

**STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA**

OPENING TIMES

CAMRA FREE

OCTOBER 1991

**No:
90**

CASK ALE BOOMS



Sales of real ale are booming - and that's official!

Whilst the recession has taken its toll in many sectors of the licensed trade, an authoritative survey by the Morning Advertiser, the licensed trade's daily paper, has shown that some products are faring better than others with cask conditioned ales at the head of the field leaving keg beers to take the knocks.

The MA survey showed that in the past 12 months, cask beers increased in popularity by 59% - by comparison 30% of landlords thought that keg beers had taken a drop. Even some of the big brewers are now admitting that cask is the big growth area for the future with both Whitbread and Courage reporting impressively increasing sales for their traditional beers.

Nationally, the general picture seems to be that although the beer market in total is declining each year, cask beers are growing at something like 3% per annum. That might not sound much but accounts for something like 1 million barrels a year.

Locally many of the new-wave micro breweries are struggling to keep up with demand with firms such as West Coast, Oak and Moorhouses all having had to take steps to increase production over the past year. The boom in interest has also been reflected in CAMRA membership which has now passed the 30,000 mark for the first time in our 21-year history.

Despite this however, there are still a minority of local pubs that do not offer their customers a choice of the real thing and remain awash in a sea of keg. Keg is yesterdays beer - don't be left behind by the second real ale revolution, if your pub doesn't sell real ale, ask for cask - and find out why.



The festival will feature over 23 'real' beers, ranging from milds and stout/porters to biters, best biters and premium ale, with a range of traditional ciders and perry, with games, products, good food available at each session, and soft drinks available for drivers. The festival opens on the Friday from 6 - 11pm and on Saturday from 11.30am to 4pm and from 6 - 11pm. It is the first festival to be held in East Manchester, and looks set to be a tremendous success. Admission is a mere 50p on Saturday lunchtime, and £1 in the evenings. **SPECIAL FESTIVAL PROGRAM INSIDE THIS ISSUE!**

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Free House News



The Strawberry Duck in Clayton

The guest mild policy at the Woolpack in Stockport certainly seems to have paid off with licensee Bob Dickinson reporting impressively increased sales. Recent offerings have included the wonderful Batemans Mild from Lincolnshire - the home-made pump-clip said it all "Batemans Mild - Yumm!"

Another local freehouse branching out on the mild front is the increasingly impressive Stanley Arms on Newbridge Lane, also Stockport.

Guest milds have long been the order of the day here but now owner Mike Belsham has gone one further and commissioned two specially brewed house milds - Stanleys Mild a 3.5%ABV brew retailing at 88p a pint and its stronger stablemate Oilles Mild (5.5%, £1.10) were due to be launched on 3rd October when the name of the mystery brewer was also to be revealed.

These beers are exclusive to the Staley Arms and while initially on a trial basis stand a good chance of becoming permanent if they sell well. Continuing the Stanley's value for money policy, Mike has also negotiated a deal with the Sowerby Bridge-based Ryburn Brewery which will see its beers on sale at prices ranging from 96p for the standard bitter to £1.10 for the top-of-the-range 5.5%ABV Stabber Bitter.

The Ryburn brewery are also introducing a new mild - again for the Stanley Arms. Ambleton Mild is a 1033og/3.2%ABV beer made without caramel but from mild malt, chocolate malt and roasted barley.

Meanwhile, over in Clayton, The Strawberry Duck on Crabtree Lane continues with its guest beer policy with Mitchells Bitter making a recent appearance.

We also understand that the Strawberry's owner is about to spread his wings with the purchase of another pub which could also lead to the establishment of the county's latest micro-brewer. More news on this when we have it.

East Manchester is also about to gain another freehouse in the surprising form of the Grey Mare on Exeter Close, Longsight (it is in fact hidden away behind the derelict Fort Ardwick flats). The pub has been sold off by the Boddington PubCo and is being bought by the sitting tenant. Boddies beer will remain on sale although the appearance of Holts cannot be ruled out.

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OPENING TIMES OCTOBER 1991

RHYTHM and BOOZE



By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

The first edition of our new music feature produced a lot of positive feedback - as ever suggestions for pubs and bands to review are always welcome, just send your letters to the editorial address. The second instalment of our local music diary concentrates once again on Stockport Town Centre - this time the Bull's Head in the Market Place, and this month's 'featured artists' are the Bamford Blues Band and the Soul Bandits.

As any enterprising landlord will know, one of the best ways to fill a pub on a Monday evening is to provide first class live entertainment (preferably free!). The Bull's Head has a recipe for success as it features live music every Monday-Thursday, with the Bamford Blues Band playing a residency every Monday evening. The BBB are a five piece outfit featuring Paul Bamford, the founder member, on guitar, with Pete Olsen (vocals and harmonica), Ronny Poole (bass), Paul Minshell (keyboard) and Brendan Day (who also plays with the London-based Steve Gibbons Band) on drums.

The BBB has been in existence in one format or another for many years, and you can hear a couple of recordings by them featured on a compilation of Manchester R&B on "Up Jumped the Blues". On these two excellent tracks, the band's vocalist is female (Lynne Bamford) and the sound and style today is just as raw and professional. They have supported blues celebrities such as Lowell Fullsom, Champion Jack Dupree, and earlier this year played at the National Burnley Blues Festival.

From slow blues to up tempo rock and roll, the Bamford Blues Band excel. On this particular evening, the band began with "Every Day I have the Blues", and followed with excellent versions of Jimmy Reed classics. We feared the worst when a member of the audience was encouraged to take over the microphone for a number, but our fear of a Karaoke was not realised, and the female vocals provided good variety. All in all well worth seeing, and if you can't manage Mondays, the BBB also play at the Bakers Vaults (also Stockport Market Place) on the first Sunday of each month.

Thursdays at the Bulls Head means the Soul Bandits. These are a seven-piece outfit (vocals, drums, guitar, bass, two saxophones and trumpet) who play a lively mixture of R'n'B and Motown-style soul.

