



OPENING TIMES



Distributed throughout Stockport; Central, East & South Manchester; Tameside; N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield

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APRIL 2003 No:228

6,700 CIRCULATED THIS MONTH

FREE

PUBS WEEK MAKES THE HEADLINES

Millions of people got the message that there's a pub for everyone when CAMRA staged its first-ever National Pubs Week at the end of February. Well over 100 CAMRA branches mounted local activities and highlighted National Pubs Week in branch newsletters with a combined readership of over a quarter of a million.

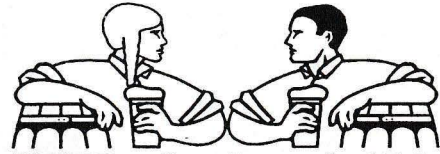
Some 400,000 promotional beer mats and 200,000 posters were distributed, some by CAMRA branches but many by brewers, wholesalers, pubcos and trade newspapers. Among the Campaign's industry partners in getting the message across were big names such as Punch Taverns, Enterprise Inns, Laurel, Unique, Scottish & Newcastle Retail, The Beer Seller, Cask Marque and Wolverhampton & Dudley. Regional brewers on board included Charles Wells, Arkells, Gale's, Fuller's, Adnams and Everards. And both the Publican and the Morning Advertiser trade newspapers carried features and distributed posters to their readers. National and regional media coverage meant the entire country was blanketed with NPW publicity. The message even went round the globe with the BBC World Service. CAMRA Press Manager Tony Jerome said: "The help we received from the industry and the amount of media coverage the event got were a huge boost, because we don't have huge budgets. In fact we spent just £25,000, so the amount of publicity we got per pound was something most marketing operations can only dream of"

But Mr Jerome said NPW wasn't purely a marketing exercise, but was tied in to promotional activities carried out by pubs themselves. "We estimate that some 15,000 pubs took part in NPW, and that's very much the point of the exercise," he said. "It's not just a question of urging people to use it or lose it. It's a matter of giving publicans practical support by publicising the promotions and activities they lay on for themselves."

Next year's event has been scheduled for 21-28 February - a timeslot which Mr Jerome said was chosen to benefit publicans. "It's their quiet time following Christmas and New Year when they could do with this sort of boost," he said. "We're delighted with the way the inaugural event worked out, but next year it needs to be bigger and better. That means more planning, more partnerships, closer liaison with the industry, and even more eye-catching promotional material. "We're planning to give the second event a theme - pubs for women has been suggested, as has focusing on the landlord and landladies themselves. But the feedback we're getting from branches includes lots of exciting and original suggestions to make NPW bigger and better - and as far as we're concerned, the more input we get from branches and members, the bigger and better it will be." Among the local events was the presentation on March 1st of the Stockport &



South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the year Award to the Beartown Brewery Navigation, Stockport. Pictured in the foreground are Angella (centre) and Chantal with the award, and behind them Steve King from the Beartown Brewery Tap in Congleton who won the Macclesfield and East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Year Award.



Stockport's 17th Beer & CIDER FESTIVAL

STOCKPORT TOWN HALL
29TH-31ST MAY 2003

Making Music

Details of the entertainment on offer at this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, once again sponsored by the Stockport Express, have now been released and we are able to bring you this exclusive preview. Along with well-established Festival favourites, this year we are bringing you some bands new to the event, all well-established professional musicians and sure to make the event go with a swing.

On Thursday night **The Swing Commanders**, formed by ex-members of former Festival hit the Winchesters, present their unique blend of jump, jive and cowboy jazz. Perfect to get the Festival off to a lively start.

The Friday lunchtime session will be in the hands of **Michael Holmes** on the **Mighty Wurlitzer**, always a very popular session with the young and old. The entertainment for Friday evening will once again be **The Purple Gang**. One of their legendary singles was 'Granny Takes A Trip'. They have supported big name bands including Pink Floyd, T Tex, David Bowie, Slade and Jimi Hendrix. Friday night is always our busiest session so arrive early to hear this band.

Saturday lunchtime is our quiet drinkers session which has proved so popular in recent years. Festival-goers should note that from 8.30pm every night the Family Room will be the quiet room for those who want to drink away from the hustle and bustle of the main hall.

On Saturday night the **Blues Blasters** entertain us with good old R'n'B, always a favourite with the Stockport crowds. Their brand of Chicago blues should see the Festival go out on a high note. With good music, interesting beers and cider, why not make this your party night at the Festival?

Next month we preview some of the highlights from the beer, cider and perry on offer - and there are certainly some treats in store! Don't forget those important diary dates - May 29, 30 and 31 at Stockport Town Hall.

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UGLY PEOPLE
HAVE SEX"

WE'RE IN THE 2003
GOOD BEER GUIDE



IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..

This month we feature mild in a big way. No apologies for that – real, cask mild was once the mainstay of the British brewing industry but now it is a faint shadow of its former self.

The reasons for its decline are essentially twofold – quality and image. Quality was the first to suffer – in the days when bad cellar practices were far more commonplace in our pubs, it was usual for the slops to go back in the mild as these were easily disguised in what were usually very dark beers. Lighter bitters were less susceptible to such obvious adulteration and came to be seen as a better drink.

Too many brewers, for too long, seemed to go along with this 'second class drink' image. Many years ago, most brewers would produce a whole family of milds, of all strengths, to sell alongside their bitters. Latterly, those brewers still, producing milds came to regard them as low-gravity 'tail end Charlies' tacked on to the bottom of their beer range.

This also fed into the image problem, with mild increasingly seen as a cheap drink for old men, ideally complete with cloth cap and whipet in tow.

Nowadays, most of the remaining family brewers who produce a mild (and in the Opening Times area they all do) are taking steps to improve its image, even if it means dropping the mild tag, as with Robinson's and Hatters. Add in some increasingly impressive milds from the micros – some true to the style and some pushing back the boundaries, and there is no reason why these tasty beers shouldn't start making a come back.

Our readers can help – take time to try a pint of mild. Better still, take part in this year's Mild Challenge. It really isn't that difficult – the least you need to do is try 12 halves of mild in 12 different pubs over a five week period. Let's make this year's Challenge the best ever – and repay the faith of the many local pubs which continue to stock it, and those breweries which produce it. Over to you.

★ ★ ★ ★

You will notice the absence of a darts column this month. Our correspondent, John Taylor, has recently retired and has decided to give up his coverage of the local darts scene. All the best for your retirement, John, and many thanks for your columns over the past couple of years. If anyone out there would like to fill John's shoes, then please get in touch with OT at the usual addresses, phone numbers etc .

John Clarke

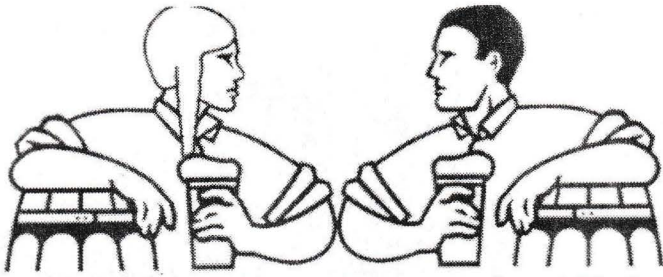
OPENING TIMES ISSUE 228

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 CD-R, 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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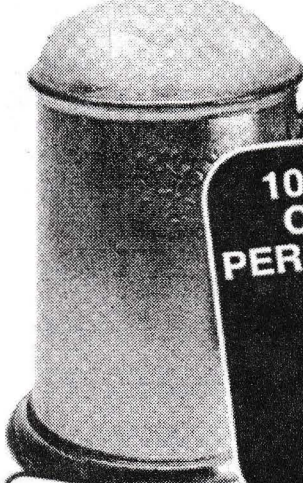
COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE OF OPENING TIMES IS APRIL 25



