

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

# OPENING TIMES



No:  
162

FREE

OCTOBER 1997

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FREE EVERY MONTH

## Black September Mayhem hits Pubs and Brewing

**T**he convulsions which have gripped the pub and beer trade over the past few years returned with renewed ferocity last month with an array of shock announcements, all of which will be felt locally.

The big news of course was the announcement that brewing giant Carlsberg-Tetley are to close or sell three of their remaining breweries over the next two years. The plants in Alloa and, closer to home, Wrexham, have been under a threat for some time and it looks inevitable that both will close. More surprising was the news that the giant Ind Coope brewery in Burton is also to go, although this time a sale is on the cards - to Bass, just next door (the two breweries are only separated by a concrete wall). This sale is expected to allow Bass to concentrate its own production facilities - so leading to more closures, this time in the Bass empire with breweries in Cardiff, Sheffield and Tadcaster looking vulnerable.

It is almost inevitable that beers will also be axed. Those from Alloa are to be contracted out to the respected Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh, but other brands are less secure, particularly the former flagship, Burton Ale, which is now unpromoted and unavailable from some depots. Continued production of the Walkers beers must also be in doubt and the 'Greenalls' beers will be on the move from Burton to Leeds. A month of shocks also brought news that Morlands, the Oxfordshire brewers of Old Speckled Hen, had snapped up Ruddles, the one time darling of the real ale revival and, ironically, just coming back onto form after years in the uncaring hands of Grand Met. Morlands say they have bought the brewery for its brands and are approaching everything with a blank sheet of paper. In other words they'll close Ruddles down as soon as they have an excuse. Meanwhile the 5.2% Old Speckled Hen will be fighting for bar space with the 4.9% Ruddles County. The two beers are clearly too close for comfort and the long term survival of both looks to be in doubt with County the most vulnerable.

On the pubs front, Inntrepreneur Estates and Spring Inns were off-loaded by joint owners Grand Met and Foster's Brewing to

Japanese investment bank Nomura. These acquisitions, which add 4,300 pubs to Nomura's existing 1100 strong Phoenix Inns chain, makes the Japanese bank the biggest independent pub operator in the country. Inntrepreneur, of course, own many of the former Wilsons pubs in the North West and so have a strong local presence. A Japanese bank is an unlikely pub owner and whilst the short term is likely to see increased, and welcome, investment in the Inntrepreneur estate, the deal will

*continued on page 3*

### What A Shambles - 2



**T**he saga of the Shambles relocation proceeds apace. As Opening Times believed, moving the pubs intact was a non starter, and the current plan is to demolish both the Old Wellington Inn and Sinclairs, and rebuild them on their new site adjacent to Cateaton Street.

In the case of the Old Wellington which is of genuine mediaeval construction (and is registered as a historic monument) it is to be reassembled from the original pieces, whereas the fabric of Sinclairs (merely a Grade 2 listed building) will be reconstructed using materials from the original 'wherever possible'.

The whole process is scheduled to take 48 weeks, so in theory they will reopen at the beginning of September 1998.

As reported in the last issue, when the rebuilding takes place the two pubs will be split into an 'L' shape, with an extension going largely to Sinclairs, which will increase the ground-floor

*continued on page 3*

**SHOOT OUT IN  
CHESHIRE  
PHOTO  
COMPETITION**



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on Page 9**



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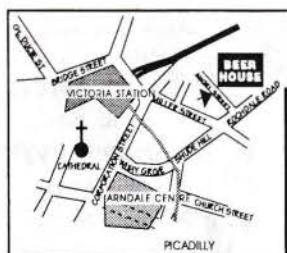
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## Black September - continued from page 1

offer little security for the long suffering leaseholders of these pubs who have had several owners in recent years. Indeed the bank has already indicated that after 2-3 years they would be looking to dispose of their pubs. As the trade press indicated, the real deal has yet to be done before these pubs find their eventual, long-term owner.

And in a worrying sign that the shake-out is reaching down to the regional brewers, Wolverhampton & Dudley, who trade locally as Banks's, have announced the sale of almost one-third of their tenanted estate to enable it to concentrate on "a range of food and liquor-led concept pubs". The deal will see 147 mainly local community pubs transferred to Avebury Taverns, a London-based company which has paid £16.4 million for them - and which has also set up a supply deal with Banks's.

Also on the shake-out trail is Bass which has disclosed that 380, again mainly local, pubs are to be either sold or switched to the leased estate, while the Bass Lease Company is to sell 175 of its pubs.

The shock waves of all this are set to reverberate for many months, or even years, to come with well-loved beers disappearing and licensees facing more uncertainty.

## What a Shambles 2 - continued from page 1

seating area and extend the kitchen. The Old Wellington will face towards St. Anne's square, and Sinclairs will face North towards the river.

Demolition should be well under way by the time you read this, although as we went to press the necessary demolition consents were still awaited (but when has that ever stopped a developer).

The one piece of good news that has surfaced since the last issue is that Humphrey Smith himself (head man at Sam Smiths) is taking a very personal interest in all this - he is particularly fond of Sinclairs and was against the whole scheme. There is therefore some hope that something, at least, may rise from the rubble.

The real question though is why any of this was necessary at all. English Heritage's own guidelines say that the site of a historic building (its context) is a vital part of the whole. Moving a structure (let alone demolishing and part rebuilding) is absolutely a matter of last resort. Not, however, to the stalinist planners of Manchester.

The Great God Mammon (or his representative below the Arndale, St. Michael) did not want a grubby pub or two behind their flagship store (which will no doubt be utterly hideous!) and so they had to go. If they do resurface as a twee Disneyfied edifice closer to the Cathedral they will be a sham. Furthermore, with the proximity of the Mitre, the Crown & Anchor and the new mega-development planned for the bottom of Shude hill, the planners have constructed another 'circuit' of leisure experiences to attract groups of drunken aggressive youngsters on Friday and Saturday night - just what Manchester needed. Not. And what about the shoppers? Shambles Square was one of the few havens for a quiet drink while the shopping experience was endured. Now a few overpriced, characterless and, dare I say it, un-Mancunian cafe bars with nitro keg or bottled rubbish will be all that's left - the pubs are being driven out into ghettos.

The heart of Manchester has been ripped out at last, and the final piece of real (pre-Victorian) history that survived Hitler's Luftwaffe, the building of the Arndale and the bombing of the Arndale is reduced to a sad pile of rubble. What the IRA could not do, a bunch of incompetent, philistine planners have managed. I had my first pint of (legal) beer in Sinclairs.

Shooting is too good for them.

