



OPENING TIMES



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JULY 2001 No:207

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BETRAYED!

CAMPAIGN WILL NOT GIVE UP ON LICENSING REFORM AS LABOUR BREAKS HOURS PROMISE

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is to press the Government to honour its election pledge to reform pub opening hours after hopes that it would be introduced early in the life of the new parliament were dashed.

The omission of a licensing bill from the Queen's Speech infuriated sacked Home Office minister Mike O'Brien, who accused Tony Blair of bad judgement.

Mr O'Brien said: "The Prime Minister has broken a promise made to every pubgoer in the land." He said Downing Street had given full support to his pledge last May that reform of licensing laws would be one of the first acts of a new labour government.

Now Mr Blair has taken responsibility for liquor licensing away from the Home Office and given it to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, a move welcomed by CAMRA.

CAMRA's Jonathan Mail said that the Campaign had predicted that licensing reform might be delayed. "There is still all to play for on licensing reform, and we will be pressing the minister responsible, Tessa Jowell, to keep Labour's election commitment to introduce legislation early in the life of the new parliament," he said.

"We want the Government to give a firm pledge that a reforming bill will be in the next Queen's speech, which will not now be until 2002. If that does not happen pubgoers will not be able to drink later until at least 2003."

CAMRA is to press for an early meeting with Tessa Jowell and her officials and will stress that longer hours will not lead to increased alcohol-related disorder.

Britain's family brewers also welcomed moving licensing reform to the DCMS, now dubbed the Ministry of Fun. Independent Family Brewers of Britain vice-chairman Stuart Neame said: "The Home Office discriminated against community pubs and did not give the public clearly what they wanted, which is flexible opening. We want a genuine liberalisation of licensing laws."

WETHERSPOONS ARE COMING...

Stockport's very first J D Wetherspoon pub is scheduled to open on 27 July. The Calverts Court occupies the old Partington's furniture store on St Petersgate. Wetherspoon's make a feature of cheap beer, all-day food and no music and it will therefore be interesting to see what effect it has on neighbouring pubs.

In theory, there is supposed to be a second Wetherspoon's, a new-build on the vacant site next to the Underbank Hall branch of NatWest. There has however been a conspicuous lack of activity there and it may be that Wetherspoon's plans for the site have been quietly dropped. Copy date permitting, we'll have a review of the new pub in next month's OT.

The new Wetherspoons development in Manchester City Centre (at the 'Circus' on the junction of Oxford Street and Portland Street) is due to open even more quickly - a week earlier, in fact on the 18th and is to be called The Paramount. That makes 4 (with the Deansgate and Piccadilly outlets, and Lloyds in the Printworks) and at least two more are threatened.

FULL PINT FIGHT GOES ON

Meeting sought with consumer minister

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is seeking an urgent meeting with new consumer affairs minister Melanie Johnson to call for action over Labour's full pint promise.

The promise came in a Labour press release in March 1997, and proposals to put an end to the short-pint scandal have actually been drawn up by the Department of Trade & Industry - but consumers are still waiting for its commitment to be honoured.

In the meantime, consumers are still being ripped off. A survey carried out in Cardiff in May revealed that the average pint in themed pubs was only 94.7 per cent liquid, with one beer only containing 87 per cent liquid. The findings were consistent with previous surveys by CAMRA branches and trading standards officers.

CAMRA Head of Communications Mike Benner said: "The Government has made a clear commitment to full pints to deal with the growing problems of customers being ripped off in pubs, but the issue has been bounced around like a yo-yo in the corridors of power. It's quite simple; a pint of beer should be 100 per cent liquid and no pub should be able to profiteer from the current system of self-regulation, which has clearly failed.

"This problem is getting worse as the trend of serving beers with large creamy heads gathers momentum. There is a clear need to protect consumers. While the DTI appears committed to reform, the interests of big business seem to be carrying more weight with the Government than those of consumers. The industry claims it is happy to provide customers with a full pint if they request a top-up, but it rejects efforts to legislate the full pint. Drinkers should not have to ask for a top-up, they should consistently get a full pint first time. "We urge the Government to stick to its commitment."

An early day motion calling for full pints was signed by 164 MPs before the General Election

CAMRA has welcomed the return of former consumer affairs minister Nigel Griffiths to the DTI team under new Trade Secretary Patricia Hewitt.

Mr Griffiths has been put in charge of the Small Business Unit, which has opposed full pint legislation, but Mike Benner said: "Mr Griffiths was previously a champion of the full pint. He set the ball rolling after the Private Members' Bill proposed by Dennis Turner was thrown out, and its good news for consumers that he's back."

IN JULY'S OPENING TIMES

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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

Last month I dared to hope that once the election was out of the way, we might see some movement on proposals to reform our antiquated licensing laws and also to legislate for full measure. Well, there been action on the licensing front but not of the type we either wanted or expected. Putting these overdue changes on the back burner is profoundly disappointing and CAMRA will be continuing to apply pressure to ensure there are no further delays.

As to full measure, the silence is deafening. This is completely unacceptable. The short pint rip-off continues on a daily basis and must be ended once and for all. This shouldn't even involve the need for primary legislation so there really can be no excuse for the delay

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Battle lines have finally been drawn in the war over the future of Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, who trade locally under the Banks's and Marston's banners. It has every sign of being long and drawn out. Sadly, whatever the outcome, there is the prospect of more brewery closures and/or sell-offs. As ever what might be rewarding for the large teams of legal and financial advisers involved will be bad news for brewery workers, publicans and drinkers alike.

John Clarke

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

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Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Railway on Great Portwood Street in the Portwood area of Stockport.

Back in 1996, the Railway was re-opened by the Porter Brewing Co as their third tied house. Under the stewardship of Paul and Bev Stanyer, the Railway became an instant success and something of a flagship for the Porters brewery. At around the same time Alex Lord started working for the company as a barman, and then also as an odd-job man.

Paul and Bev left the Railway after notching up two Pub of the Month awards there, and subsequent events have been well documented in these pages. Suffice it to say that the pub appeared to enter a period of decline culminating in a sudden management change in September 2000. This resulted in Alex taking charge and facing the task of restoring the Railway's fortunes.

Luckily, in Alex Lord the Railway found itself in the hands of one of the most hard-working and committed licensees you are likely to encounter. And the hard work has paid off with the Railway now restored to its place as one of the top cask beer pubs in Stockport. The full range of Porter's hand-pulled beers, including the house beer, Railway Sleeper, traditional cider and foreign beers are all back to the top quality demanded by the pub's customers. A comprehensive menu of home-made food has also been restored. A new innovation, introduced by Alex, is a wide range of Belgian and German bottled beers. The range, which would look well at home in Manchester's Northern Quarter, has really taken off with the pub's customers.

