geographical areas - Pacific Northwest, South East, etc. Most breweries had a choice of several beers, sometimes in bottle but mostly keg. As well as the more mainstream styles, I tried pumpkin beers, stone beers and apricot beers. I was interested to note that non-alcoholic beers and alcopops were also available. In addition to beer, food could be purchased from various concessions in the form of popcorn, pretzels, nuts and hot dogs. There were also a few trade stands, including BrewLab from the University of Sunderland.

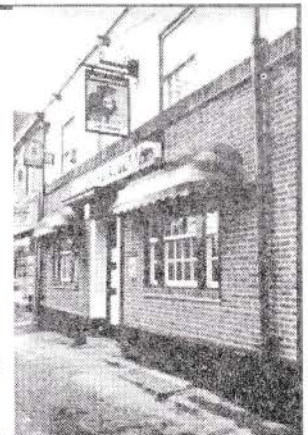
A festival like the GABF inevitably invites comparison with other major beer festivals such as the GBBF and the Antwerp 24 Hour Festival. A few fundamental differences were apparent. Firstly, visitors to the GABF pay one (quite large) entrance fee and then everything they drink is free. Secondly, beer is supplied by the breweries themselves and the stands are often manned by brewery personnel. Thirdly beer is served in measures of 1 fluid ounce at a time, except for one 6 ounce "pour" allowed only in an area called the "beer garden" (which is actually just a seating area in one corner of the hall!).

The highlight of the festival is the announcement of the gold, silver and bronze medal winners in 55 categories - from "Non-alcoholic malt beverages" to "Barley wine-style ale". Competition is fierce, as these medals are very important to the breweries, rather like CAMRA's Champion Beer awards in the UK. The gold medals this year were spread over a wide spectrum of breweries, from the largest such as Anheuser-Busch and Schlitz to a tiny brewpub such as the Pelican in Oregon.

The CROWN

of Heaton Moor
Ken and Sue

Would like to wish
all their customers
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and all the Best for
the New Year



National Winter Ales Festival - Castlefield, Manchester January 18 - 20, 2001

Among the winners were several well known names – Bud Light (!) – plus many unknown to me. Colorado brewers won their fair share of awards, including the Mountain Sun brewpub in Boulder, which won the gold medal for German-style Doppelbock for the third year running. Another small Colorado brewer, Backcountry of Frisco, won the hotly-contested (104 entries) American-style Pale Ale category for their wonderfully hoppy Telemark IPA. Awards are also given to brewing companies. The small brewery of the year was won by the Eel River Brewery of Wyoming and the mid-size brewery award went to another Colorado brewery, New Belgium, which also scooped two individual gold medals for their Belgian-style beers. There were inevitably a few criticisms. The practice of paying in advance and giving beer away, albeit in one-ounce measures, did lead to some mild drunkenness and rowdy behaviour at the end of the session, something I have rarely observed at a British beer festival. Another strange custom was the breakout of loud “hollering” (as I believe the Americans call it!) whenever someone (accidentally or deliberately) dropped their glass, which I found rather childish. Another major criticism was the quality of the programme, which was a flimsy 4 page newspaper, containing only a list of breweries (in very small type) amidst the adverts. I was told that this was to reduce costs and that in previous years, a more substantial programme had been included in the cost of admission. I was able however, as a media representative, to obtain a proper list of available beers. I also thought the toilet (or restroom!) provision was rather inadequate, with long queues forming at busy times. Although this is a criticism which could equally be applied to many British beer festivals! Overall though a very exciting event, with so many different and excellent beers to sample. I managed to get through quite a lot but I definitely recommend having some sort of strategy. You could start at one end of the first bar and just work your way round. Or you could concentrate on a particular geographical area, or on a particular style, such as wheat beers, for example. Or to save time just keep a look out for a free space at the bar and nip in for a beer! Some stands did get quite crowded at times. And the bonus is that Denver is a great place to drink outside the festival (of which more next month).

**Fight for Consumer Choice in Pubs •
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CAMPAIGN
FOR
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BOOK REVIEW

CAMRA's Good Cider Guide, edited by David Matthews. CAMRA Books, 400pp, £9.99

It's been four years since CAMRA produced a guide to real cider, and the last edition met with something of a mixed reception - whilst the producer information was useful and well-researched, unfortunately reliance on second-hand information meant that not all the outlet listings could necessarily be relied upon. So to some extent, this new third edition had the task of re-establishing CAMRA's authority in the field. The first obvious change is to the book's physical appearance - no longer pocket-size, this new guide is a substantial paperback volume in the format (though mercifully not the thickness) of the National Rail Timetable.

Inside, the impression of substance is confirmed when you discover that the first 100 pages consist of thematic articles on various aspects of cider and perry. Good articles they are, too, from a variety of industry and CAMRA sources, and covering such matters as history, wassailing, orchard ecology, and pen pictures of various cider regions (extending to Normandy, Northern Spain, and North America).

Then come the listings, all grouped by county - producers first (where they exist), then pubs and other outlets, and finally any other sites of cider interest. As was inevitable, a number of smaller producers have opted not to be included, but a good proportion of those you'll see at any decent cider bar will be found here, and useful particulars on production levels, farm gate sales, and other outlets are included. Few assessments of quality are made (prob-

ably wisely, for year-to-year variation is part of the fun of small-scale cidemaking), and in a few cases the descriptive text could usefully have been expanded ("cider has been traditionally made at Palmershayes Farm for over 100 years" - that's it, folks).

