

OPENING TIMES

5,500 CIRCULATED
EVERY MONTH

AUGUST 1995 - CAMRA NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR

At Last! Sensible Sunday Opening Arrives

Despite fears of sabotage during its passage through Parliament, the Government's latest reform of our outdated licensing hours survived unscathed and from Sunday 6th August pubs were finally able to stay open throughout Sunday afternoon.

That's not to say everything went without a hitch - just a few days before the reform came into effect, police forces were still waiting for official Home Office confirmation of the changes and in some parts of the country publicans had apparently been warned that they could face prosecution if they remained open after 3pm. To add to the confusion some licensees had formed the idea that Sunday restrictions were being completely abolished and they could open from 11am to 11pm. Sadly, that particular reform is still some way off!

Nevertheless as we went to press the trade was gearing up for all day opening, seven days a week. Reaction though, was generally muted with most licensees adopting a "we're stuck with it so we'll make the most of it approach". The comments of Beryl Lavelle at the Coach & Horses in Gorton were typical: "I don't really like the idea, it's the only day you get off, but I'll be opening all the same" Irene at the Greyhound in Edgeley took a similar line "I don't like it but we'll stay open". In common with other licensees, Irene thought Sunday afternoon drinking could affect the evening session and that, overall, there would probably be no more trade overall.

Lorraine James at the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport was more upbeat "It's a good idea as long as the custom is there". In common with many retail chains and brewers, the Boddington PubCo has decided that all its managed houses will stay open on Sunday. Although it is unlikely this will remain the case if there is no trade. This is a view taken by Tony Brookes who runs the Head of Steam pub chain. Despite being a fervent believer in total liberalisation of pub hours himself, he can't see the change making any difference to the opening his Manchester outlet as "there's no trade in Manchester on a Sunday afternoon, anyway".

It's early days yet and it remains to be seen if people will change their drinking patterns. As Betty Boylan at the Florist, Shaw Heath, which will not be staying open, told us "I like my afternoon break too much". So, possibly, do many people on the customers side of the bar, especially on Sundays. Revolution or damp squib? Time will tell.

Silly Smiths

In a move that has staggered the drinking world, ultra traditional Yorkshire brewer Samuel Smith has pulled cask beer out of the bulk of its London estate and substituted nitrokeg Sovereign bitter. This absurd move has been justified on the grounds of 'indifferent and inconsistent beer quality'. Smith's chairman, Humphrey Smith apparently cannot tell the difference between bland albeit smooth keg beer and the real thing. Clearly he is in the wrong business. Smiths still brew in slate 'yorkshire squares' and insist on using wooden barrels. Now this!

All Smiths need to do, is set up a temperature controlled distribution warehouse, and switch to Aluminium casks. That way the beer would not cook on the trip down from yorkshire to the pub. Greene King have done this and its done wonders for the beer quality problems they were having.

Camra members in London remain shocked by the move. CAMRA chairman John Cryne condemned the move as appalling, "When you consider the support we have given them over the years, this is a real slap in the face". Locally the move indicates that remaining Smith's keggeries such as the Wilmslow Road Turnpike are likely to remain that way. Rumours that Smiths were pulling the stronger 'Museum Ale' ARE true, and the beer will disappear, but the expectation that Smiths needed the capacity to brew another real ale to replace it (a Stout had been suggested) are clearly not. The capacity is needed to brew nitroKeg Sovereign. Boo hiss.

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PUB of the Month

AUGUST

The Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month award for August goes to the Crown, Heaton Lane in Stockport. It is a Boddington PubCo Ale House that will be familiar to many Opening Times readers. The pub was awarded the prestigious local Pub of the Year award as recently as 1993 under the erstwhile stewardship of Ken Birch. So what's changed since then? The Crown is now in the very capable hands of Steve and Lorraine James and since they took over, one or two subtle, but nonetheless important improvements have taken place. It is still a comfortable multi-roomed interior, one of which is a no-smoking room. These are served by a central bar which boasts no less than ten handpumps.

The range of beers available is enough to make the most ardent of 'tickers and scratchers' shiver with excitement as brand new

brews from even the tiniest far flung micros rub shoulders with the best that the bigger brewers can produce. The quality of the beers is second to none, and you don't need to stop at cask ales, as genuine Furstenburg is also on offer, as well as a traditional cider and a range of bottled beers.

Service has improved hand over fist since Steve and Lorraine took control, and Lorraine's policy of 'look after the beer and look after the customers' seems to be paying dividends. A beer festival is planned for next month, and, even as OT goes to press, the stage is being swept so that live music will once again become a feature of the beer 'yarden'.

So, join us for a night of celebration as we say a big thank-you to Steve and Lorraine for their hard work and commitment, in what is quite simply one of the best pubs in Stockport, when we present them with a richly deserved award. The presentation takes place on Thursday 24th August, and it promises to be a cracker, so get there early.



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2

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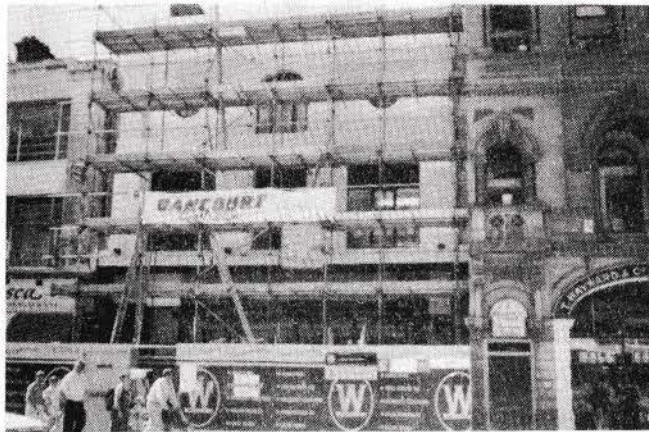
EVENING MEALS MON - THURS

★ 5.30 - 8.30 ★



OPENING TIMES AUGUST 1995

Wetherspoons Latest



Manchester's first JD Wetherspoon pub was due to open its doors to the public on 15th August. This is the first venture into the North West by the successful London-based operator and will feature the standard

Wetherspoon features of no music, no pool tables and a no-smoking area. Some £2 million has been spent on converting the old cinema on Deansgate into The Moon Under Water which will have some thing like 8000 square feet of public area which, Wetherspoons reckon, will make it the biggest in the city.

There will be six cask beers - Theakston Mild, Bitter, and XB, Courage Directors and Youngers Scotch Bitter plus a constantly changing guest (the latter is particularly welcome as many Wetherspoons pubs sell just one guest beer a week, and that's weekends only). The Youngers will retail at 89p a pint, making it amongst the cheapest beer in the city centre.

In a press release Wetherspoons also tell us that the new pub will feature numerous sculptures relating to Manchester including "one of Coronation Street's Ena Sharples and Hammer House of Horror star Christopher Lee". The reference to 'House of Horror' in the context of this type of gimmick is perhaps unfortunate, given the infamous Whitbread "House of Horror" conversions a few years ago. In their London heartland Wetherspoons are used to opening pubs to almost universal acclaim - they may find we are less easily impressed up here. Review to follow.

Porter Expands



The Rossendale Brewery, based at the Griffin Inn, Haslingden and run by former Stockport resident Dave Porter, has doubled the size of its tied estate. To two.

The second tied house is, sadly, even further from Stockport than the first, being in Clayton-le-Moors, which is a couple of miles from Accrington. The Albion, on Whalley Road opened its doors to the public on Saturday 29th July, although Opening Times managed to get a sneak preview the night before.

Like the Griffin, the Albion had been closed for some time before Dave arrived on the scene and had previously been a keg-only Bass pub called the Navigation. The pub has been thoroughly redecorated and also boasts a shiny new bar which serves the two rooms which in turn are split up into a variety of levels.

The full range of Porters beers will be available, although initially the premium Sunshine will be at the slightly lower strength of 4.7% until the locals get used to it! Licensee is Paul "Stan" Stanyer who some readers will recall as the barman at the Crown, Heaton Lane, so beer quality is guaranteed. With Porters traditional low prices - bitter at £1 and other beers priced to match - and the quiet 'drink and chat' atmosphere which none of the local pubs can match should see a successful future for the Albion and we wish it well.

Heard at the Bar

At Sullivan's Tavern, Ashton-under-Lyne

Drinker 1: We used to have an empire, but we've lost that.

Drinker 2: We haven't even got an umpire apart from Dicky Bird.