Stockport's 17th Beer & CIDER FESTIVAL

STOCKPORT  TOWN HALL
29TH-31ST MAY 2003

5 Minutes from Bus & Train Stations



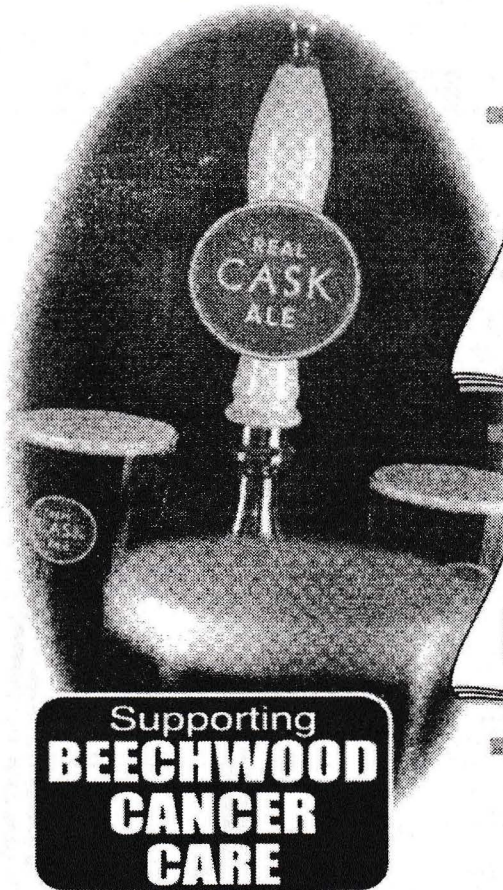
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PUB OF THE MONTH APRIL 2003

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			



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for April is the Blossoms, Stockport Road, Heaviley.

A landmark building, on the corner of Bramhall Lane and the busy A6, the Blossoms has for many years been a favourite with local drinkers. The redoubtable Barbara Mounkley ran the pub for many years and in April 1997 was succeeded by Neville and Margaret Owen who have quietly put their own imprint on what remains one of the town's top traditional locals.

Despite having over 30 year's experience in the licensed trade, mainly as a bar-cellarman, this was Neville and Margaret's first pub in their own right and it is testimony to this experience and their hard work that the Blossom's remains in the top rank of local pubs. Not the most flamboyant of licensees, Neville and Margaret's commitment shine through in the immaculate condition of not only the pub itself but, more importantly, in the superb beer sold. The pub retains much of its original Victorian layout and many original features. The heart of the pub is the traditional drinking lobby, which has three rooms off. Of the two front rooms, one is dedicated to pool while the other has more of a tap room feel with TV and pinball table. The gem, though, is the back smoke room, arguably one of the finest pub rooms in town, complete with a superb carved fireplace and traditional furniture.

It is however in the beer that the Blossoms really comes into its own. Neville's career in the trade includes 25 years as a bar-cellarman and you will be hard pressed to find a better pint of Robinson's Hatters or Best Bitter anywhere. During its season there is usually a cask of Old Tom on the bar, too, and this not only adds to the pub's appeal but also epitomises the best traditions of the pub trade which the Blossoms seems to showcase so well.

This will be the second time that Neville and Margaret will have won a Pub of the Month award. The first was back in October 1998 and recognised their work in continuing the pub's high standards over the 18 months since they took over. This award salutes their continuing commitment to the very highest standards of public house tradition and will be presented on the evening of Thursday 24 April when another good night at the Blossoms is guaranteed. The Blossoms is well served by public transport- the very regular 192 bus will drop you nearby from either direction.

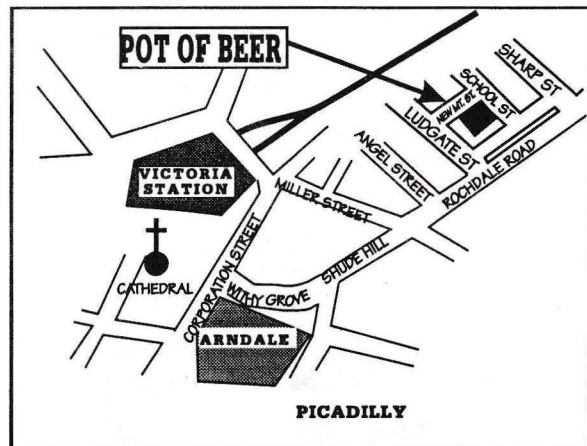
The local branch of CAMRA decide on a Pub of the Month by a democratic vote at the monthly branch meeting.

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STAGGER

with John Clarke

Going Mild In Stockport

This month's Stagger is a crawl with a difference. Reflecting the Mild theme of this issue and looking forward to the Mild Challenge, this is a tour of some classic local pubs with the aim of trying the mild in each one. So, here we go...

If you're going to start a pub crawl anywhere it might as well be in the local CAMRA Pub of the Year and so it was that we assembled at the **Navigation**, Lancashire Hill. Regular readers will be familiar with this pub and how it has been turned round from a going-nowhere, keg-only failure into a thriving local serving a range of cask ales, real ciders and foreign beers. It is, of course, owned, by Congleton's Beartown Brewery, which produces two milds. Tonight the stronger of the two, **Black Bear** (5%) was available – at a very reasonable £1.60 a pint. This is a rich, dark beer with some distinct chocolate notes and was very well received indeed. A good start to the night. Licensee Angella Lindsay told us that for the duration of the Mild Challenge, the pub would be stocking both Black Bear and the brewery's other mild, **Ambeardextrous** (3.5%). A brisk walk downhill brought us to the **Tiviot**, the first Robinson's pub of the night. The Tiviot is an excellent, old fashioned town local with a good lunchtime and afternoon trade. It's usually quieter at night with a pleasant relaxed atmosphere. The vault has a particularly good feel to it and the winter months also bring the welcome sight of a cask of Old Tom on the bar. The regular beers are Best Biter and **Hatters** so, Hatters it was. Now, the Tiviot always sells reliably good beer but tonight the Hatters wasn't on its usual sparkling form here. It was still OK but when you get used to the best in a pub, anything less disappoints. Subsequent visits have confirmed that this must have been a one-off 'blip', thank goodness.

Next port of call was the **Railway** on Great Portwood Street. Another micro-brewery tied house of course, this time owned by the Porter Brewing Co. of Haslingden. Another Pub of the Year,

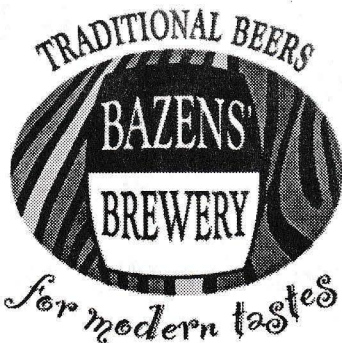
too, having been local Pub of the Year for 2002 and a creditable runner-up in the national competition. It sells the full range of beers from eponymous brewer Dave Porter, and enthusiastic licensee Alex Lord ensures quality remains high. Over eight cask beers are sold but the beer of choice was **Porter Dark Mild** (3.3%), a true dark mild with a slight maltiness and a good hint of roast in the finish. Again, very well received, and at a bargain price of £1.20 a pint. A Porter Brewing sideline is the installation of micro-breweries, the products of which tend to feature as guest beers in the Railway. So it was tonight with Blythe House Bitter from the little-known Blythe House Brewery. This had to be tried and proved to be an excellent, hoppy beer.

Time for Holt's and Winters on Underbank. This is an impressive conversion of an old jewellers' shop with a ground floor bar with a vault-like atmosphere and upstairs a more plush lounge affording an intriguing view of the workings of the famous automaton clock. Despite the effort and expense that has gone into this pub it has, for some reason, failed to find its niche in the local pub scene. **Holt's Mild** and Bitter are on handpump and of course it was mild tonight. This was perfectly alright without being anything special although some of our party found the beer too cold to be properly enjoyed. It was just a short walk to the **Swan With Two Necks** on Princes Street for more **Hatters**, although during the Mild Challenge it is hoped that the rarer **Robinson's Dark Mild** will be available. The Swan if of course another classic local, listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of historic pub interiors as a rare example of an almost intact inter-war pub. The drinking corridor is supplemented by three rooms, of which the superb middle top-lit smoke room is the real gem. Apart from **Hatters**, the pub sells Best Bitter, Frederics, Old Tom and, usually, the current seasonal. All beers here are in top-form and so it was with the **Hatters** tonight.