Having been involved in the refurbishment of four of the five Porters pubs, Alex initially only came to Stockport for six months but is now happily settled into the full time running of the Railway. Apparently there are still some former customers who are unaware of the dramatic improvements since Alex's arrival but they will be assured of a warm welcome back, as will everyone who comes down for the presentation on Thursday 26th, from 8.00pm onwards. Weather permitting, the recently installed BBQ may be in operation on what is bound to be a memorable evening. The Railway is back, because as the licence plaque over the front door clearly states - there is A Lord above! MW/JC.

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

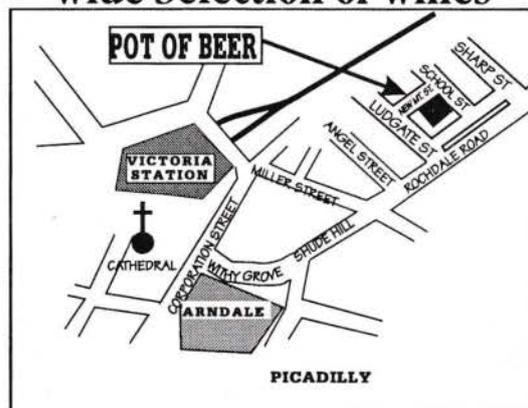
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COPY DATE FOR THE AUGUST 2001 ISSUE OF OPENING TIMES IS JULY 25

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From F.M:

I pen this missive to you on a matter of some considerable concern. It has been noted by myself and others of my age group, that although CAMRA has a well-places policy as regards to "young members", I notice nothing is happening to encourage "older" people to join. As a nonagenarian (97 last birthday) having recently converted to life membership, I feel there should be more events for "older" people, such as organised Darby and Joan nights, hot pot evenings, whist drives etc.

Though I have a busy social calendar, what with my scuba diving for the over-seventies instructional activities, formation sky diving commitments (of which we are the champions), and my rally cross meets, I still feel we of the retired section of society have a lot to offer and are being grossly ignored. I feel there is a yearning empty pit in my life, which can only be filled by more CAMRA activities for the more long standing members (have you ever tried getting a seat on a packed bus; gone are the days when some young person will stand up for you. Why, just the other day I had to abandon my place to a quite frisky lady of advancing years who had been forced to stuff her five dachshunds into the parcels locker - not pretty site as you can appreciate - and was in some considerable distress you understand, it took me all night and not some inconsiderable energy to console her. Mama mia, to borrow an Italian phrase, what a performance, though I do say so myself...) of our society and to encourage more of my ilk to enlist in our righteous and god blessed fight. So come on CAMRA, pull up your socks and let's see more action on the wrinkly front. I didn't fight in two world wars to be ignored. Come to think of it, I didn't fight in two world wars anyway.

(My finely honed journalistic instincts make me think this may be a spoof. However, on behalf of CAMRA's national Finance Committee it does allow me to appeal to all of our nonagenarian readers to follow FM's example and take up life membership of CAMRA without delay - ed(1))

From Paul Beard, New Mills (via e-mail):

I am writing to you with some concern regarding the Royal Hotel in Hayfield, another of our much valued watering holes in the High Peak. It has recently been taken over, I understand by the previous tenants of the Roebuck at Chapel-en-le-Frith. On my last visit to the Royal I found only Tetley's and Pedigree on the bar with no mention or evidence of any guest ales. We used to enjoy the ever changing guest, usually two a week, and the beer festival in October was an unmissable event.

Are you aware of what the new owners' policy is going to be? Will we continue to enjoy what we had before or has that now gone? I guess as a minimum the entry in the Good Beer Guide will have to be deleted (for the time being).

(High Peak Branch are having a meeting at the Royal on 9 July, so hopefully the position will be clarified. If guest beers have gone from the Royal it will be a sad loss. - ed (1))

From Stephen Marsh, Hyde:

I enclose a copy of a letter sent to Wetherspoons for inclusion in Opening Times:

"I was ordering my usual pint of cask beer at Wetherspoon's, Hyde on 23 May 2001; my first choice was Abbot. I was told it was off. My second choice was the guest beer; that was also off. I then settled for Directors. Oh, wait a minute, that is off, too. Three cask beers off at the same time. Not good enough.

"I enclose a clipping from 'Opening Times' no. 205. I note other Wetherspoon's are operating a no beer available policy also. At Hyde however the pumps were not being cleaned (no pipes). I suspect no-one could bother to change the barrel. All hands are on deck when it comes to changing the coffee machine filter! Beer is your core business."

From Dave Nunn, Hazel Grove:

I get increasingly angry with the racist pondlife which frequent our local pubs. No doubt many will be off for a curry after their session. Can I remind these people that the law prohibits racist comment. In Stockport we have a very diluted non-European ethnic mix, however we suffer morons in pubs who claim their ill on cultures they do not understand. Their (morons) problem is no doubt economic and it is for themselves to resolve.

Given the recent disquiet in North West towns recently maybe it would be appropriate for OT/S&SM CAMRA, local brewers and pub operators to assist by means of a poster campaign.

(Food for thought, but not within our remit, I'm afraid - ed(1))

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STAGGER

with Paul Moss

Burnage and Heaton Mersey

A small band set out on what was to be an interesting and very wet night. I think the depleted numbers were probably due to the very successful Pub of the Month presentation at the Lass O'Gowrie the previous evening.

The Milestone which was our meeting place and start of the Stagger had unfortunately lost its cask ale and was selling only keg beer. Two of us broke our normal rules and tried a half whilst waiting for any possible additions to the party. No further arrivals prompted us to move on to the **Mauldeth**, on the corner of Mauldeth Road and Kingsway, and now apparently part of something called the White Lion Pub Co. The open-plan layout of the building, with its mainly green and cream décor, has a pleasant, warm feeling. A disco was in preparation and it was surprisingly busy for so early in the evening. Theakstons Bitter and Grays Best Bitter were on offer, the latter being chosen at only £1.20 a pint and proving quite good.

Back onto Burnage Lane and the **Victoria**, a bright and cheerful, well-used locals' pub. Again a disco was due to start and both lounge and vault were very busy. Boddingtons is not my favourite beer but the bitter here was agreed to be pretty good. Further along Burnage Lane is the **Farmers Arms**, an ex-Greenalls pub now in the hands of Hydes'. Another well-frequented locals' pub that was once again busy at the time of our visit. The by now obligatory disco had already started here. The Hydes' Bitter was quite good so we drank up and moved on to the next pub with the rain now falling quite heavily.

The **Albion** had a more homely feel to it and seemed to attract a more mature clientele. It was not very busy when we called, but without the loud music of the previous house, had a more relaxed atmosphere. We all drank the Hydes' Mild, which was the best beer of the night so far.