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Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month April 1994

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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW

At long last our antiquated licensing laws take another lurch into the twentieth century with the advent of all-day opening on Sundays. As our survey shows, not all pubs will be taking advantage of the new regime but, of course, that is not the point. This long overdue reform means that they can if they want and that, surely, is what the much vaunted choice and market forces are all about. In point of fact most brewery managed houses will stay open throughout as will that growing number of pubs which have built up a good trade in food. For tourist areas this will also be a boon. Campaigning now will turn to extending permitted hours on Friday and Saturday nights, which surely cannot now be far off.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I recently picked up 'The Sainsburys Beer Guide', an excellent free booklet all about our favourite drink, its history, ingredients, how to cook with it and well written by CAMRA's Roger Protz and Susan Nowak. The main point of it, of course, is to promote the wide and enterprising range of beers that Sainsburys make available - in common with many of the leading supermarket chains. Indeed many local branches of the national chains have interesting, well-

presented displays of their beers. With one notable exception - the Stockport branch of, you guessed, Sainsburys where the beer display is little short of a disgrace. It looks thrown together by someone who cares little about beer and knows even less - how else could you explain the presence until recently, of Brody 'designer' cider on the shelf labelled 'Beers of Distinction'. Come on Sainsburys, Stockport deserves better than this!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A growing and unwelcome development, in my opinion, is the growing obsession of British brewers with fruit beers as the end product is usually quite disgusting. It was bad enough when this was confined to a few micros but now more established brewers are jumping on the bandwagon. The latest of these noxious concoctions I came across was from Batemans, yes Batemans, one of the most respected of the family brewers. Strawberry Fields is apparently brewed with strawberries somewhere along the line and was truly horrible. Not only that but Batemans are planning a series of these things, the next one apparently, having vanilla in it. Yech! Our brewers should steer clear of this sort of gimmickry and leave it to the Belgians whose fruit beers, by contrast, can be quite exceptionally good.

John Clarke

Head of Steam

The Head of Steam on Whitworth street is planning one of the first ever breweriana fairs to be held in a pub.

This idea had developed from initial plans to run a series of auctions in the pub which, initially, attracted little interest. The idea now is to run a swapmeet/breweriana fair where interest parties could go along, take a stall and offer their wares to the public. So, if anyone out there fancies going along, setting up a table and selling beer mats, bartowels, pump clips, books on pubs/brewing etc then contact either Operations Manager William Wilkinson or Head of Steam licensee Dave Shipley on 236 6645.

The aim is to run the first event in late September on a Saturday afternoon and for the first event all stalls will be free of charge (at future events a donation to a selected charity may be asked from stallholders).

All in all this has the making of a great day out and makes a change from the more usual in-pub beer festivals.

Carlsberg-Tetley News

Carlsberg-Tetley are reported to have changed the recipe of their Warrington-brewed Tetley Bitter to bring it closer to the Leeds version, which is generally more highly-regarded. Recent tastings at pubs known to serve it well such as the Shady Oak and the Woolpack have certainly indicated a noticeable improvement.

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Glenn Worth

CAMRA members throughout Greater Manchester were shocked by the sudden and violent death of Glenn Worth on 1st August. Whilst he had not seen eye to eye with the Campaign of late, his contribution over the years has been invaluable and many local members counted amongst his friends. Some will remember his pioneering CAMRA shop at a succession of local beer festivals, others for his astonishing flat-cum-breweriana museum or perhaps his recently published history of Whitefield pubs. Most however will simply remember a convivial and welcome drinking companion. He will be sorely missed.

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING

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STAGGER

with Guest Beer Writer
Mark McConachie

The Stagger on Friday June 16 covered the area of Abbey Hey. Lying in East Manchester, Abbey Hey has Gorton on one side and Openshaw on the other.

We began in a pub situated in the former area, the **Vale Cottage**. This is a Wilson's house of some age; just off Hyde Road on Kirk Street, it overlooks the Gore Brook. The decoration could be described as mock-rustic, with various brasses, an old-style telephone and stamp machine. An old photo from earlier this century shows the pub covered in ivy and the original main door. This door is now blocked off to provide more bar space between vault and lounge; the main entrance is now in the extension added some years ago.

Beers on sale were Wilsons Bitter, Websters Yorkshire Bitter and Taylor Landlord. Only Wilsons and Landlord were sampled, both were deemed good. As it turned out the Landlord was the best beer of the crawl. No surprise then that this pub is in the Good Beer Guide and was Pub of the Month recipient in January 1994. Much of this success must be attributed to the pub having been in the same family for over 20 years.

Next we made our way through the back streets to the first of two pubs on Cross Lane. Websters **Cotton Tree** is a

basic two-roomer. The only noticeable difference between the two rooms appeared to be that the vault had a pool table. The bar sported a nice collection of copper kettles, whilst the walls displayed a range of old brass bedpans. Beers on sale were Websters and Boddies Bitters together with John Smith's Chestnut Mild. This latter beer is not to my knowledge available in cask form. We can only assume that keg beer was being sold through a handpump. If this was the case, we can only deplore such a practice. Everyone plumped for the Boddies with the general view being it was average.

The second Cross Lane pub was the **Royal Oak**. Two porch-covered doors provide entrance to taproom and lounge of this pleasant looking BodCo pub. The lounge is furnished in brewer's plush with rustic walls and photos of old Gorton. Meanwhile the taproom displays a definite leaning towards sports with photos of local teams and even a signed photo from boxer Frank Bruno. Three very interesting pierced-brass pedestal tables were spotted too. The sole beer was Boddies Bitter (cheaper than the Cotton Tree, too) and was thought about average.

We moved on to the **Prince of Wales** on Abbey Hey Lane. Before we entered we were informed by our "runner", whom we had sent ahead, that the **Garibaldi** on Lees Street was still keg only. It was, however, Tetley Keg of the traditional type - no attempt to deceive here. Back at the 'Prince', we found a basic, boisterous boozier which in essence is a one-room pub with a horseshoe shaped bar separating two areas. As a Whitbread pub it was, perhaps, unsurprising to find nitro-keg Boddies; this left one cask ale - Chesters Bitter. Nobody on our party rated it as being other than average.

Further along Abbey Hey Lane lay the faded splendour of the **Abbey Hey Hotel**. Formerly a Bass house, this is now signed a Centric/Gibbs Mew pub which, to be fair, was being re-decorated at the time of our visit. Inside we found four rooms of differing character and popularity. The most congested part was around the bar and looking into the large back room. This also houses a large-screen TV, in front of which an artiste was setting up. The front vault was fairly spartan and was also selling nitro-keg William Younger's Draught Welsh Bitter (brewed by Horne in Nottingham, I am assured). We took refuge in the (largely intact) front snug where we gazed into the gloom over our below-average halves of Stones Bitter.

Onward once again, a hundred yards or so to Vaux's **Hamlet**. Sited on a corner, this is a modernised two-bar pub. The well-appointed lounge afforded plenty of room; this coupled with the quality of the beers helped to provide a warm welcome. As we neared Openshaw the beer prices seemed to lower and the Hamlet was no exception. Two cask beers here - Vaux Bitter and Samson. Both were sampled, both comfortably above average. As we were leaving the pub seemed to be filling up nicely.

Staying on Abbey Hey Lane our next pub was the **Hare & Hounds**. This can only be described as a classic, traditional local. Plenty of original features remain - modesty screens, etched glass, plenty of wood and elaborate wall tiles. Consisting of vault, snug and back lounge, owners BodPubCo have not been slow in recognising the needs of a changing clientele - the pub now has a beer garden located on a croft at its side. Although it only sells Boddies Bitter, our samples were rated very highly (just short of beer of the night).

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Onward and Openshaw. The **Albion** on Ashton Old Road is a lively Whitbread pub. When we arrived a karaoke was in full swing and the pub was comfortably busy. Some of our number noted that dark beers appeared to be in favour and ordered Chesters Mild. This proved to be a wise choice as the beer was above average. Of the other beers on offer - no-one had Boddies and the poor chap who tried the Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter wished he hadn't. Ah well....

OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From : D M Memory

Your 'Opening Times' correspondents often comment about the volume of music in pubs; well each to his or her own is the usual superficial reply - and if you don't like it then go somewhere else.

But there are two serious aspects worthy of prosecution by CAMRA.

First. If the sound level in a pub is so high as to cause ear or eye damage to bar staff, can the employer be prosecuted and the staff compensated? Such neglect would not be tolerated in a factory.

Secondly. I thought that places open to the public required fire precaution arrangements - but looking round pubs I am hard put to find them. You might look round your local tonight and check for fire alarms, extinguishers, and fire notices. I bet that you don't find them all. Such regulations only appear to be applied in hotels. But assuming that fire alarm arrangements do exist for pubs, then if their music levels are so high as to make them inaudible, then who, if anyone is to blame? And what protection exists for the public?

Your newsletter has the clout to take up these issues with the Health & Safety executive. You would do us all a kindness if you did - and you might save a few lives.