The pub descriptions in the main follow the style of Good Beer Guide entries, though without the battery of facility symbols. For the benefit of those who prefer beer, many allude to the range of ales available, and there's a symbol for those which sell no real ale. The truly dedicated cider houses, though, where cider outsells beer, and in particular the four remaining where only cider is sold, are specially identified - an excellent innovation enabling enthusiasts to zero in on the real specialist pubs.

Readers in Stockport will regret the absence of the Crown and the Olde Vic, both of which re-introduced real cider too late for the Guide's surveying timetable. Otherwise, though, the Manchester region entries look much as one might expect (no Man & Scythe in Bolton, though - surely they can't have stopped selling cider?).

The book is rounded off by an alphabetical index of producers, a list of cider distributors, which should be of great value to pubs wishing to put cider on, and an oddly selective bibliography. I felt some further supporting matter would have been useful - notably a brief glossary, a list of the producers' associations which have done so much to promote the real stuff in recent years, and dates for some of the best cider bars, whether at CAMRA festivals or elsewhere.

Regardless of that, this is an excellent publication which should do much to raise the profile of real cider and perry. Dedicated enthusiasts will scarcely need my recommendation, but the book can be heartily recommended even to those who take only an occasional glass of these glorious drinks. For perhaps the first time ever (much though I admire David Kitton's pioneering work) we have a cider guide that can stand alongside the Good Beer Guide in terms of authority and status. You shouldn't be without it. RPJ.

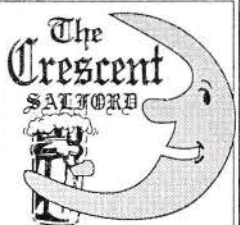
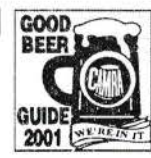
Copies of the Good Cider Guide can be obtained from Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Rd, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG. The cost, including post and packing, is £9.99 - please make cheques payable to Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA.



THE CRESCENT

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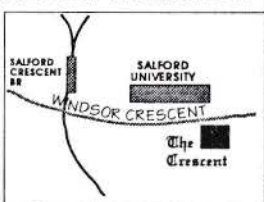
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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Idy, Sal and all at the Crescent





Sus on Wheels

Over every Christmas period, we read reports of some police force or other having carried out an immense number of breath tests and achieved only a handful of positive results. Last year, for example, over a twelve-day period, Cheshire police carried out 4,119 tests, of which a mere three proved positive, or less than one-tenth of one percent. The argument in favour of this approach is that it is a powerful deterrent that sends a message to potential offenders that, wherever and whenever they drive, they stand a significant chance of being stopped and tested. In the past, this may have had some validity, but the diminishing returns surely must indicate that it is becoming less and less true.

I am not suggesting that the police should in any way "go soft" on drink-driving or give drunk drivers a sporting chance. However, the strategy of mass breath testing is increasingly becoming a waste of police time and effort that serves to alienate the public while being ineffective in apprehending or indeed deterring offenders. If you keep looking for something, but rarely if ever catch anybody, surely it indicates that you might just be barking up the wrong tree.

Any responsible citizen will wish to help the police in their efforts to catch lawbreakers. But, equally, the police have a duty to use powers of a "stop and search" nature with discretion and a sense of proportion. If they fail to do that, they will inevitably forfeit the respect and co-operation of law-abiding people. Non drink-driving motorists will become increasingly fed up of being held up when going about their legitimate business and, in effect, being treated as suspects and having an unwarranted accusation levelled at them.

If this was any other form of law enforcement, then the civil liberties lobby would be up in arms, but since it involves a combination of the two *bêtes noires* of political correctness - alcohol and the motor car - they remain strangely silent. Perhaps they might take more interest if the government ever gets round to taking effective measures against drug-impaired driving, which police forces now believe accounts for considerably more deaths and injuries than excess alcohol, and is a growing rather than diminishing problem. Drink-related road casualties are less than a third the level of twenty years ago, and it is generally acknowledged that the battle has been largely won amongst the general public, with the problem now confined to a small hard core who tend to have little or no respect for any road traffic law. This is not grounds for complacency, but surely it suggests that it is time for a change in approach that puts more emphasis on detection and less on deterrence. The government themselves, in their road safety strategy document, published earlier this year, have acknowledged the need for more intelligence-led drink-drive enforcement.

The police should aim to identify in more detail exactly who are these hard-core offenders, where and when they are drinking, and how best to catch them, and adopt a much more closely targeted strategy to achieve that. One would hope that up to a point they are doing that already, but it does make you wonder when they continue to carry out huge numbers of breath tests with ridiculously few positive results.

5 Years Ago
 by Phil Levison **DECEMBER '95**

The whole of the front page was given over to that vexed question - "What exactly is a pint?" Section 43 of the Weights and Measures Act had defined a pint as a pint of liquid, excluding the head, but this section had never been activated. Current guidelines stated that a pint should consist of 95% liquid with a reasonable head, and that "top ups" should be given with good grace. But in an astonishing about face the Brewer's Association had recommended the use of oversize lined glasses for the dispense of some beers --CAMRA saw this as a major breakthrough in the full pint war, and were now demanding that the brewers go the whole hog and admit that a pint should be a pint. Although confusion reigns over short measure, the law is quite clear on OVER-measure. For 70 years it has been a specific licensing offence with fines of up to £500, but the government believes this to be a ridiculous piece of legislation - prosecutions have been rare - and the law was to be repealed.

Brewing had returned to Bolton after a 25 year gap, with the opening of the Bank Top Brewery on Back Lane, just round the corner from the Howcroft. John Feeney and Barry Fallon had 15 years home-brewing experience between them, and the plant had been installed by the Yorkshire based Marston Moor Brewery. It's pure beer, only containing malt, hops and yeast, and Bank Top won their first award by being voted Beer of the Festival at the Howcroft, where the beer had just been launched.