More **Hatters** beckoned at our penultimate pub, the **Pineapple** on Heaton Lane. This excellent little pub has the atmosphere of a local community pub and yet it lies just a couple of minutes from busy Mersey Square. It's always supported by a loyal band of regulars enjoying the top quality beer. We caught the end of a cask of **Hatters** and this wasn't very good at all. A quick word saw a new cask put on and our defective pints replaced with some very good beer indeed. From there it was just a short walk to the last pub of the night, the ever-reliable **Crown** on Heaton Lane. Top of the league for choice and quality, it's almost unknown to get a bad pint in the Crown – and if you do it will be changed without delay. The choice is extensive and imaginative – the house beer is Jennings Bitter, there are pumps reserved for Bank Top, Whim, Pictish and Phoenix beers, four more pumps ring the changes with other breweries' guest beers and a tenth pump always has a guest mild. Tonight's guest was another Phoenix beer, **Monkeytown Mild**, a 'modern mild' with quite a bit more hop character than is traditional for the style, but balance with plenty of chocolate and roast notes. Refreshing, quaffable... and on top form. An excellent end to the night.

There are few parts of the country where a Stagger such as this would be possible, so endangered is cask conditioned mild. In Stockport, though, this was just the tip of the iceberg, with many other pubs selling the beer. It would be easy to be complacent and that's where danger lies. Mild sales continue to decline – it really is a case of 'use it or lose it', or perhaps that should be 'drink it or sink it'.

Letters to Opening Times: The Editor, Opening Times,
45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport. SK3 9HD
or johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com



Golding Fleece 4.4% (March/April)

Pacific Bitter 3.8%

Flatbac 4.2%

Best Bitter/Flying Zebra 4.5%

Black Pig Mild 3.6%

Knoll's Porter 5.2%

Regular outlets include

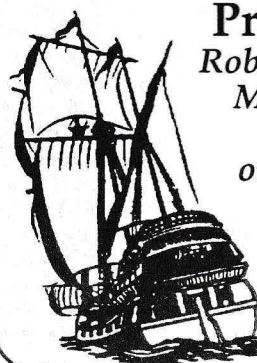
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Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month Oct 2000
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Family Favourites

The latest clutch of seasonal beers from our local family brewers are now on the bars – and all four a very good beers.

From Robinson's it's the return of Stockport Arches although this year the beer seems to have been tweaked to give it a bit more bitterness, a move which has improved it hugely. Robinson's have also been increasing their stake in Lake District brewers Jennings. A further 2 per cent of the company's shares have been brought, bringing the total holding to 13 per cent and worth about £2 million. The shareholding is now approaching the level at which Robbies will have to declare their intentions – could a bid be on the cards?

The latest from Lees is also a beer making a welcome return. This is Brooklyn Best, a very bitter 5% beer initially created by Garrett Oliver from the Brooklyn Brewing Co of New York. It's as good this time as last, and remains one of the very best of Lees seasonal beers.

Both Hydes and Holt's have brand new beers out. Hydes' Copper Hopper, a 4.2 per cent bitter, is a superbly refreshing beer – a recent sampling at the Victoria in Withington found it in top form. Arguably one of the best of Hydes' craft ales, we think. From Holt's, the 4.1 per cent Blackwell is now out. With a rounded flavour and lingering aftertaste, this is an extremely well-balanced, tasty brew.

Micro Magic

The local micros continue to produce interesting and tasty beers...

Abbeydale - although based in Sheffield, this well-established micro's beers are frequently seen in the local free trade. Out shortly is Resurrection, a 4.6 per cent, pale and hoppy bitter - and if you don't spot this in a local pub, you will be able to get it at Stockport Beer Festival. Also out this month is Vespers, a 4.2 per cent, dark porter-style beer. Look out for the scooter-riding nun on the pumpclip! Building work is currently underway at the brewery which will see the brew length increased from eight to 14 barrels, such is demand for the beers.

Pictish – this Rochdale micro, a byword for brewing excellence it has to be said, has a new seasonal out this month. This is the welcome return of the 5 per cent Malestrom, a superbly bitter and hoppy premium beer. Speaking of bitter and hoppy, brewer Richard Sutton has also re-brewed the wonderful 6 per cent Blue Moon. Look out for it in the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport.



Phoenix – as ever, there are a number of new beers out this month. The Easter beer is Resurrection at 4.7 per cent and also out is St George's Flag at 4.3. There's also a new permanent addition to the Phoenix portfolio in the form of Double Gold, a 5 per cent, pale and very hoppy beer. This, too, has been tried in Stockport's Crown and we can confirm that this is everything you would expect from a Phoenix beer with these specifications. Again, look out for it at Stockport Beer Festival. As we reported last month, Tyke Bitter, 4.2 per cent, has been re-brewed to celebrate 21 years of the Barge & Barrel at Elland, West Yorks, being a free house. From April 7 the pub will be running a mini-festival showcasing Phoenix beers.

Leyden – Brendan Leyden is producing a new beer for the Pace Eggers, a team of morris dancers who visit the Lord Raglan at Nangreaves, where the brewery is based, every Easter. This is a mid-brown 4.2 per cent beer and will be available at the pub from Palm Sunday, when the Pace Eggers traditionally visit the pub. Another new beer is '6-0', to mark the centenary of Bury FC winning the FA Cup six-nil. It's 6 per cent, and is described as a pale, hoppy summer-style beer.



Boggart Hole Clough – another brewery with a new beer out this month. This is Hoppy Ale, a 4.1 per cent beer which 'does everything it says on the tin' as it were, being 'nice and hoppy' according to the brewery. Business continues to boom at Boggart Hole Clough with production running flat out.

Whim – over in Hartington in deepest Derbyshire, there has been a trickle of new beers. As we went to press the excellent Cascade was out – a intensely hoppy beer, full of citrus notes from the (very) generous use of Cascade hops. Stout Jenny, 4.6 per cent, is also out at the moment and later in Spring, Whim's wheat beer will reappear. Also out now is Easter Ale a 4.8 per cent golden bitter, brewed using organic First Gold Hops. The beer is dry-hopped with Willamette hops and has been conditioning in cask at the brewery since January so we're in for a treat.



LAB - Peter Wood at the Lowes Arms, Denton has once again brewed a special for this year's Mild Challenge. You may recall last year's beer was Jet Amber, well this year's is Aromatic Amber at 3.5%. Unlike Jet, this beer is a light mild. If it's as tasty as Jet and sells as well, I don't think anyone will care. This news came too late for us here at OT to amend the Challenge card with this up-to-date information, as the cards had already been printed up. Whatever the case, the Lowes is always worth a visit.

Khean – the 'other' Congelton brewer goes from strength to strength – owner Ken Newsome tells us that February was his best month ever. The latest Khean beer is the 4 per cent Village Green. This is pale, hoppy and flowery beer made using American Cascade hops, the first time Ken has used these. If it proves successful then it might be retained for the summer. Khean may also be brewing a special for the forthcoming Macclesfield Beer Festival.





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Anita
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To

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at their Best*

Including the Seasonal Beers

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Bell-push for service at your table*

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RANGE OF ROBINSONS BEERS!

Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,
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Cumbria Way
and Snowdon Ale

A WARM WELCOME
IN A TRADITIONAL PUB

MANCHESTER

STOCKPORT & MANCHESTER
MILD CHALLENGE 2003

MILD - THE FACTS

What it is, and why you should drink it

This beer is without doubt a "red list" species in danger of extinction. Yet if it were to disappear from our pubs it would be a great shame. Even though it may be seen as a beer without 'street cred', and the one you may have been warned off early in your drinking career because of what unscrupulous publicans might be putting into it. Not least because it was usually dark coloured and would therefore conceal the evidence from view!

