

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES

CAMRA
FREE

No:
104

DECEMBER 1992

The Pub and the Community

As the countdown to the fate of the Olympic bid gets underway, comes news that Manchester will be hosting the next Earth Summit in September 1993. Both events throw into focus the city's "green" credentials and what it makes of what are perhaps its two greatest resources - its people and its industrial heritage. Linking the two is the fate of the city's remaining pubs, particularly those in areas scheduled for redevelopment and regeneration.

The pub is often a vital part of the local community it serves, acting as a focus for social events and leisure activities. It is all too easy for such buildings, sometimes shabby and neglected outside, but within vibrant and alive, to be seen as an unwelcome blot on the landscape by distant planners drawing up grandiose schemes. But to those who live and work in the area they can be the axis around which their daily lives revolve. It is all too easy for local communities, while welcoming attempts to breathe life back into them, to become alienated as they see cherished local institutions swept away. Looking after the needs of local people, listening to what they want for their communities, is just as much a "green" issue as other environmental subjects which get a far wider airing. The "knock it down and start again" concept is a failed idea - just look at what has become of those areas cleared in the 1960's.

The pub is also very often a link with our past. Many of the surviving pubs occupy important 19th century buildings, and not just the grand Victorian extravaganzas but also plainer, simpler examples of domestic architecture which are all too often unappreciated but nevertheless vital links with our past. It is easy to disregard buildings like these but a case can be made that these simpler unadorned pubs are more typical of the historic Manchester pub scene than the late Victorian gin palaces, impressive though the latter may be. 19th century Manchester grew up around mills and factories - it was the people living in the streets of terraces that made this city great and the pubs they drank in - small street corner-type locals are a continuing link with that past. Too many have already gone. Those that survive must be preserved.

These are fine words, but how is the city and its various planning authorities meeting the challenge? The facts speak for themselves. WE have already documented the threat to



such survivors as the Little Bradford in Beswick and the Plough in Gorton. In the city centre the visitor arriving at Piccadilly station will be greeted by the sight of decay and dereliction as the dead hand of the Development Corporation blights the Coach & Horses and the Imperial, two historic pubs, both closed and increasingly derelict and on an important gateway site to the city. WE are told that the Corporation have no plans at all for the site, and very little money to do anything anyway. Next in the pipeline is an announcement about the proposed site of the Olympic Village and administration centre - this is to be on the site behind Piccadilly station and could involve the issue of yet more Compulsory Purchase Orders, potentially threatening such classic locals as the Moulders Arms and the Jolly Angler, the latter a Manchester beer drinking institution. We understand that the aim of this scheme will be to blend the old with the new and could well be the acid test of the planners commitment to keeping the best of the old in the glorious new Manchester that they see before them.

The Olympic Games and the Earth Summit are all very well, but to many people what happens to the places they live, work and, yes, drink, is just as important. The time for the powers that be to show they understand this, the time for action, is now.

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PUB of the Month December



Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

This month, Opening Times' coverage of the Pub of the Month is extended. While the pub itself is of great merit, there are wider issues involved. Read on...

The Little Bradford - The Pub

Originally known as the Bradford Arms, this ex-Tetley pub had been known as the Why Not for some years before Peter and Aline Hallam moved in in August 1988. The Why Not had been eccentric to say the least - perhaps the most madcap scheme had been to park an entire aircraft shell next to the pub (no, it never happened) - so local drinkers waited with some interest to see how the Hallams, new to the trade, would develop the place.

Perhaps the best tribute that can be given to their stewardship is precisely that phrase "new to the trade" - for they have taken to the pub like old stagers. While some of the former decor still remains, the main visual theme of the pub is now firmly grounded in the area's industrial history - in particular some splendid photographs of nearby Bradford Colliery. Evidence of the thriving business the pub does is provided by the existence of no less than SIX darts teams (three mens', two ladies', and one mixed) - it's no surprise there are so many trophies to be seen! Pool players have their own room at the back, and other "added attractions" include a Wednesday quiz night and Beswick Friendly Society fortnightly on Fridays.



In December there's one very special added attraction - the Pub of the Month presentation on Thursday 17th December. As well as the usual range of draught beers (Boddingtons Bitter, Chesters Mild and Tetley Bitter), it's hoped to have a "mystery beer" from a small Manchester brewery - and there could even be real cider available! All this and Peter and Aline's famous hospitality - don't miss it!

The Little Bradford - The Threat

Manchester is bidding for the Olympic Games. The stadium site, which will be developed Olympics or no Olympics - is in East Manchester. The Little Bradford lies just south of one of the planned car parks. It's under threat of compulsory purchase to "landscape" the car park.

CAMRA thinks this makes no sense. Destroy a great pub for a clump of shrubs? Ridiculous! We're not getting much joy out of the Council, so we've invited Bob Scott, Chair of Manchester's Olympic bid, to the Pub-of-the-Month presentation. Turn up and tell him what you think! Further comments are expressed in the editorial on page .