As reported last month, Hydes had relaunched their famous XXXX Strong Ale. It was first brewed in 1922 with a gravity of 1055, although for most of its life it was somewhat stronger at 1068. Local drinkers remembered it as a powerful 8-9% brew, but it has reverted to the original 6.8% ABV, enabling it to be sold at the more acceptable price of 95-97p a half.

There was a 3 page guide to Opening Times World Wide Web Site. The pages had actually been live since October, and although they hadn't been widely advertised, there had been visits from the USA, (an ex-Bolton Branch member) Australia, Japan and all over the UK and Europe.

A couple of months ago the Swinging Sporan had featured in the Pub Vandalism Awards, and the boarded-up pub was a sorry sight. But it had come back to life as the Retro Bar, still operated by Scottish Courage, with the new manager said to be John Anderson, original manager of the Jabez Clegg.

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeon.co.uk

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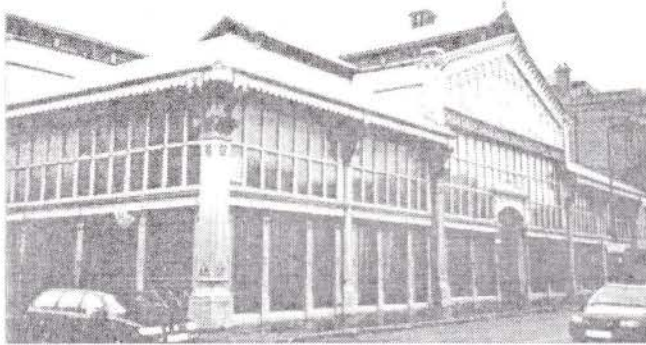
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- ★ Egon Ronay Guide, AA Best of British Gd
- ★ CAMRA Good Pub Food Guide 1999
- ★ CAMRA Pub of the Month April 2000

National Winter Ale Spectacular



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

The festival moved to Manchester two years ago, from its original home in Glasgow, and has been a runaway success with beer selling out by 7.00pm on the Saturday night the first year. Larger supplies ensure this no longer happens! 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



National Winter Ales Festival Manchester 2001

Upper Campfield Market 18 - 20 January 2001
PLEASE USE ONE FORM PER PERSON
ONLY CURRENT CAMRA MEMBERS MAY VOLUNTEER



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. This is largely limited to sleeping space within the hall. A limited number of reasonably cheap rooms have been arranged. Please contact the staffing officer directly for details. Please note - accommodation cannot be guaranteed

Mon 15	Tue 16	Wed 17	Thu 18	Fri 19	Sat 20	Sun 21	Mon 22
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. A party for staff helping at the festival will be held at the Crescent, Salford on Saturday April 7 2001 (from 7pm)

Send your completed form to:

Staffing: Laura Holmes, 121 Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, CW10 0HL,

Phone: 01606 737184, Fax: 08700 569 053.

E-mail: LAURA@WHITWELL.DEMON.CO.UK

Republic rarely seen in the UK, draught and bottled American Winter beers, and hopefully a few beers from Holland. A good range of ciders and perries will also be available, this time from an individual bar.

This year sees the triumphant return of Idyfrom the Crescent, Salford running both a hot food bar, and a separate butty bar, both an outstanding and popular success last year. The three day event runs from 18-20 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 - 18-20 January.

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.



STAY SAFE! Don't drink and drive This Christmas

As a reader of "Opening Times" you will know that alcohol is very much part of the world we live in. Have 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

Alcohol 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 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.

Jayne & Bryan welcome you to

THE ASH HOTEL

232 Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel 0161 476 0399

After Major Refurbishment

- ☆ Christmas Cabaret - Including Supper - December 15th - Tickets £10

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2001 STOCKPORT BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Stockport Beer & Cider Festival is probably one of the biggest annual events in the area attracting around 4,000 people each year.

In 2001 the Festival will offer even more sponsorship opportunities to local companies and organisations:

- ★ Souvenir Glasses
- ★ Souvenir T-Shirts
- ★ Entertainment
- ★ Family Room
- ★ Beer & Cider
- ★ Even the Staff!

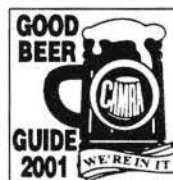
Sponsorship can be financially based or on a barter basis. If you are interested, please contact Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire. SK4 5EG (Telephone: 0161 432 1816)

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TOWN



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HATTERS MILD
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17

CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

HISTORY IN A GLASS - CHRISTMAS CLOSE AT HAND

A Wry Look at the History of British Drinking by Pete Soane (Part 4)

At this time of year we're looking back briefly at Christmas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where as always, plenty and poverty went hand in hand.

"They live well, eat and drink well, clothe warm and lodge soft... in a word the people of England eat the fat, drink the sweet, live better and fare better than the working people of any other nation in Europe. They spend more on back and belly than any other country." - Daniel Defoe, 1726.

Even at the end of the century cartoonists were depicting the gulf between Europeans on a meagre diet and fat jolly Englishmen consuming huge roast joints, vast puddings and foaming tankards of ale. Of course, not everyone could afford to eat and drink so well and Ned Ward, the London Spy, describes a visit to a very inferior Billingsgate alehouse in 1704.

"In a narrow lane, as dark ass a burial vault, which stunk of Stale Spirits, piss and Sir-reverance, we groped around like a couple of thieves in a coal-hole to find the entrance to that nocturnal theatre in whose delightful scene we proposed to terminate the night's felicity. At last we stumbled upon the threshold of a gloomy tavern... We turned ourselves into a smoky boozing den where round the fire sat a tattered assembly of motherly flat-caps, their fish baskets hanging upon their heads... with everyone her nipperkin (quarter pint) of warm ale and brandy."