Anyone present at the first session of this years Stockport Beer Festival could not help but be impressed by the quality of the performance, and the well deserved rapturous reception earned by the band. Since May there has been a notable change in the vocalist, but the style and professionalism remain. This evening's performance kicked off with "Bare Footin" and included old favourites by Wilson Pickett and Jackie Wilson. Members of the audience couldn't resist a dance, and even joined in the occasional chorus. If you like soul and saxophone, you'll love the Soul Bandits - but be early, standing (or dancing) room only by 9.00pm.

DEADLINE... DEADLINE... DEADLINE

Due to staff being committed to working at the Openshaw Beer Festival, and a much earlier publication date for November's Opening Times, we must ask for all articles etc. to be submitted to John Clarke by 15th October

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STAGGER

with Peter Edwardson

WYTHENSHAWE

For our August Stagger, a small group of us gathered for a minibus trip around Wythenshawe and its environs, an area that over the years has perhaps been rather neglected by CAMRA members. This was maybe because of the somewhat unsavoury reputation it had acquired, and we were interested to find out whether this would be justified or not. As always, the views expressed are purely those of individual CAMRA members on one particular evening.

Our first call was the Griffin in Heald Green, a modern Holts pub in uncompromising, boxy 1960s style. From the outside it is not particularly appealing, but inside it is an excellent and genuinely welcoming pub, with a large comfortable lounge, a smoke room and a plain vault at the rear, where we chose to drink. A noteworthy feature was the choice of standard and Manchester dartboards. The beer, dispensed by free-flow electric pumps, offered the excellent value for money expected in Holts pubs, and both mild and bitter were in good condition, the mild being slightly the better of the two, although both beers would have benefitted from being a couple of degrees cooler.

We then moved on to the Beech Tree on Outwood Road, a Whitbread pub well hidden away amidst housing

estates to the south of Heald Green. It had been converted to a one-bar layout at some time in the past, and had obviously been recently renovated to give a pleasant but slightly bland impression. We all plumped for the Castle Eden Ale, which was above average; nobody tried the Chesters Bitter, which was also available.

Moving across the Manchester boundary into Wythenshawe, we reached the Tudor Tavern on Peel Hall Road, a large 1950s Grand Met pub retaining separate vault and lounge. Again the lounge had recently been redecorated and reupholstered. Two real ales were available, Ruddles Bitter and Websters Bitter, and for once the Websters was not the worst real ale in the pub, being acceptable if rather bland, while the Ruddles had the harsh metallic tang sadly nowadays often characteristic of this once excellent beer, and some of us found it undrinkable.

Whitbread's Portway on Portway was fairly similar, a big two-bar 1950s pub with a surprisingly smart lounge. The beers here were Chesters Bitter and Boddingtons Bitter, both of which were of average quality. As the evening wore on, the pubs were becoming busier, and here there were only a few seats still available.

We then continued to two pubs on Greenwood Road. First was Tetley's Greenwood Tree, which from the outside looked like a 1950s school, with an unusual central tower. The live entertainment in the lounge gained more marks for effort than accomplishment, but even so it was standing room only, so we sought refuge in the fairly spartan vault. The only real ale available was Tetley Bitter, which was about average.

The next pub was Hydes' Anvil, where we hoped for an improvement in beer quality and atmosphere in an independent brewery house. Sadly we were disappointed - the grim 1960s building scarcely looked open, and inside there were only a handful of people scattered around the oddly-designed interior, with its strangely sticky leatherette uphol-

THE BEER HOUSE



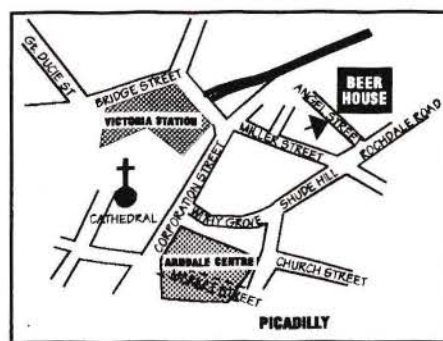
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HOT AND COLD FOOD

OPENING TIMES OCTOBER 1991

stery. The electrically pumped Hydes Bitter was acceptable enough, but the Mild was vinegary and totally undrinkable, no doubt due to low sales. It was changed without complaint, but still left a sour taste in the mouth.

From one of the low points of Hydes' tied estate, we moved on to one of the peaks, the Horse and Farrier in Gatley. This is a former coaching inn with a number of cosy wood-panelled rooms arranged around the central bar, and its traditional atmosphere provided a strong contrast with the modernist pubs of Wythenshawe. Another contrast was that, unlike the Anvil, it was packed! The Hydes Light was well above average, while the Bitter was the best beer of the night.

Returning in the direction of Stockport, we paused at the Malt Shovels in Adswold, a modern two-bar Grand Met pub similar in style to many of those in Wythenshawe, with the same style of renovated lounge, where the most noteworthy feature we spotted was a slot machine offering the chance to win a cuddly toy. Nobody tried the Websters Bitter, while the Wilsons Bitter was a little above average.

Our final stop was Hydes' Cross Keys on Adswold Road. This is a large 1930s pub with a bowling green, remodelled in recent years but still retaining a variety of separate areas including a distinct vault. The Mild and Bitter were both above average. All in all a very reasonable pub, unfortunately our visit was spoilt by the fact that, due to police pressure on drinking-up time, they stopped serving at about 10.50 - but made no announcement to that effect. I am far from convinced of the necessity to stop serving early to comply with the law, but even if a licensee feels he must, surely he should make sure that his customers, including casual visitors, are left in no doubt on the subject.

The general conclusion at the end of the evening was that, while the better Wythenshawe pubs were considerably more attractive and welcoming than we had been led to believe, to get a good pint of beer in a traditional atmosphere you would be well advised to go just outside the boundaries of the area, to pubs such as the Griffin or the Horse and Farrier.

Old Shilling Bitter

Last month saw the introduction of a new cask beer into selected pubs run by the Boddington PubCo. 'Old Shilling' is a low-gravity (3.1%ABV) beer specially commissioned by the PubCo to sell at a value for money price and, in effect, to compete with Holts. The beer retails at 89p a pint and with a price rise due from Holts in the next couple of months, the two beers should then be on a par, in price terms at least.

