

OPENING

CAMRA
5000
OVER
DISTRIBUTED

No:
127

NOVEMBER 1994

Calls for Duty Cuts

This month sees Chancellor Kenneth Clarke present his second budget and once again there are widespread calls for a cut in beer duty.

Readers may recall that in June, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA joined forces with local brewers Robinsons to launch a national petition calling for British beer taxes to be reduced. Bearing almost half a million signatures, this was presented to the Government last month as part of an ongoing lobbying campaign by the industry for a 'level playing field' on which to compete with the flood of imports coming into the country from the continent.

One third of the price of a pint of beer is made up by excise duty and VAT with British taxes six times higher than in France - the source of most of the imports. The advent of the European single market at the end of 1992 has allowed holiday makers and day trippers to bring unlimited quantities of beer into the country from the continent.

The huge duty difference in tax has made a bootleg trade in beer very profitable. The brewers believe that one in every eight pints drunk at home is imported and that by the end of the decade some 10,000 pubs across the country could close as a result.

Despite the overwhelming case for action, is there any realistic prospect of a duty cut? The Chancellor is obviously remaining tight-lipped but has admitted 'there has been a lot of lobbying by the trade and I am fully aware of its problems'. He is also acutely aware of the need to get the budget deficit down to fund tax cuts before the next election and Clarke could quite possibly take the easy way out and settle for a duty freeze, as indeed he did in 1993.

Meanwhile his Cabinet colleague Virginia Bottomley has come under fire for applying double standards over excise duty on beer and cigarettes. The Health Secretary has claimed that British smokers mustn't be taxed too heavily or they would just go over to France to get their cigarettes. Mrs B.

was asked on Radio 4 if cigarette taxes should continue to rise for health reasons. Confirming this she went on to qualify her reply by making a case for similar price levels across Europe 'otherwise there is a danger of people travelling across to the continent to buy their cigarettes.'

This poses the question - isn't it the same for beer? CAMRA's Steve Cox commented "this is one sign of the logic of the situation creeping into the mind of a top Cabinet minister - we just hope that she now takes on board the equally vital question of beer tax."

Most of our local brewers and pub operators have pledged to pass on any duty cut. Meanwhile the trade and drinkers alike are holding their breath for budget day - November 29.

Station Porterfest 2

This month sees the second "Station Porters" beer festival at the Station pub in Ashton.

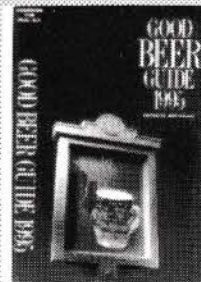
The festival runs from 17th-23rd November and will be featuring new and obscure beers from micro-brewers around the country. While the festival will be majoring on stouts and porters a whole range of beers will be appearing. Licensee John Hesketh has given us a sneak preview of one or two, so expect to see a new winter brew from Dyffryn Clwyd of Denbigh; Roosters Wizzpop; Townes Pynot Porter; Hanby Mule Ale; Commercial Ruggies Russet Nectar; Brunswick Novices Nog; Shardlow Sleight; Nethergate Coriander Porter; Mauldons Eaton Swill Old Ale; Gibbs Mew Wake Ale to name but a few. There will also be beers from Wilds of Slaithwaite (Best and Wild Thing) plus, hopefully beers from the new Hart Brewery in Preston. Beer Spotters will doubtless be out in force, plastic bottles to the fore.

Food will be available throughout along with entertainment with Folk featuring on the Monday. The popular marquee will be open on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All in all, an event not to miss.

In NOVEMBER'S OPENING TIMES

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| Pub of the Month | 2 | Beer from the wood . | 11 |
| 5 Years Ago | 3 | Good Beer Guide | 12 |
| Editors View | 3 | Camra Calling | 13 |
| Letters | 5 | Cider Corner | 14 |
| Stagger | 6 | Featured Pub | 15 |
| Free Parking | 7 | Rhythm & Booze | 16 |
| Cheshire Pubs | 8 | Curmudgeon | 17 |
| Pub Grub | 10 | Book Review | 18 |

CAMRA's Annual national Good Beer Guide is now available. This years publication is bigger and better than ever before, to cope with the increasing numbers of new micro breweries supplying beer all over the country. Get yours now - pages 13 and 23!



| | | | |
|----------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| High Peak news | 19 | Manchester Matters . | 22 |
| Bar | 21 | Pub News | 24 |



| 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 | | | |

PUB of the Month

NOVEMBER

CAMRA's Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month award for November goes to the Friendship on Hyde Road, Gorton. This is arguably one of Manchester's "forgotten" traditional locals - forgotten by a wider public at least, for local folk have always known of its excellence.

A central bar serves three counters - in the vault, where septiated footballing heroes look down on the battle of the domino tables; in the cosy rear snug; and in the lobby which gives access to the now extended lounge, where entertainment (keyboard and/or singalong) draws in the crowds four nights a week.


Friendship is the pub's name, and it's certainly exemplified by licensees Pat and Irene Griffin, who've been here since November 1990. Though Pat had done some relief management for Greenalls, this is their first pub, although you'd never guess that from the easy rapport with a great crowd of locals. They describe the Friendship as a family pub, and it has never had a pool table or a jukebox - "over my dead body" says Pat. Their success at the pub becomes a little easier to understand when you learn that before taking it on, they

were regulars here for 16 years, and were shown the ropes by previous landlord Alec Campbell, who kept the pub for a remarkable 35 years. As well as darts and dominoes, the regulars run a pigeon club and a fishing club, and trophies for the various activities can be seen behind the bar.

The beer is from Marston's, with Bitter and Banks's Mild when Pat and Irene took over. Pat, though, was keen to sell a dark mild in the Manchester tradition, and Bateman's Mild was added to the range earlier this year, now selling a more than respectable 4 or 5 9 gallon casks a week. Remarkably, Bateman's did not replace Banks's lighter mild, as in so many Marston's pubs; instead, both milds sell side by side, and along with Marston's Bitter (the biggest seller) make up a trio of fine real ales always presented in good condition.

Pub of the Month presentation night is on Thursday 24th November. With the help of Pat and Irene, their obliging staff, and the Friendship regulars, it's certain to be a night to remember.

LADYBRIDGE PARK RESIDENTS CLUB



**THE place for
your function!**
We can cater for
up to 230.
Cask Ales of
Your Choice
and **LOW PRICES**

We are on Edenbridge Road
Ladybridge Park, Cheadle Hulme
☎ Alan for a quote on 485 1188

New Range for Stanley

In a shock move, the Stanley Arms, Newbridge Lane, Stockport, has discontinued the entire range of Ryburn beers.

The Stanley had a long-established reputation as an unofficial 'brewery tap' for Ryburn and often featured the brewery's full range on the bar, including two exclusive house milds. Landlord Mike Belsham told us that the move was essentially down to beer pricing - not only did he experience a brief (and unannounced) interruption in supplies of some beers, notably his best-selling Rydale Bitter, when the brewery moved premises in September, but this was followed by an across the board 10% price hike. Understandably Mike found this unacceptable, especially so when he has for some years been one of Ryburn's biggest outlets - and indeed it was arguably the case that it was Mike's initial order for Ryburn beers and the commissioning of the house milds that kick-started Ryburn into action when it was virtually moribund.

However, Ryburn's loss is Stockport's gain. Mike has a new supply arrangement with the Steampacket Brewery at Knottingley, West Yorkshire. Up to seven Steampacket beers are featured and Mike has found that sales are exceeding those of the Ryburn beers at their most successful. Certainly the Steampacket beers have improved immeasurably in recent years and while Foxy (3.9%) is proving a top-seller drinkers should not miss out on the likes of Chatterly (a 3.7% wheat beer and absolutely stunning when OT called) or Packet Porter (4.5%), thinnish but with bags of flavour, among others. Steampacket also operate a 'beer swapping' arrangement with micro-brewers around the country and Mike is hoping to benefit from this to once again feature beers from the more obscure small brewers - first off could well be beers from the Sutton and Blewitts breweries in Devon.

The Victoria

Hall Street, Offerton
Greenalls Ales
plus
A GUEST BEER each WEEK
OPEN ALL DAY
BAR FOOD AVAILABLE
Your Hosts
Ian & Christine
Tel: (061) 480 3983

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

NOVEMBER 1989

BODDIE BLOW was the headline when Boddington's decided to turn their backs on 136 years of brewing tradition, and sell their breweries to Whitbread. The main points of the deal were:- Whitbread to buy Boddington's breweries, brand names and existing stocks for £54 million.

Boddington's to keep control of their 500 plus pubs and free trade outlets.

Boddington's to buy 75% of their beer from Whitbread, under a renewable five year agreement. The remaining 25%, it seemed, could be made up by increasing the 75%, or using it to give the company the opportunity of entering the guest beer market.

There were several other things likely to happen :-

Higsons, Liverpool, would close or be sold, and beer production would be transferred elsewhere.

The several milds available would be reduced to one, or even abolished altogether.

Strangeways would brew Boddington's only, and "Oldham" would go elsewhere.

This policy of brewing "local" beers outside their own local area had become a growing trend (and not just by Whitbread) - they had attracted the name of "beers on wheels".

There were more critical comments about Bass's almost total disregard of the requests of the Greater Manchester drinker for more cask ale. In Stockport, nearly 20% of the keg only pubs were Bass, and the Hope in Heaton Norris had been waiting for two years to go "real", and it was still waiting. This was part of a promised mass conversion of Bass pubs to cask beer - but nothing happened.

It was a very different story with John Smith's tied houses in the branch area - the time was fast approaching when they would all be "real". Just three years ago, none of them were.

The Strawberry Duck on Clayton Lane had started selling guest beers, in addition to the regular Holt's and Boddington's. Marston's Pedigree, Taylor's Landlord, and Theakstons Old Peculier had appeared, and Moorhouses Pendle Witches Brew was due to make an appearance on Halloween.

Finally, a few odds and ends of pub news :-

The Farmers, Cheadle Heath, Conways, Cheadle Hulme, and Sports, Edgeley all looked as if they were being turned back into proper pubs. (They were all originally part of Grand Met's "Open House" theme.)

After a long closure, the Old Junction at Cheadle Hulme had emerged with an imaginative new name - the Cheadle Hulme, and a completely changed appearance.

A Whitbread guest beer appearing in the area was Pompey Royal from the Fremlins Brewery in Faversham, Kent. It was originally produced at the Brickwoods Brewery in Portsmouth, until Whitbread closed it.

**COPY DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER ISSUE
THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER**

Design and Origination by CPPR, a division of Connaught Technologies, using Aldus PageMaker 5, Corel Draw 3.0 & 4, Microsoft Word for Windows 2.0 & 6.0, and Wordperfect 5.2. Mcr. Office is located at 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport SK4 2NP. 061 432 8384 Printed by Redvers Press Failsworth.

IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

All eyes will be on the Chancellor when he stands up to present his second budget on November 29th. The trade wants a duty cut (despite the ambivalence of What's Doing, the self-styled 'Manchester Beer Drinkers Magazine'.) Will we get one? that is the \$64,000 question and in all honesty the answer is probably no.

Kenneth Clarke is a consummate political animal. He can appease the drinks lobby now, and throw a lifeline to many suffering licensees. Just think, though, of the political fall-out of such a move when VAT on fuel is slated to go up to 17 1/2% and the value of mortgage relief is about to drop to 15%. Put in that context the blandishments of the trade and drinkers will be easy to resist. Bear in mind also the imperative need to reduce the budget deficit to pay for what are hoped to be election-winning tax cuts. In short it's down to a choice of helping the brewing industry today or political survival tomorrow. Now, which one would you choose?

John Clarke

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING RATES: 1/8 page: £20; 1/4 page: £35; 1/2 page: £65; Full page £120. Surcharges apply for back page. Discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design & origination usually free of charge. Ring 061 477 1973 for details. (Rates current 1994).

Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. Image height 24cm. NB Advertisers who supply camera ready artwork that cannot be resized to our standard sizes will be charged the equivalent column/centimetre rate plus a surcharge of at least 30%. Adverts that require unusually large amounts of design work will have the extra work carried out by a studio at full commercial rate. Estimates will be given.

OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ 477 1973 (home) 831 7222 x 3411 (wk). News, articles and letters welcome. All items may be submitted in any popular WP format or ASCII on IBM-PC format 3.5" disks (which will eventually be returned!). All items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.

Contributors to this edition: John Clarke, Rhys Jones, Paul Hutchings, Richard Hough, Phil Levison, Peter Edwardson, Martin Wystryk, Charlotte Bulmer, Brian Carey, Tom Lord, Tim Jones, Frank Wood, Ben Zwiernik, Jim Flynn

*"Some people say
my stout is better
than my porter"*

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA



THE CREAM OF MANCHESTER.

Boddingtons Draught Bitter. Brewed at the Strangeways Brewery since 1778.



OPENING TIMES

LETTERS

From : A local licensee (name and address supplied)
As a local licensee on the outskirts of town, I display a 'No Travellers' sign on my door.

I do this to keep out undesirables such as 'Gypsies' or 'Irish Tinkers' who do absolutely nothing to the well being of any public house.

The word 'Travellers' is a word of their choosing, but it is used by me, and fellow licensees, because in our crazy society 'No Gypsies' or 'No Irish Tinkers' would be seen as discrimination.

So in conclusion I hope I have explained to RH (issue 125) or any other supercilious prat who no doubt lives in a cul-de-sac well away from the well-washed, well-mannered, educated 'travellers' who entertain various locals with a feast of abusive language and at the end of the evening, a friendly punch-up. Invite them round to your home for that friendly quaff of ale or even a hearty repast - it will no doubt open your eyes.

From : Rhys Jones

As October's OT predicted, a fine range of beers was presented at the Royal in Hayfield when the pub held its beer festival. I missed Steam Packet's Ginger Wheat Beer - but the beer's flavour was so assertive that it had an interesting effect on the Linfit Special which succeeded it on the same pump!

But oh, those prices! The festival beers i.e. anything but John Smiths bitter - were available by half-pint ticket only, tickets being sold in strips of 5 (£4.50) or 10 (8.85). Depending on how much you wanted to commit yourself to in advance, your beer was therefore either £1.80 or £1.77 a pint - this for a range which, though it included the odd brain-slamming beer, averaged out around 4.5% - 5%ABV, and included also such delightful but low-gravity (and therefore usually lower-priced) ales as Batemans Mild.

I'm all for pubs introducing their customers to an imaginative range of beers - and the Royal's range was certainly that. However, a pub does neither its own reputation nor the cause of real ale any favours if it makes such an occasion an excuse to charge utterly unrealistic prices, or to adopt 'bulk purchase' policies which may encourage customers to drink more than they really want - a particularly important point in a rural area where many customers may arrive and leave by car.

From : Richard Hough

Could you enlighten me as to whether there are any genuine vegetarian beers available? Some of my friends are veggie, and refuse to drink beer on the grounds that most beers use finings (from fish) to clear the beer. And are there any guides available on this issue? (See Next Issue - Ed)

Navigation On Course

In these days when some pubs which should know better are continuing to work the 'keg-cider - fake handpump' con, it's good to be able to report on a pub which has taken active steps to avoid the practice.

Since Pete and Norah Berry took over, the beer range at the Navigation, Lancashire Hill, Stockport, has been transformed. The one solitary real ale previously on sale, Websters Yorkshire Bitter, has been joined by Innkeepers Special Reserve and Banter's Bitter from Coach House and Stones Bitter. All have gone down very well. Pete and Norah also thought they were getting a real cider when their suppliers installed a 'handpump' for "Arthur J Moore's Cidermaster" and were subsequently dismayed to find that this is yet another keg cider in the Scrumpy Jack mode. The product was immediately taken off sale and the handpump is due to be removed - and replaced by an additional beer line which could see a fifth real ale on sale at the pub.

When too many pubs that should know better are taking these keg ciders and conning their customers by selling them through fake 'handpumps' it is good to see integrity prevailing at the Navigation.

Poetry corner

High Peak CAMRA member Roly Holroyd found this in a copy of the Glossop Dale Chronicle dated 6.6.1919. The author is unknown

Said Bill to George "We've worked a week
And worked reight hard at that
Let's don us up and go out and seek
Some company and a nice hours chat

I wonder if we can find a drop o'gradely ale
Th'real sort that should do us good
There seems precious little o'that sort on sale
Th'creamy sort drawn straight from th'wood

How lucky are those wi' some in stock
Wines, spirits and stouts, and cigars
Tha doesno see them allus watching th'clock
Or dolling about near th'bars

Then off they went with hearts of gold
Beating 'neath their Sat'day vest
Men who've done their whack when the story's told
Though no medals adorn their breasts

But they tramped a long way without any luck
And their thirst became hard to bear
Met closed windows, bars which seemed to have stuck
'Twas enough to make decent chaps swear

And both of 'em yearned for the good old days
When beer with some body was brewed:
When the working man's beverage was worthy of praise
And ale was both drink and a food

And very sick at heart they landed back
Looking vexed and feeling "Reight queer"
For eleven pubs they tried on their weary track
And every one said "No beer"

Tom Thumb's

54 KING STREET WEST, STOCKPORT

A CLASSIC COMMUNITY PUB

BODDINGTONS BITTER, JOHN SMITHS BITTER
MARSTONS PEDIGREE

A PUB WHERE THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO

★ KARAOKE - WED, SAT/SUN ★ LIVE ARTISTS - FRI ★

ACTIVE GAMES TEAMS

COME AND EXPERIENCE OUR UNIQUE FUN ATMOSPHERE

"Personally,
I don't like
to comment"

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

STAGGER

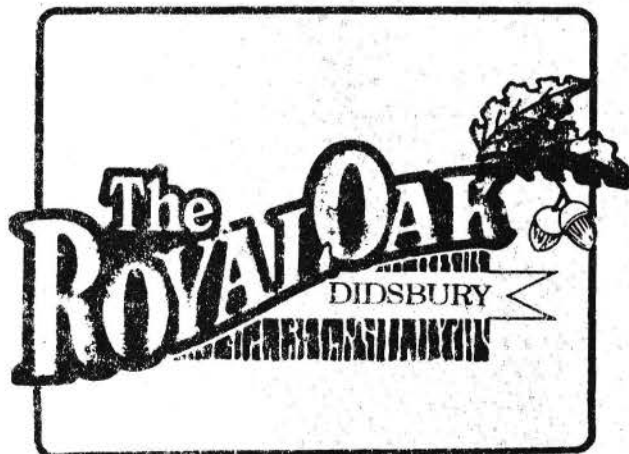
with Rhys Jones

A pleasant August evening found us exploring Hazel Grove. Starting point was the Rising Sun, the former Wilsons pub where the Buxton and Macclesfield roads diverge. This was frankly an uninspiring beginning, the bland and uninteresting decor crying out for some sort - any sort - of refurbishment. The beer range has increased somewhat, comprising standard bitters from Ruddles, John Smiths and Theakstons together with Courage Directors. No-one tried Directors, Ruddles was only average, but the other two were a little better, Theakstons being preferred.

Next call was the **Bulls Head**. This was a Wilsons/Host Group (remember them) refurbishment of the mid-80s, and on previous visits had not seemed to be wearing well. It was, however, a lot livelier than the Rising Sun, and the plethora of chalked notices, posters and T-shirts on display at least indicated that some sort of effort was being made to attract business. Doing our best to conceal our disappointment at the absence of Websters Bitter, the pumpclip for which was reversed, we were faced with the choice between Courage Directors and Theakstons Bitter. Sampled at an outside table, both were above average, the Theakstons again preferred. No-one would call the Bulls Head a brilliant pub, but it was better in all respects than our first port of call.

Next came the **White Hart**, the southernmost of Hazel Grove's many Robinsons pubs. Typical of so many Robinsons modernisations, this had little to excite the eye. The unimaginative opened-out layout, with trademark "Robinsons" arches and dralon seating, created an instant sense of deja vu. The beers are Best Mild (or Hatters if you must) and Best Bitter, served by electric pump. Both were stunningly average.

Next came the **Horse & Jockey**. For some time this ex-Wilsons pub has been famous for being owned by Vaux but having Holts Bitter as its only real ale. A surprise was in store though, as the Holts has been joined by handpumped Vaux Bitter. While this was only average the Holts was considerably better, though perhaps not disclosing the full character possessed by this beer at its very best - "it would be a good pint if it wasn't Holts", as one of us put it. The pub itself is one of the more characterful along the strip, retaining some leaded glass as a reminder of former days.



It was now time to cross the road to our 8.30 meeting place, the **Three Tuns**. This was in layout and atmosphere the first truly traditional pub of the night, with plenty of separate drinking areas and an entirely separate vault at the rear. It was also by some way the busiest pub so far - is there a lesson there? We were tantalised by the presence of beer mats advertising Frederics premium beer, but only mild and best bitter was on sale. I personally rated the bitter my best beer of the night, but I was a lone voice, and it's possible I was unduly influenced by my great liking for the pub; others thought it little better than average, though the mild was thought considerably better.

A short back-trek now, to the **Grapes**. This is another real pub, again with separate vault - and a fine room it is too, with trophy cabinet and well-used noticeboard (always a sign of a good pub). Concern was expressed some time ago when the pub switched from lined to brim-measure glasses, so we were pleased to see lined glasses once again in use - good to see CAMRA's full-measure message getting across. Again, mild and best bitter were on offer, and the mild drinkers reckoned their beer was a shade lighter in colour and sharper in flavour than at the Three Tuns. In any event, both beers were judged to be a notch superior to their equivalents at the Tuns.

Next call was the **Bird in Hand**. Not unattractive externally, inside this is another bland and uninspiring modernisation. We played the game of speculating as to its former layout, but the changes have been so thorough as to leave few clues. Robinsons mild and best bitter are sold from electric pumps. Both were above average, but our tasters preferred the mild.

