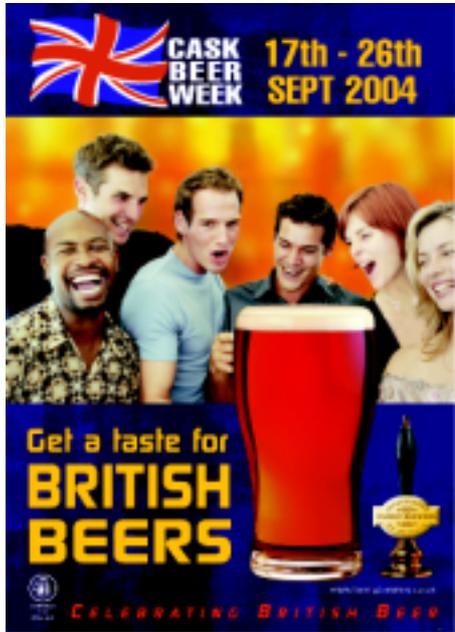


The FREE CAMRA Regional Magazine covering Central, East & South Manchester; Stockport;Tameside; Trafford; N.E. Cheshire & Macclesfield

## REAL ALE BOUNCES BACK LOCAL BREWERS 'ARE OVERTAKING NATIONALS'

**T**he true importance of real ale to the pub trade has been revealed for the first time in a joint report from CAMRA, the Independent Family Brewers of Britain and the Society of Independent Brewers, launched shortly before the same organisation jointly promote Cask Beer Week.



'Real Cask Beer – A Route to Success', which was launched at last month's Great British Beer Festival, reveals that cask beer from independent brewers is the fastest growing sector of the on-trade beer market. For while overall on-trade beer sales are declining at 2.2 per cent a year, output of real ale from independent brewers is growing at 5.4 per cent. As a result, the independents are overtaking the nationals in real ale production. Last year, says the report, the gap between them was just 766 barrels. And given the independent sector's rate of growth, it should command more than 50 per cent of the 2.9 million barrel real ale market in 2004. The report claims that official statistics understate the amount of real ale sold by about 17 per cent. But more crucially, real ale's often-quoted 7 per cent share of the total market hides its importance to the pub trade.

Real ale sales are stable or growing in 90 per cent of pubs that stock it, where it accounts for more than one in seven of all pints sold. Contrary to received wisdom, its popularity is growing among under-25s. And pubs can score by choosing beer from nearby regionals or micros: two-thirds of pub regulars believe that at least one beer in every pub should be locally brewed. The report shows that stocking cask ale creatively is a vital traffic-builder for publicans, who can make a name for themselves by listing interesting beers from local and regional brewers, running beer festivals, offering free tasting samples, and holding regional beer and food promotions.

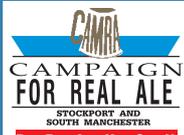
Speaking at the launch of the report, CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "The message is that cask is not underperforming. It's clear that the independents are performing exceptionally well by concentrating on cask. "Consumers are increasingly moving towards local food produced in time-honoured ways, and cask beer fits the bill perfectly."

Fuller's director John Roberts said: "The IFBB has believed for a long time that regional beers are increasingly contributing to an upsurge in cask consumption, and this report bears out our belief. Through our initiatives such as Cask Beer Week the IFBB aims to promote cask beer and the message is getting through."

SIBA commercial director Nick Stafford added: "This proves that our national drink is increasingly popular with consumers – where they are allowed to drink it."



Wide ranges of micro & regional brewed ales may become an increasingly common sight.

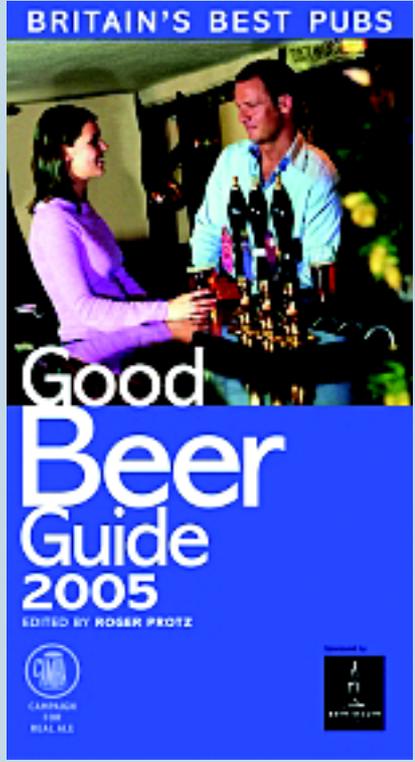


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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE  
STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER  
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## GOOD BEER GUIDE 2005

CAMRA's 2005 Good Beer Guide, the 32<sup>nd</sup> edition, is launched on 15 September and promises to be the biggest and the best yet.



All the pub and brewery entries will be in two-colour for the first time making the book a very attractive purchase. Not only that there are fully revised pub entries (with one third of the 2004 entries not making it this time round) and a unique and expanded Breweries Section that lists every brewery that produces cask beer. This bumper 830-page guide retails at a very reasonable £13.99

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Iccle Jimmy Ale 4.6%  
 eXSB 5.5% Blue Bullet 4.5%  
 FlatbaC 4.2% (Beer of the Festival, Stockport, 2003,  
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# PUB OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER

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		

2004



**The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for September is the New Victoria, Stockport Road, Longsight.**

At first sight the New Victoria is an unexceptional inner-city estate pub, and for many years this was the role it filled. Owned by the unlamented Greenalls, it was a pub with its ups and downs, including many downs and this ended in a period of closure. The New Vic was then bought by an obscure Yorkshire company, 'RBNB', that runs the Oakwell micro-brewery at Barnsley. The company, which maintains an air of some secrecy, owns about 30 or so pubs in the north and midlands and runs its own brewery based in the premises of the original Barnsley Brewery, closed by John Smiths in 1976.

Since reopening the New Victoria, the pub has been obviously well-run, most recently under current licensee Simon Prime who took over nine months ago. It is now a clean, comfortable and pleasant place to have a pint or two, although it can be lively enough on occasions. And this is the other thing - in an area where decent pubs, and particularly decent beer, are thin on the ground, the New Victoria sells two cask beers. Both are 3.8% ABV with the main seller being the Oakwell Bitter, a tasty easy-drinking beer, and this is often accompanied by the dark Old Tom, a mild-style ale. Old Tom has in fact been 'rested' for the summer months although it will be making a reappearance on our presentation night.

The New Victoria is Simon's first pub although he has long had an interest in the licensed trade and has in fact been a member of CAMRA for 20-odd years. He tells us that cask sales are doing very well with the bitter being the pub's best seller. In short, this pub is something of an oasis in a relative desert and deserves every support and encouragement for what it is doing. In recognition of this, our Pub of the Month award will be presented to Simon on Thursday, 23 September from 8.00pm onwards.

*The New Victoria is on the A6 and as such is well served by the 192 bus service, with stops in both directions just a couple of minutes from the pub.*

## OPENING TIMES ISSUE 245

**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](mailto:johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com) Adverts or photos should be "hard copy" 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).



# Facer's Brewery



Northern County Superb Session Ale 3.8%	Crabtree Mid-Range Bitter 4.3%	Landslide Premium Strength 4.9%
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And coming soon to a quality cask-ale house near you, the latest in the Greats of English Literature series, a tonic for the autumn months inspired by the H.G.Wells novel of the same name:

## Tono-Bungay

3.9%

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**IN THE EDITORS' VIEW..**

As we report this month, tales of cask ale's demise have been somewhat exaggerated it seems. We now have reliable statistics to show that cask's weakness has been greatly overstated. I have long thought that the annual figures produced by AC Neilson on behalf of the British Beer & Pub Association were a distortion of the true picture and so it has proved to be. Strip out the national brewers, and cask ale volumes are in fact rising. Indeed could we be on the verge of another cask ale boom? There are certainly some interesting straws in the wind. A recent industry survey by *The Publican* trade paper revealed that almost two-thirds of licensees considered cask ale important to their business. Carlsberg UK has embarked on a promotion of cask Tetley Bitter in its Yorkshire heartland. And the MD of Avebury Taverns has written a paean of praise to cask ale in community pubs and wonders why more don't sell it. Of course while all this is welcome news the big question is do we really want a cask ale boom of the type we got in the late 80s? What happened then was that handpumps appeared all over the place - often in pubs that couldn't (or shouldn't have been allowed to) sell it. The result was too much indifferent beer and we know what happened next - enter smoothflow. So yes, let's see more cask in more pubs. But at the same time let's also make sure it's quality cask looked after by keen and interested licensees. Quality over quantity must be the by-word this time around.

★★★★★

Congratulations to JW Lees in winning Gold for their GB Mild in this year's Champion Beer of Britain contest. Greater Manchester remains one of the few parts of the country where cask mild is reasonably easy to come by and it is good to see one of our dedicated local producers of the style being honoured in this way.

