

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES



No:
160

FREE

AUGUST 1997

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Caught Red Handed

The brewing industry's near-hysterical campaign against full-measure was torpedoed last month when the *Observer* newspaper revealed that Scottish Courage has been secretly encouraging its pub managers to serve short measures and so help maximise the company's profits.

Former managers for Scottish Courage told the observer of private meetings where they were urged to keep measures short with large heads and were warned never to discuss these arrangements with customers.

Peter Love, the general secretary of the National association of Licensed House Managers said he was aware of the issue: "Companies expect to receive a surplus, and if managers don't produce it they can face disciplinary action. With careful pouring, you can get 96 pints out of a barrel which actually holds 88. At £1.50 a pint you are making an extra £12....The obvious answer is a standard size lined glass."

CAMRA has estimated that as many as one in four pints could be short being poured into brim-measure glasses with a large head.

A former manager at Scottish Courage owned pubs in the east Midlands told the paper that the brewery could save over £2000 at a single pub over 6-9 weeks in accumulated 'surplus stock'. Area managers held meetings attended by licensees at which sales figures and 'stock surpluses' for each pub were compared, "Brewery mangers do not tell you to deliver short measure. They do not put it that way. They say that bigger and better heads make bigger and better profits. Everyone knows head on beer is a mischief, but no-one has worked out how many people are being ripped off and how much extra the breweries are making."

Scottish Courage was quick to deny the allegations, saying that managers followed national guidelines stating pints had to be 95% liquid. "We are committed to providing a full pint to customers which includes the head on the beer. Head will vary depending on customer preferences, but are still within the set guidelines," a spokeswoman told the *Observer*.

Not that these denials are cutting much ice where it matters - with the Government. Consumer Affairs Minister Nigel Griffiths, reacting to similar accusations, said: "These are very serious allegations which must be investigated. I am determined to clamp down on it." He also made it clear to the trade press that legislation to implement lined glasses **will** be introduced de-

spite the smokescreen of spurious arguments being thrown up by an industry which must surely realise by now that this is one battle it has well and truly lost.

Crown Update

Regular readers will know that the fate of the Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport, the town's premier pub for choice of real ales, has been in the balance for some time. This is because Greenalls in their infinite wisdom decided that it had to be turned into a tenancy and so threatening not only the continuation of the guest beers which have made the pub such a local institution, but also the livelihood of managers Steve and Lorraine James.



Steve put proposals to Greenalls which would have resulted in the pub becoming a tenanted operation but continuing in similar vein. After weeks of silence, and much uncertainty, Greenalls have now made their plans known. The Crown is no longer to become a tenanted pub - instead it is to be sold off! However despite this declaration of intent, as we went to press the pub still wasn't officially on the market. So, Steve and Lorraine still don't know where they stand and it is to their eternal credit that throughout this stressful period the beer range and quality has been, and continues to be, as good as ever.

This shabby treatment of hard-working licensees and the evident contempt for the Crown's loyal customers is to the eternal shame of Greenalls. Shame, however, seems to be something of a precious commodity where the operations of this company are concerned.

Copies of the award winning Viaducts & Vaults 2 - The Stockport Pub Guide are still available - see Page 12-

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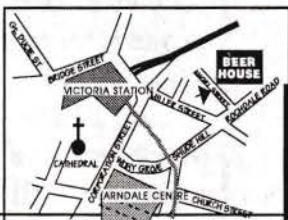
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For the second article in this series we move from Greater Manchester's oldest established brew-pub to the newest, the Church Inn at Uppermill.

This quite low-key operation first came to wider attention at the Oldham Beer Festival in April where drinkers were offered an intensely bitter Saddleworth More Bitter. Little was known of the brewery and it took many local enthusiasts by surprise as many new brew-pub operations are well trailed in advance. A visit was essential. The Church Inn, dating from the 13th century, is situated in 25 acres of grounds on Church Lane, just next to Uppermill church, up a hill and about a mile or so from the rest of the village which can be seen nestling in the valley below from the pub and its adjacent brewhouse. The brewery is the brainchild of Julian Taylor whose family bought the Church Inn five years ago. Going through the deeds there was a reference to an old brewhouse which turned out to be still standing next to the pub, although the last beer was produced about 130 years ago, the building having more recently been used as a pigsty!



Although Julian has no brewing background he "likes a few real ales" and, inspired by the award winning Sair Inn, just over the Pennines near Huddersfield, he "woke up one day last November saying 'I'm opening this by Christmas!' - but I didn't" he adds. In fact the brewery came on stream on 14 January and hasn't looked back since.

The equipment is largely home-made with many of the vessels coming from the tea and coffee industry. Technical assistance was offered by Alan Green, a brewer with 20-years experience at Charringtons and who now works at the Sarsons Vinegar brewery in Middleton. The result is a compact and professional brewing plant in the restored brewhouse, which is a listed building.

The ingredients are very traditional - Maris Otter malt, Fuggles, Goldings and Cascade hops, yeast from John Willie Lees and water from the brewery's own spring (they even own a shire horse!). Julian currently brews 3 days a week, producing up to 12 barrels, although average sales at the pub, which is where the beers are almost entirely sold at the moment, are about 6 barrels a week.

Three beers are currently produced - Saddleworth More (3.8%), not quite so bitter as at Oldham, but a fine mid-brown session beer with a good hop character; Bert Corner Bitter (4%), a golden, hoppy, full-bodied beer; and Shaftbender (5.4%), Julian's favourite and perhaps the best out of a good range, a rich stouty-type beer with the flavours of black and chocolate malt balancing a good hop character.

They have been very well-received by the locals. And so they should be for not only are these quality products, the cost-savings of brewing on the premises are passed on to the customers (which is not usually the practice in other similar operations, something which has caused some adverse comment at other brewpubs, apparently) so Saddleworth More is just £1 a pint in the pub, Bert Corner is £1.20 and Shaftbender a real bargain at £1.30. Other beers are planned including a Xmas special, a dark mild (only keg Bass mild is sold at the moment), and Sams Revenge which comes from a recipe provided by an ex-brewer from Websters and will be a dark Yorkshire Bitter with wheat in the recipe. Other one-offs will also be considered. The Church Inn is certainly worth a visit, and not just for the house beers. Another guest beer is sold (Kitchen Stout when OT called), alongside handpumped Websters and John Smiths. Children and dogs are welcome, there

is a function room, a restaurant and bar meals are served 12.00-2.30 and 6.00-9.30 Monday to Friday and 12.00-9.30 on Saturdays and Sundays. A welcome and well-run addition to the local brewing scene. **J.C.** The Church Inn can be contacted on 01457 820902. Free houses reading this should note that the beers are not generally supplied to the free trade at the moment.

The Ladybrook

The Ladybrook on Fir Road in Bramhall, owned by Greenalls, has recently reopened after another major refurbishment. The vault at the rear of the pub has been retained, but the attractive inglenook feature around the fireplace has gone and the room at the front right which previously held a full-size snooker table, probably unique in the area, has been incorporated into the general drinking area. The overall effect is pleasant and comfortable but little different from so many others.

Real ales are Boddingtons Bitter at 153p and Draught Bass at a very reasonable 156p. In the past, the regulars have been so committed to their Boddies that the pub has struggled to sell any other beers, and it will have to be seen how long the Bass lasts. Perhaps rotating guest beers from independent breweries would be a better way of extending interest in cask beer. Food is available lunchtimes and evenings seven days a week from the "Keeper's Choice" menu, a new theme recently introduced by Greenalls. Exactly how this differs from a "Miller's Kitchen" is probably known only to the marketing men who dream up such things in the first place.