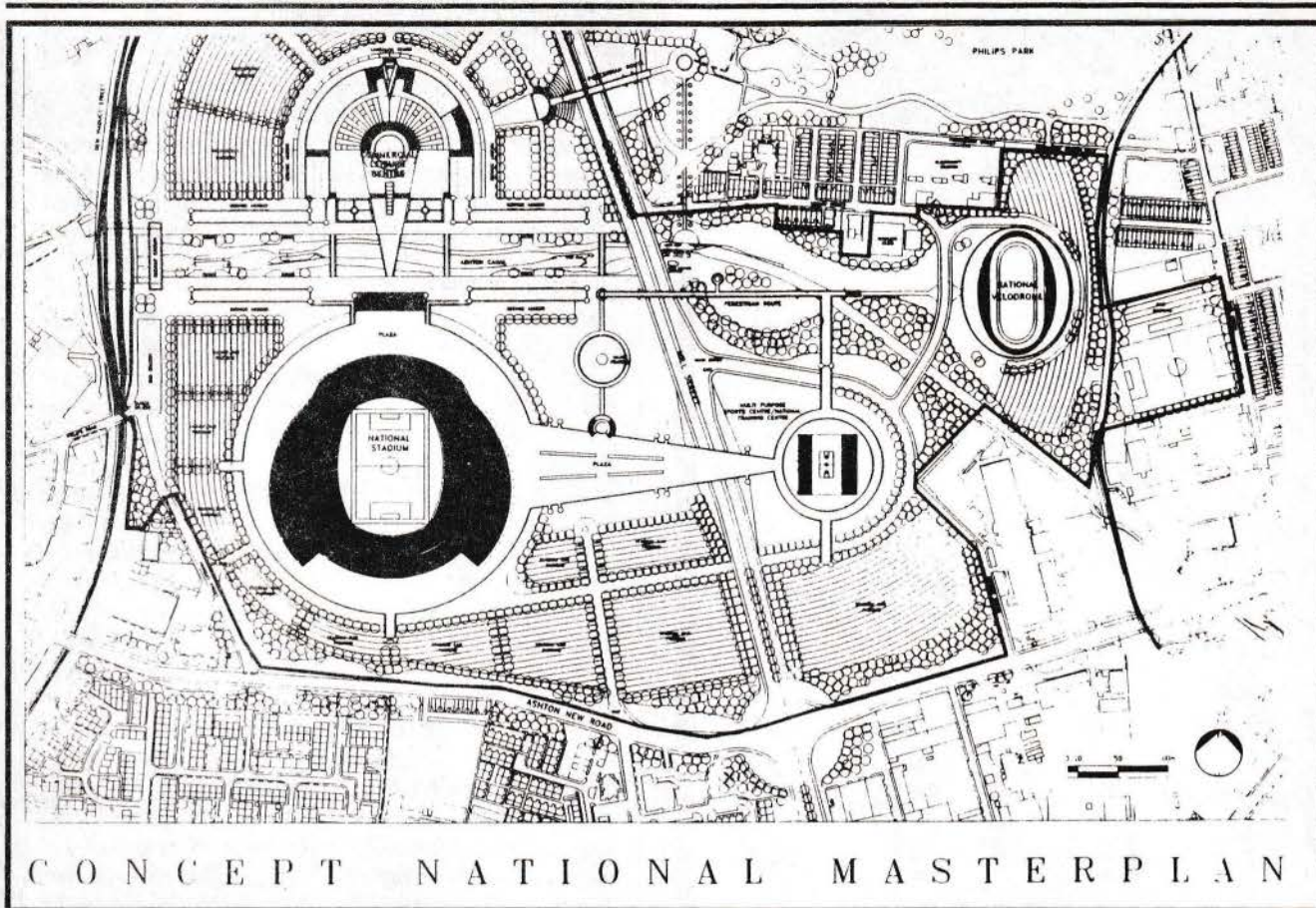
*Aline & Peter Hallam
of*

THE LITTLE BRADFORD

wish all customers and friends

A Merry Christmas

and A Happy New Year



C O N C E P T N A T I O N A L M A S T E R P L A N

The Little Bradford - The Area

Some people will still try to tell you that East Manchester is over-pubbed. So let's look at the facts. "Ale of Two Cities", CAMRA's latest guide to real ale in Manchester and Salford, came out in the Spring of 1990. The Little Bradford is one of 12 real ale pubs it lists in the Beswick and Bradford area. Let's look at those 12 today.

- Alexandra - CLOSED & DERELICT
- Britannia - survives without threat
- Corner Shop - no longer with real ale
- Crescent - CLOSED & DEMOLISHED
- Duke of Edinburgh - CLOSED & TO BE DEMOLISHED
- Grey Mare - CLOSED & DEMOLISHED
- Little Bradford - survives but threatened
- Metropole - no longer with real ale
- Old House at Home - survives
- Queen Victoria - CLOSED & DERELICT
- Seven Stars - survives without threat
- Travellers Call - CLOSED & DEMOLISHED

In no way does CAMRA seek to perpetuate pubs that have lost their role. Yes, there was a time, after East Manchester's industry vanished, when ALL its attendant pubs lingered on. They couldn't all survive - nor would we wish them to. Equally we have no quarrel with the loss of pubs, such as the Shakespeare, which stand plumb in the middle of the major developments planned.

But look at the list above. Ponder the losses (and experience how thriving are the good pubs that remain). And ask yourself - hasn't this area suffered enough?



The Shakespeare Inn - smack in the middle of the development, it stood no chance of survival, but in the original drawings, the Britannia Inn was also shown as demolition fodder, (to be replaced by shrubs) - thankfully this proved to be the fault of an over enthusiastic draughtsman.



**THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER**

No apologies this month for returning to the theme of the threat to our pubs. This really is becoming the issue of the nineties as far as pub-goers are concerned.

Hot on the heels of the various road schemes and the Olympic Stadium development, we now learn that an announcement could be in the pipeline about the Olympic Village, bringing in its wake the threat to even more of our local pubs. We in CAMRA will fight as hard as we can to

save those pubs which can sensibly we're not lud-
diting every-
preserved for
day, but there
time when
enough. The
wave of pub
the inner city
stopped.
which weren't
cally viable
ready gone to
Perhaps one or
on but for the

In the Editor's View

by John Clarke

those that remain are vital and profitable centres of their local communities. Many local authorities are drawing up tough new planning rules to prevent pub closures - Birmingham for example has announced that planning permission will be refused for change of use if a pub with an important social role is to be closed. As we approach the year of the Earth Summit isn't it time that our own local authorities did the same?

We were hoping to have Olympic Bid supremo Bob Jones along to present the Pub of the Month award to the Little Bradford and so give him a chance to talk directly with those affected by the Stadium plans. Unfortunately he will be out of the country at the time but, undaunted we have now extended a blanket invitation to the entire Bid Committee. It would be nice to think that they will take this opportunity to meet with and talk to the locals of this fine pub threatened with unnecessary demolition.

All that now remains is for me to wish all of our readers and advertisers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Here's to 1993 (it's just got to be better than 1992!)

Save Our Pub !

No, that's not CAMRA talking, but Beswick and Clayton Liberal Democrats. The fight to save the Little Bradford features on the front page of their local newsletter, where they call the pub "one of the best and friendliest freehouses in the area". CAMRA, of course, is not concerned with party politics; in this matter, though, we welcome support from the Liberal Democrats - and will be trying to find out whether the other parties are willing to commit themselves!

Letters for publication, and any other contributions, should be sent to: The Editor, 'Opening Times' 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD

OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1992



Stuart Ballantyne

For this month's pub grub article we visited the Milestone on Burnage Lane in Burnage. The Milestone is a comparatively new pub being purposely built by Banks's (Wolverhampton & Dudley) brewery some five or so years ago resulting in a welcome increase in beer choice for the area.

Built in Banks's house style, the Milestone may not be to everybody's taste, but it is certainly better than a lot of other local (and indeed national) breweries efforts. The bar and lounge are two distinct and separate rooms, the lounge being a split level room with central fireplace and its own food bar. There is a distinct 'rustic' feel to the lounge where considerable use has been made of mahogany and stonework. Regrettably the atmosphere of the room has been compromised somewhat, with some of the seats looking as though they have been slashed.

Today's menu included Roast Pork (£3.75), Cheese & Onion Quiche (£2.45), and Steak Pie, Hot Pot, Chilli con Carne, and Liver & Sausage Country Casserole all at £3.20. Hot crusty rolls were also available from £1.00 as were sweets such as Hot Chocolate Fudge Cake and Apple Pie, both with cream or ice cream for £1.20. No salads or children's meals were advertised and, unusually, chips did not seem to be available.

My partner chose Steak Pie but was immediately disappointed to be told "sorry, Steak Pie's not on. It always goes first as its always good quality". I wondered somewhat cynically if this meant that everything else was not always good quality. He instead opted for the Hot Pot, whilst I chose the Liver and Sausage Country Casserole. Both meals were served with roast potatoes, boiled potatoes, carrots, peas and cabbage.