Warm ale was commonly drunk in the winter and in The Old Curiosity Shop, Dickens describes a scene in the kitchen of the Jolly Sandboys, "A small road-side inn of ancient date"... "it's a stew of tripe" said the landlord, smacking his lips, 'and cow heel', smacking them again, 'and bacon', smacking them once more, 'and steak and peas, cauliflowers, new potatoes and sparrow-grass, all working up together in one delicious gravy'. Then, said Mr Codlin, 'fetch me a pint of warm ale'. Nodding his approval the landlord retired to draw the beer, and returning, applied himself to warm the same in a small tin vessel shaped funnel-wise, for the convenience of sticking it far down in the fire and getting at the bright places."

And again, Tom Smart, in The Pickwick Papers, takes shelter from a rainstorm on the Marlborough Downs in a road-side inn. "In less than five minutes time, Tom was ensconced in the room opposite the bar before a substantial roaring fire burning and crackling with a sound that of itself would have warmed the heart of any reasonable man. Tom was fond of hot punch - I may venture to say he was very fond of hot punch - and in short time he had emptied the fourth tumbler and ordered a fifth."

Dickens, probably better than any other English author, caught the mood of Christmas and as Mr Pickwick and his friends, together with Sam Weller, travel to Dingley Dell for Christmas, on the Muggleton Coach, "with a huge cod-fish snugly packed up, in a long brown basket and half a dozen barrels of real native oysters" the author reflects; "Christmas was close at hand, in all his bluff and hearty honesty, it was the season of hospitality, merriment and open-heartedness, Happy, happy Christmas that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood, that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth and transport the sailor and the traveller back to his own fireside."

This Christmas then, celebrate with a glass of warmed Old Tom, forget the drink units for once, and remember our ancestors who certainly know how to enjoy the festive season.

"Beer! Happy produce of our isle,
Can sinewy strength impart,
And, wearied with fatigue and toil,
Can cheer each manly heart" - Rev. J Townley

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beer as soon as it is brewed!

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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 Hatters Mild all on hand pump.

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Ashton Town Centre
'come shopping and
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Excellent home cooked food served:
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Friday & Saturday 5.00 - 8.00 evenings

12.00 - 3.00 Sunday. 3 course special plus full menu

Parties catered for -
hot and cold buffets
and theme nights





Full Measure of the Law

It's not just elections that are odd in the States. A court in California (where else!) has found out that Heinz have been underfilling (by about a teaspoon) their ketchup bottles for a number of years. The remedy? Heinz must now overfill the ketchup for a period of 12 months! Now compare this to the welcome, but somewhat supine decision of our Trade & Industry Secretary, Stephen Byers about the fully filled pint. Granted he thinks that 100% liquid + froth is what is required, AND he has recognised that this requires an oversize lined glass. Good. He also thinks that the existing Weights & Measures Legislation is quite adequate to enforce this. Hmm. So we should have had full pints for the last 'n' years then....so what's he doing about it. Nothing for two years, to allow the pub-owning companies to change their glass stocks. So a full pint must wait till 2003. No chance of a little bit extra in the meantime...far from it - that's still illegal!

This makes me wonder about another glass-related issue. The beer glass as a Friday-night-special weapon. A local rag is heading a campaign to have standard glasses replaced by 'toughened' versions which shatter into round pebble fragments (like car wind-screens) - so why not go the whole hog and do both at once...too much like joined up government for our political masters I fear. Anyway, provisionally we must declare a victory for CAMRA and drinkers. I say provisionally because being the awkward cynic I am I have a fear all this will be forgotten about (reconsidered) after the election, when the pub-owners wave wads of donations and bleat about "cost" and "red tape" - they've already started in fact. I'm glad at least that it was this one we won rather than the 24 hour licence reform - about which I have very severe doubts. The longer that and the 24-hour vomiting weekend yob gets postponed the better! With all the vertical bottle-drinking excrescences opening up in town - Printworks, Great Northern, Circus (development not the excellent Pub), Deansgate etc...etc., we do not need this in Manchester.

ANSWERS TO THE N/4 QUIZ

1. Harp & Shamrock
 2. "The Thumbs Up" (Bonus) - because a cardboard thumb was placed in the window if "lates" were available.
 3. McKennas Brewery
 4. McKennas owned both the the Marble Arch and the George and Dragon (later known as the Band on the Wall)
 5. Simon Finch
 6. Bensons, and before that "The Wheatsheaf".
 7. Tetleys, (despite the Empress Brewery tile-front).
 8. It stocks the full range of Robinsons Draught Ales.
 9. The Old White Bear
 10. Walkers AND The Royal Crown Hotel.
- The (2) all correct answersd were given by Steve Smith and Mick the Hair.

Merry Christmas from Kath, Ian and all the staff

THE CASTLE
 OLDHAM STREET, MANCHESTER
 NOW SERVING THE COMPLETE
 RANGE OF ROBINSONS CASK BEERS!
 Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
 Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,
 Old Tom and Hartleys and
 introducing....
Robin Bitter
 (4.5% abv)
 WARM WELCOME AND FINE
 BEERS IN A CLASSIC PUB

Better the Devil You Don't Know!