Until about nine years ago this impressive mock-Tudor pub had a largely unspoilt 1930s interior, which was swept away in the last refurbishment. It's hard to believe that anything more was needed than a lick of paint and some new upholstery, and it is regrettable that Greenalls have seen fit to spend a lot more money on it so soon afterwards, and in the process get rid of two of the most distinctive remaining features. **PE.**

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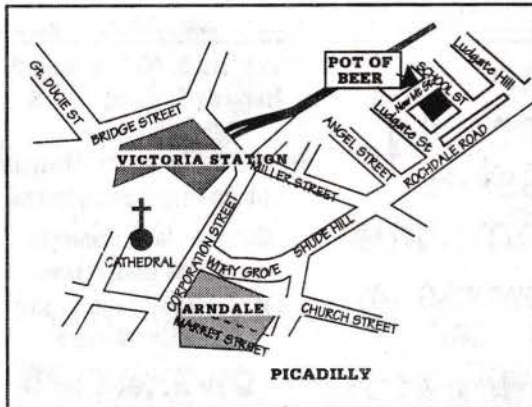
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Pub Of The Month

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



AUGUST

In the Stockport & South Manchester area we really do have some excellent pubs selling superb beer and which deserve wider recognition. One pub that fits this description is our Pub of the Month for August - the Cross Keys on Adswold Road, Adswold, where Jane and John Maguire have been steadily building up trade over the past 16 months.

The Cross Keys is a large, multi-roomed Hydes' pub, originally a coaching house complete with stables, which has been extended over the years without losing its character. For too long it struggled to achieve its full potential but with the arrival of John and Jane from the Anvil in Benchill, things began to look up. John had to run the Anvil with a firm hand (and of which he is now able to recite many a good tale!) and this experience has stood him in good stead in building up the Cross Keys into a thriving community local, once again proving that it is hard working and committed licensees that make good pubs, rather than other less tangible things like location. The list of community and charity events that the pub can boast is impressive by any standards. The pub has no fewer than five football teams that play at weekends - and is the chosen watering hole for local league Adswold United, newly promoted to the premier division. Behind the pub is a lovingly tended bowling green, regularly used by the ladies and gents teams that play Monday to Thursday nights. The proceeds from the recent Kenny Hackney memorial mixed pairs bowls tournament have been donated to local cancer charity. Of course one essential ingredient of a good pub is the quality of the beer. Hard work and commitment in the cellar ensure that the Hydes Mild, Bitter and seasonal Billy Westwood's Bitter are served in tip-top condition.

Combining all these ingredients in a clean, relaxing pub make the Cross Keys one of the most improved pubs in the area and so richly deserving of our Pub of the Month award. The presentation is on Thursday 28th August when a great time will no doubt be had by one and all. **SB.**

The local branch of CAMRA decide on a Pub of the Month by a democratic vote at the monthly branch meeting.

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OPENING TIMES

LETTERS



From Bob Bromley:

I think it's time Curmudgeon retired. I can't believe the drivel that fills the column these days!

The criticism of Lees is completely unjustified from experience of the King & Barnes ale trail here in Sussex. The two ale trails would appear to be run along exactly the same lines; one pint of the brewery's beer in each pub with an exhortation not to drink and drive. I have not heard a word of criticism of the King & Barnes ale trail in over 15 years of operation even though virtually all the pubs are inaccessible by public transport. As for the suggestion that any drink should be consumable: how would it benefit Lees if everyone went round drinking soft drinks etc.? I might concede, that with the number of pubs to be visited, but not as a concession to women, a half pint in each could be appropriate.

Then there is criticism of road humps for driving people away from a pub. What hypocrisy! Now, suddenly, it's convenient to have a go at something which may discourage people driving to the pub. Anyway, are we really supposed to believe that forcing people to slow down in their cars, presumably adding just a few seconds to their journey, is going to dissuade them from driving to a pub? And Curmudgeon must be living on another planet if he (?) thinks that the majority of motorists stick to the speed limit these days.

PS I am surprised by the total lack of response to me earlier letter regarding the Curmudgeon column; is there no interest in the column from the readership?

From Rhys Jones:

Pete Soane's letter (OT, July) echoes much recent CAMRA concern over the serving of handpumped beer via tight sparklers. But even those most vociferous against this practice concede that many more robust beers - "excessively hopped", as it has sometimes, unbelievably, been put - can stand up to this dispense method quite happily. Manchester beers in general, and Holts in particular, have more than once been cited as equal to the worst that tight sparklers can throw at them. Indeed, it was once quite common for Holts to be served through electric pumps (with far greater agitation than a sparkler-free handpump), and I recall no complaints of deficient bitterness then.

If Holts is indeed less bitter than it once was, perhaps we should seek the reason elsewhere. Has the beer been subtly "softened" to appeal to a wider market? (The Boddingtons effect, though mercifully to a far lesser extent). I think CAMRA members, particularly in the North, should be wary of jumping aboard a largely Southern-led anti-sparkler bandwagon which, while not without some basis in fact, risks blaming all the ills of draught beer on one easily scapegoated piece of equipment while ignoring the influence of a host of other factors, not least the cellar skills of the licensee. (I also think that a lot of the Southern beers which the sparkler supposedly ruins would be a lot better beers to start with if they had a few more hops in them. But that, perhaps, is another story).

From Oscar Bloemfontein:

Whilst I generally have no sympathy with the swan-neck/tight sparkler argument (which seems largely the preserve of a few southerners who wouldn't know a good pint if they fell over one), I think Pete Soane is bang on when it come to the effect of this dispense method on our beloved Holts.

Last year I had the chance to sample of 'tight sparkler' Holts Bitter and then try a pint from the same cask but drawn directly from the barrel. What a difference! The handpumped stuff was reasonable enough but not quite the Holts that built its formidable reputation. Down in the cellar, though, it was a superb, classic pint of awesomely dry bitter.

Perhaps local CAMRA branches could prevail on a friendly licensee to arrange some blind tastings to see if this was just a one-off or whether there really is a difference.

IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

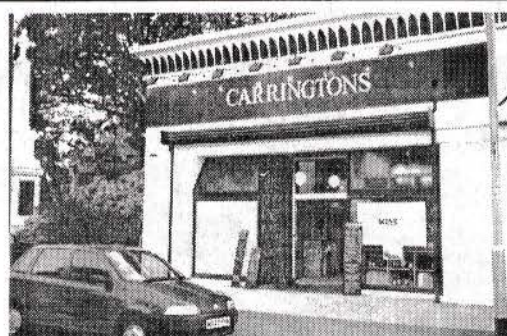
At long last, CAMRA's campaign for full measure looks like bearing fruit. The Consumer Affairs Minister, Nigel Griffiths, has made it crystal clear where he stands on this issue and is talking about full-pint legislation being in place in a year or so from now, although a longer run-in will be allowed to accommodate the gradual replacement of pub glasses. We're not there yet, though, and you can be guaranteed that we will hear even more wild and hysterical arguments from the drinks trade before the measure reaches the statute book.

They won't win, though, because they have nothing positive to offer as a solution to the snort-measure problem. They have cried wolf too often, and now no-one believes them. Instead of whipping up hysteria and conjuring up ever more ludicrous scenarios of what will happen when pubs have to serve pints that actually consist of 20 fluid ounces, the brewers and trade bodies would gain more credibility if they accepted the position and set about bringing in lined glasses voluntarily. After all, as Nigel Griffiths put it, "only those businesses which are serving short measure are going to resist this move".

John Clarke

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STAGGER

with Rhys Jones

Nearly midsummer it may have been, but it was still a damp and gloomy night as we gathered to explore the pubs of Hyde Road. Though this major route boasts fewer pubs than it once did, the full crawl is still rather a lot for one evening, so we started adjacent to the new relief road, at Hydes' **Travellers Call**. Long slated for demolition under a now shelved road widening scheme, the "Travs" has, perhaps understandably, been rather neglected over the years. Still, even at 7 o'clock, the narrow front vault which sees most of the pub's trade was well filled with regulars. As if the unspoilt fabric of the pub wasn't enough, Manchester's own "log-end" dartboard proclaimed its status as one of the city's dying breed of plain and simple boozers. Hydes Mild and Bitter are served, both on electric pump. Both were very good, with the Mild perhaps marginally preferred. It's great to see an old-fashioned pub like this still doing well; and if the brewery could be persuaded to spend money on a sensitive upgrading, to complement improvements such as new floor covering already installed by the licensee, so much the better.