PBH

# THE MARBLE ARCH

# BREWING SOON

3

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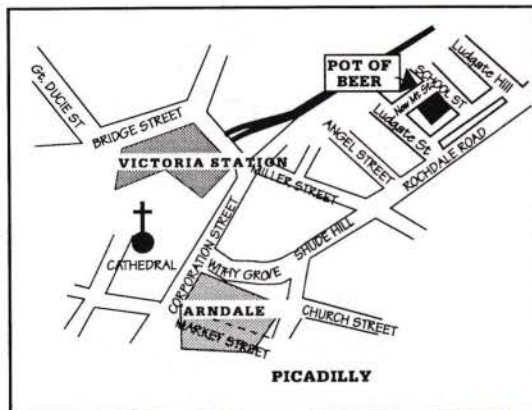
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## IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

It never rains but it pours, they say, and certainly September brought a rash of shock announcements on the pub and brewery front. The two biggest surprises were the Ruddles take-over by Morlands and the Carlsberg-Tetley decision to include the giant Ind Coope Brewery at Burton in their sell-off and closure programme.

The fate of Ruddles remains unclear. As things stand, Morland does not have the capacity to take on the full Ruddles production but when the latter's supply agreement with Scottish Courage runs out next year, things could look very different. It is of course supremely ironic that Morland, itself the victim of a failed take-over bid so recently should now embark on the take-over trail itself. They will be all too aware of the demoralising uncertainty which will now prevail at Ruddles - what we need is a clear and unambiguous statement guaranteeing the future of the Rutland Brewery. What about it Morlands?

Meanwhile at Carlsberg-Tetley the inevitable axe has fallen. No great surprises with Wrexham and Alloa and a bolt from the blue at Burton. Future developments can only be guessed at. What made this carnage even harder to take, though, was the stink of hypocrisy which accompanied it. Various people who should know better, including the chairman of Carlsberg-Tetley, put the blame for the closures and job losses at the door of Trade Secretary Margaret Beckett. Apparently if she had permitted the merger with Bass, all would have been well. Not a brewery would have closed and scarcely a job lost, we are asked to believe. If the people coming out with this actually believe what they are saying then they are self-deluding fools. If they expect the rest of us to believe it, they are sadly mistaken.

*John Clarke*

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# OPENING TIMES LETTERS

**From Tom Lord, High Peak CAMRA:**

Further to the article about Disley pubs in the August edition; there is in fact a pub in Disley which was omitted from the notes.

This is the Plough Boy, on the Buxton Old Road, half-way up the hill on the left-hand side, and worth the climb to visit. It currently has Vaux Waggedance and Wards Best Bitter, both served through handpump.

(Sorry about the oversight - apologies to all concerned - ed.)

**From Paul Marsden:**

In the September edition of Opening Times, Rhys wrote that real ale was no longer available in any of the bars (at least 5) at UMIST.

This was correct at the publication of OT, however this was a short-lived phenomenon. Prior to the publication of September's OT the union bar was selling real ale and the conference centre's rear yard was full of empty casks.

Real Ale has now returned to UMIST, as have the students; are the two events connected?

On the second day of term the 4th or 5th guest ale was on sale.

## CAMRA Lobbies for Full Measure



The fight for full measure goes on. The campaign to ensure that drinkers get what they pay for - a full pint of beer, continues to gather momentum. National pub chain Wetherspoons have now introduced oversized lined glasses into all of their pubs - without encountering any of the problems that the vested interests of the licensed trade predict in their increasingly hysterical campaign against full measure.

To hammer home the message, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA joined forces with Banks's Brewery to run a 'full measure social' in September at the Four in Hand in Didsbury.. All local MPs were invited along for the evening and while many sent letters of support, local MP Keith Bradley came along for the night and offered any support he could. Our photo shows Keith Bradley, the licensee of the Four In Hand and local members on the night. JC

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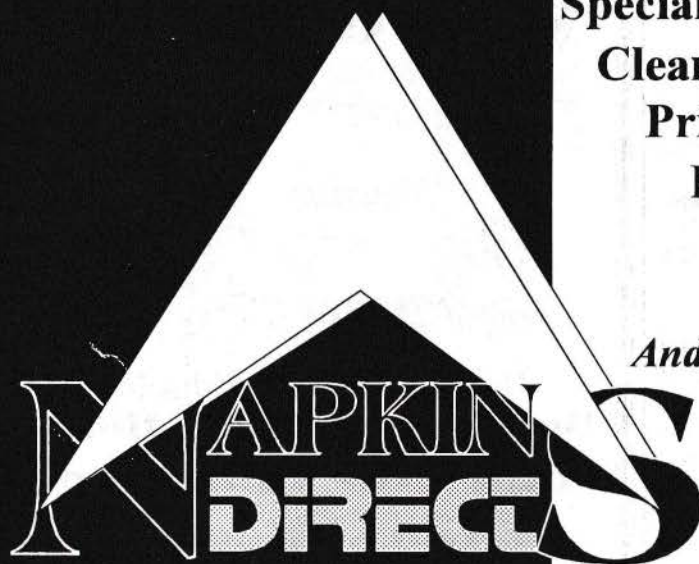
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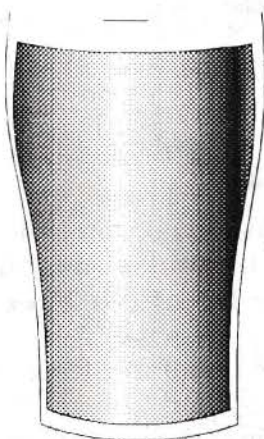
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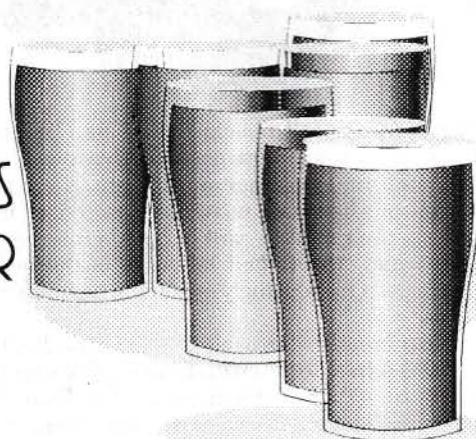
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# Pub Of The Month



**T**he Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for October is the Orion, on Burton Road in Withington.

A Holts house, serving that brewery's mild and bitter in excellent condition, the Orion is run by Gary and Beverly Parker who came to the pub from the unlikely sounding Lower Broughton Conservative Club where they had made a point of selling several cask beers, often from local micro brewers. They have been at the Orion for 10 months now and in that time have turned the place from a frankly mediocre pub selling poor beer into a thriving community local.

The pub is firmly traditional, split into lounge and vault, the latter with a picture of the MSO Orion taking pride of place

# OCTOBER

## 1997

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	<b>23</b>	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



- and from where the pub gets its name. This is the second time the Orion has been pub of the month - last time it went to licensees Beverly and John who went on to win Pub of the Year at their next pub, the Griffin in Heaton Mersey. Clearly the Orion is a pub that seems to attract quality licensees. Getting there is easy - buses 42 and 22 from Stockport will drop you virtually at the door as will the many Wilmslow Road buses from Manchester. So, if you want a grand night out on Thursday October 23rd (which is when Gary and Beverly get this much deserved award) then the Orion is the place to be. Get there early if you want a seat! **JH.**

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

7

## THE RAILWAY

### Voted CAMRA Pub of the Month May 97

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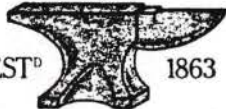


LUNCH & EVENING MEALS 7 DAYS

8

## THE MOSS ROSE

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## Good Beer Guide '98

Beer Bible Clocks 25 Years of Success

Remember when beer cost only 15p a pint? The Good Beer Guide marks its Silver Anniversary on 16th October by celebrating CAMRA's successes and welcoming the next 25 years of campaigning for drinkers' rights. The 1998 Guide is bound in a special Silver Anniversary cover and features around 5000 top pubs and nearly 500 real ale breweries.

