

OPENING TIMES

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BODDIES FOR THE CHOP?

News that Interbrew were moving some keggling operations from the Strangeways brewery with the loss of 68 jobs has caused a right old lather with predictions of the ultimate demise of the 225-year old brewing operation coming from numerous quarters.

In fact the prophets of doom are likely to be proved wrong, although no-one should be complacent enough to imagine that everything in the garden is rosy. Take the 68 job losses for a start – these are never good news but apart from that it is important to remember just what is and is not planned.

Firstly, no production is being moved from the brewery until 2004. Until then, all Boddingtons Bitter will continue to be made in Manchester. What will happen is that the keg versions will be trunked to plants in Salmesbury, Lancs and Magor, South Wales, for processing and packaging.

In 2004 all production of Boddingtons Bitter for keggling will transfer to Magor. This will leave Strangeways as a cask ale only brewery producing cask-conditioned Boddingtons Bitter, Flowers IPA and Flowers Original. Another dedicated cask ale brewery in the city is superficially good news. Announcing the plan, Interbrew's Stewart Gilliland said: "It is important to retain a cask operation within Interbrew UK and by specialising as a cask brewery, the Boddingtons site holds a unique position within our business.

"These changes will enable Boddingtons Brewery to concentrate on its strengths. Building on its heritage as a cask ale brewery, it will operate as our centre for cask ale brewing, delivering quality cask ale brands.

"We are committed to developing Boddingtons both in its heartland and nationally, and in all of its packaging formats."

Reassuring words? As things stand at the moment, no. Put bluntly, the removal of keg Boddingtons from Strangeways will reduce its brewing volumes to just 20% of capacity, that's just one day's work a week and not sufficient to keep the brewery viable. Add in claims that Interbrew's cellar staff have been briefed to persuade cask Boddingtons stockists to switch to keg, thus reducing cask volumes further, and its easy to conjure up a picture of closure just around the corner. Transport & General Workers' Union regional spokesman Franny Joyce summed up the fears: "We think the ultimate aim is to get out of cask beer altogether".

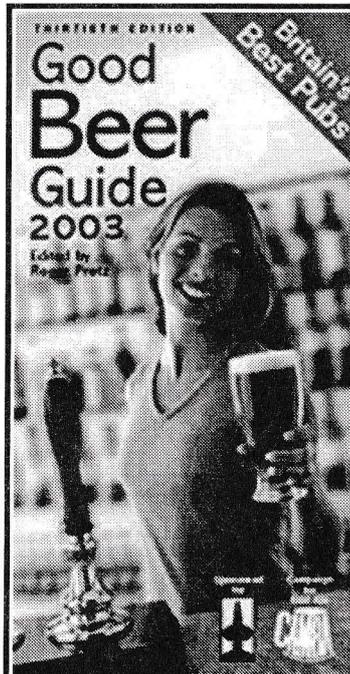
Well...perhaps not. Cask ale may or may not still be in decline (the figures for this year will make for interesting reading) but it's still a large market. And one of the biggest real ale brands of all may well be the saviour of Strangeways Brewery. Draught Bass. Yes, really. Draught Bass was one of the few former Bass beers retained by Interbrew when they sold most of that company's former operations to Coors. While the promised promotion and reinvigoration of the beer is a long time coming, it is still the biggest premium cask ale brand in the country, with 150,000 barrels produced each year. Some commentators have suggested that the closure of Strangeways could be accompanied by the transfer of the remaining cask ales to Burton. That theory has one tiny flaw – Interbrew doesn't actually own any breweries in Burton. Sure, Draught Bass is brewed there – by Coors on Interbrew's behalf.

In the trade there has been, and remains, strong speculation that when the Coors contract expires it won't be renewed and instead Interbrew will move the production of Bass elsewhere and brew it in-house. And just when does that contract expire? 2004 – now, *there's* a coincidence.

(See also editorial on page 2).

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**FULL DETAILS &
REVIEW ON PAGE 9**

OKTOBERFEST IN PARADISE

Paradise Brewery will be hosting an Oktober Beer Fest from 11-13 October, and unlike the famous Munich Oktoberfest, this one is actually in October.

Held at the brewery premises, next door to Wrenbury Station, a range of around 30 beers is promised plus some traditional ciders and the usual Paradise Brewery range. Enough to make this well worth a visit.

To help visitors from the Stockport and Manchester area, the indefatigable Crewe & Shrewsbury Passenger Association has arranged with Wales & Borders Trains for the 11.33 Manchester-Cardiff express to stop specially at Wrenbury on Saturday 12 October. On the same day, a through service to Manchester will depart from Wrenbury at 17.05 (approx.). Both services will call at Stockport and Wilmslow. This year there have been 935 arrivals at Wrenbury for various beer festivals and this one will certainly take the numbers well over the 1,000 mark. Travellers should note that on Saturday 12 October, Group Save tickets are available on Wales & Borders for small groups of three or four, who can travel for the price of two. These tickets are not available on Fridays, though.



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IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

News that Interbrew are to transfer most the production of Boddington's Bitter out of Manchester has caused shock waves in the city. Over the years the marketing of Boddingtons has linked it with Manchester to such an extent that the thought if it being brewed elsewhere is unthinkable to many people. Closure of the brewery in two year's time must be a real possibility, unless the brewing of other beers is moved there to boost production.