*John Clarke*

**OPENING TIMES LETTERS**

From Dennis Jones, Woodley:

*Curmudgeon makes several valid points in his rant against pub grub but he must be challenged on a couple of them. Too English? In the last 12 months, without leaving Greater Manchester, I've eaten French, Italian, Indian, Caribbean and Spanish—all in normal pubs. Perhaps Curmudgeon should get out more.*

*Separate dining rooms? If my partner and I go out à deux, we'll eat in the main pub. If we go out with our friends (say, six to twelve of us) then a separate room is very useful.*

*Children's portions? A great idea except that the person in the kitchen has no idea whether the child is three or thirteen. On several occasions my three-year old granddaughter has left more than she's eaten.*

*But what I dislike most about pub meals in some places isn't even mentioned by Curmudgeon. This is what I've dubbed 'pretentious adjectival diarrhoea'. You've seen the sort of thing I mean. 'Oven baked haricots in a sauce of sun-drenched love apples served on a lightly crisped bed of browned ciabatta.' Beans on toast to thee and me. Nothing's grilled anymore, it's flame seared. We don't have gravy, it's all jus and underdone vegetables are foisted on us as 'al dente'. I recently went to a pub a couple of miles south west of Stockport centre (I daren't be more specific!) where the description of each dish had so much waffle that the full menu was spread over four separate blackboards, each one in a different area. It took so long to locate and read all four that by the time I'd finished reading the fourth I'd forgotten what was on the first.*

*There are great pubs all over the place, offering delicious and imaginative food at reasonable prices. All you have to do is find them!*

**OPENING TIMES ADVERTISING**

ADVERTISING RATES FROM JANUARY 2004: 1/8 page (60mm x 85mm): £30 (£60 colour); 1/4 page (120mm x 85mm): £55 (£90 colour); 1/2 page (horiz: 174mm x 120mm; vert: 250mm x 85mm): £90 (£150 colour); Full page (175mm x 240mm) £150 (£250 colour). Surcharges may apply for back page. Generous discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design origination usually free of charge unless large costs involved. Ring 0161 477 1973 for details. Artwork should be submitted as hard copy (positive bromide) or PC COMPATIBLE (NOT MAC) \*.jpg, \*.eps, or \*.tiff AND you MUST include hard copy back-up). For colour adverts please ring for details first.

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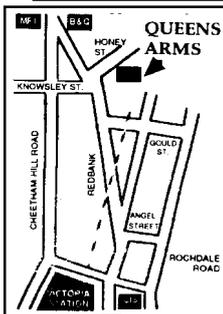
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# CASK BEER WEEK

This year's Cask Beer Week runs from 17-26 September and our local family brewers will again be joining forces to promote the cause of cask conditioned real ales.



Cask Beer Week was started in 2000 by the Independent Family Brewers of Britain to promote their members' ales and has grown into a nationwide celebration of proper beer supported by many companies and organisations – including CAMRA. The main publicity push this year will be an invitation-only event to be held at Holt's Ape & Apple (John Dalton St, Manchester) from 12 noon. The four Manchester family brewers, Hydes', Holt's, JW Lees and Robinson's will be joined by Thwaites and Jennings in an event which will involve both a presentation on the cask ale industry and tasting notes on various beers and suitable food accompaniments.

Apart from this most of the local family brewers will be concentrating on in-house promotions. However, Hydes' are also planning a series of pub-based beer festivals to mark this year's Cask Beer Week, running from 20 September. The pubs will fall into three bands. Some will sell their usual range plus one beer from an extra range including Fit As A Fiddle, Over The Moon, Manchester's Finest and 4X strong ale. Others will sell their standard range plus all of the extra beers while those in the third group will sell their standard range, all of the extra beers plus guest beers from selected micro and other brewers.

### FAMILY FAVOURITES

More news of seasonal beers from the local family brewers.

**Robinson's** – look out for Kick Off (4.2% ABV). This is described as a "full bodied light mahogany coloured beer" with "an a 11 - malt recipe for added

fullness and flavour matched by a generous addition of hops for bitterness and aroma". There will be added ginger, too, for an extra 'kick'.

**JW Lees** – This month will see the launch of an autumn seasonal, Ruddy Glow (4.5% ABV) described as a "rich ruby coloured beer, brewed with a high percentage of crystal malt to give a sweet taste and a tantalising hint of liquorice". Pubs such as Rain Bar in the City Centre and the ever-excellent Lloyds Hotel in Chorlton will have this. Lees are also celebrating winning a gold award for their GB Mild in its class in the Champion Beer of Britain competition held at last month's Great British Beer Festival. This excellent 3.5% brew has a very loyal following although in common with most milds, sales have declined

in recent years. The brewery hopes that this win may help them give the beer a bit of a promotional push. It's been a good year for Lees on the awards front as head brewer Giles Dennis has also been named as Brewer of the Year by the all-party Parliamentary Beer Group.

**Hydes** – the new craft ale out this month is Over The Moon (4.5% ABV), another autumnal ale described as a "special warming seasonal ale, brewed with just a hint of natural berry juice".

**Holt's** – last month the new, award winning Humdinger went into over 200 Tesco stores. The 3.5% ABV bottled beer is available for an initial period of three months and retails at £1.39 a bottle.



Keith Sheard, Barrie Kelly, Richard Kershaw, Tom Dempsey and Denis Maddocks, celebrating HumDinger, winner of the Tesco Beer Challenge

It is also available in the Holt's estate – look out for it if you haven't tried it, as it is a remarkably flavoursome little number.

**Cains** - this Liverpool-based family brewer, trading locally at the Gothic in Gatley, also has an autumnal beer out in September. This is the 4.5% ABV Cains Red, described as "A full-flavoured ale with a unique ruby red colour derived from the addition of natural berry juice. Flavoursome and highly quaffable."

### MICRO MAGIC

As usual there's plenty of activity at our growing number of local micro brewers. Apologies by the way for still not covering the new ventures in Wigan and Oldham. These will definitely feature next time.

**Facers** – Loll's Summer Love has now finished as a seasonal beer. The winner of the Loll's Summer Love competition was Mike Robertson of Eccles. Mike's name was first out of the hat from the

correct entries, the answer being, by the way, that Loll's Summer Love referenced 'Cider with Rosie' by Laurie Lee. The 'Greats' special for autumn, available mid September, will be 'Tono-Bungay', named after the H.G.Wells novel of the same name. Tono Bungay tells the story of an entrepreneur who devises a sensational tonic to cure all ills. Though not guaranteed as a cure-all, the beer will be made using a carefully selected blend of hops to give a mellow fruity autumn-berry glow, so it should at least cheer the drinker up a bit! Last year, Dave hoped to brew a 'green hopped' one-off beer using freshly harvested non-dried (hence 'green') hops, but the green hops got lost on their journey from Pixley Berry hop farm in Worcestershire to Manchester and arrived two weeks after despatch as a putrid black mess. Ever the promoter of quality, Dave abandoned the idea. This year, provided the harvest in the extensive Facer hop gardens comes up to scratch, he'll try again although the beer hasn't yet been named.

**Phoenix** – as usual lots of interesting things happening up at Heywood. The 4.7% Struggling Monkey is out now as is White Tornado, the 4.3% clear wheat beer. This has been brought out one month early due to demand. Brewer Tony Allen is also experimenting with a series of three IPAs



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 12-3, 6-9.30 Fri; 12-9.30 Sat; 12-8 Sun



inspired by the American craft brewing scene. All will be 4.6% ABV and be extremely hoppy, with the most popular of the three being added to the permanent Phoenix range. Already out is East Coast IPA, made paradoxically with English hops, and next up will be West Coast IPA, this one being made exclusively with American hops. The third beer in the series hasn't yet been named or formulated.



**Millstone** – the 5% True Grit is now planned for October but out now is the new Autumn. Leaves, a 4.3% copper-coloured bitter beer made using Cascade hops. Next month Millstone celebrates its first anniversary, as does the Ashton Arms in Oldham – the two are therefore coming together and on Saturday 23 October the pub will be having a Millstone night.

**Greenfield** – new out is Viaduct Bitter a 4.2% light and hoppy beer. Still selling well are Uppermill (4.2% dark amber beer) and Dovestones (4%, light and golden) but the 4.1% Delph Donkey has been a real success. It's a light golden bitter with citrus notes and has taken off 'big style' the brewery tells us.

**Shaws** – still going strong up in Dukinfield with six beers sent to the Glossop beer festival at the beginning of this month. New out are Brewers Gold, a 4.2% pale and hoppy beer made just using Brewers Gold hops, and also Howard Town Ale a 4.1% malty bitter, brewed for the Glossop beer festival but also available to the free trade.



**Bank Top** – the new beer from Bolton is Pavilion Pale Ale a 4.5% hoppy beer made using Cascade and First Gold Hops.

This beer will replace the darker Cliffhanger. There will also be a special beer made for the forthcoming beer festival at the Howcroft in Bolton. Most of the details hadn't been finalised when we contacted the brewery although it will be brewed using Amarillo hops, an increasingly popular American variety.

**Boggart Hole Clough** – the latest beer here is Pioneer a 4.5% pale and hoppy brew. Other beers may be in the pipeline.



**Leyden** – the 3.8% Balacalava is out now. This uses Brewers Gold

hops and a new variety known as 'Pam'. The beer is copper coloured, malty and fruity, and is planned to be one of a series of Crimean War themed brews. Next up will be a 3.8% dark beer. A new fermenter has been installed to take the brew-length up to six barrels. 33 branches of Tesco are also taking a bottled version of the 4.6% Raglan Sleeve.

**Pictish** – the special for September is Staddle Stone, described as "a premium tawny coloured ale with a ruby red hue. A robust hop aroma precedes a full bodied malty taste with caramel notes and a dry bitter finish". The 4.3% Honey Ale is also available again and a new batch of the fabulous 6% Blue Moon will also be out this month. The new recipe Celtic warrior, a touch lighter and hoppier than before, is going very well with good reports so far.