The Campaign for Real Ale's market leading pub guide was first published in 1974 and has now sold over a million copies. It is also largely thanks to the efforts of CAMRA and the Good Beer Guide that the pubs and beer scene has changed almost beyond recognition since 1974 -

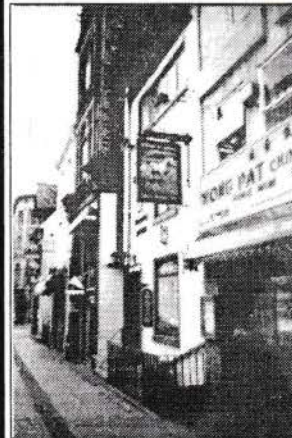
- ★ The number of breweries has increased fourfold
- ★ The number of real ales on sale has increased ten-fold!
- ★ National companies which brewed only fizzy keg beers in 1974 all now brew real ales
- ★ More choice in pubs, including guest beers
- ★ Pubs open for longer and offering better facilities

The Guide itself has changed, too and the 25th edition is the biggest and best ever! This year there are 560 fact-packed pages on the British beer scene with pride of place going to 5,000 of the best beer pubs in Britain, arranged county by county, fully mapped and with all facilities highlighted, from accommodation and meals to family rooms, no-smoking areas and wheelchair access.

There is also information on all Britain's breweries and the real ales they produce, from giants like Bass and Whitbread to the newest micros like the Saddleworth Brewery, featured in OT recently. There are in fact no less than 48 new breweries in the 1998 edition - that's almost one opening every week. Commenting on the new brewery boom, Guide Editor Jeff Evans told Opening Times, "There seems to be no end to the brewery boom. There are nearly four times as many breweries as there were in 1974 when the first Good Beer Guide was published. There are now around 2,500 real ales".

Also featuring more tasting notes to help you find a favourite pint, the Good Beer Guide is the book no beer lover can afford to be without and is ideal for holidays, business trips, days in the country or nights on the town.

Order your copy now by simply sending a cheque for £10.99 (post and packing is free), made payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Branch, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5EG



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**Robinsons Fine Ales**



# STAGGER

with guest beer writer Mark McConachie

**T**he district of Levenshulme is the southernmost part of Manchester on the A6. It has Longsight to its north and Heaton Chapel to the south; all of the pubs described here are on the A6, Stockport Road, unless otherwise stated. Bus service 192 provides very frequent access to the area; services 190 and 191 may also be used.

Our August crawl began at Levenshulme's most southern pub, the **Wheatsheaf** (Devonshire Pub Co - formerly Greenalls). On my last visit to the Wheatsheaf I found it rather grubby, stark and austere; the beer was poor, too. Not so now though, a refurbishment some time ago has left it as a very pleasant and rather well-appointed pub; it's busier too. The pub has two large rooms - a little used lounge with stage area and a plush, wainscoted vault. Previously the lounge was rarely open. One cask beer was on offer - Old Tub Thumper Bitter at 110p. We rated it about average but couldn't work out who brewed it. One of my fellow crawlers was so impressed he spilt his half over all my trousers - thanks Peter!

Next was the **Levenshulme**, formerly a Wilsons house, it appeared to be being redecorated so it didn't even display the pub name. Inside a lone handpump for Wilsons Bitter lay unused as it "not on". We were offered John Smiths Smooth as it "was very popular...". We declined and went on to **Fiddlers Green** (Websters). This pub now sells no cask beer at all but it can be complimented on looking more like an Irish bar than it did before.

We knew that at least Holt's Bitter awaited in the pub to follow - the **Pack Horse**. Indeed it was the sole cask beer in this much-improved boozier. Probably Levenshulme's oldest licensed estab-

lishment - an inscription on the gable end reads 1587. The present building was built around the turn of the century and was really messed about by having a dreaded 'Sports' theme impressed upon it years ago. Remnants of that era remain but it looks a lot cleaner and brighter of late; more welcoming too. We rather enjoyed the Holts (even at 115p).

Across the road to the **Railway** or 'Lacey's Bar' as a neon window sign attests. I recall this used to be 'Daly's Bar' and sold cask Boddies. Well, the name's gone and so, too, has the cask beer - another real ale loss. Out and down the road to Lawrance Hennigan's eponymously named cafe bar. Basically this is a converted corner shop so you get a long narrow bar, but it works. It exuded a relaxed and sporting feel, plenty of scope for perpendicular drinking. Old photos of Levenshulme and an Irish piper moulded into a corbel provide some interest. Another pub offering just one cask ale, this time Boddies at £1 (or, oddly, 65p a half) was well-received by us all - a good, sharp flavour.

We back-tracked at this point to get to Wilson's **Horseshoe** on Chapel Street. This is a very pleasant two-roomer, neat and tidily kept, but strangely quiet for 8.30pm on a Friday evening. Our recollections were of this being a busy and lively pub and just to add to our disappointment the Wilsons Bitter was very lacklustre at 120p. Out mid-point meeting place beckoned, so off to the **Union Inn** (Greenalls - ex-Bod Pub Co). A good looking pub from the outside, you cross the threshold to an original tiled corridor and four rooms - all very different. We opted for the front snug; I did not like the choice of colours - I'd have had some brown woodwork, but that's personal choice. Yet again only one cask beer - Boddies at 120p; we all thought it better than average.

Mid-point over with we were off the Greenall's **Church Inn**. First Impressions were of a recent refurbishment; the drinking space seems to completely encircle the bar now. In practice it doesn't, you have a games area at the rear, a plush side area and a vault-ish part to the front. It seemed reasonably busy, the pub was reasonable and the Greenalls Bitter (even at a high for the night of 142p) was reasonable. All in all...

We decided not to do the **Farmers Kipper**, **Midway** and **Little Vic**, we even decided to forego the pleasure of an 'opening' that night to get the rest of the pubs done. Leaving Stockport Road we headed up Barlow Road, past the library and baths to the **Blue Bell**. This is a large Sam Smiths pub set back from the road; two rooms off a middle bar were both well-kept and lively. The only thing lacking was cask beer - surely a pub like this could give Old Brewery Bitter a push with proper promotion. Over to you, Sam's... Continuing up Barlow Road we were greeted by the sight of the **Polygon** (again, ex-Bod Pub Co); we were also greeted by the landlord at the door - almost as if he was aware of our coming. Pleasantries exchanged, we headed into the vault which is actually two rooms sub-divided. Well presented, if slightly loud but, no matter. The lounge is much the same size but slightly plusher. What was surprising was that after visiting ten pubs, this was the first to offer more than one cask beer! Thus, we had Greenalls low-gravity Festival at 105p and Boddies at 132p. Both beers were very well received by our party with the Festival turning out to be a very narrow runner-up in our beer of the night. We left in contented mood; I was taken by the original cobbled forecourt and skyboard signs; the pub sign with a parrot fleeing its cage is fun too.