Next came our only excursion off the A6, the walk down Commercial Road to the **Royal Oak**. This inter-wars pub has retained much of its character - the external gargoyles caught the eye. We were unfortunate enough to catch the karaoke, but even so it was clear that this is a good and popular local. Robinsons mild and best bitter are on handpump here - bitter little better than average, mild considerably better.

Back to the A6 now, and the **Cock**. By this time Hazel Grove was getting busy, and half of them seemed to be in the Cock. The modernisation here gave the impression of having been carried out more sensitively, though to be honest it was too busy to be certain. (We even had difficulty squeezing our way out of the place!) Robinsons mild and best bitter here again, and both comfortably above average. Interestingly, in this as in the four Robinsons pubs immediately preceding, mild was preferred to bitter by a considerable margin.

By this time, Robinson's fatigue was setting in, so leaving the Grove, the Anchor and the Woodman to be covered on another stagger, we made our way to Whitbread's **George & Dragon**. One of Whitbread's real ale theme pubs, this is decked out in their pseudo-rustic style, and while initially it

looked full to bursting, we did in fact find ample room towards the rear. The handpumped range included, as well as Boddies and Flowers IPA, Arkells BB and Cains Bitter; the beers on gravity dispense didn't seem to be on - a shame as they included Hardington Moonshine. (Incidentally, I had noticed in several Whitbread "ale houses" over the summer that the gravity-dispense beers have been unavailable. Were they, I wonder, finding that their in-cask cooling system wasn't up to the hot weather?) Though some difficulty was experienced in obtaining full measure, the Cains was rated as one of the best beers of the night and the Arkells was also comfortably above average, bringing the stagger to a pleasant conclusion. Sadly all this was spoiled by the 'handpumped' keg Scrumpy Jack on the bar - discerning drinkers should avoid the pub while this remains.

As ever, the foregoing simply represents the opinions of a small group of reasonably experienced beer-drinkers on one particular evening - it can't be taken as definitive. For myself, I confess I found it a curiously unsatisfying evening - no real stinkers, true, but equally no truly memorable high spots. There is surely scope for one or other of the pubs in the centre of Hazel Grove to carve out a position of clear pre-eminence - for one of the Robinson's pubs to try Frederics wouldn't be a bad start.

Barmaid Wins Dublin Trip

The Fir Tree, Gorton Road, Reddish, Stockport has scored top marks in the Tetley Pub Company's mystery drinker campaign which checked the pub's performance against 107 criteria. In addition, Mary Sumner, was named Tetley's number one barmaid and given an all expenses paid weekend for two in Dublin.



Picture shows (l-r) Hosts Tony & Cathy Duncan, barmaid Mary Sumner and Tetley's David Nugent

Mary's achievements include awards for customer service, hygiene, health and safety and cellar management. She is qualified to train other members of staff and can name the drinks of 1500 regular customers!

Mary was one of sixteen members of the Fir Tree team to be presented with awards at a special ceremony held at the pub.

"The night was a celebration of the Fir Tree's success," says Tetley training officer, Robin Bell. "We wanted to recognise and reward all the hard work that has made that success possible. Licensees, Cathy and Tony Duncan only took the pub on at the start of the year, yet they have managed to ensure that the Fir Tree is consistently rated as one of Tetley's very best for service."

Free Parking

CAMRA, both nationally and locally, abhors the practice of drink-driving. If you have drunk anything alcoholic, you should not sit behind the wheel of a car and drive. Simple as that, or is it?

The legal limit of alcohol when driving is around 4 units, one unit being equivalent to half a pint of 'standard' (probably up to 3.8%ABV) bitter, one glass of wine or one measure of spirits. But as we all know, beer affects different people in different ways. I always know when I've had a pint; I never enjoy driving after even one pint, and certainly wouldn't after two. My personal view is that if I have had any alcohol, I won't drive. Moreover, I won't accept a free lift home off anyone who has had a bit to drink. To be honest, I couldn't care less about them losing their licence if they are collared, but this 'mate' who drives me home could end up killing me. For the sake of a couple of beers.

If I'm going out and I know I'll be drinking, I won't drive. Catch a bus, get a train or drive and go elsewhere. But you wonder if pubs are indirectly encouraging people to drink and drive by providing large car parks. Certainly many out of town pubs have large car parks in front. The Old Mill in Cheadle Hulme or the Plough & Flail in Mobberley are prime examples. But pubs with no car park NEVER attract a drink-drive public - the Queens Head in Stockport or the Sportsmans, Market Street, Manchester or the Circus, again Manchester for instance.

In the case of many new pubs this isn't the fault of the pub or the brewery. Planning requirements often stipulate that new pubs have to have a car park of a minimum size - you can bet that Robinsons would have been happier building a bigger pub with a smaller car park when they built the Three Bears in Hazel Grove, for example. In these days when deregulation is a buzz work this is one bit of red tape that could certainly go into the dustbin - and make a contribution to road safety at the same time.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

83 Castle Street, Edgeley ☎ 477 3424

Delicious Home Cooked Breakfast
served 8-11.30 Mon - Sat only £1.50

Fantastic Lunches served 11.30-2 Mon - Sat
with Wonderful Daily Specials

Sunday Lunches Served 12-5.30
(bookings required after 3) - 3 Courses for £5.50
also an extensive alternative menu

THE PRINCE ALBERT

107 Castle Street, Edgeley

Opening Times 11-11 Mon-Sat - Normal Sunday Hours
serving delicious meals Mon-Sat 12-2

*"Porter's Porter.
Champion Beer,
Stockport Beer Festival 1994"*

**The Griffin Inn,
Hud Rake, Haslingden**

"We're NOT in the 1995 Good Beer Guide"

THE PLOUGH

Heaton Moor Road, ☎ 432 5563

NOW FEATURING

5

REAL ALES

**Tetley Bitter, Jennings Bitter,
Marstons Pedigree,
Robinsons Best Bitter
and introducing**

**THE
TAPSTER'S
Choice**

TRADITIONAL "HANDFULL" BEERS

A regular guest beer changing every fortnight

**Lunchtime Food available
7 Days a Week**

**including serve yourself salad bar
Your Hosts Alan & Kath**



PHOENIX BREWERY

**Brewers of superb ales
including:**

**WOBBLY BOB
DOUBLE DAGGER
PHOENIX PORTER
OLD OAK ALE
HOPWOOD**

PLUS SEASONAL BREWS

**For details & prices ring:
0706 627009**

**OAK BREWING CO. LTD.
PHOENIX BREWERY
GREEN LANE • HEYWOOD
LANCASHIRE • OL10 2EP**



Maybe the single most remarkable feature of the Commercial is its opening hours - closed every evening until 8pm, and not open at all at lunchtimes apart from 12-2 on Sundays. That's only 22 1/2 hours a week - probably the most restrictive pub hours in Cheshire. Why bother going, you may well wonder, when you'll be lucky to be able to get through the door. The answer is that it's one of the most unspoilt, traditional pubs in the county, in a setting where you'd least expect it.

Wheelock is a drab suburb-cum-village straggling along the A534 a couple of miles south of Sandbach on the way to Crewe. The road drops down to cross the bridge over the Trent & Mersey Canal. On the left is the Cheshire Cheese, on the right an area set back from the road by some converted canalside warehouses. Facing these is the Commercial, a long white-painted building of vaguely Regency appearance, probably dating from the building of the canal. It's not immediately obvious from the road and is easily missed, but should not be, if it's open!

Now a free house, it was for many years in the hands of Whitbread and their predecessors, and still bears the signs of their ownership in a Birkenhead Brewery doormat. The interior was remodelled in 1939 and has scarcely been touched since. It's surprisingly spacious, with four separate rooms along the front of the pub. From left to right there are a lounge with wicker furniture reminiscent of a 1950s seaside guest house, a cosy snug, the main bar area with an impressive wood-panelled bar counter and backfitting, and a games room featuring table skittles and a full-size snooker table. How often do you see one of those in a pub? The toilets too are a 1930s period piece, the gents' displaying an original notice telling you not to make a mess in tones of such genteel circumlocution that it's difficult to work out what they're on about. Back in the pub there's a selection of magazines, bird-watching featuring prominently, but rubbing shoulders with "Hello" amongst others.

The Commercial has been a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide and the beer quality does not disappoint. The regular range is Boddingtons Bitter, Thwaites Bitter and Marstons Pedigree, with the addition of a guest beer on

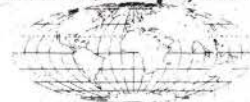
Marble Arch World Beers

57 Manchester Road, Chorlton,

Manchester M21 9PW. Phone: 061 881 9206

**OVER 150 bottled beers in stock including
English Ales, German wheat beers, Fruit &
Trappist Beers. Glasses for Sale
A choice of 3 different draught beers to
take away each week.**

**Open:- Sun: 7-10pm, Mon: 5-10pm, Tues: 12-10pm,
Wed: 5-10pm, Thu & Fri: 12-10pm, Sat: 10am - 10pm**





The Commercial, Wheelock

Thursday nights only, oddly enough, the last one having been Caledonian Golden Promise. On our visit the Boddingtons, served from a handpump with an original 1950s pumpclip, was about as good as you're ever likely to find it - those limited hours must give it time to mature. Bulmers Traditional Cider is available from an electric pump, making it possibly the only regular outlet for real cider in the whole of Cheshire. If you order cider you're likely to be offered ice and a slice of lemon to accompany it - our cider aficionado politely declined, but the cider was fine without them. The range of other drinks includes a selection of unusual spirits, some genuine Polish Vodkas particularly catching our eye.

Our visit was on a Sunday lunchtime, when it was ticking over nicely but still fairly quiet. No doubt it becomes a lively social centre for the village on Friday and Saturday nights, but even so you can't avoid a fleeting thought that the pub may be missing out on its potential. You know, open up at lunchtimes, put some food on, turn the lounge into a children's room - it could be a goldmine. That, though, would spoil its unique appeal as a pub where the surroundings and atmosphere of the 1950s have miraculously survived until the present day. Savour it for what it is, and long may it continue.

If you do need somewhere that's open all day, plus that vital extra hour on Sunday lunch, and serves food, you could do far worse than the Cheshire Cheese over the road, another Good Beer Guide entry with Banks's Mild and Bitter on handpump. And it's worth noting that Wheelock is easily accessible by public transport, served by an hourly bus from Macclesfield to Crewe that runs until fairly late in the evening.