**Bazens'** – Icicle Jimmy (4.6%) is going so well that it has been rebrewed. At the end of this month a 6% mild, Wild Boar,

will make an appearance. This will be a dark reddish beer, slightly lighter than the best selling Black Pig. It has been commissioned by Croydon CAMRA as a festival special but will also be generally available to the free trade. Richard Bazen tells us that Blue Bullet and Flatbac are also selling very well at the moment.

## NWAF ON!



The CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival - a major celebration of Milds, Bitters, Porters, Stouts AND, of course, Winter Ales, returns to Manchester (New Century Hall) from 26 to 29 January 2005. More will be revealed in OT each month as the build up to the big event gets under way....



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Wobbly Bob  
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Navy  
Gold



2002  
Wobbly Bob  
Gold



2004  
Wobbly Bob  
Bronze



**STOCKPORT SUPPING**

**P**UB BEER FESTIVALS seem all the rage at the moment. Apparently **The Beer Seller**, a major supplier of cask ales, has reported that if their orders are anything to go by, in-house festivals are running at more than twice last year's level.

Locally, the **Duke of York** in Romiley ran a very enjoyable event over the bank holiday weekend. Fourteen very well-chosen guest beers complemented the five (yes, five, including Adnams) regularly available. All served in the upstairs room from a cleverly set-up temperature controlled stillage, both range and quality were very impressive, I thought. It was difficult to pick a favourite but I found Hampshire Ironside, Oakham Bishop's Farewell, RCH PG Steam, Osset Silver King and Moor Peat Porter all very enjoyable. Congratulations to all involved - I understand local CAMRA man Anthony Meynell had a major role in choosing and looking after the beers, and Anthony and dad Dave ran the bar on the Saturday when I called.



In the pipeline are a series of in-house festivals run by Hydes' to mark Cask Beer Week, which runs from 20 September. I know that the **Horse & Farrier** in Gatley will be running one such festival and I plan to get out there, and also have a mooch round the rest of the village at the same time.

**AROUND THE TOWN**

A stroll around Stockport Town Centre yielded few surprises. On Wellington Road South, the **Nelson** still sells cask beer, I'm happy to report. Theakstons Bitter is the regular and this is joined by one

and sometimes two guest beers. When I called the guest was Boddington's Cask with the other pump unused. Not a bad pint either.

Across the road the **Town Hall Tavern** is still firmly keg, I'm sorry to say. Further down I was going to drop in at the **Unity** but was driven back at the door by the volume of the karaoke. Having said that, the pub appeared to be pretty well full. The nearby **Cobden's** is still available for tenancy according to Robinson's web site. This must be a pub with a huge amount of potential and I'm surprised no-one has taken it on yet.

I also made a, for me, rare visit to **Little Jack Horners** on Wellington Street where the fixed range is Theakstons Bitter, Tetley Bitter, Marston's Pedigree and Cameron's Strongarm. This has always been a popular and well-kept, cosy little pub with a good trade. Having said that, while the Tetley was pleasant enough, the Strongarm was pretty ordinary, unusual for this pub.

Heading to the Market Place, I passed **Abbey**. Every time I have passed in the last two or three months, the solitary handpump has been unmarked. Has the experiment with cask ale failed here, I wonder?

I popped down to the Market as I had heard that the **Pack Horse** was now doing something interesting in the guest beer line - and so it is. A very well kept pint of Copper Dragon Best Bitter from Skipton was on sale alongside the Tetley Bitter, and I understand that this features quite regularly here. The pub itself has a good, local atmosphere, despite its town centre location, and with three rooms, seems to retain a lot of its original layout. Well worth a visit, I think.

Another town centre 'local' is the **Pineapple** on Heaton Lane. This Robbies pub always has a warm welcome and a good range of well-kept beers as well. Hatters and Best Bitter are the staples on electric pumps while on handpump are to be found Cumbria Way and the current seasonal. This was Lucky Jim when I last called, and very enjoyable it was too.

Of course, for many 'beer buffs' (God, I hate that phrase) the Pineapple is overshadowed by its near neighbour the **Crown**. Having said that, the Crown is a top pub with 14 invariably well-kept cask beers. There are now pumps reserved for changing guests from Phoenix, Copper Dragon, Bank Top, Eastwood & Sanders and Pictish. Add in Black Sheep Bitter as a house beer, a guest mild always on (and, usually a stout or porter as well), and the fact that the pub is the unofficial 'tap' for the local Three Rivers Brewery and you really do have something a bit special.

**BITS & PIECES**

In Edgeley, Pete Kaut left the **Armoury** at the August Bank Holiday weekend, He has been succeeded by Tom and Sheila Barlow, who are new to the trade. I briefly called in a week later and found the beer to be in good nick, so it looks like they are off to a flying start.



Next door, there is activity at the closed **Swan**. I will be surprised to see it reopen as a pub and the latest rumour is that it's future is as offices, but the award for the scruffiest pub in town must



go the closed **TJ's Bar** on Wellington Road. This place, originally the Wellington has had a chequered history to say the least and is now an eyesore. It's also difficult to see what sort of future the place has got.

In Hazel Grove, the **George & Dragon** has now been renamed 'The Phoenix' and remains keg.

Finally, the good beer range at the Golden Days garden Centre in Cheadle has been mentioned in these pages before. They now have a range of Czech beers including Rezak, Konrad, Janacek Patriot & Premium, and Hejtman.

**OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS**

Advert Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. Image height 26cm. NB Advertisers who supply camera ready artwork designed for another publication that cannot be resized to our standard sizes will be charged the equivalent column/centimetre rate plus a surcharge of at least 30%. Adverts that require unusually large amounts of design work will have the extra work carried out by a studio at full commercial rate.



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our customers

**BODDINGTONS BITTER,**  
*A Real Traditional Pub  
for Real Ale Drinkers -  
come and try the NEW cask  
plus TETLEY BITTER  
& DARK MILD IN CASK*

*Local CAMRA Pub of the Month, Feb 2004*

## BEERIENTEERING PURPLE DAY LANDS FOUR.

DAVE HALLOWS REPORTS...

The four being, newly recruited young members that went on CAMRA Under-30 (note the new name!) social group's Beerienteering. A new sport on the lines of Orienteering, but this time not to find a particular hillock, but to navigate six pubs in correct order by use of maps and clues and only the modes of on foot, by bus, tram or train to choose from (an ordeal for some, I might add).

Everyone came in sports gear or fancy dress as requested. The whistle staggered start for each team at the door of the excellent Knott Bar on Deansgate saw a possession to either the Old Monkey (Holts), Circus Tavern (Tetley Heritage Pub) and Grey Horse (Hyde's) all nearby on Portland St. 'Three Pub Trick' proved easy for all teams who worked out the clue and entered the Grey Horse to have their score sheets correctly marked by the official CAMRA Beerienteering Marshall. All apart from Silly Mid Wicket, who went in the Circus but were compensated by another excellent hostelry.

Team Purple & Nick established an early lead when they entered the Salutation on Higher Chatham St, just off All-Saints. Taylors Landlord had just gone as they had had a shindig in the pub the night before, but the Flowers IPA looked nice and clear. All teams worked out correctly, that it was better to walk to the next call - the Mawson on Frances St, Chorlton-on-Medlock, where Tetley Bitter and Coachouse Best bitter were on offer.

Something of a logjam here as most teams didn't want to leave this lively and friendly local, deceptively close to Manchester University. Team Purple made a move for the door and the chase was on again. Next was darts in the Sidings (Holts) on Broom Lane in Levenshulme. This Pub of the Month for April, again had fine Holts bitter & mild and a chance for teams to get a handsome time bonus, as the score was done by the clock in total minutes! Teams then needed to work out of which two Stockport town centre pubs gave the best time bonus. Either the Tiviot (Robinsons) on Tiviot Dale or the Railway (Porters) along Great Portwood St.



It was in the latter that intrepid CAMRA marshals & membership gurus the magnificent Wainwrights signed up an entire team to the CAMRA fold, notably, Bald but Beautiful. The judges, myself and Mike Flynn only just made to the Navigation (Beartown) up Lancashire Hill, before Team Purple & Nick rushed through the door having ran up the hill. Didn't they know they could have caught the bus to the door? But anyway, If You Could Tolerate This.... entered as did Silly Mid Wicket and Bald But Beautiful and all had to wait and wait.... Until I had to go down to the Tiviot to get Barmy Army, who weren't there, despite being pre-arranged to meet them there. It transpired that one of the women 'wanted to look at something' in Argos, I asked you! Barmy Army were declared 'out of time' as Team Purple & Nick, who were baying for the result after the delay, were told of victory of the Official Greater Manchester Region CAMRA Under-26 1st Beerienteering winners of 2004! If You Tolerate This... got the wooden spoon. Presentation was given very kindly by microbrewers Jude & Richard Bazan. Plus it didn't rain and proceeds went to the Parkinson's Society.

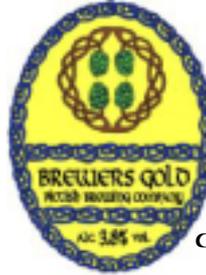


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7

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**HYDES**  
THE MANCHESTER BREWER  
ESTD 1893

**BREWERY TO BAR:  
DISTRIBUTING BEER IN  
THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

*We read and write a lot in CAMRA about the brewing of ale, and about the keeping and serving of ale, and of course an elephant lot about the drinking of ale. But we never wonder how beer gets from the brewery to the pub. It's not straightforward, as Neil Worthington discovered.*

**PART 1 - THE DISTRIBUTION MANAGER'S TALE**

To begin with, I went to have a chat with David Worsley, who's worked for Hyde's Brewery for 36 years now, the last six as Distribution Manager. (Favourite saying: "Don't talk to me about hard work and dirty jobs in a brewery - I've done them all!") He's seen Hyde's grow from a small managed or tenanted estate with just a few free trade accounts to today's much larger estate of 39 managed houses, 32 tenanted pubs and a lot more free trade outlets - and a brewery turning out a record 80,000 barrels a year of ales and lagers.