Back up Barlow Road to the junction with Broom Lane and down there for 400 yards to Holt's **Sidings**. This is a modern pub split one-third vault and two-thirds lounge - both were busy with people waiting two-deep at the bars. If you are familiar with the Holt house style, the Sidings will hold no surprises for you. Given how busy it was we moved outside to enjoy our mild and bitter. I never knew there was such a great fenced-off outside drinking area at the pub - you always learn. The mild was good, the bitter excellent and indeed beer of the night.

Out Stagger had come to its end; it was interesting to note that the two best pubs (also offering the best beers) were off Stockport Road - is there a message there for the A6 operators? Take a look yourself.

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Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month April 1997

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## Ape & Apple Open at Last



**T**he long-awaited opening of the Ape & Apple, Holt's new pub on John Dalton Street in the City Centre, finally took place on Thursday 2 October.

It has to be said that this is a magnificent effort on the part of Holts and the new pub will almost certainly become their City Centre flagship. The style of the pub will hold no surprises for those familiar with Holts house style these days - plush, not to say luxurious, but without descending into neo-Victorian pastiche. It in fact resemble a rather larger, grander version of the Old Monkey on Portland Street in both decor and layout.

Downstairs is just one large room with the bar on the back wall. The decor is firmly traditional with much stained wood, tiling and leather seating round the walls although most of the public space is clearly aimed at perpendicular drinking. Upstairs is the lounge which again occupies the full length of the building but only extends to half its depth. This is a light, airy room with its own bar-counter and it is here that food may be ordered. Again the accent is on the plush - and this room gives the feel of a drawing room from a minor stately home with a bar inserted! To the rear is an outside drinking area, perhaps the only first floor example of its type in the city, although as it is totally enclosed by the high walls of both the pub and the church to the rear it offers no views and is not for the claustrophobic.

Holts Mild and Bitter are on handpump at 99p and £1.05 respectively which is a 3p a pint premium over their other pubs at the moment although with the brewery's annual price increase due shortly it will probably not be out of line for long. J.C.



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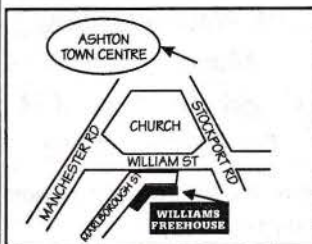
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## CURMUDGEON



### Crude Puns, Crude Pubs

Over many years, CAMRA has been strangely indulgent towards the Firkin chain of so-called brewpubs, which have done great damage to the credibility of the organisation, our pub heritage, the image of real ale, and indeed the English language itself.

The chain was started in the early eighties as an independent operation by David Bruce, and it must be said that his cheap and cheerful brewpubs furnished with old church pews proved very popular. At this time, though, virtually all of the beer was kept in cellar tanks under CO2 pressure and therefore didn't qualify as real ale. Even so, amazingly, Mr Bruce appeared on the front cover of a CAMRA guide to micro-breweries. Some CAMRA branches were so keen on their local Firkin pubs that they put them into the Good Beer Guide listing only one or two guest beers which were real, when they knew very well that most of the beer wasn't.

The rudimentary interiors may have been tolerable when the chain was independently run and mainly occupying premises newly converted to pub use, but that changed once the concept was taken over by national giants Allied-Domecq and rolled out into a lot of their existing pubs. We may have escaped relatively lightly in Manchester, but across the country many historic pub interiors have been destroyed by these Firkin vandals.

When Tony Greener, the Allied-Domecq manager responsible for the Firkin chain, spoke at CAMRA's national conference earlier this year, we were left in no doubt about the callous and cynical marketing philosophy that now underpins the operation. Yet it is still common to see CAMRA members working at beer festivals wearing Firkin T-shirts without any apparent sense of contradiction. They'd almost be better off advertising Fosters - at least that could be seen as ironic, and nobody imagines it has anything to do with real ale.

The image of real ale put across by the Firkin chain is of a rough, home-made product with crude names like "Dogbolter", fit only for swilling by students in a tatty, bare-boards atmosphere. This does a grave disservice to the many micro-breweries who do take their craft seriously and produce distinctive, high-quality beers. And the "home-brewed" image is becoming seriously out of date, as more and more Firkins do not brew themselves but take beer produced at other locations.

Worst of all, the chain has been responsible for an epidemic of poor and often offensive puns stemming from the obvious connotations of the word "Firkin". This promotes a downmarket image of real ale drinkers as people given to coarse and sexist humour.

Well, I think it's all a Firkin disgrace!

### If They Can Do It, Why Can't You?

Congratulations to Wetherspoons on announcing that they are to convert all their draught beers to oversize glasses. Once again, they have shown that they are a company that, on standards of customer service, leads the market rather than following it. Full measures are rapidly becoming a touchstone of proper treatment of pub customers. So it's disappointing to see that only six of the twenty-seven pubs included in the new Good Beer Guide in the Stockport & South Manchester area use oversize glasses, significantly excluding recent and potential Pubs of the Year, which on many other points are exemplary. So, come on licensees, next time you buy any new glasses, make sure they've got lines on them!

# BREWERY NEWS

**W**hitbread have announced a major cutback in their range of 'local' cask ales. Locally available casualties in the rationalisation include Chesters Bitter, Bentleys Yorkshire Bitter, Wethered's Bitter and Winter Royal. More resources are to be channelled into national and regional beers such as Boddingtons, Flowers and Wadworths 6X.

The range of experimental beers from Porters has so far been very well received. Just two have been produced so far - 'Number 1' was a full strength version of the standard bitter at 4.2% and 'Number 2', Rossendale Ale with three times as many hops. 'Number 3' is, according to Dave Porter, to be a "really, really bitter version of Sunshine. Something so bitter it'll almost be undrinkable". Sounds promising!

Meanwhile rumours continue to circulate that a new beer may be in the offing from that most conservative of local brewers, Joseph Holt. Naturally, the brewery appear to be tight-lipped on the subject, as ever.

Hydes' Anvil have appointed a new Head Brewer to replace Alan Mackie who is now firmly ensconced at Ushers. The new man is Paul Jefferies, currently production manager for Cain's in Liverpool. Paul takes over on 11 November and once he has settled in we look forward to Hydes' popular seasonal beer range taking off again.

While Hydes' seasonal beers remain in temporary abeyance, John Willie Lees have launched their first seasonal offering.



