

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

No:  
95

# OPENING TIMES

MARCH 1992

CAMRA  
FREE

## THE CASE For The Prosecution

*Alastair Walker takes a critical look at a well known cask beer.*

There is a brewery located in one of the Riding Towns of West Yorkshire. Advertised widely on television, you might be led to think that its flagship beer is mainly drunk by horses (got the message yet?). This product, names are being withheld to protect the innocent, has long been the bane of real ale lovers - many say it is the type of beer to give real ale a bad name, generally being bland and utterly characterless. It does however display other characteristics which make you wonder... it never, ever seems to be cloudy, even at the end of the barrel, and - while it can display an unpleasant, acrid and sulphury aftertaste, it is never vinegery (ie "off").

Now, even the best run pubs can have the occasional off night, even with the most reliable of beers, but not, it seems with this one. So, what is going on? I am drawn to the conclusion that this beer may not in fact be a traditional **cask-conditioned** real ale as defined by CAMRA but might in fact be an imposter, dressed up to look like the real thing at the brewery and foisted on to unwary publicans and drinkers alike. My reasoning for arriving at this conclusion is as follows:

Firstly, let us consider the clarity factor. All traditional cask-conditioned beers are of course supposed to be perfectly clear when served to you, after conditioning in the pub's cellar, but this does not mean that there is no yeast present in the barrel. On the contrary, it is **essential** that yeast is present because this is crucial to the secondary fermentation that gives the beer its life or sparkle - no yeast, no secondary fermentation - result, dull, lifeless beer. The secondary fermentation process adds greatly to the flavour, condition and aroma of the beer and, when it's over, there will be a sludgy residue at the bottom of the barrel. I am sure that everyone will have witnessed the odd occasion when a barrel runs out and the yeast at the bottom is accidentally pulled through the line to give a cloudy pint - but not, in my experience, with this beer. Just why is this? - the obvious answer is that the yeast residue is insignificant in which case it must be asked to what extent there is any secondary fermentation and if this doesn't take place we don't have cask-conditioned beer and we don't have real ale.

The second characteristic of this beer is possibly of greater concern to the more health conscious among us. The beer is available nationally. It is transported vast distances from its source without ever deteriorating during its various periods of handling, storage, re-handling, re-storage etc. Furthermore, why is it never 'vinegary' in any of its outlets? With such a large number of outlets, there must be a few incapable licensees who would normally be expected to sometimes serve up a 'dodgy' pint. The most obvious answer to this mystery is a healthy dose of preservatives added to the beer before it leaves the brewery. For example, both sodium meta bisulphite and sodium benzoate are preservatives that can legally be added to food and drinks, and would leave an unpleasant sulphury and acrid taste is used over-enthusiastically in beer..

Although I have singled out a brewer close to home, I am convinced that yeast-filtration and preservative addition are not-uncommon amongst our big brewers. The evidence, although circumstantial, is strong. That is the case for the prosecution. You, the drinkers are the jury - if you reach a 'guilty' verdict, only one sentence is possible: avoid these national brands and stick to the high quality Real Ales from your local breweries.

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**28 - 30 MAY**  
more details next month

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# PUB of the Month March



Su	M	T	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	31				

The Stockport and South Manchester Pub of the Month for March is the Osborne House, Victory Street, Rusholme. The Osborne is a Hydes pub - one large room split into three with identifiable "vault" and "lounge" areas and a good community local which is handy for both curries and City home games!

So why Pub of the Month? The Osborne isn't a pub of great architectural merit; the beers it sells (Hydes Mild and Bitter) are not exotic guests from far-flung places; and it's not a pub that has had to be turned round from the depths of despair into a thriving local. Different pubs provoke different reactions when you go in and the Osborne is a pub which can only make you say 'yes, this is **very** good.' Just something about the atmosphere in the place makes you feel instantly comfortable and at home. The beer quality is also very high - it won't be giving too many secrets away to reveal that the pub has been chosen for inclusion in the next edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

All in all, a fine pub doing a good job in what can be a difficult area. This richly deserved award will be presented on Thursday 26th March when all will be welcome for what should be a memorable night. To find the pub go west off Wilmslow Road down Claremont Road and turn left after the Lord Lyon. The Osborne House is at the bottom on the right.

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## No-Smoking in Pubs

Further to our item in December's Opening Times, we owe an apology to Alan Pillinger of the Parrswood in East Didsbury for missing him off our list of pubs with no-smoking areas.

Alan Tells us "We have had a no-smoking area in the Parrswood for over 18 months now - I was the first pub in the Stockport and South Manchester area to provide such a facility." When the pub was renovated Alan insisted that such an area was provided "I don't smoke myself, and I knew it would be popular with customers" he added.

Another pub with a no-smoking area is the Crown on Deansgate in the City Centre which, despite its Wilsons signage, currently serves an excellent pint of Holts.

## Seen in the Beer Guide

A pub entry in the new East London Beer Guide; "Closed. Pub signs taken down, future not known but outside local drunks gather waiting hopefully for its imminent re-opening".

## Beer Festival News

Once again the countdown to the Stockport Beer Festival has begun. This year we have renamed it the "Stockport Beer & Cider Festival" to reflect the growing interest at the Festival in cider and perry.

The venue is once again at Stockport's Masonic Guildhall on Wellington Road South (A6) and the vital dates for your diary are Thursday 28th May - Saturday 30th. More next month.

The WIGAN beer Festival is being held from 12 - 14 March at the Mill on the Pier, Wigan Pier, with hot food, entertainment, a family room and a wide range of beers. Frequent trains run between Wigan and Stockport.