Let's remember, though, it's only the production of *keg Boddies* that is to be moved. Cask Boddies will remain a Manchester beer and it's interesting to see that 'Boddingtons Cask' is now actually being promoted as such. The message from all this is clear - if you want to help save Boddies - ask for cask. Every pint of smooth Boddies drunk puts Manchester jobs and the future of the brewery on the line.

If you care about Boddies beer and the future of the brewery, you won't touch a pint of the smooth stuff again. If your local only sells the smooth, then demand it gets cask back in. If it won't then go and drink somewhere that will. Every single Boddies drinker can play their part in this campaign. You really do have the power to make a difference here.

Boost cask Boddies, boost Manchester jobs, boost Manchester brewing. It's over to you.

John Clarke

Its interesting to see that a number of the more aggressively themed pub groups are getting into trouble - sadly currently for what appear to be the wrong reasons, Old Monk - which never really penetrated much further north than the Watford Gap, are being broken up, which means we will be spared the proliferation of the 'Springbok' sports bars for the moment. Whilst SAB (South African Breweries) is a major world player, they are not exactly known for memorable beers. A cool measure of Castle Lager might seem delightful on a 100°F day, but when cooler heads and temperatures prevail, its not up to much. And as to 'sporting' bars, the South African teams (with the exception of the soccer side) have never been held up as paragons of sportsmanship.

Pressure is mounting on Scottish & Newcastle to get out of pubs (from the remaining City idiots (sorry, analysts) who still have jobs). They now favour merging S&N's estate with Bass'(6Continents) remaining operation. One day management might realise that this 'pressure' is being raised just to provide some income for the city M&A teams who are a bit bereft at present. In case anyone sane at S&N is reading this - **IT MAKES NO COMMERCIAL SENSE. NONE, WHATSOEVER.** Oh, and the foreign flavour to OT this month will be short-lived, never fear.

P.B. Hutchings

OPENING TIMES ISSUE 222

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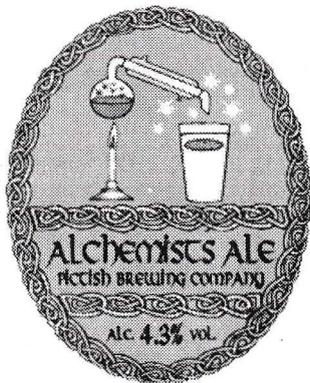
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30	31		



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA October Pub of the Month is the Rising Sun, Burnage Lane, Burnage. Built on the site of an old petrol station, the Rising Sun started life as the Milestone, one of the first pubs Banks's built in Manchester. In common with many of their early Manchester acquisitions, the brewery seemed to lose interest in the pub after a while, despite it being a large, well-designed building with a great deal of promise. Cask beer went and a clearly unsuitable licensee managed to drive away much of the pub's trade. Something had to be done, and it's all credit to Banks's that they did it.

A £480,000 revamp transformed the pub into a well-lit, spacious and more upmarket establishment with handpumps once again dispensing real ale. The vault was knocked through and the resulting pub is now a large, rambling one-room lounge with an emphasis on affordable all-day food and cask beers. There are three real ales on handpump - Banks's Original, Marston's Bitter and Pedigree.

Of course, no matter how good the refurbishment, it would be wasted money without the right licensee. Banks's are therefore lucky in having Paul Saxton running the show. Paul is a Burnage man who returned to the trade to take on the Rising Sun. That he is clearly the right man for the job is self-evident, the former locals are back and the pub is thriving again.

This well deserved award will be presented on Thursday, 24 October in what promises to be an excellent night out. JC Buses 166, 169 and 197 go right past the pub. It's only a short walk from Kingsway (down Grangethorpe Drive) which is well served with buses, and Mauldeth Road Station is also close by.

