

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

No:  
116

# OPENING



## TIMES

DECEMBER 1993

STILL  
FREE

# GUEST BEERS

# UNDER THREAT

The much criticised MMC report into the brewing industry did have one major benefit for lovers of traditional beers - while thousands of pub tenants and leaseholders were given the right to stock a guest beer this had to be a cask-conditioned real ale. Despite attempts by the national brewers to at first stifle and then stitch up this burgeoning guest beer market it has nevertheless proved a welcome boost to many independent brewers, particularly the new wave of micro-brewers which has sprung up in the last couple of years.

This guest cask ale market now risks being dismantled or at the very least cleverly diluted if Blackburn business man Andrew Ronnan gets his way. Ronnan is the boss of the Bavarian Lager Company which imports genuine quality German lagers into the UK. As the tie remains on lagers, it has subsequently proved difficult to sell these imports into local pubs and the company has accordingly made a complaint to the European Commission that tie freedom on cask ale discriminates against lager and keg beer suppliers.

The Eurocrats seem to be taking this seriously and say that the UK Beer Orders, which introduced the guest beer rules, didn't take small importers into account or examine whether the 'cask only' clause contradicted European trading law. Brussels is now seeking 'political clearance' for an enquiry to be pursued.

This isn't the first time the issue has been raised - the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers, which represents various pub chains, also wrote to Brussels about the same thing some time ago.. Apparently oblivious to the national revival in real ale and the continuing decline of keg, ALMR spokesman Nick Bish claimed that lager should be included in the guest beer rule because many pubs 'have no market for cask beer'. Bavarian Lager boss Andrew Ronnan agrees, "in many areas of the UK cask beer does not sell and the current regulations discriminate against a free trading policy" he says.

We believe that these are dangerous moves. Despite abuses, the guest ale clauses of the Beer Orders are starting to work. More genuine guest beers are appearing and there is a growing appreciation of different ales by the drinking public. Nothing would please the national brewers more than a chance to subvert the Beer Orders even further (and, God knows, they've done enough already) and at the same time boost ailing sales of session lagers. They have attracted so much flak already that they wouldn't dare attempt anything like this themselves (although we bet they've thought about it) but it seems that someone has unwittingly taken up the cudgels on their behalf. Let's hope these proposals are given the short shrift they deserve.

## Restricted List

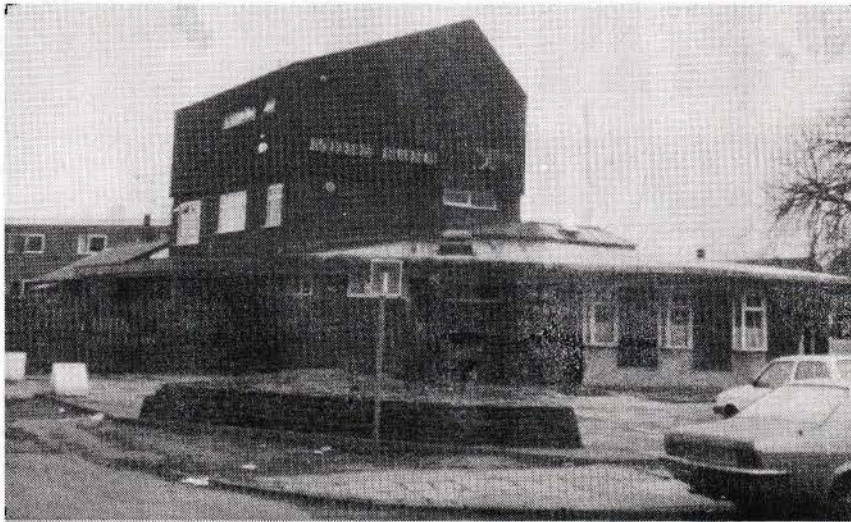
**It was almost two years ago that we reported an initiative by the Boddington PubCo that would see a range of guest beers appearing in their pubs. Reports have now reached Opening Times that this has been drastically cut back.**

When the scheme was launched Boddies tenants were able to order from a wide selection of beers supplied by Boddingtons subsidiary, Liquid Assets. This facility has now been scrapped and tenants are restricted to the beers available via the Whitbread 'Cask Beer Club'. This consists of a range of pretty dull in-house Whitbread beers - Bentleys, West Country Pale Ale and Strongs for example - together with a handful of decent beers from independent brewers such as Greene King Abbot and Taylors Landlord.

Why the PubCo should take this retrograde step is a mystery, especially when their 'Ale House' pubs have been such a success. Indeed that success possibly gives a pointer to the answer. The PubCo is currently shackled to a supply agreement with Whitbread with swingeing penalties if the agreed barrelage isn't met. Clearly the more outside beers the PubCo's customers were drinking meant less from Whitbread and the threat that the agreed barrelage wouldn't be met. Once again consumer choice is sacrificed on the altar of financial expediency.

The PubCo have done so much right in recent years - and they do still offer their licensees a selection of some 13 permanent beers excluding guests - that it is doubly sad to see them behaving in this way. Let us hope that once the supply agreement comes up for renewal the terms are made less onerous than they seem to be at present.





# 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 |    |

The December Pub of the Month award goes to the Moss Rose on Didsbury Road in Heaton Norris. Like the November winner, the Swinging Sporan in Manchester City Centre, the Moss Rose is outwardly an uninspiring example of modernist pub architecture and must be a strong candidate for the title of Stockport's ugliest pub, but both show how a good pub can be created in the most unpromising of buildings.

The interior of the Moss Rose is in total contrast to the exterior, with much more of a traditional feel, emphasised by the extensive use of dark stained wood in the decor. There's a roomy, comfortable lounge and a busy vault. The pub appeals to a wide cross-section of the local community, supporting a number of active sports teams, and while it's by no means an old folks pub, it's particularly gratifying to see the number of pensioners using it.

After a period of several changes of licensee, the pub was taken over in the Autumn of 1992 by Graham and Gladys Tildsley, who have brought a much-needed element of continuity and have enhanced its all-round appeal. The quality of the Hydes Anvil Light and Bitter has been consistently good, due to Graham's insistence on conditioning the beer properly before it is sold, although the impressive cellar facilities, including separate cellars for mild and bitter, can't do any harm either.

We may occasionally give the misleading impression that CAMRA has eyes only for multi-beer free houses, but in reality, traditional locals, particularly those belonging to local independent breweries such as Hydes, form the backbone of good pubs and good beer in this country.

It is in recognition of what makes a first-class local pub that we will be presenting the Pub of the Month award to Graham and Gladys on Thursday 23rd December. Not only should it be an excellent night in its own right but also a good opportunity to get in training for Christmas!

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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

DECEMBER '88

The viability of many of the area's social, political and working men's clubs was under threat from the new extended pub hours. This was a warning from the National Union of Club Stewards. Many drinkers used the clubs if they wanted a drink outside normal opening hours, and often it was easier to go there straight away, rather than go to the local pub first, and then have to uproot at 3pm. In short, the customers at many of the clubs were not there for the atmosphere or the quality of the beer, but due to the legal restrictions on the pubs. The change in the law has put an end to this situation, and the clubs (or many of them) are going to have to pull their socks up, and serve a decent pint of cask ale to really compete with the pubs on level terms. It is the policy of Opening Times to report on clubs with good beer in order to bring them to the attention of a wider audience.

The range of beers available in the branch area has been very slowly increasing in recent months, with probably the most interesting being the Belgian beers available in the Olde Vic in Edgeley. They all tend to be fairly strong compared with our own traditional bitters, and two recent additions are Duvel (8% ABV), and Chimay (7 - 9% ABV). Another feature is that you can drink them out of their own distinctive glasses.