Passing a transport cafe and a car showroom, it was just round the corner to our next call, the **Imperial**. Once a fine traditional local, this was altered several years ago to its present one-room state. It still has two distinct "sides", though, so you take your choice of lino and TV or carpet and dralon. The only pumpclip advertised Castle Eden Ale, but the only real ale available was Boddingtons Bitter; on this occasion, sadly, this was no more than average.

As we left the Imperial, the **Nag's Head** confronted us. A traditional street-corner pub in its external aspect, inside it proved to have had much, though not quite all, of its internal structure removed - we sat in the old snug, which though fitted out with an

odd assortment of furniture gave some idea of how the pub must have been. The pub's odder features included a partially dismantled nitro keg fount, and a bar stool occupied by tins of pet food which had no obvious owner. Numerous posters, for karaoke and "ladies nite exotic dancers", suggested that the pub is now largely given over to what might loosely be termed entertainment. Once again, the only real ale was Boddies Bitter, which was no better than at the Imperial.

Passing the ghostly presences of the Rock and the Victoria, we came with some relief to the **Coach & Horses**, on the corner of Belle Vue Street. Here we were firmly back in a real pub, with fine tiled bar and classic two-room layout (though some of us did spot the tell-tale signs of the wooden partition which once divided the vault into two smaller rooms). Though occasionally quiet, this place has a superb community atmosphere which soon grows on you, and is truly a traditional local for the connoisseur. Happily its local trade is these days augmented by customers from the multi-screen cinema opposite, though our visit was rather too early to encounter them. Robinsons Hatters Mild and Best Bitter are available on handpump. Both were exceptionally good, the Bitter being rated beer of the night.

Bass's **Midland** didn't detain us long, having reverted to keg beer (but shamefully retaining its fake cider handpump), so it was on to Hydes' **Pineapple**. This is a one-room modern estate pub whose two drinking areas take the form of interlocking rectangles. The more lounge-style of the two boasts an attractive high ceiling and numerous local photographs of interest - the "vault" is dominated by pool and TV. Electric-pumped Mild and Bitter were both good, up to the impressive standard set earlier by the Travellers Call, and here we could also try Billy Westwood's Bitter, which pleased us greatly - both its availability and its quality.

There's none of this "separate drinking areas" nonsense at JW Lees' **Suburban**, our next port of call. Here the lounge is comfortable and sedate, and the vault is down-to-earth and robust, and doesn't care who knows it. Truth to tell, the vault could perhaps do with a little care and attention, and by 8.30 when we arrived it certainly had that "lived-in" look. Nonetheless, it's a fine room in a fine pub, and enlivened by a fascinating early map of the district and some great full-size cartoons by a former (?) regular. In a side room off the vault, further cartoons chronicle the adventures of the local morris dancers whose HQ this was for many years - in fact, they've not long been taken off the pub's hanging sign in favour of a stereotyped suburban semi which looks more like Surbiton than Gorton. Lees Mild and Bitter are on handpump here, and both were comfortably above average.

Next came the evening's second Robinsons pub, the **Plough**. This fairly recently became a listed building, largely on account of the splendid vault with its carved bar gantry, and this was naturally the room we made for. Another well-used vault to match the Suburban's. This had a good local atmosphere without being the busiest pub we'd visited so far. Hatters Mild and Best Bitter are sold on electric pump, and while the Bitter was well above average, the Mild was disappointing by comparison. It should be pointed out, though, that the pub was under a temporary licensee when we called.

On now to the **Lord Nelson**, one of the oldest buildings in Gorton. Sadly, though, its owners over the years have managed to expunge most of the evidence of its historic nature. Externally, a modern (sixties?) block has been crudely tacked on to the front; internally, it's a single, characterless meandering room. A very noisy room by now, too, so we took advantage of a break in the rainfall to sip our halves of Boddies outside. The beer struggled to reach even the modest standards set by Boddingtons earlier in the evening, and we were soon gone.

Down a muddy (well, it was tonight) path at the side of the Lord Nelson lies the **Vale Cottage**. This is another old pub which has been much altered over the years, but to far better effect. It now has the atmosphere of a bustling, slightly up-market country pub, and little touches of class are all around once you start to notice them - for example the substantial doormat to wipe your feet after that muddy lane. The beer policy's been a little disappointing of late; the excellent Taylors Landlord was replaced by Theakstons XB (a decent beer, but not quite the same), and while guests from such as Mansfield and Greene King have appeared more recently, they

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have by no means been regularly available (and weren't tonight). That said, the XB was comfortably above average, and the service and atmosphere pleased us greatly; Wilsons and Websters bitters were also available on handpump had we wished to try them. Back along the muddy footpath, across the road, and into Holts' Waggon & Horses. No doormat here - but what d'you expect at Holts' prices? The pub was packed, with two dartboards going, but its linked

drinking areas made friendly room for all. "The beer's crap", said a departing regular greeting us. He lied - in fact the beer (handpumped mild and bitter) was very good indeed; but for the supremely good Coach & Horses, the bitter would have been judged beer of the night. Only one to go now: Marstons' Friendship, the last pub actually on Hyde Road until you get to Denton. Here we were back to a good old-fashioned multi-room layout; the vault - my favourite room here - was busy, a disco seemed to be winding down in the lounge, but we found seats in the very pleasant rear lounge (which for reasons I keep meaning to enquire into is known as the Redford lounge). With its own bar servery, this was a splendid place to relax over our final pints and contemplate the advantages of the multi-room pub. The handpumped beers here are Marstons Bitter and - remarkable - two milds, from Banks's and Batemans. We chose the Batemans (known here as "dark mild" to distinguish it from the lighter Banks's), and were well satisfied. A fitting end to a Stagger on which we'd enjoyed some great pubs and fine beer. As ever, the above simply reflects the subjective experiences of a few of us on one particular night - it doesn't set out to be a once-and-for-all judgement. Best advice is to try the pubs for yourself, and see what you think.

The Samuel Finney

Opened to the public on Monday 9th June, the Samuel Finney is built on the site of the old Rex Cinema and is the latest addition to the Wilmslow pub scene.

Spending in excess of £1 million, Watling Street Inns have created over two floors an impressive new pub incorporating features of a wine bar with a restaurant and a pub. Upstairs is the cocktail bar (Galaxy Bar - nitro-keg only) which leads onto a balcony overlooking the Parkway and the fields beyond. Downstairs there are numerous small drinking areas (some non-smoking), each styled in such a way to give its own character. The attention to detail is remarkable and period features have been used to great effect.

The pub takes its name from Samuel Finney (1719-1798) who was a local artist and JP and who became the portrait miniaturist to the court of George III. After making a fortune in London, he retired to Wilmslow and became the town's first magistrate in 1770. On opening night, Watling Street Inns managed to arrange for his resurrection as he was seen wandering through the pub in period costume, grinning in approval at disbelieving customers (*then again, it might have been an actor...ed.*)

Four cask beers are sold - Robinsons Hatters Mild (£1.50), Boddingtons Bitter (£1.70), Courage Directors (£1.70) and Theakstons XB (£1.80). It is perhaps a little soon to criticise the beer quality as the new licensees have bare got their feet in the cellar, but to date the beer has been acceptable but unremarkable. Food features strongly with both lunchtime and evening menus. This seems to be the area where the pub aims to recuperate much of its investment, especially in the evening when prices make a restaurant seem cheap. Lunchtime food is more realistically priced. There is also a separate cheese and pate bar (something akin to the Royal Oak, Didsbury but without the Oak's huge choice, helpings or value for money.

I have no doubt that Watling Street Inns are on to a money spinner with this pub which is likely to become the place to be seen in Wilmslow. If you haven't visited yet give it a try before Wilmslow's fickle and transient youth render the place unbearable. SB.



While the 1998 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival is a long way off yet (dates for your diaries will be May 28th-30th) we have already confirmed one major event for the Festival. For the first time outside London, CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championship will be held at the festival. More details nearer the time but this is one event all lovers of traditional cider and perry will not want to miss.