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

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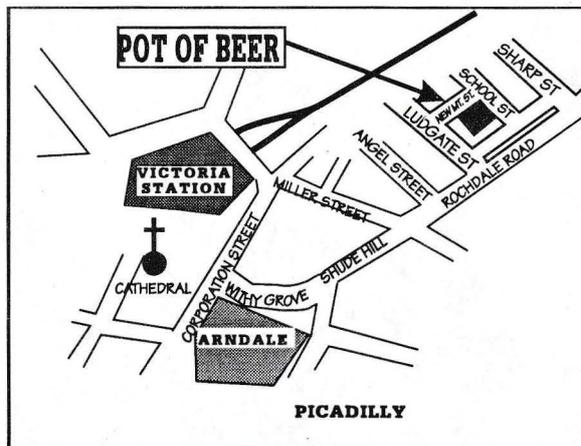
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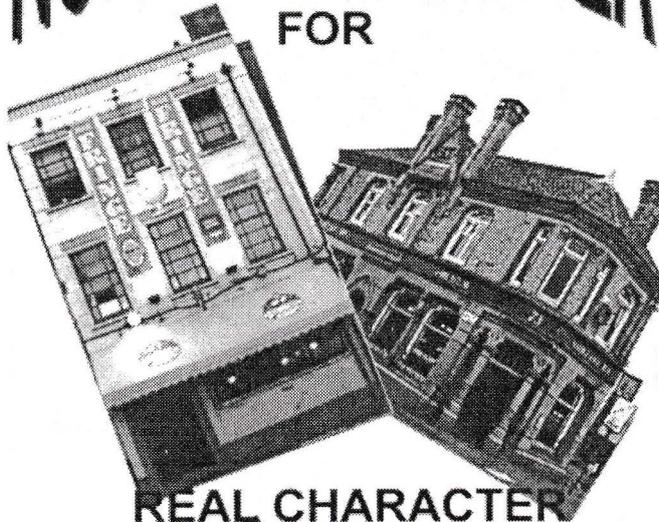
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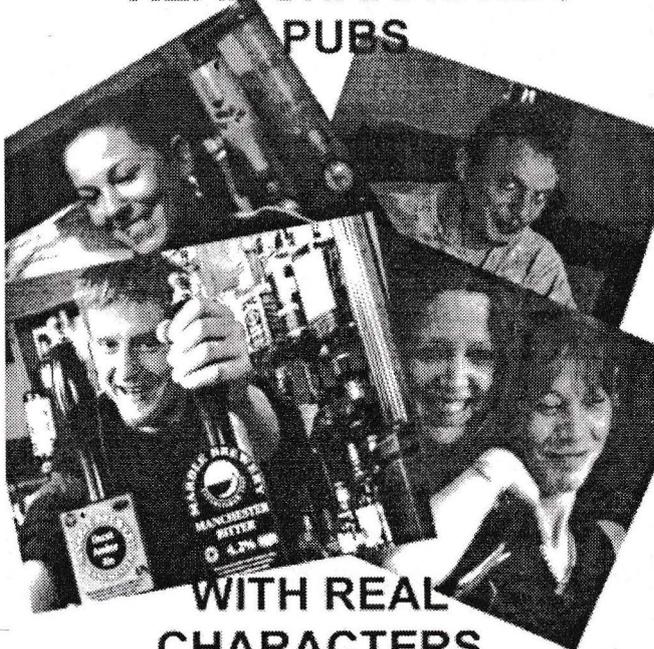
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with John Clarke

Rainy Night In Edgeley

The night we chose for this Stagger must have been one of the wettest of the summer but despite this, a good crowd turned out at the first port of call – the *Alexandra* on Northgate Road.

Built around 1902, this large Robinson's pub is a listed building, and it's easy to see why. The interior is almost completely intact with a wealth of tiling, etched and stained glass. The rear snug, separated from the main lobby by a mahogany and stained glass screen is a particularly fine room. Perversely we chose what is perhaps the most spartan room – the rear lounge – but this didn't spoil our enjoyment of the very good Cumbria Way, on handpump alongside Best Bitter. The latter was less favourably received, though, being generally considered below par.

The rain eased off as we left and made our way down Northgate Road to the *Gardeners Arms*. This ex-Wilsons pub has had a very chequered history in recent years, at one time getting through a licensee about every six weeks. It's much more settled now, and to my eyes looked better than it's done for years. The old Wilson's signage remains outside and within the altered interior still contains some nice 1930s panelling. There's a lounge and vault and both were bright, clean and comfortable. The two handpumped beers were Boddingtons Bitter and Flowers IPA and both were thought to be above average without being exceptional – which is about as good as you're going to get with these two particular beers in most pubs anyway.

The rain set in again as we made our way to the *Woolpack* on Brinksway. This multi-award winning pub never disappoints and has been in the capable hands of Bob Dickinson for a good few years now. His sure hand shows in all aspects of the very professional operation here. The range usually consists of three regular beers, often from a national brewer (when we called these were Theakstons Best and Cool Cask plus Courage Directors) and two guests, tonight St Austell Tribute and Barnsley Umpires Finger. We all tried the St Austell and opinions varied from above average to very good indeed. One of our party detected pear drop notes in the taste and was rightly slapped down.

The rain had abated to just torrential as we made our way up the hill and down Grenville Street to the *Royal Oak*. The Hollywood on Bloom Street would have made a useful stopping off point but it no longer sells cask beer, despite being a busy pub. No such problems in the Oak where large quantities of Holt's Bitter are dispensed to an appreciative crowd. This is another pub that has come on by leaps and bounds in recent years, lively and friendly, clean and comfy, it really does seem to be very well run. There's also a greater emphasis on lunchtime food and the new beer garden is a treat, although not tonight! One of our party thought the Holt's too cold although the rest disagreed and found it a very enjoyable pint indeed.

After leaving the Oak it's keg hell for a while, with no cask beer in the Prince Albert, Bobby Peel, Pineapple or Jolly Crofter. Add in a closed Windsors and it's a pretty depressing experience for the cask ale lover. However at the end of Castle Street another oasis beckons in the form of the *Grapes*. This is a basic two-room boozery in the very best sense of the word with a settled, mature clientele who appreciate the pub's simple qualities. Dave and Sandra George have been there for over 20 years now and this welcome continuity only adds to the pub's appeal. It's another Robbies house with Hatters and Best Bitter on handpump – both were very well received and proved to be two of the most consistently good beers of the night.