There was news of three pub alterations in the Stockport area :-

The George & Dragon, Hazel Grove now looks more like a pub than it has done for years - and the choice of beers has improved. Trophy, Pedigree, and new for the area Flower's Original. Although 99p a pint, the Flower's is currently the best seller.

Still in Hazel Grove, Robbies Woodman is going to be extended by knocking through into the shop next door.

Robbies again - the Royal Mortar on Higher Hillgate - a definite improvement, but the lighting is too bright.

Also included were several pages of Christmas Greetings from the pubs, an article on Winter Ales, and the recipes for Old Tom cake and some traditional mulled ales. There was also a timely reminder on the dangers of drinking and driving, which concluded - "If you want a Merry Christmas, leave the car at home".

## THE MOSS ROSE

Didsbury Road, Heaton Norris

*Graham & Gladys wish  
A Merry Christmas  
to all their Customers*



**HYDES TRADITIONAL ANVIL ALES**

## H.R.Fletchers

'Back to basics' is a theme very much in the news these days and it is certainly one that more and more brewers are taking on board with an ever increasing number of specialist real ale pubs opening. Locally Whitbread have been to the fore in these developments with their various Cask Ale Houses, Hogsheads and (shudder) Tut N'Shives. Bass have now joined the fray with the opening of H.R. Fletchers in central Manchester.



Sited just off Deansgate, Fletchers is very much typical of the genre with bare wooden floors and mismatched furniture going hand in hand with a variety of cask beers on sale. What distinguishes this from the pack, however, is the fact that this conversion has been executed with rather more style and flair than is often the case. There is some particularly fine etched and gilded glass and the Victorian junk has been kept to the minimum. Indeed only a small area at the back, done out to resemble a converted house, where you can even sit on the toilet with your pint, for heavens sake, seems both tacky and unnecessary.

Interestingly the pub has been labelled a Highgate Brewery house - and, no, this isn't some long defunct concern resurrected as a marketing exercise but a well-thought-of concern in Walsall which for years now has concentrated on just one beer - Highgate Mild (with an old ale brewed for the winter months). It's astonishing such a small, one-product concern has survived so long in the Bass empire and it is to be hoped that the national promotion now being given to the brewery and its products (there are to be a chain of these opening next year) doesn't result in any compromise on product quality.

The beer range is currently Bass, Worthington Best Bitter, Highgate Mild (or Dark as it is now called), Highgate Old, Highgate Best Bitter (currently brewed in Burton but moving to Walsall in the New Year) plus two or three guests. Prices aren't too bad for the City Centre with the Dark retailing at £1.28 and the bitters averaging £1.40-ish. There is also a range of simple but good value food.

Opening Times was first through the doors on opening day, 22nd November, and can vouch for the quality of the Dark! All in all this is a welcome addition to the city centre scene and is well worth a visit. H R Fletcher is on St Mary's Street (off Deansgate down the right hand side of Kendals).

### Heard at the Bar

**Punter:** Can you top me up, please?

**Barmaid:** I was worried that you might lose your head

**Punter (not worried about losing his head):** I was worried about losing my beer



# HORSE & FARRIER

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Anvil Ales  
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Traditional  
Cask  
Beers  
Always in  
good taste



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Cask  
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Merry Christmas

to all

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## LETTERS OPENING TIMES

From Roger Wood:

As a non-smoker in a permanent state of bad health, mainly as a result of the passive smoking of other people's cigarettes, I take objection to Curmudgeon's territorial demands on pub space.

I don't mind smoking in the best room and vault, but where there is space in large pubs, I get annoyed when smokers begrudge non-smokers a small space to enjoy their drinks and still be able to breathe properly. CAMRA is always complaining about falling beer sales in pubs. Perhaps the growth in the canned beer sector is due to people voting with their feet and drinking at home, shunning smoky pubs. I also think that when pubs are applying for children's certificates these should only be granted when no-smoking provision is provided as the effects of passive smoking on young children are if anything worse than on adults.

From Alastair Geddie:

On a recent tour of Scotland I was delighted to find many new outlets for real ale, of which a very high proportion were in excellent form. I also found the Orkney Raven Ale and Caledonian 80/- to be very palatable. Two pubs in Edinburgh, Kays Bar, 6 real ales, and 2B Or Not 2B, 9 real ales, had excellent beer, so naturally, my 24 hour stay extended to four days. Just to get a reasonable taste, you understand.

Now to a tale I find disturbing.

Whilst staying at the Crown & Anchor, Findhorn, Moray (6 real ales and 600 whiskies) I was amazed to find that this hotel is to be excluded from the real ale guide. This I found, was the reason: one representative from Inverness called and had two pints, this after calling at several other outlets. The ale was not to his taste, so out of hand he damned the hotel. Incidentally, he was later found drinking lager in a local club. Surely this is not the way CAMRA is supposed to work, where one man can endanger the livelihood of another with a stroke of a red pen. I found the beers excellent and the Boddies was as good, if not better, than in Manchester. After staying there for a week, I for one would recommend this hotel to everyone.

(Editor's note: Whilst it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the methods of Good Beer Guide selection employed by the Inverness Branch, the situation, if it is as you describe it, is less than satisfactory, and a copy of your letter has been sent to CAMRA's Scottish Regional Director.)

From Richard Hough

Am I missing something? I usually go to a pub to have a couple of pints and relax, or to socialise with friends. I don't mind music on a jukebox providing it is quiet enough to remain unobtrusive, but I positively dislike pubs where the television is on the whole time. Neighbours and Home and Away, horse racing, children's television, inane quiz shows, over-indulgent news, second rate gardening or cookery, the list is endless. More often than not no-one in the pub is even remotely interested in what is on and usually it is overpoweringly loud. Even worse, though, is when one of the regular customers is in possession of the remote control. A channel-hopping frenzy means you cannot ignore the one-eyed monster. And how often is it that the majority of customers even want the television on at all? The art of conversation is dying as it is, without the intrusion of the incessant goggle-box in our pubs.

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OPENING TIMES DECEMBER 1993



## IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

"Many pubs....have no market for cask beer"  
"In many areas of the UK cask beer does not sell."  
The seventies revival may be all well and good but we thought that tired old arguments like these had gone the way of Watneys Red Barrel. Not so, it seems.

Even allowing for the fact that these utterances come from people pursuing what they perceive to be their commercial self interests, they are not only nonsense, but dangerous nonsense to boot. Nonsense because, well they are simply not true. Whilst some pubs may not have the facilities to keep and serve real ale there is probably scarcely a pub in the country that doesn't have a market for it. Just ask the hundreds of licensees who have seen their sales increase by introducing real ale. Nor is there any area of this country where real ale wouldn't sell if the pubs were given the chance to take it, witness the real ale revolution currently under way in the North East and Scotland, arguably the last strongholds of keg.

Of more concern is the danger in these statements. They have been made in support of attempts to weaken the guest beer rules to include lager and keg. Sure, given the current interest in real ales many pubs might be reluctant to swap their guest beers for lager but you can be sure that many a financially-pressed publican being offered the chance to sell a heavily discounted and nationally known product rather than the dearer product of a local brewer would be sorely tempted.

And this is the irony. The instigator of all this is the owner of a company importing quality German lagers which would doubtless knock the socks off anything the big brewers could offer but given the financial muscle of the big boys it's a fair bet that even if Andrew Ronnan is successful in his aims he would find that there was still no room at the inn for the imports of the Bavarian Lager Company.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mention of 'no room at the inn' is of course a reminder of the festive season that will soon be upon us. This is traditionally a busy time for the trade - on both sides of the bar - and it only remains for all of us here at Opening Times to wish all of our readers and advertisers the merriest of Christmases and the happiest New Year. See you all in 1994!