Today breweries tend to brew a wide range of bitters and, tacked on at the end, a solitary mild. It wasn't always like that. Before the Second World War, many breweries would have a 'family' of milds, of various strengths and styles, which ran in tandem with a similar range of bitters. Indeed mild was the biggest selling draught beer style for many years: in 1959 it accounted for over 40 per cent of beer brewed. Twenty years later it was down to ten per cent, and today it is just a fraction of that.

Initially this steep decline was largely the result of selective advertising on bitter beers, but until the late 1970s most brewers produced at least one mild. Its last strongholds are now the Midlands and here in the North West, although even in parts of Greater Manchester you will have to look long and hard to find it.

Its popularity here was perhaps typified by Chesters' "Fighting Mild", as it was endearingly known. Once a delicious dark mild, so dark that the first time you walked into a pub selling it, you would be convinced everyone was drinking draught Guinness. Its reputation lingers on but as it once typified mild's popularity, it also mirrors its decline - the beer was discontinued in cask form in 2000. Unlike in many parts of the country, all our local brewers still produce cask mild today, and this includes a good number of our micros, too. Robinson's still produce two, and Hydes' three! Elsewhere, many breweries today produce only very small amounts of cask mild, some just as a seasonal beer, or none at all where its popularity has diminished through a vicious circle of no promotion, restricted availability and hence declining demand.

Mild beers in good condition are deliciously tasty and come in a host of varieties. Many are dark in colour but some, like Robinson's Hatters are as lightly coloured as a bitter beer. Some are light and hoppy and others rich and high in gravity - it's a mistake to think of mild as being a weak beer and although many of today's examples are low in alcohol, in times gone by milds of five or six per cent alcohol were commonplace. In fact there are still over 100 milds brewed nationwide.

Mild beers are normally characterised by being brewed with less hops than bitter beers and often use darker malts, or sometimes more sugar or caramel, to give their typical dark colour. They are generally light and easy to drink, and usually being lower in alcohol, make an ideal lunchtime pint. They are also some of the best value beers around. So next time you pop out for a pint - make yours mild. You won't be disappointed.

Following the success of last year's competition, we have once again teamed up with the Stockport Express to bring you another Mild Challenge, and again we have stretched our wings to include parts of Manchester and Salford along with a few other pubs further afield. The previous Challenges have been a great success and if you haven't taken part before, try and have a go this time. It's fun and it's easy. It's also a chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and, of course, to win some great prizes.

The Challenge runs from Saturday 5 April to Sunday 11 May and offers everyone taking part the chance to win something. All completed entries will receive either a free entry ticket for the 2003 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival or, if you're a member of CAMRA, a voucher for two free pints of mild at the Festival.

We are also again featuring the Mild Challenge Extra - visit a participating pub in 12 different areas, using the headings shown on the card, and you will win a special Mild Challenge T-shirt; visit all participating pubs and you will win a specially engraved pewter tankard.

An extra feature this year is the Mild Challenge Super - get 36 stamps from 36 different pubs and you will win a free 'Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge' sweatshirt.

This year we are also especially grateful to Hydes' for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go into a draw and the first 10 pulled out will win a visit to the brewery to see how their three milds are made. Too good to miss out on? Definitely! So, what do you have to do? It's easy...

- First, get a card. All participating pubs have a stock or you can use the version printed in this issue of Opening Times. Additionally you can get one from the Mild Challenge address: 39 Fox Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9EL.

- When you buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part, ask the bar staff to stamp your card. Remember, though, you can only get one stamp from each pub.

- When you've filled the card (you'll need 12 different stamps from 12 different pubs) send it to the Mild Challenge address on the card and, after our closing date, we will send off your prizes.

Simple isn't it? Happy Drinking!



*Steve, Johanne, Molly &
sometimes Jess welcome you to*
Ye Olde Vic

1 Chatham Street, Edgeley, Stockport
(0161) 480 2410



Opening Hours:
Mon - Fri: 5pm - 11pm;
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5 Alternating Cask Beers

*Westons Traditional Cider chilled,
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Selection from 12 single malts in 35cl measures

Solid Fuel Open Fire

An Establishment for the Discerning Drinker!!

**We still maintain our no swearing and
good behaviour policy.**



MILD - WHO BREWS WHAT

While the national brewers seem to have virtually turned their backs on good cask mild, our local companies still produce the real thing. Robinson's in fact still produce two, and Hydes' three! Here we give a run-down on most of the milds available in the Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge area with the alcohol by volume given in brackets. Those marked* are available on the Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge:

Robinson's: Hatters* (ABV 3.3%) - light mild with a refreshing dry, malty flavour.
Dark Best Mild*: Hatters Mild with added caramel. Fruity, malty and a rare find - although FOUR Challenge pubs (Swan With Two Necks, Stockport; Caledonia, Ashton; and Castle and Pot of Beer, City Centre) will be selling it.
Hydes: Mild* (ABV 3.5%) - dark and dry, an all malt brew.
'Welsh' Mild - an even darker version of standard mild. Very rare outside Hydes' Welsh estate.

Light* (ABV 3.7%) - lightly hopped session beer. Refreshing, fruity with dry finish.
Holt's: Mild* (ABV 3.2%) - very dark with a complex taste. Very bitter for a mild with a long and satisfying aftertaste.

Lees: GB Mild* (ABV 3.5%) - malty and fruity with a dry, malty aftertaste.
Porter: Dark Mild* (ABV 3.3%) - rich and full-bodied with a roasty aftertaste. Available at the Railway, Portwood.

Bank Top: Dark Mild (ABV 4%) - perhaps the classic dark mild. Dark, luscious and totally wonderful. The Crown, Heaton Lane is a fairly regular outlet.

Bazens': Black Pig (3.6%) - a classic dark mild recipe with chocolate notes predominant.

Beartown: Ambeardextrous* (ABV 3.5%) - dark, rich and full-flavoured.
Black Bear* (ABV 5%) - a rare strong mild with roast and malt flavours and a mellow finish. (Available at the Navigation, Lancashire Hill, Stockport, and Bruin's, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield.)

The LAB: Jet Amber* (ABV 3.6%) - a brand new beer brewed specially for the Challenge. Should be deep red with biscuity malt taste and slight hop character. Available at the Lowes Arms, Denton.

Phoenix: Monkey Town Mild (ABV 3.9%) - a dark, 'modern' mild combining a hoppy freshness with the traditional qualities of a true dark mild.

Pictish: Black Diamond (ABV 3.5%) - dark and tasty, still retaining elements of the trademark Pictish bitterness.

Whim: Magic Mushroom Mild* (ABV 3.8%) - well balanced with a complex mix of flavours and a sweet finish.

Cains: Dark Mild (ABV 3.2%) - smooth, dry and roasty. Superb drink when on form.
Banks's: Mild* (ABV 3.5%) - often sold as plain "Banks's" or "Banks's Original". Amber coloured and well-balanced.

Moorhouses: Black Cat* (ABV 3.4%) - dark and fruit with a bitter, roast character that lingers in the aftertaste. A former *Champion Beer of Britain*. Available at the Sportsman, Hyde.

Marble: Uncut Amber* (ABV 4.7%) - Strong and roasty with a biscuity malt character. The only organic mild on the Challenge. Available at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Road and the Knott, Deansgate.

Greene King: XX Dark Mild* (ABV 3%) - smooth and sweetish with a bitter aftertaste. A rare visitor from Suffolk, available in the Smithfield, City Centre.

Thwaites: Best Mild (ABV 3.3%) - rich and dark with a smooth malty flavour and a pleasant, slightly bitter finish.

Timothy Taylors: Golden Best (ABV 3.5%) - clean tasting and refreshing with a hoppy, bitter finish. A frequent free trade guest beer.

Coach House: Gunpowder Strong Mild (ABV 3.8%) - full bodied and roasty with a malty aroma and full finish. Another free trade regular.

Carlsberg Tetley: Tetley Dark Mild (ABV 3.2%) - fruity and dark. Less distinctive than it was.

Tetley Mild (ABV 3.3%) - well-balanced malt and caramel with good bitterness.

Scottish Courage: Theakstons Mild Ale (ABV 3.5%) - rich and smooth with a creamy body.

