

GET OUT!

GET OUT! That's the uncompromising message from Marstons to some of their most successful licensees.

Aping the bully-boy tactics of the national brewers, the Burton-on-Trent based company has issued notices to quit to its top 40 tenants. Locally, three pubs are affected, all in the South Manchester area. At the **Whitworth** in Rusholme, a manager was installed last month. At the **Royal Oak** in Didsbury long-serving licensee Arthur Gosling has negotiated a 5-year stay of execution until he reaches retirement age.

However, there will be no stay of execution at the third pub - the popular **Station** in Didsbury where single-parent licensee Ann Wigglesworth has been given 12 months notice to quit and will have to be out of the pub by June next year.

The fact that the pub has been in the same family for 32 years appears to cut no ice with Marstons. Nor do they seem to have taken account of the fact that the pub is perhaps one of the most unsuitable for a managed house that could be imagined - it's a small street corner local with three small inter-connecting rooms with no scope for a food operation or the installation of slot machines, the usual source of extra revenue for managed pubs. Marstons have simply looked at their tied estate to see which tenanted pubs sell the most beer per square metre of floor space (the Station sells an incredible 850 barrels in total 'wet sales'

each year) and that, it seems, is that.

Well, not if the regulars and Ann have any thing to do with it, it isn't.

For many people, the Station is the last true local in Didsbury village and the large and loyal band of regulars are up in arms at the threat to their pub. Marstons have apparently stated that their aim is to turn the Station into a 'promotional managed house', ie one for trainee managers - 32 years of family continuity replaced by probably a new licensee every 18 months or so - the last thing a pub like this needs. A petition is already underway, with many of the regulars saying that they won't set foot in the place again once a manager is installed. The brewery have said they could take a drop in sales of 200 barrels a year and still make more money with a manager. Strength of feeling is so high that they could well end up losing much much more than that.

Ann does still want to stay with the company and stresses that they have tried to do the decent thing by offering assistance in looking for another pub and have even hinted that a 12-month reprieve might be possible if nothing turns up. What they ought to do is forget the whole silly idea. The Station was once described as a small pub with a big heart. The time has come for Marstons to show they have one at all.



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4	11	18	25...
5	12	19	26...
6	13	20	27...
7	14	21	28...
1	8	15	22 29...
2	9	16	23 30...
3	10	17	24 31...

**PUB OF
THE MONTH**

PUB of the Month for August is the **Longsight** on Kirk-manshulme Lane, Belle Vue.

Built in 1985 to serve nearby housing developments, the Longsight was quickly recognised as being considerably above the standard of the typical estate pub. A two-room layout (the vault no mere afterthought but a substantial and well-patronised room) was complemented by high decorative standards, full facilities for the disabled, and a family room, to produce the fabric of a very good pub. At first, however, it was plagued by a rapid turnover of licensees (perhaps because the brewery harboured unrealistic expectations of trade at a pub which had cost a lot to build?)

With the arrival of Richard Jones from the Osborne House in Collyhurst in February 1988, though, a period of stability set in which happily continues to this day. Rick and Mal have worked hard to make the pub an essential part of the local community - all the way from the well kept Banks's ales to the fishing trips. The Pub of the Month award is a double honour - to Banks's for getting the formula right in the first pub they built in Manchester, and to the licensees for making what was already a good building into that very different thing, a really good pub.

This is believed to be the first CAMRA award to any of Banks's pubs in the North West, and the presentation night promises to be a most enjoyable night out. All "Opening Times" readers are welcome on Thursday 22nd August. The Longsight is easy to get to - and back from. The 53 bus stops outside; Hyde Road (buses 169, 203, 211 etc) is 5 minutes walk away, as is Belle Vue Station. Stockport Road is 10 minutes walk.

Free House Focus

THERE have been some interesting developments on the local free house scene of late.

Most noteworthy is the change that has come over the **Stanley Arms** on Newbridge Lane, Stockport in recent months. The uninspiring range of national brewers beers has gone to be replaced by up to 10 varying guest beers at any one time. There have been several Stockport 'firsts' and most notably, the pub is now a permanent outlet for Dent Bitter from Cumbria, sold at the very reasonable price of £1.06 a pint. Indeed, the competitiveness of the prices is another feature of the pub. The free curry suppers on Thursday nights are also worth a mention.