*John Clarke*

### EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING

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From

Judith & Alan



THE

**GREY HORSE**

Reddish



*Happy Christmas*

*To All Our Customers*

*From Sid, Ann & Wayne*

**THE THATCHED  
TAVERN**

Reddish



### HEARD AT THE BAR

"ISN'T IT NICE - I SUPPOSE HE'LL  
PUT THE BEER UP NOW"

"I'M SURE THE DADO IS THE SAME  
AS THE ROVERS RETURN"

"Y'KNOW THEY MAKE THIS GEAR  
IN SUNDERLAND, OR IS IT  
SHEFFIELD - ANYWAY - WHO  
CARES?"

WHERE ? - RING JIM MULVEY 480 3214



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AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

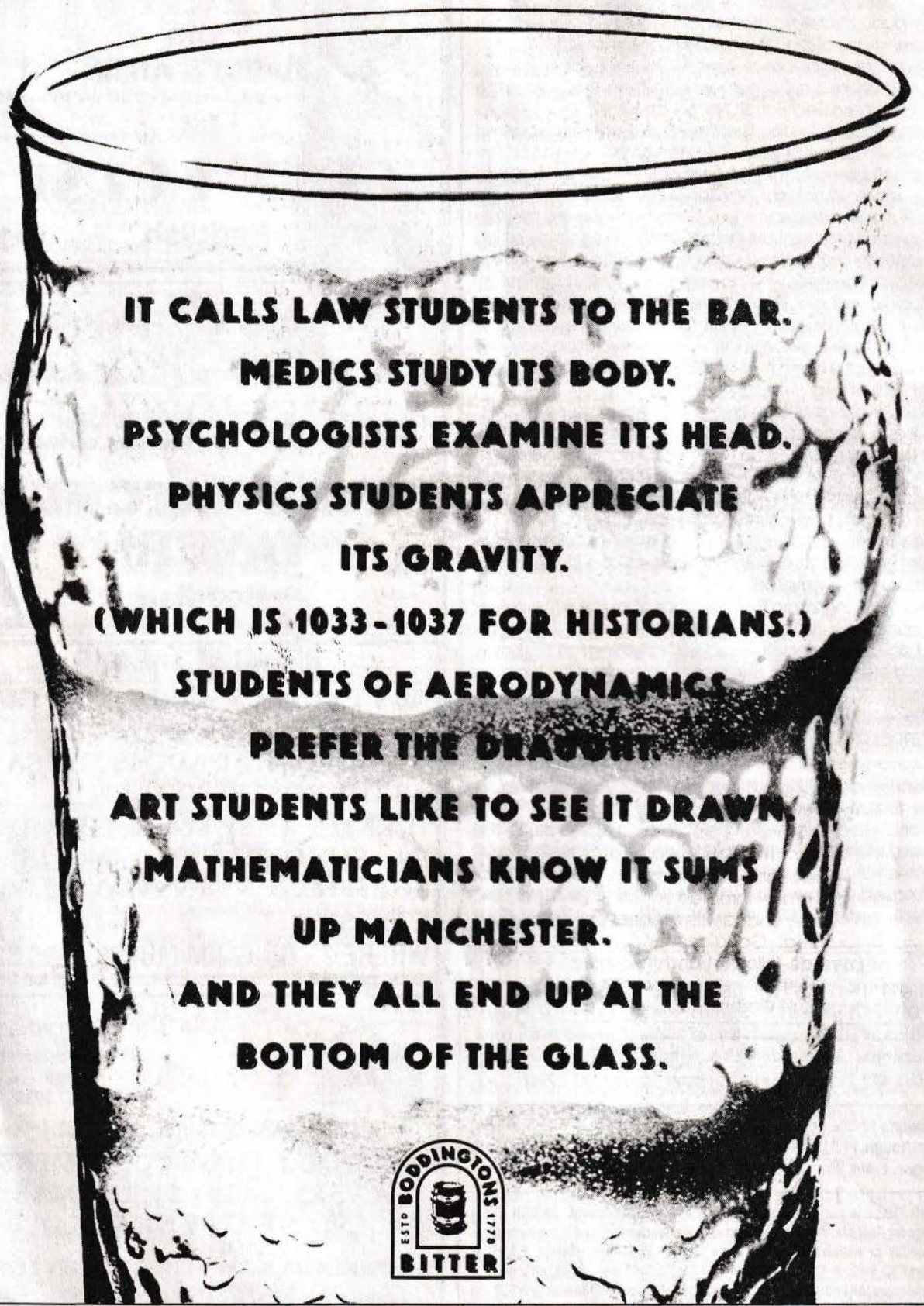
BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN FOR  
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DECEMBER 1 - 23

12 noon - 2.30pm & 6pm - 9pm







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MEDICS STUDY ITS BODY.  
PSYCHOLOGISTS EXAMINE ITS HEAD.  
PHYSICS STUDENTS APPRECIATE  
ITS GRAVITY.**

**(WHICH IS 1033-1037 FOR HISTORIANS.)**

**STUDENTS OF AERODYNAMICS  
PREFER THE DRAUGHT.**

**ART STUDENTS LIKE TO SEE IT DRAWN.**

**MATHEMATICIANS KNOW IT SUMS  
UP MANCHESTER.**

**AND THEY ALL END UP AT THE  
BOTTOM OF THE GLASS.**



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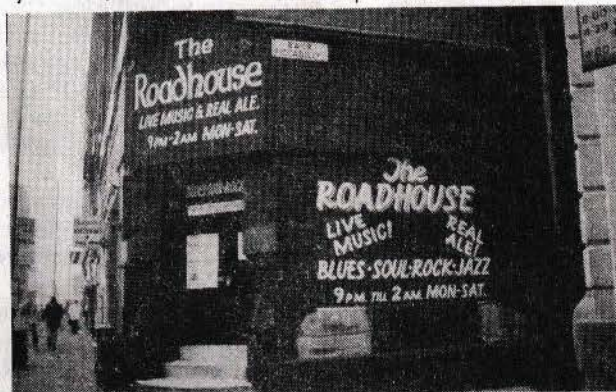




# RHYTHM and BOOZE

It was no ordinary Sunday. It was the day we honour those who died at war and spare a thought for the bereaved. It was no ordinary day for live music either. An all-day Blues jam at Manchester's newest venue promised to be a bit special.

The Roadhouse on Newton Street, Piccadilly, just eight weeks young, is fast gaining a reputation for that all too rare combination of quality music and quality beer. The added bonus is that it is open every day, with a late licence Monday to Saturday. The permanent beers are Marstons Bitter and Pedigree, with two more genuine guests available. Although a little pricey (£1.50 - £1.70 a pint), the beer quality is generally good, and it must be remembered that it is in the city centre, and it is a club, not a pub.



An extensive sound-check ensured that the quality and balance of the sound was as good as possible. Bende Earlobe kicked off with a pleasant blend of soulful pop, which was well received by the very small number of people present. The highlight of the set was the untitled twelve-bar jam. It was only later on that I discovered that this was their first gig; pretty good first gig, lads. Backlash come straight from the Cream school of Blues-Rock. Music for these guys is simply something on which to hang a squealing guitar solo. This is underpinned with wholesome bass and drums, with a helping of gravel throated vocals. After minor feedback problems, they ended with their irreverent version of "I Wanna Be Your Dog". Good one too.