Unusually, the specification for the beer was worked back from the intended retail price and a couple of brewers were then approached to come up with a suitable product. As to the source of the beer, the official line is that it is simply produced by 'a regional brewer', although Opening Times understands that this is probably not situated a million miles from Mansfield...

The PubCo marketing manager Bill Gosling has described the beer as a "quality 'hoppy' bitter with the traditional values of an English pint at a price that drinkers will appreciate". Sales are apparently far exceeding expectations and, whilst most outlets are to the north of the city, it should be available in the following local pubs: **The Union** and **The Polygon**, both **Levenshulme**, **The Victoria** in **Burnage** & **The Grey Horse**, **Reddish**.

On the subject of the Pubco, plans to convert one of their Stockport outlets into a free of tie 'Ale House', along the lines of the Kings Arms in Salford have run aground due to the poor structural state of the pub in question.

The Smithfield, Openshaw

Last month we reported that the Smithfield (ex-*Locomotive*) on Ashton Old Road closed due to financial problems. We are pleased to report that the pub has in fact now re-opened, although this is restricted to evenings from 7.30pm.

The financial problems, it seems, are other peoples rather than the pub's - following the closure of the nearby Napoleon and Gorton Loco Pub, trade in the area has plummeted with lunchtimes particularly badly hit.

The tenancy of the Smithfield is currently up for sale - interested parties should contact the Boddington Pubco.

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WE'RE IN THE GOOD BEER
GUIDE 1992

The Good Beer

Hot on the heels of the 1991 sell out, the 1992 edition of the Good Beer Guide goes on sale at the end of this month as a prelude to CAMRA's 21st birthday year. The Guide has long been seen as CAMRA's flagship, mixing solid campaigning points with entertaining features, the latest information from the brewing world and Britain's best pub guide. This year's edition, once again generously sponsored by British Coal, is no exception.

The breweries section continues to expand, such is the growth in demand for real ale, and many new brews are featured to whet the appetite. In addition more historical information on the breweries has been added and CAMRA's tasting panels have been out and about once again - will their often controversial comments tie in with your opinion of your favourite tippie?

Once again there are a variety of special features that make the Guide more than just a guide but a good read as well:

- * If you're a survivor of the Red Revolution - or was it a failed coup? one feature you'll want to read is Brian Glover's nostalgic glance back at those dreadful keg beers. Do you remember who claimed "It's what your right arm's for"? or the pint that thought it was a quart?

- * On the other hand, if you fancy a night in, take a closer look at TV pubs with top critic Hilary Kingsley, while following beer writer Barrie Pepper's advice on what to drink at home.

- * Roger Protz welcomes with open arms the rebirth of stout and porter (always popular at Stockport Beer Festival)

- * Beer hunter Michael Jackson chaperones drinkers who want ale, not lager, when abroad.

Of course, campaigning points remain at the forefront: new long leases for tenants, inter-brewery supply deals and the latest wave of brewery closures are all put under the spotlight.

At the end of the day though, this is a book about that most treasured of British institutions - pubs. Looked at by many as the pub lovers essential reference book, this is where the guide really comes into its own. With detailed descriptions of over 5000 pubs the length and breadth of the country, there will be something for everyone, from basic inner-city boozers to thatched gems in the heart of the countryside. They're all there: pubs with food, pubs with gardens, pubs with accommodation and pubs where you can take the kids. This year there are more than 1500 new entries from the previous edition.



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GOOD BEER GUIDE

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GOOD BEER GUIDE 1992

EDITED BY JEFF EVANS

GOOD BEER GUIDE

On the occasion of the Campaign for Real Ale's 21st birthday, the Good Beer Guide is once again your key to the door of nearly 5,000 great pubs.

Here are Britain's best pubs, researched week-in, week-out by true enthusiasts: pubs serving meals; pubs for families; pubs with gardens; pubs offering accommodation and, for the first time, pubs with no-smoking areas.

Above all, pubs with the best beer in Britain.


Yet this is more than just a pub guide; it's also an important reference work, with all the information on Britain's breweries and the beers they produce, including tasting notes to help you find a favourite.

Plus, whatever happened to those awful keg beers? We take a closer look. What to drink at home - and where to find real ale abroad. And how do our TV pubs rate? Do they measure up to Good Beer Guide standards? Whether it's for the bookshelf or the glove compartment, the Good Beer Guide allows you to join in the birthday celebrations.

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The Good Beer Guide 1992, edited by Jeff Evans, contains details of nearly 5,000 pubs, including for the first time, a guide to pubs with no smoking areas. It provides an important reference work with all the details of Britain's Breweries, including the famous - and controversial - tasting notes.

As we went to press there were plans in hand to launch the 'GBG' at the Openshaw Oktoberfest where it will of course be on sale. You should also be able to pick it up in most good bookshops and selected pubs. Alternatively you can order it by post - just send a cheque (payable to CAMRA Stockport and South Manchester) for £7.99 to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG.

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OPENING TIMES

LETTERS



From Rhys Jones:

As reported in August, the Westons Special Vintage cider at the Olde Vic in Edgeley was indeed excellent. What you didn't report, though, was the price. At £1.64 a pint, this was not only significantly above what other Manchester area freehouses charge for traditional cider (typically around £1.20 - often less): more importantly, it was at a level which makes even an enthusiastic cider drinker such as myself think more than twice about going to sample the pub's next guest cider.

It would be a very great shame if this latest enterprising move of an enterprising pub were to come to naught as a result of an unrealistic pricing policy.

From Craig Gordon:

As a CAMRA member I am an avid reader of *Opening Times* whenever I get the opportunity and find it both interesting and informative. So I immediately noticed that the September issue is somewhat different - superior paper quality and much improved typesetting. However, I was disappointed at the much reduced content of the magazine.

My reason for writing however is to highlight the omission of one of the best boozers in Stockport, consistently overlooked in your magazine when reviewing Stockport town centre pubs. I refer to the Boars Head on the Market Place.

This month's OT article of Rhythm'n'Booze is a point in fact. The popularity of the pubs on the Market Place is greatly dependent on the bands playing there. For example, the most popular venue on Thursday nights is the Bakers Vaults, on Monday and Tuesday the Bulls Head - they all compete equally at weekends. However Wednesday nights seem to be most popular at the Boars with the Best Band playing to their large and enthusiastic following. Yet this went unreported in your article.