Moving on with the weather steadily deteriorating we arrived at the **Sun in September**. Set back from the road, the pub still resembles the large private house it once was. Once inside, the layout and décor of the comfortable, well-decorated interior made for a very relaxed atmosphere. Trade was very steady and the Sam Smiths Bitter in excellent form.

I think monsoon conditions had now arrived outside, and a long, wet walk took us to the **Dog & Partridge**. This large Boddington's pub has obviously lost a lot of its attraction. On the last Stagger in this area, the place was packed and very much a thriving, community local. Tonight, though, despite the pleasant and comfortable layout, had only two customers in the lounge and eight in the vault. Not surprisingly the beer, Boddingtons Bitter, was below par, and described by one of our group as boringly tasteless.

Braving a deluge, a short walk brought us to the **Griffin** on Didsbury Road. Being both biased and a Holt's fan, I can only describe the Griffin as one of the best pubs in Stockport, with its superb multi-roomed layout and mahogany and etched glass Victorian bar that has been faithfully replicated in the modern extension to the side of the pub. As ever, every room as full, and justifiably so with both the mild and bitter being voted the best (and cheapest) beers of the night.

I would have liked to spend the rest of the night here but unfortunately duty called and we had to move on. The **Frog & Railway** was all keg, and a further short walk took us to our final watering hole, the **Crown** on Didsbury Road. Another superb pub, one of the oldest in Stockport and set in a cobbled conservation area. All the rooms were decorated to a high standard, giving a warm, relaxed atmosphere whether eating or dining. The high standard of the food is one of the main attractions during the day and it is always a busy pub. As with the Griffin, a visit is recommended and I'm sure you won't be disappointed. We all found the Robinson's Hatters Mild excellent, if a little expensive at £1.65 a pint.

Two excellent pubs finished off this very enjoyable stagger which I would recommend to anyone (although it would be more enjoyable on a dry night!).

Of course, the comments in the article can only be a snapshot of what we found on one particular night and so shouldn't be taken as a once and for all judgement of either the pubs or their beers. Try them yourselves and see what you think.

Dave and Sue welcome you to

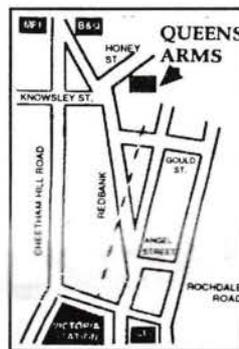
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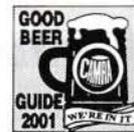


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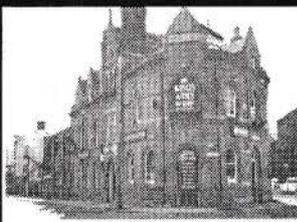
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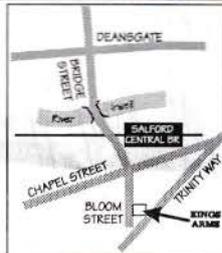
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JW Lees held a big party at their Greengate Brewery to celebrate the remarkable achievement of 56 'passport holders', who had successfully completed its Passport Trail by visiting all 149 pubs in the North West and North Wales in the past year. Every guest was presented with a commemorative passport, a



personalised crystal tankard and a special edition Lees fleece to mark the occasion. As part of the evening celebrations, guests were also taken on a tour of the brewery before tucking in to a buffet dinner, accompanied by free flowing Lees beer. Lees also have a new seasonal beer out this month; Summer Scorchers is a 4.2 per cent light beer "with a citric fruit aroma and wonderfully refreshing hop finish".

Look out, too, for new beers from Hydes and Lees. Hydes' have produced "Hit's The Spot" a beer with lemons in (!) aimed to be a summer thirst quencher, while Robinson's are reprising Whistling Will, the first of their seasonal range. Light and quaffable, it does however lack some of the character of their other seasonal beers. Hydes' have now entered the Cask Marque scheme and the first awards have gone to the White House and Q in Stalybridge, swiftly followed by the Victoria in Withington.

Readers may recall that in 1999 Holt's brewed a special ale called 1849 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the company. It went on sale in all Holt's tied houses (£1.50 for a 500ml bottle) and since sales have been very good, the beer is still being produced. A quantity of the beer is brewed and sent off for bottling only about once a year and when all the bottles have sold, another batch is produced. With the most recent brewing, a small amount was racked off into casks and sent to the Railway in West Didsbury to replace the guest beer for a short while. The 5.5% 1849 was priced at £2 a pint and as only three nine-gallon firkins were racked off, it wasn't expected to last very long. And there won't be any more until 1849 is brewed again.



The big national news, of course, is the bid by Pubmaster for Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. The pub company's offer has been rejected as insufficient and it is to be hoped that WDB keeps its independence. Certainly, its financial performance of late has been on the impressive scale that for years made the company effectively bid-proof. On the downside, breweries will go whatever happens. If they stay independent, the Camerons brewery in Hartlepool will be sold to Castle Eden and Mansfield closed (although there are plans for a management buy-out). If Pubmaster win, all four breweries will be sold (albeit in an orderly fashion, they claim). More news as it develops, but don't hold your breath as this has all the makings of a long, messy affair.

Marble Brewery continues to impress, as does brewer James Campbell who gave a very informative talk when Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA visited the brewery in June. The 4.5 per cent Ginger Marble was excellent - unlike the first, undrinkable batch, brewed with the 'assistance' (if that's the word) of your very own Ed(1). Marble's 100th organic brew, due out this month, will be the 4.4 per cent Stonham Cask Lager - "pale and dry, with citrus hop notes and a moderate bitterness." A contribution from the price of each pint sold will go to Stonham Housing, a charity which provides housing for abused women.



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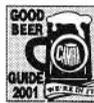


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Among the other local micros, Phoenix were, unusually, planning nothing new this month as we went to press (although that's not to say the odd newcomers won't make an appearance). The cask lager, Pilsner Irwell, has been a phenomenal success and is to be brewed again. This isn't an overnight job, though. Given the amount of maturing time involved, it won't be hitting the bars for another three months. John Feeney at Bolton's Bank Top Brewery is struggling to keep up with demand. So much so, that while he has now taken delivery of some Australian 'Pride of Ringwood' hops, he hasn't had time to use them. They will eventually be used in a planned (but as yet unnamed) 4.2 per cent bitter. John tells us that he is sending six 18-gallon casks down to the Great British Beer Festival, including three of the superb dark mild. He's also just won a Beer of the Festival Award at a three-pub event held in Eskdale, Cumbria.