Websters: Green Label (ABV 3.2%) - thin and bland. Often sold as a 'budget' bitter.
In addition several pubs on the Mild Challenge will be offering a variety of guest milds during the Challenge.



NEW CALL FOR FULL PINTS

CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale, has supported calls by the National Audit Office for a modernisation of Weights & Measures legislation to stop beer drinkers being served short measures in pubs.

The report, 'Regulation of Weights and Measures' released today, claims that licensees are selling an extra 200 million pints of beer each year than they buy in with a wholesale value of £130 million. CAMRA's own research shows that 9 out of 10 pints sold in British pubs are less than 100% liquid and that 1 in 4 pints are less than the industry's own guidelines of 95% minimum liquid.

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications said, "It's quite clear that new legislation is needed to protect Britain's 15 million beer drinkers from short measures in pubs. The current system of self-regulation has failed and consumers are paying through the nose for beer they are not receiving. We need a law which protects consumers by defining a pint of beer and cider as 100% liquid, making it an offence to serve short measures."

CAMRA has been campaigning for 'an honest pint law' for many years, but current Government proposals for a 95% minimum pint rule will still leave beer drinkers short-changed by millions of pounds every week and will be difficult to enforce.

Mike Benner said, "The National Audit Office report is a welcome step forward and we now need to see action in the form of new legislation which guarantees that beer drinkers get what they pay for - a full liquid pint every time."



SUNDAY
4TH
MAY



~ MELLOR MARCH ~
Helping Cancer causes in our community

10.30 AM
ROYAL
OAK
MELLOR
(0161)
427 1655

MILD CHALLENGE RULES

- 1) When you buy a pint (or a half pint) of cask conditioned mild in a pub supporting the challenge, get this card stamped by a member of the bar staff.
- 2) Only one stamp from each participating pub.
- 3) When this card has stamps from 12 pubs complete the section below and send it to: 'Mild Challenge' 39 Fox Street, STOCKPORT, SK3 9EL, by 13th May 2003; it will be included in the Grand Draw (to be drawn at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival). There are numerous great prizes including 10 trips around Hydes Brewery where you can see how Hydes Mild and Hydes Light are brewed!
- 4) You will be entitled to a free entry ticket (any session but Friday evening) to the 2003 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (29th - 31st May. (CAMRA members get two free pints of mild instead) NB if you want a free entry ticket (or two free pints), please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Tickets will be distributed by 17th May, 2003.
- 5) To join the **Mild Challenge Extra** get stamps from 12 different pubs in 12 different areas and you will also receive a free 'Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge T-shirt'. Alternately, for **Mild Challenge Super**, get 36 stamps from 36 different pubs to receive a free 'Stockport & Manchester Challenge Sweatshirt'.
- 6) To complete **Mild Challenge Ultra**, send in cards containing a stamp from every participating pub, you will also receive a free, special-edition tankard with your T-shirt. Otherwise, only one entry per person please.
- 7) The Mild Challenge runs from 5th April to 11th May 2003 inclusive. All prizes distributed at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 8) The Organisers decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered in to.

This year you can win four pints of mild at the festival by coming up with a slogan of no more than eight words on why you drink mild (NB Entry into the Mild Challenge does NOT require you complete this). The winning slogan will appear on next year's Mild Challenge T-shirt. The winning slogan will be announced at the Festival.

I drink mild because

Complete for the Grand Draw

Name

Address

..... Post Code

Signature Tel. No. (H) (W)

Camra Membership No. (if applicable).....

- I wish to enter the 'Mild Challenge Extra/Super' and claim my free T-shirt/Sweatshirt
- I enclose a SAE for my Stockport Beer & Cider Festival ticket (or two free pints)
- I am interested in joining the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)

SEND TO: 'MILD CHALLENGE' 39 FOX STREET, STOCKPORT, SK3 9EL



**CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE
STOCKPORT &
MANCHESTER
MILD CHALLENGE**

(NB Only one stamp per pub- see overleaf for rules)

Fill this card with stamps from 12 different pubs and you will receive a free ticket to the 2003 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival and entry into a Grand Draw. First Prizes - visits to Hydes Brewery & Sampling Room!
FREE T-SHIRT/SWEATSHIRT BY ENTERING 'CHALLENGE EXTRA/SUPER' (see overleaf)

Sponsored by **Stockport Express**

MILD CHALLENGE

PUBS

<u>AREA</u>	<u>PUB</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BEER</u>	<u>AREA</u>	<u>PUB</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BEER</u>
ADSWOOD	Adswood Hotel	Adswood La W	Robinson's Hatters	HIGH LANE	Horseshoe	Buxton Rd	Robinson's Hatters
	Cross Keys	Adswood Rd	Hydes Mild	HYDE	Sportsman	Mottram Rd	Moorhouse's Black Cat
ASHTON-U-LYNE	Caledonia	Warrington St	Robinson's Hatters / Dark	LANE ENDS	Travellers Call	Glossop Rd, Marple Br.	Robinson's Hatters
	Station	Warrington St	Guest Mild	MANCHESTER	Marble Arch	Rochdale Rd	Marble Uncut Amber
BREDBURY	Arden Arms	Ashton Rd	Robinson's Hatters	CITY CENTRE	Pot o' Beer	New Mount St	Robinson's Hatters Dark
	Horsfield Arms	Ashton Rd	Robinson's Hatters	NORTH	Smithfield Hotel	Swan St	Greene King XX Mild
BURNAGE	Albion	Burnage La	Hydes Light	MANCHESTER	Castle Hotel	Oldham St	Robinson's Hatters & Dark
CHEADLE	Crown	High St	Hydes Mild	CITY CENTRE	Knott	Castle St / Deansgate	Marble Uncut Amber
	Olde Star	High St	Hydes Light	SOUTH	Rain Bar	Gt Bridgewater St	Lees GB Mild
CHEADLE HULME	Church Inn	Ravenoak Rd	Robinson's Hatters	MARPLE	Hatters	Church La	Robinson's Hatters
	Conway	Turves Rd	Hydes Mild	MARPLE ROSEH.	Ring o' Bells	Church La	Robinson's Hatters
CHORLT.-ON-MED.	Mawson	Kincardine Rd	Tetley Dark Mild	MELLOR	Railway	Stockport Rd, Rose Hill	Robinson's Hatters
COMPSTALL	Andrew Arms	George St	Robinson's Hatters	MOSS NOOK	Royal Oak	Longhurst La	Robinson's Hatters
	Northumberland Arms	Compstall Rd	Robinson's Hatters	MOTTRAM	Tatton Arms	Trenchard Dr	Robinson's Hatters
DANE BANK	Dane Bank	Windmill La	Robinson's Hatters	NEW MILLS	White Hart	Market St	Moorhouse's Black Cat
DENTON	Lowes Arms	Hyde Rd	LAB Jet Amber	OFFERTON	Masons Arms	High St	Robinson's Hatters
	Red Lion	Crown Point	Hydes Mild		Emigration	Hall St	Robinson's Hatters
DIDSBURY	Fletcher Moss	William St	Hydes Mild	PORTWOOD	Fingerpost	Hempshaw La	Robinson's Hatters
	Nelson	Barlow Moor Rd	Guest Mild	REDDISH	Railway	Avenue St	Porter's Dark Mild
	Station	Wilmslow Rd	Banks's Original	ROMILEY	Thatched Tavern	Stanhope St	Tetley Dark Mild
EAST DIDSBURY	Gateway	Kingsway	Hydes Light		Friendship	Stockport Rd	Robinson's Hatters
EDGELEY	Church Inn	Moseley St	Robinson's Hatters	RUSHOLME	Railway	Stockport Rd	Robinson's Hatters
	Grapes	Castle St	Robinson's Hatters	SALFORD	Osborne House	Victory St	Hydes Mild
	Olde Vic	Chatham St	Guest Mild	STALYBRIDGE	Crescent	Crescent	Guest Mild
FALLOWFIELD	Bruins	Wilmslow Rd	Beartown Ambeardextrous		Pineapple	Kenworthy St	Robinson's Hatters
GATLEY	Horse & Farrier	Gatley Rd	Hydes Light	STOCKPORT?	Station Buffet Bar	Rassbottom St	Guest Mild
	Priuce of Wales	Gatley Green	Hydes Mild	CENTRE EAST	Arden Arms	Millgate	Robinson's Hatters
GATLEY SOUTH	High Grove	Silverdale Rd	Hydes Mild		Swan with Two Necks	Princes St	Robinson's Hatters & Dark
GLOSSOP	Friendship	Arundel St	Robinson's Hatters	STOCKPORT	Tiviot	Tiviot Dale	Robinson's Hatters
	Old Glove Works	George St	Guest Mild	CENTRE SOUTH	Red Bull	Middle Hillgate	Robinson's Hatters
GORTON	Plough	Hyde Rd	Robinson's Hatters		Royal Mortar	Higher Hillgate	Robinson's Hatters
	Waggon & Horses	Hyde Rd	Holt Mild	STOCKPORT	Unity	Wellington Rd S	Robinson's Hatters
HAZEL GROVE	Bird in Hand	London Rd	Robinson's Hatters	CENTRE WES?	Crown	Heaton La	Guest Mild
EAST	Royal Oak	Commercial Rd	Robinson's Hatters		Pineapple	Heaton La	Robinson's Hatters
HAZEL GROVE	Grapes	London Rd	Robinson's Hatters	STRINES	Royal Oak	Strines Rd	Robinson's Hatters
WEST	Three Bears	Jacksons La	Robinson's Hatters	WHALEY BRIDGE	Goyt Inn	Bridge St	Tetley Mild
HEALD GREEN	Griffin	Wilmslow Rd/Finney La	Holt Mild		Shepherds Arms	Old Rd	Banks's Original
HEATON NORRIS E	Navigation	Lancashire Hill	Beartown Ambeardextrous	WITHINGTON	Victoria	Wilmslow Rd	Hydes Mild
HEATON NORRIS	Moss Rose	Didsbury Rd	Hydes Light	WOODFORD	Davenport Arms	Chester Rd	Robinson's Hatters
WEST	Nursery	Green La	Hydes Mild	WYTHENSHAW	Airport Hotel	Ringway Rd	Robinson's Hatters
HEAVILEY	Blossoms	Buxton Rd	Robinson's Hatters				

