

Pub of the Year

It is always a pity when there have to be losers. And this is even more true when the losers are worthy contenders for the accolade of Pub of the Year. But there can be only one winner of this prestigious title, and Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA are proud to award their Pub of the Year for 1994 to the Queen's Head in Stockport.

It is one of the smallest pubs in the town, and one of only two Samuel Smith's houses in the locality. Well-kept Museum Ale and Old Brewery Bitter can be found on the bar, both of which are competitively priced; the OBB has gone up just 2p in five years, and remains the best value pint in Stockport, while the Museum has actually fallen in price. And while Samuel Smith's must be congratulated on their low prices, it is for the actual fabric of the pub that they deserve the most praise. The Good Beer Guide 1992 described the Queen's Head as "a breath-taking rhapsody in brown." Dark polished wood and gleaming brass can be found in abundance, with deep red upholstery in the rear room as the perfect complement.

It is difficult to believe, then, that the pub was completely renovated just five years ago. Careful collaboration between CAMRA, the brewery and conservationists resulted in the Queen's Head being restored to its former glory, with all the original features back in place. The following year it scooped first place in CAMRA's national Pub Design awards.

But a good pub needs more than all this. The hard work and commitment of the landlord and landlady, David and Paula Harris, is what makes a pub like the Queen's Head something special. Their insistence on getting it right, and making the customer feel wanted and welcome, leaves a lasting impression on the casual visitor. In addition their "hands on" approach is to be applauded. You will always find one or other of them (or both of course) on hand behind the bar.

In short, the Queen's Head is a licensed gem in Stockport, and is "not to be missed when in the area". Further to that, a Pub of the Year should be worth crossing the country for, and this is certainly no exception. Proof positive, then, that good things come in small packages. The presentation for this richly deserved award will take place on Saturday evening, March 11th, when all are welcome for what promises to be a rather special night.

STOP PRESS Just as we went to press, we heard that the City Council had given permission for the Tesco development to go ahead, threatening the Sportsman's Pub. More news next month.

In FEBRUARY'S OPENING TIMES

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New Brewery for Stockport?



The next two months could see the first new brewery to open in Stockport since the demise of Pollards over 10 years ago. The unlikely site for this new venture is the cellars of Peaches night-club, which occupies the imposing redbrick premises of the old Reform Club on the corner of Hillgate, opposite the Gladstone.

"Richard Cobdens Brewery" is the brainchild of Peaches owner John Perkins, who has been active on the Stockport pub and club scene for over 25 years - at one time he was the licensee of the ill-fated Ups N' Downs when it was the 'top' and 'bottom' Wellington.

At present just one beer, Richard Cobdens Bitter, is being produced under licence by Moorhouses. This is a light and refreshing bitter at 3.8% ABV. At present there is a slight sweetness in the taste although John told Opening Times that the next brew will be fermented out a little longer to make for a drier beer. Some equipment has already been delivered and John expects to be brewing in two months or so. Eventually four beers will be produced with the bitter being joined by a dark mild, a premium bitter and a porter. As a newcomer to the trade John has also been surprised at the way fellow brewers have been eager to offer assistance (apart that is from a certain brewery not a million mile away!).

Richard Cobdens Bitter is currently on sale on a regular basis at Peaches and the Cheadle Sports & Social Club on Councillor Lane, where it retails at a reasonable 90p a pint. The Station at Ashton has also taken the beer on a guest basis.

This is obviously an exciting development and we will bring you more news as the project develops.

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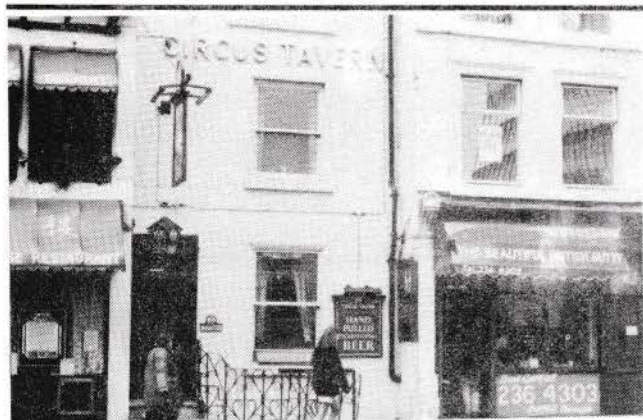
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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PUB of the Month

FEBRUARY

February's Pub of the Month is the Circus Tavern on Portland Street in the middle of Manchester. This is possibly the most long overdue award to be given by CAMRA, since Terry and Kath have not received any official recognition since taking over at the Circus some 24 years ago (around the time the then 'Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale' was born).

The Circus is a tiny pub that, quite simply, has defied progress. There is no draught cider, no draught lager and no draught stout available on the bar. Indeed there is only room on the bar for two handpumps, which both dispense some of the best Tetley Bitter this side of the Pennines. Further, there is a refreshing lack of any juke-box, pool table or fruit machine. The only sound in this Circus is the ebb and flow of laughter and conversation, and the gentle chink of glasses.