A brief interlude followed and then it was the turn of Acoustic Andy. One man, one guitar and a few self-penned numbers in a folk style washed down with fine London Pride,

is the perfect way to spend any Sunday afternoon. "Gutter Picking" had its first ever public airing, while "Strange Girl" ended abruptly with a broken string, unfortunately. The set was well received, and Andy enjoyed it too. Then there was an impromptu jam session, which gave me a chance to try the beers and chat to the slowly increasing crowd.

The rock'n'roll end of blues was ably covered by the Instigators. Powerful guitar combined well with groovy harmonica and LV while the drums and bass (was it Bill Wyman?) kept it ticking over nicely. They were the first band to dress for the occasion, and damned dandy they looked. After a swift one in Mother Mac's over the road it was back for more business. Pagan's Chemistry Set fill the Blues gap left between the Stones and Jimi Hendrix more than admirably. They are a genuine band who play well and come across well. It is roughly a Beatles line-up: a left-handed bassist and one guitarist sing, and there is one more guitarist and one drummer.

Time for a swift Taylor's Landlord in the Crown & Anchor nearby and I was back in time for Right Band Wrong Planet to...change their trousers, have a pee, get a pint and then they were on, all seven of them flowing nicely. RBWP are one of my fave bands, and for a full description see a previous OT. These boys smoke fags and drink beer, and will give anyone a good run for their money when it comes to playing shit-hot blues. You must get down to see them.

If you missed it, you definitely missed out. Unfortunately, so did Christies Hospital. All proceeds from the day were destined for Christies, with all bands giving their services for free. But I was there, and so were many others. As of now I am addicted to the Roadhouse. Get there now before it becomes popular (and it will!), and I'll see you there soon.

## Pat, Joe & staff at the NELSON INN Didsbury

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# STAGGER

with Paul Felton

The cold but dry evening of 19 November saw the latest in the line of monthly staggers, this time around the compact delights of Cheadle village.

We began at the **Cafe Bar**, formerly a video shop and now the newest addition to Cheadle's range of pubs (and that despite much local opposition). As its name suggests, this is a comfortable, rather open plan lounge bar which nonetheless does have three distinct areas in which to sit; although food was much in evidence, it does have the feel of being very definitely a pub. Three beers were available: Tetley Bitter at £1.40, Ind Coope Burton Ale at £1.54 and Marstons Pedigree also at £1.54. It should be noted that the latter was not on that section of the bar which greets you when you walk in, but was tucked around the right hand side. All of the beers were distinctly average.

Boddington Pub Co's **White Hart** is literally just across the road. If the Cafe Bar had been festooned with adverts for Beaujolais Nouveau, here was the 'real thing': the newest beer from the West Coast Brewery, the raspberry flavoured "Beer Jolais '93" (sic). More normal beers available were Boddingtons Mild and Bitter and Robinsons Best Bitter (very rare for that end of the village....). The Boddies beers were average, whilst he who sampled the Beer Jolais made a few bad French jokes about 'not very jolais' but otherwise declined to comment.

The **Crown** is a small Hydes pub serving mild and bitter (the latter at £1.18), and perhaps easy to miss, so little does its exterior look like a typical pub. At first sight of its interior the Crown might be thought an unpromising place, being an inverted L shape with low lighting, but this would be to demean a good little place which manages to generate its own friendly atmosphere and which provided us with some rather good bitter.

The **Vine** was the busiest place so far, though the range of beers on offer might suggest that choice is not the attraction. John Smiths and Websters Yorkshire bitters were on sale: we all tried the former, which was (yet again) very average. It's a pub which does have some character, so it is to be hoped that perhaps something more interesting in the way of other beers might appear. One particularly noteworthy aspect of the Vine is its array of specially taken and framed local photographs; the pub is worth a visit for these alone.

The **Star** is Hydes' other pub in Cheadle: refurbishments since our last communal visit have sadly meant the loss of the revolving door (doubtless due to fire regulations), but this is still a good little pub, with a lounge and a tiny, two- or three-table vault. Mild and bitter were again the offered beers, and both were rather good. Note: there is a price differential between vault and lounge: the bitter was £1.15 and £1.18 respectively.

We passed by Greenalls **Red Lion**, which has been keg for years. However, it was closed and apparently undergoing a refurbishment: rumour has it that cask ale might be installed, so watch this space for news.

The **Ashlea** was our only call not on the main A560, being a few yards up Manchester Road. The village's second BoddPubCo pub, formerly known as the Railway, it's another lounge affair, with the standard PubCo furnishings that will be familiar to pub goers. There's also an upper-level restaurant attached. Only one beer was available, Boddingtons Bitter, which was (surprise, surprise) very ordinary.

Turning the corner to head to Stockport meant Robinsons all the way. First was the **Royal Oak**, a good little pub with several separate rooms and possibly the first ever sighting of that hitherto unknown beast, the useful and acceptable Robinsons arch: this fine structure has opened up the previously under-utilised vault. Best mild and best bitter were on offer, the mild was slightly above average, whilst the bitter at £1.18 was good.

Next was the **Red Lion**, a pub leased by Robbies but still selling their beers. Now the Red Lion operates a door policy enforced by bouncers. On our last visit the wearing of jeans and/or trainers meant NO ENTRY: it is good to report that things have now relaxed somewhat. Jeans were allowed,



Get into the  
Christmas Spirit  
at The Bridge

**THE BRIDGE INN**

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Heaton Norris  
(opposite B&Q)

**Robinsons Best Handpulled Ales**

**The Olde Vic** Chatham St.  
Edgeley

**STOCKPORT'S PREMIER  
FREEHOUSE**

**Guest Beers Weekly**

**TAYLORS**

**BATEMANS**





but the heinous sin of wearing trainers caused a bouncer to request that your writer wear shoes next time he visited the pub. Might one ask why? Since when have jeans and trainers identified a job? Anyway: the pub used to be a good local, now it isn't, being over decorated with loud music, a young clientele and very average beer.

The **Printers Arms** is the pub where the branch was founded (twenty years ago next January - see you at the celebration). It has undergone a radical transformation recently, with the moving of the bar, lavish redecoration, the partial opening out of its rooms and a conservatory extension at the rear. While it is in some ways a shame that the characterful old place has gone, it is now larger and consequently busier, and it's still a good pub. Best mild was okay, best bitter quite good.

Our final resting place was the **Queens Arms**, the only Cheadle pub in the new edition of the Good Beer Guide. Its former separate rooms have lost a little of their individuality and can best now be described as separate areas, but this is still a cracker of a pub (and is the kiddies' pink elephant still in the back garden?). Perhaps its most notable feature is its beer range, for while (as seemingly ever with Robinsons pubs) best mild and best bitter were available, the Queens is one of those rare places that serves Robinsons Ordinary bitter (as indeed did the Red Lion before its conversion for the youth market). Understandably, all present tried the ordinary, which was fine.

So, despite a plethora of distinctly average beer, particularly in the first half of the village, Cheadle is a good place for a pub crawl, if only because it takes about five minutes to walk from first pub to last! Tellingly, it is beer from independent breweries which is most likely to provide you with a good pint. But as ever this article can only present a snapshot of what we found on one particular night and cannot be taken as a once and for all judgement of the pubs or their beers. As ever, why not try them yourselves and see how much you (dis)agree.

## Pub Campaigning

CAMRA's national PUBS GROUP is meeting in the 'Buffs Room' of the Grapes, 431 Liverpool Road, Peel Green, Eccles on Saturday, 8 January at 12 noon. Any interested local CAMRA members are invited to attend. The meeting will be quite boring but the Holts is good!

## Heard at the Bar

Lady Behind Bar: I might be only a woman, but I'm learning the cellar work!

Punter: How are you getting on?

Lady behind Bar: OK - I've already learned how to filter back...