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Real ale came thick and fast now. First up was the **Blue Bell** on King Street West. This imposing pub has been the subject of an impressive restoration over recent years with features made of many elements of the old Victorian pub. A lot of money has been well spent on the three rooms and lobby, most recently financed by Holt's I suspect, for while this pub may to all intents and purposes look like a Holt's tied house, it is in fact a free house. Yes, really. Holt's Bitter is the beer on handpump and while it was thought to be above average, it didn't set anyone's taste buds alight. Just around the corner is the **Church**. When we called it was under temporary management and was very quiet for a Friday night. Robinson's Best Bitter was on handpump and was very much below par. Happily for the Church, it's now been taken on by keen licensees who are determined to restore the pub's reputation - "No Drugs" signs now abound. The beer is vastly better too, and with Hatters joining the Best Bitter as well. Well worth a visit, it deserves support. Across the road is the **Greyhound**, with its strange new veranda at the front. Inside it's pleasant enough but to be honest this pub seems to have struggled since the days of Irene Morris and for me it still doesn't seem to have found a role. There was only one cask beer when we called, Boddingtons Bitter on handpump, and I'm sorry to say it's a toss up whether this or the Robbies in the Church was the worst of the night. Inevitably, the final port of call was **Ye Olde Vic** on Chatham Street, a pub run in irrepressible style by Steve Brannan. From the armoured personnel carrier parked outside to the list of Steve's failed tasks on the wall within (painting the outside of the pub features prominently, although one wall has now had a coat of paint) mark this pub out as a one-off. A welcome is always guaranteed at what was the first pub in town to offer guest beers, and which is still doing the business with four or five ever-changing guests. There's real cider, too - although at this stage in the proceedings none of our party felt brave enough to try it. The beers were from Everards, Greene King, Osset and York Brewery and all rated good or better - the best beer of the night, in fact. And so ended a wet and interesting night. Of course this report can only be a snapshot of what we found on one particular night and so can't be taken as a once and for all judgement of the pubs or their beers - the very best pubs can have off nights (and vice-versa, of course!). Despite too many losses to keg, the pubs of Edgeley still offer a rewarding experience for the cask beer enthusiast with something for all tastes in both pubs and beer. Try some yourself and see what you think.



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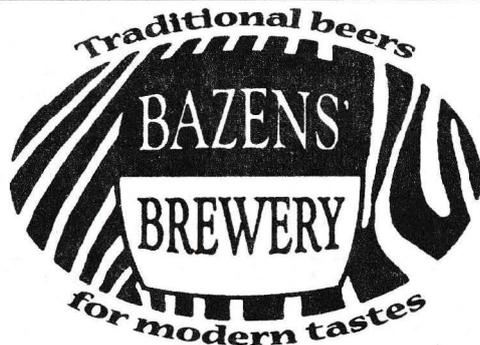


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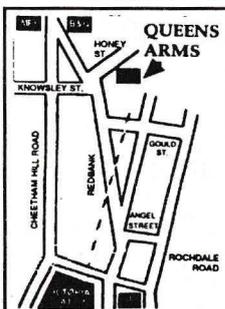
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EAST MANCHESTER BLUES

Football fan Mark Charnley checks out the prospects for
real ale near the new stadium

As a Manchester City supporter, I thought it was time to carry out some reconnaissance around the area of the City of Manchester Stadium, as we will be playing there next season.

With the euphoria of the Commonwealth Games having passed by I felt the pubs would be back to normal. You could therefore treat this as an update of the Stagger in the October and December 2001 issues of Opening Times as well as the Guide to the Pubs of Sporting Manchester in this July's issue.

Having taken the afternoon off work, I met up with my intrepid colleague in the **Crown & Anchor** on Hilton Street. Our route was planned over a good pint of Adnams Bitter.

We set off to the Ashton Canal and walked up the towpath to Beswick Street and the **Mitchell Arms** for a decent Banks's Bitter and friendly bar staff. We then cut through to Bradford Road and in to the **Bradford** for on-form Holt's Mild. The Bitter was also available although we were informed that the 'Baton' pump was out of use. Now for a long walk without any (real) beer. Up Bradford Road to the **Stadium** (formerly Cricketers) - keg. Cut through New Viaduct Street to Rowsley Street to the former Lees' Britannia, which was in the full throes of conversion to **Summerbees** - no sign of what may be on sale yet.

We then crossed Ashton New Road and on to Albert Street to the **Corner Shop** and **Townley** - both keg. Round the corner on to Grey Mare Lane to the **Queen Vic**, **Crossroads** and **Mary D's Beamish Bar** - all keg.

So we carried on along Ashton New Road and across Alan Turing Way to the **Derby Arms** and the **Sir Humphrey Cheetham** - both keg. Fortunately the next establishment was Holt's **Grove**, mild and bitter on handpump as well as smooth mild. We opted for handpumped mild and it was in good nick.

We set off next down Clayton Lane passing the **Blue Moon** (formerly the Church) and the **Bridge** - both keg. We arrived at the **Fox** which was selling Cain's Mild last October. The pump was on the bar with the Cain's clip. Unfortunately the barmaid advised us it was not available and tried to serve us with a keg alternative. Admittedly, she was trying to be helpful but we made our excuses and left. Whether or not we were unlucky on the day I do not know, but it is a fair walk to be disappointed, so beware.

So, back up to Ashton New Road, to the **Strawberry Duck** on Crabtree Lane, selling Holt's Bitter and sandwiches which bolstered us for the walk back down the canal to the City Centre. My friend caught his train home while I called in the **Castle** on Oldham Street prior to catching my train.

All I can say about this excursion is thank goodness for Joseph Holt (and Banks's) but I can see me spending most of my time before matches in the City Centre. I will say, though, that everyone was friendly and as usual the Holt's pubs were fairly busy for a midweek afternoon.

Next month....Opening Times continues its visit to
Europe with reports on Prague and Bamberg.
Closer to home, we take a look at Congleton,
fast becoming a Beer Paradise, the return of Ken's
Kitchen...and much more!