Good music at the Boars is not limited to Wednesday nights. Check out the Rise on Fridays and Clive Stewart on Saturday nights - and unlike other pubs on the Market Place the entertainment is free, i.e. there is no collection for the bands.

The Boars obviously suffers in comparison to the aesthetically superior Queens Head but scores on its friendly barstaff service and atmosphere and on the quality of its beers. The pride the landlord has in his cellarman's skills can be seen by using the full 20 minutes drinking-up time when every night he religiously draws his lines.

You may also like to mention in your magazine that a pint of Old Brewery Bitter is still only 99p, a price being held until August 1992! how many sub-£1 pints in Stockport? The pub is due for refurbishment in November. I feel that the pub has much merit and deserves to be judged equally with other town centre pubs.

(Editors note - thanks for your comments about our new look. With the introduction of photographs and the new layout it was inevitable that there would be some reduction in content but on balance we thought that the improved presentation more than compensated for this. The points about the Boars Head are certainly true and I'm sure that Chris and Sue will be covering this excellent pub before too long. As to the quality of the beer, I can assure you that this has not been overlooked as is evidenced by the inclusion of the Boars Head in the 1992 Good Beer Guide.)

Seen at the Bar...

At last, a use for lager! Sue Haskey, Catering Field Trainer for Peter Walker, writes in the Allied subsidiary's internal newspaper "Walker News": "If you need to cool a barbecue down, instead of spraying with water, shake a bottle of lager and spray with that."

From: T.J.Jordan

I think I've found one of the best pints of bitter in Manchester. It has been under my nose for years. And it is at the Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, Oxford Road. It was Theakston Best Bitter and it was cold, an eighth of an inch from the top of the glass for £1! They also sell Bass, Tetley Bitter and Burton Bitter. Also, what must be the cheapest "Pub Grub" around.

The steward's name is Graham and he is a real ale buff, so is Clive Harris the SU manager, he drinks in the Star in Broughton. Well worth a visit but 'phone first as they open odd times.

Ask about the sparklers. Graham says there is no spillage!

From David Ball (this is in fact a copy of a letter sent to the Controller of the erstwhile KFM Radio - ed.)

Tonight, as usual, our Friday evening meal was served to an 8pm finish. As the last of the peanut risotto disappeared and the dregs of the first bottle of Cotes du Rhone were drained, we retired to the drawing room in time for the first bars of the weekend's real music.

Has I tuned to the wrong frequency? Has Louis Bonard increased the alcoholic content of his wine? What the sh*t was happening here? NO BLUES ON A FRIDAY NIGHT.

So I telephone...I'm told most of the staff have been sacked...something about a station in Stoke-on-Trent...but I don't live in Stoke, neither does anyone else in Stockport.

The Norman Beaker Show had, for me, earned the ultimate accolade - it had supplanted Radio 2's Paul Jones R&B Show as the premier music programme of its type. It was good, it was original in its presentation and, above all, it was local.

As KFM was linked to the Stockport Beer Festival, I have taken the liberty of 'copying in' John Clarke on this letter, particularly in view of the fact that September's "Opening Times" is concerned with Live Music and its promotion. (Another lost cause to champion John?) (Pah! - ed.)

Good luck Andrew, good luck and thank you Norman - may you never be forced to appear in a Heineken commercial.

(Editor's note - whilst the points made in this letter are not within the remit of *Opening Times*, the decision was taken to print it as real ale and real music do often go hand in hand and the sentiments expressed do seem to be widely held locally. I'm sure that our new music column will be catching up with Norman before too long...)

THREE CROWNS

It is pleasing to report a pub refurbishment that has been a successful change for the better. Boddington PubCo's £85,000 revamp of the Three Crowns, Manchester Road, Heaton Norris falls into this happy category.

External improvement includes a fascia of roofing tiles replacing the weatherboards which surround the flat roof. Door windows now contain new etched glass three crowns.

Internal improvements include re-upholstering, new furnishings and redecoration. The large best room and large vault (thank goodness this has been retained) have both gained from the use of stained glass and wood to provide low partitions which help to break up the big room areas. The vault is home to mens and womens dart teams and to a pool team. A recent darts marathon raised £700 for Stepping Hill Hospital and an empty champagne bottle raises money for a pensioners Christmas meal.

In the lounge a stage is retained for entertainment on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The stage also serves for local dart league competition finals. The walls are adorned with prints, the most interesting of which are historic photographs of Stockport.

Good quality lunchtime food is available, all of which can be washed down by the Boddles Mild (£1.01 room, 99p vault), Bitter (£1.10/£1.07) and a guest beer Castle Eden Ale (£1.15), this latter presumably introduced to compete with their nearby Hinds Head although we hear that the pub's seasoned Boddles fans have given it something of a thumbs down. The new licensees are John and Margaret Boslem who have taken over management after spells at Manchester's Old Garratt and Worsley's Bridgewater.



LOCALLEY

TETLEY
BITTER

BRITAIN'S BEST
LOVED BITTER

15 Years Ago

SEPTEMBER 1976

by Phil Levison

Last month's regular features covered Opening Times for September 1986, and included with that 1986 issue was a reprint of the Stockport Stagger in September 1976. It was thought that there might be some interesting comparisons, going back 15 years, as well as the usual 5 years.

So in 1976 the crawl started at the Crown Inn on Heaton Lane - the description of the different rooms doesn't seem to have changed much, but Oh! those prices - Boddington's Mild was 18 1/2p. a pint and the Bitter was 20 1/2p. (By 1986 it was 67p. and 70p.) Next stop was the George on the A6, with Higson's Mild and Bitter at 22p. and 24p. respectively, and draught Bass was also available. (By 1986 the Bass had gone and the Higson's was 67/72p. A 1991 visit to the George revealed Boddington's Bitter only at £1.12p.)

Carrying on up the A6 to the Manchester Arms, the Robinson's Best Mild and Best Bitter was 23p. and 25p., by 1986 it was 69/73p. and now it's £1/1.06. At least with pubs like the Crown and the Manchester Arms, it seems that the only thing that really changes is the prices, and there are a surprising number of pubs in Stockport like that.