Both meals were ample portions and well cooked though neither could have been described as being piping hot. The enjoyment of our meals was spoilt somewhat, as we found that we had to quickly bolt our meals down, before they went cold. The boiled potatoes were particularly poor in this respect.

The beer on the other hand was quite acceptable. Both the Banks's Mild and Banks's Bitter were on good form. With the odd reservation I can recommend people to try the Milestone as the food is basically good, and certainly it is good value for money as the portions are generous. As my partner commented on leaving, "I'm surprised it wasn't busier, that meal wasn't bad".

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**PUB OF THE YEAR
1992**

The King's Arms

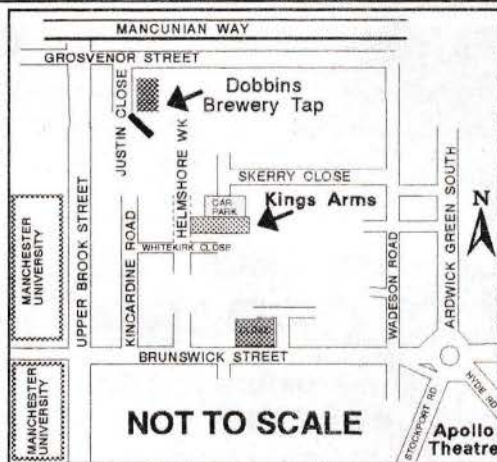


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**My Goodness!
My Guinness R.I.P.!**

Guinness Original, one of the world's classic beers is to be
axed.

Anglo-Irish brewing giant Guinness said last month that it
would replace the bottle-conditioned stout with a "pre-
conditioned" version that would have longer shelf-life and
"greater consistency" of flavour.

Pre-conditioned is brewery-speak for filtered and pas-
teurised. The living version will be removed from pubs in
England and Wales from next April. Scotland and Northern
Ireland lost real bottled Guinness some time ago but it is still
available in the Irish Republic.

Brewery spokesman Rona Cameron claimed that the
conditioned version would be a more consistent product
with a "more consistent taste". She went on to claim that in
blind taste tests organised by the company, 60% of drinkers
couldn't tell the two beers apart.

This is yet another victory for the mass marketing mental-
ity over brewing sense and consumer preference - the
Guinness attitude is the supermarket one that demands that
every apple and tomato must be the same size and polished
colour. It stands to reason that a living beer, whether in bottle
or cask, will vary slightly from brew to brew - that is one of the
joys and mysteries of the style.

Paradoxically, the Guinness decision comes at a time
when other giant brewers are showing greater interest in
bottle-conditioned beers. Bass has mounted a major cam-
paign to boost the sales of Worthington White Shield, albeit
at a price (see article elsewhere) and Courage has just
brewed a new batch of the classic Imperial Russian Stout.
Whitbread even plan to launch a nationally available cask-
conditioned porter in the New Year.

Beer writer Roger Protz summed up: "Guinness is a com-
pany that has lost its way. It is thrashing around for ever more
flashy and trendy products and is ignoring its core market
and its once great and noble heritage. This is a decision that
must be reversed."

THE KINGS ARMS

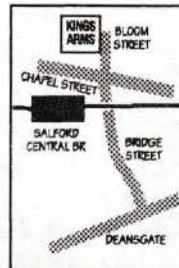
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GUIDE**

**13 HANDPUMPS
HOLTS, THEAKSTONS,
TIMOTHY TAYLORS**

**CONSTANTLY CHANGING RANGE OF
GUEST BEERS & TRADITIONAL CIDERS**



Bass Guest Beers

BASS, Britain's biggest brewers of real ale, have announced a major expansion of guest beers into their managed estate.

Announcing the decision last month, a company spokesman said "We have identified certain pubs where customers have been asking for other traditional cask ales in addition to our own popular brands." Quoted examples of this new found commitment to guest beers were as diverse as the promotion of the excellent Highgate Mild in the South East to the introduction of powerful ales such as Theakstons Old Peculiar into pubs in the Midlands.

Local drinkers however, as reported last month, would scarcely recognise this picture as the commitment to real ale shown by Bass in the Stockport & South Manchester area is still negligible. Last month we revealed that Bass alone account for something like half of the total number of keg-only pubs in Stockport Metro - the position in South Manchester is just as bad. Take Rusholme for example, for years all four Bass pubs in the area have had no cask conditioned beer. Recently the Birch Villa dabbled with Worthington Best Bitter on handpump but the experiment was apparently half-hearted and predictable short-lived.

Indeed, while other keg-only pubs are falling over themselves to install the real thing, Bass seem to be moving backwards as only recently it has come to light that Times Square in Didsbury has lost its real ale, making it the sole keg-only outlet in the village.

Bass say that something like 70% of their managed houses offer real ale - locally the statistic is almost 100% keg. Why can't Bass make it work in places like Rusholme and Reddish when local brewers such as Robinsons and Hydes and even national competitors like Whitbread and Tetley can?



Great British Beer Festival 1993

The Great British Beer Festival is returning to the Grand Hall, Olympia in West London for a second year. Plans are already in hand to prepare for the expected increase in visitors and the resulting extra beer. In total over 185,000 pints are due to be ordered to cater for the 40,000 drinkers, but with 150,000 square feet for customers to wander around in, there should again be plenty of space.

The main bar, divided into 12 separate regional bars, will offer 300 real ales whilst side bars will sell ciders, perries and foreign beers. All set under a spectacular glass roof, the drinker can look up and watch the clouds go by or be grateful to be in out of the typical summer rain!

To help line the stomach the food will cater for all tastes, vegetarians are not forgotten with many of the food stands offering veggie alternatives.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, there is live music, pub games and craft stands to browse around. Couple this with CAMRA's infamous Tombola and the room set aside for families and the Festival promises something for everyone.

The Festival opens 3rd-7th August. 5-10.30pm Tuesday-Friday; 11.30am-3pm Wednesday-Friday; 11.30am-10.30pm Saturday. For further details contact 0727 867201.



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YOUR HOSTS

Steve & Dorothy

STAGGER

with John Clarke

The Gorton Lane area of East Manchester is one that boasts an interesting array of different pubs but has to date been overlooked as a possibility for an evening's drinking in these pages - an omission hopefully now put to rights.

Our starting point was the **Junction** on Hyde Road. For many years keg-only this four-square Whitbread pub now offers a choice of handpumped Boddingtons Bitter and Whitbread Trophy. Trophy is almost always a disappointingly thin pint, no matter how well it is kept, and we therefore tried the Boddingtons, which while not on the peak of its form, was perfectly acceptable. As indeed was the pub itself - at 7.00pm it was naturally quiet but was nonetheless pleasant and comfortable with a traditional multi-room layout and a nice old fireplace containing a fake, but convincing real-flame gas fire which gave a welcome focus to the large lounge bar.