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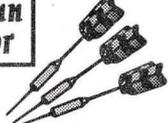
Cumbria Way
plus....

SNOWDON ALE



A WARM WELCOME IN A TRADITIONAL PUB

Stockie n The che

By John Taylor 

One season wonder or not? That is the question that was being asked about Reddish WMC, champions of the Stockport Licensed Houses Super League. Well, we were about to find out.

In Week 9 of the fixtures, they entertained the Royal Mortar who had looked unbeatable earlier in the season, but beaten they were as the champs came up with the right answers and stormed into a 4-1 lead and both points. The winning quartet on the night were Vic Clegg, who went in legs of 20 & 13 darts, including a maximum score; Mark Turner then levelled things up (20 & 19), but the come-back was short-lived as firstly Pete Say Snr won in 18 & 16, followed by Brad Clegg (18 & 22) and Neil Hunter (18 & 19) won the match for Reddish. Darryl Fitton (17 & 13) and Roly Mellor (15 & 23) won the last two for the Hillgate side to make the score line respectable.

Next up were fifth placed Bobby Peel away. No problem, and a 6-1 victory, including a win for Vic Clegg who was last on and won with the best darts of the match (19 & 18). Week 11 was a bit more of a challenge as they played hosts to the Union Inn. Derby matches are usually very tight affairs and this was no exception as the visitors stormed into a 2-0 lead through Brian Adshead and Barry Riley. The Club came back with captain Jeff Pearson and Pete Day Jnr, only for the Union to take game five with Steve Maurice in fine form. Pete Day Snr then levelled things up again. The final pairing of Vic Clegg and Dave Adshead stood at one leg each, last leg of the evening coming up. Clegg is on 20, Adshead needs 56 for the match, on the wire and misses. Clegg one dart and it's all over. He's won in legs of 18 & 19, but more importantly it's two more points, brilliant tension and sixty tons or over in the match. Well done to both teams for providing great entertainment.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In Week 8, the Mortar entertained the Union and once again it was a 4-3 score line and revenge to the home team who had been beaten three times by their opponents last season. Best of the night came from Darryl Fitton with legs of 13 & 16, including two 180s, and Chris North (13 & 18). For the visitors Dave Adshead won in 20 & 17, John McArdle and Tony O'Shea who both missed the Reddish match won with two legs of 20 darts.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The shock of the season to date came in Week 11 as North Reddish WMC celebrated a 6-1 home thrashing of the Royal Mortar. This was an outstanding result with the Reddish heroes being Paul Yates (22 & 17), John Sainsbury, Steve Needham (26 & 16), Ken Harter, Chris Hopwood and Vic Blockley. In reply it was just Darryl Fitton again (15 & 17) and another two 180s, which makes it eight for the season. Hopwood had an outshot of 116 in his win over Lancashire county star Kevin Weir. That defeat now leaves the champs four points clear at the top of the table.

★ ★ ★

In the second round of the team knock-out there were wins for holders the Mortar, last year's runners-up the Union, Reddish WMC, the Magnet, Club Leisure, Copperfields 'A', the Salisbury, who are the only Premier side left in the competition, and the Royal Oak. The draw for the quarter-finals due to be played on the evening of Tuesday 29 October is as follows: Salisbury Club-v-Magnet, Royal Mortar-v-Club Leisure, Union Inn-v-Royal Oak, Copperfields 'A'-v-Reddish WMC.

In the national team knock-out, Stockport lost 5-4 in the final to a Yorkshire side which was full of county players. They had earlier beaten sides from Glamorgan and Somerset on the day to reach the grand final. Well done to all of the players on a great effort.

★ ★

Tony O'Shea recently lost in the final of the Dutch Open, a competition that was televised all over Europe. En-route he had beaten English International Shaun Greatbach from Cambridge, ex-world champions John 'Boy' Walton and Ray Barneveld in front of his own fans. He lost to the current World Champion, Australian Tony David. Those ranking points mean that O'Shea is now ranked fifth in the world.



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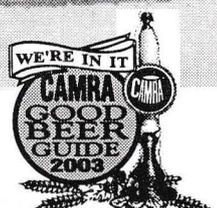
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BIGGEST & BEST EVER GOOD BEER GUIDE

Celebrating 30 years of campaigning for
good pubs and good beer

The 30th Good Beer Guide was launched by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, last month. Edited by long-standing CAMRA stalwart and beer expert Roger Protz, the 2003 edition promises to be one of the best ever and in beer drinking circles is the publishing event of the year.

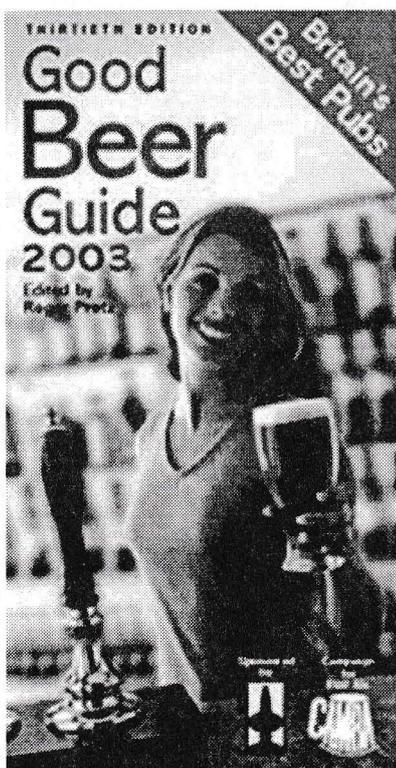
The 2003 edition of the Good Beer Guide offers a whole new reading and drinking experience for lovers of real ale. It is also the biggest-ever edition of CAMRA's market leading pub guide which has now sold over one million copies since it was launched in 1974. The Good Beer Guide is more than just a pub guide. Britain's longest-running and best-selling guide has 5,000 of Britain's best pubs for real ale. But for beer lovers it also gives up-to-date information on the country's beers and breweries. It's compiled by 65,000 dedicated volunteers in the Campaign for Real Ale. There are no fees for listings, and very pub is checked many times a year. The Guide offers:

- ★ The best pubs in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man that serve cask-conditioned real ale in tip-top condition.
- ★ Full details of beer, food, entertainment, family facilities, history and architecture for the pub entries
- ★ The unique Breweries section that lists all the breweries – micro, regional and national – the produce cask beer, with tasting notes compiled by CAMRA-trained tasting teams. There's also information about beers suitable for vegetarians and vegans, as well as the growing number of organic beers. The Guide lists new breweries, closed breweries, mergers and takeovers, and keeps track of the new powerful pub groups.

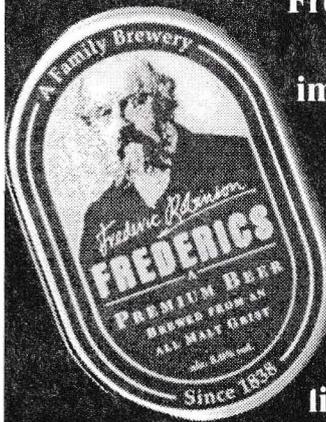
There are also a number of special features. Roger Protz gives a no-punches pulled analysis of the state of the brewing industry, with particular emphasis on the new breed of pub companies and how they are distorting the market. Other major features include:

- ★ Terry Jones of Monty Python on why CAMRA and the Good Beer Guide play a vital role in Britain today.
 - ★ Internationally acclaimed beer expert Michael Jackson on how craft brewers in Britain and the United States have brought flavour and character back to beer.
 - ★ Award-winning writer Jeff Evans on the campaign to save our country pubs
- There is also CAMRA's listing of pubs of special importance that must be saved for the nation, the top prize-winning beers of the year and beer festivals to visit throughout the country.

Fancy a pint? Don't leave home without the Good Beer Guide! Get yours for £12.99 (post and packing free) from: Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK2 5XA. Make cheques payable to 'CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester'.



Robinson's COMPETITION



Frederics Premium Beer has the immediate stamp of a quality ale. Brewed from an all-British malt grist and traditional hop varieties, this light golden beer is packed with flavour.

The winner of our latest competition can drink a toast to the founder of the Company as we offer a tray of Frederics Premium Beer as the prize, together with a Frederic's T-shirt.

John McGirr of Day Green was the winner of our July competition and receives a Robinson's umbrella and T-shirt.

To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is answer the following two questions.

1. In what year did the Company begin brewing beer?
2. What is the ABV of Frederics's *Robinson's*?

Send your answers by the end of the month to: Robinson's Competition, BHA, 94 Churchgate, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 1YJ

Or by fax to 0161 477-0809
or e-mail info@barryhook.com
Normal competition rules apply

**HELP HOLD BACK THE NITROKEG TIDE!
JOIN CAMRA (PAGE 23) & DRINK REAL ALE**



Real Beer Week

Real Beer Week ran from Monday 30 September until Sunday 6 October, and followed on from the success of Cask Ale Week last year. The week aimed to promote the 33 members of the Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) and to introduce many new customers to the joys of Real Beer. In the North West, six of the family brewers – Holts, Hydes', JW Lees, Robinson's, Thwaites and Jennings – combined force to support Real Beer Week and create greater awareness of the diversity and choice of real beers available in the region. A joint event was held at Manchester's Ape & Apple on Tuesday 1 October, attended by head brewers, directors and executives of all six companies. The various head brewers lined up to describe the beers available on the day:



Holt's Keith Sheard introduced the new seasonal, Thunderholt. This moreish 4.5% beer utilises a high proportion of dark crystal malt to give a pronounced liquorice character to the beer, which also uses Challenger hops in the brew. Definitely a more successful beer than the two Baton varieties brewed to mark the Commonwealth Games. From **Lees** Giles Dennis introduced their new seasonal, Ruddy Glow, another 4.5% beer with plenty of crystal malt to produce a hint of liquorice, although not as pronounced as in the Thunderholt. It's a well balanced beer using Target hops for bitterness and Styrian Goldings for aroma.

Chris Hellin from **Robinson's** was next, introducing Coopers Bell, reprised from last year. This quenching beer is an all-malt brew using 85% pale ale malt, 3% crystal malt and 11% wheat malt. Goldings hops are used throughout, both early and late in the brewing process and also in the dry hopping where 4 ounces are added to each cask. The last of the Manchester brewers was Hydes' **Paul Jefferies** with the new Autumn Goldings, also at 4.5%. Paul told OT that he thought this was one of his favourite of the Hydes craft ales. Again there's crystal malt used in the brew which is hopped with Goldings and Early Bird Goldings varieties which give an appealing marmalade note to the beer's taste.