Closer to home, the Stanley Arms in Newbridge Lane is running a massive in-house festival this month - see advert. Early next month, the Beer House in Manchester is extending its eighteen handpump range with another forty or so beers for four days (April 14 - 17).

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Your Hosts Mike and Lynne Belsham

This month we return to a well-worn theme - deceiving the public. On our front page Alastair Walker queries the bona-fides of one well known beer, but in truth it must be said that there are genuine doubts about just how many of the nationally available products are truly 'real ales' - not just to the letter of the dictionary definition (no doubt all would claim that their product just manages to clear that hurdle) but also in spirit. Additives, adjuncts, whirlpooling, rough-filtering and re-seeding with yeast are just some of the practices that make many lovers of traditional beer (and many brewers of it as well) gag on their pints. In many ways the term 'real ale' has been so used and abused by the big brewers (and some not so big) that perhaps it's time CAMRA looked for a tighter

## In the Editor's View

by John Clarke

definition to ensure that only beers worthy of the name could be called truly "Real Ale".

The other area of contention is our old friend the fake handpump. As Phil Levison shows in '5 Years Ago' this is nothing new and, while keg beers served this way are now few and far between, the practice is, paradoxically, becoming more widespread through the medium of Scrumpy Jack cider. There are some blinkered individuals who think that because it's cider and not beer that is being sold this way then it somehow doesn't matter. They are missing the point - cider or beer, the public are still being conned. Cheating is cheating and, as a pub-goers consumer group CAMRA, and this publication, will continue to expose it, and those who perpetrate it.

## OPENING TIMES

From Derek Hayward-Shott:

*"The Kings Arms" as Pub of the Year! Oh, come on! What did Simon and Brendan do? Let the panel drink free after hours as a penance for listening to Brendan's republican opinions?*

*Don't misunderstand me. I like Simon and, especially, Karen and have always had a warm welcome in the place on my infrequent visits. I respect Brendan as a superb brewer while detesting his political stance; and I have known and liked his partner Peter Gandy for many years. But a pub of the year should be a pub for the general public, female as well as male, and for drinkers who wear suits and ties as well as scruffy body warmers and tatty trainers. Whatever else it is, and it has several merits, "The Kings Arms" is not a pub where I would take a respectable lady for a pleasant drink, nor would I pop in with colleagues for a business lunch break.*

*And, a pub of the year should have a range of beers from different brewers, as opposed to a range, even a good one, from just one brewer, and this "The Kings Arms" palpably fails to do.*

*Both CAMRA and the beer drinking public at large need pubs like "The Kings Arms" as the 'rough trade' end of the pub spectrum, but to select it as pub of the year is an insult to anyone who does like a bit of carpet on the floor and conversation without the 'F' word twice in every sentence. It also brings the whole 'Pub of the Year/Month' process into disrepute, to the disadvantage of those better pubs which have put themselves out to offer a wide selection of beers to a wide cross-section of customers.*

*Sorry to be so critical. It's not "The Kings Arms" I'm against, it's your judging team!*

**(Editor's note: As usual, Derek doesn't mince his words! As to anyone's politics, this is something CAMRA tries very much to avoid and should certainly play no part in the selection of pubs for anything, be it awards or guides. Of course we all like pubs that serve guest beers but to exclude the pubs that don't from consideration for Pub of the Year would be doing a disservice to those many excellent pubs that simply are not able to sell them - those belonging to our excellent local brewers, for example. And of course, no-one is pretending that the Kings is the Ritz, indeed it's a pub in a difficult area doing a difficult job very well - many would say that this is an argument in its favour rather than against.)**(The Production editor adds: just before I was given this letter to set, I was in

the King's Arms at lunchtime. The 'back' bar was busy, mainly with chaps in business suits having a lunchtime bite and chat. As for the issue of women, I've not been ashamed, in the past, to take my mother in for lunch, and I certainly regard her as a respectable woman. Presumably, the author feels that pubs should be judged solely on the depth of the carpet pile, the number of potted plants, and the lavishness of the flock wallpaper.)

From "A Cask Conditioned Connoisseur":

*My wife is a fitness fanatic and has been nagging me to take some exercise. In fact the main topic in our house is oversize trousers not oversize glasses. Always keen to oblige "She who must be obeyed", I deserted our cosy vault and indulged in your most recent "Staggers".*

*Regrettably the Calorie Counting Queen has gone "over the brim" at this and is giving me stick in "full measure" on the exercise front, apparently the spillage she is keen to eliminate is over my belt.*

*During one of your Staggers, whilst concealed behind the head on my pint I overheard these two Stockport Lamplighters (Rotarians who stay out late). It seems they are arranging a Charity Golf Competition for Pub Golfers in Bruntwood Park over the weekend before aster, proceeds to Rainbow Family Trust. Entry forms from your local.*

*I've entered the wife and Mother-in-Law and will support them from the hospitality tent. Not everyone's cut out for exercise.*

**Editor's note: our correspondent is in fact Miles Leach the Competition Secretary for the Pub Golfers Pitch and Puff competition over April 11th/12th. The Rainbow Trust (last year's Stockport Beer Festival Charity), badly needs the cash and there can't be a more worthwhile cause than terminally ill children. We're happy to give it a plug - let's hope plenty of you enter.**

From Dave Dean:

*I was wondering if you could help my friends and I? While reading our Opening Times in the Kings Head, Ardwick we started to recall all the old watering holes along Stockport Road from Ardwick Green to the Midway. We started off at the Apsley Cottage, Cricketers Arms, Shakespeare, Lancaster, the list goes on, we know, in which order we are not sure, could you settle a friendly argument. Your word is final.*

**(Editor's note: Unfortunately, I haven't a clue either. Can anyone out there help?)**

From J.E.Kay

I was always of the opinion that CAMRA was an organisation that served the interests of customers who drink good English ale, without bias or prejudice. Sadly I now find that this is no longer so. My reason for saying this is the 'Stagger' by P.B.Hutchings in the last O.T., and the remarks about the Royal Oak, Commercial Road Hazel Grove, which incidentally refuses to contribute to yours or anyone else's organisation for the promotion of drink etc.