Even if they wanted a pool table it wouldn't fit in, because the pub is VERY small - the smallest in the whole of Manchester. Simple, original fittings can be found within, since the pub has not changed noticeably in over twenty years. And let's hope this remains the case for the next 20; pubs like the Circus are hard to come by, and are sadly becoming rarer amid all the takeovers, closures and refurbishments, which can alter a pub beyond recognition.

But not everything about the Circus is small; the welcome afforded is large and warm. And while it does no food of its own, customers are allowed to bring in their own sandwiches, and to enjoy this unique pub and its atmosphere. So join us in a night of celebration as we award Terry and Kath with the Pub of the Month for February; the presentation takes place on Tuesday 21st February at around 9pm, but get there early if you want a seat. It promises to be a great night, and aren't they all in the Circus?

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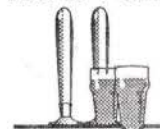
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW...

The Government's announcement about Sunday opening is indeed welcome news. Slowly but surely England and Wales are adopting the civilised drinking regime common, not only in continental Europe but also north of the border in Scotland. Those who would oppose this and further reform often conveniently forget that part of the UK has been enjoying liberalised licensing hours for some years now. I visited Glasgow recently. The pubs there stay open until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, they also open throughout Sunday afternoon. What is the result? Drunkenness on the streets? A tidal wave of alcohol related crime? Hardly, what I experienced was a much more laid-back approach to drinking, no mad rush to drink up at 11, no crowds spilling onto the streets en masse when the pubs shut. So, the next time you get a lecture on the evils of liberalised hours, just ask this question -if the Scots can handle it why shouldn't we?

It is also worth stating that it will of course be open to pubs to decide whether or not to take advantage of any liberalisation of opening hours. Some will choose not to, much the same as they don't open all day during the week now. But for some, it could be a lifeline and that's got to be a good thing.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

How pleasing it is to report that not only has the Pineapple in Marple removed the fake handpump for Scrumpy Jack but we also learn that Robinsons views coincide with CAMRA's on this particular issue. They, too, feel that these fake handpumps could be interpreted by pub-goers as dispensing the real thing, when of course Scrumpy Jack is a keg product. They have stipulated that any installations in their pubs must use a truncated 'handpump' which fronts an obvious keg switch. I'll certainly raise my glass to that.... but if Robbies can do it, what excuse do any other pubs have for continuing the deception? Answers on a postcard please.

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STAGGER

with Mark MacConachie

We didn't get off to a good start on our stagger round the City centre. The weather was filthy that evening of Friday November 18th; strong wind and driving rain. Never mind, into our first pub - the Bulls Head, London Road.

This is a rather pleasant pub which is relatively small and wedge-shaped. Some nice features included the leaded windows, pictures of old Manchester and even a pictorial description of bull breeds. This has been a Burtonwood outlet for some years (formerly Wilsons), sadly it only sells bitter - don't be fooled by the handpump for mild, it's keg! Most of us thought the beer average. This was our first sighting of Christmas decorations! And may I wish the barmaid (of undoubted long service) a happy retirement, as she seemed to be retiring that night.

It was decided (time and drinking capacity being taken into consideration) to omit Monroe's, Waldorf and the pubs in the 'pink quarter' at this stage. So out into the rain we went along to **O'Shea's**. This is a free house that is part of the Dominion Hotel, sited on the corner of Whitworth and Princess Streets. This was the original O'Shea's in the city, but I firmly believe the newer one on Chester Street to be superior. Styled on "Irish Pubs", the theme is echoed in the beer range and decor. Food is available and live music is much to the fore; in fact, a band was setting-up upon our entry. Another one-beer pub, this time Tetley Bitter (a bit steep at £1.40). We scored it slightly above average.

A short distance away on Granby Row was our next port of call, the BodPubCo's **Old Garratt**. This is one of their extended range outlets, selling Boddies, Flowers Original, Pedigree and Pompey Royal amongst others on our visit. The Boddies proved average, the Pompey Royal more so and the Pedigree slightly below par. The Garratt has been the subject of frequent re-fits and refurbishments; the current offering is pleasing to the eye. Done in "beerhouse" style - bare boards, blackboards, various junk, period pictures, numerous busts and stone jars above the bar. Nice clock set in a neo-Gothic (?) pediment too.

Next, across to Sackville Street and the **Swinging Sporan**. This is an S&N lease from UMIST, forming the ground floor corner of a drab sixties office building. Regular OT readers will be aware that licensee Cliff Thornton is in the middle of an argument between the two parties aforementioned. Consequently he is paying a ludicrously high rent which is reflected in the bar prices. **Do not** be put off, however, as the Theakston beers served are in excellent condition. Best Bitter was judged good; XB was better still (vying

for best of the evening), whilst Old Peculier wasn't tried. (N.B. well done to Cliff for having keg cider on a KEG font).