*Merry Christmas from Irene and Staff at*

## The Greyhound

**Bowden St., Edgeley**

**Boddingtons Mild & Bitter**  
**Theakstons Bitter**  
**guest beers changed weekly**

**A warm welcome guaranteed**  
**CAMRA Pub of the Month May 1993**

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| Vaux Bitter        | £1.15pt |
| Double Maxim       | £1.30pt |
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Traditional  
Cask  
Beers

Always in  
good taste



Merry Christmas  
And Happy New Year  
from Lyn and Ron  
**The NAVIGATION INN**  
Heaton Norris

Seasons Greetings  
To All Our Friends  
Simon and Rose  
**THE CHURCH INN**  
Cheadle Hulme

DECEMBER - JANUARY  
WINTER ALES FESTIVAL  
CHRISTMAS NIGHT -  
TICKET ONLY



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Stockport Tel: 429 0549

STARTING ON DEC 1 AND RUNNING UNTIL THE END OF JANUARY WE WILL HAVE A MINIMUM OF 3 WINTER ALES ON AT ANY ONE TIME. PICK UP A DRAW LEAFLET AND YOU COULD WIN A SUPERB PRIZE. (VALUE £50+). LISTED BELOW ARE SOME OF THE ALES APPEARING.

**WINTER ALES**

FREEMINER DEEP SHAFT STOUT  
HENDERSONS XLJ  
BIG LAMP WW  
HAMBLETON NIGHTMARE  
LLOYDS OVERDRAFT  
HIGH PEAK XMAS CRACKER  
NORFOLK NOG  
ASHVINE APOCALYPSE  
BUTTERKNOWLE OLD EBENEZER  
PIERPPOINTS LAST DROP  
PHOENIX HUMBUG  
WOODS YULE FUEL

**OTHER GUESTS**

REINDEER GNU BREW  
CSB CHESHIRE CAT  
COACH HOUSE TAVERNERS  
PIONEER MAYFLOWER 2  
ROOSTERS YANKEE  
TAYLORS LANDLORD  
SUTTON XSB  
NENE VALLEY RAWHIDE  
OAK WOBBLY BOB  
CLOGDANCER  
LITTLE AVENHAM PORTER  
HOGSBACK RIPSNOTTER

## Christmas Cheer

At this time of year it is traditional to try a variety of festive dishes and drinks, many of which can be made using traditional beers. This year we present a variety of ideas, old and new for you to try at home.

We start with that old favourite - **Old Tom Cake**. All you need is: 4oz butter; 4oz sugar; 1 cup dried mixed fruit; 1 bottle Old Tom; 2 cups plain flour; 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda; 1 level teaspoon mixed spice.

Preheat the oven to gas mark 4, 180 C/350 F. Soften/melt the butter in a saucepan, add the sugar, bicarbonate and mixed spice. Stir well and then add the flour and Old Tom, stirring all the time. Boil and stir for 3 minutes and add the mixed fruit. Transfer to a 1lb loaf tin and bake for 70 minutes in the centre of the oven. Cooking time may be reduced or increased for a slightly stodgier or drier cake.

This can be eaten cold spread with butter or warm with cream or custard as a pudding. Another pudding long associated with the use of beer is **Christmas Pudding**. If you fancy making one yourself, why not try the Opening Times special recipe:

What you need are: 8oz fresh breadcrumbs; 6oz brown sugar; 6oz currants; 8oz seeded raisins, chopped; 6oz sultanas; 1oz mixed peel, chopped; 8oz shredded suet; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1 teaspoon mixed spice; grated rind of a lemon; 1/2 table-spoon lemon juice; 2 eggs, beaten; 1/4 pint milk; 1/2 pint stout - try Dobbins Guiltless

Take a large basin and mix together the breadcrumbs, brown sugar, currants, raisins, sultanas, mixed peel, suet, salt, mixed spice and lemon rind. Stir in the lemon juice, beaten eggs, milk and stout. Mix well and turn into either one large or two smaller pudding basins. Tie over cloths and let stand overnight. Steam for 8 hours checking to make sure that there is sufficient water in the pan. Either eat straight away or let cool, recover with cloth and store in a cool place.

### Dog's Nose, Purl and Flip.

No, not three of Santa's reindeer, but rather festive drinks immortalised by Charles Dickens in his description of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters. The tap and parlour of this hostelry were provided with "comfortable fireside tine utensils, like models of sugarloaf hats, made in the shape that they might, with their pointed ends, seek out for themselves glowing nooks in the depths of the red coals when they mulled your ale, or heated for you those delectable drinks, Purl, Flip and Dog's Nose."

**Dog's Nose** is the simplest of the three, being a simple combination of a measure of gin and half a pint of chilled beer! If this sounds odd, it's worth knowing that a similar tradition still persists to this day in parts of the West Country - on a recent visit to Ross-on-Wye, local campaigner man, and cider aficionado, Rhys Jones paid a lunchtime visit to one of the town's numerous traditional cider pubs and, having ordered a pint of Bulmer's was asked whether he wanted a shot of gin in it, "just to set you up for the day". Readers are not recommended to try this with Strongbow or Scrumpy Jack.

An old recipe for **Purl** contained wormwood, gentian root, snake root, horse radish, dried orange peel and juniper berries - all placed in beer and allowed to stand for some months. Our version is a little simpler - simply heat half a pint of bitter until it boils; meanwhile combine one large gin and a dash of bitters in a mug and pour over the heated beer.

The last of the three, **Ale Flip**, is a nutritious and warming concoction. What you need are: 4 eggs; 4oz soft brown sugar; 1 teaspoonful of ground nutmeg; a small measure of brandy and two pints of brown ale. Heat the ale to just boiling. Meanwhile beat the eggs and add the sugar, nutmeg and brandy. When the ale is ready add the other ingredients and stir. Serve immediately.



To conclude this brief look at festive cheer, two very old drinks steeped in history. The first, **Lamb's Wool** is a very ancient drink mentioned in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Herrick wrote:

"Next crowne the bowle full  
With gentle Lambs Wool  
Adde sugare nutmeg and ginger  
With store of ale too  
And thus ye must doe  
To make the Wassalle a swinger"

With a history like that behind it, who could resist? What you need are: 6 apples, 2 pints of brown ale; grated nutmeg; grated ginger (a teaspoon of each is probably about right, but experiment until you find a combination you like); and sugar to taste. Bake the apples in a medium oven until soft, peel and core and then puree in a liquidiser or blender. Heat the ale to just boiling and add the puree, nutmeg, ginger and sugar to taste, return to the heat. Pour into a large jug, stir well and serve hot.

Lastly, something equally old but a little less exotic - **Old English Mulled Ale**. There are various recipes for this but ours is fast, simple and satisfying. Just the thing for carol singers! Take two teaspoons of honey and place in the bottom of a jug. Heat one pint of bitter in a saucepan, but don't allow it to boil. Pour it over the honey and sprinkle with nutmeg before serving.

Many of these ideas come from an excellent book, *Cooking with Beer* by Paul Harris. Now out of print, it's worth looking out for on products stalls at CAMRA beer festivals. An ideal stocking filler, if you come across one.

## Leave the Car at Home this Christmas

At Christmas many pubs experience a welcome upturn in trade. Regulars will often be out more often and even those who don't normally go to the pub may be tempted out for a festive tippie.

Over-indulgence is often the name of the game. Whilst there is nothing wrong with a little Christmas Cheer, after all have one drink too many and the only things that suffer are your head and stomach, combine this with driving and you have a potentially lethal cocktail which could have a lasting effect - on your own and other people's lives.