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8

Brown's Budget

CAMRA has welcomed the review of alcohol excise duty announced in last month's Budget. "However, we are less than pleased that before the review has reported, beer duty will go up by a penny." Said CAMRA Head of Campaigns Stephen Cox. "Prices in the pub may go up by tuppence." (The tax rise takes effect in January) "Even a small increase does nothing to tackle the serious over-taxation of beer drinkers and the traditional pub. CAMRA argued for a significant cut in duty - to save British pubs and safeguard jobs."

British beer duty is six times that in France and 10 million pints a week are imported from France in vans and cars. That is the beer sales of 7300 traditional tenanted pubs. The question has been asked how much longer this can go on without more pubs closing.

"If maintaining and slightly increasing these very high rates of tax is 'lenient' then I am a banana-flavoured alcopop." stormed Cox.

The brewing and pub retailing industries support 900,000 jobs and the Treasury's own economic model suggests a large cut in beer duty would be self-financing - by eliminating unfair cross border trade, reducing prices and saving jobs.

In his Budget the Chancellor said it was for the long-term. He must look both to the health of the industry and of the economy as the current policy will hasten the day when thousands more local pubs will have to close. It will be a cause for celebration in the off-licences and supermarkets of Calais.

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At Hydes' Anvil, Head Brewer Alan Mackie has left to take up a similar post EST[®] 1863 at Wiltshire-based regional brewers, Ushers.

This is good news for Ushers drinkers - that brewery's beers have already improved enormously in the recent past and Alan's arrival there can only see that trend continue. Interviewing for a replacement started on Friday 18 July. Hydes also tell us that the introduction of Smooth has had no impact on cask beer sales, but instead is taking sales from Guinness and cider. Furthermore it seems that Smooth is acting as a transitional drink as cask sales are also showing an increase.

One thing that Alan Mackie will have to take on at Ushers is the brewing of beers for Salisbury-based **Gibbs Mew** who last month announced their exit from brewing. Gibbs also, bizarrely, own the Centric Pub Co who run several local pubs, some of which are now starting to stock Gibbs cask Salisbury Bitter. Hopefully the quality of this essentially nondescript beer will now improve.

Robinsons' plans to transfer their cask racking plant to Bredbury are now well advanced with the move due to take place later this year. The company are also investigating a 'smooth' beer. If this comes to fruition it will be interesting to see whether it has a similar effect on pub trade as the Hydes version. The brewery are also taking steps to dispose of some smaller town and isolated country pubs "with uncertain futures".

Greenalls have introduced a new guest beer policy. As from last month, licensees may choose the guest

beer programme they sign up to. Licensees in the tenanted and leased estate can take a guest beer provided they have sufficient throughput (usually classed as shifting a container of cask ale in a maximum of three days). There are four programmes which run on a 12-week cycle:

Standard range (4.2%ABV and less): beers changed every week and may include the likes of Tisbury, Caledonian, Riddleys, Exmoor, Burton Bridge.

Premium range (4.3%ABV and above): beers changed weekly and may include such as Mansfield, Tolly Cobbold, Adnams and Jennings.

Regional Favourites: more restrictive with beers changed every 4 weeks, current list is Gales HSB, Caledonian 80/- and Shepherd Neame Spitfire.

Quirky range: seems to offer a broad range of independent and micro breweries with a number of seasonal beers. Covers the whole gravity range and currently features Titanic, Weetwood, Rebellion and Burton Bridge amongst others.

This month should also see the (very) brief appearance of some experimental beers from **Porters**. Dave Porter tells us that these are to be 'take it to the limit beers' which will be based on Bitter, Rossendale and Sunshine. The idea is to experiment with hopping rates - some of the beers will have greatly reduced hop levels to let the malt character come through, while others will have greatly increased amounts of hops (extra-hopped Sunshine, now there's a thought...). Only about 9-gallons of each will be produced and they will go on sale at the Griffin in Haslingden and Stockport's Railway, virtually unannounced and without much notice. The first should appear in the second half of the month.



Heard at the Bar

At Exeter Beer Festival: "Julie's not a drunkard - she only likes cider anyway".

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HYDES ANVIL ALES

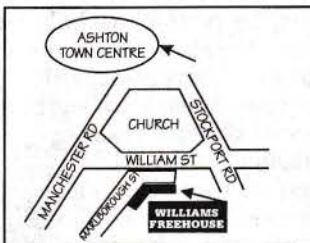
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Off-Licence Free-for-all

There's been a lot of discussion recently about the problems of underage drinking, much of it linked to the introduction of kiddie-friendly alcopops. But surely the most important factor at work is the simple ease of access to drink. There has been a tremendous growth of off-licenses in small shops where drink is only a sideline, and the supervision may well be weak. For example, a suburban newsagent near me has recently succeeded in acquiring a licence to sell alcohol, despite the fact that there are several pubs, two proper off-licenses and a supermarket within ten minutes' walk. Local people didn't exactly have a problem getting hold of a few bottles or cans if they wanted them before, so where is the need? The government are quite right too to propose to allow trading standards departments to use under-18s as decoys to try to buy alcohol, as they can already with tobacco sales. In the long-term, cigarettes may do a lot more damage to their health than a few drinks, but in the short-term, I'd feel less worried about the safety of my property if the yobboes on the corner were simply smoking fags rather than drinking cans of Hooch as well.

Speak for America

Concern for the welfare of youth has also led to somewhat illiberal suggestions that the minimum age for tobacco sales should be raised to eighteen. Some other countries, though, have already gone much further down the road of restricting the freedoms of the young. Youthful members of "Britpop" bands on their first US tour may well be taken aback to find out that they can't get a drink in a bar until they're twenty-one. Americans can risk their lives in the service of their country at eighteen, but obviously having a beer is considered more dangerous.

There's no shortage of rock stars and Hollywood actors who are quite happy to lecture us about saving the dolphin, or how Nicaragua should be governed, but fall strangely silent when it comes to what amounts to a major denial of human rights in their own backyard. It's not as if the idea is something jaw-droppingly radical, either. After all, a minimum drinking age of eighteen or less applies in Britain and most of the rest of Europe, and so do crime rates far below those in America.

Traditional Short Measures

Many Greenalls pubs display a prominent notice to the effect that "We will be pleased to top up, with beer, the glass of any customer who prefers their beer to be served without the traditional head". A more mealy-mouthed statement is hard to imagine, and in effect it seeks to justify short measure by implying that anyone who wants a full pint is a bit of an oddball who doesn't want to go along with local traditions.

And how far back does that tradition go anyway? Swan necks were unknown on this side of the Pennines a mere fifteen years ago, and I suspect the idea that Northerners like a big head on their beer has its origins in the 50s and 60s when many outlets, particularly working men's clubs, switched over to metered dispense and 24oz oversized glasses, often associated with tank beer. Before then, it probably amounted to no more than the fact that pubs in the industrial North turned their beer over more quickly than those in the rural South, and so tended to serve it with more of a natural head.

Wouldn't it be more honest if Greenalls changed their message to read "We will be pleased to top up, with beer, the glass of any customer who prefers their pint to consist of the traditional twenty fluid ounces"?

10

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Beer - The Health Drink

Recent press reports appear to have finally quashed (or should that be squashed) the myth of the beer belly. What we beer drinkers suspected all along has been confirmed by Professor David Williams of the University of Wales, Cardiff.

In fact, a pint a day could even be the basis of a weight loss diet! Professor Williams, writing in *Chemistry in Britain*, states that beer is a complete food and that its health benefits far outweigh any dangers. It is not drinking vast quantities of beer that produces the so-called beer gut, but the hoovering up of curries, kebabs and the like after a night on the sauce. Alcohol, you see, is both an appetite stimulant and an anaesthetic. "Alcohol numbs your stomach, so that you can't always tell when it's full" says the learned professor.

Beer contains no fat and no sugar, but it does contain worthwhile amounts of carbohydrates, proteins and vitamins. It is 93% water, providing an important source of the four pints of water a day that the average person requires. It is healthier than carbonated soft drinks because it does not rot the teeth and contains low levels of additives and other contaminants, which are soaked up by the yeast used in the fermentation process and then discarded. "Beer, as well as providing nutrition, also has a relaxing effect, which reduces stress. When used as part of a balanced diet, beer is beneficial to human health". So states the learned professor, an acknowledged expert in his field.