On the other side of town at the **Olde Vic**, licensee Kay Ord has now introduced real cider, with a different one going on sale every fortnight. At the time of writing this was Westons Special Vintage, and was pronounced excellent by those who know about these things.

Lastly, still no more news on the new free house we reported the other month - we hope to have more news next time.

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LETTERS

From Vernon Cockshoot:

During the last six months, I have been visited by the gout and the arthritic intruders and a learned physician has forbidden me the consumption of anything over three pints of mild beer per week. A similar doom merchant on the wireless this morning has come to the conclusion that hell is on earth and not in the after-life - the former confirms the latter. And mild is becoming as rare as interesting programmes on the box these days: Didsbury is an arid plain for the mild drinker, with stupid landlords smilingly saying that "there's no call for it" amongst today's imbibers of yellow fizz. The Royal Oak is an oasis in this south Mancunian desert. But I live in hope and still visit as many pubs in a day, even if only to sample the sandwiches and the hot-pot over a bottle of the Connolly fluid 'brewed' by Guinness. Opening Times occasional comments on pub grub are truly invaluable.

When in short trousers and drinking REAL sarsaparilla, we lived in Reddish and my old man travelled for miles in search of good ales. He would appreciate the additional outlets in that district were he not supping Ambrosian nectar with the gods upstairs, but I doubt he would recommend the quality of either the so-called food or the abysmal standard of the ales on offer: however, I must experiment with the Thatched Tavern one lunch hour despite the visitations from television personalities.

Celebrating the one evening of summer this year, I sat in the overcrowded garden of the Elizabethan. The 'beer' was dismal but, believe it or not, THREE people with Filofax binders were talking on portable telephones and sipping pils although, having tasted one bottle of that brew, I suspect there is a spelling error in the name.

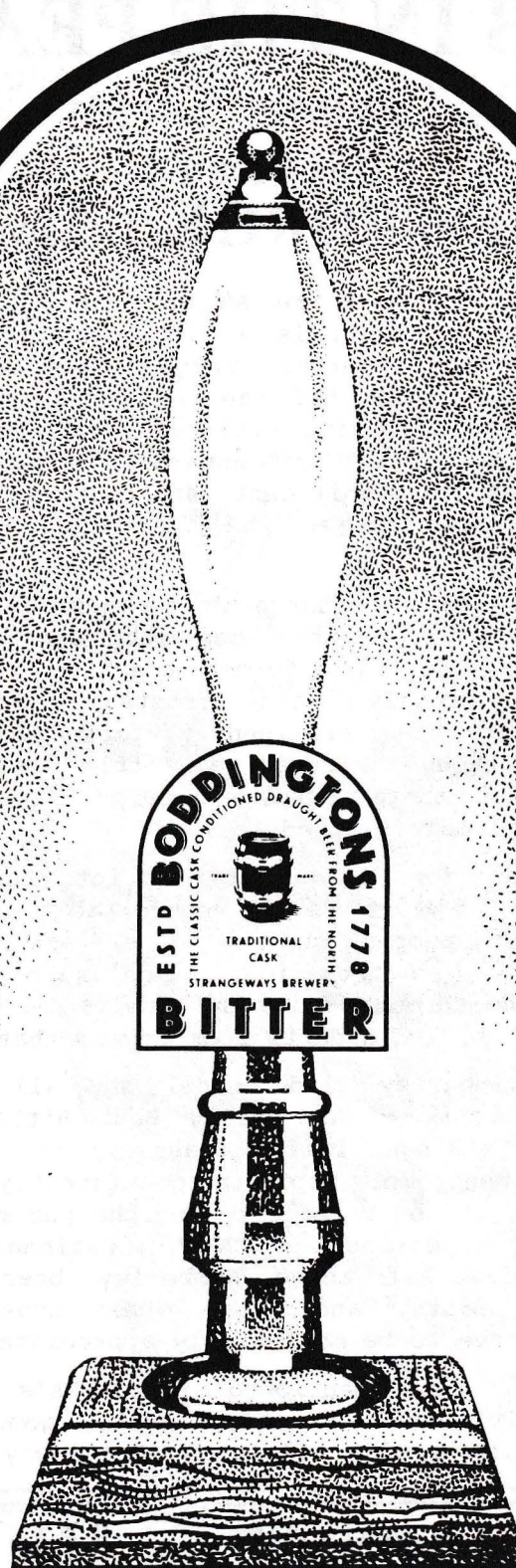
I wish you continued success on a truly original publication, worthy of the Private Eye tradition for investigative probing and good humour of an adult nature.