From : Peter Edwardson

Attractive, well-written chalkboards do much to enhance the visual appeal of a pub. Ones containing elementary grammatical errors tend to have the opposite effect. While I applaud the enterprise of your advertisers "Off the Wall", it's a little unfortunate that their ad for their chalkboard writing services perpetrates today's most ubiquitous and irritating howler in urging "Give your pub back it's own personality!"

From : Conversation Lover, Heaton Mersey

I wish to draw to the attention of Opening Times readers the introduction of appalling piped muzac into the Griffin Hotel in Heaton Mersey.

The Griffin has, for some years, been a typical Holts' local with excellent beers (though not all of the time), where customers could indulge in that declining pastime of conversation.

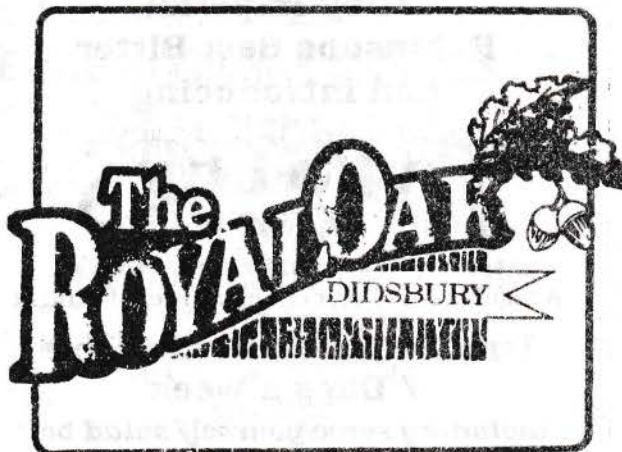
Not any more! Once again, we see the demise of what was an excellent pub by the installation of all pervasive 'background music'. What is particularly annoying, is the fact that the landlord is so out of touch with regular customers, that he no doubt thinks he will be increasing the custom of the pub.

On the contrary, many locals are now walking out when the music is switched on!

I suggest to your readers that if the 'intrusion' is present when they are in the pub, that they ask for it to be switched off, and if their request is ignored that they then register their disapproval by drinking up and walking out.

Fittingly, our last pub was on Abbey Hey Lane, the **Oddfellows Arms**. It's nice to see pubs like this surviving, because small, street corner pubs aren't supposed to be popular any more. Well, this BodPubCo outlet isn't doing too badly, thank you. The bar area and environs were full, so we retired with our Chesters Milds and Boddies Bitters to a small side room. Both beers got good marks, with the mild being thought the better of the two. This was the official end of the crawl (I had to get a 219 bus into town to connect with another bus) but several valiant imbibers ended the evening in the nearby Concert Inn.

Snapshots aren't foolproof. Critical? you decide! Praiseworthy? You decide! Visit the pubs? You decide! Happy drinking.



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For many years, the Holly Bush at Little Leigh was renowned as one of the most unspoilt traditional pubs in Cheshire. Its survival was all the more remarkable considering that it stands not in some rural backwater but on the main A49 only seven miles south of Warrington. It's a small, timber-framed thatched cottage dating back to 1641, set back behind a small cobbled area at the point where a minor road joins the main highway.

The licence was held for 200 years by generations of the Cowap family, who ran it as a sideline to farming and kept the pub as a simple, no-frills beerhouse, one of the last true farmhouse pubs in the country. The heart of the pub was the tap-room with its old wooden settles, tiled floors and open fires. There was no bar as such, just a small cupboard-like area housing the handpumps, with a hatch through into the taproom and the rest of the pub served from the door. There was a slightly less basic smoke room to the right of the taproom, and another room at the rear was occasionally opened too. One of the highlights of the year was the annual threshing fair and traction engine rally held each October.

A few years ago, the time came for Albert Cowap to retire, and rather than let him pass the tenancy on to his son, Greenalls, the then owners, tried to sell the Holly Bush off delicensed as a private house. The locals, aided by CAMRA, mounted a vigorous campaign against this, and eventually Greenalls were persuaded to abandon their plans and sell it off as a going concern, though regrettably it passed out of the hands of the Cowaps. It was bought by Real Inns, a subsidiary of Paramount, and there were various disturbing rumours of plans which would greatly extend the pub and completely ruin its character.

We recently visited the Holly Bush to see how it had come through all these changes. All things considered, surprisingly well. It's now a genuine free house, with a plaque outside announcing that it is privately owned by Mr and Mrs Lloyd. The garden has been tidied up and they are in the process of improving the previously haphazard car parking arrangements.

Marble Arch World Beers

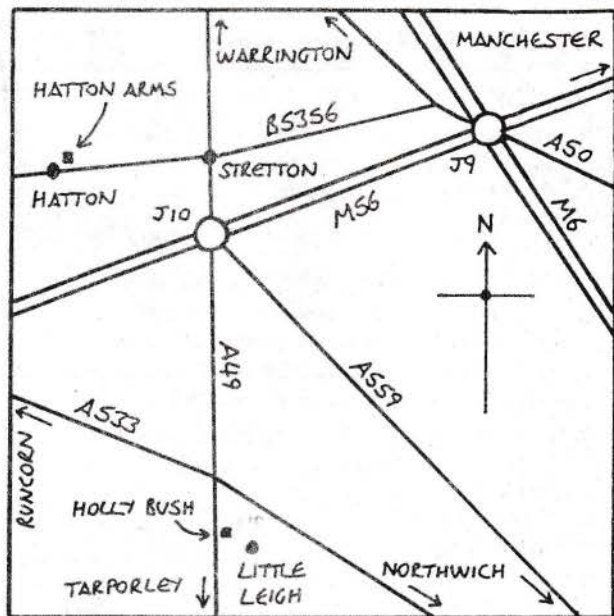
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The taproom is thankfully intact, although the smoke room has acquired a carpet and comfortable upholstered seating, and another room at the rear, previously a private sitting room, has been brought into use in a similar style. The beer is now Burtonwood, and on our visit Burtonwood Bitter was in excellent condition. Empty casks at the rear suggested that guest beers might be available at times. There's also a wide selection of food, and what other people were eating looked pretty good, although the large number of rather predictable dishes on the menu suggested that it relied heavily on the contents of the freezer.

The Holly Bush is still a marvellously unspoilt and characterful pub, and well worth a visit. Some concessions have been made to the 20th century, but everything has been carefully done and the fabric of the place is untouched. But you can't avoid a twinge of regret that it's no longer the timeless rustic beerhouse of which it used to be said, figuratively, but very truly, that there was "manure on the floor".

Also worthy of a visit near here is that Hatton Arms at Hatton on the B5356 between Stretton and Daresbury. This very attractive looking pub occupies a row of four small brick-built cottages. The interior was opened up a little in the 1950s but retains a wealth of dark beams and several

distinct areas including an unspoilt taproom. There are real fires in winter, and excellent food, mostly home-made, with generous portions at reasonable prices. The pub is currently being extended into the remaining three cottages in the row, to provide a restaurant and a few letting bedrooms, but this should not affect the character of the existing rooms.

Although it's a Greenalls tied house, offering Mild, Bitter, Original and Tetley Bitter, the quality is exceptionally good and it has appeared in the Good Beer Guide for the past two years. Unfortunately it cannot be wholeheartedly recommended due to the presence of keg Scrumpy Jack on handpump - maybe the local branch of CAMRA should have a discreet word in the ear of a licensee who seems to be doing most other things right.

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THE LOUNGE

The Nelson Tavern is now open for business again. The hospitality shown by Karen and Nigel and the friendly bar staff is complemented by the subtle new lighting throughout the pub that gives out a snug comfortable atmosphere throughout the evening. Without a doubt The Nelson Tavern is the place to be above all the rest!

KITCHEN

During our refurbishment the kitchen was completely refitted so we now offer two complete menus for the hungry pub goer.

Breakfast Menu Served 8.30 -2.30
Monday to Friday

Try the Nelson's special Gut Buster Breakfast!
Bacon, 2 Sausages, 2 Eggs Tomato, Fried Bread
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Lunchtime Menu Served from 11.30-2.30
Monday to Saturday

Horatio's Platter. A generous portion of cheese, ham, paté or tuna, served with either white or granary crusty cobs garnished with salad, pickled onions, apple wedges, home made coleslaw and traditional pickle... Enough to fill even the hungriest Sailor! ALL FOR 1.80 EACH

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Quiz Nights

Every Sunday Night is the Nelson Quiz, free to enter with first prize a gallon of beer. Snowball prize draw every week.

Student Night

From September every Wednesday Night is Student Night in the Nelson Tavern. With Student DJ Jonny Durex we can guarantee a crazy night out.

Live Music

We will occasionally have live music from a variety of local bands -watch the chalk boards for more details

THE CELLAR

Come along and sample The Nelson Taverns new range of draught beers.

Theakstons Ales
Guinness
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and a full range
of Bottled Beers.

PLUS

Watch out for our regular turnover of guest Beers details of which will be given in advance on our chalk boards.