What makes the remarks so galling is the fact that the Royal Oak is the only pub which is not influenced by the other landlords, hence the reason why the price has always been less than those charged on the main road, ie the A6, where they can serve up any dishwater they like & charge 3p and over for a pint of Robbies best bitter (sic). Royal Oaks price is at present £1.11, Cock Hotel £1.14, Three Tunnes & Grapes ££1.15. (One other pub is reputed to charge £1.18 for Bitter but as I refuse to go in I cannot verify this!).

I must admit the Karaoke is not to my liking but that is not a good reason to degrade the pub or just visit the pub (also sic) which, it is obvious before you entered you were going to berate, but to compare the 'Oak to one particular pub which, to quote your mag "at last a real pub" (The White Hart -ed.) is all the more galling as this pub has the reputation of serving up the worst ale in the whole area. (The next section makes allegations about a group unconnected with CAMRA that is almost certainly libellous and has been omitted -ed).

It has been noted that all the pubs praised in your article are those who have, at some time contributed to your campaign. I know at least one customer who said he will write to the national press about your remarks, that is up to him. I would like to assure you that Bill the landlord has in no way influenced me in writing this complaint. I doubt very much now, whether anyone who uses the Royal Oak will ever believe your reports because of your vested interests. (the author then states that he is a customer of the Cock, 3 Tunnes & Grapes as well) I have been drinking Robbies Best Bitter for over thirty years...and I consider Bills beer one of the finest around. It is not only my opinion, I very much doubt that you will find anyone in Hazel Grove, except those who are not welcome, to have a bad word for either Bill or his beer at the 'Oak. (Most of the branch members who saw this letter thought it didn't even deserve a reply, and we have had to edit it, for legal reasons - though all the criticisms of CAMRA are included. I have decided, however, for those who did not see last month's stagger, to make a couple of points. "Needless to say, the opinions expressed about the pubs and beer reflect what the group found on the night, and should on no account be taken as gospel. Try them for yourself and see how far you disagree". Clearly the writer didn't read that far, though he did, as is his right, disagree. "We could definitely have gone on a better night, as there was a Karaoke system set up in the lounge....the pub does have an excellent and attractive vault." Not perhaps as biased as you would think reading the above. As for the beer? Well, ON THAT NIGHT IT WAS OVER-CHILLED AND BLAND. When eight CAMRA members agree about anything, its a rare event, and we all agreed about that. It may have been a one off, but the whole point of a 'stagger' is that it is a snapshot of ONE NIGHT - of a particular area. There are two other matters that need mentioning. Although I have not quite Mr Kay's experience, I have been drinking Robbies for over 20 years, so I know the stuff quite well. I have not drunk in Hazel Grove for ten years or more, and never before in the Royal Oak. Far from being determined to "berate" etc, as I went through the door I had no opinion whatsoever, and no axe to grind. I write it as I see it. As to the ludicrous assertion that everyone else advertises....where? The Grove is a regular advertiser, an excellent pub, ticked off for the fatty state of some of the decor. The Grapes places an ad every Christmas....if we were influenced by £10 a year we REALLY would give up! As readers will know we always criticise pubs that advertise if they don't come up to scratch. We are independent, and the only bias is that of individual members - who all have favourite pubs. None of mine are in Hazel Grove, though there are some very good ones there. On the subject of Karaoke - I detest it. So apparently do a lot of the customers. On the night in question the Royal Oak was the quietest pub we looked at, save only the (keg) Red Lion. P.B.Hutchings, Production Editor)

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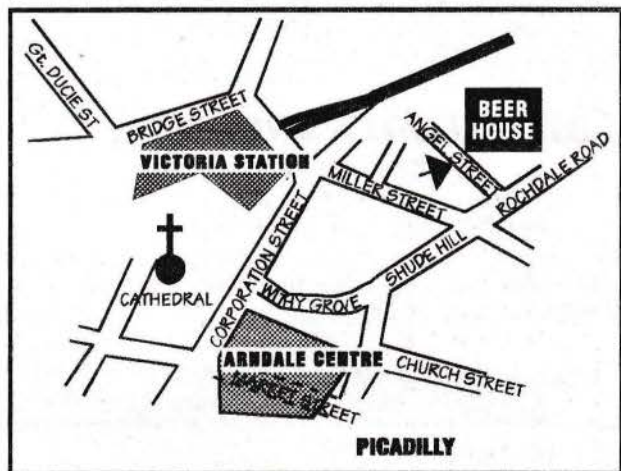
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 (1050); Clarks Hammerhead (1050); Crouch Vale Willie  
 Warmer (1060); Archers Headbanger (1065); Draught  
 Bass (1043); Blue Anchor Spingo Mild (1050); Burton  
 Bridge Festival (1055); Hall & Woodhouse Tanglefoot  
 (1048); Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew (1051);  
 Moorhouses Premier (1036); Holdens Mild (1036);  
 Brains SA (1042); Cotleigh Tawney (1040); Kimberley  
 Classic (1047); Big Lamp Prince Bishop Ale (1044);  
 Butterknowle High Force (1060); Bull Mastiff  
 Sonofabitch (1062); Cornish Original (1040)...*



# Cider, Truth & Trading Standards

Regrettably, Symonds' Scrumpy Jack, a once famous (and traditional) cider, now part of cider giants Bulmers, continues to be sold on handpump locally. Don't be conned - however it's sold, Scrumpy Jack is a KEG cider - chilled, filtered, pasteurised, and pressurised. There's nothing wrong with selling it through a keg-style bar mounting - as at, amongst others, Jabez Clegg and Stockport's Woolpack - but any licensee who sells it through the recommended fake "handpump" is deceiving you.