There are two that have changed though, and one is the Turners Vaults on Little Underbank - in 1976 it was selling electrically pumped Tetley's Mild and Bitter, and by 1986 it was keg only. Nowadays, of course, it's Sam Smith's cask beers, and the brewery has just won a major award for refurbishment of the pub. Also in 1976, the "recently modernised" Midway on Newbridge Lane had a choice of Bass, Youngers, Wilsons, Boddingtons and Pollards. By 1986 there had been an almost complete change to Pedigree, Thwaites, Jennings, Tetley, Burtonwood and Boddingtons. Now in 1991, and no longer a Free House, you will still find something a bit unusual - John Smith's Bitter, together with its two 2rare2 stablemates Magnet Ale and Courage Directors.

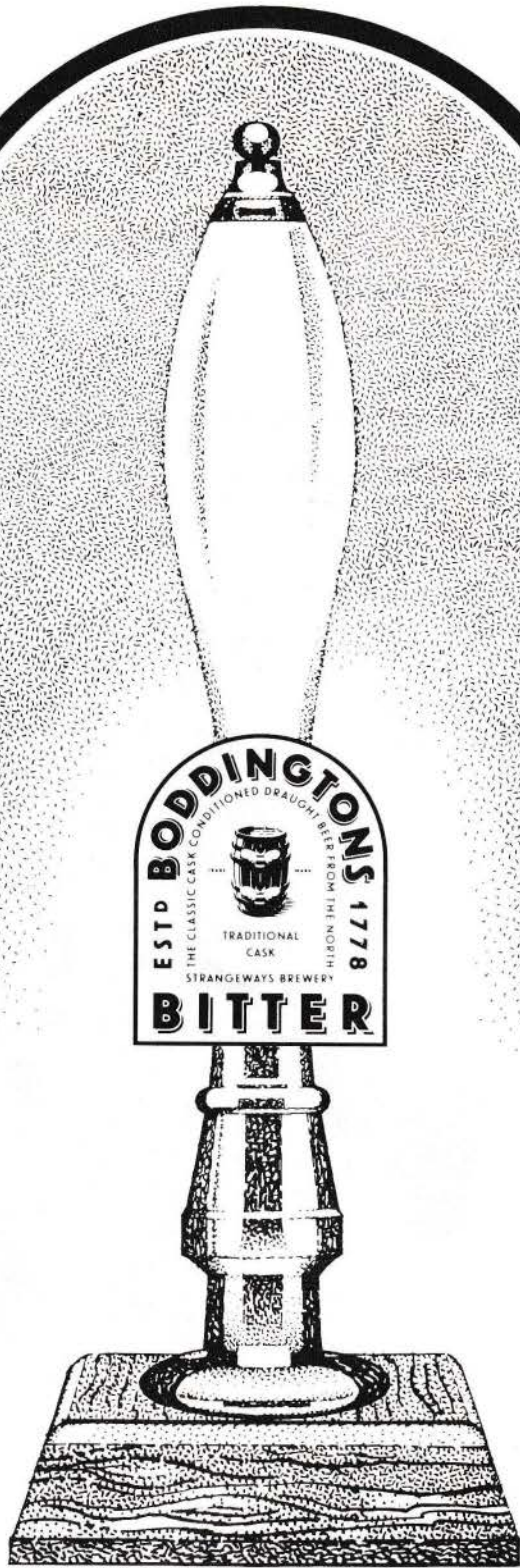
So looking back now on that 1976 Stagger, a typical pint price was just over 20p., and ten years later it had reached about 70p. Generally speaking now, the £1. pint is behind us, unless you're lucky enough to be a regular Holt's drinker where the magic £1 is still some way ahead. That earlier Opening Times cost 5p. then (so that's something that has come down in price) and the Editor was Anna Greenhalgh - I wonder if she's still around, or still campaigning?

Revenge of the Party 7!

Friends of the Flat Earth Society and supporters of the Greenalls Appreciation Society (yes, they really did exist!) will doubtless be flocking to join the latest pressure group to emerge on the pub scene - the campaign to "Free the Watney's Party Seven" has been founded by one Ben Byram-Wigfield (we are not making this up) from Great Malvern.

Aiming to promote the reintroduction of the infamous 7-pint can of Watneys at its fizzy worst, Ben tells us that the Party Seven is "a great British institution" (sounds like he ought to be in one - ed.) which is recognized universally as a "free invitation to any party, and as a post-modern display of pop-art in its most popular and utilitarian form."

Ben does however face one small snag - Watneys don't brew any more...



THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER

MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

Two East Manchester pubs, both long-standing keg outlets until recently, have quickly lost their sole real ale - Bass Mild from the Crossroads in Bradford and John Smith's Magnet from the Honeycomb in Beswick. Session bitters would seem to have been more appropriate vehicles for the introduction of real ale (readers may recall a Stagger in the area last year when the first pints of Magnet had to be "pulled through" when we called at 9.30 pm on a Friday night.)

The Bradford Hotel, Mill Street, in Bradford has gained a handpump selling Chesters Mild; let's hope that lasts a little longer. Again in Beswick, the Corner Shop is now all keg, but the General Birch has gained handpumped Chesters Mild.

In Levenshulme, Fiddlers Green has lost Ruddles bitter, leaving Websters Bitter as the only real ale (and thus leaving, you might think, precious little reason to visit), while closer to town on the A6, the Farmers Arms in Longsight has gained handpumped Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter (whoopee! - ed.).

In Chorlton-cum-Hardy, the Beech has added Robert Cain's Bitter on handpump while Tommy Ducks in the City Centre has handpumped Stones Bitter and the new Coachman's Bitter from Warrington, although a reported lunchtime tasting of the latter found it decidedly "off".

The Beer House in Manchester's Rochdale Road has announced at least one, usually two Belgian Beers on draught from next month - including at some point, a trappist brew.

Finally, John Smith's George and Dragon in Ardwick has Tetley Bitter as a guest beer on handpump.

Real Ale in Clubs

Opening Times is always on the lookout for clubs which sell real ale - if you know of one drop us a line with full details. In the meantime we can report that Heaton Moor Conservative Club sells Boddies Bitter plus another cask beer. Boddies is also sold at the Salisbury Club in Brinnington and the Newbridge Lane Conservative club.