Also picking up awards is Congleton's Beartown Brewery, who have recently picked up gongs for both Black Bear and Bear Ass Bitter. The premium IBA (4.8%) brewed for Macclesfield Beer Festival has proved so popular that it will be making a reappearance, as will Ambeardextrous (3.8%). This later has been reformulated to be darker and roasty and more like a traditional mild. There are also plans to extend the facilities at the excellent Brewery Tap in Congleton. Plans have been drawn up and all they now need is the finance.

Lastly, the well-regarded Pictish Brewing Company are reprising Siren this month. First brewed last July, this is a clear wheat beer subtly spiced with coriander and orange peel in the Belgian tradition. At 4.1 per cent it's an excellent summer refresher.



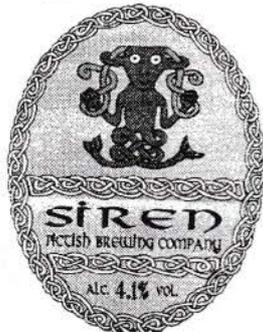
OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS

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Chris Hellin, Robinson's Head Brewer, explains the reasons that make the Unicorn Brewery and its cask conditioned ales so special for him.

"Robinson's prides itself on using quality ingredients in the brewing process. And as a family run firm it does not have to compromise standards in pursuit of profit as a large PLC might have to do."

"The company has always insisted that brewers mash their own beer," says Chris. "This means that on any particular day, one individual will be responsible for the whole brewing process - something that really gives you a pride in your work."

This personal touch extends to the way that the plant equipment used at the Unicorn Brewery is painstakingly cared for, greatly extending its working life and helping to give Robinson's cask conditioned ales their distinctive taste.

Working alongside Chris are wort production brewer John Levey and process brewer Ray Grimshaw. John joined from Tetley Walker at Warrington in 1996 having previously worked at other breweries, while Ray has spent more than 25 years at Robinson's.

Chris has been interested in the brewing process ever since his childhood in Wrexham where he used to enjoy the aromas coming from the town's Border Brewery.

He studied Biochemistry at Liverpool University and went on to take a Masters degree at the British School of Malting and Brewing at Birmingham University.

While a student, he worked on placement at Wrexham Lager Brewery before taking on his first full time job at Higsons Brewery in Liverpool. He joined Robinson's in 1985 after Higsons was taken over by Boddingtons.

Chris enjoyed both his previous jobs, but seems to have found his real niche at Robinson's. "Wrexham Lager was clinical and lacking in atmosphere and tradition, while at Higsons as I moved higher up the ladder I became more and more office bound and removed from the production process.

"With my biochemistry background, my real interest is in the application of the theories I have learnt to make the different elements inside the ale react during the brewing process to achieve the finished product."

"My job at Robinson's obviously involves administration but I also remain heavily involved in the brewing process. It gives me the chance to get my hands dirty and means I can live and breathe the brewing process."



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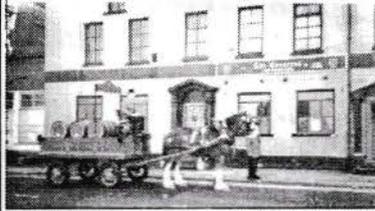
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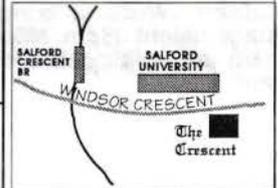
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Too Strong for its Own Good

Bass have recently reduced the strength of their premium nitro keg ale Caffrey's from 4.9% ABV to 4.2%. Apparently the customers, while they liked the taste of the beer (or was that the advertising?), were ending up too drunk if they stayed on it throughout an evening session. Somehow I doubt whether Bass will cut the price in proportion, but they do have a point. Many higher strength real ales have experienced a similar problem, being highly respected but not being beers that people wanted to drink more than a couple of pints of. A good local example is the 5.0% Frederics, at its best a superb pint, but almost impossible to find in Robbies' pubs anywhere near the brewery. There's an interesting parallel with Bass's attempts to introduce real ale to some of their local pubs a few years back. The pubs in question weren't in the most prosperous areas, and were mainly used by session drinkers. It would have been logical to replace the keg standard bitter - Stones in those days - with the real equivalent, but instead Bass chose to install the premium-strength Draught Bass, at a premium price. The locals gave it a try, but not surprisingly found that it was leaving them with a headache and a large hole in their pocket the following morning. Within a few months the real ale had disappeared again, after what gave the impression of an experiment designed to "prove" that there was no demand. Bass seem to have learned a lesson as far as Caffrey's is concerned, but it's a pity they couldn't have applied the same common sense to selling real ale.

Turning the Tide

CAMRA recently passed a milestone when the membership exceeded 60,000 for the first time. But, despite this record figure, there is less real ale being drunk now than at any time during the organisation's existence. CAMRA has been highly successful in developing an interest in distinctive, quality beers - as witness the growth of multi-beer alehouses, the mushrooming of micro-breweries and the vast array of bottled beers in your local Tesco's. But it has been far less successful in maintaining cask beer as a mass-market, widely available product.

Around here, with the concentration of specialist pubs in the Northern Quarter and the strong representation of local independent brewers, you could be forgiven for thinking that real ale was in rude health. But across the country the position is very different - huge swathes of the pub stock, especially urban locals, have lost their real ale completely, and in many other pub company outlets and free houses it struggles along on a single handpump but is outsold two or three times by nitro keg.

Some would say CAMRA itself has not helped matters by presenting real ale as something complex and obscure, that may appeal to connoisseurs but is just too difficult for the ordinary drinker. So perhaps the way to restore real ale to the keg wastelands is to promote not a bewildering range of names, styles and flavours, but a more limited choice of recognisable beers that are strong enough to stand as premium products, but not so strong that you can't drink them all night; that provide a distinctive yet reliable pint and that, having tried once, you stand a reasonable chance of finding in other pubs you go in. In other words, beers that can take on Caffrey's and Guinness head on. Pint of Landlord, anyone?

Curmudgeon Online: www.curmudgeon.co.uk

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JULY '96

A brief, ominous headline for July 1996 - 'The Bomb'. The devastation wrought on Manchester's shopping facilities had been well documented, but the blast had also taken its toll of the city's pubs.

Paddy's Rat & Carrot - The Irish Pub, ironically, took the brunt of the detonation, and had been reduced to a heap of unrecognisable rubble. The Old Wellington had suffered substantial structural damage, and was to be closed for some time - but, astonishingly, Sinclair's next door got away with only 5% damage, and was open for business after two weeks' closure. A pair of nearby pubs also varied in the extent of their damage - the Mitre remained boarded up as Opening Times went to press, but the Crown & Anchor was flying the Union Jack, and dispensing its usual vast quantities of Holt's beers. John Willie Lees in the Arndale and Bouchelles in the Corn Exchange both suffered substantial damage.