For Bulmers, Scrumpy Jack is seen as a "premium draught cider" - and a major part of their product range. Elsewhere in ciderland, rivals Taunton Cider - recently bought by its own management from a multi-brewery consortium - are planning their own premium brand - and the word is that this is likely to be a **genuine** handpumped cider. Judge Jeffreys Cider goes on sale in the London area any time now - and, if it's any good, we'll be pressing local licensees to stock it.

All cider drinkers had a nasty shock last month when the E. C. proposed to treat cider as wine for duty purposes. Nodded through without comment from British officials (even though the U.K. drinks 70% of the EC's cider!) the proposal, if implemented at current levels of duty on wine, would have seen a pint of cider cost up to £2.50 - which would effectively shut down the whole industry. Fortunately, after intense lobbying from CAMRA, the European Parliament passed an amendment putting cider in a class of its own for duty.



The Parliament's vote is only advisory - the final decision is due from the Commission in June. CAMRA will continue its lobbying to ensure that the drink sometimes called 'the Wine of the West' doesn't end up taxed as such; it's beginning to look as if so much stink has been created that even the Eurocrats realise they're meddling with something beyond their comprehension.

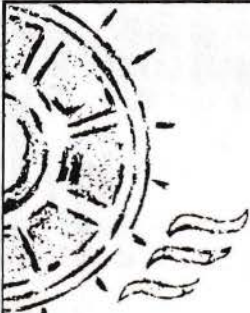
*"The day of the oppressor is over, the calamity of the cider drinker is put away; the deadly exciseman shall appear no more in our quarters"* - Gloucester Journal, 1766, on the occasion of the repeal of an earlier punitive cider tax.

*"Well, I paid 'em to make it, and I paid 'em to drink it, and still th buggers weren't satisfied. So I stopped making it"* - Herefordshire farmer on the demise of farm cider-making - perhaps to be total if Brussels has its way.

# WARNING!



## THIS IS A KEG CIDER SERVED BY A FAKE HANDPUMP DON'T BE CONNED!



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# RHYTHM and BOOZE

By Chris Stone and Sue Tittensor

Thursday evenings at the Bakers Vaults in Stockport Market Place feature what must surely be one of the most well known of the bands playing in the South Manchester area. The Removal Men have been playing their residency at the Bakers for over three years and have built up a dedicated army of followers. In summer, the pub opens up its doors and the punters overflow onto the empty market stalls. At this time of year the crowds are just as large but the atmosphere inside is more intimate!

The Removal Men are Brendan Gore (electric piano, vocals and harmonica), Gerry McLaughlin (guitar), John Brett (drums) and John Price (bass). The evolution of the Removal Men goes back as far as 1976 to the formation of Gags (the only change to the above being Bernis Nuttall on drums). Gags are a rocking R&B/Rock n' Roll band, who can be seen nowadays almost exclusively at Band on the Wall, Swan Street, Manchester, where they play to a packed house, usually on "Dance Night". Occasionally they may be seen elsewhere, but do not want to be classified as a "12-bar blues" R'n'B band. Brendan feels that modern R&B has been hampered by the Blues Brothers image, and so Gags steer clear of most American artists and blues festivals to avoid the attached stigma. Gags have, however, supported more off-beat blues/country artists such as Brendan Croker.

The Removal Men originally formed as an offshoot from Gags, initially consisting of Brendan and Gerry. Soon afterwards the numbers swelled to four, who were all associated with Brendan's transport firm - hence the Removal Men. The present line-up has been going for approximately two years and their style is country/rock with an element of R'n'B. The Removal Men are probably now more popular than Gags and Brendan puts this down to them being a "good looking bunch of lads making a very sexy band"!

Tom & Betty Burke welcome you to

## - The Grabe Inn -

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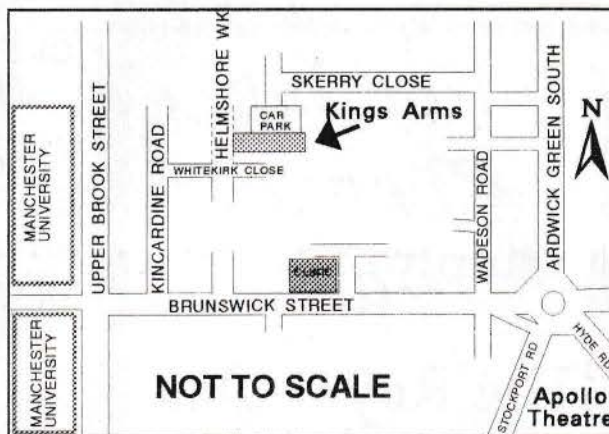
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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

# MARCH 1987

Front page news was a new "handpump" specially designed to cope with any form of supply pressure, and thus dispense cider, lager or keg beer - the manufacturers even stated that it displays "all the characteristics of the beer engine". A handpump on the bar is a generally reliable sign that a cask conditioned beer or cider is available, although several brewers have from time to time served their keg beer through handpumps. (Probably one of the most blatant cases is Scrumpy Jack, a processed cider, which is still being dispensed through what appears to be a real handpump.)