This article was taken from Pints of View, the newsletter of the Edinburgh branch of CAMRA.

CAMRA Shop

Did you forget to buy your souvenir of Stockport Beer & Cider Festival? We have a few (very few!) Festival T-shirts (medium and large only) at just £4.99 each and festival sweatshirts (XL) at only £8.95 each (P&P free in each case). Send your cheque, made payable to Stockport Beer Festival, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG.



Look at this...talk about squashed...come on editor, be REASONABLE. Sorry, no Munich YET again....

The EDITOR and this column are very nearly AT WAR NOW. I am promised 'reserved space' next month - and it will 'co-incide with the Octoberfest'. Well no it won't, actually because I was intending a seperate column on the Worlds biggest beer bash in our October issue, so Munich two months in a row is a little unlikely. As a result I am going off to Bamberg in Franconia in a towering sulk. I may feel like writing about Olympia, Kent, Derby, Peterborough and the Holsten Fest next month. Or maybe not.

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison **AUGUST '92**

Politicians in the past have often attached special importance to the "first 100 days". Opening Times was proud to celebrate its "first 100 issues". A special editorial headed '100 Not Out!' gave thanks to the writers, the distributors, and the advertisers; also those who helped with two major relaunches, and of course the original editor. The centre page spread carried a potted history - the early days, major campaigning efforts, regular features, and a reminder that there was another Opening Times that appeared in the mid-70's, and then disappeared without trace. To complete the picture, the written history was encircled by a photograph of all 100 issues. The front page dealt with the threat to two well-known East Manchester pubs - the Little Bradford and the Britannia. But they both appeared to be threatened by no more than cosmetic landscaping schemes, and CAMRA's intervention had already revealed that the Britannia was no longer required for the developments. The Little Bradford was still threatened, and Opening Times appealed to its readers to help by writing to local councillors or to the Chief Planning Officer to register their protests. (sadly, one that we later lost - ed)

It was reported that the West Coast Brewery at the King's Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock had acquired the ex-Whitbread King William IV, a short distance away in Justin Close. The intention was to transfer the brewery and the bottling plant to the more spacious ground floor of the King William.

There had been complaints from local residents about noise and disturbance from the Shady Oak, Redford Drive, Bramhall, and the police imposed a ban on outside drinking. The pub had also been forced to close at 10.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays to reduce the impact of late night revellers on nearby homes. There were plans for another renovation of the pub, and a group of residents and business people had countered with a petition in favour of keeping the pub as it was.

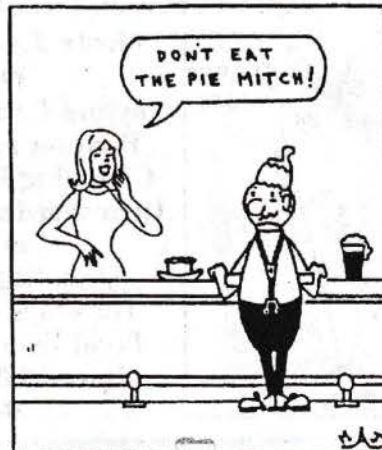
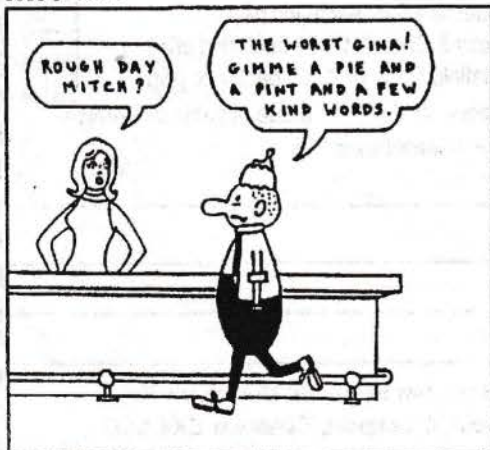
The Boddington Pub Co had finally revealed details of its long awaited guest beer scheme. About 60 pubs out of the 450-strong estate had already joined the scheme, but these were mainly the larger managed houses - the company were now hoping to enrol the bulk of its pubs by the autumn.

Up to 40 guest beers were to be made available through Boddington's wholesaling subsidiary, Liquid Assets, and licensees were to be encouraged to change their guest beers on a regular basis.

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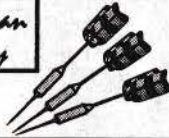
MITCH

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Fistful of Arrows

By Brian Carey



There is no question. The two best dart players in the Stockport area are Tony O'Shea and Darryl Fitton. Recently both players have underlined their supremacy with some brilliant arrows.

For instance, Tony hit two TEN DARTERS whilst winning the final of the Cheshire Open in Crewe. It was Tony's third Cheshire title since the competition started five years ago. Darryl, holder of the World record for 100,001, lifted the Tom Thumb Classic title and a cheque for a grand.

However, instead of applauding the feats of these two sporting ambassadors for the town, many local darters are saying that the pair are just too successful. Entries for both the Tom Thumb Classic and Stockport Express Individual competitions were surprisingly low. In a town that boasts a proud record for the sport, it should not be difficult to find 32 players a week to enter these competitions.

Yet, even with a £2000 guaranteed prize fund, with £1000 to the winner, the organisers of the Tom Thumb tournament struggled to find enough competitors to make the competition worthwhile. The reason most often given is that "Tony or Darryl will probably win it anyway, so what's the point of entering?" It has even been suggested that these players be banned from entering. Clearly this is a very short-sighted attitude. Would anyone seriously suggest that that Brazil or Germany be banned from the World Cup because they win it too often? Ridiculous, isn't it? Of course it is, but the problem won't just go away.

Perhaps Geoff Tucker's defeat of Darryl in the final of the Stockport Express Advertiser Individual Open will encourage others to have a go. But would it not be possible i.e. for some enterprising landlord to organise a "Pro-am" tournament. That way players of a certain

standard, say County Super League and above, would be paired in a doubles event with ordinary pub players.

Alternatively, a "blind draw doubles" would have a similar effect. I would be interested to hear the views of any local players on this idea. Contact me on 286-7762 and let me know what you think. In any case, have a go at the Teletaxis tournament currently underway at the Bobby Peel on Castle Street. Heats are on Fridays. If you don't enter, you can't win.

To continue my series on national successes by local players, the following should give cause for local pride. Darryl Fitton just failed to make it to the televised finals of the News of the World/Big D tournament. Despite taking out arguably the second best player in the world, Dennis Priestley, Darryl lost out to Lancashire's Brian Derbyshire in the regional final.

Lancashire player, now based in Stockport, Steve Cusick, reached the last eight of the prestigious May Day Festival Tournament at Hemsby in Norfolk. The tournament was won by current England international Mervyn King, who made such an impression in this year's Embassy. Steve went one better in the Mixed Triples. Teamed with Ronnie Barker and Sue Edwards the trio reached the semi-final.

It was another Norfolk player, Peter Wright, who stopped Steve's progress at the Vauxhall Family Darts Weekend in Great Yarmouth. But not until Steve reached the final, in front of a very strong field, which included players like Kevin Painter and Dave Askew. As well as taking the Cheshire Open title, Tony O'Shea did extremely well in the Welsh Open; only losing to the eventual winner Marshall James in the semi-final. That gave Tony 4 ranking points in the World Darts Federation Grand Prix table. Those points give Tony a ranking of equal 28th in Europe, a position he shares with Embassy World Champion Les Wallace, among others.

At a more grass roots level, Pete Connolly - who plays a lot of his darts locally, took the Marston's Friendship Inn Log End title in Gorton. In beating Dave Smith, Pete hit a thirteen dart slip-up leg. Other finalists with local connections included Graham Scowcroft, Mick Kenway and Tony Daniels.

Tom Thumb won the Cheshire Super League title, when they beat fellow Stopfordians Crown 7-2.