Nelson Sets Sail

Scottish & Newcastle's refurbishment of the run-down Chef & Brewer estate continues to gather pace. One of the latest pubs to get a much needed wash and brush up is the Nelson on Wellington Road South, Stockport. For many years the haunt of Stockport's student population, the Nelson had become very run down, both inside and out. In point of fact it was really an eyesore. All that has now changed, and very much for the better.

Outside the pub has been repainted and resigned and looks resplendent with its new window boxes. Inside the layout is similar to before with the multi-area layout retained, giving the feel of being a series of inter-connecting rooms when the pub is really just one big area carefully split up. There has been a complete redecoration and refitting of the pub with new furniture, light fittings, the works, although one or two elements of the old pub remain including some Victorian tiling and the stained glass ceiling installed by Pennine Hosts (and who remembers them?) .

The kitchen has been completely re-kitted out, too. Apart from lunchtime food, the Nelson as also joined that growing band of pubs serving breakfast. Here it is from 8.30-2.30 and is billed as the "Gut Buster Breakfast" for just £1.65.

Of more interest to OT readers will be the beer. On opening night the range was Theakstons Bitter, XB and Old Peculier plus the almost inevitable Websters. Only that and the XB are to be permanent as the others are to be replaced by guest beers, one 'in house' from Scottish & Newcastle, the other from different brewers. It is anticipated that the guest ales will change at monthly intervals. Licensees Nigel and Karen Pitman are certainly pleased with their new-look pub and it must be said that it is a great improvement. We now wait developments at S&N's two other run-down, landmark pubs - Stockport's Chestergate Tavern and the Withington Ale House.

* The S&N refurbishment programme continues apace. As we went to press the Malt Shovels on Councillor Lane, Cheadle was in the throes of a major revamp and next in line is the Carousel, Reddish.



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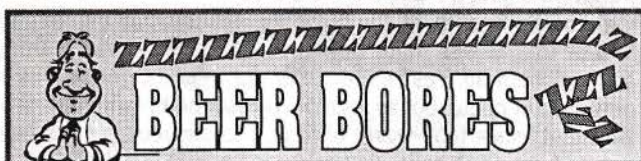
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Continuing our occasional series of the more entertaining bits from the best, and the worst, of the verbally challenged. Some of today's pretentious beer writers could take a leaf or two out of Thomas Hardy's considerable scribings. Here's what he says about drinking:

"Too much liquor is bad, and leads us to that horned man in the smoky house; but after all, many people haven't the gift of enjoying a wet, and since we be highly favoured with a power that way, we should make the most o't"

And in "The Trumpet Major", Hardy wrote of Dorchester's strong beer:

"It was of the most beautiful colour that the eye of an artist in beer could desire; full in body, yet brisk as a volcano; piquant, yet without a twang; luminous as an autumn sunset; free from streakiness of taste but finally, rather heady" Blimey.

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YOUR HOSTS

Steve & Dorothy

National Brew News

A variety of new or revamped ales from the national brewers have hit the bar tops in recent weeks.



Perhaps the most impressive of the new brews is Samuel Allsops Traditional Stout from Carlsberg-Tetley. Described as a 'dark, bittersweet ale' for once the brewery PR seems to match reality with those who have tasted it raving about the stuff. This a welcome move for Carlsberg-Tetley who, along with the other nationals, have taken second place to Whitbread when it comes to innovation with new products. Available locally in the two Scruffy Murphy pubs (Fallowfield and All Saints) and the City Arms in the City Centre.

Speaking of Whitbread they launched the latest in their series of 'Single Varietal Hop Beers' last month. This is Colonel Pepper's Lemon Ale, a 'wonderfully refreshing fruit ale' at 5% ABV with both lemon peel and ground black pepper added to the brew. Opinions here have varied, some, once again,

thinking it lives up to its publicity while other have been less impressed. Available until the middle of August it should appear on the bar of most pubs taking beers from the Whitbread range. Scottish % Newcastle have gone for a relaunch rather than a new product with their long established Youngers No 3. According to the brewery press release they have tried to combine the original recipe with more modern brewing methods. Let's hope this means they've reduced the number of adjuncts - according to the last edition of the Real Ale Drinkers Almanac this beer included a fair amount of maize, wheat and cane sugar. Despite this unappetising list, No 3 was always one of the better beers from S&N so an improved version should be worth catching.

* Next month watch out for our round up of the summer activities of the local micro brewers.



Great British Brew Up

First, congratulations to all the staff who worked at the Great British Beer Festival in the sweltering heat. There seemed to be enough bar staff this year and in general the organisation was excellent. The food was much improved with at least some choice for non vegetarians, and although expensive the worst excesses of profiteering seemed to have been curbed. So to for the beer, maybe it comes from working in London more often but the prices seemed more reasonable.

The fanous (and horribly expensive) cooling system was in place and working flat out but, oh, the beer. Well, if you hold a Festival in the first week in August what do you expect? True, no-one could have predicted that it would be QUITE that hot, but 37-43 degrees C behind the bar....

On Tuesday some of the beer was flabby but ok, but by Wednesday it was uniformly awful. And there was nothing anyone could do. Yes I expect it broke records, got zillions of new members etc, but as a showcase for the brewing talent of Britain it was a total waste of time. I know beer is at its best served from a pub cellar, but this was a repeat of the docklands fiasco. Please move it to a cooler month. Please....

Sunday Merry Sunday

"OT" readers should now be able to take advantage of all-day opening on Sunday, which came into force on Sunday August 6th. Pubs are, of course, under no obligation to observe this.

"OT" would be pleased to hear from licensees who are taking advantage of their new freedom (and, indeed, those who are not, to prevent wasted journeys), and will be reporting on the extent of all-day opening once the new arrangements have had time to settle down.

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OPENS END OF AUGUST

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

RHYTHM and BOOZE



by Richard Hough

So Robbie's left Take That. Shame. That same evening I strolled into Stockport in search of somewhat more worthwhile entertainment. Hartley and Hyde jazz takes centre stage at the Three Shires Wine Bar on Underbank every Tuesday. The advert for the place says "It's the closest we'll get to CAMRA's Pub of the Year - 82 yards", Pub of the year 1994 is the Queens Head (Turner's) round the corner. Maybe, but the Three Shires does make an effort, and offers more than a great deal of pubs do. The food is particularly good; indeed the catering for this year's Stockport Beer Festival came courtesy of the Shires' team.

After a swift one in said Pub of the Year (rather pleasant Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter, £1.10 a pint) we made haste to the Three Shires. It is a quaint little place with a black and white exterior. Inside it is a welcoming, if rather bright one-roomer which stretches back a little way, and is more spacious than the casual passer-by might believe. Tetley Bitter is the sole cask available, alongside, unfortunately, the nitro-keg nightmare in the form of Kilkenny "Irish" "Beer". A hen party was in full swing as pints of Tetleys were purchased for £1.30. The beer was thought to be neither desperately bad nor delightfully good, just run-of-the-mill Tetleys. It was rather lively, and the

head stood loud and proud. The service, though, was swift and friendly; a smile can make a world of difference.

Tonight vocalist Gloria Kay couldn't make it, but her place was taken by saxophonist Brian Smith. Sometimes it is the Hartley and Hyde trio but on this occasion Brian was backed by the quartet: two guitars, drums, and fretless bass, an instrument not seen enough on the live circuit. Jazz musicians are very much into their music, and if there had been no-one in, you can imagine the sax and bass players still drifting into a world of their own and out again.

Big-band jack-swing type jazz I find really nauseating, but this mellow melt-down was most relaxing. The tempo was held, not as you might expect by the drums, but by the bass. Extensive use of the cymbals added to the cool atmosphere already created. The drummer made the most of a very small kit, and we can only wonder what our ears would have been treated to were he allowed to explore a larger kit. He teased a whole spectrum of sounds from the cymbals, and his brush-strokes were just dandy.

The third song included a blues-influenced solo on a lovely, and apparently original, Gibson guitar with its beautiful distinctive tone. The star of the night though was Brian, who played out of his natty Nike socks. He received a ripple of applause for each stint on the sax, and deserved every bit of it. He was ably backed by finger-pickin'ly good guitar solos and body huggin' bass, and the whole thing simply shone.

Some jazz can put the listener on edge, but Hartley and Hyde (and friends) are very approachable musically (and they're quite friendly too). I've never been a major fan of jazz, but if you're not busy on Tuesday, I'll see you at the Three Shires.

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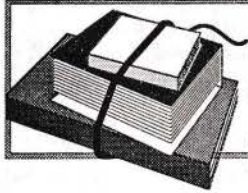
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BOOK REVIEW



Nine Towns Bitter - the Definitive Guide to Tameside Pubs.