An unusual piece of Breweriana in the Gents at the Commercial

OLD MILL

MILL LANE, CHEADLE PULME 061 488 4090

(off Ladybridge Road, next to Garden Centre)

TETLEY, BURTON, JENNINGS, CAINS

- ★ Different Guest Beers Weekly
- ★ Home Made Pub Lunches
- ★ Traditional Sunday Lunch
- ★ Beer Garden
- ★ Excellent Disabled Facilities
- ★ Large Car Park
- ★ Group Bookings
- ★ Regular Beer Festivals

WE'RE
IN THE
GOOD BEER
GUIDE '95

Your Hosts
John & Bev

The Olde Woolpack

70 Brinksway,
Stockport

☎ 061 - 429 6621

Proprietors:

Robert & Gillian Dickinson

FREE HOUSE

GOOD HOME-MADE FOOD

Marstons Pedigree
Theakston Best Bitter
Tetley Bitter
Weekly Guest Beers

Served 6 Lunchtimes a week

from a wide ranging menu PLUS

★ 3 - Course Sunday Lunch ★

choose from:

Soup - pate - prawn cocktail

Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding

Roast Chicken & Stuffing

(all served with a selection of fresh vegetables)

plus a choice of sweets

Adults £5.25 Children £3.90

WE'RE
IN THE
GOOD BEER
GUIDE '95

The Red Lion WILMSLOW RD WITHINGTON

Mon. - Sat. 11 - 11

Handpulled Marstons Pedigree

Burton Bitter and Banks Mild

plus

Marstons Head Brewers Choice

★ LUNCH ★

7 DAYS A WEEK

EVENING MEALS MON. - THU.

★ 5.30 - 8.00 ★



WE'RE
IN THE
GOOD BEER
GUIDE '95

Bakers Vaults MARKET PLACE, STOCKPORT

Robinson's Fine Ales
superb cuisine

including
traditional

Sunday Lunch

LIVE MUSIC MOST EVENINGS

BOOGIE CLUB SUNDAY NIGHT

TEL: 480 3182





For this month's Pub Grub article we travelled to Heaton Moor to try the Plough - a pub much altered over recent years. The Plough is a Tetley pub, and whilst it has tried to go up market somewhat, trying to cash in on the lucrative pub food trade, it still manages to retain the feel of a pub.

The beers on sale today were Tetleys Imperial, Tetleys bitter, Robinsons Best Bitter and Marston's Pedigree. My partner and I commented on the fact that Imperial used to be keg and was a beer to be avoided but thankfully Tetley's have at last got it right, the Imperial is now a cask conditioned ale. We sampled the Imperial and were impressed by its good quality. However it was rather expensive at £1.48 a pint.

The hot food display/serving area is at the end of the long central bar. The meals on offer this particular Friday included a starter of soup, and a selection of main course meals. The hot meals included roast beef topside, steak and kidney pie, lasagne verdi, chicken curry, chilli-con-carne and giant Yorkshire pudding. The latter was available with a choice of fillings of sausage, beef, mash potatoes, chips, chicken curry and chilli-con-carne. Chips or rice can accompany these meals. Potatoes and vegetables are also available, and so diners can be quite flexible in their choice. All these meals are priced at £3.20.

The large dining room is adjacent to the food serving area with the salad bar on the left of the entrance. If a cold meat dish is ordered (on the Friday it was honey roast ham priced



The Plough, Heaton Moor Road

at £3.20), diners can "help themselves" at this salad bar. Considering the variety and content in the display, this was indeed good value.

For diners concerned with their waistlines the following snacks were on offer, various sandwiches from £1.25, hot baked potatoes with various fillings also from £1.25, and hot toasted sandwiches and chips from £2.25.

My friend decided on the giant Yorkshire pudding with a filling of beef. For the price paid it was a good helping and the beef was tender. I took the boring option - chicken curry. It contained a few pieces of chicken and mainly consisted of a thick brown sauce. Maybe it was my own fault for choosing this dish, but I am still searching for a pub which serves a decent chicken curry. Sadly this pub wasn't the one - my search will continue.

After our meals we retired to the lounge area at the front of the pub. The service behind the bar is friendly yet fast, so my friend soon returned to the lounge armed with two pints of Robinsons best bitter. Again the beer quality was good, but the price was rather high at £1.40 a pint. As we drank our pints we reflected on the lounge atmosphere. The bare brick wall with the old Victorian fireplace was quite appealing. Various items of furniture and bric-a-brac were scattered around this room, the old French dresser was most notable in one corner. The walls contained plenty of old fashioned pictures, which helped to brighten up a rather dark interior.

In conclusion, I would recommend Opening Times readers to give this pub a visit one lunchtime. It certainly is a place where the customer is met by friendly faces and a good atmosphere. The lunches here are always worth a try.



The Olde Cock Inn

845 WILMSLOW ROAD ☎ 445 4405

BODDINGTONS, FLOWERS, MARSTONS
PEDIGREE, CASTLE EDEN PLUS

6 GUEST BEERS, changing continuously

LUNCH: MON - FRI 12 - 2pm
EVENING MEALS: MON - FRI 5 - 7pm
SAT & SUN 12 - 5pm

STEAKS AT SILLY PRICES
e.g. 12oz T-Bone £5.95

ENTERTAINMENT

MONDAY IS PIANO NIGHT
TUESDAYS - FOLK MUSIC
WEDNESDAYS - QUIZ NIGHT

OPEN ALL DAY

OPEN ALL DAY

The Nursery Inn

GREEN LANE,
HEATON NORRIS,
STOCKPORT
432 - 2044



- ★ Traditionally Brewed Hydes Anvil Ales
- ★ Good Home Cooked Food Served Daily
- ★ Lunches every day including Sundays for families in our Dining Room.
- ★ Bowling Parties and function room.
- ★ Egon Ronay 1993 - MLC Guide

Hydes
Anvil Ales
Brewers of
Traditional
Cask
Beers
Always in
good taste

Beer from the Wood

Most CAMRA members probably know about the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW), an organisation that was founded 8 years before CAMRA, in 1963, when wooden casks were still regarded as being synonymous with traditional draught beer. Metal casks have steadily been replacing wooden ones, and nowadays the Society are rather more concerned about the quality of the beer in the cask, and how it is dispensed, rather than the container itself. However, they have recently carried out a survey in an attempt to learn the current situation on the use of wood, and the results are contained in the Society's Wood Report, which is of course copyright SPBW, but permission has kindly been given for the following extracts to be reproduced here in Opening Times.

In February 1993, questionnaires were sent to 100 breweries, which included major plants of the national brewers, all the established regional brewers, and a selection of the better known small, or micro-breweries. 35 completed questionnaires had been received by the time the analysis was compiled, with the following results:-

14 breweries are still using wooden casks. In terms of percentage output of beer served from the wood, Theakston (Masham) came out as top users with 75-99%, followed by John Willie Lees at 50-74%, and Robinsons and Wadworth at 10-24%. Then followed a clutch of less than 10%. Samuel Smith was "not disclosed ("confidential")".

The report also covered the advantages and disadvantages of wooden casks, when and why the breweries stopped using them, and the familiar question was asked - "Do they affect the flavour of the beer?" In a section headed "Last words on wood", there was a wide variety of comments:-

Tolerances are outside the 1% required by the new Customs and Excise regulations.

Problems arise with palletless handling.

An outmoded form of packaging.

Greater variability of beer flavour.

Important to keep the tradition alive.

The Wood report is very detailed, containing a lot of information, and these extracts have only touched on the fringes. As a final summary, the Report's "Conclusions" have been reproduced in full.

CONCLUSIONS

This report shows that beer from the wood is not a thing of the past - at least not yet. A number of the breweries still using wooden casks showed a marked lack of enthusiasm for them and readily pointed out the drawbacks and disadvantages of wood. Furthermore, the legislation referred to covering handling and contents recording might see beer from the wood brought to an end on technical grounds.

The amount of beer still served from the wooden cask can only represent a tiny proportion of all real draught beer sold in Britain. However, it is out there to be drunk if you know where to find it. Unfortunately, unless a wooden cask is actually on display, you will probably have to make polite enquiries of the bar staff, or depend on your taste buds.

If anyone would like a copy of the complete Wood Report, please send a stamped addressed envelope plus two second class stamps to Roger Jacobson, 2 Elizabeth House, St Leonards Street, London E3 3BX.

Anyone reading this who is not already a member of SPBW might like to know that annual membership costs only £3 (£4 non-UK). For information about SPBW together with a membership form, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary, Roger West, Flat 4, 14 Maryland, Wood Green, London N22 5AJ.

John and Janice welcome you to

The Marble Arch Free House

73 Rochdale Road, Mcr 4.(061) 832 5914

Guest Ales, Traditional Ciders
and bottled beers from
Germany & Belgium

Good home-cooking available all day!

Families welcome

Live Music / Function Room

NELSON INN

Didsbury

Fine Cask Conditioned Ales

Websters & Holts

Cheapest Beer In Didsbury

Open All Day

Come and Try our

Quiz nights (Tuesday) &

Karaoke nights (Wednesday)

Irene and Staff welcome you to

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

The Old King

Great Portwood St.

- STOCKPORT - 061 480 6026

HANDPUMPED REAL ALE including

DRAUGHT BASS * GOOD FOOD SELECTION

MON - SAT 12 - 8.00, SUN 12 - 2.30 pm

OPEN SATURDAY 11.30 - 11pm

FUNCTION ROOM AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES

AND PRIVATE CLUB MEETINGS

SKY SPORTS ON SATELLITE

CHILDRENS PARTIES CATERED FOR

YOUR HOSTS

Steve & Dorothy



THE REAL PULL OF THE LAKES



JENNINGS BITTER
*Distinctively Darker Bitter.
Malty, Nutty and Mellow*
ABV 3.5%

CUMBERLAND ALE
*Light, Hoppy Golden
Bitter Rich and Smooth*
ABV 4%

SNECK LIFTER
*Very Dark Strong Bitter Slightly
Sweet wonderfully warming*
ABV 5.1%

JENNINGS
BROTHERS PLC

NOW AT LEYLAND
Telephone & Fax: 0772 623 943

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

One or two local members have suggested that we present our monthly 'what's on' in a more formal diary layout. We've decided to give it a go - let us know what you think. Starting off with the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA diary:

| November 1994 | Week 47 | November 1994 |
|---|---------|---|
| <p>Thursday 8th - Monthly branch meeting at the Gladstone, Hillgate, Stockport. Hopefully cheap beer and a guest speaker. Starts 8.00pm</p> <p>Saturday 12th - Trip to Whim, Black Bull and Leatherbritches breweries. Departs Crown, Heaton Lane 10.00am. (NB Trip full at time of going to press.)</p> <p>Monday 14th - Recruitment night and social, the Olde Cock, Didsbury. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Friday 18th - Stagger, this time Manchester City Centre. Starts 7.00pm in the Bulls Head, London Road or join at the Old Monkey at 8.30.</p> <p>Sunday 20th - Lunchtime trip to the Station Porters Beer Festival, Ashton. Bus 330 departs Stockport Bus Station at 11.15am.</p> <p>Monday 21st - Recruitment night and Social, Hinds Head, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel. All real ale £1 a pint for the night. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Thursday 24th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Friendship, Hyde Road, Gorton (see feature on page 2). About 8.30 onwards.</p> | | <p>Monday 28th - Social, Grafton, Grafton Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Monday 3rd Dec - Social, Florist, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p><i>If you live in the Bredbury, Woodley, Marple or Romiley areas (plus Glossop and Tameside) you fall under the High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch of CAMRA. High Peak have notified us of the following events:</i></p> <p>Saturday 12th - Curry Night, Bulls Head, Old Glossop. Meet at Star between 6.30 and 7.30.</p> <p>Monday 14th - Monthly branch meeting at 'Q', Stalybridge (just down from the station). Get there by 8.30.</p> <p>Friday 25th - Broadbottom crawl. Starts 8.00pm in the Crescent, moving on to the Station at 8.30.</p> <p>Monday 12 Dec - Monthly branch meeting at the Pineapple, Marple, 8.30 start.</p> <p><i>Members of both branches are of course welcome to attend each other's events.</i></p> |

CAMRA Members - Get Your '95 Good Beer Guide

This year Stockport & South Manchester Branch are offering its members the chance to buy the 1995 Good Beer Guide at a special discounted price. Not £9.99 the cover price, not £6.50 the CAMRA national members price but £5.75 (almost half price).