Up to Portland Street next, and Holt's **Old Monkey**. Whether this is meant to be a flagship for Holts, I'm unsure, but it is certainly unique in their estate. Opened just over a year ago it occupies both ground and first floors of this corner building. Each floor has its own bar. Its size and popularity mean that it is usually packed. Clientele range from office workers, to hardened toppers - a veritable melting-pot, all happily co-existing.

Holts Mild and Bitter are available (at usual managed house prices). Mild was adjudged better than average, bitter slightly better.

Two doors down we find the classic **Circus Tavern**. A Tetley House now designated a "Heritage Pub", and deservedly so, may I say. The Circus must surely be Manchester's smallest pub. It only occupies two small rooms and the corridor of a tiny terraced cottage. The whole place exudes character and warmth and this is helped along by licensee Terry Corless and his wife. The very small bar only dispenses one draught beer - Tetley bitter. This was some of the best beer we were to judge that night.

A further two doors down is the **Grey Horse**. This small Hydes pub is about the same size as the Circus but is of different internal layout. Here it is just one long room with a side bar. Enough comment has passed in these pages of late about the new decoration for me not to mention it. I doubt whether this influenced beer scores on the two beers on sale. Hydes Mild was thought to be poor; the bitter, meanwhile, could only muster average.

The remainder of the evening was spent in pubs to the east of the City Centre, the first of which was the **Castle** on Oldham Street. Four beers are on year-round sale in this Robinsons house - Hatters Mild, Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter and Old Tom. Only the first two were sampled; the Hatters was thought average, but the Old Stockport received marks that placed it as the second best beer of the night. Even without these scores the Castle must easily be the best pub on Oldham Street. The original tiled front of the building welcomes you into the bar, with two further rooms off a corridor.

A short walk through Stevenson Square brought us to our penultimate pub, Whitbread's **Crown & Anchor** on Hilton Street. This is now dubbed a "Beer Engine" - a multi-beer ale house. In truth this has been the case at this pub for many years; Dave Glass (now of the Queens in Cheetham) starting off the pub on its current trend some years ago. The beer range varies but there are always six or so on sale at any time. We sampled Fuggles Chocolate Mild which scored very highly and Taylors Landlord whose scores varied wildly from poor to superb; a comment made was that it was "too cold".

The last pub, the **Jolly Angler** on Ducie Street, was reached after a stiff five-minute walk. A Hydes outlet, it sells Light and Bitter. The Light scored highly, but the Bitter was judged outstanding - beer of the stagger! What more need be said of this superb pub? It's definitely not the building - it's fairly ordinary and uninspiring. It must be the friendly Irish humour and character that licensees Mick and Sheila stamp upon this landmark boozier.

Well, I enjoyed this crawl and I hope that I have conveyed some of the enthusiasm to you, some of the enthusiasm to you. As ever, the opinions expressed here are the author's and only cover a "snapshot" of the pubs mentioned. Go on, visit these pubs and tell us what you think.

I Don't Believe It! The Victor Meldrew Corner

For years brewers Courage, or rather their John Smiths subsidiary, were synonymous with keg beer. Having phased out real ale in 1976, Smiths stuck resolutely to keg when brewers the length of the country were reintroducing cask. No demand, we were told.

John Smiths have of course been back in the real ale fold for some years now but given their past history a recent comment by Courage's marketing controller seemed ironic indeed. "We would see keg as probably being completely withdrawn in time...." Twenty years ago they were saying the same thing about real ale!



Never on a Sunday?

No sooner had Home Office Minister Michael Forsyth given a CAMRA delegation the impression that the Government was hesitating on the issue of Sunday afternoon pub opening than Premier John Major announces "absurd" licensing restrictions will be scrapped.

Not only that, but the change could come sooner than expected. Many in the licensed trade had thought that we would see pubs opening on Sunday afternoons by Christmas but following the P.M.'s announcement, the change could be in place by the Spring.

Reaction to the proposal has been mixed. Many trade bodies and brewers have welcomed the announcement. CAMRA's Campaigns Manager Stephen Cox commented "This is very welcome and long overdue. There has never been any moral justification for stopping people having a quiet drink on Sunday afternoons, if that is what they want to do. There will be substantial trade on Sunday, for those pubs that choose to open. The extra hour, granted in 1988 has been very popular among customers and the trade."

Naturally not all pubs will choose to open all day on Sunday - those with a food operation or in tourist areas will undoubtedly benefit. Town locals on the other hand will probably choose to close for a period. As with weekday opening, the issue is one of flexibility rather than compulsion.

Opposition has come, as ever, from NAHLM the pub managers' union, who have in fact opposed every hours reform, and the temperance lobby who, as usual, predict hellfire, damnation and drunken rioting in the streets. The Home Office, meanwhile, are planning to set out their proposals in a Bill "as soon as possible". There are no plans, however, to extend the reform to grant extensions to midnight on Friday and Saturday nights as there has apparently been no public demand for such a move.