The statistics speak for themselves:

- \* each year some 800 people die in road accidents involving drivers over the limit
- \* up to 19% of all drivers killed are over the limit
- \* at night over 50% of those killed are over the limit
- \* every day 255 people in the UK fail a breath test

The more you drink, the greater the problem. Just one drink will impair your driving performance. Twice the legal limit and you are at least 30 times more likely to have an accident.

Once you've had a drink, there is **NOTHING** you can do to reduce the level of alcohol in your blood. Exercise doesn't work. Nor black coffee. Nor medicines of any kind. Nor vitamins. The only thing that will reduce the level of alcohol in your blood is time. And a long time at that.

The body gets rid of alcohol slowly - about half a pint of beer every hour. This means that if you have been on a long and late drinking session, you may still be over the limit on the morning after, or even at lunchtime.

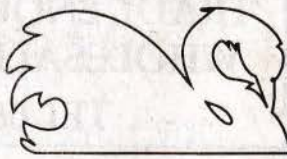
The message is simple - don't get breathalysed, don't drink and drive. Have fun this Christmas, but leave the car at home.

**STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA**

*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year*  
to all our customers and friends  
*from Bryan & Veronica*  
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*Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year*  
from all at  
**The Crown**  
**Northenden**  
**Boddingtons Ales**

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A Happy New Year**   
To All Customers and Friends  
from Phyllis, Wendi & Stuart  
**THE PRINTERS**  
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*Robinsons Best Mild & Best Bitter*

**DID YOU RING JIM?  
WELL THEN - CALL IN AND  
SEE THE NEW SWAN**  
**SEEING IS BELIEVING**  
**THE  
NEW SWAN**   
**37 SHAW HEATH  
480 3214**



## Christmas Stocking Fillers

Stuck for last minute presents this year? Look no further, the CAMRA bookshop is the answer to your problems.

The 1994 Good Beer Guide is a must for all those serious about quality beers, with its list of 5000 pubs serving top-class beers plus a directory of all the breweries and their beers. The price is just £8.99 and to order your copy just send a cheque for that amount (made payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester) to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.

We are also able to offer a limited number of the award-winning guide to Stockport's pubs, 'Viaducts & Vaults'. Previously thought to be sold out, a small stock has now come to light so if you missed out first time around, now's the chance to fill that gap in your library. The price is just £2.50 and again, send your cheque to Jim at the above address.

Lastly, there is 'Traditional Pubs of Old Lancashire'. This guide by local CAMRA member Peter Barnes has received favourable reviews in many local publications and celebrates the diversity of the pubs of 'Old Lancashire' including Greater Manchester and Liverpool. Its 228 pages are well illustrated and give details of 187 of the most characterful and distinctive pubs. A few copies remain and these are available from Peter Barnes, 12 Ellesmere Road, Eccles, Manchester, M30 9FH. The price is £7.95 including postage.

 Merry Christmas 

## Manor House

The Manor House in Withington reopened on 25th November after an extensive (and expensive) refit.

The pub has been completely remodelled inside and is now split into three distinct components. At the front is a comfortable split level lounge area on either side of the central bar. The style is perhaps best summed up as 'National Brewers Plush' with lots of dark stained wood, fancy light-fittings, rich fabrics and wall-coverings, all topped off by a convincing gas 'real fire'.

A corridor to the right of the bar leads to 'Owd Jack's', a disco-bar firmly aimed at the younger end of the market, although again kitted out in traditional style with lots of natural wood finishes. The set up is completed by the room to the left of the front lounge, namely 'Quo Libra', which is nothing less than a pizza bar, again fitted out in a style in keeping with the rest of the pub.

And the beer? As you enter a hanging sign welcomes you to the 'land of real ale' and whilst there is indeed a veritable forest of handpumps on the bar (eight in total), only three cask beers are sold - Tetley Bitter, Imperial and (yawn) Marstons Pedigree. The Tetley was pretty good but not particularly cheap at £1.31, although this is about par for the course for the Didsbury end of Wilmslow Road.

A lot of money has been spent on the Manor House, and largely to good effect. The pub is clearly trying to be all things to all people and whilst we must wait to see if this works in the long-term, it remains an appealing place to call for a drink. A slightly more enterprising beer range wouldn't go amiss, though.

## INTRODUCING DOBBINS

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| BEST BITTER   | OG 1038 |
| ESB           | OG 1060 |
| YAKIMA GRANDE |         |
| PALE ALE      | OG 1050 |
| & PORTER      | OG 1050 |
| KANGAROO 4X   | OG 1042 |
| GINGER BEER   | OG 1050 |
| OLD SOPORIFIC | OG 1084 |

DOBBINS  
GUILTLESS STOUT OG 1039

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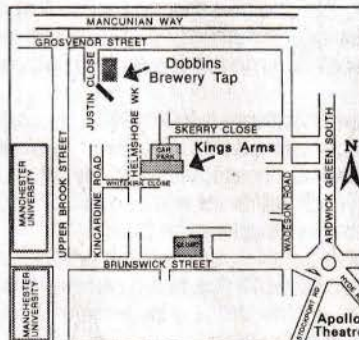
## The King's Arms

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CHORLTON ON MEDLOCK  
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THE FIRST TIME!**

LIVE MUSIC  
LAST TUESDAY OF MONTH

HOME OF DOBBINS FINE BEERS

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NOT  
TO  
SCALE

**WARNING: Excessive Intake of Alcohol is  
NOT RECOMMENDED**



# CURMUDGEON



Last month's Opening Times roundly and rightly condemned the government's shameful decision to abandon legislation to ensure a "full pint", in the face of intensive lobbying from the brewers who wanted to keep the right to charge you a pound for 90p worth of beer. It was bad enough to tolerate the previous situation, but to announce the change and then back down again shows abject weakness and indecision. Every group representing drinkers' interests, from CAMRA to the Consumers' Association, was in favour of the change. But who did the government listen to - the people or the giant firms that bankroll the Tory party?

There was a simple way of switching over to full measures without forcing anyone to incur extra costs or change over sooner than is convenient. The government could have said that, after a given date, only oversized lined glasses would be stamped, but set no time limit to complete the conversion. Pubs could then have simply changed over from brim measures as the glasses naturally fell due for replacement. If any licensee claimed that this would cost him more because he would be serving more per pint, it would be an admission that he had been serving short measures in the past, and he would deserve no sympathy. However, this solution was obviously far too straightforward and sensible ever to be adopted.

**PLEASE NOTE: COPY DATE FOR JANUARY OPENING TIMES IS TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER**

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GUEST BEERS  
EVERY WEEK

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CATERED FOR**

*Your Hosts Mike and Lynne Belsham*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It is not widely appreciated that, in this part of the world, the use of oversized glasses was much more widespread ten years ago than it is now. The main culprits have been Boddingtons, in pubs such as the Greyhound in Edgeley and the Dog & Partridge in Heaton Mersey, and Robinsons, in pubs such as the Grapes in Hazel Grove and the Unity in Stockport, although there have also been a few Greenalls and Grand Met pubs as well. In each case, the change from oversize to brim measures coincided with the pub converting from electric meters to handpumps.

The switch to handpumps is welcome, as it provides a distinctive identity for real ale, but there's no reason why handpumps can't be used with oversized, lined glasses, as we see already in those Banks's pubs serving handpumped Pedigree and Strongarm. Now I'm not saying that any of the pubs I've mentioned does any worse than other pubs using brim measures. But does anyone seriously believe that, if the situation had been reversed, and the "traditional" method of dispense used oversize glasses, while the "modern" ones used brims, the brewers would have converted one single pub back to the "traditional" method?