Jumbo Star, a 4.5% ale brewed from a single hop variety went on sale last month. Initial impressions are mixed - the beer is darker than the normal bitter and said to be rather bland. Expect to pay £1.40 a pint.



# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

OCTOBER 1992

**O**nce again it was the time of year for the presentation of the Pub Vandalism Awards. It had to be admitted that during the last year the pub stock had been treated reasonably well, but there were still two clear winners for the booby prizes of the pub world. Boddingtons were rewarded for a decade of persistent effort in eradicating every trace of the original character of the George in Stockport's Mersey Square. To be fair, it hadn't all been done by the Pub Co, as the work had been started by the then independent brewers, Higsons, but Boddingtons were to blame for finally turning one of the finest 1930's pubs in the North West into a "ghastly, neo-Victorian pastiche". The second award went to the Central Manchester Development Corporation for failing to do anything with the important "gateway" site into the City Centre opposite the Piccadilly Station approach. The plight of the Coach & Horses had often been referred to in Opening Times, as it gradually developed into nothing more than an eyesore. Similar treatment was being meted out to the nearby Imperial, where the meeting to form Manchester United from the Newton Heath club was held all those years ago.

To celebrate their 250 years of brewing, Whitbread produced a Porter at their Castle Eden brewery. It was extremely well received, but only two brews were made, and that seemed to be the end of it. But Whitbread's Marketing Director said they were considering a re-launch as a winter ale, probably in January.

There was another chapter in one of Opening Times' long running stories. For the second time in twelve months the Buffet Bar on Stalybridge Station was in serious danger of closure. A property developer was interested in converting the main building into a restaurant with offices over, thus evicting licensee Ken Redfern from his house of 20 years. But there was a glimmer of hope - Thwaites Brewery of Blackburn had expressed an interest in taking over the lease of the property, but there were no details of what alterations would be required to buildings and beer range. So the future of the Buffet Bar was described as "on a knife edge" But once again it survived and now thrives as a free house, preserved, extended and with a beer range as good as ever.

Two City Centre pubs were on the market - the Crown on Blackfriars Street, and a long time CAMRA favourite, Marstons' Harp & Shamrock just off Rochdale Road. The asking price for the latter was £95,000, and it was perhaps optimistically described as "occupying a prominent location in a busy commercial area." The comment "Oh, come on now!" followed. Yet again, the pub has survived and prospered in the free trade - last month Opening Times featured the celebrations of its first very successful year as the Pot of Beer.

## Are You Ready for the Challenge?

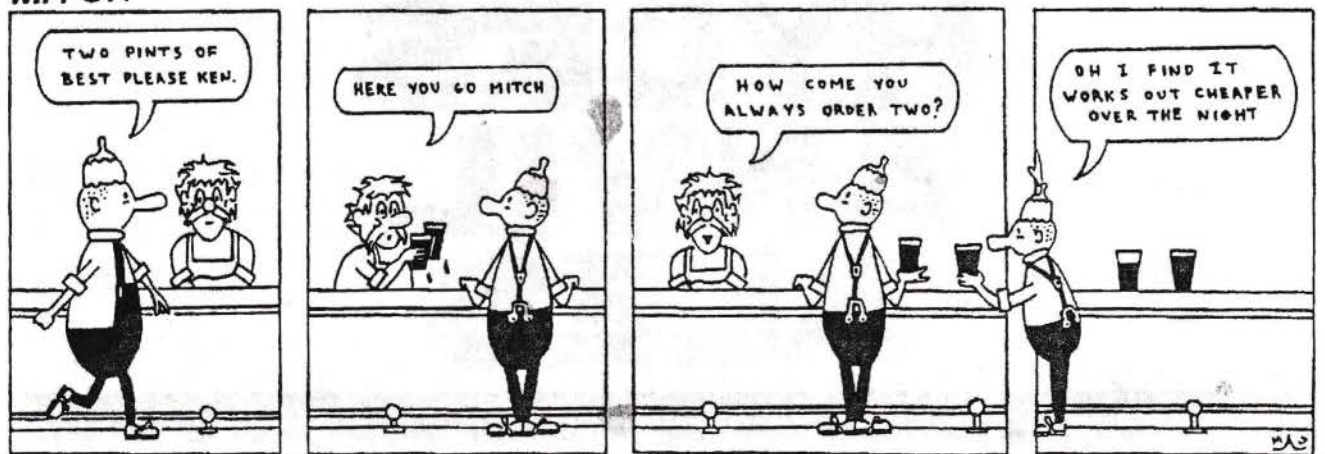
It's been away for 18 months but now it's back. Yes, Stockport Mild Challenge 1997 gets underway next month. Just visit 12 pubs, get your card stamped and be in line for one of our great prizes. We hope to have over 50 participating pubs and thanks again to the Stockport Express Advertiser for supporting the event.

The Mild Challenge will run from 8 November to 7 December.

Full details in next month's Opening Times.

### MITCH

© 1997 BY MARK A JONES



# Fistful of Arrows

By Brian  
Carey



**I** have been chastised by several readers for not mentioning the outcome of the legal battle between the British Darts Organisation and the World Darts Council. The reason for this omission is twofold. Firstly, I wanted to fully digest the implications of the result before putting finger to keyboard. And, secondly, I strongly doubt that the majority of ordinary dart players – those who enjoy the game in the pub a couple of times a week – will notice any difference. Anyway, for what it's worth, here goes.

I don't intend to go into the background of the dispute. It has been well documented, both in this column and elsewhere, over the last few years. Suffice to say that the two sides were represented in the High Court in front of Mr Justice Potts in June of this year. After hearing statements for two days, he urged both sides to make one final effort to reach agreement. Four days of negotiations followed and a settlement was finally reached and signed by both parties.

The most significant points were that the players waived all claims to damages and loss of earnings. The BDO now recognise the players associations and agree that all players will be free to compete in whatever "open" events they wish. Clauses were inserted into the agreement regarding the two World championships, to avoid possible claims of "poaching" from either side.

It is estimated that the cost of the dispute is likely to have been over a quarter of a million pounds. That money would have been better spent in encouraging youth darts, improving conditions for county players and as prize money for a big, open to all, competition.

Human nature being what it is, the mud slung over the past four years will take time to scrape off. It is just a pity that the meeting asked for by Justice Potts could not have happened four years ago. It would have saved a lot of acrimony, cash and friendships.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Darryl Fitton played the most important game of his career when he faced Peter Manley in the first round of the WDC World Matchplay in Blackpool. Darryl put out experienced professional Ritchie Gardner to reach the televised stages of the tournament. Darryl impressed early on; leading Manley 4-3 and needing only two legs to move into the next round against Alan Warriner. Sadly, it was Manley who found the doubles, but, make no mistake, Darryl will be back in front of the Sky TV cameras.