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PUB IN THE PEAK

A Summer Series

— This Month —

THE GEORGE, Tideswell

SITUATED between the A6 and the A623 east of Buxton, Tideswell is a little off the main Peak District tourist trail. Nevertheless, it's worth turning off the main road to visit this large, attractive village, almost a small market town, with its unusually long, wide main street and magnificent 14th century church, often referred to as the "Cathedral of the Peak".

Right next to the church is another of Tideswell's principal attractions, the George Inn. Built in 1730, this former coaching inn has a long, impressive stone frontage, with the window surrounds prominently picked out in white. Although altered a little over the years, the characterful interior retains a traditional multi-roomed feel.

The central door leads straight into the main area. To the left is the comfortable lounge, where most people choose to eat their bar food, while to the right a delightful tiny snug leads through into the public bar, with a pool table, and a darts room beyond that.

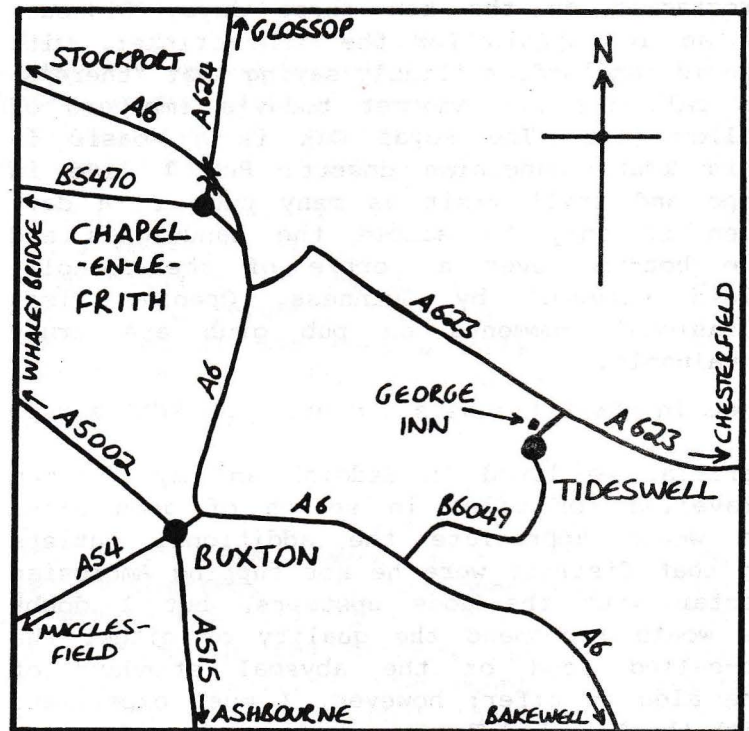
It's a Kimberley tied house, and all three of their beers - Best Mild, Best Bitter and the newer stronger bitter Classic - are available on handpump, kept in consistently good condition, which is reflected by the pub making a regular appearance in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. All three Kimberley beers are excellent pints, and these often underrated brews deserve to be more widely appreciated.

The food, too, mentioned in CAMRA's Guide to Good Pub Food, is exceptionally good, the pub offering a wide selection of largely home-

made bar meals ranging from traditional pies, fish and steaks to more exotic pizzas, curries and vegetarian dishes. Food is served every session, and the prices, by Peak District standards, are reasonable. Bed and breakfast accommodation is also available.