So send your cheque made payable to CAMRA, Stockport & South Manchester to Jim Flynn, 66, Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 5EG and your copy will be despatched. N.B. If you live outside the branch area please add 50p for p&p. This month only - For Non-Members - A combined deal of Membership and The Good Beer Guide is on offer at only £15.75! See page 23 for details

The Robin Hood

HIGH LANE, BUXTON ROAD, STOCKPORT

Telephone: 061-483 2602



- * BEER GARDEN
- * CHILDREN WELCOME
- * FOOD SERVED ALL DAY (7 DAYS)
- * FUNCTIONS
- * SATELLITE T.V.



Robinsons Traditional Ales

Your hosts Janet & Peter Blissett M.B.I.I.

Phil Welcomes You To The

Arden Arms

MILLGATE, STOCKPORT

Robinsons Traditional Ales



BITTER, MILD, OLD TOM
ON DRAUGHT

Open ALL DAY Fri. / Sat.

BAR MEALS AVAILABLE

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA



CIDER CORNER



Pressing Business with Cider and Perry Makers

Every year, on the cider bar at CAMRA's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, we ask our customers to vote for their favourite cider and perry. Obviously this is to promote greater understanding and appreciation of these drinks; just as important, it gives us the opportunity for a pleasurable trip later in the year to present the awards.

The cider that topped the poll in 1994 came from Dennis Gwatkin of Abbeydore, in the beautiful golden valley on Herefordshire's western border. Though the ancient cider cellar beneath the farmhouse suggests that cider and perry have been made here for many years, this is a very small-scale operation, with home-made mill and press and a simple philosophy underlined by Dennis's three-line course on cider and perry for beginners: "Well, we mill the fruit here, we press it here; then we let it ferment." The formula seems to work, though; from the day a couple of years ago when a couple of tubs arrived, unbidden and unknown, on cider supplier Jon Hallam's van at Stockport, Gwatkin's cider and perry have become staples of the CAMRA festival circuit.

Much of Dennis's fruit is supplied by his uncle Brian Browning, of Minsterworth near Gloucester. And this was our next port of call, for Browning's Perry was the award-winning perry at Stockport, and also picked up the "Supreme Champion" award for most votes overall.



Brian Browning receives his award from Stockport Festival Cider Manager Rhys Jones

In a manner reminiscent of some of Belgium's lambic makers, the fruit is actually pressed by nephew Dennis at Abbeydore, but matured at Minsterworth. Brian, a fascinating character whose experience spans not only farming and cider-making but also salmon-fishing on the tidal Severn, insisted on our not only sampling perry from the two casks in the barn of his listed farmhouse, but also going away with handfuls of walnuts shaken from his own trees.

Though the awards were now presented, next day still held a further visit. Ted Jones makes no cider for sale, so let's just describe his location as being "somewhere in Herefordshire"; he'd let us know that on Sunday mornings "a few people turn up and we have a bit of fun." This turned out to be an understatement - sheltering in the cider house on a dry but chilly October morning, a posse of locals reviewed the local news of the week, tossing backchat and banter back and forth in soft yet lilting Herefordshire accents.

The fun, though, didn't get in the way of the cider-making. A petrol engine coughed into life, and all hands tipped sack after sack of the small, bitter cider apples into the "scatter" mill. Shards of chopped apple were flung skywards from the mill in a pyrotechnic display as some 6 hundred-weight of apples, chiefly local varieties, were transformed in short order into a soft pulp from which Ted hoped to extract as much as 50 gallons of juice.

The milled fruit now had to be pressed. "Hairs" - made of horsehair - were spread will milled fruit and stacked 15 high to form a "cheese". Then pressure was applied on the ancient screw press, and what had hitherto been a slow trickle of juice became a mighty river flowing into the stone trough at the base of the press. From here it was transferred, in basins and wooden buckets ("We don't use plastic on a Sunday morn-



☎ 429
0549

CROWN ALE HOUSE

HEATON

NORRIS



Boddingtons Bitter plus

9 ever changing Guest Beers

Real Cider or Perry always available

Many Interesting Continental
Bottled Beers

Home Cooked Lunchtime Food

Your hosts Lorraine & Steve James

Heaton Lane, Stockport

Your NEW Hosts Steve and Kay
welcome customers old and new

THE BRIDGE INN

Georges Road, Heaton Norris

(opposite B&Q)

Robinsons Best Handpulled Ales

Pool, Darts, Crib, Bar Skittles

FREE POOL NIGHT SUNDAY 7 - 10pm

(Free Refreshments)

Tel: 480 3150

ing"), to the great wooden casks for its long, slow months of fermentation.

And of course we weren't allowed to leave without a sample. Last year Ted had, experimentally and for the first time, matured some perry in a rum cask; though he found this had perhaps blunted the delicate flavour of the perry, we found it a delightful drink, and it led on naturally to the drier, firmer, cider. And it wasn't long before Ted's wife Janet arrived bearing bottles of her apple and pear wines (made from the first pressed juice, with natural fermentation arrested and a wine yeast substituted.)



The Apple Mill on Dennis Gwatkin's Farm

Our thanks go to all the cider-makers, whose generosity and hospitality enabled us to have a glimpse into what is in many ways a pre-industrial world. It's a world, though, whose end product you can enjoy at almost any CAMRA festival. It's good to know that CAMRA, through its commitment to cider and perry, is doing its bit to keep alive these ancient traditions of the countryside.



November Featured Pub

The 19th Hole, Fairfield, Buxton

Situated on Waterswallows Road, with views over Buxton and High Peak, it is a lengthy walk from the town centre, some twenty minutes from the three GBG listed pubs, However, it is well worth a visit. Frequented at lunch-times by dining golfers, at night there is an emphasis on games - with men's and ladies' darts and pool in the local leagues.

Originally built as a primary school, it changed to a pub in the 1950s and serves an excellent pint of Marstons Bitter. Landlady Sylvia runs the pub jointly with her son Julian, they are full of enthusiasm and have been there now for four years. They have tried selling Pedigree but prefer to keep one draught beer in good condition.

Food is what I call "proper" food, a simple menu, with plenty of it, at a good price. My particular favourite is the liver dish that comes with chips, three vegetables and onions.

There is a patio at the back, with barbecue and play area and always plenty of activities going on - including quizzes and golf competitions. It was in consideration for the 1995 Good Beer Guide - but with very limited entries available in that branch area, maybe next time!

**Out of our Circulation Area ?
Having Difficulty Getting Your Copy ?
Postal subscriptions to Opening Times
are available. 061 477 1973 for Details**



MORGAN FURZE



GILBEY
VINTNERS

PARTNERS IN IDV UK LTD

**Templefields House, River Way, Harlow, Essex. CM20 2EA
Telephone 01279 454349**

YOUR LOCAL SALES DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS ARE

MARK NIKITAS -

BRANDS:- Cinzano, Southern Comfort, Baileys, Jack Daniels, Jose Cuervo, Gonzalez Byass, Sheridans, Cockspur, Croft Port etc.

MORGAN FURZE (voicemail 0895 866524)

JOHN TAYLOR -

BRANDS:- Smirnoff, J&B, Archers, Taboo/Mirage, Drambuie, Croft Sherry, C.J. Crocker, Piat d'Or etc..

GILBEY VINTNERS (voicemail 0895 866604)

**And We are Happy to Answer Enquiries from the Licensed Trade on
our Brands, New Metric Optics, Legislation etc.**

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

RHYTHM and BOOZE

by Richard Hough

Last month the Poynton Folk Centre celebrated 25 successful years with a one-off night of special music. Although it is a little out of the way, the 191 bus drops you right outside. I arrived a little early, so time for a swift one in the Farmers Arms. Despite the presence of Frederics on the bar, nothing inspired me to stay for more than one. The Folk Centre (aka the Friendly Folk Club) was easily located thanks to the jolly exterior lighting. The building dates from 1899, so some would say a R & B review is long overdue!

Inside, a maze of rooms leads to the bar area, an olde worlde affair decked with vast quantities of ironmongery. Wadworths 6X was not available so I contented myself with reasonable Thwaites Bitter at an equally reasonable £1.20 a pint. The dimly lit music room had the feel of an old school hall, with its wooden floorboards and high, timber-framed ceiling. Plenty of balloons brightened the room up, along with the cheerful decor, which features, amongst other characters, Rupert Bear playing a violin and Popeye on squeeze-box. The fun paintings continue with jungle fever in the gents. A genuine cross-section of society waited with eager anticipation for the first act. There was an absolute absence of wah-wah pedals, fuzzboxes, fearsome drumkits or stacks of amps to hide behind; just odd instruments (and musicians) around the room.

After a fabulous introduction from the lovely Linda, Joe Beard told us "It's nice to be back." He was responsible for the Purple Gang's 60s hit "Granny Takes a Trip". An interesting character perhaps, he was also the chap behind the colourful paintings on the walls. One man, one guitar (and a beard), he began with "Bootleg Whisky", the song he started with over twenty years ago. Since then he has been a regular at the Centre; tonight he gave a fine performance. In true folk tradition there were one or two songs about real events; he ended with "Gone to the Dogs", one that can't fail to get the toes tapping.

After rushing to the bar, we welcomed Geoff Higginbottom and his 12-string guitar on stage. He was sporting a Stockport County top advertising Robinsons Best Bitter, so bonus points there too. He encouraged the crowd to sing along, and they obliged. He kicked off with a folk roots version of

"Blackleg Miner", which was recorded by Steeleye Span some years ago. Geoff provided good, honest Anglo-Saxon, rather than Celtic folk. He mentioned an interesting side-point: How do you clean the windows on the Stockport Pyramid? "You can't break the oath of a Tolpuddle man" was a topical comment on people's rights (the same day, masses had gathered in London to protest against the Criminal Justice Bill). The penultimate offering was a great solo sea-shanty and, to finish, he rued the demise of the vinyl LP. Hear, hear!