I have castigated the Breare attempted buyout of Wolverhampton & Dudley, because the man is an unreconstructed asset stripper and brewery closer. Recent developments however are beyond belief. David Thompson the Wolves MD who is trying to organise a management buyout, has announced his intention to close Hartlepool (expected) AND Marstons in Burton. Marstons Pedigree is the only real national brand Wolves owns and IS special because part of every pint is brewed in the famous and unique Burton Union system with water from the Burton Aquifer. He intends to brew this in the one remaining brewery at Wolverhampton. Dolt. Idiot. Dunderhead! This is one beer it is impossible to match.. If he tries this I will personally take them to court under 'passing off' laws. NB. Beer of the Month. Tegernsee Spezial at the Beer House. As they say, there is only one. Try it at Winter Ales next month.

FESTIVE FAYRE **Old Tom Cake**

As is traditional at this time of year, we bring you our festive recipe for Old Tom Cake. We have local brewer Frederic Robinson to thank for this recipe which the brewery have now republished on a glossy red leaflet. While Old Tom is the recommended ale to use, any strong old ale could be used, perhaps even a Belgian Trappist beer.

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4 oz butter | 2 cups plain flour |
| 4 oz sugar | 1 level tsp. bicarbonate of soda |
| 1 cup dried mixed fruit | 1 level tsp. mixed spice |
| 1 bottle of Old Tom | |

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to gas mark4, 180C/350F
2. Place the butter, sugar, fruit and ale into a saucepan, mix well and then boil for three minutes.
3. Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and mixed spice into a bowl, add the fruit mixture and mix thoroughly.
4. Transfer to a 1lb loaf tin and bake for at least 40 minutes in the centre of the oven.
5. Test occasionally with a skewer - if it comes out clean, tis done. Old Tom Cake can be eaten either cold, spread with butter, or warm with cream or custard as a pudding.



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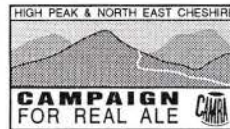
☆ QUIZZES ☆

☆ BAR GAMES ☆

REAL ALE £1.30 MON NIGHT



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DECEMBER FEATURED PUB

The White Hart,
Mottram-In-Longendale

In the shadow of the 12th Century Londendale church, situated in Mottram-In-Longendale, is the "White Hart". The heritage of this free house includes ownership by Wilson's (whose distinctive tiles still adorn the toilet walls) and also a period when it became an Irish theme pub - The Ennisfree. The pub was purchased by real-ale landlord Geoff Oliver at the beginning of the year. Geoff's semi-legendary status was gained from The Sportsman in Hyde, which twice won "Regional Pub of the Year" under his stewardship.

Real ale quality is of the highest priority here with Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Plassey Bitter and Magic Mushroom Mild being the regulars and in fine form with two to three other guests always on tap.

The pub itself dates back to the 16th Century and rumour has it that the White Hart was the first pub in the country to receive a license when licensing was introduced. The pub is comprised of 3 rooms - a large lounge with a homely real fire, a games room and a bar area. A refit of the kitchen is almost complete so bar snacks will soon be available including Geoff's fine line in vegetarian food. There is also a function room upstairs which is available for hire.

If you visit on a Thursday evening you will even find local CAMRA luminary Frank Wood serving and willing to have a chat about what's going on in the area with real-ale!!

The Waters Green Tavern



96 Waters Green,
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Following on from recent news regarding the *Whitely Nab*, Glossop - the beer range(!) is now Tetley Bitter and Boddingtons Bitter, both on handpump. The *Wheatshaf*, Old Glossop is doing well with its guest beer policy - alongside Boddies Bitter is Greene King IPA as another regular and Adnams Bitter, which was recently a very successful guest, is also being considered as a regular.

In Marple - Steve at the Railway, Rose Hill recently gained third place in Robinson's Bar & Cellar Awards. This pub is the only one in the Good Beer Guide!! For completeness - the Masons Arms, Houghton Green, Denton was first and the King William, Wilmslow was second.

The *Royal Oak*, Mellor has recently opened a "Bulls Head (Old Glossop) Style" Indian restaurant - let's hope it is equally successful.

The *White House* in Stalybridge is due to reopen on 13th December. This is after a major refurbishment by new owners Hydes' and we await the unveiling with considerable interest.

There's some good news from Kettlethulme where Ian Edmunds has taken over at the *Swan*. Ian's last job was nothing to do with the pub trade insofar as he was driving a concrete mixer but he has always been a keen supporter and drinker of real ale. He decided to take the plunge after his sister took over one of Cheshire's classic pubs - the Commercial at Wheelock.

The *Swan* has been in the same hands for the past 21 years but it's only been open part-time for the last few and the previous owner retired last month, with Ian and his wife moving in on 10 November.

The previous beer range was Marston's Bitter and Pedigree but this was down to the licensee's personal choice and not as a result of any tie. Consequently Ian intends to serve only beers from small independent brewers and prior to taking over had contacted several local breweries including Storm, Titanic, Beartown, Paradise and even as far afield as the Six Bells in Bishops Castle.

In addition to the local beer, the *Swan* will also be stocking beers from further afield supplied by specialist wholesalers and eventually hopes to be selling as many as six different cask beers, including a mild if there is a demand. There will also be genuine foreign lagers and real cider. There will also be genuinely home-made food to accompany the traditional ales. Ian hopes this will make for a successful combination - it certainly has the makings of one and we wish Ian every success in this new venture.

Finally a closure - no tears shed for the stubbornly keg-only *Trap* in Glossop when it closed recently - but every pub is an opportunity for decent real ale, so perhaps a sniffle!

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The Castle Inn, Congleton - guest beers are going from strength to strength. Goff's Joustier is due in around now, as is a beer from Goose Eye in Yorkshire. The landlord could only shift one barrel of a guest beer a week when he first introduced them, now he is up to three!