More locally, Nicholson Arms achieved the Stockport Licensed Houses Super League and Knock-out team trophy double. The Nich's regular team included Mark Cairney, Chris Heseltine, John McArdle, Brian Monks, Tony O'Shea, Barry Riley, Andy Wright and Paul Yates with John Taylor as non-playing captain.

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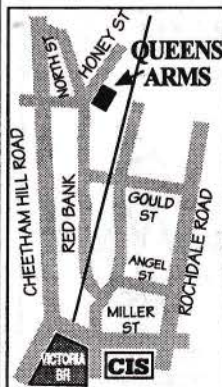
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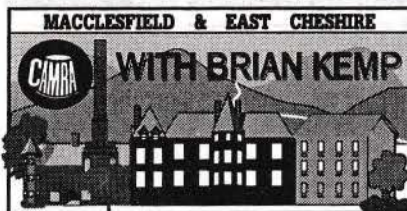
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A Tale of three 'Pities'

I have spent the last week as a patient at the Alexandra Hospital in Cheadle and during this time I have been reading American writer Bill Bryson's current best-seller "Notes from a Small Island". He came to England in 1973 and stayed for 20 years. The book is a chronicle of a valedictory tour of the country prior to returning to America with his family. What, I can hear you ask, has this to do with CAMRA? Well, bear with me! Whilst travelling around Bournemouth he makes the following observation: "...at Tuckton Bridge a once-lovely pub on the banks of the River Stour had had its lawns sacrificed to make room for a large car-park. Now it was something called a Brewers Fayre, an offshoot of the Whitbread organisation. It was awful but clearly and depressingly popular." Very perceptive for an American, eh?

Anyway, as I have lived in Macclesfield for about the same period of time, this set me to reflecting on the changes that have happened on the local pub scene during that time. What I am about to write may prove controversial on the local scene but having just been with our branch secretary and hospital visitor, Jim, to the Printers and the Star, I am feeling fairly relaxed about the matter. So here goes.

When I moved to Macclesfield in 1974, there were three pubs that were highly respected amongst local beer drinkers, viz., the Jolly Sailor, Sunderland Street; the Star Inn, London Road and the Evening Star, James Street. Come with me, if you will, and reflect and mourn on how the last two decades have treated them.

The Jolly Sailor was a magnificent Bass pub that sold super Burton-Union brewed Draught Bass. The Good Beer Guide description of the time, "An honest alehouse" summed it up perfectly. The Jolly was a basic pub in the true sense of the word, with a tap-room on the left, two sitting rooms on the right and a lounge at the back (of which more later!). Having said it was basic let me stress it was always never anything less than spotless. Landlord Ernie Austick's daughter, Sheila, looked after that. It seemed to have clean curtains practically every day! Ernie was an ex-police sergeant of the old school, who knew how to run a pub. The lounge at the back had a reputation as a debating room where Draught Bass connoisseurs of all political persuasions could indulge in friendly but frank exchanges of views only to be interrupted by Ernie leaning across the serving hatch with all his police sergeant's presence and calling the company to order in a manner of which Betty Boothroyd would have been proud. I remember him on one notable occasion showing short shrift to one young gentleman who had the temerity to ask for a pint of Draught Bass and blackcurrant by suggesting that if he wanted soft drinks then there was a chip shop down the road where he could go!

I think Ernie used to sell about seven barrels a week which you would have thought was pretty good for a small pub with few facilities but it was obviously not good enough for Bass's accountants. Bass only had two other pubs in the immediate area, the Vale in Bollington (since sold), and the Roe Street Tavern (closed), and the Jolly was subsequently sold off the Mercury Inns.

The modernisation was horrendous! The two sitting rooms on the right were knocked into one open area. The debating room at the back had its door removed so that it could be incorporated into the same area and a fiendishly loud jukebox was installed. The tap-room regulars remained loyal in spite of everything until eventually that was knocked through into the rest of the pub as well and a pool table installed. Now the Jolly is a pub I would not pass a few others for. In recent years there has been unruly and boisterous behaviour. Ernie would have sorted them out! I understand it no longer even sells Draught Bass. I am sure if you asked you would be told there is no longer any call for it.....to be continued next month.

Lynne and Andrew ☎ 445 4405

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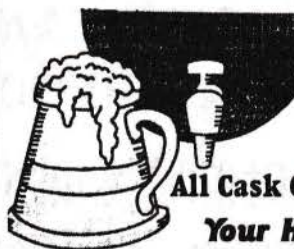
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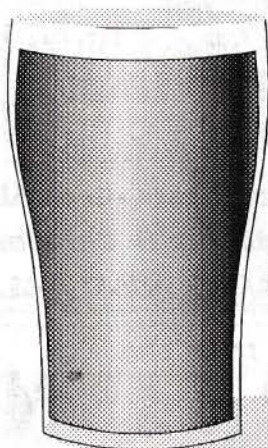
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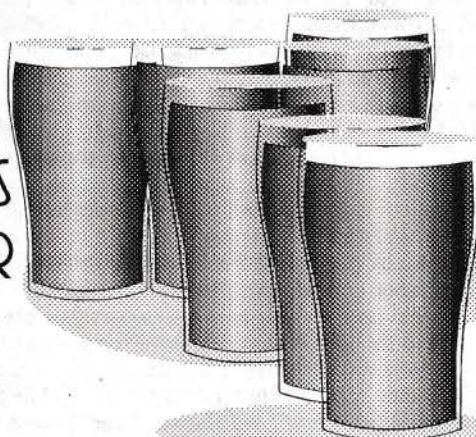
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Disley Drinking

Steve Smith goes walkabout

Nestling in a valley along the A6 between Hazel Grove and New Mills, lies the pleasant Cheshire Village of Disley. It is close to Lyme Park and within easy reach of Greater Manchester and Derbyshire. Possessing good transport links, there is an hourly train service between Manchester and Buxton, plus buses 198/199, 'TP' (Transpeak service), 361 and X67 passing regularly through. There are several pubs near the centre of the village, mostly with outside drinking areas. In order of my visit, these were:

1. Dandy Cock, Market Street - cosy, two roomed house dispensing Robinsons Best Bitter, Old Stockport Bitter and Hatters Mild. Strong emphasis on food, with separate dining area set aside for restaurant meals. Wood panelling and brasses predominate and a smart local clientele adds to the ambience. Possibly the best pub in the village, but visiting at first as lunchtime fast approached, I would have saved it until the last. Opening hours and food service times are usefully displayed outside.

2. White Lion, Buxton Road/Redhouse Lane - large pub, opened out several years ago and now in the throes of another refurbishment, hence its somewhat spartan look after a recent change of management. Old Wilsons' Brewery insignia and an etched window (covered by a poster advertising Joseph Holts' Bitter at £1 a pint). This indeed was its only real ale.

3. Albert, Buxton Road/Dayhurst Lane - extremely well presented exterior features and as equally comfortably furnished indoors. Lots of bric-a-brac and ornamentation, with archways that lead into adjoining rooms, one of which is a sports room with pool table, TV etc. Up to four real ales from the Vaux range, including Waggle Dance, Vaux (dark) Mild, Samson and Wards Best Bitter.

4. Crescent, Buxton Road - pleasant, two-roomed, end of terrace roadside pub with one half given over to a trophy room, replete with cups and shields, pool table, etc. The other half gives rise to a traditional vault-cum-lounge affair, highlighted by an imposing beaten copper canopied bar. This dispenses Robinsons Best Bitter and Hatters Mild with which you can relax onto the copper covered Britannia tables. You can't miss the pub - it stands out like a cider drinker's nose on the face of

Disley itself - it's painted garishly pink and cream! A mirror inside contains a photograph of what it used to look like before this colour scheme.