There was an unforeseen consequence of the bomb. The Royal Exchange Theatre Company had already re-located to the Upper Campfield Market whilst rebuilding work was carried out at the Exchange. This work should have been completed during 1997, but now looked likely to extend beyond February 1998. This effectively brought a sad and premature end to the hopes of Manchester (Castlefield) Beer Festivals in 1997 and 1998.

The Old Pint Pot Brewery in Adelphi Riverside, Salford, started its first mash on 19 June 1996, after suffering a number of teething troubles during setting up. (It seems that five years is ample time for a new venture to be set up, run apparently successfully and then close down). The Magic Pub Co had been sold to Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk based brewers Greene King for £197.5 million. This worked out at an average of something over £700,000 per pub, a pretty mind-boggling figure considering some of the local outlets. Included, of course, was the demolished "Irish" Rat & Carrot, which made it an extremely expensive bomb site.

The first Carrington off-licence had opened in Blackley in 1990, and the Didsbury branch had been described as 2a veritable Aladdin's Cave of alcoholic delights". The range of beers had been built up, including an impressive selection of Belgian beers, but also a large number of British beers, many of them bottle-conditioned, but all of them interesting. The plan was to stock every UK brewed bottle-conditioned ale, as well as a large selection of other interesting beers. Beer tastings, brewery visits, and guest draught beers were planned. A final comment on that old chestnut, the false handpump. The Old Bull in Burnage had re-opened after refurbishment. It had been keg for years, and still was, as the one "handpump" on the bar dispensed keg Cidermaster. There were otherwise decent pubs that indulged in similar nonsense at the time - the Shady Oak in Bramhall also had "handpumped" keg Cidermaster, whilst both the Sir Robert Peel and the Prince Albert in Edgeley, had keg Scruppy Jack on "handpump". Today, though, all are fake handpump free.

Letters to Opening Times are welcome by post to:
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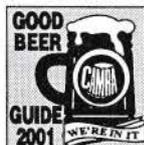
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Geoff Oliver at the White Hart in Mottram has taken an unusual source of inspiration for his new food venture. There are plans to open a Cuban Restaurant! Not sure where it'll be located...probably off to the left somewhere.

In Stalybridge there are rumours that the Rose & Crown will be renamed "Sharky's" - good grief!. The Church Inn at Millbrook will be getting a new licensee shortly and the Feathers has recently been stocking the Church Inn (Saddleworth) beers.

In Marple - the Railway at Rose Hill is due to undergo some 'low key' refurbishment internally. The main change will be the removal of the low ceiling. There is a rumour that the Bowling Green is set to lose its licence...it already had the handy fall back of permission for residential conversion! The Jolly Sailor opposite(ish) is still well and truly boarded up. Over in Hyde, in what is becoming something of a Bremuda Triangle for real ale, the famous Cheshire Ring is now all keg. Back in its hey-day when Ken and Fran had it, it was the first to stock Winkles Saxon Cross (Clive's cloudy), first to have Taylor's Landlord as a regular and first non-Marston house to have the full range of Marston's on. This was helped by the 17 handpumps. The Cheshire Ring took over from the failed CAMRA Investments pub - the White Gates (keg) as one of the best real ale outlets in the Manchester region. Also within 'the Triangle' is the Wellington Arms which had a chequered past and was once the only outlet for the Failsworth Brewery. Closed!

Frank Wood adds - in Stalybridge, both the Dog & Pheasant and the Stamford Park Inn, opposite each other in Stamford Street, are currently boarded up.

Over in Glossop at the Whiteley Nab, licensees Steve and Jean have put on a guest beer alongside the staple Boddingtons Bitter. Greene King IPA is a rare beer for the area. Since moving there from Tenerife last September, the pub has had a facelift and with a varied menu, plus specials, it is looking much better than it has in a long while - since the days when Paul and Joannah Rawlinson got it in the Good Beer Guide in 1995.

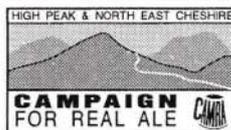
The pub had had a number of owners over the years. The old Shaws Brewery of Dukinfield had the pub from the 1870s until they were bought out by John Smiths. More recently it was acquired by Vaux in 1992 and hence it came into the hands of Pubmaster who acquired a large part of the old Vaux estate. It seems to have taken a turn upwards over the past few months and Steve is hoping the guest beer increases trade so he can justify keeping it on.

The Queens at Old Glossop has been stocking interesting beers recently. Alongside the regular Black Sheep Bitter, beers from Gales and Youngs were in evidence during a visit in the first week of June.

A pub just out of the High Peak Branch area, the Snake Pass Inn, on the notorious winding road from Glossop towards Sheffield and the Hope Valley, has had a change of ownership. Since last November, Chris Cauldwell has been at the helm, having bought the pub from the Dorbier Pub Company. Changes, too, in the beer range. An ever changing four handpulled beers are available; on my visit in early June, they were John Smiths Cask, Greene King's 'Morland' Old Speckled Hen, Theakston's Best Bitter and Charles Wells' Bombardier. The Snake opens at 7.30 every morning for breakfast and morning coffee, and food is served from then until 10.00pm. En-suite bedrooms are available and a function room has been re-opened.

The Snake Pass road was opened in 1821, the last of the great turnpikes and the Toll Bar was at the Snake Inn. Interestingly, the name was not after the winding road over the moors but from the Duke of Devonshire's family crest which features a snake. The current Duke at the time was a chief promoter of a Bill to build the road.

Geoff Williamson adds - after many false rumours of refurbishment over recent years, the Ram's Head in Disley was bought by Bass earlier this year and was immediately closed for 14 weeks for a reputed £1 million make-over. The 'Ram' reopened on 11 June and it has to be said that the result of all this work is excellent, with high quality treatment both inside and out. The new establishment is very heavily focussed on food, with a restaurant feel to much of the interior, but Bass describe it as an 'Inn' and that is probably a fair description of how it will operate (there is accommodation, too). The sign proclaims 'In Keeping with Tradition' and it is pleasing to see in this day that the bar features two handpumps dispensing cask ales, albeit providing a rather ordinary choice of Draught Bass or Tetley Bitter.



JULY FEATURED PUB The Church Inn, Chelmorton

Standing at the extreme southernmost boundary of the High Peak branch area, five or so miles from Buxton, is the Derbyshire hill village of Chelmorton. A small community of around five hundred inhabitants, the village essentially consists of one main street which winds its way steeply uphill until the tarmac blends into a bridleway across open moorland.

At the top of this hill, opposite the highest sited Parish Church in the county, and the last but one building in the village, stands the Church Inn. This is an almost stereotypically picturesque village local surrounded by flower beds and hanging baskets and with a number of tables and chairs in front.