The brewery itself of course is a classic Victorian structure, and it's nothing like as big as the sketches in the old advertisements would have you believe! It's seen a lot of investment in new brewing equipment and next year it will get a new warehouse, which is having to go outside the present cramped site. Even manoeuvring around the brewery yard is a difficult job. It was fine when beer moved by wagon and horse, but there's no room to turn a modern lorry. And the ornate canopy over the loading bay is another problem, limiting headroom to 11' 6". And as for those charming olde worlde cobbles - just try moving a fork lift truck over them. There are just four drays in the Hyde's fleet these days. They're all rigid vehicles (not articulated), with relatively high floors and curtain sides. The biggest is a 26 tonner and it boasts a tail lift. Two are 18 tonners and one is a 14 tonner. We should also mention a Transit van that wears the same gold and black livery as the drays. The vehicles aren't owned by Hyde's. Back in the late 80s, the company took the decision to contract out its distribution, recognising that other firms had specialist skills in operating and maintaining road vehicles. An outside firm (currently Hammonds of Bradford) took on responsibility for the vehicles and the draymen, whose conditions of employment were protected under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) or TUPE legislation.

Draymen of course aren't just lorry drivers. They are specialists in their own right and undergo specialist training in looking after a product which is both a foodstuff and a very awkward bulk load. A booklet from the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association (BLRA), *Manual Handling in the Brewing and Licensed Retail Industry*, highlights the problems. One third of all injuries in the brewing industry are caused by manual handling of heavy loads such as cask, kegs and crates. Even a 9 gallon cask - a firkin - weighs over 40 kilograms (more than 6 stone) when full. And Hyde's also use 18 and 36 gallon casks, not to mention 11, 22 and 30 litre kegs (the last ones are for Staropramen lager). Hyde's only use qualified draymen with a proper training record - not easy to find at short notice when you need to cover for sickness or holidays.

Loading a dray at the brewery is relatively straightforward. It's unloading at the other end that's the challenge. David Worsley has spent a lot of time in reviewing the cellar delivery arrangements at the company's own pubs, and a lot of changes have



**How would you feel...**

**...if all your favourite pubs closed, or your favourite beer disappeared**

**from the bar?** You could accept it and find another pub or move on to a different beer. Or you could do something about it...

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been made to make it safer for draymen and publicans alike. The ideal situation is the "roll in" cellar, where draymen have level access to the cellar. It's not that unusual – new bars especially have "cellars" at ground level, and some older pubs are built on sloping ground, allowing casks to be rolled straight in to the cellar. A few awkward pubs, like the Knott in Manchester, have their cellars **above** ground level. I don't think Hyde's will be delivering there any time soon!

The traditional arrangement is what's known as a "gantry". This is a ramp, sloping down from ground level into the cellar, often with steps set down the centre of the ramp for ease of access. The casks are then rolled down the ramp. The difficulty with this is Gravity, which can speed up a moving cask until it's out of control. This has caused a lot of injuries in the past. To avoid this, Hyde's have converted a lot of gantries into "straight drops", where the ramp is removed and the cask is literally dropped straight into the cellar. The key to success here is to absorb the energy of the fall very quickly, and to do this Hyde's use the "Vitapad". It's a modern version of the traditional cork bag which you'll have seen outside pubs in the past, but filled with layers of heavily compressed foam rubber. It comes in varying sizes to suit different cellars and different sizes of cask and it very effectively "catches" a cask, absorbing the impact and preventing the cask from bouncing or even rolling very far. Even cases of wine or spirits can be dropped safely onto a Vitapad.

Why don't they use some kind of a lift? I asked. Well, they're great in principle, but if they go wrong, then your cellar is blocked. The biggest problem though isn't getting beer into a cellar. It's getting it out again. This is when you're working **against** gravity. Why would you want to take beer out though? Well, sometimes beer has to be returned because it's picked up an infection. Where possible, Hyde's agree with Customs & Excise that the beer can be destroyed on site (tipped straight down the drain without first passing through the human bladder), after taking a sample for analysis. Sometimes this isn't possible and the cask has to be "roped" out of the cellar. The drays are equipped with winches to help lift the casks but it is all too easy for a cask, or keg, to slip from the rope or webbing that secures it and roll back into the cellar.

The Hyde's estate, and the free trade accounts, are scattered over a wide area now, roughly a 70 mile radius of the brewery. The extremes of the distribution area are Preston, Burnley, Glossop, Buxton, Leek, Crewe, Llangollen, Wrexham and Liverpool. The drays do a different run each day, sometimes making as many as 16 deliveries to different premises. Usually they're dropping off larger volumes at a smaller number of pubs, and the drays have to return to the brewery to reload.

They normally deliver on the same day each week and at roughly the same time of day. They work Mondays to Fridays, unless there's a bank holiday, in which case they work Saturday instead. Pubs phone their orders in to the brewery two days before delivery, and the fine detail of the delivery run is planned one day before, bearing in mind the danger of overloading the dray. At Christmas and other peak times the drays may need to do several runs to deliver all the beer that's been ordered – and of course cask ale, being a live product, has only a limited cellar life. It can't be stockpiled!

Overall, David Worsley has good reason to be pleased with his team's work. Their performance, measured in terms of deliveries made and completeness of order, is now up to 99.7%. It would have been a clear 100% if they'd been able to cover for a sick driver on one day. But what's it like actually rolling out those barrels? **Part 2 - The Draymen's Tale**, being an account of a day on the dray, will follow next month.

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WESTVELTEREN 12  
GEMBER (SCRUMMY GINGER ALE)  
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**(FELIX KRIEK STILL  
ON ORDER!  
HOPEFULLY SOON!)**



**...AND  
EVEN  
A SMALL  
BEER  
GARDEN!**



# STAGGER

with Chris Wainwright

## OFFERTON

Summer may seem a distant memory now, but in late July there were one or two decent, warmer evenings. It coincided with one of these nights that a dozen or so local CAMRA stalwarts gathered in the **Wrights Arms** at the far end of the branch to start the stagger of Offerton. Technically this pub is just outside our branch area by a few yards, yet is within the geographical borders of the district. It is a historic pub on a historic turnpike road. Having had mixed fortunes since the break up of the Wilson's estate, it is now on the up and up. Appealing mainly to the twenty-something age group with bold music and televised sport, it attracts all ages on quiz night. The regular beers on the bar are Boddingtons Cask Bitter and Flowers IPA. There is also a regular guest from a UK regional brewer; on this visit it was Adnams Regatta. The latter two beers were judged to be in a presentable condition. It must be noted though that the rear lounge and the front vault are quieter than the main bar area and do lend themselves to be more convivial drinking spots. Being mindful of the great distance to the next cask ale pub, we hastily stepped forth along Marple Road, passing the keg only **Golden Hind** and the newly refurbished **Strawberry Gardens**. The latter now advertises itself as Stockport's only air conditioned pub. Sadly, this also extends to the beer which consists solely of gassed-up keg and smooth.

We arrived at the **Fingerpost** to be greeted by its usual busy, cheerful atmosphere. This is a Robinson's pub to the core, dominating the crossroads at the end of Banks Lane and Hemphaw Lane. Always avid supporters of the annual Mild Challenge this sturdy, multi-roomed, red brick building has the subtle "Stockport Viaduct Arches" architectural theme found in so many of Robinson's outlets. Parts of the interior are akin to a shrine to Stockport County F.C. with signed pictures and framed artefacts adorning almost every wall. The Bitter and

Hatters both got a resounding thumbs up as is usual here. It was noted the electric Bitter pumps had not been re-badged to the new Unicorn name yet, (perhaps indicative of hand pumps in the near future?)

Dragging ourselves away, we ventured the few yards down Hemphaw Lane to the **White House**. It must be hard to compete in a finite market when your neighbour and competition is the **Fingerpost**, yet here the management have worked hard and rebuilt a faithful following again since it reopened a couple of years ago after a long period of closure. The interior is more comfortable than the rather bold whitewashed exterior suggests. However on the night of our visit all hopes of conversation in the open plan lounge and function room were drowned by a thunderously loud karaoke. The only cask ale served was a rather average Boddingtons Cask Bitter. There is an interesting collection of black and white prints of New York skyscrapers on the walls in all the rooms including the quieter vault which doubles as a games room.

Cutting through the back streets we arrived at the **Gardeners Arms** in time to catch the last remaining rays of sunlight as we sat at the new benches arranged in the car park and thoroughly enjoyed two things. First to strike the senses was a bombardment of colour from the wonderful flower baskets on the front of the pub. Some gardener really deserves a pat on the back for them. The other delight was on the taste buds in the form of an excellent pint of Boddingtons Cask Bitter, declared best ale of the night (so far) by more than one of us. A very busy night at the bar it was too, but the efficiency of the staff ensured every one got served promptly. It is a large building in an imposing position overlooking the traffic lights at the top of Hall Street. With a games room at the back almost the same size as the lounge at the front it can get quite noisy at times, this time it was with the buzz of conversation as there was no music being played here.