Pub of the Month for March was Robinson's Tatton Arms, Moss Nook. Whilst this award very often goes to a landlord who has improved the standard of the beer or the pub, in this case it was presented for sheer consistency. Licensees Alex and Marie Bell have been at the pub for fifteen years, and in every Good Beer Guide since 1975. (It was missing from the 1991 Guide, but back in again this year, the Best Mild and Best Bitter have only been joined by draught lager comparatively recently, and the licensees are unchanged.)

The monthly pub crawl was a trip round fourteen of Manchester's City Centre pubs, starting at the Coach and Horses on London Road, and after an approximately circular tour, finishing up at the Imperial only a short distance down the road. In between came a broad selection, with surely something to suit all tastes - large pubs and small pubs, re-furnished and unaltered, a brew pub, and an astonishing choice of 23 different beers from 11 breweries. No wonder that Manchester has been called the beer-drinkers Mecca. (To repeat the tour today, you would probably find that the Coach and Horses and the Imperial are the only two where you couldn't get a drink. They are both closed, and in a rather sorry state, and their future is perhaps best described as "in doubt".)

Finally, several snippets of Stockport pub news: Guest beers expected at the Olde Vic, Shaw Heath. The George, Mersey Square closed for a 12 week refurbishment. The Three Tunnes on Hatton Street, and the Buck and Dog - razed to the Ground.



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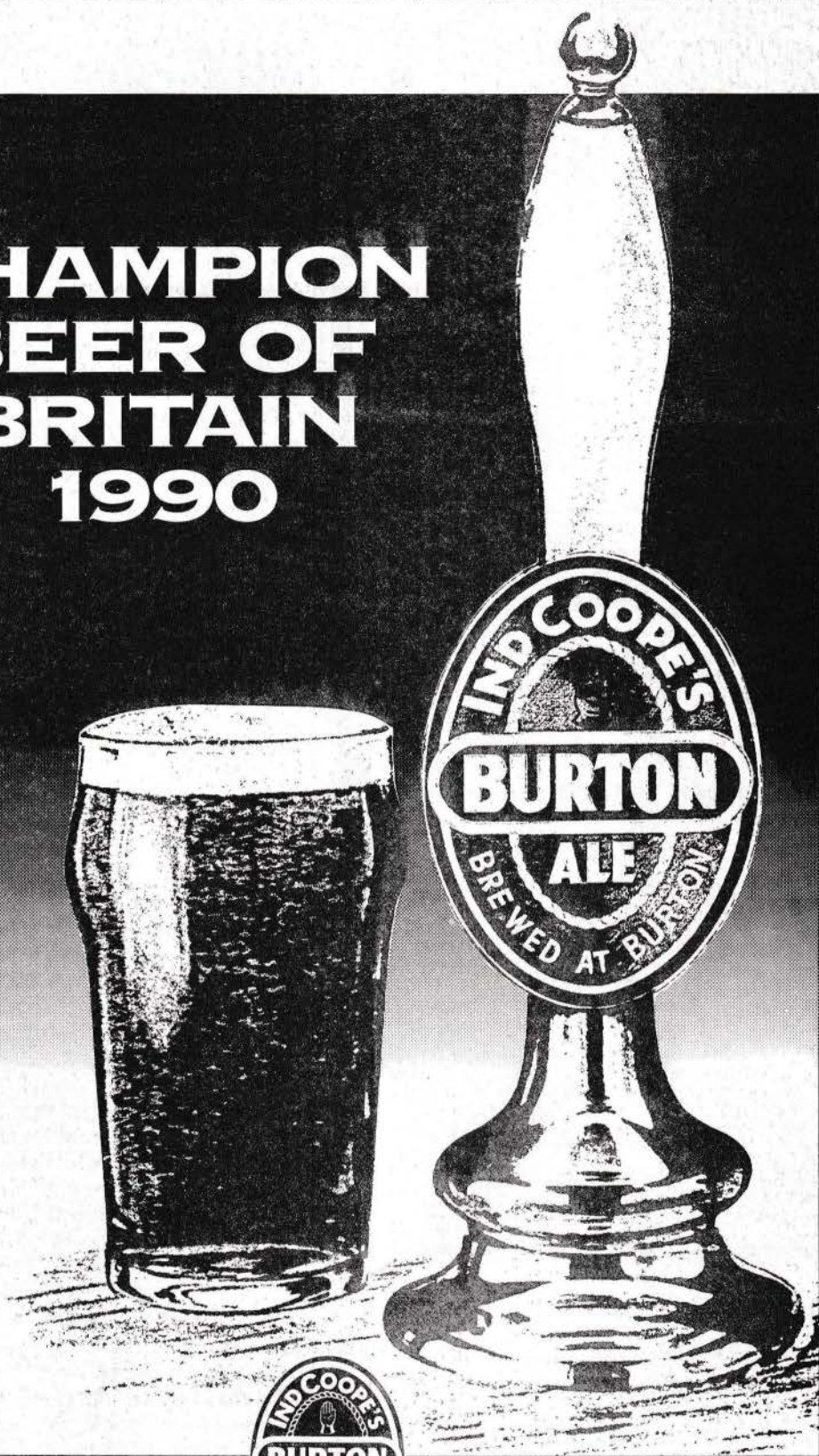