Just next door is the **Dolphin**, a pub with a chequered history over the past decade. Originally a very run down Marstons pub with (in my opinion) very little to commend it, few tears were shed when it closed down. In this part of the city that would normally be the end of the story but remarkably, the pub has been rescued from dereliction and is now a comfortable one-room freehouse. On the plus side there are some nice old photos of the area but the downside, at least when we called, was the obtrusively loud TV. The beers were a surprise, too. Expecting a range of Allied/Tetley products we instead found Boddingtons Bitter and Coachhouse Innkeepers Special Reserve. We all tried the latter and while possibly a bit "green" this was rated good or better by all our party bar one who found it no more than average.

Swiftly moving on, the next stop was the **Aces** on Clowes Street. This is a fairly standard estate pub aimed very much at the younger end of the market with a variety of video machines, pin-ball tables, pool tables and a stage for a band or, as when we called, a **very** loud disco. You could be forgiven for not expecting very much on the beer front in a pub like this and for much of the recent past you wouldn't have been disappointed as a keg-only Whitbread range was all that was on offer. But no more! An array of handpumps dispense Trophy

Bitter, Boddies Bitter, Holts Bitter, Thwaites Bitter and Chesters Mild. Spoilt for choice we tried the Holts, Thwaites and Chesters all of which were OK without being anything special. Both the Holts and the Boddies were only 96p a pint - is this the cheapest Boddies anywhere? Full of praise for the beer range, we were sorry to see one more handpump on the bar, this one dispensing keg Scrumpy Jack cider. Let's hope this is only a temporary aberration on the part of what could be a good pub.

The nearby **Wellington**, keg Bass (what a contrast to the Aces!) had nothing to detain us and we made our way to the **Birch Arms** on Gorton Lane, pausing only to look at the distant site of the now-demolished **Railway** on Pottery Lane, once the best pub for miles. Pondering vanished glories we made our way into the Birch which, despite being a Bass pub, had only one real ale - the, by now ubiquitous Boddingtons Bitter, and not very good Boddies at that. The pub though, is very pleasant and comfortable, with a traditional vault on one side and two best rooms on the other, although the dividing wall between these two has been partially removed, each had its own distinctive character. Quite a few remaining original features and nice etched windows completed the effect.

Our 8.30 meeting point, Banks's **Gorton Arms** was closed and swarming with police who appeared to be investigation a break-in. After being cryptically informed that the pub would be closed all the weekend for reasons which could not be disclosed, we made the short walk to the **Crown** on Valance Close. This is an old Whitbread house surrounded by new housing - an old photograph inside evoked memories of the pub in its Chesters days. Inside the pub has been opened out in a modern style but was friendly and comfortable nonetheless. It's the type of pub that could be bland and boring but which successfully avoids this - it was also nice to see a Manchester log-end dart board in use. Not realising that handpumped Chesters Mild was available we all went for the other cask beer, yes you guessed, Boddingtons Bitter which was average for the night.

We now began the long walk down Gorton Lane, first passing the Steelworks Tavern, still closed despite several attempts by Whitbread to sell it off. Close by is the **Vulcan**, the first "Wilson's" pub of the night. A good solid local, there were two rooms, vault and lounge, the latter decorated with Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley and Dean Martin pictures. It was also possible to detect the previous multi-room layout from the beams on the ceiling. Despite the lack of pumpclips we discovered that the two beers were Wilsons Bitter, a welcome and increasingly rare sight these days, and Boddingtons Bitter. Sadly neither were very good.

Ye Olde Vic Chatham St.
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Guest Beers Weekly

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good taste

Just down the road is the **Gardeners Arms**, another Whitbread house. The layout is very traditional with vault, lounge and snug, all the more commendable as the pub was apparently converted back to this format from a previous open-plan layout. It's been carried off very well - the bar is particularly fine with dark wood and stained glass much in evidence. Plenty of trophies in the vault attested to a well-used community pub. No Trophy on the bar though, but handpumped Chesters Mild and Bitter plus (yawn) Boddies Bitter. We all tried the Chesters Mild which was above average. Sad to say, though, this is yet another good pub which blots its copybook by selling Scrumpy Jack keg cider on a fake handpump, there was even a bloody great poster in the vestibule advertising the stuff...regretting that until the fake handpump goes, this otherwise fine pub can be no more than an also ran we walked down to the Angel on Wellington Street.

The **Angel** is a Greenalls pub but the only cask beer is (no, not Boddingtons) Stones Bitter - apparently when the Stones went in, sales of Greenalls Bitter collapsed. The pub still retains its multi-roomed layout with many original features, including some very nice tiling, although to my mind these lived a little uneasily with some attempts at modernisation. That said, this is a pleasant well-run pub which was surprisingly quiet for 9.50 on a Friday night. Unfortunately the beer didn't match up to the pub, being comfortably below average.

Next stop was the **Plough** on the corner of Hyde Road and Wellington Street. This fine unspoilt Robinsons pub and the attempts to save it from demolition have been widely reported in *Opening Times*. We all trooped into the magnificent vault and, after signing the CAMRA petition to save the pub, settled down to try the Robbies Best Mild and Best Bitter. One other feature of the Plough in recent years has been the, in my experience, consistently horrible beer - all that has changed

however with the arrival of Bob Voight from Stockport's Black Lion. The Robbies is now some of the best you are likely to get and tonight was no exception with both beers in fine form, the mild being slightly more appreciated than the bitter. If you haven't visited the Plough yet, do make the effort to get there, all the Hyde Road buses will drop you virtually at the door.

Tearing ourselves away, we paused outside the **Lord Nelson**. When last visited the two cask beers were Websters Yorkshire Bitter and Bass Light - neither made for an irresistible attraction and we moved on to the **Waggon & Horses**. This excellent Holts pub never disappoints and tonight was no exception. The pub was packed with atmosphere and customers being entertained by a gutsy female vocalist. Both the mild and bitter were on fine form with, like the Plough, the mild being preferred. It was a close run thing as to whether the Waggon or the Plough had offered the night's best beer.

All agreed that this had been an interesting night ending on some excellent beer. Other points that stick out are the almost endless procession of pubs offering Boddies Bitter and also two potentially very good pubs with fake handpumps for keg cider (and there really is no need for this - Bulmers/Symonds will supply keg fonts if asked). Of course all this article can be is a snapshot of one particular night and should in no way be taken as a once and for all judgement on either the pubs or their beers. As ever, why not try them yourselves and see how much you (dis)agree!

Running out of ideas for Christmas presents? The 1993 Good Beer Guide - the Beer Drinkers Bible - is the ideal present for any pub-goer at £7.99. Send your cheque made payable to CAMRA, Stockport & South Manchester, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG.