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Friday 9 - Saturday 10 May 2003

Rugby Club, Macclesfield.

Over 100 different beers

6 ciders and perry

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Snacks available. Tickets £7.50 from Macc Express,

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Transport available from Waters Green (opposite railway station) for evening sessions.

Sat 12-3pm. Free admission.

Beers lovers session with pub games.

Further details from Steve Leonard 07764 359127.

Email: steven_leonard@totalice.com

47 Drummond Way, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 4XY

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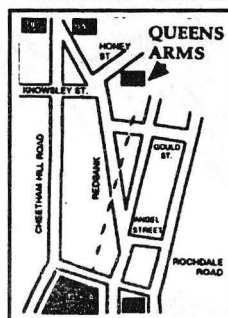
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SAT: BREWERYANA SALE

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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

APRIL 2003

Saturday 5th - Possible brewery visit to Ossett - check/book with Paul Formby (0161 612 0759 - after 6.00pm)

Tuesday 8th - Branch Meeting and AGM: Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Note change of day/date. All please attend this important meeting. Starts 8.00pm.

Thursday 17th - Reddish Stagger: 7.30pm Fir Tree, Gorton Rd; 8.30 Union, Broadstone Rd. Note - not a misprint, this Stagger is being held on a Thursday.

Thursday 24th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Blossoms, Buxton Rd, Heaviley. From 8.00pm.

Advance Notice - Saturday 17th May - Social day out in Burton as guests of the local branch - may involve micro-brewery tour and visit to best of the town's pubs. Minibus will leave Stockport at 10.00am (provisionally). Book with Paul Formby (as above).

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

Monday 7th - Committee Meeting: Hatters Arms, Church Lane, Marple. Starts 8.30pm

Monday 14th - Branch Meeting: Sportsmans Arms, Mottram Road, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm

Saturday 26th - Branch trip to Sair Inn and Riverhead breweries.



APRIL 2003

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:

Sunday 13th - Walk from Cat and Fiddle to Kettleshulme. Meet Macc bus station 11.20 am latest for bus 11.30 to Cat and Fiddle, arrive 11.55 just in time for a pint in this improved pub, walk to Kettleshulme appx 6 miles, time for plenty at the Swan and the Bull, bus back to Macc at 17.15. Please wear sensible footwear, picnic, etc etc, and please let me know if you are coming. More details form Dave Hasler (01625 572640).

Monday 18th - Campaigns Meeting: Victoria Sports and Social Club, Holmes Chapel. Starts 8.00pm

Friday/Saturday 9/10 May: Macclesfield Beer Festival. Rugby Club, Macclesfield. Over 100 different beers, 6 ciders and perry.

The Trafford & Hulme Branch covers the Borough of Trafford, that part of Manchester west of the M56/ Princes Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. They have notified us of the following events:

Thursday 3rd: Branch Meeting at The Old Market Tavern, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm

Thursday 24th - City crawl and social; meet in The City Arms, Kennedy Street, 8.00pm

Regional Under-26 Event

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To Do: Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

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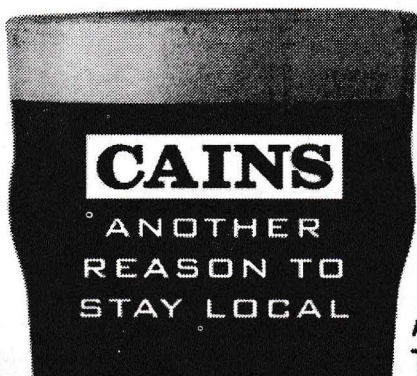
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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

APRIL '98

Most of the front page was devoted to CAMRA's continuing campaign for fair beer duty for British drinkers. This had been prompted by the Chancellor's decision to increase excise duty on beer by one penny from January 1999 - this would result in the price of a pint increasing by two pence or more. The French brewers and the Calais beer warehouses would be celebrating, whilst millions of pints of cheap French beer would continue to flood into the country. It had been estimated that 13% of beer brewed in France was being brought over to the UK by personal shoppers and smugglers. Unless there were substantial cuts in duty, the level of cross-border shopping was likely to increase from 1 in 20 pints then to 1 in 5 by 2006.

★ ★ ★ ★

A recent issue of Opening Times had reported on the launch of the Cask Marque scheme, which aimed to improve the quality of real ale in Britain's pubs. Four brewers, all with a strong cask ale tradition (Adnams, Greene King, Marston's and Morlands) had formed a working party to examine the reasons for the decline in cask ale sales in previous years. A pilot scheme had been set up, which would require licensees to be accredited, and then a team of assessors would visit outlets before making the award. The scheme would cost money, which would be equally funded by both the retailer and the brewers, and re-testing would be carried out at least twice a year. (In 2002m accreditations increased by 20%, to nearly 2,500. In addition, Intebrew's decision to join the scheme guarantees that the industry's cask ale quality initiative will at least double in size in the next two years).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

'A Pint Too Far?' was the heading for an item on the breathalyser - the original limit of 80mg had remained unaltered since the legislation was introduced in 1967, so that was 31 year's without any change. But now the government had put forward their proposals to reduce the legal alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg. This probably meant from approximately two pints of ordinary strength beer to one. The intention was to also introduce a mandatory driving ban for anyone caught exceeding the new, lower limit. Barring a major upset, these measures would probably be introduced within a matter of months. (But now, in 2003, another five years have passed, and there has still been no alteration).

★ ★ ★

Finally, some pub news. Another three Hogsheads were in the pipeline - on Deansgate, on Oxford Road near the MRI and in the so-called 'Clock Tower' development on Wilmslow Road in Didsbury. Wetherspoon had obtained planning permission to convert the King's Hall buildings in Cheadle Hulme into a pub, and it was due to open the following June. Winter's Wine Bar, Underbank, Stockport, was bought by Joseph Holt the previous year. The clock had been restored and it was due to open as the town centre's first Holt's pub.