A few Robinsons pubs, such as the Bakers Vaults in Stockport and the Alexandra in Edgeley, have even converted from electric meters to free-flow electric dispense, for which the justification of tradition certainly doesn't apply. And what a poor image for real ale this presents! If you see an electric meter, you might think there is a fair chance it dispenses the real stuff. But would any casual drinker going into the Bakers Vaults and seeing those continental style free-flow taps imagine for a second that they in fact dispense a perfectly decent pint of real ale?

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FOREST OF DEAN  
**FREEMINER BITTER**  
OG1038 (4%ABV)  
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OG1047 (4.8%ABV)  
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(Thief's Neck)  
WOODFORD

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**ALISON & YVONNE**

in the same family for over 60 years

*Robinson's Traditional  
Draught Beer At Its Best*

## OUR MESSAGE IS SIMPLE THE NEW SWAN HAS TO BE

**SEEN TO BE BELIEVED**

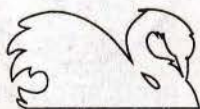
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SUPERB RANGE OF BEERS

EXCELLENT PUB

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37 SHAW HEATH 480 3214



**Merry Xmas and a  
Happy New Year  
to all our customers  
from Allan and Beryl**

at

**The Florist, Shaw Heath**



## Fistfull of Arrows



**Tony O'Shea and Phil Kerr gave local darts fans a thrilling exhibition of darts at the Bobby Peel.**

The two local Cheshire county stars were competing in the final of the Teletaxis Stockport Individual Open and provided nine legs of pulsating arrows, both players peppering the sixty segment. It was Tony who came out the eventual winner, taking the deciding leg in just 15 darts.

The whole tournament has proved a tremendous success, and not just in the playing sense. Back room work by Bobby Peel landlord John Parkin and local darts journalist Jack Hyman, ensured that competitors, supporters and, importantly, sponsors, got the most out of the tournament.

Which all augurs well for a new league due to start in the New Year. Jack and John are among the instigators behind "The Stockport Central 501 League" and have already attracted the attention of a number of teams.

Matches will be played on Thursdays, a quiet night for men's darts, and will fill a gap in a lot of diaries. It will help fill the games room of pubs and clubs, on what, otherwise, could be a quiet night. It will also offer valuable match practice for the growing number of county and Super League players in the town.

It speaks much for the standing of darts in Stockport, that the town can buck the trend of dwindling darts.

The recession has undoubtedly hit the dart world hard and many leagues are reporting lack of interest from pubs, clubs and individuals. Yet dart teams still provide a great way of attracting patrons on weekday evenings.

The Altrincham and District Log End League is typical of the difficulty facing many competitions. Formed between the wars, this league flourished well into the seventies. By the end of the decade the league had grown to three divisions, with 36 teams competing in three divisions. The Broomwood Hotel in Timperley, for example, were even able to field no less than four nine man teams.

Recently, though, the combined effects of the recession, a lack of publicity, and the withdrawal of TV coverage of the top class tournaments, has seen a gradual reduction in size.

This season eight teams started the Premier Division, including the sole representative from the Broomwood. Thirteen sides are contesting the second division, and the third division has long since disappeared.

Less than one month into the new season two of the Premier clubs failed to fulfil their fixtures. The previous season's league and cup double winners Partington WMC were the first to go, only completing one fixture, an 8-1 reversal at the Bakers Arms.

One month later, Altrincham's Railway failed to raise a side and resigned from the league.

But all is not doom and gloom in Altrincham. The league has appointed a new secretary, the enthusiastic Terry Tansey. Terry has achieved much in the short time that he has held the post, not least a commitment to obtain maximum publicity.

And for the first time in many years the local press is running a regular darts column, penned by yours truly, which all can only be good for the future of the game in Altrincham and Sale.

It is people like Terry, and Jack and John in Stockport, who will see the game of darts return to its former glories.



## Pub News

We reported last month that Yvonne O'Connor had returned to Little Jack Homers, Wellington Street, Stockport. Sadly her stay has proved a short one - the lease has been surrendered to Vaux (so no more guest beers) and Yvonne was expecting to leave the pub at the end of November. She takes with her our best wishes for the future.

The Swan, Shaw Heath, Stockport, has recently received a much-needed internal redecoration. The pub now looks a much cleaner pleasanter place to visit and is well worth dropping in if you are in the area.

## Dobbins Brewery



Last month saw a minibus load of CAMRA stalwarts make the journey from Portsmouth to present West Coast Brewery with their Beer of the Festival award. Opening Times was there to join in the festivities and our picture shows brewer Peter Mosley receiving the award from Portsmouth branch Chairman, Chris Bleach.

West Coast seem to be making a habit of this type of thing. Following Guiltless Stout's success at Portsmouth, the Yakima Grande Pale Ale won its class at the huge Norwich Beer Festival. It is good indeed to see these excellent local beers receiving the wider recognition that they deserve.

## Old Monkey

As we went to press, Manchester's newest pub, Holt's Old Monkey on Portland Street, was scheduled to open on 6th December. Opening Times has managed to grab a sneak preview and we can report that this promises to be a major addition to the City Centre drinking scene.

The pub will probably one of the smallest in the Holts estate, but the brewery have made the best use of the confined space by running the pub over two floors. The two bars are quite similar. The ground floor has the bar set back to the rear wall with a




tiled area around it and an ornate wooden pillar with shelves to perch your pints. Whilst there are also carpeted areas with comfortable seating, this bar obviously aims to pack in the lunchtime and 'early doors' crowd.

Upstairs is another bar, with a similar layout to the ground floor but fully carpeted with a raised drinking area along the front wall and a cosy snug-like area to the right of the bar. At a guess, this is where the almost inevitable food operation will be.

A lot of money has clearly been spent here - the etched glass, polished mahogany fittings and plush furnishings testify to that. Despite the cost, Holts mild and bitter will be available at their usual knock-down prices. There are already two classic small boozers on Portland Street - the Circus and the Grey Horse, the Old Monkey looks set to be a worthy addition to their ranks.



John and staff from  
The Oddies   
would like to wish all  
friends and customers  
*a very merry Christmas  
and New Year*

THE ODDFELLOWS,  
Kings Road, Hurst, Ashton

## BLOSSOMS

always the traditional multi-  
roomed pub

CAMRA pub of the year

*Robinsons Hand-pulled Ales*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
to all our customers*

*from Barbara, Rick & Simon*  
Buxton Road, Heaviley

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and a Happy New Year  
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Bitter and Museum Ale



"A traditional welcome in a  
historic pub"



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The Grey Horse in Romiley, as reported last month is now serving real ale. On offer are Theakstons Mild, XB and Old Peculiar and Scotch Bitter.

At Glossop the guessing about the proposed Boddingtons Cask Ale House has been ended by the announcement that the Star (opposite the station) has been chosen. The current licensees are due to vacate the premises on 27th November so by the time you are reading this there may be something to see. More news when we have it. Watch this space!

Now some overdue news of the Stalybridge Station Buffet. Things are still difficult for Ken Redfern but the "Friends" are still active on his behalf. After a visit from Environmental Health BR are being required to provide hot and cold running water in both the Ladies and Gents toilets. Luxury. Also there has been a brass band composition written about, and dedicated to the station. Quite how this will help to keep the bar open is not certain but it does help to highlight the problems being experienced at the buffet bar and it does appear that the pressure on Ken has eased in recent months but we are sure the matter is far from resolved.

Near by in Ashton-under-Lyne, the Robin Hood, an old Bents and Gartsides house resplendent in green tiles, has recently swapped its Bass for Theakstons.