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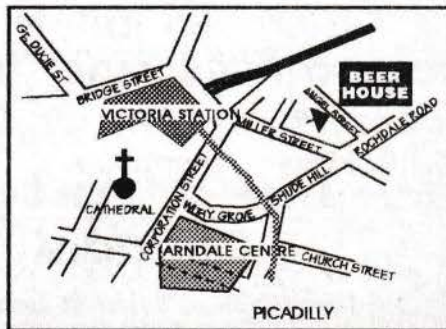
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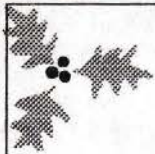
*Merry Christmas
to all our customers*



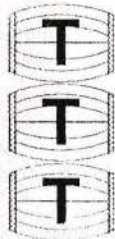
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*Merry Christmas and
A Happy New Year from
Peter and Jacqui Needham*



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MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR



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& Happy New Year
from Eddie & Alwyn**



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HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO CUSTOMERS OLD AND NEW
LANCE AND BEV
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To ALL our Customers
Tony & Pauline

Mosley Hotel

Beswick

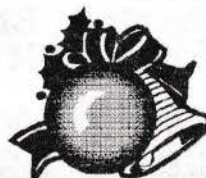
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GUEST BEERS

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A Happy New Year
To all
customers and friends
from Phyllis, Wendi & Stuart**

**The Printers
Cheadle**


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TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS
from JUNE & FAMILY
THE CHESHIRE CHEESE
EVERY STREET, ANCOATS




TRADITIONAL ALE &
REGULAR GUEST BEERS

*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
From Bob and Staff*



The Plough



GORTON

Merry Christmas
And Happy New Year
TO ALL OUR REGULARS
GEORGE & LIZ

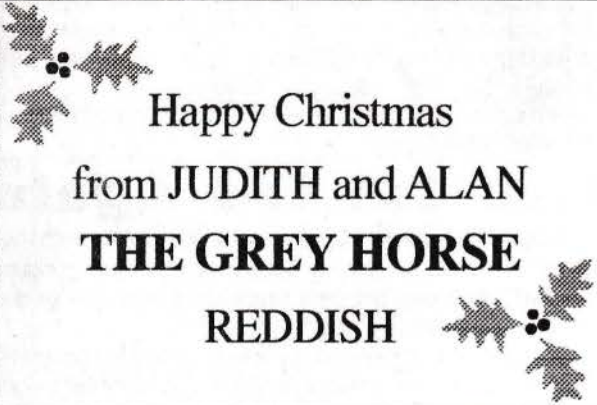


The
ANGEL, GORTON

*Happy Christmas
from JUDITH and ALAN*

THE GREY HORSE

REDDISH



Don't have a COB on !!


SWAN in to the

SWAN HOTEL

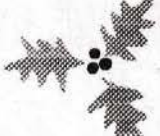
Shaw Heath


and get DOWN with

Jim Mulvey and Staff



OPEN CHRISTMAS DAY



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TO ONE AND ALL

FROM ALL AT

THE NAVIGATION

HEATON NORRIS


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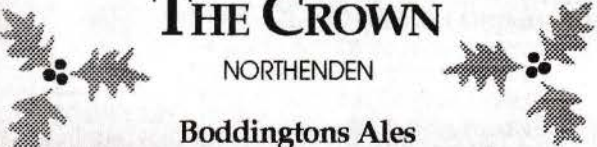
*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
From All at*



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NORTHENDEN

Boddingtons Ales




BLOSSOMS

always the traditional multi-roomed pub
Robinsons hand pulled Ales
Best Mild, Best Bitter, Old Tom Ale



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all our customers
from Barbara, Rick and Simon



11.30 - 3.30pm & 5.15 - 11pm
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Guest Beer Rules Clarified

After considerable lobbying by CAMRA, the Office of Fair Trading has finally clarified the guest beers rule as it applies to the tenants of the national brewers, that is those with more than 2000 tied houses.

For some time there has been confusion over the position of "in house" guest beers - that is ales on the owning brewers price-list which are offered to tenants as a "guest beer", for example, Marstons Pedigree on the Whitbread price list. Some licensees have been given to understand that if they bought such beer from their brewery they were prevented from buying one cask conditioned beer ("real ale") from elsewhere. CAMRA has always argued that this was not so, but the law wasn't absolutely clear.

The OFT has now told CAMRA "If a tenant takes supplies of the so-called guest beer he remains entitled to buy a brand of draught cask conditioned beer from someone else." Now that this has been clarified, let's hope that more tenants feel encouraged to stock interesting guest beers - as this month's 'Stagger' shows, all too often the guest beer market is dominated by the likes of Boddingtons Bitter, squeezing out the smaller brewers who can often offer more interesting and value for money products.

CAMRA has produced a standard letter to licensees and leaseholders who may be affected and also has copies of the relevant correspondence with the Office of Fair Trading. Opening Times can supply copies of both to interested licensees.




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EVERY
WEEK**

**EXCLUSIVE
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MILDS**

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**Entertainment
every
Weekend**



Lager Sales Sliding

Sales of lager have declined, according to the Brewers Society, the big brewers organisation.

Draught lager fell from 32.6 to 31.4 per cent of the total beer market, according to latest statistics. Taking draught and packaged beer together, lager fell from 51.4 to 51.0 per cent of the market. These figures compare 1991 and 1990, the most up to date figures available.

Commenting on the decline in lager sales, CAMRA Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox said "The great lager bubble has burst. Draught lager just isn't fashionable any more - despite the enormous sums spent on advertising."

"Only the fad for dull lagers in pretty bottles is keeping lager ahead. That fad will certainly pass. Real ale, on the other hand, continues to show significant growth."

"Real ale has grown from 19.7% of draught sales to 21.5% in a year. (Brewers Society). We expect this growth to continue, as more and more customers seek a traditional, quality, tasty product."

"After all, real ale is a world class product - unlike the bogus beer called British lager."

Bass Canned Again

Not content with attempting to mislead the public with their real-ale-in-a-can advertising, Bass have also been messing around with their one genuine packaged real ale - bottle-conditioned Worthington White Shield.

For years this has been a reliable standby in many keg pubs, and has been a popular drink in its own right with many people. The brand was however neglected by Bass, until this year that is. It has been repackaged with a new label and a new bottle. The yeast has been changed (the old strain was apparently, well, showing the strain) and is being advertised in the national press for the first time in living memory. All well and good, you may think, so what's the catch? The catch is that all this razzamatazz has been accompanied by a price-hike of 30-40%. Somewhat above the rate of inflation you will notice.

Opening Times has been inundated with complaints by long-time White Shield drinkers, many vowing never to touch the stuff again after a lifetime of loyalty to the brand. As one correspondent wrote "It really is scandalous that Worthington should increase the cost of the excellent ale by one third at one go". Scandalous, yes. But where Bass are concerned, surprising, no.

Phil Welcomes You To The

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Pages 13 and 14 have been – Lost in action!