Mention should be made that the whole evening was being recorded for a live CD which should be available before Christmas (on Plutonium records). As such the audience reaction during songs was limited (unless encouraged to sing along!) With no pause for breath, the Hughes Brothers appeared. They are a distinguished trio who offered pleasant melodic folk in a classical style. The result is easy-listening harmonies which are, at times, easily forgotten. As the Gypsy Kings know they are good, so these guys could also let fame go to their heads. There was no down-to-earth feel about them. The Bee Gees are to stadium rock as the Hughes Brothers are to folk. Nonetheless the three guitarists gave an accomplished performance. You got the feeling it had to be just right. "Pirates of Penzance" was pleasant enough, but still remained background music. The highlight of the set was a cover of Simon and Garfunkel's "The Boxer" which earned them a fabulous bout of applause.

A bit of a beer-break followed before a five-piece called The Folk Devils started, with one called "10,000 Miles". A female vocalist, fiddle and banjo gave a rather shrill edge to the music. Later on a plinky-plonk sound bound up with bass and far-reaching atmospheric fiddle gave quite a pleasant combination on the ear. And it was certainly warmly appreciated. They were at their best in the Toss the feathers-style stomps; the floor vibrated, the singer gyrated and the beer got drunk. (And so did we!) Then came bewitching vocals on the mellow "Will You Stay?" which echoed Everything But the Girl. It was truly lively, good humoured stuff. If you thought it was getting lively before, it was positively buzzing by now. Raffle tickets were sold, (future) CDs were flogged, and yet more beer was bought.

There was great anticipation as we waited for The Major Clangers to commence. And they did, with "Tonight's the Night For Drinking". Well, there's a thing. It was solid backing musically, but let down by rather weak vocals. Still, there was much more to it than a few months ago, when I saw them play the Olde Cock in Didsbury. Instrument swaps between songs broke the rhythm a little, but never mind, multi-talented they truly are. A series of Scottish jigs saw each member take an active part, which makes a pleasant change. And the Irish medley was pretty good too. I thought that the last couple of songs were rather muffled; too much Thwaites, I was told. Can you ever have too much Thwaites?

Then the raffle was drawn and more beverages were purchased. It had been over a year since The Timekeepers played a gig together. Previously reviewed in this column, the performance was, not surprisingly, a little more ragged than then. But a true song-writing ability will always shine, and the thinning crowd was blinded by the dazzle. There was some political comment too with "Victory Belongs to the Just", with subtle key changes in the vocal. "Waters from the Goddess of the Grove" was a song in Latin about er, Kimberley Ales. Er? But still a super traditional tune. Like riding a bike, you never forget how to play with the Timekeepers. Memories were revived with the now usual end to the set: "The Toast". And my toast: Here's to a great night, a smart venue and some inspiring, varied and above all enjoyable music. Cheers.

FREEMINER BREWERY

FOREST OF DEAN

FREEMINER BITTER

(4% ABV)

SPECULATION ALE

(4.8% ABV)

DEEPSHAFT OAT MALT

STOUT (6.2% ABV)

Made with only finest
English whole hops and malt

REGULAR DELIVERIES TO THE MANCHESTER AREA

Tel 0594 810408 FOR PRICES



CUNMUDGEON



As the Budget approaches, once again Kenneth Clarke is being bombarded with calls to slash the rate of beer duty, to stem the flood of cheap imports from France. Apparently, the senior civil servants in the Treasury don't think this would be a good idea, as they say it would lead to a catastrophic drop in revenue. But that isn't consistent with arguments the Tories themselves have used over cutting income tax. During the 1980s, the top rate of income tax was progressively reduced from 98% to 40% and successive Chancellors claimed that this would, if anything, increase the tax take by providing more incentive to earn, and making tax avoidance much less attractive. Whatever you may think of the politics of it all, in broad terms those predictions proved correct.

Surely much the same result would come from a big cut in beer duty - more incentive to actually drink the stuff, and less incentive to avoid duty either by buying it in France or brewing your own. The drop in revenue would be nowhere near as serious as the civil servants fear. If they need any hard evidence, they need only look at the example of Denmark, where duty was halved after the border with Germany was opened, and within a few years revenue was almost back to the previous level as the attractions of cross-border shopping disappeared. Will Kenneth Clarke have the guts to ignore the advice of the claret-sipping mandarins and do the same?



A Stockport man who claimed never to drink and drive was recently convicted of being over three times the legal

limit - the morning after the night before! He had gone to a party, left his car there overnight and returned the following day to pick it up. Admittedly, he must have drunk bucketfuls to be still at such a level many hours later, but even so this case clearly illustrates the pitfalls resulting from the very slow rate at which the human body metabolises alcohol, something which is nowhere near as widely appreciated as it should be. Five pints from 9pm to 11pm will still leave a trace of alcohol in your bloodstream at 8am the next morning; eight pints may well put you over the limit.

Anybody who claims that they "never drink and drive" and yet is prepared to go out and have a skinful in the evening and then drive first thing the following morning is either extremely ignorant or guilty of self-righteous hypocrisy. The only people who can make the claim honestly are those who either (a) never drink, or (b) never drive. The rest of us, the vast majority, have to balance the two as best we can, and it's about time the public line taken by the government recognised that, for real people living real lives, this can never be the totally black and white issue they make out. They should treat us as intelligent adults who can be trusted with the truth.

Unless drivers are expected to be teetotal, the simplistic message of "don't drink and drive" doesn't adequately sum up the issue and can, in cases like the one I mentioned, be dangerously misleading.

**THINKING OF JOINING CAMRA ?
DO IT NOW! AT A REDUCED PRICE
TRY ONE OF OUR FORTHCOMING
MEMBERSHIP SOCIALS - DETAILS PAGE 23**

COME TO THE ALL YEAR ROUND BEER FESTIVAL

The Beer House

Angel Street, Manchester

12 REAL ALES ON OFFER including

**BURTONWOOD BITTER, THEAKSTONS XB and BEST BITTER,
MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH + 8 EVER CHANGING GUEST
BEERS including a GUEST MILD**

**PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS, DRAUGHT BEL-
GIAN KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE & MANY BOTTLED BELGIAN
and other FOREIGN BEERS**

Lunchtime Food Served 7 Days A Week

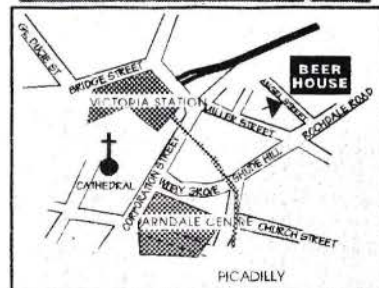
TRY OUR SUNDAY BREAKFAST 12 - 2.30

EVENING MEALS SERVED 5 - 7 THURS & FRI

HALF PRICE MENU EACH MONDAY

FREE CHIP MUFFINS EACH WED 5 - 6

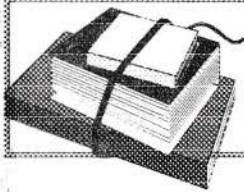
PARTY OR MEETING ROOM AVAILABLE FREE



**XMAS BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN, CALL IN FOR MENUS
- Vegetarians welcome**

OPEN ALL DAY MONDAY - SATURDAY (12-3 & 7-10.30 Sun)

**(061)
839
7019**



BOOK REVIEW



Best Pub Walks in and around Manchester
by Colin and Linda Speakman and Neil Coates,
Sigma Leisure, 164 pages, £6.95

As OT predicted in July's edition, Wilmslow based Sigma Books have made Manchester the subject of the latest in their popular 'Pub Walks' series.

In common with its companion volumes, 'The best Pub Walks in and Around Manchester' is a well produced and presented book, evidently well-researched by people who know and love their subject. It must be emphasised, though, that this is neither a good pub guide nor a good beer guide although all the pubs featured sell real ale, and usually a decent pint at that.

The focus of the book is, naturally, a series of walks, usually either starting or finishing at a pub (sometimes both), and occasionally also mentioning some en-route. The book can therefore be recommended to all local walkers who like a decent pint but want to avoid the usual well-trodden tourist routes.

The 25 walks vary in length from 6km to 16km and each has at least one 'rambler friendly' pub selected which gets its own detailed description before the route itself is described. The book has been written with public transport very much

to the fore and there is therefore no need to be even tempted to drink and drive. In the OT circulation area there are six walks and it is surprising to me that I wasn't really aware of any of them in detail. I'm certainly looking forward to trying them having read the book.

Being a guide for visitors as well as locals there are also interesting articles giving a brief history of the Manchester area, a review of the beer and pub scene in the county and details of public transport in the area, including Metrolink.

Criticisms? One or two but fairly minor. The maps are not the best I've seen but details of the OS maps to be used are given at the beginning of each walk. The choice of pubs must always be subjective, but I don't like the phrase 'CAMRA Listed' as if anything not in the Good Beer Guide is not recommended by the Campaign - in this area there are so many good pubs that there is not room in the national guide for them all. What was pleasing in the choice of pubs, however, was that the writers resisted the temptation to include only archetypal country pubs or historic coaching houses but rather detailed pubs like the Crescent in Salford, the Jolly Angler in Manchester and the Cheadle Hulme. Recommended.

Win a copy of 'Best Pub Walks in and around Manchester'

in our easy to enter competition. Just answer the following questions. First out of the proverbial hat wins the prize :

1. How many of the featured walks are in the OT circulation area
2. Which brewery owns the Cheadle Hulme?

Send your entries by November 30 to: OT Pub Walks Competition, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD. Closing date is 21st November.

Heard at the Bar (when beer was cheaper)

Customer (inspecting his pint) "It looks a bit cloudy."
Landlord "What do you expect for 2/3d - thunder and lightning?"

COPY DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER - 24 NOVEMBER

The Pineapple Inn



45 Market Street,
Marple.
(061) 427 3935

Open All Day for COFFEE, TEAS,
CAKES & PASTRIES
LUNCHES served Mon - Sun 12 -
2.30pm
EVENING MEALS Mon - Fri 6 - 8pm
Breakfast Every Saturday 10 - 11.30am
Evening Paper on sale each evening
from 5.30pm
Football Pinks on Saturdays
Bingo Every Tuesday 2pm - 4pm

Robinsons
Finest
Hand-pulled
Ales
PLUS
HARTLEYS XB,
OLD
STOCKPORT,
FREDERICS

*IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN
FOR THE STATION TO PRESENT*

*The Week Long
Winter Warmer...*



**PORTERS
FESTIVAL**

ONCE AGAIN THE STATION STAFF WILL RALLY ROUND TO
PRESENT A DIVERSE COLLECTION OF RICH EXOTIC BREWS
FROM THE BEST OF THE INDEPENDENT BREWERIES
RARE + NEW ALES WILL FEATURE ALONGSIDE

SOME OLD FAVOURITES

OVER 40 PORTERS

THURSDAY 17 - 23 NOV

OPEN ALL DAY

Home cooked food available

**WARRINGTON STREET
ASHTON-U-LYNE**

In the absence of much pub news and any reasonable excuses I thought I's re-visit a couple of real ale strongholds in Ashton-under-Lyne.