Although it's out of our area, also worth a mention for sheer novelty value is the Cosmo Bingo Club in Stalybridge which sells Boddies Bitter and Flowers IPA. Is this the only real ale bingo club in the country?

OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ 477 1973 (home) 831 7222 x 3411 (wk). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged. Design and Origination by Heatonian Publishing, 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport SK4 2NP

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CAMRA CALLING!

There is a particularly wide and varied programme of events this month with the highlight, of course, being the Openshaw Beer Festival on Friday and Saturday, 25th and 26th.

On Monday 7th there is one of our regular socials, this time at the Crown, Heaton Lane. As with all Monday Socials, this starts at 9.00pm. The branch meeting is the same week on Thursday 10th and will be held at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. This starts at 8.00pm. Because of the full agenda this month, Stagger is on the following night and will cover the Heaton Norris area. We meet at 7.00pm at the Bridge Inn on Georges Road or you can join at 8.30 at the Silver Jubilee on Belmont Way.

On Monday 14th the social is at the Sidings, Broom Lane, Levenshulme and this is followed on Thursday 17th by a visit to Cain's Brewery in Liverpool. Phone Tracey for details about this one. The very next night we have our annual trip to Stoke Beer Festival with the coach leaving the Royal Oak, Didsbury at 5.45, the Crown, Heaton Lane at 6.00 and the Bulls Head, Hazel Grove at 6.15.

The social on Monday 21st is at the Coach and Horses, Belle Vue and, of course, this week ends with the Openshaw Beer Festival on 25th and 26th. We unwind on Monday 28th with a social at the Grapes, Castle Street, Edgeley and on Friday 1st November we are running a special social for new members which will be a minibus trip around some of the best country pubs in the northern part of Stockport. We leave the Royal Oak in Didsbury at 7.00pm and the Crown, Heaton Lane at 7.15.

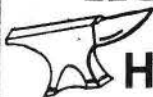
Finally, on Monday 4th November the social will be at the Circus Tavern, Portland Street in central Manchester.

For more details please phone Tracey Clarke on 061 456 6354 (evenings only).

Bob & Trudie Welcome You To

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GATLEY



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FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE

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263 Newbridge Lane, Stockport



The Drovers Return on Ashton Old Road in Openshaw is closed. Originally the Drovers Inn, the place achieved brief fame a few years ago when it was transformed into one of the pub trade's most memorable failures - Francs, a "French-theme fun bar" complete with miniature Eiffel Tower on the roof.

The Flea and Firkin at All Saints is brewing again. We understand that a qualified professional brewer is now in post, so beer quality may perhaps improve - a more customer-friendly pricing policy is possibly too much to hope for. This pub, by the way, is once again on the market along with the rest of the "Firkin" chain.

We hear that Whitbread's Lord Wolsley on Ashton Old Road in Openshaw has been bought by a freehouse chain with trading links to Bass. Boddingtons Bitter is likely to remain, but the other beers could change. It's a pleasant and largely traditional pub - why not check it out on your way to the Openshaw Octoberfest.

South Manchester looks set to get a new Banks's pub. Summerhill, a former childrens home on Palatine Road has been sold to the Wolverhampton based company who intend to spend more than half a million pounds re-vamping the building to recreate a Victorian tavern. Opening date is about 18 months away.

A major refurbishment is underway at Holts' Claremont Hotel on Claremont Road in Moss Side. Some walls are to be removed inside but we hope that the unique atmosphere of this famous drinking institution will not be lost. Hopefully, more next time.



The Royal Oak on Commercial Road, Hazel Grove is now serving Hartleys Mild in place of Robinsons Best Mild - Bill the landlord reckons that the mild drinkers in the pub have taken to it very well and there is a reasonable turnover, so it looks as though it will stay.

September saw the departure of Caz and Bob Telfer from the Plough, Shaw Heath, Stockport. They are leaving the trade, having been unable to agree terms for an Inntrepreneur Lease with Grandmet. The new licensee is Joan Hyde who hails from Oldham where she has had 12 years experience as a barmaid. Joan will be running the pub with her daughter and prospective son-in-law. We understand that no major changes are planned to this excellent locals pub and we wish Joan every success in this new venture.

The Windsor Castle on Castle Street, Edgeley - a pub with a chequered history if there ever was one - was closed as we went to press following financial problems. Apparently Grand Met hope to reopen it shortly with a temporary licensee. A recipe for disaster with this pub, we suspect.

That fine Boddington PubCo house, the Wrexham on Ashton Old Road is currently up for sale. Luckily the pub remains open and it is to be hoped that it not only soon finds a buyer but also one who is sympathetic to the unique features of this traditional East Manchester boozier.



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I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: U.K. £10 Joint membership £12

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

Knowledge of the average age of our members would be helpful. The information need only be given if you wish.

AGE: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 Over 65

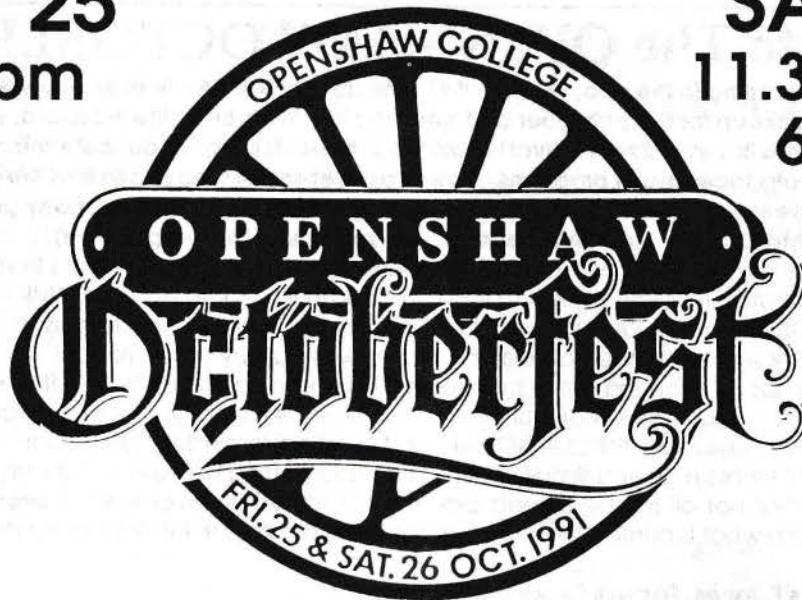
Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:

John Hutchinson, 22 Arley Avenue, West Didsbury, Manchester, M20 8LQ



FRI OCT 25
6pm - 11pm

SAT OCT 26
11.30am - 4pm
6pm - 11pm



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*(The Festival is about 5 minutes walk from
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23 REAL BEERS

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3 PERRIES

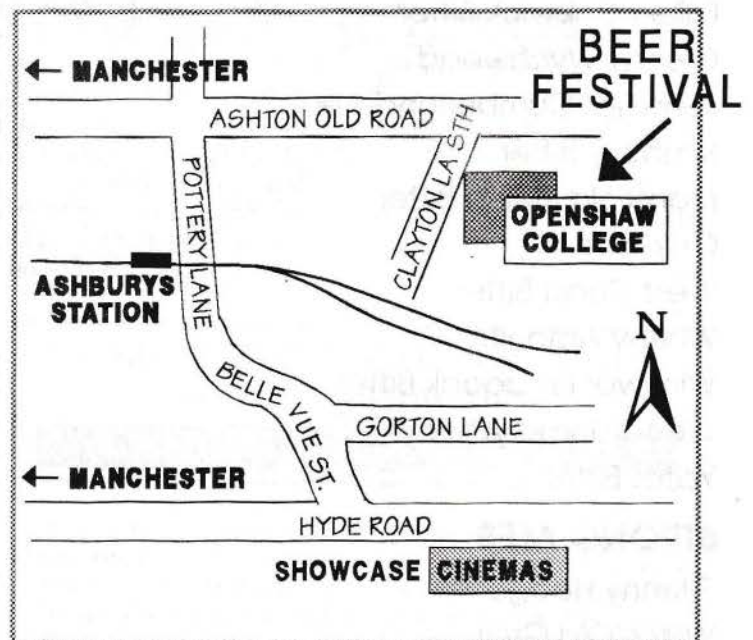
DETAILS INSIDE....!



**CAMPAIGN
FOR REAL ALE**

STOCKPORT AND
SOUTH MANCHESTER

B R A N C H



Welcome to The OPENSHAW OCTOBERFEST!

If you drink beer or enjoy an evening in the pub, you should know about CAMRA - twenty-one years old next year, we're the only organisation that speaks up for the pub-goer and beer-drinker. We started life in Salford, where our 1993 national conference will be held, and this first ever Beer Festival in East Manchester is a sign of our determination to stay close to our roots. For the beer-drinker locally faces major problems - as well as ever-increasing prices and the dubious quality of some "real ale" from the national brewers we have the planners' seeming ambition to wreck as many good pubs as possible to achieve some bizarre "East Manchester Year Zero" (see separate article in this programme).

Here at the Octoberfest we have no truck with national brands - all the beers and ciders are from regional independent producers where quality still counts. They are served to you by our entirely unpaid staff of CAMRA volunteers - hard work, but we manage to enjoy it. Occasionally you'll still hear the odd grumpy licensee describe us as "a bunch of amateurs", but remember this - Noah's Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic was built by professionals!

I hope you enjoy what we hope will be the first of many Beer Festivals in East Manchester. If there's anything you don't like or don't understand, please tell us and we'll do our best to help; if you like what you see (and taste), do consider joining CAMRA - we need many more members in this part of town; and as a final reminder, PLEASE don't drink and drive - we've told local taxi firms there's a festival on, so you should have no trouble getting home and Ashburys station is less than five minutes away. Please note that not all the beers and ciders in this list will be available at every session, and the final selection may vary slightly from what is printed here! Check the Blackboards at the Festival for details of any last-minute changes.

Good Health!

Rhys P. Jones, Festival Organiser.

THE BEERS

MILD ALES

West Coast Mild
Kimberly Mild
Hanby Black Magic Mild

STOUTS AND PORTERS

Yakima Grande Porter
Holdens Stout

BITTERS

Batemans XB
Brains Bitter
Cain's Bitter
Fullers Chiswick Bitter
Glenny Wychwood
Jennings Cumberland Ale
Kimberly Bitter
Mansfield Riding Bitter
Oak Tyke
West Coast Bitter
Whitby Amonite
Wickwar Broadoak Bitter
Woodfoorde Wherry
Yates Bitter

STRONG ALES

Glenny Hobgoblin
Willy's 'Old Groin'

Cider and Perry

Alongside the beer, we proudly present a selection of traditional ciders and perries. Rarely found locally, these drinks are as much a part of our alcoholic heritage as is real ale - and they're completely different from processed keg ciders such as Woodpecker or Dry Blackthorn. Don't be fooled either by the latest trick of selling keg cider on handpump to make it look traditional - Scrumpy Jack is the main offender here.

We hope to have the following ciders and perries available, though not all will necessarily be on at any one time. Don't forget that, while often extremely drinkable, ciders and perries are STRONG (from 5% alcohol by volume upwards) - please don't overdo it.

The Ciders

DUNKERTONS Luntley, Herefordshire. Small-scale cidemaker with a high publicity profile, specialising in "single apple" ciders made from just one apple variety. We hope to have two of these - Breakwells Seedling and Court Royal.

LANGDON Hewish, Avon. Well-established cidemaker handily situated just off the M5 en route to the West Country. We have their medium cider.

RICHARDS Congresbury, Avon. A well established Cider-maker with a strong following in the Bristol area. we have the dry cider.

WESTONS Much Marcle, Herefordshire. One of the largest of the country's independent cidemakers, a firm of history and tradition. We have their superbly mellow Special Vintage.

WILKINS Mudgley, Somerset. One of the best of the small-scale cidemakers, a frequent award-winner. We have the dry cider.

The Perries

Many drinkers have never even heard of perry - it's made the same way as cider only starting from pears not apples. A drink of great character, it's also an endangered species as suitable pears are hard to come by, Don't leave the festival without trying some!

HARTLAND Eldersfield, Gloucestershire. Famous perry made in deep countryside by an entertaining father/son team. Dry.