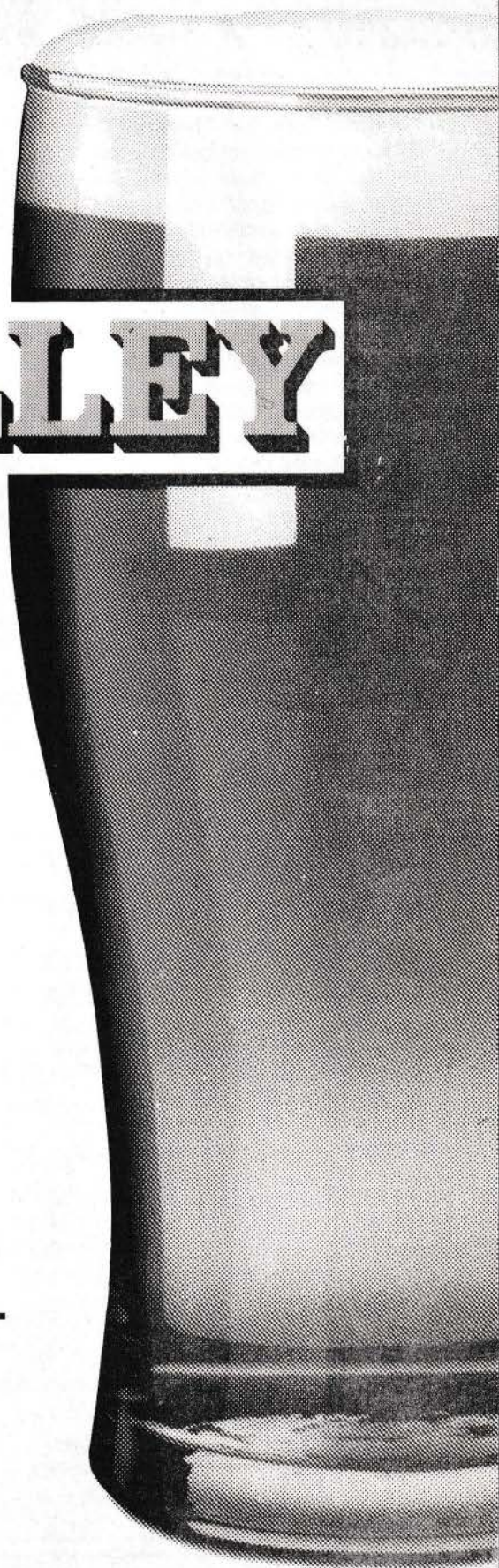
According to the contents, these pages covered Xmas Cheer (13) and 5 Years Ago (14).

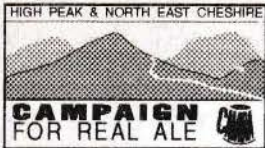
The reason for removal of the leaf is a mystery. In modern times this could have been for such as Cider Circuit or Winter Warmer Wander, but back then. . .

LOCALLEY

**TETLEY
BITTER**

**BRITAIN'S BEST
LOVED BITTER**





Pub of
the Month

DEC
92

The High Peak and North East Cheshire Branch pub of the month for December is the Hatters Arms in Marple.

This small pub is on Church Lane, in the centre of the village and is a sturdy stone built end of terrace local. The pub layout is virtually unchanged from its early years at the turn of the century. It still has its small cosy rooms and wooden panelling and so far, thankfully, has successfully resisted the trend to open plan pubs. Its time-honoured local feel is its strength.

The vault is unpretentious; no pool tables here, and serves well its function as host to traditional pub pastimes, darts, dominoes, and cards particularly nine-card darts and crib. This is a place to relax in.

The vault and 'best room' windows are leaded and the central pieces depict the tools used in the once common local hatting trade. Sadly one of these was broken by morons not so long ago but has been pieced together again.

The beers are Robinsons Best Mild and Bitter on hand pump from a good deep cellar always naturally cool in summer.

Over the years this pub has served generations of Marple drinkers (including the writer's great-grandfather in the 1920's) and has kept unnecessary change from the door, unlike, regrettably, the rest of the centre of Marple!

Long may it display the same timeless character and resistance to change that is its hallmark.

Friends or Foes ? Animals in Pubs

How do you feel about animals in pubs? The four footed variety we are talking about! We can of course extend this to include birds and fish - the latter alive and off the menu!

Four footed creatures and our feathered friends can definitely give an extra something to a pub. Who does not feel a glow of pride when the pub cat selects your lap to sit on out of all the others available, unless of course you happen to be allergic to cats or up to the point when it starts to shred your best suit. A cat is a remarkably determined creature and once having made itself warm and comfy on your lap nothing will bloody well shift it without a fight. I remember one magnificent pub tabby cat which would cling limpet-like with needle sharp claws as you tried to remove it from your lap. It defied all attempts to dislodge it and those in the know remembered the scars it had inflicted on them in the past.

In general, though, a cat is a welcome addition to a pub. It will keep itself to itself and if you are chosen will sleep peacefully in the lap for hours. A pub cat takes life in its stride and tolerates your intrusion into its domain. It adds a homely touch to a pub and at least it doesn't want to eat your crisps all the time - like the pub dog!

Why is it that pub dogs are nearly always very large, efficient looking dogs? Pub dog = big dog seems to be the rule. Alsatians, Boxers, Dobermans etc. rule OK. The message seems to be "I'm security mate, mess around here and you'll have me to deal with". "He's very friendly really" says the landlord. "He's just playful" - as you watch the hound clamp its jaws around the rubber toy plaything.

The honourable exception to this is everybody's favourite softy, the Labrador. What a wonderful pub dog; placid, calm, even tempered, unprovokeable. Generally weighing in at several stone, this softie leans its full weight against your legs and gazes soulfully up at you and then spreads out over your feet like a great big hairy rug.

Aquariums in pubs don't normally cause problems but their contents sometimes do. There have been people ejected for introducing goldfish and guppies to the delights of Ind Coope Burton Ale and for attempting to satisfy a longstanding wish to see if Planters nuts float or sink!

Sitting in a pub one night I became aware of being stared at or so it seemed. Not by any human but by a large fish in a tank a few feet away. Very unnerving! Its wide mouth gave it a sort of lop-sided grin and it looked extremely envious of my pint of bitter. It seemed to be saying "Give us a drink, mate!" Feed a creature like that Holts Bitter and heaven knows what would happen!

Birds are not so common in pubs; but if you find one with a talkative, noisy parrot things can definitely be entertaining, depending on what the customers have taught it to say - usually at the most embarrassing moments!

Just as pubs are enhanced by the human characters one finds in them pub animals also add their own contribution to a good local. If I can just shift this dog I might be able to get near the pub fire! Get that cat off my regular seat! Honest I never saw the cat before I sat down!

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES AT THE PINEAPPLE INN

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The Queens in Hyde which has been closed in recent months has re-opened. It now appears to be a Bass "free house" with a full range of cask beers :- two milds, Stones, Special, Worthington and Draught Bass.

The Bowling Green in Marple (GBG listed) is once again serving John Smiths Magnet.

The Old Hall in Whitehough, a former Good Beer Guide listed pub has closed. This comes on top of the sad news that the excellent free house, The Squirrels, has also closed as a result of unrealistic rent increases imposed on enterprising licensee, Drew Marsh (see previous Opening Times). This stupidity appears to be being compounded by the possible introduction of a manager to run the pub in the meantime. Should this rumour be correct, insult has been added to the injury of the hike in rents which came only after Drew had put time, energy, money and enthusiasm into building a fine free house. Absurd!