5. Ram's Head (Hungry Horse), Fountain Square - huge, mullioned widowed period affair, overlooking the village green with its war memorial and red telephone box. Once the lodge to Lyme Park Estate, in recent times it has been given the 'Hungry Horse' green and orange printed facade. It has now reverted to amore sombre decor and the 'Rams Head' lettering has been retained. Once inside, though, it feels as if you are in some sort of glass managerie, with the usual over-abundance of Magic Pub Co. items: lots of mirrors, ornaments to excess and a finger post announcing that you are 3511 miles from New York - wow! Beers on offer included Bass on draught, Websters Green Label and Robinsons Best Bitter.

6. Mousetrap, Buxton Old Road - predominated by old Wilsons' brewery signs, floral hanging basket and fortified stone walling, this old pub is much bigger than it first appears. An open-plan lounge with rectangular bar area and low ceiling allows a relaxing atmosphere. Three beers available on handpull: Boddingtons Bitter, Ruddles County and Websters Yorkshire Bitter, the latter on offer at £1 a pint from 11am through until 8pm on a daily basis.

7. White Horse, Buxton Old Road - a rendered blue and white building almost opposite the Mousetrap. Alas!, I arrived too late at 3.40pm to be able to sample any beers and so I wasn't a popular figure. Prior to my unwelcoming, there was just time enough to see the Robinsons Best Bitter and Hatters Mild on electric metered dispense, with dummy handpulls behind. Legend has it that this pub's cellars once were used to house the bears prior to the local bear-baiting bouts!

All in all, a pretty good stroll around with one pub left untried: the Moorside Hotel which is further up the Buxton Old Road, on Mudhurst lane in Higher Disley.

MACCLESFIELD & EAST CHESHIRE
WITH JIM BOWDEN
 Pub News...
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A new pub/restaurant/hotel opened on 28 July. Called the **Middlewood** and owned by Whitbread (Brewers Fayre), it is situated at the Tytherington end of the Silk Road. Details of any real ales (if sold) will be notified in the next OT.

- Landlords/landladies leaving:
- * *The Woodman, Hurdsfield, a Robinsons pub (pub closed at present)*
 - * *The Crown, Bond Street, Macclesfield, a Greenalls keg pub*
 - * *The Cock, Henbury, a Robinsons pub*
 - * *The Park Tavern, Park Lane, Macclesfield, also Robinsons.*

The **Kings Head**, Gurnett, a free house, is up for sale at £295,000. Graham Dickens, landlord of the **Bull** at Kerridge died on 5 July. Our condolences go to his widow Dorothy and son Michael and daughter Stephanie.

Ye Olde Admiral Rodney
Prestbury
Robinsons Hatters Mild and Best Bitter on handpump
Lunchtime Bar Snacks
12-2.30 Mon-Sat
Peter and Gail welcome you
Tel: 01625 828078



Your Hosts
 Graham &
 Vera welcome
 you to ...

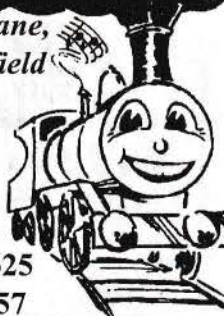
THE RAILWAY VIEW
 Byrons Lane,
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 ☆ BAR GAMES ☆ ☎ 01625

REAL ALE £1.20 MON NIGHT 423657
COMEDY NIGHT EVERY SUNDAY FROM 7.30



CHEESHIRE PUBS

by Peter Edwardson



Cheshire has a fair number of canalside pubs but, being a largely landlocked county, has very few standing beside the tidewater, as are often found in East Anglia and the West Country. One that does is the Ferry at Fiddler's Ferry, just west of Warrington, which also shares the feature of many of the best waterside pubs of being very difficult to find, in a way reminiscent of the famous Double Locks at Exeter.

The OS grid reference is JS 563867, but, while the building is marked on the OS map, there isn't a PH sign. You take the A562 from Warrington to Widnes and, just as the road runs out from the built-up area into a small stretch of open countryside, turn left signposted "Yacht Haven". About half a mile further on, turn right, and follow this road to the end where the car park is on the left just before the railway level crossing. It's about three-quarters of a mile from the main road which is served by buses between Warrington and Widnes. On foot, cross the railway line, which is still used by coal trains to the nearby



Ferry Tavern, Fiddlers Ferry

Fiddler's Ferry power station, and the drawbridge across the disused St Helen's Canal, then turn right and walk along the bank of the Mersey for fifty yards to the pub. It's not the world's most picturesque location, with the dull grey waters of the tidal river in front of you, the power station cooling towers to your right and the nuclear particle accelerator at Daresbury standing out prominently on the opposite bank, but it does have a kind of lonely charm. The yacht haven, which uses part of the old canal, is just next door, and in the summer is very busy, when the extensive pub garden can be a pleasant spot to sit out in the sunshine.

The pub itself is a long, low white painted building facing out across the river. The site is vulnerable to flooding at high spring tides and inside there are high water marks on the walls and photos of the place inundated with water. Twenty years ago the interior had a number of small low-ceilinged rooms, but at some time in the mid-eighties it was unfortunately knocked through. Recently, efforts have been made to give it a more traditional feel, and while it's no unspoilt gem it's still very congenial. There's a main bar area by the counter with a comfortable lounge at one end, a games area at the opposite end, and an upstairs dining room.

The Ferry was originally a Wilsons pub and then part of the Chef & Brewer estate - whether it's now a free house or just has some kind of relaxed tie isn't clear, but whatever the case there's a very good range of beers. On our visit there were Websters Bitter, Courage Directors and Ruddles County as regular beers, together with three guests which were Morland Old Speckled Hen, Pendle Witches Brew and Phoenix Midsummer Madness. Forthcoming guests included Crouch Vale First Gold and Elgoods Bicentennial. We tried the Midsummer Madness and the County which were both in fine condition and more than justified the pub's presence in the "Good Beer Guide" (listed under nearby Penketh, although Fiddler's Ferry is the actual location). It was also good to see oversized pint glasses being used with handpumps - although halves were still served in brim glasses.

There's a wide choice of food with a standard menu and some interesting blackboard specials. Most dishes appeared to be home made, the portions were generous and the prices very reasonable considering the quantity, with main courses typically between £4 and £6. We tried Lamb and Apricot Sausage and Mexican Enchiladas, both of which were very good indeed. One of the other customers said she came there for lunch every Sunday. Food is available every session except Sunday evenings, but visitors should be aware that they stop serving promptly at 2pm on Sunday lunchtime.

The Ferry is a classic example of the pub which is "hard to find but worth the effort". It's in a fascinating location, and it's clear that the owners make a real effort to do something well above the ordinary on both the beer and food fronts, which is rewarded by the number of customers making their way there from all around. Although it may seem a little out of the way for people living in this area, it's only about twenty-five miles from Stockport and well worth a visit if you want to go somewhere that's just that little bit unusual.

Another characterful pub to visit in the Warrington area is the Red Lion at Stockton Heath, about two miles south of the town centre on the A49. This features on CAMRA's National Inventory of unspoilt pub interiors, and has at least five small low-ceilinged rooms with many original fittings, including a corner vault with separate entrance. The beer range is only Greenalls Mild, Bitter and Original but the beer is very well kept and the pub has often featured in the "Good Beer Guide".



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SATURDAY EVENING FOLK

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always available

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MANCHESTER MATTERS

Happily, the **Dolphin** in West Gorton didn't stay closed long. It's open again now, with good quality Grays Premium (or Mansfield Old Baily, to give it its proper name) at the bargain price of £1.20. There's also handpumped Stones Bitter at the same price, but the Grays is the business. Further out on Hyde Road, founts for "smooth" keg Boddingtons have appeared at the **Imperial**. While cask Boddingtons is still sold, this is a worrying development, especially as the pub is under the same ownership as the **King William IV** in Salford, which I understand has been keg-only for some time now. Yet further out on Hyde Road now, to Gorton, where the **Vale Cottage** now has handpumped Greene King IPA as a permanent guest, replacing Theakstons XB. An unusual beer for the area (though destined to become less so as Greene King beers infiltrate the former Magic Pub Co estate), the beer is reported to be selling well, and was certainly in fine condition when I called. The price of £1.54 is not unreasonable given the pub's high standards of appointment and service. The nearby **Lord Nelson** no longer sells Websters Bitter. There are licensee changes in Gorton, too, as Alison and Pete Adamson leave unspoilt traditional Marstons' local the **Friendship**, after just short of a year, for the equally unspoilt - and listed - traditional Robinsons' local the **Plough**, following Bob



by Rhys Jones

Voigt's retirement. No news yet on the new faces at the Friendship. In the City Centre, the **Royal George** is currently closed, but the **Sawyers Arms** is selling guest beers. In Northenden, the handpumped range at the **Spread Eagle** is Greenalls Bitter and Stones Bitter - not as reported (though not in this column!) in June. Finally, my apologies to Wythenshawe drinkers who may have been awaiting news of Banks's acquisition, the **Cornishman**. This month's earlier than usual press date has prevented me getting there in time, but it will be covered next month.