The George manages with great success to strike the right balance between attracting the tourists and retaining the locals, and is one of the very best all-round pubs in the Peak, offering something for everyone, whether real ale drinker, diner, games player, or simply someone who appreciates a good pub atmosphere. It's well worth a visit if you are in the area, or even to make a special trip out, as, surprisingly, it's little more than 20 miles from the centre of Stockport.

Next Month: The Highwayman at Rainow



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STAGGER

BY: PAUL FELTON

21st June saw our group of stalwarts brave potential drowning to join in the latest of our staggers, round the many delights of Cheadle.

First stop was the **White Hart**, next to the church on High Street. It's a Boddington PubCo house, with an H-shaped seating area, basically one room with three sections. It's typically refurbished Boddies - quite smart and plush, with no actual 'vault' area. No less than four beers were available - Boddies Mild and Bitter, Theakstons Bitter and Cains Bitter (from the new brewery operating out of the old Higsons site in Liverpool). Cains, though becoming more frequently sighted, is quite rare in the area, and so most of the party tried it, and it wasn't bad at all; the Theakstons was slightly disappointing.

Next was Hydes' **Crown**, on High Street. From the outside it doesn't look up to much - basically a converted shop-front. Inside, it's

just one large L-shaped room. Don't let this put you off, however, for the pub is thriving and characterful, with usually good beer. I say usually because, although the mild was quite reasonable, the bitter was not up to its usual standard on the night.

The **Vine**, a few doors down, was the only national brewers' house we visited - a GrandMet pub serving Wilsons and Websters bitters. It's a long and narrow pub with, again, just the one room, split into sections, and with no little character. With more interesting beers on than the two mentioned it could be something rather good. Everybody tried the Wilsons which was average.

The **Star** was our next stop, another Hydes pub on the High Street. It's a two roomed affair, done up recently (new carpet and seating, as a prelude to a more thorough refurbishment coming soon) and all the better for it. Three features stand out: the exterior, the revolving door (which hopefully will not disappear) and a rather nice little area at the front of the left hand room. The bitter was average, the mild slightly better.

Boddington PubCo's **Ashlea**, on Manchester Road, is still perhaps more well known as the old Railway. It's a quite recent conversion into a more up-market Henry's Table affair, split-level, rather flash and with quite a large dining area. Some things did stand out: bouncers who quite remarkably were NOT dressed in penguin suits (and who were even polite enough to open the door for us); the complete lack of railway memorabilia; the loss of Marstons Pedigree; and a considerably quieter and less busy atmosphere than on our previous visit (nowhere near so many young people). The single beer available was Boddingtons Bitter, which was okay.

Next was Banks's **Station**, also on Manchester Road. This was easily the most imposing exterior of any pub on our route: a splendid conversion of Cheadle's old Cheshire Lines railway station. The interior is not quite so splendid - one large bar with drinking area all round it and the back part of the pub being something of a sun-lounge affair. The Station is extremely popular with young people, and both the pub and extensive car park are often packed. Both mild, at £1.07, and bitter were available, both above average with the bitter being slightly better. It is interesting to note that penguin-suited bouncers have returned here after a time when the pub survived without them.

From then on Robinsons took over. First was the **Royal Oak** on Stockport Road. It's a good solid place with low ceilings and four rooms, including a games room. Try the vault, which the pub is deliberately trying to bring into more active use. As usual, both Best Mild and Best Bitter (£1.05) were available: as with the Station, both beers were above average,

BURTONWOOD BREWERY

A FAMILY TRADITION OF FINE BREWING

with the bitter being preferred.

The **Red Lion** on Stockport Road has been leased by Robinsons to Playmaster Leisure. They operate a bouncer-controlled dress policy, Friday and Saturday nights only. If you turn up with jeans and/or trainers, forget it. So we forgot it.