Entering by the low front door you find yourself in a single roomed pub (opened out from two small rooms some thirty odd years ago) with fireplaces at each end. To the left is the bar and what could be described as the 'drinking' area while the right hand side of the room is set out for dining, although not exclusively.

Beers are from Marstons with a guest (Admans Bitter on the day we visited) and are in excellent condition. Home cooked food is served every evening with Sunday lunches being popular with locals and visitors alike.

The Church isn't a pub that you would ever pass casually, Chelmorton being away from the main roads and public transport being almost non-existent, but is well worth a visit and, on a sunny day, makes a fine watering hole for the many walkers passing through the village.

The Church Inn, Chelmorton, Buxton (off A515 Buxton - Ashbourne Rd.)



The Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Summer Pub of the Season is a Robinson's house, the Egerton Arms at Astbury.

A 15th Century inn is set opposite St Mary's church in this pretty village just south of Congleton, for the past six years the Egerton Arms has been in the capable hands of Allen and Grace Smith who arrived at the pub following a 12½ year stint at the Beeston Castle Hotel. Their experience is evident in what is a very professionally well-run pub.

Large, multi-roomed and beamed, the Egerton boasts six bedrooms and a menu of home-cooked food in a separate restaurant, including good vegetarian options. The chefs have in fact been with Allen and Grace for between 16 and 18 years, having moved with them from the Beeston Castle.

The comfortable interior has displays of brewing paraphernalia and has recently undergone a refurbishment throughout and is a good place to sit and enjoy the pleasures of conversation. The impressive interior is well complemented by the floral displays outside and the large beer garden boasts some 26 tables plus a safe, fenced-off play area for children.

The Egerton doesn't stint on the beer front. Two cask ales are regularly available - Robinson's Best Bitter, the biggest seller, and the more elusive Frederics ("we sell loads," says Allen). Also available is Old Stockport in 'real smooth' form although Allen has been known to bring a jug of the real thing up from the cellar on request. This family operation (daughter Haley also helps out) is very much a class act, living up to its motto of "a friendly pub for friendly people". All in all a well deserved award which will be presented at 8.00pm on Monday 9 July.

This Grade II listed building is a focal point of the village, and very much a flagship establishment. There are a number of traditional pubs in the centre of Disley and these could also benefit from any trade the 'Ram' may bring into the village. On balance, Bass must be complemented on the fine refurbishment they have carried out to this old coaching house, and it is hoped that the undoubted future success of this eatery will also bring increased trade to some of the other village pubs.



This month's Desert Island Beers have been chosen by Richard Bazen, currently head brewer at Phoenix Brewery in Heywood. He has over 15 years' experience in the brewing industry having been a founding partner in Bridgewater Ales, a brewer for Holt, Plant & Deakin in the West Midlands and originally at the eponymous Bazen's Brewery.

"Good Beer Guide 2001 and Black Cat, fine; but I'm still unclear as to whether these are supposed to be today's beers or those fondly remembered (funny how you always remember the beers but not a lot else, or not?), so I'll indicate as I go along.

"Let's start with a classic hoppy beer using unadulterated Kentish ingredients in its flavours. How about **Hopback Summer Lightning**? Must confess I became a fan of this in bottled form - one of the few class acts to survive the process.

"I feel it would be tactful to include at least one beer from the Phoenix portfolio, and now have to make a decision. Although mention must be made of Old Oak, a firm favourite (and according to Ken Birch one of the most underrated of British beers) my Phoenix beer of the year is **White Monk**. Words can only describe the delectable balance of flavours, but you'd have to have something missing not to be struck by the heady waft of hop! One of Tony Allen's finest creations.

"My mind drifts back to a sultry, August, Wolverhampton afternoon in 1994. It was 80 degrees in the shade; and I was in the brew house, drenched and blinded with sweat, digging out a steaming forty barrel mash tun. "Not to worry", I thought, starting on my second pint of iced water, "I'll nip through that conveniently placed door into the Brewery Tap and sample the fruit of my endeavours" - a pint (at least) of Holt, Plant and Deakin's famous **Entire**. If you never got the chance to sup this remarkable beverage, and wonder what it was like, all I can say is it was a similar style to Taylor's Landlord. Slightly less pale, initial maltiness leading to... ZOWEEEE! (that is hop zinginess without the bitterness).

"I seem to have neglected lower gravity 'session' beers thus far. OK, this one's an acquired taste for some, and I was happy to acquire it in 1981 at my first Mancunian local (The Gateway, East Didsbury): **Hyde's Anvil Bitter**. Many's the time, particularly during my musician days (we'd often work nights), I would down up to a gallon or more, often at the Jolly Angler in Ardwick propping up the bar and chatting away to my hosts Michael and Sheila. Remarkably I never suffered a hangover after such lengthy sessions - one sign of a class ale.

"Go even further back, to the late 70s; age sixteen; environment the Wheatsheaf, North Ealing. Meeting a fellow student friend - furtive glances as I approached the bar - 'look confident and mature!' - will they question my age, or laugh? Met another friend at the bar that night, one that saw me through thick and thin, **Fuller's London Pride**. Not sure whether it was because I left my southern jessie roots and became accustomed to northern style ales, but modern day London Pride doesn't seem to taste the same. Still in those days you could leave your front door wide open, etc etc"

BOUNDARY CHANGEOVER

The revamped Boundary at Guide Bridge reopened its doors to the public on Saturday 9 June - the week before their famous beer festival - after a short period of closure. The pub has had a complete reversal; what was the main drinking and eating area is now the enlarged vault, totally refurbished with laminated flooring and new seating. The main food area occupies the site of the former vault and includes a conservatory, which serves as a family room. The guest beers are sold on this side of the pub and there is also a pub food bar. The outside drinking area that goes down to the canal is also undergoing a makeover.

WELL DONE WITCHWOOD

Congratulations to the Witchwood, Ashton-under-Lyne, which has been voted UK Music Pub of the Year 2001 in a competition run by *The Publican* trade paper and sponsored by the Performing Rights Society.

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STOCKPORT & MANCHESTER

Mild CHALLENGE 2001

There were two omissions from last months report. Ian Norbury was missed off the list of those people covering every pub. Apologies, Ian. We also omitted to include the list of those lucky people winning a trip to Hydes Brewery for themselves and a friend. The lucky winners are: Malcolm Sutherland, N Dennerley, Michael Boardman, Dave Hastie, Steve Johnson, John Murtup, Patricia Murch, Sue Ridings, Dave McCann and David Hope. We are currently making arrangements with Hydes Brewery for the visit and will be contacting the winners with details as soon as possible.

Perhaps two of the most dedicated 'Challengers' were Steve Robinson and Sue Ridings. Keen rambblers both, their activities were curtailed by the foot and mouth outbreak. To compensate they covered all 66 pubs on foot. Steve has been persuaded to put pen to paper and next month we record some of their exploits.