As with most of Offerton's public houses, The **Emigration** on Hall Street is extremely busy. Tonight was no exception, with standing room only in this three-roomed pub situated on a street corner and decorated in the standard Robinson's fashion. Many of us braved the now chilly night air to sit outside on the benches set out on the rear patio to drink our beers. But unfortunately, and very surprisingly too, it wasn't up to the standards we have come to expect from this usually fine outlet. The Robinson's Hatters was far too warm and in somewhat poor condition. The Unicorn Bitter fared better, but still only attained an average rating. I have been in here many times when the beer has been in fine form so I am sure this was a one off glitch and must not be construed as any sort of yardstick for the pub.

Pressing on now, with time running out and drawing ever closer to Stockport we arrived at the January 2004 Pub Of The Month winner, the **Victoria**. Buzzing with chat, all the tables were encircled with locals having a great night out. Not as many beers on the bar as usual, there have been as many as five in the past. They being Banks's Original, Banks's Bitter and Morland Old Speckled Hen (now brewed by Greene King). All in excellent form, my vote for the best beer of the night went to the Old Speckled Hen. More green fingers here too, the car park being bordered with beds of roses. A small flowerbed under the lavatory window is home to two rare carved stone pub advertisement plaques. A third is set into the wall at the front of the pub.

There are two pubs in Offerton we were unfortunately unable to visit due to them being slightly off the course we had set. The **Puss in Boots** on Nangreave Road and the **Harvester** in the middle of the Bosden Farm housing estate. Both of which are fine, modern pubs that sell good real ale to the local residents. There is nothing extraordinary about Offerton. It is just an ordinary suburb to the South East of Stockport town centre. Yet the pubs cater for everyone. There are loud ones and quieter ones. Pubs for the young, the not so young and families. Pubs for watching your favourite teams play, and pubs to just gather and chat. You can sit down for a good meal in some or stand up for a game of darts or pool in others. One thing they all have in common is the reception, warm and sincere from staff and customers alike. And nearly all of them serve good real ale too. In six pubs, we tasted some eight different real ales from six breweries (and four regions of England). Which in anybody's books can't be a bad thing.



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**Fine Cask  
Boddingtons Bitter**



**FLIXTON NEWS**

New licensees have recently been appointed at the Church Inn, Church Road, Flixton. I would like to extend a welcome to Maureen ("Mo") and Barry Jones, who are keeping up the tradition of serving real ale, which they did at their previous pub - The London Bridge in Stockton Heath.

During recent visits the beer has been in excellent condition. The Church Inn has been a Good Beer Guide entry for many years, but unfortunately at the time the surveys were being carried out there were a couple of temporary managers due to the retirement of Bill Webb, the licensee for many years, so the pub could not be considered for the 2005 Guide. However if Mo and Barry continue as they have started it will soon be back as a contender for entry into Good Beer Guide again.

The cask beers on offer on the branch's most recent visit were Timothy Taylor Landlord, Coachhouse Coachmans, and the guest beer was Robinson's Sunny Jim. All in excellent condition. On earlier visits we found Young's Bitter, Jennings Cragrat, and Caledonian 80/- and also Wychwood Pole Jolter. The new menu from The Spirit Group caters for all tastes and food is served until 8.00pm seven days a week at reasonable prices.

**OTHER NEWS - NEIL WORTHINGTON REPORTS...**

The Old Packet House in Broadheath (or is it strictly speaking Altrincham? it's on the south side of the canal) has changed hands. It's seen a number of different managers over the past few years but the lease has now been sold on. Terence Hardman took over a couple of months ago and is slowly but steadily refurbishing this historic low ceilinged pub. He's kept the raised no smoking area to the left of the bar and in fact the only real

change has been to replace Tetley's with Hyde's Bitter. Two other handpumps offer Boddington's and Charles Wells' Bombardier. All are in good form, despite the landlord being new to the trade.

Over in Cheshire, the Jolly Thresher in Broomedge, near Lymm, has been gently refurbished and classed as one of Hyde's Heritage Inns. (The others are the Old Hall in Altrincham, the John Millington in Cheadle Hulme, the Horse and Farrier in Gatley and the Coach and Four in Wilmslow.) Most of the money has been spent in the kitchens rather than the public areas, and there's a new menu. Changes behind the bar mean a wide range of malt whiskies, bottles of wine rather than bags in boxes, and four handpumps offering a range of Hyde's beers, mild, bitter, Jekyll's Gold and the seasonal (currently Tickety Boo). Otherwise the main changes are to the upholstery - the pub still has a cosy, cottage-like feel. It could so easily have been ripped open in a classic pub "barn conversion" but sensibly Hyde's have held back. And yes, the bowling green at the back has survived.

In Lymm itself, another Hyde's pub is being sympathetically restored. Two years ago there were plans to do a 'barn conversion' at the Bull's Head on the main street, next to the canal bridge. From the "artist's impressions" on display at the time, this would have taken away all the charm of this old fashioned place. But the powers that be decided on another course and changed it from a managed house to a traditional tenancy. The new landlord is a true aleman and insists on racking all his cask beers himself. He's also doing most of the redecorating himself, which explains the restricted opening hours of late - it will normally be open all day. My notes are a bit sketchy on the beer range but I think it's mild, bitter and possibly Jekyll's Gold.

**JOIN CAMRA NOW**

membership form on page 18



Not so much a column as a glorified caption. I've been away almost all of August, firstly participating in the 'Great British Beer Festival Experience' or 9 days of it anyway, in the company of those brave fools below, on the Bar Managers Training course. The Bar above is one of the 13 beer bars at the festival (cider & foreign making 15) and featured 'North West Beers', from among North West towns such as Keighley, Skipton.... oh well, southerners have little idea of geography. After which I repaired to Bavaria to recover. Some sort of report next month. The Crescent Festival (which I got to on the last day) was very good, as usual. Thought the Eastwood & Sanders beer was outstanding (which it also was on the North West Bar at Olympia), coming from Yorkshire, as it does.



11  
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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, Macclesfield and Trafford & Hulme

Diary

### September 2004

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup>** – Hazel Grove South Stagger: meet 7.30pm at Rising Sun, Buxton Rd (next to 192 terminus); 8.30pm White Hart, London Rd.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Pub of the Month presentation at the New Victoria, Stockport Rd, Longsight. From 8.00pm.

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup>** – 2005 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival – first organising meeting. Swan With Two Necks, Princes St, Stockport. All members welcome. Starts 8.15pm.

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup>** – Visit to Robinson's Brewery – meet in Unicorn Room (entrance at back of brewery) 7.15 for 7.30. Trip full at time of going to press.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October** – Macclesfield Social: meet for lunch at Nag's Head, opposite station. Ramble starts from here at 1.30pm. Finishes early evening. NB – Network Rail permitting, trains should be running from Stockport and Manchester.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. **NB change of venue from 'CAMRA Calling'. Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, will be our guest speaker.** Starts 8.00pm.

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

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: Cheshire Ring, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October** – Committee Meeting: Royal Oak, Market St, Chapel-en-le-Frith. Starts 8.30pm

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup>** – Branch Meeting: Ramsay's Bar, Buckingham Hotel, Burlington Rd, Buxton. Starts 8.30pm

### September 2004

*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 :*

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>** – Rail Ale Day Out: Churnet Valley railway and three good pubs. Meet in Cheddleton Station car park at 11.30 for a 12.40 departure on the train. Car sharing can be arranged.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Campaigning Meeting: Ship, Altrincham Rd, Styal. Starts 8.00pm.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>** – CAMRA stall at Knutsford Beer Festival, Knutsford Sports Club.

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup>** – Summer Pub of the Season Award: Stag's Head, Mill Lane, Great Warford. From 8.00pm.

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October** – Campaigning Meeting: Rifleman's Arms, Moor Lane, Wilmslow.

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

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Little Bollington survey/social: 8.00pm Swan With Two Nicks; 9.00pm Stamford Arms

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Queens Arms social, meet by ticket office at Victoria station at 7.00pm.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October** – **Branch A.G.M** at the Wheatsheaf, Manchester Road, Altrincham. Starts 8.00pm. **Will all members please try and attend this important event.**

### REGIONAL EVENT

Regional CAMRA under 30 social group: Fri 1 Oct from 8pm. CIDER NIGHT at the Marble Arch, Rochdale Rd, Central Manchester. 9 pm Beer House, Angel St (off Rochdale Rd) Meet by CAMRA sign.

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12



# POYNTON REAL ALE FESTIVAL

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAMRA

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FROM THE COUNTRY'S TOP MICRO BREWERIES

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**DOMINOES IN THE SMOKE ROOM**

The smoking prohibition in Ireland's pubs has apparently been claimed as a great success, with 97% compliance being reported. However, that statistic only tells half the story, because it may simply be a case of many smokers staying away. A recent survey of Dublin pubs showed that turnover was down by 16% and employment had fallen by 14%. In small towns and rural areas the impact has been even more severe, with many pubs losing a quarter or more of their trade, and licensees have petitioned the government to review the application of the ban, unfortunately to no avail.

A similar impact could be expected this side of the Irish Sea – there would be a noticeable but not catastrophic overall decline in the licensed trade, but the smaller, more traditional pubs would be hit much more than dining outlets and theme bars. And a 16% fall in business would undoubtedly push many already struggling locals over the edge into closure.

In the long run, of course, the tide of history is running strongly against smoking, and it is now easy to find non-smoking areas in a wide variety of pubs, while more and more are choosing to go entirely or predominantly non-smoking. Just in the past month I have learned of one local pub that has gone entirely non-smoking and two more that have decided to restrict smoking to a small area. If genuine customer demand is driving that trend then, as a non-smoker, I'm all in favour of it. In twenty years' time it is likely that, even without any government action, smoking in pubs will have become a rare anachronism. But there is now growing pressure to accelerate the process by bringing in a total ban.