In Dukinfield, the Flowing Bowl which recently changed its name from the Norman when ownership changed, is again on the market. The reason for this is increases in rent. The new owner, who has put a lot of effort into turning this pub round can no longer afford to keep the pub. Another example of absolutely stupid estate management. When will these breweries

and pub owning groups realise that an open and trading pub bringing a reasonable and regular rent is far more profitable than a boarded up pub that nobody can afford or want to open?

Landlord Peter Brady of the Horsfield Arms in front of Robbies bottling plant, is to move to the Admiral Rodney to serve Robinsons beer to the Cheshire set in Prestbury. This could be seen as a step up (possibly, possibly not) but it is a cruel irony that the pub has, under the stewardship of Peter, been on the verge of an entry in the GBG for a number of years and has finally made it in the 1994 edition. Too late was the cry! Our wishes for success in his new venture, however genuine (and they are) could well fall on deaf ears. Let's hope that Macclesfield branch keep an eye on The Admiral.

Finally, The Beer Emporium, Union Street, Oldham is due to have a new owner. John Dyson from the legendary Witchwood in Ashton-under-Lyne will shortly be taking over. Let's hope that the Emporium will now return to its best which brought an entry in the GBG.

In Hadfield, the station's wine bar has re-opened with a new name. At the end of the branch line from Manchester, it is aptly named "The Last Stop" and has two hand-pulled beers, Worthington Best Bitter and Stones Bitter.

The Marstons pub trail which was so successful during the summer months, announced the winner of the most consistent pint on the Manchester area trail recently. Of 88 pubs, the participants of the trail voted the Prince of Wales, Milltown, Glossop as the best of the lot.

The Lane Ends at Marple Bridge, primarily selling Tetleys Bitter only for years, has begun taking a regular guest beer. The current landlord is the brother of Don Grundy who has the Hare & Hounds at Simmondley, a Good Beer Guide listed pub again for 1994 and who apparently is in control of both. He tells me that plans are in hand for a beer festival next Summer run along the same lines as the successful annual event held at the Hare.

The enterprising landlord from the White House in Stalybridge has acquired Rosies Bar, a small former wine bar just up the road next to the Rose & Crown. Running it on similar lines to his GBG 1994 Free House, he has introduced 5 real ales and plans to change the name to the Q-Inn, after the name of a former Stalybridge pub knocked down years ago. It adds even more choice to a small, packed few hundred yards that also includes the Station Buffet Bar. On a recent visit (1st November) the beers on were Marstons Bitter, Charles Wells Bombardier, Greene King Abbot Ale and Banks and Taylor Bodysnatcher and Black Bat.

A recent survey in Mottram proved to be quite uninspiring when one of our branch members had reason to spend the evening there at a 40th birthday function. The Junction, at the village traffic lights, is a friendly place where you are made very welcome by the locals and landlord alike. However the Robinsons Best Bitter and Mild were such that, after a few, the rest of the evening was spent on bottles. Parway through the village, a trip to the White Hart was equally poor. The Boddingtons Bitter was below average and with the other choice being a bland brew produced in bulk at Halifax(!), it was not considered worth another drink. Across the road, however, things looked up a little. The Pack Horse Inn had Boddies Bitter, Ruddles Bitter and Courage Directors, the latter being in excellent form. The landlord told me he is to take a guest beer from November, though it will be the Speckled Hen, Wadworth 6X type. Then it was back to the bottles down the road!

As a footnote, a copy of the October 1973 edition of What's Brewing made an appearance at a recent meeting. It was predicted in this venerable publication, that beer will cost an extortionate 65p per pint by the turn of the century. We can't wait.

Last month we reported that the King Billy in Newton, whilst displaying handpumps for Boddies and Theakstons on the bar, sold only keg beer. Not so. The handpumps are in full working order and dispense cask-conditioned Theakstons Bitter, XB and Worthington Best Bitter. The pub has never sold Boddies. Red faces and apologies all round.

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and a Happy New Year



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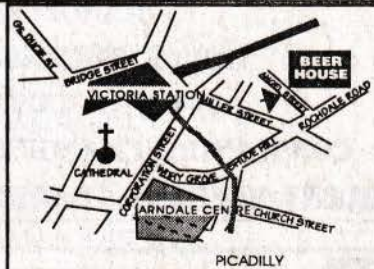
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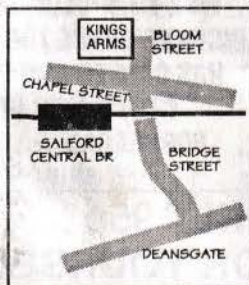
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Happy  
New  
Year*

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# CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Lots of socials in the festive month of December, kicking off on Monday 6th at the Ash, Manchester Road, Heaton Norris. In common with all Monday socials this starts at 9.00pm. The same week sees the monthly branch meeting, this time at the Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. This will feature a Christmas quiz with lots of deluxe prizes!

Saturday 11th is the date for our annual Christmas meal which this year will be at La Rachele's in Bolton. Our speaker for the evening will be Dick Venes, the Holts under-brewer and the cost is £10 per head which includes coach travel there and back. If you want to book a place contact Dawn Geddes on 445 0872.

The social on Monday 13th is at the Orion, Burton Road, Withington. One of Holts recent acquisitions, this, and well worth a visit. This is followed on Friday 17th with our monthly Stagger which of course is the annual Hillgate Crawl. We start at the Queens Head (Turners Vaults) on Underbank at 7.00pm with an 8.30 meeting point at the Red Bull.

On Monday 20th the social is at the Vale Cottage, Kirk Street, Gorton (just off Hyde Road) and on Thursday 23rd we present our Pub of the Month award to the Moss Rose in Heaton Norris (see feature on page 2). And last, but not least, the first social of 1994 will be on Monday 3rd January at the Bakers Vaults in Stockport Market Place.

Of course, if you live in the Bredbury, Romiley, Marple or Woodley areas this is covered by the High Peak and North East Cheshire branch of the Campaign. High Peak will be holding their Christmas Social on 14th December - contact Tom Lord on 427 7099 for details of this. The first two High Peak branch meetings of 1994 are on Monday 10th January at the Buck & Hawthorn in Ashton and Monday 14th February at the Andrew Arms in Compstall. Members of both branches are of course more than welcome to attend each others events.

# MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Rhys Jones*

A welcome real ale gain in Hulme is the Talbot on Stretford Road, with handpumped Dobbins Best Bitter from West Coast Brewery at £1.10, reduced to a super-bargain 89p during weekday times. It's a very plain but friendly Irish pub with frequent live music, mostly of the country-and-western or country -and-Irish style.

The Irish theme continues in Withington, where the Copson Street premises once known as Pier One, than as Berties, have re-opened as the Celtic Bar. There's music here too at times, and the bar supports the biggest Guinness font this side of the Irish Sea, but the only handpumped beer is the scarcely Celtic Boddingtons Bitter. English beer again mixes with Irish Music at the Moulders in Ancoats, where the Sunday evening traditional session is a treat. Sadly, though, the pub no longer sells mild (not even in keg form) - the Burtonwood Bitter, however, remains excellent.

In Fallowfield, handpumped Jennings Bitter has returned to the Queen of Hearts, replacing Greenalls Original, while the current range at Robinski's Wallet is Websters Bitter, Ruddles Bitter, Courage Directors, Morlands Old Speckled Hen, and West Coast Ginger Beer. Finally, a black mark for At the Eighth Day wholefood shop and cafe at All Saints, where bottled Dunkertons ciders and perry have been unobtainable since October, despite vague promises to re-order - let's hope the place gets its act together soon.

And finally, a real ale gain to report in Levenshulme where Hennigans Cafe Bar on Stockport Road (near the Palace Cinema) sells Boddingtons Bitter on handpump.

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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, 11 Twiningbrook Road, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, SK8 5PU**

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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