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Over the Christmas period, Merseyside police issued a warning to the public against drinking and walking, and that's not a misprint. If you're going to the pub on foot, they told us, make sure you don't overindulge. Apparently a third of all adult pedestrians killed in road accidents are over the legal limit for driving. But that's hardly surprising, considering that it represents a pretty small amount of alcohol. What proportion of the total number of pedestrians are over that limit?

It's astonishing to be addressed in such a patronising manner when you think you're doing your bit as a responsible citizen by leaving the car at home and walking to the pub. What will we see next? Breath tests for pedestrians? People arrested for being drunk in charge of a pair of shoes? I can't believe the police don't have better things to do with their time.

We're now seeing guest beers appear in large numbers in big brewery pubs where you would never have believed them possible five or six years ago. But why is it that, so often, "guest beer" seems to be taken as meaning "strong bitter", and nothing else? I was recently in the Old Mill at Cheadle Hulme where, in a range of six beers, there were no dark beers at all, and apart from the standard Tetleys, nothing weaker than 4.5% ABV.

While the likes of Old Speckled Hen, Royal Oak and Pendle Witch are all fine brews, such a range doesn't begin to do justice to the vast spectrum of beer styles now available. Why no stouts and porters, which have made a great comeback in recent years? Why no old ales, or milds? And why is it so rare to see an ordinary bitter of 4% or less as a guest beer? Also, quite apart from the issue of choice, is the lack of a normal-strength alternative a responsible idea in pubs where many customers arrive by car?

So-called hospitality received over the festive season in the course of family duties has reinforced my belief that canned "widget" beers have a taste and texture hard to distinguish from stale dishwasher. I'm baffled by the number of supposedly discerning people I meet who express the belief that this stuff represents a major advance in packaged beer technology. Have they been conned by the advertising? Do they judge a beer by its look alone? Far from being an improvement over what went before, "widgets" are actually markedly worse - in terms of both flavour and mouthfeel - than the better quality conventional bottled and canned beers.

Drinkers everywhere will welcome the government's decision to stop funding the Health Education Authority. Rather than concentrating on genuine health issues this self-important body insisted on banging on in a nannyish way about the importance of drinkers sticking to ludicrous "maximum" safe limits of 21 units a week for men and 14 for women, even when it became clear that these had been scientifically discredited. The HEA was a misuse of taxpayers' money and won't be missed.

Marble Arch World Beers

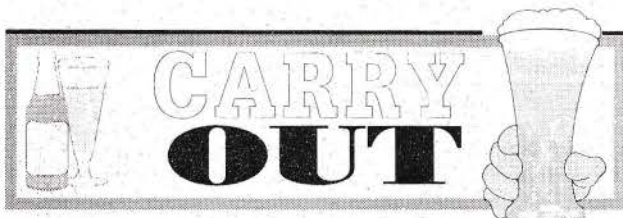
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CARRY OUT



A vegetarian delicatessen is not perhaps the first place that springs to mind when you want to buy something to drink at home. However, ignore Banarberries at your peril for hidden at the back of the shop is a small but perfectly formed range of alcoholic goodies to tickle the palates of veggies and carnivores alike.

The shop itself has been open for 17 months now and is the brainchild of owners Kath Flewitt and Jeremy Frost, an enthusiastic couple who met at university seven years ago and decided to channel their interest in vegetarian cookery into the work place. Some convenience foods are stocked but the focus is mainly on raw ingredients, all vegetarian but appealing to all those with an interest in cookery. There are, for example, 45 varieties of cheese, including some unusual farmhouse cheeses, but all veggie. Indeed, Banarberries is the first shop of its kind to gain the Vegetarian Societies official sign of approval, the 'V' symbol.

But what about the booze, you ask. The selection is small but well chosen. Wine drinkers are catered for by organic wines and, more interestingly, a range of country wines including the likes of plum brandy and damson gin. For the beer drinker you will find the unusual Flag Porter (whose yeast strain was cultured from a sample found in a shipwreck), and Caledonian Brewery's Golden Promise, a strong flavoursome pale ale. Overseas ales include the not-



uncommon Jenlain from France and the rarer Pinkus-Muller wheat beer from Germany, a superb example of the style with a spicy, refreshing palate. The stars of the range, though, have to be the large bottles of Dunkertons Cider and Perry. Classic products from a relative newcomer to the cidermaking scene, these are favourites at Stockport Beer Festival, and justifiably so. The normal range stocked is the dry and sweet ciders plus the perry, although the more elegant Court Royal single apple cider has been spotted in the past.

Not the biggest range, perhaps, but well thought out and presented with enthusiasm. Well worth a visit. Banarberries is on Little Underbank in Stockport, just opposite the Queens Head, our pub of the year (Sam Smiths beers, incidentally, are also suitable for veggies). If you want to phone to see what's in stock then they can be contacted on (061) 474 0511.