On a more cheerful note the large hotel in Hayfield, The Royal is due to reopen shortly. Let's hope it again reaches the standard that gained it recognition in the Good Beer Guide in the past.

Still in Derbyshire, the Spring Tavern in Woolley Bridge now has Jennings Cumberland Bitter on sale alongside Spring Bitter a house beer supplied by Banks & Taylor.

Down the road in Glossop, The Commercial in Chunal has been renamed the Whiteley Nab after the hill opposite. The reason for this extra local character is not as romantic as it may first appear. Some executives from Vaux Brewery, who acquired the pub recently, decided to visit their new outlet. So off they went to Glossop where they asked for directions to the Commercial in Old Glossop, where they informed the bemused landlord that he now worked for them. He informed them that there were two pubs of that name and that they must have bought the other. This was obviously too complex for them so they changed the name of their Commercial. And we thought our pubs were safe in their hands. Or did we?

Drinking in The Low Countries

Everybody knows Belgium as the home of a multitude of fine and unusual beers. But Holland? Well, not the least of the strengths of Tim Webb's new book on Belgium and Netherlands drinking is the number and range of his discoveries, some of them in areas long thought deserts for the serious beer-drinker. The only province in the two countries where he finds nothing of interest is the reclaimed polder of Flevoland.

The research is thorough. Not far off half the book is taken up by an invaluable breweries section, listing all the beers over 3.5% ABV - with the exception, on deliberate principle, of the proliferating "label" beers (an existing brew under a new name) which do so much to confuse the visitor. Webb's fluent and readable prose style is perhaps at its best in this section - who could resist a lambic described thus: "Like flat real ale with added mushrooms! Grows on you. And in you perhaps." Most of the bar listings also give a good impression of the place - some shorter ones are based on secondhand reports, but these are clearly identified. Another reviewer has complained of the lack of details of which beers are served, but in a changing scene, with nothing resembling the British tied house system, I thought this a sensible decision - half the fun is asking and trying things for yourself.

The book's background information - food, transport and the like - is useful, and includes a very helpful section on ferry crossings. No boring and instantly out-of-date lists of times and fares here, but a succinct and well-informed rundown on the plus and minus points of each route. Those who can read some Dutch will no doubt continue to buy Peter Crombecq's irreplaceable Bierjaarboek annuals. This new volume, however, effortlessly establishes itself as the standard work in English on the subject. If you are planning to go anywhere near Belgium or the Netherlands in the next year or so, you must buy it. And if you are not, why not?

Stocking Filler

Running out of ideas for Christmas presents? The 1993 Good Beer Guide - the Beer Drinkers Bible - is the ideal present for any pub-goer at £7.99. Send your cheque made payable to CAMRA, Stockport & South Manchester, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5EG.

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NEXT TO BY-PASS

CAMRA CALLING!

Lots of socials in the early part of the month, but we have a rest between Christmas and New Year.

On Monday 7th, there will be a social at the Aces, Clowes Street, West Gorton. An interesting range of beers at this Whitbread pub, including Thwaites and Holts. In common with all Monday Socials this starts at 9.00pm.

This is followed on Thursday 10th with our monthly branch meeting. This will be at the Kings Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock and will include our traditional Christmas Quiz with lots of wonderful prizes. We kick off at about 8.00pm.

The following Monday the social is at the Travellers Call, Buxton Road (A6), Great Moor. An excellent little Robinsons house, this. On Thursday 17th there is the Pub of the Month award at the Little Bradford - anyone wanting to book a place on the minibus that will run should phone Dawn and Duncan on 445 0872. The very next day it's the legendary Hillgate Stagger. We start at the Royal Oak on High Street at 7.00pm and finish at the Blossoms sometime after 10.00pm. The 8.30 meeting point will be the Black Lion. It should be a particularly interesting crawl this year with the two Wilsons pubs, the Crown and Wheatsheaf having gone to Vaux, and the Black Lion offering guest beers. One not to miss!


The last event before the Christmas and New Year period is on Monday 21st when there will be a social at O'Connors, Stockport Road, (A6), Longsight. That's it then until the New Year. The first two events of 1993 are Monday Socials - on January 4th we will be at Jabez Clegg, Dover Street, Chorlton-




Thursday 26th November saw a goodly turnout of CAMRA stalwarts to the Pub of the Month award, to George and Sue Lindsay at the Nursery Inn, Heaton Norris. The pub also received a special award commemorating 10 consecutive years in CAMRA's National Good Beer Guide. Hydes Brewery further marked the event, presenting George with a commemorative tankard.

on-Medlock and on the 11th at the Crown, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey.

Of course, if you live in the Marple, Romiley, Woodley or Bredbury areas you fall under the High Peak and North East Cheshire Branch. They will be having a branch meeting on Monday 14th at the Dog & Partridge in Denton. Aim to get there by about 8.30. There will also be a Christmas trip to the High Peak area on Saturday 12th. The January branch meeting will be on Monday 11th at the Travellers Call in Bredbury. For more details about High Peak activities, contact Geoff Williamson on 0663 765634. Members of both branches are of course more than welcome to attend each others meetings and events.

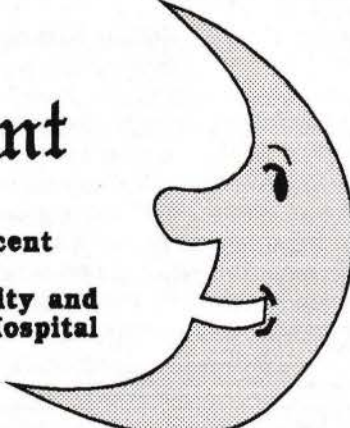


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A FAMILY TRADITION
OF FINE BREWING

The Crescent



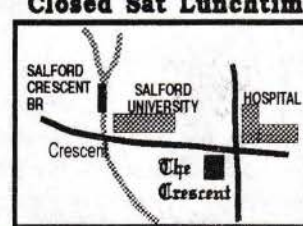
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Closed Sat Lunchtime



MANCHESTER MATTERS

by Rhys Jones

It's good to have something positive to report from East Manchester, and the Mosley Hotel on Ashton New Rd (corner of Rowsley Street) in Bradford promises to be a most encouraging real ale gain. Handpumped Boddingtons Bitter is joined by a regularly changing guest beer - guest beers have included such delights as Coach House Innkeepers and sell at the bargain price of 99p. a pint. Landlady Pauline Griffith is receiving advice and encouragement from her neighbour (and relative) Lance Gibbs of the Britannia, and the pub - which, like the Britannia, stands just outside the Olympic development area - looks set for a much-needed and well-deserved period of prosperity.

In Rusholme, the Sherwood on Claremont Road has re-opened, with Boddingtons Bitter on handpump although the nearby Lord Lyon, also re-opened after a short closure, is now all keg. In the City, Parker's Hotel on Corporation Street is trying real ale again - it's handpumped Marstons Pedigree.