The Not So Good Pub Guide

I was leafing through a new pub guide that, while very good in its way, struck me by its remorselessly positive nature. All those wide ranges of guest beers, varied menus of imaginative home-made food, cosy and comfortable interiors that have been opened out a little and warm welcomes for children if dining became a touch cloying after a while. But often the pub visits that stick in the mind do so for completely different reasons. So here are a few ideas for alternative pub guides that might lead you to somewhere a little less predictable.

1. **The Quiet Pint** - pubs with no piped music. Hang on, that's been done already in real life. Only problem is, if you're not careful it ends up as a long list of Wetherspoons. But a total absence of piped music is often a sign of quality in independently run pubs.
 2. **Grown-Up Pubs** - where an over-18s only rule is strictly enforced, and screaming babies and toddlers running around in circles won't get in the way of adults having a quiet drink and possibly a relaxing meal. There might be some serious possibilities in this one too.
 3. **Pubs for Drinkers** - there's nothing to eat apart from crisps and nuts, so you can enjoy a few pints and a chat in an environment free of the rattle of cutlery and smell of chip-fat. The country pubs section contains some especially interesting establishments
 4. **Pub Pets of Character** - here you can find the pubs that still have a goldfish tank in the corner of the lounge. Special sections for elderly, obese, asthmatic labradors and bad-tempered cats that park themselves on the best seat near the fire, give you a vicious scratch if you come anywhere near and promptly go back to sleep again
 5. **The Grumpy Landlord Guide**. Modern customer care skills can go hang - here are the people who still treat pubs as their own private fiefdom where customers are at best grudgingly tolerated and choice insults abound
 6. **Classic Pubs of the 50s and 60s** - modernist architecture is now at the nadir of its popularity, and these highly distinctive designs are deeply unfashionable and an endangered species. Enjoy them now before they're swept away by fake Victorian tat or turned into drive-thru McDonalds
 7. **Pubs for Collectors** - the prized displays of foreign bank notes, matchbox labels and porcelain figurines assembled by old-school landlords have largely disappeared in favour of "books by the yard", but they can still be found if you know where to look
 8. **Britain's Best Outside Toilets** - once a classic feature of the pub experience, especially in midwinter, but now increasingly falling victim to the nesh modern trend for warmth and comfort
 9. **Pubs for Pensioners** - where nobody is ever seen drinking straight from the bottle or wearing a baseball cap the wrong way round, and you'll feel at home if you want to discuss how you never had to lock your door back in the 1950s and why they ought to bring back National Service
 10. **Real Pub Snacks** - forget your Walkers crisps and KP nuts, here you can get such traditional delicacies as pickled eggs, three-day old meat pies in a glass case at the end of the bar, and genuine pork scratchings with hairs still attached
- Somewhat I can't see many of these ideas getting to the publishing stage - but they certainly might lead you to some fascinating drinking experiences.

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In Chapel En Le Frith, the Royal Oak, as promised by the incoming landlord back in November, has now added Burtonwood Top Hat as a regular beer, alongside the usual Burtonwood Bitter. My visit on a Monday night, mid evening, early in March saw several diners, and an active pub in general. With Bed & Breakfast on offer, lunchtime snacks 12-3, evening meals 6-9 (with varying choice of specials), it seems to be building trade. Worth calling in if in the area. The Dog & Partridge at Bridgemont is an outlet for Cains Dark Mild. The other beers are often Taylors Landlord, Old Speckled Hen and Tetley Bitter.

In Glossop, the Globe on High Street West now sells Kelham Island beers as well as Pictish and Lees Best Bitter. My recent visits have seen Pale Rider, Easy Rider and Best Bitter at various times, with Pictish supplying Brewers Gold and their seasonal beers as they rotate around. The music here goes from strength to strength, with folk now established on a Monday evenings (a Pub feature will follow in a future edition).

The Jodrell Arms at Whaley Bridge, next to the station, reopened in January, after a lengthy closure, with Tetley Bitter on offer. No information however as to the operators who are running it. Also whilst in Whaley Bridge, the Shepherds Arms has Hydes Jekylls Gold currently as a guest beer.

Wetherspoons are planning another pub in our Branch area, this time in Stalybridge, the site I believe is not far from Tesco's.

Just out of our area now, over the Snake Pass, at Strines, the Strines Inn had a pleasant choice on a visit there in the middle of March after a walk around the surrounding hills, on a lovely day. Kelham Island Pale Rider and the Belhaven St Andrews Ale were both excellent, no-one from our party trying the Banks's Bitter or the Marston's Pedigree. However, both the ones we tried were in excess of £2.00 per pint. Still, this lonely country pub in excellent walking country is of a high quality for beers and food and it also has Bed & Breakfast accommodation. This is a current Good Beer Guide entry and a genuine free house.

Whilst on prices, way out of our area, in early March, I found myself in a walking party doing the Nantle Ridge in Snowdonia in awful weather. The highlight was coming down to the Cwellyn Arms at Rhyd Ddu, again a Good Beer Guide entry 2003. Not being a choice of pubs in this remote hamlet, we were astonished that the beers, though a good selection, were on sale at the eyebrow raising prices of either £2.40 (for Brakspears Bitter and Wye Valley Forgemans Mild) or £2.50 for Cottage Wicked Hound, Cottage Southern Bitter, Brains SA, Dorothy Goodbodys Winter Tipple and Brains St Davids Ale (Oh, nearly forgot the Worthington Bitter at £2.00 pint). Nothing wrong with the pub, the facilities, the ambience, coal fire, flagged floors, accommodation that was on offer (at the pub and at a nearby bunkhouse) just the prices.

In Strines (near Marple), the Royal Oak has now been taken over by Jamie Moon, following his father's death at the turn of the year. Next door, the two adjoining cottages, presumably owned by Robinson's, have been demolished and a kitchen extension is believed to be planned along with an outside drinking area.

Having lived and worked in Indonesia for the past 18 years, Keith Graney has finally returned home to the north west and taken over as licensee of the railway, Whaley Bridge. He will be running the Robinson's pub with wife Tarini who he met while living abroad. At the Railway, Keith is already offering a very traditional welcome to his customers and reports that trade is increasing since he took over. "I place great value in the quality of the beer that is served and have already received some very supportive comments. I am proving that there is a strong market for well kept cask conditioned beer in the area, and I would like to establish a reputation for serving the best at the Railway," says Keith.

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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



One break from tradition, however, will be the home cooked Indonesian food that will soon be introduced as part of the lunchtime menu. The spicy dishes will be freshly prepared by Tarini and it is hoped they will become a firm favourite with customers.

Terry Devine gets in touch to tell us that his family purchased The Rising Sun, Stockport Rd Mossley at the end of October 2002. His son Stephen Devine is the landlord being given his licence by Tameside Magistrates when he was still aged 20. His mother Raisa does the bookkeeping and the ordering of soft drinks and snacks. As a family they are very keen to remain a 'CAMRA pub' and have many CAMRA members visiting each week. They always have Timothy Taylor Landlord, Black Sheep and Tetleys on sale plus three other guest cask ales. Recently these have been Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Hop Back Crop Circle, Batemans, Brakspear, Archers Golden, Shaws of Dukinfield, Bills O' Jacks Greenfield brewery and many more besides. Since February Stephen has decided to try and alternate the two local micro brews on one of the guest pumps. He has had Shaws Best Bitter and their I.P.A. and from Peter Percival's Greenfield Brewery, Bills O' Jacks, Greenfield Ale and Dobcross Bitter. Custom has definitely increased even though this is usually a quiet time for the trade. Stephen has changed his opening times to start from 4.00pm Monday to Friday (used to be 6.00) and 12 noon at weekends.

HIGH PEAK BRANCH WALK 2003

The fifth Annual Branch Walk takes place on Saturday June 7th, as usual a new route within the Branch area, with a new Charity as beneficiaries of the event.