All six companies present displayed a huge enthusiasm for their cask ales. No wonder that as the national total of cask ales sales declines, many of the IFBB companies are bucking this trend and their combined sales now account for some 50% of the cask ale market

Robbies Go Stateside

Robinson's and the American, Wisconsin-based Capital Brewery have agreed a deal to export their specially brewed British beer to the USA over the next 12 months. The contract has been more than a year in the making during which time Robinson's has developed two new ales, Northern Glory and Double Hop, for export. Robinson's will also be shipping out their award-winning Old Tom in the near future.



The two new beers will be shipped out in 500ml bottles. Northern Glory is a 4.4% traditionally brewed bitter that is "warm, welcoming and full of character". It uses a blend of pale, dark and roasted barley and wheat malts to produce a light oak colour. It has already appeared here in cask form as Stadium Bitter and will return next year under its real name.

At 5% Double Hop is brewed with East Kent Golding hops. The beer has a refreshing and complex palate that gives a balance of hop flavour and bitterness. By using a blend of pale, crystal barley and wheat malts, a rich golden bitter is produced with a crisp dry roasted malt finish. A cask version will appear in the new year when it replaces Samuel Oldknow in the seasonal beer programme.

Micro Magic

As usual, our local micro brewers continue to produce a range of interesting beers...

Marble Brewery – is about to reintroduce Chocolate Heavy for the winter season. Always a welcome sight on the bar at the various Marble outlets, this strong (5.5%) beer might well be tweaked a little this time round.



Boggart Hole Clough – two new beers in the pipeline for this month. A session beer called, perhaps a little unimaginatively, Session Ale, at 3.8% will be followed by Cinder, a 5% ruby coloured ale, with coffee notes and a floral taste or, as brewer Mark Dade put it, "bloody gorgeous"!

Leyden – have two new beers in the pipeline. Brewer Brendan Leyden is using up some malt stocks to create a 4.5% dryish "out and out" porter. The beer, as yet unnamed, will feature at the Hare & Hounds beer festival on 25 October. Also available there will be another new beer, possibly brewed with honey, and possibly called Nangreaves Nectar.

Porter Brewing Co – this month sees the return of the superb Porter's Stout. Bone dry and dangerously drinkable at 5.5%. Raspberry No.4 has also made a return visit and was much enjoyed when the Greater Manchester Pub



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of the Year Award was presented to Porter's Railway in Stockport at the beginning of the month.



Pictish - Rochdale's ever-reliable Pictish Brewery has a brand new beer out this month. This is Alchemists Ale, a 4.3% straw coloured ale with "crisp malt flavours and a robust hoppy finish". Certainly one to look out for. Will we also see a return of the excellent Samhain Stout this year?

The LAB - on a recent visit landlord Peter Wood had just put on a new brew. Old Stans Amber Ale (4.2%) is a malty, fruity brew, named after Lowes Arms regular Stan Phillips, who died 2 months ago. He lived in a farm locally and owned the land around the area of the Lowes. He was 93. Coming round again as well as the normal brews, in the coming weeks, will be Jet Amber Mild, not actually brewed since the Stockport Mild Trail, but a beer that went well at that time.



Sarah's Hop House - still going strong. See this month's letters column on page 20.



Phoenix - as ever, Tony Allen's award-winning brewery has a whole raft of new beers out. Last Leaf is a 4.5% autumn ale, well-balance with a predominantly hop finish; Firecracker is 4.7%, light brown with a lingering hoppy finish; Riprap, 4.1%, is pale with lots of hop everywhere - OT remembers this beer from last year and it really is superb; Spooky Brew (4.7%) and Uncle Fester (4.5%) are two more old favourites coming back, and at the end of this month the hoppy Flash Flood (4.1%) will also be out. Phoenix are also celebrating getting a big order from Wetherspoons for the gold medal-winning Navy which will be going into JDW outlets nationwide.

ADVERTISING IN THE 2003 STOCKPORT PUB GUIDE

This will be the third edition of Camra's Guide to Stockport Pubs, 'Viaducts and Vaults'- The first two each won awards and sold out and we are very confident that our new edition will be equally as successful. This edition will be published in early June 2003 with a print run of 2000 copies.

Advertising in the Guide will enable businesses in and around Stockport to promote their company within their local core market at highly competitive rates. Each reader will use the book time and time again bringing the companies who advertise and their products to mind each time. In order to maintain the integrity of the Guide no advertisements can be accepted from pubs.

If you are interested please ring Jim Flynn on: 0161 432 1816 (evenings) or write to him at: 66 Downham Rd, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, SM 5EG.

Closing date for advertising copy is the end of November 2002.

BAZEN'S BREWERY



Richard Bazen is well-known on the local brewing scene, having helped set up the lamented Bridgewater Brewery and subsequently moving to work as brewer at Tony Allen's highly regarded Phoenix Brewery in Heywood. Now, for the second time in his career, he has set up on his own. The original Bazen's Brewery was a short-lived affair, operating from Trafford Park in the early 1980s. This time around he is in partnership with wife Jude and operates from a unit on the small, pleasant Agecroft Enterprise Park in Swinton.

Three sites were checked out before the Swinton premises became available, including one just behind the Crescent in Salford (what a brewery tap that would have made!). The brewing kit, from Brewing Solutions in Oldham, was bought in July and the first brew was in mid-August with about 4 1/4 barrels per brew coming from the nominal 5-barrel plant.