Ashton is spoilt for good beer from a variety of brewers both national and regional, but to add to this the town can boast two of the area's best free houses; the **Witchwood** and the **Station**. Both these pubs will be familiar to many readers of OT but I feel that because of their consistency they sometimes miss out on recognition.

As reported in OT the Witchwood has recently been under new management and has undergone some changes at the hands of new licensee Gerald Madden. There have been alterations to the front bar, giving a less stark appearance, with information about beers above the bar. However, these alterations are merely cosmetic and the layout and atmosphere remain the same. In the back bar (venue bar) more seating has been provided and a rather unusually corrugated iron bar lends the room an "up and at 'em" feel, which is not out of place on busy nights. Also welcome is a noticeable change in the guest beers available. Whilst you correspondent mourned the loss of Holts Bitter from the range, the guest beers - 3 in all, with small breweries well represented, goes a long way to compensate. At the time of my visit the standard range of John Smiths bitter, Marstons Pedigree, Boddies bitter, Courage Directors and Theakston Bitter and XB was supplemented by Titanic Lifeboat, McGuinness Special Reserve and Morland Bitter.

The pricing policy set up by former licensee John Dyson is still in place and despite a recent increase (only small) the beer is very good value for money.

At the **Station**, another long time favourite, the up-coming Porters Festival (now a regular event) should get a large number of devotees (new and old) along to sample brews from near and far (over 40 different).

But this shouldn't overshadow the excellent range of beers the pub boasts all year round. The policy of 5 guest beers alongside the three regulars - Boddies Bitter, Marstons Pedigree and Chesters Mild - is working well, and the condition of all beers is almost invariably excellent. The selection of the guest beers is unusual and imaginative in terms of style of beer and brewery. Small breweries are always well represented, making the Station about the best place to sample new brews in the area. When I visited the guest beers were :- Hull Brewery Ellwoods Bitter; Steam Packet Cream Stout and Ginger Wheat (!); Clarks Burglar Bill and Moorhouses Cauldron Stout. With beers from Freeminer, Coopers, Crouch Vale and Goose Eye in the pipeline the variety is something to behold.

Both pubs provide a wide selection of brews in good condition all year round, and whether you want a night out for beer and music or an afternoon sampling sittingg in the summer sun, you'll have no problems in Ashton.

The Station's Porter Festival - complete with marquee and 40 brews - is from 17th to 23rd November, and open all day.

Finally, just out of the High Peak area, the **Double Cocks**, Exeter, has changed hands - it is now owned by Smiles Brewery (so amend your 1995 GBG's!!) Ok, so the beers will change, Smiles are good.... but what I want to know is what will happen to the excellent food?

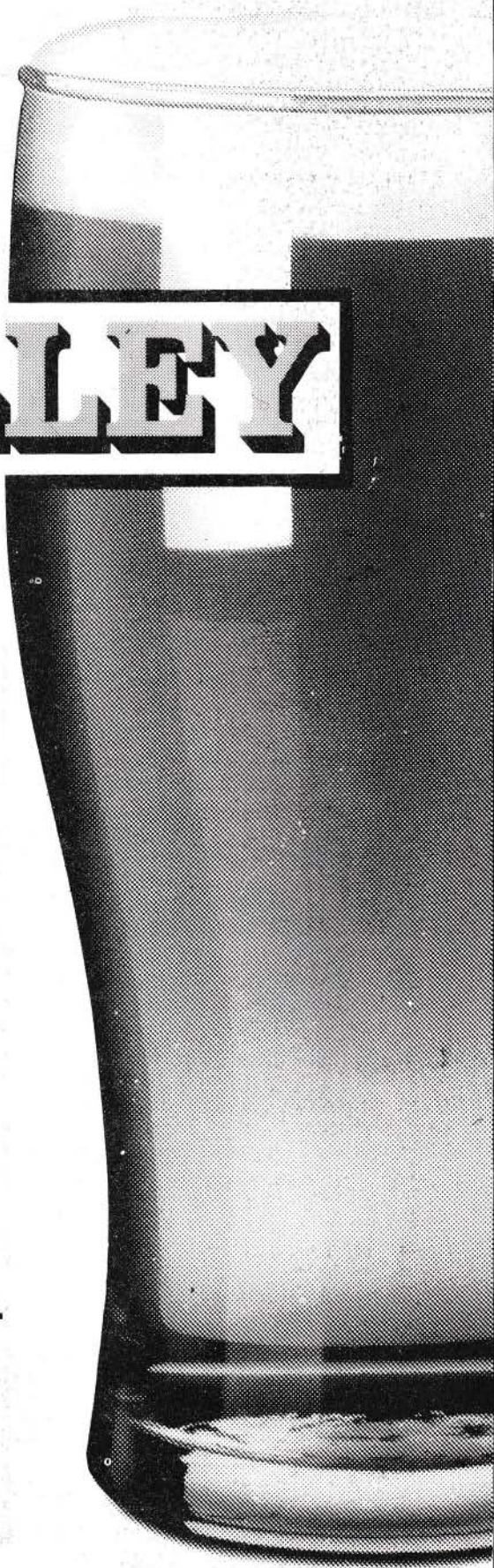
The Best in the North West

SILVER MEDAL WINNER 1994
THE BREWING INDUSTRY INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

LOCALLEY

TETLEY
BITTER

BRITAIN'S BEST
LOVED BITTER



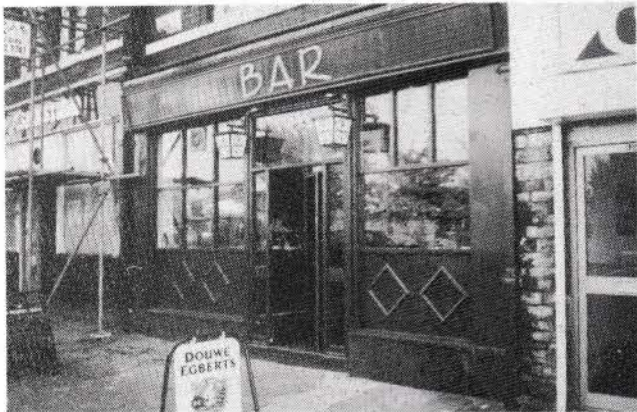
Called to the Bar

Spurred on by the success of their Marble Arch World Beers off-licence, owners Janet Whitehead and Vance de Becheval have now gone the whole hog and opened an on-licensed sister establishment.

The simply named 'Bar' is on Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, just opposite Safeways in premises that were last used as an Italian restaurant but which originally started life as a barber's shop with some original fittings from this now forming the bar back.

The aim has been to re-create the atmosphere of a Belgian beer cafe and on first impressions they seem largely to have succeeded in achieving that unique blend of cafe and pub which is so common on the continent but which when attempted over here too often results in a tacky wine bar, or worse.

No such problems here. There is a semi open-plan multi-level layout which combines simple polished floorboards and an eclectic range of furniture to create a relaxed informal drinking venue. There are two real ales (Courage Directors and Ruddles Bitter) together with a real cider but the main interest here centres on the range of foreign bottled beers.



There are Belgian classics such as Hoegaarden (Wit and Grand Cru), Chimay, Liefmans, Westmalle, Rochefort, Duval and Orvel but one of the biggest successes so far has been the range of German Wheat beers, including amongst others Schneider and Weltenburger, retailing at £2 each. Yet more evidence of what is clearly a growing fashion (how long until the big boys leap on the bandwagon?). There are also some classic UK bottles including the superb Titanic Stout. Lunchtime and afternoon drinkers will also be served in the appropriate branded glasses where these are available although in the evenings these are kept safely out of harms way.



Of course the other important aspect of any continental cafe is the food which Bar serves all day to 11.00pm. The menu is small but beautifully formed - when OT called there were two main dishes, Chicken Adobo and Thai Green Chicken Curry, both at £3.75 (with free coffee included in the price), a variety of sandwiches and an impressive sounding and looking cheese platter. Coffee is also available at all times (the sight of the cups and coffee machine at the back of the bar alongside the beers and glasses really does bring back memories of many a Belgian bar).

Bar is managed by Alan and Pete, both of whom have a catering background, who tell us that so far business has been brisk. It deserves to be. Thoroughly recommended.

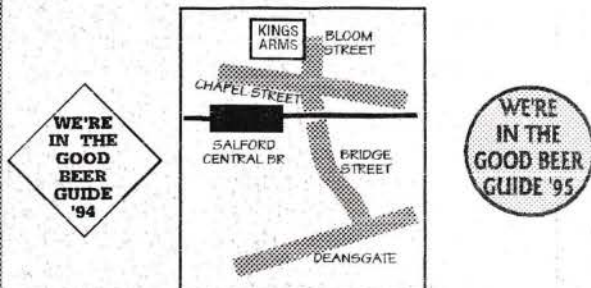
Heard at the Bar

"It was in the cider-drinking season - which usually seems to start the previous year"

- Herefordshire cider-maker Brian Jones, in a talk at Hereford Cider Museum.

THE KINGS ARMS BLOOM STREET, SALFORD

Dave and Sue Price welcome you to enjoy the fine range of beers, ciders and foods in Salford's Premier Ale House



13 HANDPUMPS
HIGHEST QUALITY
TIMOTHY TAYLORS &

CONSTANTLY CHANGING RANGE OF
GUEST BEERS & TRADITIONAL CIDERS

SHADY OAK

REDFORD DRIVE, BRAMHALL 061-439-1070

5 REAL ALES

TETLEY BITTER & DARK MILD
THWAITES, PEDIGREE
+ REGULAR GUEST

"BIG STEAK" MENU SERVED
LUNCHTIME & EVENING

7 DAYS A WEEK

Your hosts Phil & Julie



STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

MANCHESTER MATTERS



by Rhys Jones

A contender for the most tersely named pub in Manchester opened on the last day of September on Wilbraham Road (opposite Safeway) in Chorlton-cum-Hardy. Signed simply "Bar", it is in fact an offshoot of Marble Arch World Beers, so it's no surprise that the main emphasis is European, with Czech Budvar and German Krombacher beers (and, for some reason, San Miguel!) on pressurised draught dispense, along with some decent German and Belgian bottles. However British produce is not neglected - as well as some British bottle-conditioned ales, Ruddles Bitter and Courage Directors are on handpump, to be joined by some more interesting selections from time to time, and since opening a gravity-served cider, initially Westons, has been added to the range. Altogether a classy and innovative venture that deserves to succeed (see also review on page).

Across in Bradford, no such brevity prevails at the former Bradford Labour Club on Grey Mare Lane, which, after a while as Richmonds, now rejoices in the title Little Mary D's Beamish Bar. While the keg stout from Cork is heavily advertised, three handpumped beers - Wilsons Mild and Bitter and Lees Bitter are sold at attractive prices in surroundings which leave you in no doubt of the place's origins as a club, with pool, darts, and big screen dominant, and live entertainment frequently featured. Socialists of a certain age, and indeed anyone with a sense of history, will commend the retention of the brass plate recording the opening of the club's extension by Jennie Lee. Though very different from

Chorlton's Bar in style and surroundings, this too is a very welcome venture, going a small way to redress the wholesale destruction visited on the area's stock of pubs by a combination of social change and official indifference or worse.