The **Printers Arms** on Stockport Road holds a particular place in our hearts, for it was here that the local branch of CAMRA was formed over 17 years ago. It hasn't changed much - small, several rooms - including a games room, pleasant beer garden, consistently good beer and busy with it. Some alterations are scheduled to take place here, and it is to hoped that the separate rooms are all retained. Best Mild and Best Bitter - a good buy at £1.03 - were on: both were rather good, with bitter again shading it and being probably the best beer of the evening. We finished off by doubling back to the **Queens**, again on Stockport Road. This is a rarity in that it is the only pub in Stockport to sell Robinsons 'ordinary' Bitter. One of the separate front rooms has been lost, although another still remains, and there is a rather nice back room. There is also a childrens playground in the beer garden and, yes that really is a large elephant. The Queens is the only pub in the village in the current Good Beer Guide (although it's being re-joined by the Printers for 1992) and the beer on the night reflected that quality. Unsurprisingly, given its rarity value, all the party went for the bitter at £1.03.

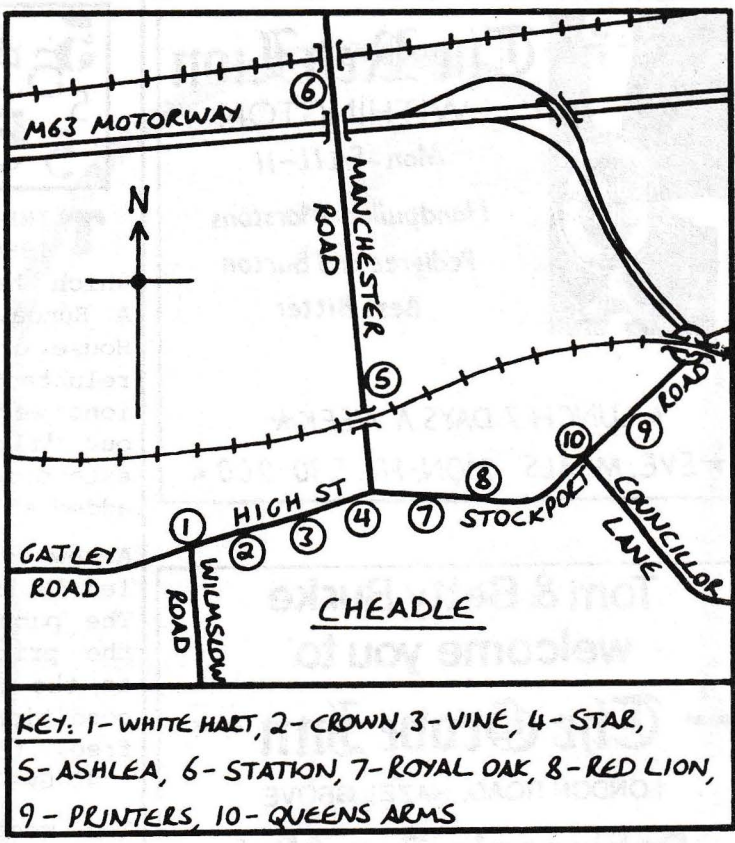
Camra Calling

NOT too much space this month, so a brief run-down on forthcoming events.

ONLY two Monday social (we always give Bank Holidays a miss). On 12 we are the Station in Didsbury. A good turnout, please for this threatened pub; and on 19th there is a two-way social in Offerton - 9.00pm at the Strawberry Gardens and 10.00pm at the Victoria (will Coach House beers be available?)

The branch meeting is at the Arden Arms on Thursday 8th. A prompt 8.00pm start please. The Stagger is on Friday 16th and consists of a minibus trip round parts of Wythenshawe and Adswold. We meet at the Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.00pm. Phone Tracey on 456 6354 to book a seat.

Pub of the month at the Longsight is on Thursday 22nd and on Friday 30th we have something a bit different - a camping trip to Plassey Brewery and campsite in North Wales. Saturday night will be spent under canvas at Wem in Shropshire and Sunday Lunch at the Rising Sun home brew pub at Shraleay Brook. Phone Tracey if you are interested.



So ended what was, all in all, one of the better of recent staggers for beer quality and it didn't even rain!