Good news from the Woodlands, Congleton - the beer range has been stripped down and Black Sheep has been introduced alongside Boddington's. The Black Sheep was excellent quality when I tasted it. Also good news has come in from Heath Farm, Congleton - Tetley Bitter and Wadworth 6X are still available, but the ubiquitous Marston's Pedigree has been replaced (possibly permanently) by Ind Coope Burton Ale. Our reporter was "delighted by the quality of the beer".

In Bollington the Meridian is still not open - the builders and electricians are still working on it - an opening date is not currently available. Unfortunately we still do not know what beers it will serve when it does finally reopen. Down the hill, the Waggon & Horses is 'to let' and the Vale is still (after several years) for sale.

Also in Bollington a beer wholesale company has just started business on Grimshaw Lane. Now here is an opportunity for the many pubs selling Boddingtons (at least 6 at the moment) in Bollington to try something else and its right on their doorstep. So if you regularly drink in Bollington and would like more variety why not ask the landlord to try a guest beer from just up the road?

Talking of variety in Bollington, the Lord Clyde is now selling Greenalls Bitter, Bass, Castle Eden and Old Speckled Hen and the Poachers always has 4 real ales on the bar (including one from the local Storm Brewery.) In Macclesfield it seems that Hyde's have bought some premises in Park Green (the old Iceland shop) for conversion to a pub - nice to see an independent brewer moving into the town centre instead of the big pub owning companies.

The Filigree and Firkin (Bears Head to the older folks) has been gutted for refurbishment. Coincidentally, the pub was damaged the day before it closed by some visiting 'football supporters' from Oxford - saved the builders some effort perhaps? Since the Filigree did very poor business now might seem like a good time to turn back the clock and resurrect the Bears Head, under which name it always seemed to be busy as I recall. Last month we reported that when the Robin Hood, Rainow, changed hands, the new licensee was left with very little stock. We have now heard from John Brown, the former licensee of the pub, and now landlord at the Jolly Carter, Chapel-en-le-Frith. John tells us that he was specifically asked to run down the stocks before he left and there was no question of him leaving new licensee Nick Rowcliffe in the lurch. We are more than happy to set that straight.

The Waters Green

Brian McDermott at the Waters Green has asked us to clarify a couple of things after last month's OT article.

He will now always be selling Landlord, Jennings & JW Lees plus others. The idea about only one guest beer actually means Brian can select one guest beer that is not on the list supplied by the owning group, but he can select other guest beers that are on the list (i.e. he doesn't have to include Tetley's/Boddingtons etc.). One final point, Brian says he was not forced into the deal.

Ye Olde Admiral Rodney



Prestbury

Robinsons Hatters
Mild and Best Bitter
on handpump



Lunchtime Bar Snacks

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Mottram

Now Acquired by the owners of
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Now Serving: Plassey Bitter,
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Regular Beers include
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CAMRA CALLING!

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

Diary

DECEMBER 2000

Thursday 7th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Nursery, Green Ln, Heaton Norris. Starts 8.00pm. Includes annual Christmas Quiz.

Saturday 9th - Regional Pub of the Year presentation to Ye Olde Woolpack, Brinksway, Stockport. From 8.00pm.

Monday 11th - Two-way Social: Moss Rose, Didsbury Rd, Heaton Norris, 9.0pm; Woolpack, Brinksway 10.00pm

Friday 15th - Annual Hillgate Stagger - the oldest annual fixture in any branch calendar. Let's make it a big one this year - all please attend. Starts 7.00pm Queens Head (Turners Vaults), Underbank; 8.30pm Red Bull, Hillgate. Finish Blossoms, Heaviley (for an Old Tom nightcap).

Thursday 21st - Pub of the Month presentation to The Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. From 8.00pm.

Saturday 30th - Informal Social at the Paradise Brewery Beer Festival, Wrenbury Station. Train departs Manchester Piccadilly at 11.33 with special stop arranged at Wrenbury

Tuesday 2nd January - Committee Meeting: Queens Head (Turners Vaults), Underbank, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.

Wednesday 10th - Regional Meeting & AGM, Beer House, Angel St (off Rochdale Rd), Manchester. Hosted by Stockport & South Manchester so a good showing please. 8.00pm.

Thursday 11th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm, NB Pub of the Year will be chosen at this meeting so a good turnout please.

DECEMBER 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:

Saturday 9th - Branch Christmas Social, Mossley. Starts 6.30pm. (details from Frank Wood 01457 865426)

Monday 11th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Crown, Victoria St, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 30th - Alternative Christmas Boozep-up in Buxton. Meet Wetherspoons at 7.00pm.

Monday 8th January - Committee Meeting: White Hart, Newton, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 15th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Pack Horse, Audenshaw. Starts 8.30pm.

Advance Notice - 2nd-4th February - Branch trip to Peterborough. Details from Tom Lord on 0161 837 4474.

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:

Friday 15th - Christmas Social: Beartown Tap, Congleton. Food (charge tba), Beartown Beers - a chance to drink a local brew! Starts 7.320pm.

Monday 8th January - Branch Social: British Flag, Coare St, Macclesfield. Starts 8pm.