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Beer Festival

Planning is now well advanced for the Ninth Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, to be held at the Town Hall ballroom on 1st-3rd June.

Once again the festival is being supported by the Stockport Express Advertiser, to whom grateful thanks. There will be one or two changes that we will be announcing including themed food and campaigning on beer duty levels. Also expect major changes on the beer front - the festival bar managers tell us that about 26 of last years beers will be dropped to be replaced by brews new to the festival. Only one has so far been confirmed - the powerful Lees Vintage Harvest Ale. This is currently the strongest beer produced in Greater Manchester and is normally only available in bottle, so this will be a real exclusive. At a minimum of 11.5%ABV this will only be sold in halves and nips.

Thanks are also due to Ian Brookes of the Bakers Vaults who has kindly agreed to be our licensee this year. More next month.

Tom Thumb's

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STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From : M Kelly, Tut'n'Shiv at Chapel House
 In response to Curmudgeon Jan'95 issue, we at the Chapel House Tut'n'Shiv serve a variety of baked potatoes (different fillings) and sandwiches off our main menu which is available 11.30-2.30pm Mon - Sat. From 2.30pm until 8.00pm we serve substantial basket meals or various stews and good old fashioned home made broths together with crusty bread.

During summer or warmer months we replace the broth and stews with sandwiches.

Yours unnoticed again

From : Richard Hough

Does anyone know the origin of the scenes depicted on some handpumps? Two that spring to mind are a hunting scene and a Willow Pattern style picture in blue and white. I just wondered, as they are frequently seen on bar counters and no-one I've asked seems to know.

From : Peter Barnes

Why is CAMRA campaigning against supermarkets? (Shopping Folly, OT, December). I agree with you that the Sportsman, Market Street is well run, well used, well liked and is important as one of only three outlets for Lees beer in the city centre.

However the fabric of the pub has no special qualities, there are no historical connections and there is no reason why a replacement outlet, as part of the new development, would not be at least equally as good as the present Sportsman. I can understand licensee, Brian McCausland making common cause with the local traders and campaigning against the whole development but CAMRA should go for the more appropriate and achievable objective of accepting the Supermarket proposal but insisting on a replacement pub for Lees in that area, fronting Market Street.



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BODDINGTONS, FLOWERS, MARSTONS
 PEDIGREE, CASTLE EDEN PLUS
6 GUEST BEERS, changing continuously

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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

From : Cathy & Martin Kelly, Chapel House Tut'n'Shiv
 In response to "Stagger" concerning the younger element in our establishment. We have conducted our own survey and students from Manchester University used us as a study point, and we both found the cross-section of ages immense. Friday night is our busiest night of the week with ages ranging from 18-70 years plus.

Throughout the week our youngest ages seem to be mid-twenties, as you have already stated in your disclaimer "it is only one night of the week".

Don't forget the 18-20 year olds are the new generation of drinkers, therefore this age group need educating on the goodness of Real Ale. We find that they are increasingly trying the cask ales and "going off" the "Buds and Diamond Whites". Maybe we should leave the drinking of real ale to old fogeys!!

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

FEBRUARY '90

The Boddington Pub. Co. were all set to offer their tenants and Managers a choice of guest beers, in addition to the Boddington/Higson/Oldham products which were available. By taking this action, they appeared to be stealing a march on their competitors, as the National brewers were not expected to release their tenants from the tie until 1st May. Bass tenants were to have complete freedom to pick whatever guest they wanted, but they had been "advised" to stick with the brewery list. Tetley were known to be planning guest beers, but they had indicated they would not be adopting the Bass approach.

The closure of Higson's brewery in Liverpool was announced by Whitbread together with the news that production was to be transferred to Sheffield. Rumours of a new cask bitter were confirmed by another announcement from Whitbread - a reformulation of Bentley's Yorkshire Bitter was to be brewed at Sheffield - test marketing showed that it had been favourably received.

A review of flexible licensing hours, which had been introduced a year earlier, had been the subject of a nationwide CAMRA survey among licensees, whose reactions were generally favourable. Over 80% had tried some form of changed or extended hours, and only 7% had judged the experience a failure and had reverted to their old hours. There was specific criticism, however, of the number of Central Manchester pubs closing promptly at 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon; another disappointing aspect was how few pubs were displaying their new hours.

The Red Lion in Cheadle had been closed, was surrounded by scaffolding, and had been completely gutted by Playmaster Leisure. There were also foundations for what looked like an extension. Further details were promised in due course.

Full marks to Robinsons for making an excellent job of the alterations at the Arden Arms, Millgate. The landlord said he was aiming to create a town centre showpiece for Robinsons.