There's been some activity lately on the guest beer front, not least in the Whitbread estate. At the Seven Oaks in the City Centre the range on handpump is now Boddingtons Bitter, Thwaites Bitter and a guest beer (recently good Taylors Landlord at £1.35); the White Lion on Liverpool Road has dropped the Chesters beers and Cains Bitter but has Castle Eden Ale, Marstons Pedigree, Flowers Original (why?), Boddingtons "OB" Bitter and Taylors Landlord on handpump; and the Crown & Anchor (Hilton Street) has dropped Fullers Chiswick Bitter in favour of Thwaites Bitter.

Out of town, the Beech in Chorlton-cum-Hardy has a regular guest beer, while the Aces in West Gorton has lost "OB" Bitter but gained Thwaites Bitter, Chesters Mild, and Whitbread Trophy. These beers are all served by genuine handpump - what a shame, then, that the place also serves Scrumpy Jack keg cider on a fake handpump! If nothing else, this means the pub is making itself ineligible for any form of CAMRA recognition such as Pub of the Month award or inclusion in selective guides, both of which would otherwise be a very real possibility in view of the enterprising range of beers - I do hope the licensee comes to see the sense of this.



"Handpumped" Scrumpy Jack has also appeared in the Gardeners Arms in Gorton where similar remarks apply. Staying in Gorton, the Birch Arms has lost Draught Bass, while the Crown has gained handpumped Chesters Mild - keg mild is still available, but a choice is offered and keg is losing ground. And in West Gorton, the Dolphin no longer has Castle Eden Ale but does have a regular guest beer on handpump - Coach House has featured here also.

The White House in the City Centre has Oak Best Bitter on handpump. Dobbins Brewery Tap in Chorlton-on-Medlock, while continuing to build up the full range of West Coast beers, has Westons Special Vintage cider from the poly cask and will have guest beers now and again - including Freeminer Bitter from the Royal Forest of Dean! At the Longsight in Belle Vue and the Milestone in Burnage, there are the rare sights of handpumps in Banks's pubs - they serve Cameron's Strongarm from the Hartlepool Brewery which Banks's took over earlier this year. The Rampant Lion in Victoria Park no longer sells Greenalls Original - guest beers have been sighted here, but don't seem to be a regular feature. The Crown in Northenden is trying handpumped Theakstons Bitter after an unsuccessful trial of John Smiths. And finally, the Shere Khan Wine Bar in Rusholme is now "Mr. Mac's Bar and Disco", and is keg.

REGIONAL DIARY - DECEMBER

Regional Meeting, Wed 9 Dec Marble Arch 8pm

Great North Western Beer & Cider Festival Meeting, Sun 13

Dec, Howcroft, Bolton. 12 noon.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

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: 18-21 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 Over 65

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

Chris Stone / Sue Tittensor, 80 Bexhill Road, Davenport, Stockport, SK3 8UZ

those wishing to join CAMRA who live in the Marple, Bredbury, Woodley or Romiley areas, should write instead to:
Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple, SK6 6JH

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Another Vaux acquisition to come to light is the Whetsheaf on Higher Hillgate, Stockport. Boddies Bitter remains as a guest beer and is now joined by Vaux Samson and Wards Bitter on handpump. Also on handpump is keg Scrumpy Jack cider, so the pub only merits two cheers at the moment.

Further down Hillgate, one of the few Vaux pubs to be resigned so far is the Crown although at the time of going to press it has Vaux signs but no Vaux beer! This was due to arrive on 1st December along with a new licensee - more next month.

Still on the Vaux front, Thorne Mild had now joined the Samson in the Castlewood in Stockport.

Back in Manchester, the Ardwick Empire, the long-closed keg Greenalls pub which formed part of the Fort Ardwick complex has now been demolished. Happily the nearby Grey Mare on Exeter Close is both open and trading. OT hopes to pay this pub a visit before too long, watch out for our report.

We reported the other month that the Lord Lyon in Rusholme was closed. The period of closure was, it seems, just one afternoon! The pub is still open and trading but sadly offers no real ale at the moment - the brewers? Bass!

Following the departure of Jim Mulvey, whither the Crown on Heaton Lane, Stockport? We gather that the pub will be going over to managed house status and may even become a Boddingtons Ale House along the lines of the Kings Arms on Bloom Street in Salford. In the short term, look out for cheap Tetley Bitter...

The Queens in Cheadle has been undergoing one of Robinsons marathon refurbishments. Completion is imminent and we will have a full report next month.

The other month we gave a hearty recommendation to visit the Plough on Shaw Heath, Stockport. How sad then to see that this otherwise good little pub has joined the ranks of those selling keg Scrumpy Jack through a fake handpump. A perfectly good keg font is available for Scrumpy Jack so why otherwise good pubs should indulge in the fake handpump deception is a mystery. Let's hope that this is only a temporary aberration on the part of the good backstreet local.

In the Grey Horse, Broadstone Road, Reddish, Old Shilling Bitter has been removed due to poor sales and has been replaced by cask Boddies Mild which is apparently selling well.



The Railway on Wellington Road North, Stockport has replaced Greenalls Mild with Greenalls Original, due to poor sales of the former. On the guest beer front generally, Greenalls continue to be put to shame by their smaller rivals, the Boddington PubCo - let's hope they get their act together before long.

We understand that the mild in both the Beehive and the Denmark in Moss Side, both Hydes houses, is now cask conditioned again after several years as keg. This is a welcome change, especially as no indication was given on the bar mountings that the beer was not the real thing. Let's hope that if either these or any other Hydes pub offers keg beers in future, some effort is made to tell the consumer what they are getting at the point of dispense.

In a move reminiscent of its historical namesake, Jabez Clegg has been abandoned in its infancy by its parents - or more prosaically, put up for sale as a going concern. Rumours suggest a (surely optimistic) price tag of £/.5 million. Despite early promise and an impressive appearance, Jabez has so far failed to impress (although being undoubtedly popular with its student target market), with too many instances of sloppy service, inattention to basic items like emptying ashtrays and clearing glasses, and a disappointing range of beers. However it retains the potential to be a very fine drinking place. Let's hope that, as in the novel, the neglected infant is adopted by a wise mentor and grows up to a life of fame and fortune.

The George on Ashton Old Road, Openshaw (Keg Bass!) is now run by the Centric Pub Company of Nottingham, one of the new breed of non-brewing pub-owners. Centric pubs take Bass beers and there is as yet no sign of any real ale in the George.

More real ale in clubs to report - the Edgeley & Shaw Heath Labour Club ("The Bungalow"), has Tetleys Mild and Bitter at £1.02 a pint plus Boddies Bitter and a beer from the Whitbread guest beer list, Flowers IPA when OT called, both at £1 a pint.

Popular licensee Jim Mulvey left the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport at the end of last month and is now settled in as tenant at Vaux's Swan on Shaw Heath. Jim tells us that he intends to smarten the place up and soon be 'Pub of the Month'! The Swan is certainly a pub with enormous potential and we wish Jim all the best in his new venture. Cask beers on sale to begin with should be Vaux Samson and Wards Bitter.