Monday 22nd - Branch AGM, The Baths, Green St, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Member Address CAMRA 93 Partner



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

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Claire and Howard send Seasons Greetings to all their friends and customers

Among Our DECEMBER BEERS:

Charles Wells Eagle IPA, Bombadier, Noggin; Cains Dr Duncans IPA; Thwaites Good Elf; Titanic Night to Remember; Highwood Lincolnshire Legend, Christmas Cheer; Mauldons Mid Winter Gold, Eaton Swill Old; Everards Tiger, Beacon; Brakspear Special, Oh Be Joyful; Batemans XB; Champagne Charlie; Wychwood Rocking Rudolph, Santa Claws, Fiddlers Elbow, Hobgoblin ... and many more



KENNEDY STREET THE CITY ARMS

8 HANDPUMPS
6 GUEST ALES
LUNCHTIME FOOD

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2001 11.30-2.30
Mon - Fri & 11.30 - 2.00
Saturday

Great Food from Our Menus & Specials Board

MANCHESTER MATTERS by Cityman

City Centre News

Despite last month's break, there's still not a huge amount to report from the City Centre. The big story is that Terry Corless has announced his retirement from the Circus Tavern, early in the New Year. I still don't have the full story, which will hopefully feature at length next month, although I gather that two of the regulars are taking the pub on so there will at least be some degree of continuity. I am sure that local drinkers won't let his departure pass unmarked.

The Printworks is now open, of course, and so far offers not a drop of cask beer in its multitude of bars. There is however light at the end of the tunnel - Wetherspoon's are to open an outlet there sometime in February and cask ale is promised. Indeed, Wetherspoon's seem to be going expansion mad at the moment - the Printworks outlet is just one of three new Wetherspoon's in the pipeline for the City Centre. They are also lined up for the Circus development which is taking shape on the Portland Street/Oxford Street corner and have now put in for a license at 67-71 Princess Street. This is the row of Georgian buildings opposite the Town Hall and will be known as The Waterhouse (presumably in honour of Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse who designed the Town Hall).

There's also a welcome real ale oasis in the Deansgate Locks development where the Fat Cat Café Bar has a handpump selling, on my visit, Flowers Original. More on this one next time.

Elsewhere there are a couple of real ale losses to report - both Rothwell's on Spring Gardens and the Sawyers Arms on Deansgate are now all keg. The disused handpumps remain in the Sawyers so perhaps all is not lost yet, although I have had at least one report of bar staff directing those asking for cask beer next door to the Hogshead! For reasons best known to itself the Goose on Piccadilly is now the Piccadilly Tavern. Apart from this nothing has changed. In another intriguing development, it looks as though Hale Leisure (Jabez

Clegg et al) now have the Crown on Deansgate, although I have no news of what is planned for this very traditional pub. The former Mash & Air, meanwhile is in the throes of conversion into a Jongleurs Comedy Club (and we all know how the City Centre desperately needs another comedy venue) while not far away Via Fossa (Canal Street) has re-opened after a refurbishment which was essentially a spruce-up. Amazingly, cask beer remains with Theakston's Cool Cask spotted on handpump.

In The Suburbs

In January, I reported that the Derby Arms at Clayton had lost its cask ale. Recently this pub has just had an external face-lift. It has two brand new signs:- One saying "Cask Ales" and another saying "A selection of traditional cask ales" On entering, the ales available are Keg Trophy, Keg Whitbread Mild and Cream flow Boddies. They still have the unused handpump with Trophy pump clip (which is visible from outside) which can mislead people into thinking cask ale is available. What a shame that they can't copy the Sir Humphrey Chetham opposite where the sole handpump dispenses Peter Yates bitter (at £1 a pint on my last visit).

On the south side meanwhile, Hydes' have re-opened the Gateway in East Didsbury after a major refurbishment. My spies tell me that it's an impressive job in a traditional style. I hope to get there myself over the Christmas break. In Didsbury village, Squires remains closed and undergoing a major refurbishment. It remains to be seen whether cask ale will put in an appearance, although I'm not holding my breath - especially as the White Lion in Withington has now lost its real ale. So, too, has the nearby Albert, I'm sorry to say. I also managed an all-too-rare visit to the Old House at Home on Barlow Road recently and was again impressed by the way the pub is now being run. Three guest beers alongside Boddies, and all in fine fettle. A good pub atmosphere, too. Not too far away, Holt's continue to work on the Railway, Lapwing Lane, although I suspect it will still be several months before the pub actually re-opens.

Finally for this month, the beer range at the Farmers Arms in Northenden has improved with Theakston Cool Cask and a guest beer being sold alongside the Greenalls Bitter. The guest beers have apparently been introduced at the request of the regulars and it's good to report that more cask beer and less Fosters is being sold as a result.

Join CAMRA Now! & get into National Winter Ales Festival (Manchester, Jan 18-20) FREE (or just £1 Thurs/Fri Eve)

Calling all Opening Times readers! As you may know, Opening Times is published by the Stockport and South Manchester branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. But what is CAMRA all about, how do we, the Campaign's local representatives, fit into the picture, and what's the point of being a member? Briefly, CAMRA has campaigned for many years, at a national and local level, for quality and choice for the British pubgoer. Locally, our campaigning activities are combined with a lively diary of social events.

Best Ever Time To Join

If you're considering joining CAMRA then this is your chance! For the rest of this year we're offering £2 off full membership - that's a bargain £12 for your first year. And there's even better news if you're under 26 or a full-time student - concessionary membership is just £8. Not only

that but as a CAMRA member you'll be able to buy the new 2001 Good Beer Guide from the Branch for just £7 - that's £4.99 off the cover price! Added to which you can get into the superb National Winter Ales Festival (see page 3 for details) for free on the Friday lunchtimes and Saturday sessions, or just £1 Thursday/Friday Evening.



APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP - £2 REDUCTION!

(Opening Times 200)

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 £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP

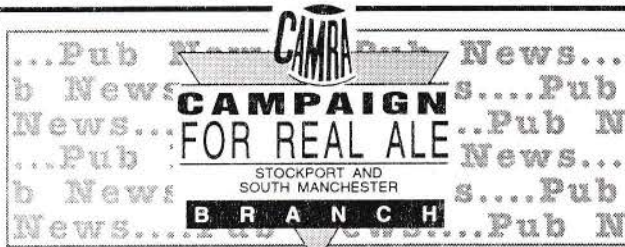
UNDER 26 YRS or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8

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.