ASHTON'S
 PREMIER
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 HOUSE

THE
STATION

SAT 11.30 - 3.00
 7.00 - 11.00
 SUNDAY
 USUAL TIMES

- REAL ALES BODDIES, PEDIGREE, CHESTERS MILD
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- REAL ATMOSPHERE IN THE PUB, CONSERVATORY or GARDEN

IN SHORT - A REAL PUB

WARRINGTON ST. ASHTON-U-LYNE NEXT TO BYPASS

There are various bits from around the Tameside and Stockport areas of High Peak, supplemented by info from the Derbyshire bit of the branch from Frank so I'll start in Marple at the Pineapple without further ado. Recently controversy descended in the form of Scrumpy Jack keg cider and more particularly the method of dispense! A prominent FAKE handpump was spied alongside the genuine article that serve the regular Robinsons TRADITIONAL beers. This, as has been reported in these pages on numerous occasions, is frowned on by CAMRA as it plainly attempts to deceive the public into thinking that a traditional cider is available. Well the up-shot of this is that the offending "handpump" has been emasculated and is now little more than your average "Bobbitt". Who says it's quiet in Marple.

Up on the Ridge, the Romper is regularly selling Coach House beers and also has a "house beer" available. This, unsurprisingly, is rumoured to be from this very brewery and can be found alongside Innkeepers Special Reserve.

In near-by Romiley the Hare & Hounds on Hatherlow is undergoing a refurbishment and, at the time of visit, the large lounge (to the left as you approach the bar) was screened off whilst work was under way. This large Boddies pub is the oldest in Romiley and it must be hoped that any work does not alter the character of what is a very popular watering hole. There is one improvement already visible, the god-awful eagle has disappeared from the front (never to return?)

Over in Hollingworth, the Gun Inn is still closed for a refit but recent information would suggest that it won't be long before it re-opens in all its Henry's Table glory.

In Ashton a new brew is available at the Station. Richard Cobden bitter has been on sale for a number of weeks. It is being brewed by Moorhouses at the moment on behalf of a brewery soon to open in the old Reform Club off Wellington Road in Stockport. I understand that eventually four beers will be available to challenge its big neighbour.

In Hyde at the Cheshire Cheese the only real ale available is Boddingtons Mild. The bitter is now served through a monstrous font and is brewery-conditioned keg crap....for all of you who like to go to the pub for a pint of the sort of rubbish any self-respecting drinker would only drink in the privacy of his own home. Has the world gone mad? Life reflecting art at its most ridiculous.

Whitehough's loss is Glossop's gain as Peter Roberts took over the Prince of Wales, Milltown, Glossop in mid-January after John Bradley's move to pastures new in Lancashire. Peter, who re-established the Oddfellows at Whitehough into a recent Good Beer Guide regular entrant has more than proved himself and moves as a manager to the busier Glossop pub which is also in the 1995 guide. Both these Marstons houses have the Head Brewer's Choice available.

The Crown in Glossop have been taking Museum Ale during the winter months again alongside its Old Brewery Bitter.

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**

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Cheapest Beer In Didsbury

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SKY SPORTS ON SATELLITE**

CHILDRENS PARTIES CATERED FOR

YOUR HOSTS

Steve & Dorothy

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport & South Manchester, followed by High Peak. Needless to say members of both branches are welcome at each other's events.

Diary	February 95	February 95
	<p>Thursday 9 - Monthly branch meeting in the upstairs room, Friendship, Hyde Road, Gorton. 1996 Good Beer Guide selection so please try to attend. Starts 8.00pm.</p> <p>Friday 10 - New members social - trip to Porters Brewery at Haslingden. Minibus leaves the Crown, Heaton Lane at 6.30. Phone Chris and Sue on 486 9256 to book a seat.</p> <p>Monday 13 - Social, Firtree, North Reddish. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Friday 17 - Edgeley/Shaw Heath Stagger. Start 7.00pm Royal Oak, Castle Street. Meet 8.30 Sir Robert Peel, also Castle Street.</p> <p>Saturday 18 - Llandudno Beer Festival by train. Depart Manchester Piccadilly 10.17.</p> <p>Monday 20 - Social, Durty Nellies, Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Tuesday 21 - Pub of the Month, Circus Tavern, Portland Street, Manchester (see article on page 3.)</p>	<p>Monday 27 - Social, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle Hulme (where else!?). Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Monday March 6 - Social, Rothwells, Spring Gardens, Manchester. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p><i>High Peak Branch cover Romiley, Marple, Bredbury, Woodley and all points north. They have notified OT of the following events:</i></p> <p>Monday 13 - Monthly branch meeting at the Duke of York, Romiley. Aim to get there by 8.30.</p> <p>Saturday 18 - Denton pub crawl. Meet Big Chapel House 8.00-8.30pm.</p> <p>Saturday 25 - Shude Hill crawl. Marble Arch 8.00pm, Beer House 8.30, Hare & Hounds 9.00.</p> <p>Sunday 26 - Woods walk - on Kinder Scout. Meet Grouse at Chunal 9.45am.</p> <p>Saturday 4 March - Sheffield by rail taking in a visit to Kelham Island Brewery. Phone Frank Wood on 0457 865426 for details.</p>