Edited by Ralph Warrington. CAMRA High Peak Branch, 128 pages, £3.25

A tattered and beer-stained scrap of paper resides on the section of my bookshelves devoted to pub guides - it is the last comprehensive guide to Tameside's pubs. A portion was recently removed for radiocarbon dating, but textual analysis (notably the references to Pollards Brewery) suggests a date in the early 80s. Now, however, it can be thrown away - for it has been replaced by this brand-new pocket-sized book produced by CAMRA's High Peak branch with the assistance of Tameside Council.

With an attractive green and gold cover featuring a colour photograph of the Oddfellows in Hyde, the guide makes a good first impression.. Inside, it follows the now widespread "two-tier" system whereby all pubs - real ale or not - are covered, with the most meritorious being singled

out for extensive description. And the descriptions really are extensive - the featured pubs get a full page and photograph each, while the also-rans get a short paragraph, and even the keg-only pubs are accorded a line or two.

Features - on such things as licensing hours, Tameside Canals Festival, and brewing history - are used to separate the nine towns of the title (which is a play on Tameside's slogan "Nine Towns Better") and are succinct and to the point. There's a brief run-down of the most widely available real ales in Tameside, and the book is rounded off by clear and attractive maps locating the featured pubs.

Complaints? Well, it would be useful to have some indication of opening hours, at least for the featured pubs - the editor points out reasonably enough that these can change, but even so, some information has to be better than none at all.

While the keg-on-handpump con is exposed where it occurs, it does not preclude a pub from "featured entry" status, a policy which many will feel blunts the book's campaigning edge. And I imagine the inclusion of the patronising and ill-founded "sensible drinking" message was a by-product of the Council's involvement (the stern words to drink-drivers, by contrast, are entirely in order)

But these are minor matters. As I said, this book has been needed for many years - it turns out to be well worth the wait. Clearly drawing on a deep knowledge of and respect for the pubs and their communities, it amply justifies its "definitive" tag. Buy, read, and explore!

As well as bookshops and featured pubs, the guide is also available from usual CAMRA sources and at Tourist Offices in Tameside.

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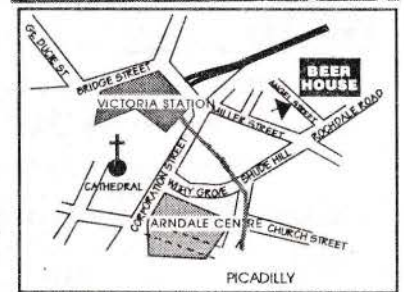
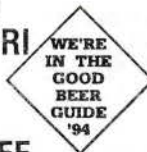
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The Chester Challenge

**- High Peak CAMRA limber up for the
Ashton Canals Festival.**

Frank Wood survived to tell the tale...

Just to prepare for the strenuous Beer Tent weekend just five days later, a small but enthusiastic group of us took Chester by storm, kicking off at the Boddington PubCo's Union Vaults Ale House on Edgerton Street, just a short five-minute walk from the station and virtually on the canal bank.

Landlord Paul Lamb again impressed us at what is essentially a back-street, end-of-terrace locals pub - one that we didn't better all day. There were five cask beers available, and all on fine form. Just a short walk away down the canal is Old Harkers, the converted round floor of a warehouse which is an outlet for Phoenix (Oak) beers and again a choice of some half dozen ales. Very light, with expensive furniture, it is well used by businessmen and families alike, for what seemed to be excellent food. The next pub along is again an old warehouse, again plenty of choice - but I can't remember the name (*for Heaven's sake!* - ed.). Leaving the canal, we had a relaxing walk through the Grosvenor Gardens to the Albion, a first class Greenalls pub. Enamel signs dominated the decor and we couldn't help noticing the plethora of rules and regulations posted up by the licensee, including no under-25's admitted (not that I was particularly bothered by that one!). The beer was good, though and then it was off to the Bear & Billet, an outlet for Weetwood beers, the bitter being particularly good. Up the road, the Falcon is an ever popular Sam Smiths house that persuaded us to try some more Old Brewery Bitter at the Olde Boote.

A break does plenty of good and so we split up. I went for a haircut and a wander round the shops. Two of our party were woken up in the cathedral to be asked to move because a service was about to start. Gluttons for punishment we all resumed at tea-time in the Bull & Stirrup, a popular CAMRA pub in days gone by. The Ship Victory was out next choice, for a pint of Tetleys or Burton Ale, then back to the Union Vaults to pick up the landlord who was coming out for the night. Slowing down now we spent nearly two hours at the Good Beer Guide listed Mill Hotel, virtually next door to the Union. Again Weetwood Best Bitter was available and in sparkling form. It was a lovely summers evening and we enjoyed excellent meals outside overlooking the canal.

Next port of call was the Boathouse, two separate pubs, one on the river side with lovely views of the Dee, and an "aletaster" type bar where we felt more at home. The second best pub in my opinion that day was the Olde Custom House, long time meeting place for the local branch of CAMRA. A central bar with rooms all round, there are many old original features and a trip to Chester is incomplete without a visit. After Lees Moonraker at Clavertons it was back to the Union for night-caps and bed for the night.

We will return - for the John Otway gig in September.

High Peak News

The Hare & Hounds, Hurst, Ashton-under-Lyne is closed "until further notice", according to a sign in the window.

CURMUDGEON



The traditional form of seating in pubs is to have benches fitted around the walls. This design was used because it works. It's flexible, as you can spread out coats and papers, or huddle close together, it's sociable, as everyone faces in towards the centre of the room, it's adaptable to different-sized groups of people, and it gives a room a distinctive quality of "pubbiness". It's no coincidence that all of what we regard as the finest pub rooms in the area, such as the toplit snug at the Swan with Two Necks, or the wood-panelled lounge at the Nursery, have fixed wall seating.

So why is it that modern pub designers so often go for having individual loose chairs grouped around tables instead? They may give a place the atmosphere of a gentlemen's club, or a Continental bistro, (or, at worst, a works canteen) but they certainly aren't right for pubs. They mean that people tend to cluster around tables in inward-facing groups rather than talking amongst each other, and make the place less sociable. They make the person who's just popped in on their own for a pint and a quick read of the paper feel ill at ease, and they're awkward too for groups of more than four. The Woodstock in Didsbury is a pretty decent new pub, but it would be much better if it had wall benches rather than loose chairs and tables.

Maybe the modern designers are subconsciously afraid of making pubs seem too much like pubs, for fear of putting people off. But pubs have nothing at all to be ashamed of - it's poor service that deters customers, not distinctive design. So come on, you architects, give us some wall benches in your new pubs and refurbishments, and the more the better.

★ ★ ★ ★

I was sitting quietly in a pub minding my own business, when the whole place was suddenly disrupted by customers making a real nuisance of themselves. They were shouting at the tops of their voices, running up and down the room, jumping on the seats, ripping beer mats up and throwing them in the air, and generally annoying everybody else in there. Were they obnoxious drunks, or football hooligans? No, they were small children running amok out of their parents' control.

Anyone who ever dares to complain about the bad behaviour of children in pubs is likely to be told that it's nothing compared to how adults go on when they're drunk. But how often do you witness offensive drunken behaviour in pubs? In the vast majority of places, scarcely ever. Adults may become a bit rowdy and boisterous, but they normally know where to draw the line.

If children are to be allowed in the bars of pubs, instead of allowing their natural exuberance free rein, surely other customers have the right to expect that they display a reasonable standard of behaviour, and that licensees have a duty to enforce that behaviour, just as they would with grown-ups.

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SK3 0JP Tel: 0161 477 8363

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

AUGUST '90

Opening Times No. 76 was a Special Cider Issue - there were articles that explained how real cider differed from Strongbow, or Diamond White; also some information on perry, made from fermented pear juice, and produced only in a small area on the Herefordshire - Gloucestershire border. There was a review of CAMRA's Good Cider Guide, and what was described as "a quick whizz round the local pages of the Guide". Although there was not a lot of real cider available in the Manchester and Stockport area, it was evident that it was there if you knew where to look - in addition to the pubs, several off-licenses were mentioned, including branches of Oddbins.

In complete contrast, the front page was headed "The Yanks are Coming" - this was looking ahead to 1992, when the single European Market would allow virtually unrestricted trade among all countries of the EEC. As the American brewing giant Anheuser-Busch already controlled a large part of the American market, it seemed likely that in order to expand further they would have to acquire a European, or even a British brewery, in order to gain access to the single European Market. There were also some extremely uncomplimentary remarks about the American beers (but excluding the growing number of micro-breweries) - colourless, lacking in body, loaded with CO₂, flavourless. The point was made that our own big brewers were quite capable of supplying us with these types of beer, without the help of their American counterparts.