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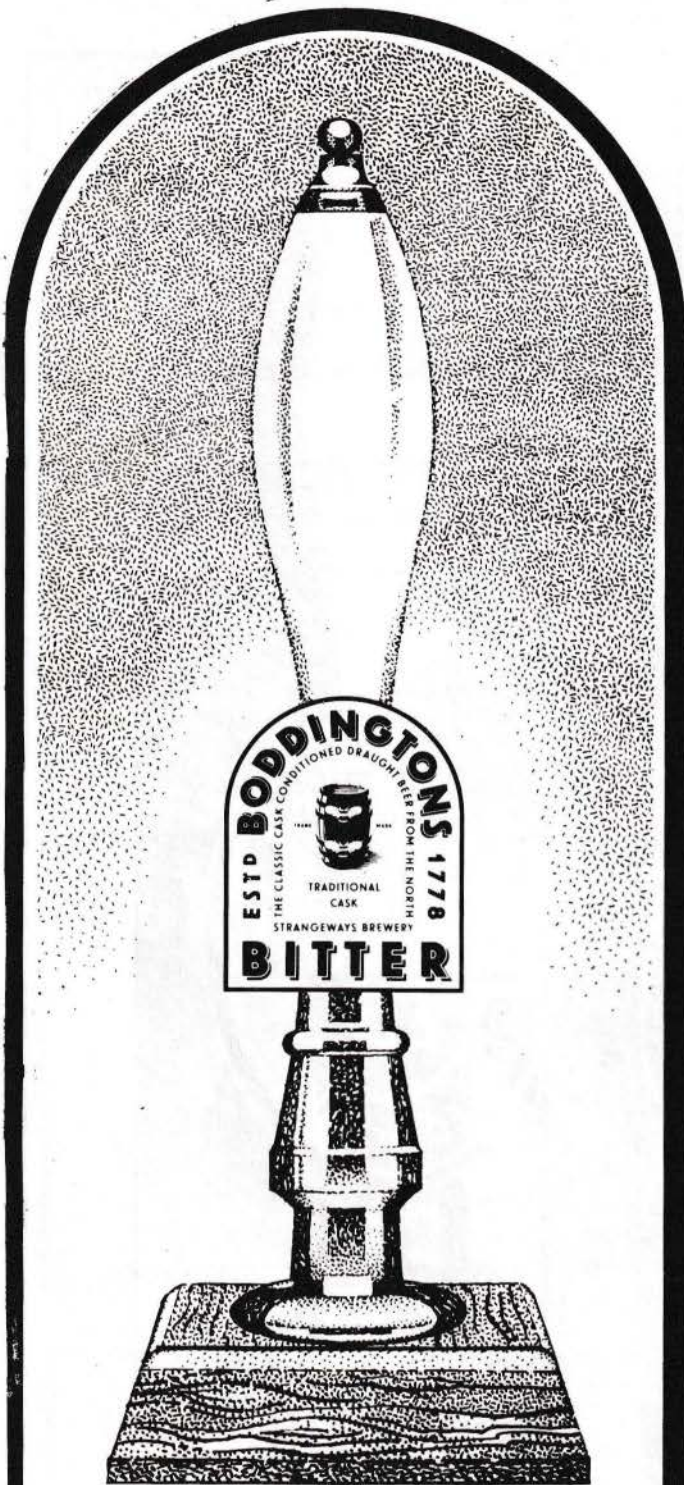
# CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 1990



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**CAMPAIGN**  
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## sSpeaking Socially

**One problem for CAMRA Branches whose members have a wanderlust to sample beer in other areas of Britain is the sheer practicality of long distance travel these days.**

Gone are the days of epic coach trips leaving early in the morning and getting back bleary eyed in the early hours of the following day.

Older High Peak and N.E. Cheshire members will remember at least two such marathon events to Peterborough and Oxford. What a wonderful dawn it was over New Mills!

Road transport regulations and rising costs these days have made such twenty-four hour outings just a memory.

However, one way round the problem is to organise a weekend visit to some far flung UK oasis where there is a variety of real ale. Group travel on BR can be used or a few branch members can be coerced into driving, and the icing on the cake is a brewery visit. All the real ales can then be enjoyed at something approaching a leisurely pace.

High Peak branch organise such events wherever possible. Previous visits have included Wainfleet (for Batemans brewery) and Cambridge.

A few weeks ago fourteen branch members tackled Salisbury. A bed & breakfast deal was struck with the Cathedral Hotel and a Gibbs Mew brewery visit was arranged for 10.30am on Saturday morning. All fourteen arrived on time to their credit, despite the previous Friday evening.

A look at the Good Beer Guide will show the range of beers in Salisbury where several trading areas tend to overlap. There is a fair sprinkling of small breweries as well. The Wyndham Arms is particularly worth a visit for the Hop Back range of beers, all excellent. The Summer Lightning (og1050) is especially delicious, but beware its deceptive strength.

Beers from Eldridge Pope, Hall & Woodhouse (including the new bitter, Hard Tackle), Ushers, Gibbs Mew and Wadworth can all be sampled in the city centre, all within easy walking distance of the railway station.

Several pubs including the Village on Wilton Road have a variety of guest beers. St Austell beers were in evidence at the time of our visit. Ringwood beers are also to be found and Morlands is in one outlet. The pubs themselves are a representative cross section of town pubs, but the Haunch of Venison, by the Poultry Cross, is a superb old English inn and one not to be missed.