It's certainly a contrast to the slightly shambolic appearance of Bridgewater. Here gleaming stainless steel vessels are neatly arranged in a surprisingly spacious unit. There's still a slight Heath Robinson aspect, though - the cask storage unit is cooled by a fan and radiator from an old Vauxhall Cavalier! Another interesting feature of the plant is the control on the mash tun which regulated the vigour of the boil - this can be slowed down to retain more hop character in the beer, which promises some interesting developments in the future. Ingredients are pretty standard for the micro sector. The malt is primarily Maris Otter from Fawcetts, supplemented by some lager malt, crystal malt and a little torrieffied wheat for head retention. Hops are primarily Fuggles along with Goldings, Styrian Goldings, Green Bullet and Pacific Hallertau (the latter two from New Zealand) and, for the Flatbac, some American Cascade. The yeast comes from Hydes'.

Enough of the technicalities, what about the beer? Two have been produced so far - a session beer brewed to an original Bridgewater recipe, at 3.8% and Flatbac at 4.2%. The latter is based on the Bridgewater American Blond recipe but uses New Zealand hops. The beer is named after a musical instrument played by Richard and which is depicted on the attractive pump clip designed, as are all the clips, by Jude.



Forthcoming beers include Bazens' Best Bitter, a 4.5% premium brew, and Rees's Resurrection, a 5.2% porter based on the former, award-winning, Bridgewater Delph Porter recipe. Also planned for the next couple of months are a 5.5% ale aimed at the student market. This interesting beer will have a traditional English malt grist (along the lines of Fullers ESB) combined with the hop profile of the old American

Blond. The name is planned to be Freshers Special, with the tag line "After Two Pints You'll Talk Like One". Another planned beer out soon should be a 3.7% dark mild, planned to go into two or three pubs as a house mild. Planned for next year is a lager and a wheat beer. Opinions of the beers have been uniformly high and many local free houses have taken them, including the Crescent, Albert Vaults and Kings Arms in Salford and the Crown in Stockport. Definitely worth seeking out. JC.

Bazens's Brewery is at Unit 22, Agecroft Enterprise Park, Agecroft Road, Swinton, M27 8UW. Phone 0161 743 9121. E-mail: enquiries@bazensbrewery.co.uk.



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BeerMonster™ Abroad

So the long-mooted, and much doubted, BeerMonster™/CAMRA trip to Franconia, the Alps and the Oktoberfest finally happened. Over half the original party dropped out, making the visit more a reconnaissance-en-force rather than an invasion, and the flooding meant that the Kelheim/Weltenberg diversion had to be postponed, but as a preparation for a larger trip in 2004, it was a distinct success. Next month the Franconian (The North West Bit of Bavaria) leg of the trip, and especially Bamberg, will be detailed. Given that space is currently at a premium, I will limit this article to the latter stages of the trip - based at Tegernsee (house brewery of the National Winter Ales Festival Foreign Beer Bar) with a few trips into Munich. This year's Oktoberfest will be remembered for one thing - snow during the first week. (Only, indeed a sprinkling in Munich, but quite a lot more in Augsburg, seen on the way down). The earliest snow for 62 years in fact. Didn't make much of an impact on those of us rugged-ised by the UK (or insulated in the first-class compartment of an ICE train!).

Every year, people tell me the Oktoberfest is getting more commercial. Sadly, every year, they are also right. In 2003, even in the first week, finding an unreserved table even in early afternoon, in an 'unfashionable' tent, is becoming problematic. Acres of tables have company-based reservations. Fair do's, if they don't turn up on time, they speedily become 'unreserved', but it is getting to the point that seats will soon be pre-ordered only. Not good. Prices? Surprisingly reasonable - a litre Maß of 6% beer for little less than the price of (two) pint(s) of German beer in Manchester. All in all, its still well worth a visit, but do it in the next couple of years. Beers: Best 2003 Oktoberfest Bier - Paulaner. (Well that's a surprise....not!) Most Improved Bier - Once again - Spaten.

If You Pray For It - It may come

Thinking of Manchester, now I'm back, I am currently counting the days to the return of the German/European Christmas Market in Albert Square. I have been praying, assiduously, for the return of the Paulaner/Thurn & Taxis beer Tent. Over the last 12 months or so, a couple of fonts have appeared in City Centre Pubs, claiming to dispense genuine Munich Lowenbrau. I have to admit to having my doubts. The initial launch was indeed brewed in Munich but was the 'export' variety, not quite to the German Purity Standard, and brewed primarily for the USA. Nevertheless it went down well. The really GOOD news is that it went down SO well, that Carlsberg Tetley (the importers) have now jumped up a gear, and imported the 5.2% Original Munchner Helles that you would expect to get in a Munich bar. Its pretty good, even if Lowenbrau is the lesser of the Big Six Munich beers - AND its available year round. Knott Fringe on Deansgate and Centro on Tib St are good places to sample it. (I am still praying for a Paulaner Christmas, however).

UMIST Beerex

Every year, UMIST hold a Beer Festival to support their Rag Week. This year, its on from 23 to 26 October. There are fifty odd real ales (and a promise of 18 imported beers, 8 ciders plus spirits). See ad on next page for opening times. The beer range looks good, with quite a few cask ales rarely seen in the pubs, and if previous years efforts are anything to go by, it should be hugely enjoyable. After a touch of Friggin in the Rigging, and a little Shaft Bender, I may see the need for some Snake Catcher. We shall see.

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