It is not difficult to see how a compromise could be reached that would allow people to continue to smoke in pubs if they wished to, without inconveniencing anyone who didn't want to drink in a smoky atmosphere. For example, smoking could be prohibited in designated dining areas and anywhere children are admitted, and all pubs except the very smallest could be required to designate at least 50% of their floor space as non-smoking, if not covered by the previous two requirements. However, it is unlikely that anything short of an outright ban in every single room of every single pub will be acceptable to the anti-smoking zealots.

Then, of course, they'll turn their attention to alcohol...

**RUNNING THE GAUNTLET**

One problem that would inevitably be caused by a smoking prohibition in pubs is the sight of a knot of smokers outside every pub door, just as there now is outside many office buildings. This will give a poor image to pubs in particular and town and city streets in general, and lead to pavements being covered by discarded butts. You may enjoy a smoke-free atmosphere once in the pub, but you'll have to negotiate a haze of fumes to get inside. Surely it would be better all round if the smokers could be confined to a separate room at the back of the pub rather than being forced out onto the street.

**Curmudgeon Online:**

<http://members.lycos.co.uk/curmudgeon>

**5 Years Ago**  
by Phil Levison **SEPTEMBER '99**

**T**wo items occupied half the front page each – 'Best Beer in Britain' (Timothy Taylor's Landlord) and 'All Change' (local free houses). Landlord had been announced as the Champion Beer of Britain in 1999 at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival after a particularly lengthy judging session by a panel of consumers, brewers and journalists. It had previously won the top prize in 1994, which proved how a regional family brewer could compete on the national stage.

☆☆☆☆

There were new faces at City Centre free houses, but it was thought that they would all remain in good hands. Mike Bowden and Christine Nash were at the Kings Arms on Bloom Street, Salford; Idy and Sal from the Beer House had taken over at the Crescent, Salford; Mark Dade at the Marble Arch had given up as licensee in order to concentrate on the Marble Brewery; and there were new managers at the Pot of Beer. In early July 2004, the Pot of Beer was standing empty and also boarded up, although a sign still said "The Pot of Beer welcomes you – open as usual."

☆☆☆☆

Wetherspoon's latest addition to the local drinking scene, the Sir Edwin Chadwick, had opened for business on Stockport Road, Longsight. The area had never seen anything like this before, and it offered more in terms of choice, quality, comfort and value than any other pub in the vicinity. In 2004, the pub has closed and the premises are in use as an Indian restaurant.

☆☆☆☆

Two new and eagerly awaited City Centre bars both opened their doors on Thursday 5 August. John Willie Lees had finally unveiled their new Rain Bar, while Hydes' had opened their Breeze café bar. They were very different. A Victorian four storey umbrella factory had been very successfully converted into Lees' flagship Rain Bar serving their full range of cask ales, and an interesting, extensive menu served throughout the day. The Breeze Bar had been designed to attract the café bar crowd. It has now been renamed Jar Bar, which is Hydes' younger concept, and has the dubious position of being the only Hydes' tied outlet not serving real ale.

☆☆☆☆

Bass had beaten a hasty retreat following the unguarded comments of their Marketing Director, Mark Hunter. He had admitted that as far as he was concerned publicans could spare neither the time nor the effort to look after cask beer, and nobody would want to invest money in it. Understandably, this caused a storm of comment, and Bass said he had been quoted out of context. But apparently Mr Hunter had now said that Bass were going to spend £1 million supporting Draught Bass over the coming 12 months.

☆☆☆☆

Manchester Matters had commented on the number of new openings and refurbishments that had followed what had been a few quiet months on the local pub scene. The Sun in September had reopened after what had been described as one of the best refurbishments seen in a long time. But the poor old Shambles had continued to live up to its name. Remedial work had continued at the Olde Wellington, and Sinclairs had all its rendering removed, as cracking could have led to chunks falling off in cold weather! What a mess!



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Geoff Oliver who owns the Good Beer Guide listed White Hart at Mottram, has let the pub out to tenants and moved back to his house in Glossop. While he still controls the pub and has stipulated legally which beers are on the bar regularly (the same as usual), he is retiring from the 'front line' on the pub scene. The Sportsman on Mottram Road, Hyde, two miles down the road, the original of the two pubs owned, is also going out to a tenancy shortly, possibly by the time these notes appear.

**The wreckage of the Beehive on Commercial Brow in Hyde, has been demolished and the nearby Talbot has now been shut and boarded up for some nine months.**

All eight of Disley's pubs joined in a cricket 6's tournament in August. The Rams Head narrowly beat the Crescent in the final after a long day at Disley Amalgamated Sports Club where much of the guest beer for the weekend (Wadworth 6X) was consumed in a tournament that ran from 10am till 7pm.

**The Rat Pit at the bottom of Bents Lane Bredbury (across from the Greyhound) are now taking a Real Ale. The first brew in August was Old Speckled Hen.**

Reports as we went to press that the Romper at Marple Ridge had two different Clarkes (of Wakefield) beers on the bar. At the Star in Glossop, Bed & Breakfast was introduced from the start of August. The name of the accommodation is 'Owls End'.

**Marcello Tonsella and partner Lisa Shufflebotham have taken The Grapes, Gee Cross, by storm. The couple have proved a hit behind the bar of the Robinson's pub, showing that the combination of a little Italian spirit and the perfect pint is too much to resist. "I'm always happy and enjoy entertaining the customers, who enjoy a laugh with me," enthused Marcello. "I guess that's what makes The Grapes so popular," he concluded modestly!**



**Marcello and Lisa put (pictured with Brewery Director David Robinson) their success behind the bar down to the skills they initially honed as hair-dressers, where the customer was always put first and made to feel centre of attention.**

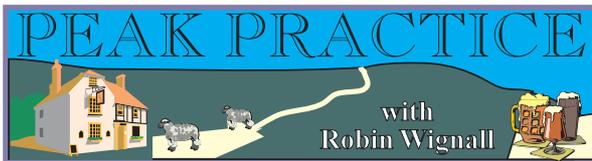
Claire Jones has swapped her nine to five job behind the counter in a bank for a rewarding career as licensee behind the bar at The Unity, Hyde. Full of enthusiasm for her new role as tenant at the Robinson's house, the twenty-four year old has thrown herself into making the business her own.

Claire was keen to take on the challenge of running her own business when she learnt that the tenancy was available. "As a regular customer here, I realised that I could really make a go of it. It has provided me with an exciting career and not just a nine to five job," she said enthusiastically.

Not one to stand still, Claire has tastefully converted the beer garden into "the secret garden" with hanging baskets, flowers and benches for the customers to enjoy. "It's now the perfect place to relax and unwind with a drink and escape from the hustle and bustle," she commented.

At present bar snacks are available, but Claire has plans to expand on the current menu to include some home cooked recipes. "I hope to do more food and lengthen our opening hours. "It's such a lovely pub, I'm looking forward to really making my mark on it," she said.

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Imagine walking 10-plus miles, some of it over rough moorland, and arriving at what you hope will be a welcoming hostelry. Recently five members of a walking group, all sexagenarians and reasonably law-abiding citizens, not given to disturbance and riot, arrived at the Ramblers in Edale. The first to order held roughly the following conversation with a member of staff:

"Pint of bitter, please." "Where are you sitting, inside or outside?" "Does that make a difference?"

"Inside you have a glass, outside plastic."

"Why is that?" "Because of the kids."

"There's nobody out there." "But there might be."

Being one of the few fine days of the summer, we settled for plastic. To add insult to injury, as we were finishing our drinks, a lady came into the garden carrying wine in a real glass bottle to be served into real glass wine glasses. The beers available were Findlater & Mackie, Gray's beers. Bitter (3.9% ABV) cost £2.10 whilst LS Lowry (4%) cost a staggering £2.50. I dared not ask the price of Premium (4.5%) or England's Glory (4.9%). Who brews these beers? They don't get an entry in the 2004 Good Beer Guide.

And now to more enjoyable experiences.

Mention of Thwaites houses in the Peak in last month's article had led me to visit two of them, and well worth a visit they are. Hayfield can be reached by buses 358 and 361 from Stockport, and as well as welcoming pubs in the village centre, there is also the Sportsman, just over half a mile east of the village. I called at a quiet time after evening dining but got a good pint of Thwaites Bitter. Lancaster Bomber was the other hand-pulled beer. The Sportsman has a reputation for good food. There is also accommodation and visitors to the area were enjoying the bar. Over the years the pub has expanded into adjoining cottages, so that there are a number of separate areas, still retaining a multi-roomed feel. Campers and caravanners from a nearby site also frequent the Sportsman and walkers are very welcome.

The Highwayman at Rainow is a 16<sup>th</sup> Century building on the Whaley Bridge side of the village. It is less easily reached by public transport. The New Mills-Macclesfield bus runs every two hours during the day, Monday to Saturday and there is a more frequent Macclesfield-Rainow village service. Sunday services are very limited. However a visit is well worth the effort. Again food is important, but so are the

welcome and the beer. Again Thwaites Bitter was in good form, and was accompanied by Thoroughbred. Low beams and ceilings mark the rooms, and round each corner is a new discovery. Non-smokers are provided for and there is outside seating. Despite being outside the village, the Highwayman is also a good community local. Still on Thwaites, their bitter is also available as a house regular at the Swan in Kettleshulme, a recent topic for this column. So, three good pubs to sample well kept Thwaites beers, of which the Bitter must be an archetypal English bitter ale.