Other local players who have excelled in national competition recently include Sue Hambleton and Steve Cusick, who reached the final of the Mixed Pairs Pontin's Championship at Camber Sands, only going down to Merseyside's Mick Brooks and Cumbria's Chris Howatt in the final. Star & Garter landlady Sue also reached the last 16 of the Women's singles at the new British Classic Darts Championship in Blackpool. Tony O'Shea will be teamed with Pete Boughey as the Cheshire Pairs representatives at the Embassy Gold Cup National Finals at Trentham Gardens on 1 November. Kath Conway will partner Caroline Roberts in the Women's event, while the Men's and Women's singles will feature Gary Welding and Jane Stubbs, respectively. Sue Hambleton will represent Lancashire in the Women's pairs in the same competition.

Tony O'Shea held on to his Teletaxis title at the Bobby Peel recently. He beat Dave Peploe in the final 5-2. The match of the night, however, was Tony's semi-final clash with Daryl Fitton. Darryl took a 3-1 lead, hitting three maximum 180's and finishing in 15, 13 and 15 darts; Tony replying in 15. Tony dug in his heels, reaching the final in just 13, 12 and 14 arrows.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Samson final will take place at the Crown, Hillgate on 23 October, with eight of the best local players fighting for the title. For Cheshire's first game of the new Inter-Counties season, the county welcomed Berkshire for their first ever meeting. The Cheshire players seemed to like their new venue, The Rudheath Social Club. Both "A" sides registered wins – the men 8-4; while the women cantered home 5-1. The "B" results were more mixed, the men scraped home 7-5, but the women went down 0-6. The overall result was 20-16, with Cheshire taking the bonus points. Local

*continued on next page*

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# THE TRUE TASTE OF THE NORTH!



# HYDES ANVIL ALES

**BREWERS OF EXCEPTIONAL SEASONAL BEERS AND CRAFT ALES**



### A Tale of three 'Pities' - 3

This month Brian Kemp continues his look at three Macclesfield pubs which just don't seem to be the way they were...

The third of our three 'pities' is the Evening Star another Marstons pub and one with a remarkably similar story to The Star Inn, mourned last month. A corner terrace pub in a residential town centre location with a customer base very similar to the Star's, it consisted of a lounge and tap room divided by a central bar.

The trade in the Evening Star had been built up during the 1970s and 80s by a succession of excellent landlords, Jock Crawford, Dennis Brooke and Brian Mitchell. It sold first rate Pedigree, Bitter and Mercian Mild. Dennis, in fact, was one of the first Macclesfield CAMRA branch chairmen. I remember being in there on the famous night in the mid-70s when he finally won a battle with the brewery and ceremonially dismantled and unscrewed from the bar the keg Whitbread Trophy bar mounting prior to throwing it into the backyard!! CAMRA campaigns roused passion in those days!

When Dennis eventually decided to move on to the Oddfellows in Chinley, Brian Mitchell, who had been a regular customer, turned out to be an admirable successor. We presented him with one of our first Good Beer Guide 10-year certificates in 1989. The pub sold a respectable amount of beer and for a time everything went well but eventually the brewery accountants intervened again. In the 1980's Marstons seemed to increase their price at a rate that significantly exceeded their local competitors which made life difficult for pubs like the Evening Star, which by now had a newly-acquired Holts pub nearby with which to compete. I remember one day Brian confiding in me that he had raised the issue of price as a problem with his brewery rep, only to be told that Marstons did not believe that beer was a price sensitive commodity in the tied trade! They obviously conduct their market research in some kind of parallel universe!

The final straw came when they decided to demand a substantial rent increase which Brian knew the business could not stand. He resisted but finally gave up the unequal fight and left. Marstons' search for a new tenant prepared to pay their new rent proved fruitless and a manager was installed. It changed hands a number of times eventually, I believe, being offered as a tenancy at the same rent Brian had originally been paying. When Jim and I went there one Sunday lunchtime a couple of years ago the beer was undrinkable. What it is like now I don't know as I have not been tempted to go back since. The once-thriving tap room is now dominated by a pool table. The sad thing is that even if one of its previous landlords returned they would struggle to turn the situation round because it is far easier to drive trade away than it is to attract it back. As a final indignity, the pub was put up for sale by Marstons earlier in the year.

So there you have it, "A Tale of Three Pities" and if I may paraphrase Charles Dickens' final line from "A Tale of Two Cities", 'Tis a far far worse thing that they do now than they ever did before'. Rest in Peace, The Jolly, The Star, and The Evening Star.

### Fistful of Arrows (continued)

players who performed well were Gill Ball (23, 24, 29) who beat Val Skidmore (26) and Tony O'Shea who won the "Man of the Match" award with a per dart average of 29.99; beating Tony Steele in 13, 15 and 18 darts, with Steele replying with a brace of 16's.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stockport Town Hall will be the venue for the presentation night for the Stockport Licensed Houses League. The League is celebrating their fiftieth anniversary and have offered an invitation to all current and former players and officials. The event will take place on Tues 14 Oct.

Lynne and Andrew ☎ 445 4405

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SKY SPORTS

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# Down at the Dog & Duck

- by Nicholas R Winterton MP

*"...this House notes the long-established historical traditions which lie behind the ancient names of public houses and appreciates the special role which they play in community life; deeply regrets the growing trend towards theme pubs, with contrived names that have no relevance for the local community and which can cause embarrassment, ridicule and a sense of alienation for local people..."*

**S**o reads an Early Day Motion set down in the House of Commons by Macclesfield MP Nicholas Winterton. It reflects a problem that *Opening Times* has certainly covered in the past and which continues to grow, with the ever increasing trend to branded theme pubs. Nicholas Winterton has now followed up his motion with a Private Members Bill and here he writes for *Opening Times* about his campaign to protect this perhaps too unregarded part of our pub heritage.

The British pub is a unique institution. It has survived and developed over the centuries so that today it is a part of the social fabric not only of the nation, but of each and every local community. There have been changes to pubs in recent years, many of them welcome - an improvement in the quality and diversity of the food available, a wider range of beers and spirits at prices which as a result of duty reductions have actually begun to fall, and a cleaner, fresher environment which is more welcoming to women and to families.

But other changes have been more unwelcome. I do not deny that the owners of public houses have the right to change their decor

and their layout to attract different groups of customers. Whilst I personally have no time for "theme" pubs, thrown together to realise an ad-man's idea of perfection, publicans are perfectly free to do with their property as they wish. But do we really need to remove the ancient names of those hostleries which have in some cases been around for centuries and which are firmly established in the collective history of the local area?

The names of public houses frequently record important, if local historical events, and give their names to local areas. It is both wrong that centuries of community heritage can be erased at the stroke of a marketing-man's pen and unfortunate that many local residents feel embarrassed or alienated by the contrived names adopted, particularly by theme pubs.

A classic example was the threat by Allied Domecq to change the name of Macclesfield's ancient coaching inn, "The Bulls Head", to "The Pig & Truffle", and I was delighted by the way in which the local community, our local Borough Council and many other interested parties cried "foul" and saw off, at least for the time being, this squandering of our local heritage.