There was further criticism of the Boddington PubCo, and their "few faltering steps into the guest beer market." The existing Boddington's Bitter and the Sheffield brewed "Higson's" Bitter at the George, Mersey Square, Stockport had been joined by Theakstons Bitter. But what a pity they had picked another national brewer (they already had an arrangement with Tetley) - it would have been nice if they had turned to another local or regional independent brewer. At least the pattern had been set for other Boddington's pubs, and the question was posed "What would be sold at the King's Arms, on Bloom Street in Salford?" The BodPubCo's intention was to turn it into a "freehouse".

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STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA



Smithfields

One of the new up and coming Manchester free houses that is gaining a growing reputation for its beers is the Smithfield Hotel & Bar (formally Walkers Bar) on the corner of Swan Street and Coop Street in Manchester. Its close proximity to the nationally famous Band on the Wall means that it can be busy mid evening with pre club revellers, but at lunch times it is quieter, and hearing reports that the lunches were good, I decided to call in and give it a try.

Smithfields is a long narrow building with the bar along the side wall and kitchen area opposite. The front part of the pub is the bar area hence the bare wooden floor and array of games machines with the lounge/eating area at the back. The tables were nicely done with tablecloths and vases of flowers which gave a pleasant airiness to the pub.

Although Smithfields is known primarily for its beers, for such a small pub the choice of available meals is good (provided you are not a vegetarian) and all are reasonably priced with nothing over £3-25. The list on the blackboard today included liver and onions £2-75, roast beef, potatoes and veg £3-25, roast pork dinner £3-25, and ham, egg and chips £2-95. Other meals available today included kebab salad and chips £2-75, scottish sandwich steak and chips

Special

Stuart Ballantyne dines in the City Centre, while Richard Hough explores leafy suburbia

£2-95, and cumberland sausage, potatoes and veg at £2-95. With no apparent vegetarian option we were driven to ask, and yes something called 'vegetable cuisine' was also on offer at £2-95. Whilst my friend tended the food order I turned my attention to what was on offer on the bar.

Six beers were available today starting with the (comparatively rare for this area) Everards Mild, which was joined by Boddingtons Bitter, Mitchells Bitter, Thomas Hardys County, Bishops Finger and this years newcomer to the guest beer market, Commercial Breweries Hi Summer Bitter. At just 3.2% this is a light but hoppy golden beer and a good summer lunchtime drink albeit at a somewhat pricey £1-30 a pint. Today it was on good form and eminently drinkable.

The food order had now arrived. For the price you pay no one could complain about the size of the helpings as they filled the plate and my cumberland sausage with mash, cauliflower, broccoli and gravy represented good value. The verdict on the scottish steak sandwich however was less enthusiastic with the accompanying chips overcooked, the steak tough, and the lettuce not fresh. She was determined to make a point and this she did. "With the market just over there selling fresh vegetables at cheap prices there is no excuse for serving this frozen stuff". And what of the vegetable cuisine? This consisted of cheese and vegetable kiev served with lots of salad but no potatoes producing a non committal "I would have liked some potatoes, but its OK".

Having finished their meals my two friends had to dash off. I however had time for another pint and so opted for the Boddies. This proved to be like what Boddingtons Bitter is invariably like in 90% of the pubs that now serve it, OK but lacking that bitterness and conditioning that makes it worth going out of your way for.

1995 BOLTON BEER FESTIVAL

in aid of Bolton Lads & Girls Club

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The Howcroft Inn

POOL ST (off Vernon St/St Georges Rd) BOLTON

OVER 120 BEERS, Lagers & Ciders

Night Time Entertainment FOOD AT ALL SESSIONS

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SHOWING OF BOLTONS OWN BANK TOP BREWERY BEER

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SAT 28 12-4 & 7-12

SUN 29 12-3pm



For more information phone BOLTON (01204) 526814

For accommodation phone (01204) 364333

Independents' Day

Now in its third year, July's Treasure Hunt round manchester City Centre pubs selling independent brewers' beers attracted a record-breaking 21 teams, the vast majority of whom finished the course and returned to the Beer House in mid-evening for the results. This year the coveted shield (to be held for a year) and gallon of beer went to Bury-based team Two Dead Goldfish, captained by CAMRA life member Ian Openshaw, who has expressed his willingness to set next year's event.

Congratulations to all the participants, and to the pub licensees and regulars who so skilfully misled them; and hearty thanks to Idy Phillips and Graham Rawlinson at the Beer House for hospitality and refreshments.

The High Peak & North East Cheshire

Branch Contact is Tim Jones

(0161 371 9006 (h))



Richard Hough in Suburbia

Tucked away in leafy Cale Green lies Copperfield's, the public bar of the Southlands Hotel. It is an open-plan affair with plenty of tables for diners, but drinker-friendly too, both in terms of atmosphere and range of drinks available, all at highly competitive prices. Ruddles County, Robbies Best Bitter, Wilsons Original Mild, John Smiths Bitter, Worthington Best and Marstons Pedigree. While the range is perhaps a little uninspiring, the quality is generally OK.

Traditional Sunday lunch at Coppers is, well, traditional. The standard menu, available in the week, is not on on Sundays. A chalk board gives details of what's on offer, so you can be sure that what's displayed will be cooking. To start, a choice of Florida Cocktail or Minestrone Soup for 85p. For the main course one of Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding, Roast Lamb or Breast of Chicken Celestine, for £3.66, and a choice of sweets to follow. A lack of a vegetarian alternative was disappointing to see.

The Wilsons Mild, at £1.10 a pint, was fairly good and not the caramel-water it can be at times. We ordered Florida Cocktail, and sat outside at the brand new benches. The place-mats though, could have done with a wipe.

The Florida Cocktail was a simple affair of mandarin oranges, grapefruit and a glace cherry. Marston's Pedigree, a bargain at £1.10 a pint, was rather humdrum, as can so

often be the case these days. I ordered the Roast Lamb while my partner decided to try the chicken.

Both meals arrived before too long, on piping hot plates. The chicken, off the bone, was encrusted in apple and almonds, and accompanied by two roast potatoes, two boiled, peas and carrots. It was a surprisingly pleasant combination, with the almonds adding texture to the dish. The Roast Lamb in gravy, with the same vegetable selection, was followed out by a small jug of mint sauce. There were no complaints except that the carrots and peas were a little overdone. It was proper gravy that didn't congeal as lamb gravy often does; the portions were generous.

Back to the bar then for some Ruddles County, which was thought to be a little below average, before we finished with Mandarin Sundae, and Strawberry Cheesecake (each was 99p as was the Peach and Brandy Gateau which wasn't tried). The sundae consisted of two scoops of quality ice-cream, plenty of mandarins, two wafers and the seemingly obligatory squirry cream. The cheesecake was, well strawberry cheesecake, and not home-made. It too had some squirry cream on the side.

Overall, it was functional without being over-the-top, but representing excellent value for money - well worth a visit.

THINKING

OF JOINING CAMRA ?

DO IT NOW!

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY £12

(£6 for Students) - PAGE 23

Walking can be fun

On a warm summer evening, what can be better than a stroll outdoors taking in a few pubs along the way? Recently Manchester has felt more like Malaga and there's nothing like a spell of hot weather to bring on a raging thirst.

This month I felt like a change of scenery and so it was that I found myself in The Station on Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. This is an excellent pub with the feel of a genuine local. It's a very small pub divided into three rooms and drinkers often spill out onto the pavement where there are some benches. At this time of year the pub is bedecked with hanging flower baskets. And the beer? Well Marstons Bitter and Pedigree as well as Head Brewers Choice, a range of one-off brews again from Marstons and, a pleasant surprise, Batemans Dark Mild, a superb beer with more taste than a lot of stouts.

On the evening I called an impromptu guitar singalong added to the enjoyment and with difficulty I moved on to the Nelson on the corner of Barlow Moor Road and Wilmslow Road. This is a one-room pub with Websters Bitter and, a rarity for the area, Holts Bitter. At £1.10 this must be the cheapest pint of bitter in Didsbury and it was on excellent form when I called.

Once again I was reluctant to leave but another superb pub beckoned, this, of course, was the Royal Oak also on Wilmslow Road. Much has been written in O.T. about this pub so suffice it to say that the place was packed and the beer (all the Marstons range and Batemans Dark Mild) excellent.

Leaving the Royal Oak turn right then right again and the next pub the Albert Inn is on William Street near Healds Dairy. Hydes Mild and Bitter are the beers here in this friendly back street local with a good mix of drinkers. There are also benches outside for the summer months.

Unfortunately the time had come to leave Didsbury, so I walked up to School Lane, which is at the junction of Wilmslow Road and Barlow Moor Road. Turn right and a footpath can be seen, again on the right. This footpath runs behind the Dairy and is pleasantly quiet, after the traffic on Wilmslow Road, with trees forming a canopy overhead. Soon the rear of the Tesco superstore comes into view then, passing the allotments, the path runs under Didsbury Road. Walk up the hill, turn left and one of Stockport's best known pubs the Griffin (Holts of course), is on Didsbury Road.