FORTHCOMING BEER FESTIVALS

Feb 16-18 Llandudno, Aberconwy Centre, Up to 50 beers inc N.Wales brews

March 3 - 5 Wigan, Mill at the Pier, 35 Real Ales + ciders

(non CAMRA Festivals)

Feb 15 - March 1, City Arms, Kennedy Street,, Manchester City Centre

March 8 to 12, CIDER FESTIVAL 20+ traditional Ciders & Perries Beer House, City Centre



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SAT LUNCH: MORRIS DANCING
SAT EVE: GLOCHLAN

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CAMRA PRODUCT STALL
PLUS A CHARITY STALL



RHYTHM and BOOZE

by Richard Hough

The Tut'n'Shiv, Heaton Chapel has been on the receiving end of some harsh criticism in these pages before now. But the fact remains that it sells some of the best beer in the vicinity, and has live music regularly. As such a R'n'B article must be inevitable, and when I heard that two decent local bands were on I made sure I got there early.

The old Chapel House underwent a major refurbishment several months ago and emerged as the now infamous Tut'n'Shiv, complete with old doors on the ceiling and wonky blackboards. Although it has been widely slated for the interior decor, it retains far more character than many bland refurbishments that can be seen locally. A Pub Vandalism award to the pub was taken in good heart, and the Tut remains as popular as ever.

A range of cask ales greets the customers as they walk through the door, and while it is a predominantly Whitbread range, they do offer more than most. Taylors Landlord was the first choice, and very good it was too. The four handpumps near the bar were not operational, but all the beers displayed were available to the rear.

It is a rare (and pleasant) sight to see a pub so full of people so early in the evening. And it looked fair to get fuller, which leads neatly into the next pint. Fullers London Pride, advertised as being 'now on', gained favourable reports from all quarters. Unfortunately a five-second-per-song soundcheck detracts from the atmosphere, but we got the impression we were going to get something good.

Without warning, Hangnail appeared suddenly from nowhere, and kicked off with a funky punky version of Blur's "Boys and Girls"; the best version I'll hear for a while I shouldn't wonder. This was In Yer Face rock like rock was designed to

be. Hangnail are a local 5-piece who play for pleasure, with a good mix of cover versions and self-penned material. Mention should be made that Mikey the lead guitarist was playing with a dislocated shoulder and considering this, it was a great performance, with just the occasional 'odd' bit.

Morlands Old Speckled Hen was neither desperately bad nor desperately good, which tends to be par for the course for this now widely available beer. Much more conspicuous was the lead vocalist who (apart from the Nazi Punks *!*! off T-shirt) could have been a clone for Johnny Rotten. A pint of Chesters Mild was fairly average, but it is still better now it is contract-brewed by Everards.

Feedback was both used and abused, and by now Hangnail had submerged into hard rock with squealing guitars and noisy drums, but were nonetheless holding the crowd's attention. It was a bit quieter although no less subdued by the pool table. The last two songs deserve special mention: "Night Boat to Cairo" lacked the spongy ska of the Madness original, but was even so a desperately good rendition; and they ended with a grunge version of Cameo's "Word Up". 'Hangnail are probably the best band on this side of the planet' said Tim.

My Cat Dances. Local lads with a penchant for delivering decent guitar-based melodic tunes. This is what flop-fringed jingle-jangle pop has become, and it's not at all unpleasant. Having said that it still contained the rough edge of a live performance. They did 'Working Class Hero' (a seriously good cover) and I got a pint of Christmas Pudding. £1.40 for a 5.5% Whitbread beer was reasonable enough and the beer itself was OK, although I've had better Pudding elsewhere. It didn't quite tantalise the taste buds as it should have done.

From somewhere the band developed some squealing energy and passion. It sounded vaguely familiar yet retained its originality. They eased from lively rock to simple melodic pop with effortless ease. There was never a dull moment in this night of liquid entertainment. The Jelly Bean Machine was pretty good too. The names to watch for in the future could be Hangnail and My Cat Dances. And get to the Tut'n'Shiv on Tuesdays for great local indie-type music. My cat will dance yet!

BEER FESTIVALS

AT THE JABEZ CLEGG

around 20 beers available including beers from Eldridge Pope, Coach House, Exmoor, Hydes, Holts, Lees, Moorhouses...