First, let's set the record straight about the *Old King*, Portwood. We have on more than one occasion suggested that the pub is threatened with demolition, given the fate of its near neighbours the Brinnington Inn and the Railway. New leaseholder Karen Hopkins is keen to assure everyone that this is very much not the case. Before she signed the Punch Taverns lease, extensive enquiries were made and the pub is not under threat. Good news indeed. The pub sells two cask beers - Worthington and Tetley Bitter - and is also in line for a part-refurbishment.

Having been done up a couple of years ago when still part of the Allied Empire, the *Old Mill*, Cheadle Hulme has closed again for another refurbishment. It closed on 10th Nov and according to a sign on the door will re-open on 13th February. A local newspaper reveals that part of this will involve a new porch and planning permission for this has only just been applied for. In addition, we understand that the interior is to be gutted and redone. Will anything be done to the beer range and dispense?? Certainly the beer choice has been far more limited in the last couple of years and this decline seemed to start before Punch took over. We suspect that trade, especially from the younger drinking element, has been badly hit by the opening of *The Kings Hall* in Cheadle Hulme, which continues to thrive. Apparently Wetherspoon's chief Tim Martin paid a surprise visit there last month. It is reputedly one of Wetherspoon's more successful pubs. Certainly, they sold the full range of festival beers at the recent festival and I gather took some supplies from other local branches that couldn't sell theirs. They regularly have 4 guests on plus the standard range.

Some news from the airport. Good news- *The Donkeystone* in Terminal 1 continues to sell a guest beer. Bad news - it is now £2.50/pint whatever the beer is. Even the Tetleys is £2.20/pint. Is this the most expensive pint of cask ale in the area?

We welcome Andy Cockayne as the new licensee of the *Shady Oak* on Ringmore Road in Bramhall. Andy has introduced a range of events for the pub to emphasise its role as a community pub, including a quiz night on Thursdays and live music on Fridays. The current beer range is Tetley Bitter and Marston's Pedigree, plus a guest which on our visit was Taylor's Landlord. A wide range of food is served every day of the week from 12-2.30 and 6-8.30. We wish Andy every success in the *Shady Oak* which is a pub of great potential that has suffered recently from a number of short-term licensees.

Winters, (Underbank, Stockport) has yet another new licensee - but this one's here to stay! Peter Sibbit left after a very short stay and has moved to another Holt's house - the *Woodthorpe* in Prestwich, which we felt to be more suited to his catering skill. His replacement is Kerry Dixon who took over on 30 October. This is her first pub, after training with Whitbread at the *Olde Cock* in Didsbury, although she is no stranger to the pub trade, having been a barmaid for 20 years, mainly in her hometown of Stalybridge. She's certainly happy with the pub, "I love this place", she told OT and is very keen to stay at *Winters* for a "good few years". The beer's certainly back on form (partner Neil Garlick helps with the cellar work) and a substantial food operation remains in place, being served from 12-4, every day. The introduction of the Christmas menu (a snip at £8.75) will see these hours extended to 12-5 and 7-10, again every day. The bar in the upstairs room will also be brought back into use for the festive season. *Winters* has needed a period of stability for some time and we wish Kerry every success.

After a lengthy delay, a major refurbishment is at last underway at the *Chestergate Tavern* (Mersey Square, Stockport). The pub has been completely gutted - a sensible move, for once - and as we went to press work was feverishly underway, presumably with an eye to a pre-Christmas opening.

The *Yates's Wine Lodge* group have found a buyer for their *Watling Street Inns* chain, which includes the *Governor's House* in Cheadle Hulme. Unusually, the buyer isn't some thrusting new pub company but an old-established family brewer - *Hardys & Hansons* from Nottingham. Famed for their *Kimberly Ales* (a personal favourite of Ed.1), the nearest the company has come to the *Opening Times* area to date is *Buxton*, so this is a welcome move, particularly if it sees them acquiring other pubs in the area.



OPENING TIMES DECEMBER COMPETITION

Sponsored by The Beer Seller

Last month's competition attracted a good number of entries from both near and far.

The beers you were looking for were: Level Best; Town Crier; Rudolph; Haymaker; Rumpus; Sound Whistle; Eddystone; Easter Frolic; Cornucopia and Arizona.

The winner of the usual pack of beer-related goodies was R Yates of Heaton Norris. Congratulations!. This month we have some more brewery related items, again kindly donated by the Beer Seller.

The competition has once again been set by Paul Stanyer of the *Swan With Two Necks* and this time you are just looking for breweries, all of which appear in the 2001 Good Beer Guide. As usual complete the grid in a clockwise spiral - we have given you the first letter.



Entries to:
OT Competition,
45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley,
Stockport, SK3 9HD
by 31 December please.

- (1) Did this brewery rise from the ashes like the mystical bird?
- (2) Sounds like this beer is out of date in Lichfield
- (3) You may cede dance for this Ashvine brew (Anag)
- (4) So real ham on the menu in Suffolk (2word anag).
- (5) Drinking this in York will make you nearly a lunatic! (2 words)
- (6) Was his theory of evolution thought up in Co. Durham?
- (7) A replacement watch for the Badger? (2words)
- (8) Is this giant tree a Wheatheroak? No!
- (9) Knock this down and they all fall down at the Brewery on Sea
- (10) Antagonised the root vegetable in the Kitchen (2words)

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