The Griffin has been extended to cope with the busy trade and the extension fits in very well with the rest of the pub. But my favourite part of the pub is the original bar, a superb example of a Victorian mahogany bar complete with etched glass. The hand-made black and white tiled floor sets it off perfectly. There is a beer garden at the rear which, being completely enclosed, is safe for children. All this and still under a pound a pint!

On leaving the Griffin turn left up Didsbury Road and the last pub on this walk, the Crown, is on the right. Local brewers Robinsons are represented here, electrically pumped bitter and mild. The Crown is Heaton Mersey's oldest licensed House and while some modernisation has taken place there are some unusual features inside including pew-type seating and original beams. One memory of this pub is the best black pudding (home made) I ever had! For steamy summer evenings there is a terrace at the rear of the pub.

In the six pubs on this walk there is once again a wide range of beers, nearly all from independent brewers with local brewers well represented. This is, of course, a purely personal choice and there are other good pubs which I have not mentioned, so, while the sun shines, happy walking (and drinking.)

Pete Soane

THE BOUNDARY

Guide Bridge · Audenshaw

Tel: 0161.330.1679

**1st BRITISH
BEER FESTIVAL
SEPTEMBER 8 - 10**

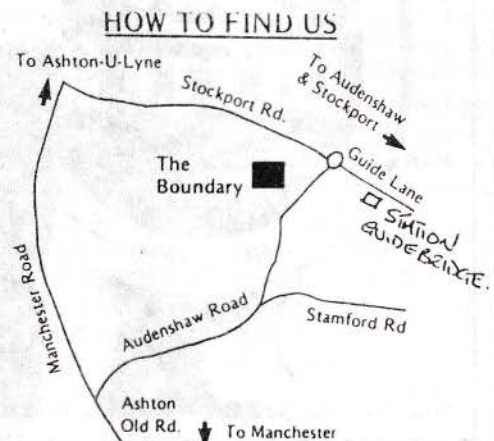
50+ Beers from Independent Micros to
Regional Breweries.

New Seasonal Brews & Ciders from Southern
England. All housed in a Giant Marquee

Opening Hours
Friday 6-11pm

Saturday 12 - 3pm and 6 - 11pm
Sunday 12-3 and 6-10.30pm

Where else but at the Boundary in Guide Bridge can you find a beer festival housed under a giant Marquee, where a selection of micro and regional breweries are represented. Traditional styles can be found along with new seasonal brews, some 50 plus ales and beers are available, from fruit beers to session beers to the strong and powerful (not for the faint hearted). Some interesting tastes are promised. Friday and Saturday evening sessions have live music and for the connoisseur who likes to just stand and drink in the quiet atmosphere, the lunch time sessions are ideal. The Boundary is easily accessible by train (Guide Bridge Railway Station) and bus routes from Stockport, Ashton and Manchester.



LOCAL HAUNTS

by Pete Massey

This month we turn our attention to the Gladstone on Hillgate. A few weeks ago it burst back to life after a long period of inactivity. Just as suddenly it has gone back to sleep again, with occasionally one eye open in the room above the vaults. In the cellar is a toad which I chanced upon one evening in Edgeley whilst checking out various hostelries. All pubs need a toad in the cellar as a familiar for the spirits.

I had been informed of things in the cellar worth looking into, but, before I was able to muster my forces and organise a 'bust', the curtains were closed on the Gladstone, leaving my toad alone with the mysterious 'lady' in the cellar, who has been seen by a number of people. There are also bricked up entrances to the familiar Stockport tunnels. One or two landlords have tentatively offered to unbrick one or two - watch this space!

In the vault of the Gladstone many people have reported that whilst sitting or leaning on the bar they have felt the presence of someone coming through the door, though no-one had, of course. I myself have heard the footsteps walking across the floor of the room above the vault when there was only the landlord and myself downstairs in the whole pub.

The Gladstone was originally known as the 'Bishop Blaize', named after the patron saint of woodworkers, in the days before the cotton mills came to Stockport and the ensuing industrial, political and social changes which were to take place over the next hundred years or so. In the area of Middle Hillgate where the Bishops started there were at one time 30 public houses and 11 beer retailers on the main road alone. The Salvation Army on Hillgate was originally two pubs, one being the Pack Horse which has moved to its present site on the next corner.

Behind the Gladstone is Hope's Carr, the scene of the 1967 Stockport air disaster and also the site of the first silk throwing mill in the country, before cotton took over. It was founded by an Englishman who brought back with him, after a visit to Italy, two Italians and the patent of the manufacturing process. Unfortunately for the two Italian gentlemen, a disgruntled lady member of the family took a trip over to Stockport and murdered them. They were buried at Macclesfield church cemetery, now a car park.

Silk gave way to cotton and many Irish immigrants settled around Hillgate and Edgeley. The economy was struggling with the costs of the Napoleonic wars and the excesses of the Prince Regent and the Irish were looked on as the cause of the hardships by providing cheap labour.

In June 1852 a Royal Proclamation was issued banning processions and the wearing and carrying in public any religious regalia that wasn't Protestant. For the previous 19 years the Catholic scholars had held a procession through the town without any problems. The town authorities dithered, as they still do, and decided to let the procession go ahead and keep their fingers crossed. The day arrived on June 27th 1852. The procession proceeded along its usual route, 'minded' by hundreds of fellow Irish from communities in Manchester and Salford. There was no trouble on the way, due no doubt to the advance guard of a couple of hundred navvies carrying pick-axe handles.

That afternoon, two Irish chaps walked into the Bishop Blaize for a jar or two. They were feeling a bit cocky after the day's display of Irish solidarity. As they passed through the pub one of them knocked off the hat of this English chap sat at a table. Now, in those days in Stockport, the knocking off of hats was considered an insult of the grossest kind - half the town's economy was built on them.

Not surprisingly a brawl ensued spilling out into Hillgate and throughout the town, causing the Riot Act to be read out three times. The only two Catholic churches in the town were sacked, there was much destruction of property and many injured persons. Unfortunately, there was one fatality - the result of a 'home goal' by the Irish.

Next month - mortuaries in the cellar.

THE KINGS ARMS

BLOOM STREET, SALFORD

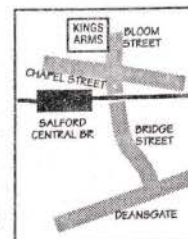


REAL ALE
SALFORD

Dave and Sue Price invite you to try the fine range of beer, cider and foods in Salford's

Premier Free House

Constantly Changing Range of Beers on 13 handpumps



ASHTON'S
PREMIER
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THE
STATION

SAT 11.30 - 3.00
7.00 - 11.00
SUNDAY
USUAL TIMES

"... is head and shoulders above any other free house in Tameside in beer terms. The ever changing selection of real ale (invariably in good condition) from independent breweries from far & wide is to say the least impressive."

NINE TOWNS BITTER

WARRINGTON ST. ASHTON-U-LYNE NEXT TO BYPASS

STOCKPORT AND SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

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

August 95	August 95
<p>Thursday 10th - Monthly branch meeting, Arden Arms, Millgate Stockport. Starts 8.00pm</p>	<p>Monday 4th September - Social, Gladstone, Hillgate, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm. Meet in Red Bull if still closed.</p>
<p>Monday 14th - Social, Tiviot, Tiviot Dale, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm</p>	<p>Advance Notice - on the weekend of 20-22 October we will be running a trip to Herefordshire to present the cider and perry awards from Stockport Beer Festival. The winners this year are two of the bigger firms, Westons and Dunkertons so a minibus may be run if there are enough interested parties (and volunteer drivers!). We would aim to leave Stockport Friday evening and return on Sunday, arriving back early evening with B&B accommodation in Ross-on-Wye. Could all those definitely interested contact John Clarke on 477 1973 by the end of August at the latest.</p>
<p>Friday 18th - Stagger in Rusholme. Starts 7.00pm, Grafton, Grafton Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock (Buses 191 or 42 from Stockport will take you close) or join at the Albert, Walmer Street, Rusholme at 8.30.</p>	<p><i>High Peak branch covers Romiley, Marple, Bredbury, Woodley and all points north. They have notified Opening Times of the following events:</i></p>
<p>Monday 21st - Social, Romper, Ringway. Apparently the 369 from Stockport will take you almost there! Catch 8.45 from Stockport Bus Station.</p>	<p>Monday 11th - Monthly branch meeting, Buck & Hawthorn, Ashton-u-Lyne. Aim to get there by 8.30.</p>
<p>Thursday 24th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport (see article on page 2).</p>	
<p>Wednesday 30th - Trip to Passage-way Brewery, Liverpool. Minibus departs Royal Oak, Didsbury at 6.15 and the Crown, Heaton Lane at 6.30. Phone 477 1973 to book a place.</p>	

FORTHCOMING BEER FESTIVALS



September 14-16 Bangor Beer Festival, Student Union Bar, 5 mins BR, 3 mins Town Centre 50 plus Real Ales from Wales and Britain plus ciders. 6-11 Thurs, Fri Sat 12-4 Fri & Sat.