BAZEN'S BREWERY

Phoenix Head Brewer Richard Bazen's first venture into commercial brewing was a short-lived micro brewery set up over 15 years ago. Until now its existence has been unrecorded.

This was the time of Margaret Thatcher's 'vision?' that we all could be successful entrepreneurs - so like a number of other similar minded people, I took the plunge and jumped in with my eyes firmly shut, writes Richard Bazen. And so Bazen's Brewery was established in December 1985 - and ceased trading in March of the following year, possibly holding the record for the shortest-lived micro-brewery?

An unbelievably cheap, Heath Robinson, 1 barrel brewing plant was tacked together from various bits of stuff. It boasted a copper made of copper (a domestic immersion heater), heated by three ordinary kettle elements (it took about 4 hours to achieve boiling point). All this was installed at Unit 3, Trafford Enterprise Centre, Third Avenue, Trafford Park - premises which were originally a primary school. Basically the business was laughably under-capitalised, and failed for lack of an adequate business plan. In the latter days, there was an attempt to breathe new life into the business. An application was made for an off licence, and a new marketing strategy adopted (see 'flyer'). It could have been Manchester's answer to Davenports, but it was not to be. Despite the experience and enthusiasm of a late arrival, sales representative John Madden, and some degree of interest (one of our customers buying an 88 pint keg was the Wrexham Department of Social Security!) shown, it was too late - funds became exhausted by March 1986. "Still, nothing in life is a waste of time".

Two beers were produced: Bazen's Best Bitter (1045 og), a medium brown bitter and Bomber Ale at 1060, strong and dry.



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to Davenports, but it was not to be. Despite the experience and enthusiasm of a late arrival, sales representative John Madden, and some degree of interest (one of our customers buying an 88 pint keg was the Wrexham Department of Social Security!) shown, it was too late - funds became exhausted by March 1986. "Still, nothing in life is a waste of time".

Two beers were produced: Bazen's Best Bitter (1045 og), a medium brown bitter and Bomber Ale at 1060, strong and dry.

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There are ambitious plans in the pipeline for the Bakers Vaults (Market Place, Stockport). Alex Rigby is managing the pub on behalf of its new tenants, Didsbury-based media production company Light Age. He says that the pub is keen to expand on the music that it already puts on several nights a week. "Friday and Saturday nights are packed out in here. We also have music on other nights sometimes but I believe there is the potential to put it on seven nights a week", he says. "At the moment we have a lot of rhythm and blues on but if we increased the number of gigs we could have other styles such as jazz or pop." Plans include installing two large video screens in the pub to show the performers on, and broadcasting sound and pictures on the internet. "Going live on the internet is something we would really like to do," says Alex. "As far as I know we would be the first pub in Europe to do it."



Alex has something of a track record in the music business and is currently in a rock group called Chrome Ultra. Away from the music side, Alex plans to reintroduce food at the pub with meals at lunchtime and snacks in the evening.

Robinson's themselves have applied for permission to refurbish the pub's exterior to complement the changes within. We also have news of former Bakers licensees, Ian and Dot Brookes. Having retired from the licensed trade, they have now moved to pastures new and taken over a snack bar and ice cream parlour in Brixham, Devon. Apparently it's opposite the Golden Hind, which is moored on the quayside there and OT is sure any friends visiting from the area would be made more than welcome.

The Bowling Green (Charles St, Stockport) looks as though it is about to have a new lease of life. Despite predictions of its demise. Work was well under way as we went to press with reports of a July opening, although this could be optimistic.

Looking well and truly dead is the Bridge Inn (Georges Rd, Heaton Norris) which is now looking decidedly worse for wear. Not a million miles away, the lease of the Navigation (Lancashire Hill) is up for sale, on a free of tie basis.

In Edgeley, the Blue Bell (King Street West) is currently closed for a major refurbishment. Many people seem convinced that Holt's have bought this pub but as far as we know this is not the case. It is in fact a privately owned free house, although clearly Holt's have provided a great deal of the finance involved.

In Shaw Heath, the Swan is now selling cask beer again. The unlikely choice is the premium Old Speckled Hen (now brewed by Greene King). It is apparently selling well, though, no doubt helped by the bargain £1.50 a pint being charged when OT called. Further down Shaw Heath, the Plough has now lost its cask beer.

A couple of months ago we printed a letter which suggested that the Bamboo nightclub in Hazel Grove was to become a MacDonalds. This brought a swift call from Mr Beeley the owner who was keen to stress that this is not the case. In fact the club will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in September, having spent all that time in the same private hands. Something of a record, perhaps?

The foreign beer range at the Railway (Great Portwood St, Stockport) continues to impress. The pub's customers have taken to these beers without impacting on the cask beer sales and ever more interesting bottles continue to appear. As we went to press a delivery of the superb Hanssens Kriek and Gueuze were awaited.

THE GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL 2001

The 2001 Great British Beer Festival will take place at Olympia, London, from Tuesday 31st July until Saturday 4th August. This is our tenth year at the same venue. There will be entertainment every session with quieter or more traditional music earlier in the week and at lunchtimes, and the more boisterous acts on Thursday and Friday evenings.

The Festival offers the opportunity to sample beers ranging from the finest traditional brews to the newest micro-brewers' offerings. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all well represented, but so is the rest of the world. We have beers from the vast majority of beer producing nations and many from the famous brewers of the world like Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and USA. Ciders and Perry are also available, as are some of the finest continental lagers including dark versions, and some excellent American examples. For More information see www.gbbf.org.

Champion Beer of Britain

The final tasting for the 2001 Champion Beer of Britain takes place on the morning of Tuesday 31st July. The Champion Beer of Britain Awards will once again be announced in the National Hall during the Trade Session which is again being sponsored by the Beer Seller, who will have a stand in the GrandHall, featuring a range of beers from breweries that this wholesaler represents. The trade session will start at 1.45pm and continue to 5pm when the Festival is open to the general public. Once again, as a special thank you to Season Ticket Holders, their tickets will allow them to attend this unique session and to hear the announcements of the 2001 Champion Beer of Britain winners. Season tickets cost: £16 (£13.50 to members of CAMRA) plus 50p booking charge per order to cover p&p, and are available from CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans Herts, AL1 2LW

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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

JULY 2001

Saturday 7th - Beer Festival Staff Party: Ye Olde Vic, Chatham Street, Edgeley. From 8.00pm.

Thursday 12th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Gateway, Kingsway, East Didsbury. Starts 8.00pm. **NB - guest speaker, Paul Jefferies from Hydes Brewery so a good turnout, please.**

Monday 16th - Social: Albert, Walmer St, Rusholme. Starts 9.00pm.