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**THE ROYAL OAK, DIDSBURY**

The word 'institution' can be over-used but it is true to say that Didsbury's Royal Oak has been something of an institution on the South Manchester pub scene for many years now.



It was the legendary licensee Arthur Gosling who instituted the famous cheese and paté lunches and despite subsequent changes of licensee and the pub moving from tenancy to management, these have continued to feature at the pub. The pub is currently run by Hazel and Robert Long who last year introduced an innovation – a week-long international cheese and paté festival. This involves an expanded selection of cheeses from around the world along with a range of patés and also pork pies, all splendidly displayed at the front of the bar. The friendly and helpful staff encourages tastings before you buy and you make your choice from several combinations. You can have two cheeses, cheese and paté, cheese and pie or paté and pie. Portions are vast (doggy bags are available) and come with large amounts of crusty bread and free pickles and onions.



There were a few of us along one sunny lunchtime and apart from a couple of patés and a pie, we sampled a range of cheeses including Lanark Blue, Black Sticks Blue (a winner at the famous Nantwich Cheese Festival), Cornish Garlic & Herb, creamy Dovedale Blue and some wonderful Stilton. All served at perfect temperature to bring out the full flavours. As you will see we went for some pretty strong stuff but milder cheeses are available for those of a more sensitive disposition.

Of course, there is only one thing to accompany food such as this – top quality cask beer. The Royal Oak does this well, too. It was originally a Marston's house (well in fact *really originally* it was a Taylor's Eagle Brewery house – hence those rather odd looking birds in the etched windows) and still sells Marston's Bitter and Pedigree along with a guest beer, usually from the Wolverhampton & Dudley stable. When we called this was the tasty but powerful (5.7% ABV) Old Empire Pale Ale. Needless to say all three were on top form.

The Royal Oak is a fine example of simple pub food done very well. Top class ingredients, impressive display and total commitment make it almost unbeatable. Highly recommended – food is sold Monday-Friday, 12-2.30pm. JC

As promised last month I have visited the Church House in Bollington which is under new management. Nothing much has changed in this Enterprise Inns pub, the beers on offer are Black Sheep (£2.20 a pint), Timothy Taylor's Landlord (£2.30 a pint) and Boddingtons (afraid to ask how much). Enterprise Inns might be interested to know that at the Crown on the same street, Black Sheep can be had for 35p a pint less!



**In Macclesfield, the Brewers Arms has just changed hands and the new landlord has reinstated cask ales after an absence of many years. Graham Emery is very keen on real ale and is selling Deuchars IPA (which he plans to keep as a regular beer) and Summer Lightning (which will be rotated on a monthly basis. The Brewers is open on weekdays from 4pm and on weekends from 12 noon. Also in Macclesfield, the White Swan has re-opened after a closure of several months.**

Congratulations to the Beartown Tap for winning the CAMRA Regional Pub of the Year competition.

**In August the rains came to Bollington, the New Conservative Club and the Cotton Tree were both flooded. Captain Butterworth of the good ship Cotton Tree said the water was five feet deep in his engine room (cellar) and the beer barrels were floating. Fortunately the Fire Brigade managed to pump the pub out before too much damage was done. However a few days later the Brigade was once again called to the Cotton Tree to pump out the engine room again. Captain Butterworth is very grateful to the Fire Brigade and seriously hopes he doesn't need them a third time.**

Andrew and Kirstie Billinge have eagerly embarked on a challenging new venture, by taking over the reigns at The Barnfield, Macclesfield. The couple bring a wealth of experience to the Catherine Street pub, for Andrew has worked there on a full-time basis for the past three years, while Kirstie got to grips with the trade at The Flowerpot on Congleton Road.

To take on the Robinson's house Kirstie has given up her job in retail sales so that she and Andrew will devote their full-time attention to developing the already popular haunt, to make it a real draw for customers old and new. They are pictured below



with Brewery Director Dennis Robinson, presenting them with their licensees' course certificates.

While the couple has plans in the pipeline to build their business, enthusiasts of the popular Sunday night quiz can be assured that this will remain a weekly fixture. "We like to have broad appeal, and plan to start serving up a selection of fresh lunch time bar snacks in the near future," explained Andrew. "New businesses are starting up around here all the time, so we will be catering for the demand that this is likely to produce."

**PLEASE NOTE - COPY DATE FOR OCTOBER ISSUE OF OT - SEPT 25**



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**BOTTLED BEER TASTING: GERMAN BEERS**

Much has been written in the pages of *Opening Times* about the traditional beer styles and long brewing heritage of Britain. Readers will be aware that many other countries also have proud traditions of brewing and drinking beer, and perhaps the best known beer-drinking nation is Germany. Whilst many people will buy into the stereotype of *Lederhosen*-clad Bavarians swilling from huge *steins* of frothing lager served by blonde maids in pigtails, in truth there are numerous traditional German beer styles, many of which are every bit as threatened as their counterparts in Britain and elsewhere. So, our buyer was sent out to see what German bottles could be found in the *Opening Times* area.

★★★★★

Our first beer was golden in colour, and the bouquet was fresh, fragrant and full of floral hoppiness. This was matched by the flavour: dry, quenching and fresh-tasting, backed by a malty character redolent of digestive biscuits. This beer went down very well indeed, tonight being a rather warm and muggy evening; one taster commented that he'd be quite happy to drink it on draught. When the bottle was revealed, this turned out to be **Paulaner Original Münchner** (from Munich), 4.9% ABV and described on the label as *hell* (pale). To you: £1.80 for a 500ml bottle from *The Bottle Stop* on Acre Lane in Bramhall – something of a local specialist for German bottled beers.

★★★★★

The next beer was a similar golden colour to the first, but this time hazy, leading the tasters to speculate that this could be a wheat beer. It also displayed a lot of carbonation and a large head, neither of which had been noted in the first beer. Apart from one taster claiming to detect marmalade, none of us could really smell anything much but carbon dioxide from the fizz. We found the taste to be gently citrus – oranges – and slightly yeasty. Overall, we found it very drinkable, but a little bland and lacking in finish. This turned out to be **Erdinger Weißbier** at 5.3% ABV. This style has yeast in the bottle which, unlike most British bottle-conditioned beers, is traditionally swirled into the last third of the bottle and served into the glass, hence the cloudy appearance. This was sourced from Morrisons, at £1.49 per bottle.

★★★★★

On to beer number three, which was pale yellow, and the palest beer so far. The nose was described variously as fresh, earthy and sharp. The flavour was unusual and distinctive, which gave away the style of beer to those on the panel familiar with it. It was again described as earthy, with one drinker going beyond this to suggest cardboard (pretentious, *nous?*). There was some soft hoppiness initially, followed by a more astringent bitterness in the finish, and this was certainly a dry style of beer. The bottle appeared, and displayed the red and white label of **Früh Kölsch** ("Ein Lieblingsbier der Kölner"), £1.80 from *The Bottle Stop*. Kölsch is style of beer distinctive to Cologne (Köln), and, unusually for German beers, is top-fermented (as are most British beers).

★★★★★

Our next sample was rather darker: a copper-coloured beer whose smell was slightly toffee-ish and somewhat burnt. Marmalade was suggested again, but this time there was agreement that it showed through in the flavour as a definite burnt marmalade character. There was an initial sweetness, which gave way to a dry, bitter aftertaste dominated by dry malt. This was a much more full-bodied beer than the earlier offerings, and proved to be **Duckstein** from Holsten. This has an ABV of 4.9%, cost £1.59 from Morrisons, and, according to the label, is "gently beechwood matured". Hmm.

★★★★★

Beer number five arrived with a much darker brown colour than any of the earlier beers. It had a rich, complex nose with "roasty" aromas, perhaps even chocolate. On the palate, the chocolate notes were there, and there was a dry, bitter aftertaste, but overall we found this beer to be rather lacking in character. This was revealed to be another top-fermenting beer style, **Altbier**, *alt* (old) indicating that this type of beer has been around a long time – even before bottom-fermenting lagers were invented. This example ("*Das Alt*") was from **Schlösser**, with a strength of 4.8% ABV and a price-tag of £1.80 at *The Bottle Stop*.

★★★★★

Our last beer was probably the palest of the evening, with a light yellow colour. The smell was very fresh and grassy, with a hoppy aroma that our server told us had been evident from the moment the bottle was opened. "Smells like a quintessential German lager," said one. The nose followed through to the taste, which was clean, dry and above all bitter – strikingly so for a German beer. Very good, we all agreed – indeed, this was unanimously our favourite beer of the night. Those of

us who'd had this distinctive beer before had no difficulty recognizing it as **Jever Pilsener**. Oh, you unenlightened drinkers of mass-produced British lager, get yourselves down to *Carrington's* in Didsbury and spend £1.89 on a bottle of the good stuff.

In just one evening, and a handful of beers, we were able to dispel any suggestion that German beer is all pale lager of the type found chilled to death on most British bars. And there are a lot more to discover than just these six. Seek them out and enjoy a little of the fascinating world of German beer.

**CHAMPION BEER 2004**

**Pale Rider brewed by Kelham Island Brewery of Sheffield has been judged the best beer in Britain by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists. Described in the 2004 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as, 'A full bodied, straw pale ale, with a good fruity aroma and a strong fruit and hop taste. Its well-balanced sweetness and bitterness continues in the finish', it was chosen as the overall winner from over fifty finalists in eight categories including beers from tiny micros to major regional brewers.**

Paul Ward, Head Brewer of Kelham Island Brewery said, "I'm gobsmacked. I thought the beer would do well, but to win is amazing. At only 31 years old what do I do now? Thanks to our great team at the brewery and all our customers at the Fat Cat pub in Sheffield."