Seen in the Pub

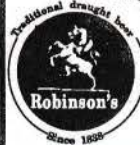
Two signs in John Willie Lees' Glanrafon in Benllech: "We do not sell, or support the sale of alchopop (*sic*) drink" and "Unattended children will be sold as slaves".


THE CASTLE

OLDHAM STREET, MANCHESTER
NOW SERVING THE **COMPLETE**
RANGE OF ROBINSONS CASK BEERS!

Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
Hatters Mild, Dark Mild,
Frederics, Old Tom and Hartleys


A WARM WELCOME
AND FINE BEER IN
A CLASSIC PUB



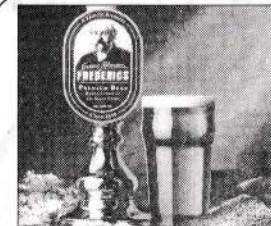


THE Robinson's


COLLECTION




BEST BITTER (4.2% ABV)
- pale and bright with a full bitterness derived from choice aroma hops.




FREDERICS (5.0% ABV)
- light and golden in colour and packed with flavour. Named after the brewery's founder. Also available in bottles.




XB (4.0% ABV)
- a smooth bitter ale with a malty taste. First brewed in the Lake District.



HATTER'S MILD (3.3% ABV)
- brewed from quality malt and hops, it's the best cask conditioned, light mild around.



OLD STOCKPORT (3.5% ABV)
- rich golden body with a refreshingly hoppy taste and lightish alcohol content.



OLD TOM (8.5% ABV)
- smooth, dark and mellow. Brewed from a recipe almost as old as the brewery itself.

CHOICE BEERS

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 and Macclesfield. Members of all branches are welcome at each other's events!

Diary	August 97	August 97	To Do Address: Notepad Anniversary: CAMRA 93 Planner
	<p>Tuesday 5th - Saturday 9th - Great British Beer Festival, Olympia London</p> <p>Monday 11th - Social, Bakers Vaults, Market Place, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Thursday 14th - Branch meeting, Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.</p> <p>Friday 15th - Trip to Sair Inn, Linthwaite nr Huddersfield. Current National Pub of the Year and home of Linfit Brewery. Minibus leaves Royal Oak, Didsbury 6.45; Crown, Heaton Lane 7.00pm. Phone 477 1973 to book a seat.</p> <p>Monday 18th - Social, Railway, Chapman Street, Gorton. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p>Friday 22nd - Stagger in Levenshulme. Starts 7.00pm Wheatsheaf, Stockport Road (A6); 8.30 Union.</p> <p>Thursday 28th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Cross Keys, Adswold. See article elsewhere.</p> <p>Friday 29th - Second attempt to visit Harts Brewery! Minibus leaves Royal Oak, Didsbury 6.15; Crown, Heaton Lane 6.30. Phone 477 1973 to book.</p>	<p>Monday 1st September - Social, Park, Newbridge Lane, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.</p> <p><i>High Peak Branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all points north. They have advised us of the following events:</i></p> <p>Tuesday 12th - Branch meeting, Royal, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm. NB Change of day.</p> <p>Monday 1st September - Committee meeting, Brunswick, Park Road, Dukinfield. Starts 8.30pm.</p> <p><i>Apart from Macclesfield and Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have advised us of the following event:</i></p> <p>Monday 18th - monthly branch meeting at the Highwayman, Rainow. Starts 8.00pm.</p>	

PHOENIX BREWERY

GREEN LANE, HEYWOOD, OL10 2EP.
TEL: 01706 627009

 HOPWOOD Pale coloured bitter, clean tasting session beer with a bitter hop finish.	 BANTAM Pale brown bitter. Slightly nutty, full flavoured beer.	 OAK BEST BITTER Tawny coloured, with a hint of sweetness in the full bitter palate. A fresh but dry hop finish.
 OLD OAK Well balanced brown beer. Malt and hops balance the strong fruitiness in the aroma and taste. The finish is malty, fruity and dry.	 THRISTY MOON Light brown bitter. Strong hop aroma. The slight maltiness is dominated by a full crisp bitterness giving a dry and satisfying finish.	 BONNEVILLE Light brown bitter. Malty character with a soft rounded hop balance.
 DOUBLE DAGGER Pale brown bitter. Full flavoured hoppy bitterness. More pleasantly dry and light than its gravity would suggest.	 WOBBLY BOB Amber beer. Malty fruity aroma. Strongly malty and fruity flavour. A slight sweetness yields to a dry finish.	

Claire and Howard welcome all their friends and customers to

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KENNEDY STREET
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 9 HANDPUMPS - 6 GUEST ALES
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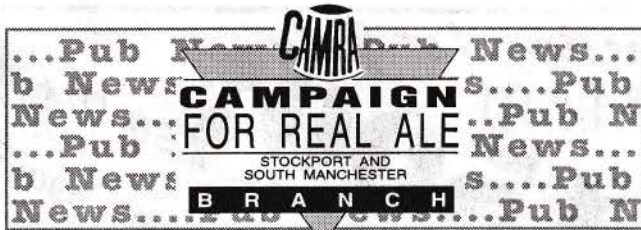
Charabancas Beer Festival



City Arms location: Kennedy St & Cross St

25 July - 8 August





As we went to press, Gary and Saxon from the *Station*, Didsbury were 99% certain that they would be offered the tenancy of the Whitworth in Rusholme. Their tenancy was expected to begin on 1 August.

Norma and Ron (formerly of the *Station*, Didsbury) and presently doing relief work at the Carters Arms, are to take over at the *Royal Oak* in Didsbury from 1 September. We do not know what outgoing licensee Vinny Crolla and deputy manager Stephen plan to do after that time.

As we reported last month, Simon Mounkley, formerly of the *Blossoms* is now firmly ensconced at the *Prince Albert* on Castle Street, Edgeley. Simon took over at the end of May and he has already set about making his mark on the pub - men's and ladies darts teams and two pool teams are already established and a football team is in prospect as well! The outside of the pub has had a much-needed coat of paint and the interior is next in line for a redecoration. Former *Blossoms* regulars, several of whom regularly make the journey to the *Prince Albert* will already



recognise memorabilia from the old pub on the walls. On the beer front, handpumped Wilsons Mild and Bitter comprise the current range although Simon is intending to try guest beers off the Matthew Brown list which, hopefully, he will be able to sell at a competitive price. Robinsons could be one of the first! Well worth a visit.

Vaux are finally spending some money on the Stockport pubs they acquired several years back. The *Wheatsheaf* at the top end of Hillgate has already reopened after quite an impressive refurbish-

ment which has seen the pub transformed into a semi-open plan affair, although with quite clearly separate 'rooms'. There's a vault on the left, a pleasant tiled area around the bar and a lounge to the right. The decor is traditional and includes many nice touches including wheatsheaves in the stained glass above the bar and new etched windows. Cask beers are Vaux Mild and Samson plus Wards Bitter, all on handpump. Closed and under refurbishment as we went to press was the *Crown* on Hillgate. A quick look through the windows indicated that this could be a very impressive job. A full report next month.

The White Lion in Disley is scheduled to re-open on 4 August after what we are told is a very impressive refurbishment. A full report will appear in next month's OT.

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(Opening Times 160)

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NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

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SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I / We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: INDIVIDUAL £14 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £17

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