Gibbs Mew's Anchor Brewery is in the town centre on Gigant Street. They produce a range of four cask conditioned beers - Wiltshire Bitter, Salisbury Best, Premium and Bishops Tipple. All very palatable at the brewery, but Bishops Tipple was a bit much for 11.30am!

One word of warning - average price per pint in Salisbury is approx £1.35 - but then in Southern England that's to be expected and it certainly did not detract from a great weekend in a historic city. The next branch targets are Bath, Edinburgh and Oxford - for more details contact Tom Lord on the number on the next page.

This month Opening Times breaks new ground by taking the rest of Stockport Metro into its circulation area. After the successful move into Marple at the beginning of the year we now cover Romiley, Woodley and Bredbury. As you may have read previously, these areas fall within the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch of CAMRA and in future issues we hope to devote up to two pages to news and views from the branch.

Not that it's been all plain sailing, as High Peak Chairman Tim Jones explains... As you may have noticed in recent months this venerable organ of Stockport & South Manchester Branch has been appearing in pubs in Marple, unbeknownst (for a time) to the cognoscenti of the indigenous beer drinking public. This caused a bit of a storm on hallowed ground where "she who must be obeyed" showed her discomfiture in time honoured fashion resulting in ragged ears and an unusual gait for members of the local branch. This was not appreciated.



Action was swift, as it needs to be when the devil drives. Beacons were lit, rallying calls were answered, barricades were built but chiefly beer was drunk. Stockport's special envoy (that's yours truly - ed.) was summoned and discussions were held. Common ground had been reached.

So, from now on this organ will be appearing in selected pubs in Marple and other areas of Stockport MBC which fall in the High Peak branch area. For your information these are, in no particular order, Ropmiley, Bredbury, Woodley and High Lane.

In these post-glasnost days of co-operation we'll help keep you informed as to changes in the ancient heartland (and beyond) despite the old - how shall I put it? - rivalry between our two branches, and if you discover any juicy titbits don't hesitate to get in touch.

Our branch contacts are listed below:

Chairman - Tim Jones, 7 Drayfield, Droylsden, Tameside, M35 7ET (371 9006). Secretary - Geoff Williamson, 92 Chantry Rd, Disley (0663 765634). Socials/Membership - Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple (427 7099). Publicity/Press - Chris Tucker, 210 Astley Street, Dukinfield (330 4188)

...Pub Ne b News... News...P ...Pub Ne b News... News...P	HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE  <b>CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE</b> 
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In Marple Bridge, the recently refurbished Oddfellows (on Mellor Road), formerly Greenalls keg beers only, now serves Draught Bass, Boddingtons and Stones Bitter, all on handpump. Not the most imaginative choice but at least it's a step in the right direction.

The CPO for the Travellers Call in Bredbury was recently published in the local press - it seems that the only JW Lees pub in Stockport Metro is at last to succumb to the long-awaited Stockport North-South bypass.

Hartleys XB (now brewed by Robinsons in Stockport, of course) is to go on sale at the Pineapple in Marple and could well be available by the time you read this.

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HARTLEY'S XB BITTER ON DRAUGHT

# Old Mill Festival



For the last two weeks in February the Old Mill at Cheadle Hulme ran a very successful in-house beer festival. Several Allied pubs have tried these in the past 18 months or so but this was probably the biggest and best to date. 25 beers were on offer over the two-week period including beers from Fullers, Jennings, Oak and Old Mill. Also available were tours of the pub cellars which, we hear, were absolutely spotless (as indeed they should be).

Following the festival the beer range at the Old Mill is to be further extended by the addition of guest beers, initially based on those which went down best at the festival.

# CAMRA CALLING!

As usual we have a wide range of activities this month, starting on Monday 9th with a social at the recently refurbished Old Star, High Street, Cheadle. In common with all Monday socials, this starts at 9.00pm.

The branch meeting is in the same week on Thursday 12th, this time at the Coach & Horses, Belle Vue Street, Gorton. The 203 bus from Stockport will drop you almost outside and the 52 from South Manchester also stops close by. The meeting starts at 8.00pm.

The social on Monday 16th is at the Parrswood, Parrswood Road, Didsbury and this is followed on Wednesday 18th with a trip round the brewery at the Flea & Firkin on Oxford Road - we meet in the pub at 8.00pm. Lastly, to round off a busy week, there is a Stagger on Friday 20th. This month we are tottering round Heaton Chapel and Heaton Moor. Meet at the Chapel House on the A6 at 7.00pm or you can join at 8.30 at the Plough, Heaton Moor Road.

The following week is even busier with a social at the Grapes, London Road, Hazel Grove on Monday 23rd, another at the Stanley Arms Beer Festival on Wednesday 25th, Pub of the Month at the Osborne House, Rusholme on the 26th and on Saturday 28th a joint social with the High Peak Branch. This will be in Marple starting at the Railway near Rose Hill Station at 7.30 or join at the Bowling Green, Stockport Road at 8.30.

On Monday 30th, the Social is at the Milestone, Burnage Lane. Into April and on Saturday 4th there will be a visit to the Ryburn Brewery and Sowerby Bridge. We leave the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport at 10.00am. Phone Tracey on 061 456 6354 to book a place. The following Monday the Social is at the Old Mill, Mill Lane, Cheadle. And finally - advance notice of the branch AGM which will be on Thursday 9th at the Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. This will see the more important of what could be two elections on that day - namely the one for the branch committee!

Turning now to the High Peak Branch who cover Marple, Romiley, Woodley & Bredbury, they will be holding their monthly branch meeting on Monday 9th March at the Travellers Call in Bredbury. Get there for 8.30pm. Also in March there will be a games night on Tuesday 24th. This will be held at the Hatters Arms, Church Lane, Marple and will start at 8.30pm. For more details about High Peak contact Geoff Williamson on 0663 765634.