The Silver award went (amidst a certain amount of controversy) to IPA from Greene King (Suffolk). Bronze went to Ironside from the Hampshire Brewery.

The full results were: Champion Beer of Britain: KELHAM ISLAND PALE RIDER. Second: Greene King IPA, Third: Hampshire Ironside. Milds: Gold: Lees GB Mild, Silver: Brains Dark, Bronze: Hardy & Hansons Kimberley Mild

Bitter: Gold: Greene King IPA, Silver: Oakham JHB, Joint Bronze: Triple FFF Altons Pride and Whim Hartington Bitter

Best Bitter: Gold: Hampshire Ironside, Silver: Hook Norton Generation, Joint Bronze: Nottingham Extra Pale Ale and Woodfordes Nelson's Revenge

Strong Ale: Gold: Kelham Island Pale Rider, Silver: Mordue IPA, Bronze: Hop Back Summer Lightning

Speciality Beer: Gold: Cairngorm Tradewinds, Silver: Harviestoun Schiehallion, Bronze: Titanic Iceberg

Real Ale in a Bottle: Gold: Titanic Stout, Silver: Youngs Special London Ale, Bronze: Yates Isle of Wight Special





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# MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

## MANCHESTER FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

This runs from 1-11 October this year and part from the mainstream events in the City Centre, there are 'fringe' festivals, of which the longest established is in Chorlton. This year, the **Belgian Belly** will be playing a major role, in partnership with the excellent **Lloyds Hotel** opposite.

Not all the events had been finalised as I penned this. However, on 5 October will be the 'Belgian Belly Laugh @ Lloyds Hotel' featuring stand-up comedians, Belgian beers and, of course, JW Lees beers on handpump. The cost will be £5 per head. On 8 October there is another joint event at the Lloyds, called 'Why Wine When You Can Grin and Beer it?' This will take the form of an illustrated lecture (and practical exercise!) on matching Belgian beer and food. Prices for this have yet to be confirmed. Tickets for both events can be obtained from either the belly or the Lloyds Hotel - see their ads in *Opening Times* for contact details. Details of all events can be found on the website [www.foodanddrinkfestival.com](http://www.foodanddrinkfestival.com).

Another feature of the festival is the awards for Bar, Pub etc of the Year. One or two OT favourites have been nominated in the various categories. The **Knott** is up for Bar of the Year, while the Pub of the Year contenders include the **Kings Arms** (Bloom Street), **Circus Tavern**, **Crescent**, and the **Hare & Hounds** (Shudehill). The **Belgian Belly** has been nominated in the Best Food & Drink Retailer category. You can vote for your choices via the website I mentioned above. My votes are already in!

### SOUTHSIDE NEWS

News from the Rusholme area. First off is the Banks's owned **Varsity** on the corner of Oxford and Hathersage Roads. A new building with full height glazing affording good views of the bustle that lies before Whitworth Park and part of the Victorian splendour of the MRI. Ideally positioned for academics, medics, lovers of art and folks who partake of curries, this large, almost triangular space can accommodate them all with ease.

Décor is of the minimal school with bold patches of colour and good use made of lateral wood panelling. The ceiling ducting is *de rigueur*, but pleasing to see are the good number of tables and

chairs flanking a swathe of parquet flooring. Only opened a few months, it had no cask ale until recently. Now, two handpulled beers are being tried - Boddies and Pedigree (the latter at £2.15). The Pedigree was on good form when I called. The many large TV screens dotted around the walls mean that you can watch live sport or chill-out to the music videos being shown. Food is served for most of the day from a menu not too dissimilar to that of Wetherspoon. All-in-all a very useful addition to the pre-curry drinking scene.

Across the street on Moss Lane East lies the reopened **Whitworth**. Closed for a while to allow it to be redecorated throughout, you will not notice a great deal of change apart from it being a good deal cleaner. It is no longer a Marstons house, although it occasionally sells bitter or Pedigree alongside Lees bitter or Lees seasonal beer. Daytime food has been introduced (from 12 till seven) and comprises a select choice of main dishes and sandwiches, all very competitively priced. A midweek quiz was going on while I was there and seemed to be popular. The pub needs to re-establish itself after what has been quite a fallow period. If the recent rains stay away, you may just get the opportunity to use the re-vitalised beer yard - it is now lighter, cleaner and has decking underfoot; quite a transformation. If the quality is maintained, the Whitworth should do well.

Staying in Rusholme, I see that the **Huntsman** has now reopened - needless to say, real ale has not made an appearance.

### ODDS & ENDS

Although a new (third) bank of handpumps has been installed at **The BeerHouse** (off Rochdale Road, on Angel St.), I was led to believe that it was only likely to be used for Beer Festivals, the remaining two banks providing as many as were needed normally.

### JOIN CAMRA - HELP PRESERVE REAL ALE

Use the form on the left to join CAMRA - send it and a cheque made payable to CAMRA to: **Karen & Chris Wainright, CAMRA Membership, 173 Shearwater Road, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5XA** - or better still,

and more conveniently, just fill in the **Direct Debit application** and send it along with your form - remember to keep your Direct Debit guarantee.

This Guarantee should be retained for your reference.

#### The Direct Debit Guarantee

This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us at Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 250 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 4JW



Title	Surname	<b>Membership Application</b>
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Partner Title / Surname (If applicable)		Please indicate below (circle the amount and payment method) which categories applies:
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Address		Joint.....£19
Postcode		Under 26.....£9
Tel No.		Under 26 Joint.....£12
E-mail		Retired.....£9
Post to: Karen & Chris Wainright, CAMRA, 173 Shearwater Road, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5XA		Retired Joint.....£12

**Membership Application**

Please indicate below (circle the amount and payment method) which categories applies:

Single.....£16  
 Joint.....£19  
 Under 26.....£9  
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Well trade is clearly on the up, because on my recent visit 14 pumps were in use for beers - and the other two lines were being cleaned ready for more! It looks like those who wrote off the pub may be forced to eat some humble pie, because Paul and Sue are working hard and the pub is rapidly getting back to what we knew and loved under Idy & Sal (currently at the Crescent, Salford) and Ian Casson. I also popped my head into Dukes 92 and there is now a handpump on the bar. OK, there's only one and it didn't have anything on it! - but it's a step in the right direction and presumably shows some intention of reintroducing cask ale in the not too distant future. If anyone spots any please let me know.

Manchester City Council has issued a Compulsory Purchase Order on chunks of Chorlton-on-Medlock (talk about history repeating itself!). One pub is included and this is the Spinning Wheel on Stockport Road. Formerly the Cock & Bull this pub has not, as far as I know, sold a drop of cask beer in its entire existence. Somehow I don't think I'll be lying in front of the bulldozers to stop this one.

While it's way off my usual patch, I also have some news about the previously closed Clough Hotel on Hall Moss Road in Blackley. This Avebury Taverns pubs has been taken on by one KC Godin-rior (*sic*) who will be renaming the pub \_rior's Clough (*sic* again) with plans to make it "the country's newest and best premier live entertainment venue" with a big cask beer offering. The launch party was scheduled for 11 September and it will be interesting to see how this develops.

## Local CAMRA Awards

Something of a bumper crop of award presentations this month, and amazingly only two feature Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Branch Chairman (and Ed(1).



of this organ, John Clarke. From the top, John presenting July's Pub of the Month Award to David and Tracey Britnell of the Legh Arms, Openshaw.

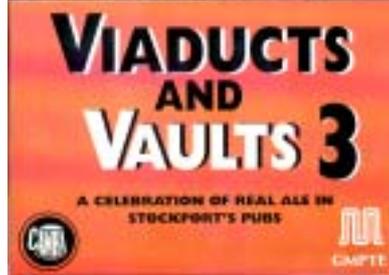
(Above) The bulky form of Ed(2), Paul Hutchings with Angella and Chantal Lindsay of the Navigation, Heaton Norris and their August Pub of the Month Award. On the right, John Clarke again, this time with Richard Sutton of Pictish Brewery and the Stockport Festival Beer of the Fes-



tival Award (for Black Shiver). Last but by no means least, Joe Quinn and Steve King of the Arden Arms, Stockport with their Greater Manchester Regional Pub of the Year Award, presented at the pub on September 4. Enjoyable evenings, all.

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## MILD CHALLENGE 2004 – WINNERS' BREWERY VISIT



I DID IT... MILD WAY

August 4th saw a party of over twenty take a tour of Robinson's brewery and hospitality area. The lucky people were the winners of the prize draw for entering the annual Stockport and Manchester Mild Challenge. Head Brewer, Chris Hellin, provided a very comprehensive and descriptive visit of the brewing facilities, enlivening the proceedings with his great knowledge of the business and many humorous anecdotes. There followed a brief promotional film whilst we enjoyed the full hospitality of the bar.

I would like to convey my thanks to Robinson's on behalf of the Mild Challenge, CAMRA, and to all who attended on the night for what was a splendid and enjoyable evening. Thanks to Chris, and to Lea and Angela who manned the Hospitality suite. Pictured below are the group (in protective clothing on the tour, and right - in the Hospitality suite).

Mark McConachie – Mild Challenge Organiser



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**CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 245:** John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Peter Butler, Phil Levison, Peter Edwardson, Mark McConachie, Robin Wignall, Paul Moss, Chris Wainwright, Neil Worthington, Brian Taylor, Frank Wood, Tom Lord, Glen Mason, Dave Burston, Pete Farrand, Steve Bray. Dave Hallows



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