FEBRUARY 20 - 23

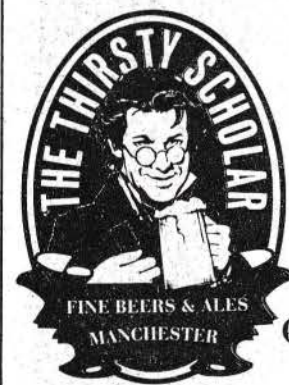


Food Available

AT THE THIRSTY SCHOLAR

around 10 beers available including Lees, Oak, Hydes, Holts, Archers and Ringwood
FEBRUARY 27 -
MARCH 2

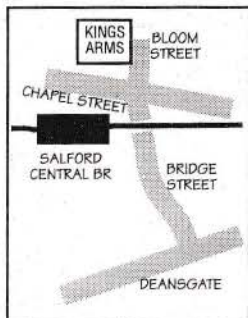
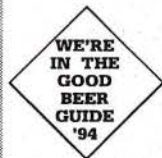
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MANCHESTER MATTERS



by Rhys Jones

Only a short report this month. As usual, the rush to open or re-open before Christmas has resulted in a lull after the festive season, and while a few long-heralded projects (the Jabberwocky, and the Harrison & Killey building) are still unfinished business, in general the city's beer scene has been rather quiet.

The Midland at Belle Vue no longer sells real ale. While any loss is regrettable, real ale never really established a strong following here - if I was asked to nominate a pint to convert a keg or lager drinker to proper beer, Worthington Best Bitter would not be the first that came to mind.

In Gorton, the Angel has replaced handpumped Stones Bitter with Tetleys - not only is the beer considerably better, it's a few pence cheaper too. Nearby at the Vale Cottage, Wilsons Bitter is now available on handpump, replacing the keg version previously sold.

In Hulme, the real ale at the Unicorn is now handpumped Holts Bitter rather than Tetleys - all the more reason to visit this perfectly decent little pub, which you will find tucked away near Marston's Mancunian. In Longsight the Mad Hatter has been renamed the Huntingdon - apparently it did adopt this name immediately after re-opening, but it's only recently that it has been prominently displayed.

In the City Centre, the Victoria on Hardman Street is now known as the Rumberbar (are pub names now allocated by the concerns that devise international brand names so as to give offence in no known language?) Handpumps have been installed but at the time of visiting were not yet in use. The range of keg beers suggests a continuing Carlsberg/Tetley tie. Still in the Centre, the range at the XXXXX is now Tetley Bitter, Greenalls Original and a (generally fairly predictable) guest. At the Boardroom, John Smiths Bitter has been replaced by Theakstons XB; however a cask breather system is in use on the traditional beers.



The Royal Oak, Castle Street, Edgeley, no longer has Holts Bitter as a guest beer. A strange move as the Holts always seemed to be selling well when Opening Times called. Perhaps the fact that the pub's lease is currently up for sale has something to do with it. Also up for grabs is the nearby Prince Albert, another popular local.

The Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport has introduced Lees Bitter as a permanent addition to the range there. This is, we think, only the second regular outlet for Lees in the town, the other of course being the Travellers Call in Bredbury, which seems to have been under the threat of demolition since Adam was a lad.

Work seems to be under way on not one but two "Scruffy Murphys" Irish theme bars, both along the Wilmslow Road corridor. The Harrison & Killey building across Grosvenor Street from the Flea & Firkin is likely to be first off the mark followed by the Jabberwocky part of the Queen of Hearts in Fallowfield, with the pub itself becoming a non-brewing Firkin.

Another area of activity in the City Centre is the Canal Street area where Boddington PubCo last month finally completed the purchase of the large building next to the Rembrandt. Despite its location we understand that this new venture is more to be a 'straight' venue.

More City Centre news - following on from last month's report of the JD Wetherspoon development on Deansgate, we now hear that this fast-expanding London-based pub chain has acquired another property, this time in the Piccadilly area, apparently out-bidding Yates Wine Lodges for the site. More news when we have it.

Back in Stockport, the string quartet now performs at the Olde Vic in Edgeley every other Wednesday and not every week as we reported last time.

Boddington PubCo have sold a batch of some 30 pubs to Paramount, a pub chain in which Burtonwood and Bass have large stakes, and Paramount subsidiary Real Inns. Those disposed of include the Bulkeley Arms in Stockport, the Smithfield in Openshaw and the Sun in Macclesfield.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(OT130)

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

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SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I / We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: INDIVIDUAL £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £14

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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



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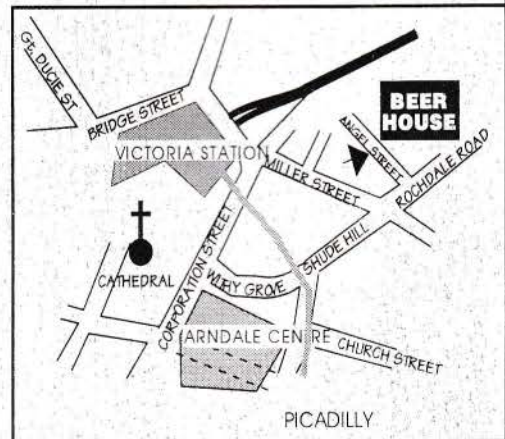
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