It's also pleasing to note the re-opening of two pubs which haven't always enjoyed the most salubrious of reputations. In Wythenshawe (or would the local estate agents prefer me to call it Brooklands?) the Pear Tree on Wendover Road has reopened as the Wendover, with Websters Bitter, Theakstons Bitter and Courage Directors on handpump, while in Longsight the Mad Hatter, on the corner of Stanley Grove and Northmoor Road, is now selling real ale for what must surely be the first time ever - and with Boddingtons Mild and Bitter and John Smiths on handpump, it's an unusual range for what still appears to be a Greenalls pub. Both pubs now seem resolved to provide a safe and pleasant service to their law-abiding locals, and I wish them well.

In Hulme the Unicorn on Shawheath Close now has Tetley Bitter on handpump, and in the City Centre the Burton Arms on Swan Street has re-opened, with Theakstons Mild, Bitter and XB on handpump.

Saddest sight of the month must be the Wrexham in Openshaw - closed, with ground floor windows boarded and many first floor windows broken. I fear this really is the end of the road for a fine old boozier. In Hulme, the Talbot, which had been selling West Coast Bitter, now has no real ale.

Theakstons advertising now permeates the City Centre pubs which Scottish & Newcastle bought from Chef & Brewer - the beer itself, though, is more elusive, frequently proving unavailable even where heavily advertised. For the record, City Centre pubs which have supposedly gained handpumped Theakstons Bitter include the Shakespeare, Sam's Chop House, the Bridge Street Tavern, Rosies Bar (which has dropped John Smiths Bitter) and the Salisbury (which has dropped Bulmers Traditional Cider while, to its shame, continuing with "handpumped" keg Scrumpy Jack). The Scrumpy Jack "squashed hedgehog" award also goes to Bouchelles, mentioned last month, whose cafe bar section has the stuff, along with Morlands Old Speckled Hen on a real handpump, in addition to the beers previously mentioned.

Full marks, though, to the Kings Head, Ardwick, where Scrumpy Jack has vanished from a bar whose handpumped beers are now Websters Bitter, John Smiths Bitter and Courage Directors. Not so far away at Banks's Gorton Arms in Gorton, both mild and bitter have switched from electric (cask-conditioned) dispense to handpump - a move unimaginable for this brewery a few years ago.

Finally to some of the autumn's long-heralded developments in studentland. The Old Steam Brewery at All Saints, Chorlton-on-Medlock has re-opened as the Cafe Bar International, with three nationalities vaguely alluded to on its three floors. Les Parisiennes, the main bar on the ground floor, has Tetley Bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale on handpump; the basement, Das (shouldn't that be Der?) Bierkeller, has keg Lowenbrau in place of Burton Ale, and "role mop herring" on the menu; upstairs, La Dolce Vita seems to be intended principally for eating. The whole place is a sister establishment of O'Shea's Irish Bar in the City Centre - perhaps the designers should have stuck with an Irish theme, for their sympathies with Europe seem little more evident than those of Michael Portillo.

And so to Dirty Nelly's, Boddington Pub Company's instant conversion of Yates Wine Lodge in Fallowfield to a strange hybrid of Irish theme bar and specialist ale house. As this is featured elsewhere in this issue, let me just say that while I applaud what has initially been a highly enterprising guest beer policy - with even the Scottish "antiquarian" brew Fraoch Heather Ale on the "forthcoming" board in mid-October - the prices are another story. £1.80 for (admittedly excellent) Riddleys Witchfinder Porter at 4.3%ABV is quite simply a rip-off. I'd also be happier if we were told the origin of Nelly's Poison, which appears to be a house beer.

SPORTSMANS

62 Market Street (basement)

Manchester M1 1WP

Lees Bitter

Brian and Jill welcome you to our excellent downstairs Oasis in the City Centre

Home Cooked Tavern Fayre

Bar Food Mon - Sat 11.30 - 3pm

Traditional Sunday Lunch Carvery 12-3



Private Room
available with Bar
Outside Catering a
Speciality
(061) 832 6766

Come and Join Us



Sign up, sign up and join one of the world's most successful consumer groups.

In October and November we are holding a number of recruitment nights to boost the Campaign's membership still further - it is now at 45000 and rising. We have been fighting for Britain's beer, pubs and breweries for 24 years, and though CAMRA is booming, new blood is always needed.

Locally in Stockport & South Manchester branch we pride ourselves on being amongst the most active campaigning branches in the country, with a social side to match. If you want to join, or have been thinking about it, then now is the time as anyone joining at one of our special nights gets £2 off the normal rate. (Students get an even better deal and can join for half-price, just £6). For your tenner you can get:

- ★ Discounts on CAMRA products - including future Good Beer Guides.
- ★ What's Brewing - CAMRA's information packed monthly newspaper.
- ★ A free members handbook, plus a local handbook for Stockport & South Manchester members.
- ★ Reduced or free entrance to CAMRA beer festivals, including Stockport of course.
- ★ The chance to get involved in local campaigns to save local pubs.
- ★ A chance to go on brewery trips and other social events.

Just come along to one of our special membership nights:

Monday 7th November - Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport

Monday 14th November - Olde Cock, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury

Monday 21st November - Hinds Head, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel

On these nights, in addition to the super discounts on membership, those joining will get a free pint plus the chance to pick up a brand new 1995 Good Beer Guide for the members' price of £5.75, compared to £9.99 in the shops.

If you can't make any of these special evenings, then just clip out the membership form below. If you want a Good Beer Guide at the same time then the address to send it too is: Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport - together with a cheque for £15.75 (membership £10 plus Guide at £5.75) made payable to CAMRA (Stockport & South Manchester)

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL OFFER (VALID UNTIL 30 NOVEMBER)

to take advantage of the combined membership/GBG 95 offer, tick here
and send with cheque for £15.75 to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel,
Stockport, SK4 5EG (and fill in your details below)

(OT127 - offer)

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: INDIVIDUAL **£10** JOINT MEMBERSHIP £14

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £6

Chris Stone / Sue Tiffensor, 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, where different terms will apply

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £6





The Olde Cock in Didsbury was burgled last month - among the items stolen was the pub's Opening Times holder. We know OT is a much sought-after publication but surely this is taking things just a bit too far!

Also in Didsbury, the Station has reintroduced singalongs, starting on Tuesday 27th September and every fortnight thereafter.

We reported in September that changes were afoot at the Bulls Head, Stockport Market Place. The pub is firmly under the control of Janet Dixon with active hands-on involvement from mum and dad, better known as Ian and Dot Brookes at the Bakers Vaults. A new bar and lighting is being installed and there should be simple food in the form of the ever-popular 'bread and cheese/pate' combination. The customer profile has also changed with the removal of a few lunchtime undesirables and a large number of night time under age drinkers. As a result the pub has swiftly established its former reputation as a pleasant place to drink with many new customers replacing those removed. The upstairs room at the pub has a 1am supper licence and some careful thought is being put in to how this can best be utilised in a trouble free manner.

DEMOLITION CORNER. The Lake Hotel at Belle Vue was demolished in the last week of September. Though it hadn't sold real ale for many years, and indeed had been closed and crumbling for some time, it's still sad to lose a link with the past. Moreover, its loss makes the wide open spaces of this part of town look ever more like a motorway-junction landscape - an awful warning of what may come to pass if the Hyde Road dual-carriageway scheme does eventually go through.

The Wrights Arms, Offerton, is another acquisition by the Magic Pub Company.

The Vine in Cheadle, one of the pubs acquired by Scottish & Newcastle for Chef & Brewer, has added handpumped Theakstons Bitter to its range. As in so many of the recent S&N acquisitions, however, the Theakstons can on occasion be unavailable. There's talk, though, of the pub having a minor refurbishment before long, so perhaps the supply chain will be sorted out at the same time.

Kevin Fallon of the Nag's Head, West Gorton, has moved to the Oddfellows, Openshaw; both pubs are Boddington Pub Company houses.

Holts prices went up a little early this year, in mid-October. With a 2p increase, it should still be a year, duty permitting, before bitter hits the £1 mark in managed houses.

A Fishy Tale

Burtonwood Brewery have just been fined £4,000 for discharging 11,000 gallons of stale ale into a stream, which had foam and froth on its surface. The brewery admitted the offence, and Warrington magistrates were told that no fish were killed, but they were "hung over."

Contrary to expectations, the planning application for the Jabez Clegg 3 was rejected by the city planners last month. The project, which was to involve the conversion of the old Victorian villa on Cromwell Range, Fallowfield, now looks to be on indefinite hold, although noises have been made about an appeal.

As we go to press, it appears that Alan Preston's long running fight with Whitbread over the Hinds Head, is to have a happy ending. After three and a half years of Whitbread attempts to throw Alan out and convert the premises to a managed House - against undertakings the Brewery had made to the licensing bench - it appears that an acceptable lease has finally been produced by the brewery, and Alan is hopeful that contracts will be exchanged within the next three weeks.

Durty Nelly's

In one of the most rapid turn-arounds ever, the Boddington PubCo signed on the dotted line and bought Fallowfield Yates Wine Lodge on Friday 30th September. Two weeks later it opened as "Durty Nelly's" a student Irish theme pub.

The rapid transformation was possible as no structural alterations were involved. The pub therefore retains its old Yates layout of raised seating areas looking down on central bar. The decor, however, is what might be called 'designer basic' with distressed walls, bare boards (plus sawdust) and plenty of chalk signs, the latter emphasising the 'Irish' connection.

Keg stouts and Irish ales feature on the bar along with

quite a good range of real ales - Boddies Bitter, a house beer Nelly's Poison (4.2%ABV, from Coach House), a Whitbread guest (Castle Eden on opening night) plus two independent guests (Oak Wobbly Bob and Riddleys Witchfinder Porter again on opening night). There will be live entertainment and cheap filling food. There's even a genuine Irish licensee, Peter Deans.

Yates had certainly neglected their Fallowfield outlet and PubCo clearly think they can make a go of this, the first of what promises to be a string of studentland 'Irish Bars'. With what we now understand may be a combined Firkin/Scruffy Murphys operation at the Queen of Hearts over the road, they might well be right. And that name? Pubco insist it's not as fake as it sounds and comes from a "real" Irish pub just outside Shannon. (*True - but the original is horribly kitsch - designed to appeal to 'Oirish' Americans and about as authentic as the plastic leprechaun in the garden! - Production o'Editor*)

Bass are also leaping on to the bandwagon with the development of 'Barney McGrews' in the Precinct Centre opposite the RNCM. This could well be open by the time you read this and a full review will follow but just how authentic will be an 'Irish Bar' named after the Trumpton firemen (you know, Pugh, Pugh, Barney McGrew...) remains to be seen.