But this is happening all over the country and in my campaign to call a halt to this decimation of our cultural heritage I have received letters of support from parish councils, civic societies, historical study groups, academics and individual people from every quarter of the British Isles. The "Bolton Abbey" became "Boom Boom", "The Elgin" became the "Frog & Firkin", and umpteen "Queen's Heads", "Kings Arms" and "Coach & Horses" have become fake Irish or other theme pubs going by the name of "Scruffy Murphy's" or "Filthy McNasty's".

I am not one to quit the fight and I am seeking now to introduce a Bill into the House of Commons to force a debate on this important subject before it is too late and all these historic names have forever been lost.

What I am proposing is not a ban on changes or excessive regulation, merely a minor amendment to the existing regulatory regime, namely that the name of a public house should be part of the licence conditions and be changed only after local consultation. It is otherwise a bizarre anomaly that the size, scale and luminosity of a pub sign is regulated, but the name which it displays and which could cause greater offence is not.

We should remember that the free market is our tool, not our master, and that society has every right to control that market to ensure that it conserves from the past that which is worth preserving, and changes that which needs improving.

To me, it would be foolish and reckless to allow these pieces of our living history to be destroyed.

*This article first appeared in Community News. Nicholas Winterton's Public House (Names) Bill is due for its second reading on Friday 28 November. If you would like your MP to support it, write to him or her at House Of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.*

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## CAMRA VALE OF CLWYD BRANCH

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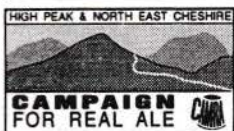
Peter and Gail

welcome you

Tel: 01625 828078







## OCTOBER Featured Pub: The Beehive, New Mills

**T**he Beehive is to be found on the right-hand side of Albion Road as you travel down the hill from Newtown Station. This small stone-built pub, mainly frequented by locals, is of interest on a number of counts.



*The Beehive, New Mills*

Firstly it is of a most unusual cheese-wedge shape, being located on the acute angle of the junction of Woodside Street with Albion Road; but that wasn't always the case - which brings me to the second point of interest. The pub once stood on the opposite side of Albion Road some distance up the hill and close to the toll bar, which once ensured travellers paid for the privilege of using the road (how things have gone full circle!). The toll bar was removed. Amid much rejoicing, in 1886, and the pub and toll house were subsequently both demolished in 1902, to make way for the Midland railway line, the pub being rebuilt in its present position, reputedly a reconstruction of the old toll house.

The central bar separates the traditional vault, at the 'pointed end' from the small lounge, and even smaller dining room, at the rear of the pub. Boddington's Bitter and Flower's IPA accompany a regularly changing guest beer, all dispensed by handpump. The pub is generally quiet, with a friendly atmosphere, and is also only a short walk from the Peak Forest Canal. Food is available lunch and evenings.

One final point of interest relates to the current owners and licensees, Christine and John Smith, they were both present at the inaugural meeting of the South Manchester Branch of CAMRA. The branch then included the area now covered by the Stockport & South Manchester and High Peak & NE Cheshire Branches, and the meeting was held in the Printer's Arms in Cheadle. Why not call in at the Beehive and have a chat, if you are in the area, you'd be made very welcome. GW.

Your Hosts  
Graham &  
Vera welcome  
you to ...

### THE RAILWAY VIEW

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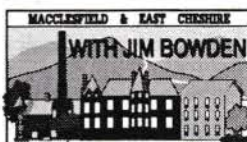


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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE  
WITH TIM JONES  
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CAMRA

It's good to be able to report a real ale club. This time its Chalkers Snooker Club in New Mills (its on Buxton Road about 200 yds on the left past the traffic lights). Cask beers include Chesters Mild, Boddingtons Bitter and a weekly guest beer, usually from an independent brewer, Well worth a visit.

Just as this issue of Opening Times comes out, the Stalybridge Station Buffet bar will be holding a Wye Valley Brewery event. Ten different beers from this popular Hereford brewery will feature - Bitter, HPA, Supreme, Classic, Brew 69, Glowing Autumn, Wholesome Stout, Green Dragon, Mortimer and Full Moon. Real cider, local bottled beers and farmhouse cheese will all add to the Herefordshire flavour. The menu will reflect the event, featuring such dishes as Trout in Cider.



ib News...  
ews...Pub  
vs...Pub N  
ab News...  
ews...Pub  
s...N

The Middlewood mentioned in July's Opening Times has three beers on handpump - Boddingtons Bitter, Whitbread Castle Eden and Marstons Pedigree.

The Ship, a free house on Beech Lane, Macclesfield, is up for sale.

The Weaver, Thornton Square, Macclesfield, now sells Robinsons Best Bitter as a regular.

Rumours that the Vale in Bollington had been bought by Holts appear to be unfounded as the brewery have no knowledge of the purchase!

The Bruce, Crompton Road, Macclesfield, has been refurbished and is selling Tetley Bitter and Draught Bass on handpump.

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**T**he end of this month sees the Rhyl Beer Festival take place on Friday 31 October and Saturday 1 November at Rhyl Town Hall. The festival will feature the 'Ales of Wales' with over 30 beers from the Welsh independent regional and micro breweries.

The 1997 'Champion Beer of Wales' will also be announced at this event and visitors to the festival will be able to sample all the competition finalists which include local favourites from Plassey and Dyffryn Clwyd as well as strong competition from the South Wales breweries.

Visitors to the Rhyl Festival will also have the opportunity to sample new beers that are not normally available elsewhere. These include beers from the Travellers Inn Brewing Company, Caerwys; the Flannery's range from Aberystwyth; Valhalla beers from the recently opened Brecknock brewery, and Rheidol Reserve from Tynllidiart Arms, officially recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the smallest brewery in the country.

The Rhyl Beer Festival is open on Friday evening (6-11pm), Saturday lunchtime (12-4pm) and Saturday evening (6-11pm). Admission to CAMRA members is £1 for all sessions, non-members £1.50 Saturday lunchtime, £2.50 Friday and Saturday evenings. Admission includes free festival glass and programme.

Closer to home, whilst we await the first fruits of the Marble Arch brewery with keen anticipation, there are a couple of beer festivals coming up - the City Arms on Kennedy Street in Manchester is participating in a 'national' Festival Ale House festival, running

throughout October with a different set of guest beers each week. As we went to press slightly late I did manage to sample a couple and good they were too.

The Stout and Porter season is with us with a vengeance, the National Winter Beer judging will take place at the Glasgow Beer Festival in a very few weeks time, and the Beer House is having a Porter/Stout week from November 5. There is a surfeit of pub festivals on next month with The Beer House having a 'real' Lancashire Festival (Ales from breweries located within the boundaries of the old county palatine) and the Stalybridge Buffet putting on a Winter Ales Fest simultaneously (27 - 30 November).