Friday 20th - Clayton & Beswick Stagger: Minibus will leave Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.00pm. First stop Strawberry Duck, Crabtree Lane 7.30pm; Grove, Ashton New Rod 8.30pm.

Thursday 26th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Railway, Great Portwood St, Stockport. From 8.00pm.

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

Sunday 8th - Branch Walk. Starts 10.00am - details from Frank Wood (01457 865426)

Monday 9th - Monthly Branch Meeting: The Royal Hotel, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 6th August - Committee Meeting: Railway, Marple. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 13th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Station, Warrington St, Ashton-u-Lyne. Starts 8.30pm.

JULY 2001

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:

Monday 9th - Pub of the Season Presentation to the Egerton Arms, Astbury. 8.00pm

Monday 23rd - Business Meeting: Wild Boar, Wincle (on main A54 Buxton-Congleton road). Starts 8.00pm.

HIGH PEAK CHARITY WALK

The 3rd Annual Sponsored Charity Walk run by High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch was due to take place on 30 June but had to be postponed because of the foot and mouth outbreak. It has now been rescheduled for Saturday 1 September and will take the form of a canal towpath walk, over 18 miles, from Whaley Bridge to Guide Bridge with 8 pubs en route. The proceeds from sponsoring this year will go to the Marie Curie Nurses. Details are available from Tom Lord on 0161 427 7099.



To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

14



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT LORRAINE ON 0161 491 1966

MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

Unfortunately, other pressures have meant it's a case of "not been there, not done that" this month. So, apologies in advance for the brevity of this month's column. In the City Centre, there have been a couple of new bars - there's one at the new Jongleurs Comedy Club in the old Mash & Air building and just round the corner **Taurus** has opened at 1 Canal Street. It doesn't look as though either sell cask beer. Both the **Salisbury** (which I knew about) and the **Old Garratt** (which I didn't) have now been turned into tenanted/leased operations by Scottish & Newcastle. In their previous incarnation as managed houses both sold decent guest beers - particularly the Salisbury, under the very keen Andy Massey - including house beers from Porter Brewing Co. No more - the changeover has severely restricted the choice of guest beers. Presumably this makes sense to the fevered mind of some Scottish & Newcastle executive but it's beyond me.

On a more general note, I was reassured to learn that the Laurel Pub Company, the new operator of the old Whitbread estate, has announced plans to create more Hogshead alehouses. There were fears that the chain would be sold off but instead, Laurel boss Ian Payne says he wants to increase the number of Hogsheads from 150 to around 200. He also has plans to give the chain a new look with a wider range of beers and table service. Good news indeed if all of this come to pass - some of our local Hogsheads, such as the High Street and Didsbury outlets are run by keen licensees who deserve every encouragement.

I'm told there's good news at the **Lass O'Gowrie** where everything looks to be staying much the same despite the Whitbread pub sale. **Jamie will be staying at the helm so it's business as usual at this excellent Good Beer Guide listed pub.**

A trip to West Didsbury and Withington last month revealed the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane *still* playing silly buggers with handpulled 'cask smooth'. Dear, oh dear. There are some misguided souls out there who seem to think that this isn't in any way misleading - just what planet do they inhabit, I wonder? Having said that, the Holt's Bitter was on fine form, and I'd have tried the 1849 if I knew it was on. Like the smooth, it came from an unmarked handpump! Thank God for the **Old House at Home** which is still doing the business with the guest beers, and the **Victoria** where I managed to catch both a CAMRA Pub of the Month presentation and the award of a Cask Marque certificate to licensees Edgar Ambrose and Janice Oliver who really have worked wonders at the pub.

Finally, more Wetherspoon's. The next City Centre outlet to open will be the development in 'The Circus'. The Paramount, as it is to be called, is due to open on 18th of this month. There's also a planning application for yet another - this time on the corner of Quay Street and Deansgate (I think). Speaking of 'The Circus' - there's going to be a new bar there called the Springbok - don't you just know that there'll be no cask beer *there*.

THE GREAT PINT POT CHALLENGE

This summer, ChildLine is asking publicans to serve up a pint of goodwill by filling a pint pot with cash to help ChildLine North West answer more calls from local children and young people in trouble or danger.

It couldn't be easier to take part. ChildLine will provide you with a free Pint Pot Pack with details of the challenge and your official Great Pint Pot sticker. Simply affix the sticker to a pint pot and you're off! Fill the pint pot in one day or over a period of time by asking customers to donate their spare change and encouraging staff to donate some of their tips.

A Certificate of Thanks will be sent to every participating pub to display as a token of ChildLine's appreciation.

How your pulling power will help.

The more money collected in your pint pot, the more volunteer counsellors ChildLine can recruit, train and support and the more children in the North West can reach the comfort and protection ChildLine's counsellors can provide.

Every day, 15,000 attempted calls are made to ChildLine, but lack of funds mean that currently only one third of these calls can be answered. Many children have to call several times before getting through to a counsellor and tragically, some may give up altogether. ChildLine answers an increasing number of children's calls every year, but as 90% of ChildLine's income comes from voluntary donations, the support of the public and of companies is vital if ChildLine is to reach its goal of answering every call from every child the first time they ring.

Children and young people call ChildLine about a wide range of problems including physical and sexual abuse, bullying, family relationships and worries about friends' welfare. Although the calls are free to the children calling ChildLine's 24-hour helpline, ChildLine pays for them.

Help ChildLine reach out to more children in trouble or danger in the North West

For a free Great Pint Pot Challenge Pack contact ChildLine fundraising office: 0161 834 9945, ChildLine North West, Freepost 1111, Manchester M2 8BB. Fax: 0161 834 7184. Thank you for supporting ChildLine North West.



OPENING TIMES ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING RATES: 1/8 page (60mm x 85mm): £30; 1/4 page (120mm x 85mm): £50; 1/2 page (horiz: 174mm x 120mm; vert: 250mm x 85mm): £85; Full page (175mm x 240mm) £140. Surcharges apply for back page. Discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design & origination usually free of charge unless large costs involved. Ring 0161 477 1973 for details. Artwork should be submitted as hard copy (positive bromide) or PC COMPATIBLE (NOT MAC) *.eps, *.tiff or *.cdr (Corel Draw versions 3, 5 or 7 - please state which AND you MUST include hard copy back-up).

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1/2 Price menu Monday lunch, free chip butties Wednesday 5 - 6pm, curry night Thursday 5 - 7pm, choose from 6 curries & rice for £3-

July Promotion:-

Collect stamps for every pint of Titanic Iceberg purchased to get an exclusive Iceberg Polo Shirt available whilst stocks last through July

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Look out for forthcoming events & festivals!

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