This year, Members and friends (that could be you!!) are assembling at Ramseys Bar, in the Buckingham Hotel, Buxton (Good Beer Guide 2003) for an 11am start. The route ascends through the Cavendish Golf Course, down through the Goyt Valley, up to Pym's Chair, across to Windgather Rocks, before descending to Kettleshulme where the Bulls Head and the Swan are the lunchtime stops.

After lunch, with the walk half completed, the route is more gentle, taking in parts of the High Peak Canal, River Goyt and Sett Valley Trail (and a few more selected pubs), finishing in Hayfield at the Kinder Lodge pub.

The Charities this year are the Glossop Mountain Rescue and the Edale Mountain Rescue crews, who between them cover most of the Dark Peak area, including the Kinder, Bleaklow and Black Hill areas. The teams are all volunteers who turn out on rescues, often in appalling weather conditions, all year round. With many Branch members being active walkers, it is likely to be a popular charity. Anyone wishing to take part, please contact Frank Wood on 01457 865426 or 07960074996 (evenings).

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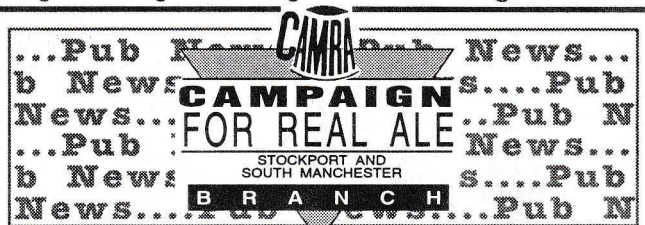
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Enterprise Inns have put a clutch of pubs in the Opening Times area on the market. The Meridian, Bollington can be yours for £175,000 and the Trafalgar, Ashton, comes in at £70,000. The rest are priced at 'offers invited' which presumably translates as 'please take these pubs off our hands'. Included here are the Abbey Hey Hotel, Gorton; Bar One, Ashton; Cheshire Ring and Talbot, Hyde; Church Hotel and Royal Oak, Droylsden; Church Inn, Audenshaw; Huntsman, Rusholme; Nelson, Rusholme; Pinnacle, Denton. Some of these pubs undoubtedly have potential in the right hands and might make suitable tied houses for some of our local micros. Also up for sale is a long lease on the Aces in Gorton at just £125,000 plus VAT.

In Stockport, the Bridge Street Wine Bar (ex-Briarlys, ex-Castlewood etc etc) is once again open but sadly has no real ale available.

Also staying firmly in the keg-only camp is the Jolly Crofter in Edgeley. A impressive refurbishment has seen the pub transformed inside and out by owners Pubmaster. What a shame they couldn't have worked the same magic on the beer range as the pub did in fact sell cask beer for years until only quite recently.

Nearby, the Grapes, Edgeley, has been redecorated and carpeted inside - and very good it looks, too. Additional shelves have been put up in the lounge to display even more of landlady Sandra George's teapot collection! Hatters and Best Bitter are the beers in the Robinson's house and always in good nick, too.

Staying in Edgeley, the Church has installed a third handpump. This dispenses the popular Cumbria Way, which now joins the always well-kept Hatters and Best Bitter on the bar. Indeed, since installing this third handpump, the pub has been given another two - raising the prospect of five cask beers ultimately available as trade picks up.

The Davnport Arms in Woodford has picked up yet another CAMRA award, this time from the neighbouring Macclesfield Branch of CAMRA. This is their annual Jim Bowden Award, presented to a pub which epitomises all that Jim (a former branch stalwart who sadly passed away a few years ago) looked for in a pub - no music, a traditional and comfortable atmosphere and, above all, superbly kept beer. We'll have more details about the award and the presentation date in a future issue. Meanwhile congratulations to all at the pub.

Local CAMRA member Paul Watson has just returned from a holiday in Madeira and brings news of a brewpub on the marina at Funchal. It's called The Beerhouse. Only one beer is brewed by the Munich sourced brewplant, a 5% (approx) beer very similar to a German Weissbeer. Price is a very reasonable 2.5E for a generous 1/2 litre, a far superior brew to the universally available Coral lager.

Windsors on Castle Street, Edgeley re-opened on January 24th after a two year period of closure. During that period much vandalism had taken place - wiring damaged, doors removed, glass smashed and more. Owners, Unique, have done a grand job in restoring the pub's looks, which is very smart and clean. Tasteful part-panelling, mirrors and a lively colour scheme brighten the place no end. Cask ale has made a return too, in the form of Boddies bitter. The lady in charge is Christine Elam who at one time ran the nearby Greyhound and has since had various pubs in places as far afield as Oldham and Liverpool. Good to report a maturer clientele is returning, it's popular with football fans too and there's live entertainment every Friday. A weekday happy-hour runs from noon Monday till 7pm on a Friday.

MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

In The City

Well, it's been a quiet month in the City Centre but the big news is that, as I feared last month, brewing does seem to have stopped at the **Lass O'Gowrie**. This year would see the 20th anniversary of this brewpub, making it one of the longest-lasting of the 'new wave' brewpubs that set up in the first real ale revival of the early 1980s. OK, most of the beer wasn't to everyone's taste but lately some very tasty beer indeed was produced. You can still get Lass Ale on the bar – and a very good pint it was, too, when I called – but I'm told it's now produced by Titanic Brewery.

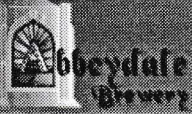
So, what's gone wrong? I've not had chance to talk to the new-ish licensee, but I was told by the bar staff that it's down to some health and safety regulations and problems with the cellar, where the brewery is located, having stone walls – "it should all be stainless steel". Now I don't know if that's the official line but if it is, I'm here to tell you that's a load of old cobblers. Luckily, the plant seems still to be in place so perhaps we haven't had the last Lass O'Gowrie beer yet. For the record, though, it's only fair that I also report that the pub does still sell a good range of guest beers.

Also selling guest beers is the **Salisbury**, next to Oxford Road Station. The pub was refurbished rather well the other year and despite my worst fears, the guest beers have remained. Regular beers appear to be Theakstons Best and OP, Courage Directors and Greene King Old Speckled Hen. When I called, these were supplemented by Hydes Copper Hopper, with a further blank handpump indicating that a second guest may also be offered at times. Next door is the **Thirsty Scholar** and this rings the changes as well. There was just Moorhouses Pendle Witch when I called, with the clip on a second handpump reversed and a third blank, Bar/cellarman supremo Jimmy, at city centre **Marble Arch** informs me that up to six differing milds will be showcased at the pub during the Mild Challenge period. It is still unsure as to whether Marble's UnCut Amber will be amongst those.

Out In The Sticks

I have been out and about in the suburbs, though. In Didsbury I was disappointed to see the **Barleycorn** still keg but greater shocks were in store. In the **Four In Hand** on Palatine Road I encountered my first ever keg Pedigree. Yes – keg Pedigree! Luckily Marstons Bitter and Banks's Bitter remain on handpump and very enjoyable they were too. As if this wasn't enough, a visit to the **Railway** on Lapwing Lane left me reeling as I experienced my first £2+ pint of Holt's – and in a Holt's tied house, to boot! OK, it was the new seasonal, Blackwell Bitter, which was presumably priced as a 'guest' beer. But even so – I ask you! The Railway, excellent in many respects, still also blots its copybook with the gassed-up 'cask lager' on handpump and despite stories I hear to the contrary, I've still not seen anyone drink the stuff. Across the road, the Metropolitan was packed, as usual, and I see there has been a change in the beer range since my last visit, with the three cask beers being Pedigree, Taylor's Landlord and Black Sheep Bitter. Staying in Didsbury, Paul Saxton at the **Station** has introduced cask Mansfield Dark Mild for the duration of the Mild Challenge. It may be on longer than that if sales are good. I found it in super condition on a late March visit.

I also popped into the Victoria in Withington where the Hydes Copper Hopper was in superb form. Not surprisingly, the pub has gained a second place in Hydes' Bar & Cellar competition – and for the second year running as well. Given that the Wheatsheaf in Lymm appears to have a permanent reservation in the top spot, this is no mean achievement.



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