LONG ASHTON Long Ashton, Avon. A former government fruit research institute which always made a small amount of cider and perry, now privatised into a fully commercial cidemaker. Medium dry.

WESTONS Much Marcle, Herefordshire. Sweet.

NOT ALL BEERS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT EVERY SESSION

CAMRA CAMPAIGN

Once again it's that time of year when, having handed out the bouquets (this year to Sam Smiths for their excellent refurbishment of Turners Vaults in Stockport) we let fly with the brickbats as we bring you the Pub Vandalism Awards of 1991.

Whilst real ale is currently on the up and up with ever more pubs selling the stuff, the places to drink it in, our traditional public houses, are under threat as never before. Closure of low barrelage pubs and unsympathetic alterations to those that remain are more and more becoming the order of the day. Often it's because the brewers increasingly look on their pubs simply as retail outlets from which the most money must be obtained, by whatever means. Sometimes it's just plain incompetence....

Despite a strong field, our two winners this year really did sink head and shoulders below the rest in the pub demolition derby stakes. Our first award, subtitled the 'Scorched Earth Award' for wholesale urban destruction goes to Manchester City Council for their impressive array of road schemes which threaten over 20 pubs in the East Manchester area. This is the first time the award has gone to an organisation outside the brewing industry but the judges felt that the sheer determination shown by the council over the years in depleting the inner city's pub stock at last deserved recognition. What they missed in the clearances of the 1960's and 70's they seem determined to get this time round.

On Hyde Road, a widening scheme has already claimed the Horseshoe and another six are definitely for the chop. Also under threat is the Plough - proposals to move the pub to the new line of the road could fall victim to the apparent high cost of the scheme. Just to the north the inner relief road threatens another clutch of pubs including the excellent Duke of Edinburgh on Mill Street and has already claimed the Travellers Call, the Grey Mare and the much-lamented Railway on Pottery Lane. Well done



The Duke of Edinburgh - threatened with demolition for another east Mcr. road scheme



The Travellers Call is yet another pub whose existence is threatened by a road scheme. Will there be anything left for these cars to travel to?

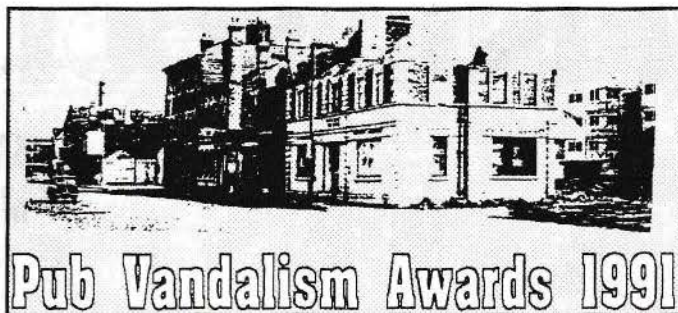
chaps - keep it up and by the end of this century you could have achieved what the temperance movement never managed in the last, a pub-free city.

It's not East Manchester's year because our second award goes to a pub not far from those just mentioned. Local brewers Joseph Holt are widely praised for selling quality beers at low, low prices; clearly something they are very

good at. What they are not very good at is conserving some of their finer pubs as is shown by what they have done to the Seven Stars on Ashton Old Road. The fate of this pub has been well documented in Opening Times, suffice it to say that the removal of a wealth of Victorian tiling, mahogany and etched glass in favour of a new extension which, for the most

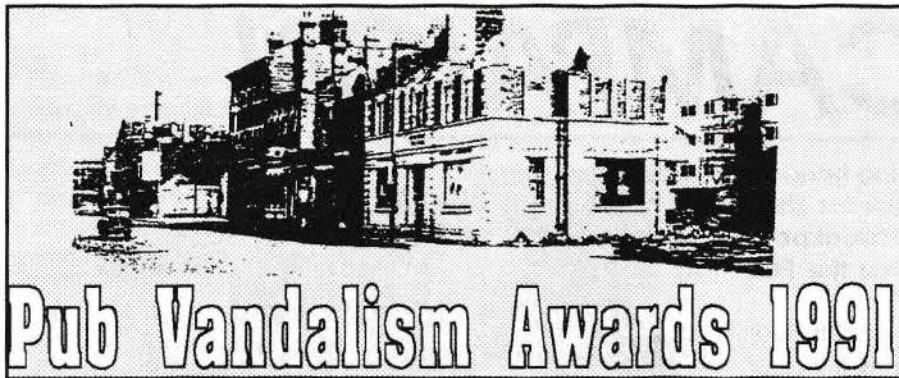
part, is barely used, makes Holts a worthy winner of our second award this year, the "Golden Sledgehammer" for sensitive refurbishment. Again well done, after all, who wants tradition when you can have an aircraft hangar?

That's it for 1991 - the search is now on for the 1992 winners. Will your local be closed, gutted or knocked down in the next 12 months? Watch this space in 12 months time when we announce the winners of our Pub Vandalism Awards for 1992.



**CAMRA - THE PUBGOERS' CHAMPION
JOIN NOW!
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**

Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA would like to express their sincere thanks to Bob and Madeleine Gregory of the Swinging Sporan in Sackville Street, who are acting as licensees of the Openshaw festival



Pub Vandalism Awards 1991



In celebration of their Pub Vandalism Award, Manchester's planners have announced a further scheme which will threaten yet more of East Manchester's dwindling pub stock.

As if the destruction being wreaked on the area's pubs by road schemes wasn't enough, news comes of a further threat in the shape of the Eastlands sports stadium, planned for the old gasworks site opposite Phillips Park as part of Manchester's renewed Olympic bid. Associated development is planned to lead to the demolition of four pubs - the Britannia, the Little Bradford, the Moseley and the Shakespeare. All are well-liked locals; all but the Moseley sell real ale; and the Britannia particularly is one of Manchester's finest pubs, with a cracking local atmosphere you would have to go a long way to equal.

It is time to call a halt. Change and development are necessary, but should respect the best of what already exists. CAMRA will be fighting these demolitions all the way - come to the OPENSHAW OCTOBERFEST or join CAMRA to find out how YOU can help.

The Horseshoe - already lost to the insatiable destructive urges of Manchester's planners.

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