Cheadle Kingsway Sports Club

1st Cheadle Beer Festival

at
*The Sports Ground,
Kingsway, Cheadle*
on

Saturday 31st August 1991 at 2.00 pm
Entrance Fee £1.00
including a Pint Pot

*Come along & taste many Traditional Beers
B.B.Q. etc. available, Entertainment*

The Red Lion

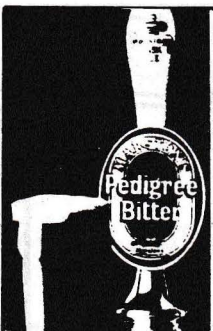
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YEARS AGO

TIME for Change" was the front page headline in August 1986, a reference to our antiquated licensing laws which had remained very largely unaltered since 1921. A Sunday Trading Bill had just been thrown out by the House of Commons, and it seemed that the Government was reluctant to risk another defeat, even though no alterations were planned for Sunday hours. When we finally got our 'flexible hours' several years later, the one hour extension on a Sunday was the result of an amendment added at a late stage by the House of Lords.

A new series of articles was started in the summer, entitled 'Holiday Ale' - this month it was the turn of Anglesey. The pubs referred to haven't changed all that much, but the prices have, and the Dinam Arms at Gaerwen, quoted as the cheapest Burtonwood at 67p, no longer sells cask conditioned beer. (The list of pubs is still available, free, from P.J. Levison at a slightly different address - 40 Gwelfor, Cemaes Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd, LL67 ONL).

The monthly "Stagger" was an interesting one a visit to all 9 Holt's pubs in the branch area - this was to mark the solemn occasion of the centenary of the death of the founder of the brewery, Joseph Holt. The Grafton was not included, as it had been demolished, re-sited, and rebuilt, and it was not quite ready to re-open.

There were two other references to Holts in 1986 - the Griffin, Heaton Mersey, had changed from tenancy to management, and this had resulted in a price reduction to 62p for bitter and 58p for mild. There were plans to build a new pub off Broom Lane, Levenshulme. The new pub, of course, is the Sidings, which has been open for some time now, so perhaps the time is ripe for another crawl, and it could now include the Grafton and the Sidings. Although renowned for selling the country's cheapest beers, Holts recently announced that their profits were up from £4.6M to a record £5.7M.

Finally, it was reported that Ralph and Jean Heatley, after many years managing the Gateway, East Didsbury, were leaving to take over the tenancy of the much smaller Crown in Cheadle. Both are Hydes pubs and the Gateway was to undergo a 'virtual re-structuring'.

New Brew News

LAATEST product to roll out of Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery is Dobbin's Real Ginger Beer. On sale at the Kings Arms and elsewhere (including a surprise appearance at last month's Ashton Canals Festival), it's a superbly refreshing drink, but take care, as it has an original gravity of 1050 and 6% alcohol by volume. The beer is temporarily replacing Yakima Grande Porter, which is now unlikely to be brewed again until the autumn.

Meanwhile the beers from the new Coach House Brewery in Warrington came on stream last month and, initially are going into 60 Greenalls pubs and the local free trade. The two beers are Coach House Bitter and Innkeepers Special Reserve. We will bring you news of local outlets as soon as we get it.

More Hydes

Further to our previous report, the new Hydes pub in Sale is on Manor Avenue and not Main Avenue as reported last month. In addition, Hydes have bought another 10 pubs off Bass, the nearest locally being the Jolly Hatters on Stockport Road, Denton. The remainder are in the Burnley, Bury and Bolton areas. A SAE to OT will get you the full list.

Bob & Trudie Welcome You To

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GATLEY

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

BY RHYS JONES

CHORLTON-cum-Hardy, just outside our main circulation area, has no fewer than three real ale gains to report. The **Feathers** on Barlow Moor Road has handpumped Chesters Bitter; the **Grove** on Upper Chorlton Road, leased and renamed (formerly the **Seymour**) by the Boddington PubCo, has handpumped Boddingtons Bitter; while the **Trevor Arms** on Beech Road, probably the pick of the bunch, has Greenalls Bitter, Original and Stones Bitter, all on handpump. Also in Chorlton, the **Royal Oak** has gained handpumped Castle Eden Ale, as has **Mr Thomas's Chop House** in the City Centre, while the **Oxnoble** in the Centre has added Boddingtons Bitter on handpump.

It's a great pleasure to welcome back handpumped Boddingtons Mild at the **Oddfellows** in Openshaw; the beer has been reintroduced following a change of licensee, and was on very good form when recently sampled at a planning meeting for Openshaw's Octoberfest beer festival.