October 27-29. Denbigh Beer Festival. Just about the friendliest and best of the smaller festivals.

Welsh Beer of the Year selection reflected by choice of 43 Welsh Beers. Thurs 6-11, Friday 6-11, Sat 12-4 and 6-11.

OPENING TIMES

ON THE INTERNET - 2

It would hardly be true to say things are moving remorselessly forward to the launch of Interactive Opening Times, but a slow grinding progress is being made as we negotiate space on servers. The launch - still planned for mid October - will include interactive pub thoughts and a letters forum, as well as (parts) of OT in downloadable form. Other ideas are being bandied about. If anyone out there has something to contribute in the form of an idea or maybe some time, I would be grateful to hear from them via (for the moment) snail mail, either via the editor or at CPPR (addresses on page 5). It should be stressed that this is a purely local venture.

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



MANCHESTER MATTERS

Although it was covered in our news pages last month, I cannot let the opening of the Head of Steam, by Deansgate Station, pass unremarked. In these days of theme pubs that are more gimcrack than (except in name) magic, it's a delight to see a place where a serious theme has been carried through in an authentic manner. Here you can relax on a platform bench from Wragby in Lincolnshire, or mourn the demise of the coal industry with the Taff Valley Railway's map of collieries. Some have criticised the prices, some of which are indeed excessive (£1.89 for Hop Back Summer Lightning, and a truly horrifying £2.19 for Biddenden cider); many prices, however, are notably cheap for the City Centre (£1.15 for Hansons Mild), so the advice must be to drink with care - fortunately, prices are clearly displayed. Quixotic pricing aside, though, this is an ambitious and attractive venture which deserves to flourish.



by Rhys Jones

There's nothing flourishing, though, about Openshaw's Halfway House, now permanently closed with most windows boarded up after fire damage, nor yet about the Gorton Arms in Gorton, which now sells neither draught nor keg beer, the sale of the occasional can sufficing to meet the needs of the few remaining customers. Here closure seems the inevitable end of a potentially excellent pub which could well be seen as a casualty of Banks's over-hasty acquisition of a job-lot of national brewers' cast-offs.



There's a brighter spot on the East Manchester scene at the Strawberry Duck in Clayton, where new managers Christine and Bernard Sullivan recently took over. The "guest beer" spot here is now occupied by two beers from the Duck's sister establishment, the Millgate brew-pub in Failsforth - the original Willy Booth's Bitter and the new, well-hopped Sam Mac's (3.8%ABV). These are excellent beers well worth trying in either establishment - the Millgate is the more lavishly appointed of the two, but the Duck has the advantage of a characterful canalside location. And there's more new beer around in the shape of Samuel Allsopp's English Stout, from the small pilot plant in Ind Coope's Burton-on-Trent brewery; this splendidly dry stout is at the City Arms in the City Centre and the Scruffy Murphy's at All Saints (Chorlton-on-Medlock) and Owens Park (Fallowfield).

Still in Fallowfield, the Brewers Arms is the latest Whitbread real ale emporium to get a handpump for Symonds Old Hazy cider, while the Friendship on Wilmslow Road no longer sells Hydes Mild - Hydes Light is still on sale on electric pump, however, and there's also a handpump for Summer Ale (and, no doubt, the seasonal beers that will succeed it). Finally, the Hungry Horse in Wythenshawe no longer sells Draught Bass.



Deansgate's Head of Steam

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(0T136)

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 £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £14

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £6

Lorraine York, 54 Lime Grove, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 1PF

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





A range change at the *Ladybrook* in Bramhall sees the loss of Tetley Bitter, the loss of the guest beer and the introduction of Caffrey's Nitrokeg. Oh dear...Mind you it always was a staunch Boddies drinkers' house, it's just a shame the mild is still keg .

The *Queens Head (Turners Vaults)* in Stockport has had its 5-yearly lick of paint and jolly smart it looks, too. The brewery have done a good job and no character has been lost. The colours, for the interested, are Oatmeal, Chestnut and Donkey Brown (ahem). We are told that Turners will also be losing its Museum Ale. Rumours are that the beer could be for the axe as Sam Smiths need the capacity to brew some thing else, a stout has been mentioned...

Edgeley snippets 1: *The Greyhound* (Boddingtons and guests) is in the throes of a refurbishment, more news on this one later...Edgeley 2: *The Joseph Worrall* (formerly the Windsor Castle) apparently has Richard Cobden's Bitter as a permanent guest....Edgeley 3: the same beer has made an appearance at the *Woolpack*, things are looking good for Stockport's newest brewery...Edgeley 4: Vaux Waggle Dance (the honey beer) is available at both the *Swan* and the *Jolly Crofter*...Edgeley 5: signs of life at the (currently closed) *Pineapple*? Surely not...

A recent visit to Magic Pub Co's *Frog & Railway* in Heaton Mersey revealed a guest beer alongside the standard Magic range of Websters Green Label, Boddies and Bass. Theakstons Bitter was, however. A less than imaginative choice. Surely Magic can do better than this, or then again...

More from Edgeley - a recent visit to the *Alexandra* on Northgate Road revealed a cask mild loss, the pub is now selling Robinsons keg Three Shires Mild.

The *Gladstone* on Hillgate, Stockport, is closed once more. Rumours fly as to the reasons for this. All that concerns us, though, is when will it re-open? Word on the street is - soon, possibly by the time you read this. More news when we have it.

Major changes afoot at the *Crown* in Cheadle following the retirement of veteran licensee Ralph Heatley. The pub is to be totally refurbished with a bigger bar, a bigger kitchen, major work in the cellar and even a new frontage. This coincides with the arrival at the pub of a new management team in the form of Philip Ridyard and Bonnie Lee who come from the Oddfellows in Hyde. Philip tells us that the aim is to give the pub more character but at the same time keep its strong local trade. Once the cellar work is complete the standard beer range of Hydes Mild and Bitter will be

supplemented by the new Hydes seasonal brews and when these are not available, Hydes Light. Beer quality should be good as Philip and Bonnie steered the Oddfellows into the Good Beer Guide. More on this after the builders have been in.

The *Micker Brook* on Councillor Lane in Cheadle opened its doors on July 17t. This is a fairly standard 'Brewers Fayre' operation by Whitbread decorated in what can best be described as a 'country kitchen' style with lots of wood panelling and bare brick in a generally open plan layout. As you might guess, the accent is mainly on food with some thing like 70% of the pub set aside for eating. Meals will be served from 1130am to 10pm and children are welcome. The beers on opening were Boddies Bitter (£1.38), Flowers IPA (£1.49) and Castle Eden Ale (£1.47), not unreasonable prices for this type of operation. Boddies will remain as the standard house beer with the manager (Scott Bannon) being able to vary the other two with other beers from the Whitbread stable. A sign at the bar inviting top-ups if required is a nice touch.

Festivals Galore

In-house beer festivals are becoming more and more popular with the more enterprising of our local pubs. Early September sees not one but two such events.

In Audenshaw the *Boundary*, which is just a couple of minutes walk from Guide Bridge Station is staging its "First British Beer Festival" with some 50+ beers ranging from fruit beers, session beers, seasonal ales plus a selection of ciders. Licensee Len Roper tells us that these will be housed in a giant marquee next to the pub and the festival will run on September 8th, 9th and 10th. The Friday and Saturday evenings will feature live music and commemorative glasses will be available.

Apart from trains to Guide Bridge, there are a variety of buses from Manchester, Stockport and Ashton that will take you there. This is Len's first venture along these lines and deserves every support.

In Stockport, the *Crown* on Heaton Lane will also be running a beer festival from 4th to 10th September featuring about 50 beers in total. All the handpumps will be in use and there will be a blackboard detailing those which are currently available from the cellar. The beers will comprise full ranges from Jennings and Harts plus many rarities from the South West, a part of the country whose beers to Crown is making something of a speciality of these days.

Will these include the newly voted Champion Beer of Britain, the Cottage Brewery's Norman's Conquest? Licensee Steve James isn't saying but he does promise on or two surprises. The festival will be accompanied by a range of other in-house events running from free raffles, a hot-pot supper and live music on, hopefully, both the Friday and Saturday.

Later in the month there will also be in-house festivals at the *Head of Steam* on Whitworth Street and the newly opened *Wetherspoons* on Deansgate, both in the City Centre.

The *Howcroft* in Bolton will also be running a major festival at the end of October - more on this one nearer the time.