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# MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

**Sadly, pub closures in East Manchester come as no surprise these days, but the two latest are nevertheless extremely bad news.**

The Duke of Edinburgh in Bradford, the area's most architecturally splendid pub and one which under a succession of licensees served up far better beer than its sparse trade gave one any right to expect, closed its doors in early February, having, it would seem, become impossible to continue as a going concern.

The nearby Crescent is also closed - in this case, it seems, following trouble involving a group of non-locals followed by extensive vandalism of the by-then-closed pub. This above average estate pub has been looking like one of the relatively few East Manchester pubs with a secure future, ideally placed as it is to tap the trade from the housing that's replaced Fort Beswick flats. Its owners, Whitbread, need to move swiftly to repair the damage both to the pub's fabric and to its reputation.

There's another closure just across the "state line" in Droylsden, where I'm told the Buxton has closed. East Manchester's month of gloom continues with the Steelworks in Gorton, now in private ownership, still supplied by Whitbread, but handpumps unused.

There's only one real ale gain to set against the bad news, and even there you'll not have to mind paying £1.40 a pint for Hydes Bitter - for that's the price in the Bush Bar at the Barbican Hotel on Wilmslow Road, Withington. Tetley Bitter is also available; both beers are on handpump. My advice, try the Victoria a few doors along, for a better pint at a much better price.

Changing fortunes for the Mersey's two new independent brewers - Tommy Ducks in the City Centre no longer sells Coach House beers, but the Rampant Lion at Victoria Park has handpumped Cains Bitter.

The Beer House's (off Rochdale Road) long promised Belgian Draught Ales - 5 in number - are now available, and Pete's range of bottled Belgian Beers now exceeds 100 varieties - with 40 odd others from around the world. The pub is holding a Beer Festival in early April - see the ad in this issue for details.

On the subject of Pub Beer Festivals, that at the Flea & Firkin was so successful, they are planning another for early May.

Finally, I should clarify the position on cider at the Salisbury in the City Centre - the pub now has BOTH real handpumped Bulmers Traditional and fake "handpumped" Scruppy Jack. You know which one to choose (clue: it's not the one containing a Christian name).

STOP PRESS: The Wheatsheaf in Levenshulme now has handpumped Greenalls Original (though not always on) but no Stones! Fiddlers Green, though considerably improved inside, is now keg.



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Since no organist has come forward, the Coach & Horses at Belle Vue has brought back to the area the grand old tradition of the pub piano; this can be heard in the lounge on Friday evenings. There's still a vacancy for a Saturday and/or Sunday evening pianist - apply at the pub.

At the George & Dragon in Heaton Chapel, we hear that the licensee will shortly be retiring after which the pub will be refurbished by the Boddington PubCo. Although some misgivings have been expressed at the prospect, the PubCo do have a generally good record in this department.

It is with great regret that we report the death before Christmas of Roy Wagner, licensee of the Seven Stars on Ashton Old Road. While there's been criticism in these pages of Holt's treatment of the pub, we've never had the slightest cause to criticise Roy's or the family's stewardship of the pub, where the tradition of a splendid pint in friendly surroundings has been very well maintained. The family hope to take over the Bricklayers in Ordsall, where they have family connections. We offer them sincere sympathy and our best wishes for a successful future.

Over in Didsbury, the Olde Cock is about to undergo a major refurbishment to take the pub back to its rustic roots, or so we hear. Look out for lots of bare boards and farm implements scattered about.

Not too far away, the Railway in West Didsbury is at long last being knocked through into the disused shop next door. It's years since we first reported this and certainly, the plans submitted at that time didn't look too bad. It was intended to introduce real ale once the work was complete, let's hope that is still the case.

We understand that the Halfway House at Higher Openshaw crossroads is now a managed house, well-liked former licensee Dave having taken over a pub in Glossop. Reports, please, on what has been one of the better Whitbread pubs on the East side.

More real ale in clubs, this time in Reddish, where the Conservative Club has handpumped Thwaites Bitter while Reddish Leisure on Broadstone Road has a varying real ale from Whitbread. Good news for an area where pubs are on the whole disappointing.

At Banks's Gorton Arms in Gorton we welcome new licensees Ann and Gordon McLean. While this is their first pub, Ann in particular has experience of the trade, having worked not only at the Gorton but also at the not-far-off Longsight. We hope these friendly local faces will see the Gorton at long last realising its considerable potential.

The Albert, Walmsley Street, Rusholme (Hydes) is another local pub to see a new licensee. Here we welcome Jim Callaghan a former Bass tenant from the Crown in Hulme. Due to poor sales, the Albert also no longer sells mild.

The Bamford Arms in Heaviley, Stockport was for many years a dreary Berni Inn selling nothing but keg beer. Following the sale of the Berni chain to Whitbread, the Bamford has been extensively remodelled inside and now offers handpumped Boddingtons Bitter and Marstons Pedigree in a pleasant "new-traditional" (you know, lots of pictures, stained glass and natural wood) public bar.

Unfortunately the back bar at Jabez Clegg no longer has a 2am licence, but shuts at 11pm along with the main room; it is not known whether a late bar will be provided once the upstairs bar opens.

Tom Thumbs on King Street West, Stockport now has handpulled Websters Green Label on sale alongside the John Smiths and Boddingtons Bitters. Unfortunately, the pub blots its copybook by also selling keg Scrumpy Jack on fake handpump.

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