The **Kings Arms** in Chorlton-on-Medlock is now selling traditional cider from Hartland's of Eldersfield, Gloucestershire; this joins a wide range of quality imported (mainly Belgian) beers as part of licensee Simon Finch's policy to provide a choice of first rate drinks to complement the excellent beers brewed on site. Meanwhile the (mainly Irish) folk sessions at the King's are back, now on Monday nights not Wednesdays; they take place in the back room.

Efforts by Bob and Madeleine Gregory at the **Swinging Sporran** to extend their range of beers are meeting a negative response from the brewery. In a recent letter to one of the pub's customers, Malcolm Ditchburn, Sales Development Manager for Matthew Brown, who seemingly now administer the pub as the local arm of Scottish & Newcastle, laid down the law: "tenancies are required to purchase draught beer and cider exclusively from ourselves...the guest ale clause does not apply". All he could offer was to install an extra handpump for a single S & N brewed guest beer, including such "not so familiar" beers as Youngers IPA! (given the obvious demand for proper guest beers in this pub, Mr Ditchburn does not seem to be doing much to develop sales at this particular outlet, despite his impressive title - ed.)

The only crumb of comfort is that Bob and Madeleine have graciously been permitted to hold an in-pub beer festival. Featuring up to 20 beers, with Yates from Cumbria top of the bill, this will run from Monday 21st to Wednesday 23rd October, thus acting as a lead-in to CAMRA's festival at Openshaw College on Friday and Saturday of the same week.

Finally, the **Stage** in Ardwick has reopened but no longer sells real ale, but the **Alexandra** in Bradford is reported closed following a fire.





Name the Beer Competition

VIRTUOSO brewer Brendan Dobbin, the driving force behind the famous West Coast Brewery, based at the Kings Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock, is producing a special one-off beer to celebrate the first Openshaw Beer Festival. The beer will be a premium strength bitter, and is likely to be very hoppy and clean tasting. CAMRA is inviting local drinkers to name the beer before the festival.

To win, all you have to do is devise the most appropriate name for the beer. The judgement of the organisers is final, but one hint that we can offer, is that the Festival logo is a locomotive wheel, and Openshaw is renowned for its former production of locos.

The prize will be 2 season tickets giving free admission to all the sessions of the festival, plus either free CAMRA membership for a year or 5 pints worth of beer tokens.

Entries should be handed to CAMRA members, or posted to George Symes, Openshaw Octoberfest, Name the Beer Competition, 77 George Street West, Stockport, SK1 4HZ.

Contributors to this issue: Stuart Ballantyne, Rhys Jones, John Clarke, Peter Edwardson, Paul Felton, Phil Levison, George Symes and John Tune.

Copy date for next issue: Friday 16th August. NB early date.

Details of postal subscriptions, advertising rates and CAMRA membership available from the addresses below.

Manchester Camra Darts Tournament

THE first Openshaw Beer Festival will be the venue for the first CAMRA sponsored Manchester Darts Tournament. Intended to be an enjoyable change from usual pub-league games, this will be arranged in separate tournaments for each of the sessions of the Festival, with lots of prizes. Scratch teams are, of course, eligible to enter, and ladies teams will be most welcome. Both London and Log End boards will be in use.

All you need to do to enter, is pre-book with the Tournament Organiser, Ian Saunders, 20 Farlands Drive, East Didsbury, Manchester M20 0GB and send a cheque for £5 per team of four, to cover the cost of prizes. (Cheques payable to 'Openshaw Beer Festival', please). Pre-booked teams have guaranteed entry to the festival with no queueing.

Parties of 8 or more qualify for free admission for the organiser.

As well as the darts, other fun pub games will be in evidence. With food at all sessions and soft drinks for drivers what more could you want? Oh, alright, more than 20 traditional beers from all over the UK, and real cider and perry. Come and join us, you'll love it.

Openshaw College: Friday 25 October (6-11pm)
Saturday 26 October (11.30am-4pm & 6-11pm)

THE Boars Head
MARKET PLACE STOCKPORT
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