While waiting for Stoke and Nottingham Beer Festivals to come round (the first for its excellent foreign beer bars, the latter for its sheer size - 400 plus British Beers) I have managed to stagger over to Burton and St Albans. The Burton venue (the Town Hall) is very attractive and the multi-room layout is a help when grown men start dancing and jingling bells.... A very good festival once again - featuring CAMRA's excellent beer-cooling equipment from the National extravaganza at Olympia. St Albans on the other hand is a truly first rate festival in a terrible building - one of these modern leisure complexes. Super range of beers including quite a few that were new to me, all on gravity. (Actually I prefer handpulls, and if that makes me a modernist, so be it). The foreign beer bar had a range of draught American craft beers, with rather more from the West Coast than appeared at Olympia, and very tasty they were too! (if a tad strong). I stayed a great deal longer than I meant too, and if you are in the right part of the country at the start of October I recommend this one very highly.

So, where is Munich, you ask - well its still in Bavaria, as far as I know, and the map for my article is still in my laptop, which is not in Manchester....oh well, can't blame the editor this time! It will appear sometime soon. Sorry also for OT being a few days late this month, illness and hospitals intervened, I'm afraid.

18

ENJOY  
**DOROTHY GOODBODY**  
&  
**WYE VALLEY**  
**FINE ALES**  
at



**WYE VALLEY WEEK SPECIAL**  
**STARTS OCT. 8**

*A TASTE FOR THE COUNTRY!*

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## THE CASTLE

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Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,  
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A WARM WELCOME  
AND FINE BEER IN  
A CLASSIC PUB



# Shoot Out In Cheshire

## Photographic Competition

Local Branches of CAMRA are busy surveying pubs throughout Cheshire (and a few favourites just outside) for next Spring's new guide to the county, *Out Inn Cheshire*. This will give prominent treatment to more than fifty of the best pubs, each with a photograph.

The front cover demands something special, and we want a photograph of one of the selected pubs which captures all that is best in Cheshire's pubs.

You may think that this should be an idyllic pastoral scene with hanging baskets, honeysuckle round the door and smiling yuppies sharing a bench with rosy-cheeked yokels. Alternatively, a happy nuclear family tucking into a groaning board next to a roaring log fire may appeal, or you may have a distant vision of a homely inn, warm lights welcoming the weary hiker as the setting sun gilds a threatening sky.

Whatever your interpretation, you are encouraged to send your artistic best to the editor of *Opening Times*. A panel of rank amateurs will judge the submissions, and the worthy photographer who contributes the cover shot for *Out Inn Cheshire* will receive an exciting prize and lots of glory.

Contact your local CAMRA branch for the list of selected pubs of call 01565 653096.

## THINKING OF JOINING CAMRA?

**DO IT NOW! INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY £14 (£8 for Students) - PAGE 21**



# THE HOGSHEAD

64/66 HIGH ST. MANCHESTER

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FAX 833 9419

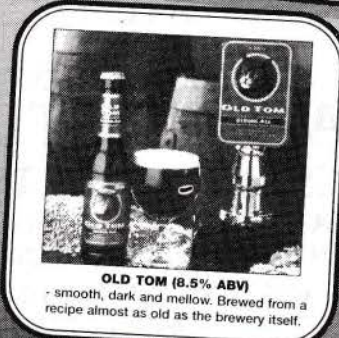
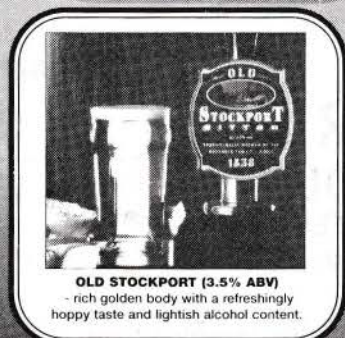
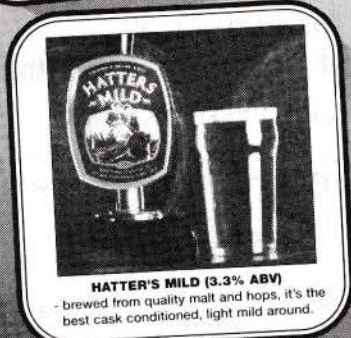
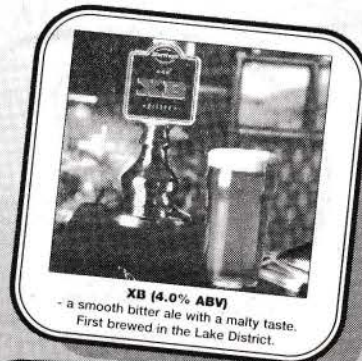
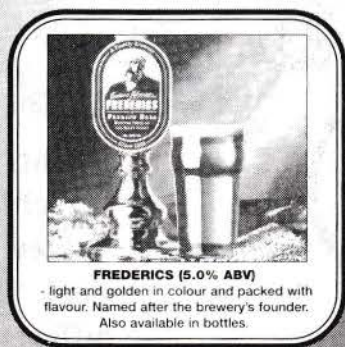
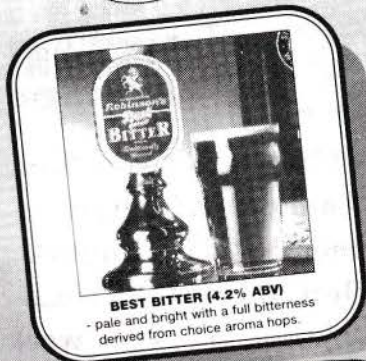
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*Food Served Daily Including Our Sausage Emporium*



# THE Robinson's COLLECTION



**C H O I C E B E E R S**

# 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

### October 97

**Thursday 9th** - Monthly branch meeting, the Blossoms, Buxton Road, Heaviley. Starts 8.00pm.

**Monday 13th** - Heaton Moor Social: 9.00pm Elizabethan (watch those shoes!); 10.00 Crown, both Heaton Moor Road.

**Friday 17th** - Edgeley Stagger: 7.00pm Royal Oak; 8.30 Jolly Crofter. Both Castle St.

**Saturday 18th** - National Pubs Group Meeting: Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 12 noon.

**Monday 20th** - Social: Lass O' Gowrie, Charles Street, City Centre. Starts 9.00pm.

**Thursday 23rd** - Pub of the Month presentation to the Orion, Burton Road, Withington. 8.00pm onwards.

**Sunday 26th** - Evening Curry Crawl: 6.00pm Denmark, Moss Lane East; 7.00pm curry in Rusholme; 9.00pm Albert, Walmer Street for live Irish music.

**Monday 27th** - Social: Old Star, High Street, Cheadle. Starts 9.00pm.

**Wednesday 29th** - Trip to Eddisbury Cider to present Cider of the Festival Award. Minibus leaves Crown, Heaton Lane at 6.45. Book your place on 477 1973.

**Monday 3rd November** - Social: Station, Didsbury. Starts 9.00pm. **NB change**

### October 97

**of venue from CAMRA Calling newsletter.**

*High Peak Branch covers Romiley, Bredbury, Woodley, Marple and all points north. They have advised us of the following events:*

**Saturday 11th** - Trip to Slater's Brewery, Eccleshall; joint social with Macclesfield branch. For details contact Frank Wood on 014578 64526.

**Monday 13th** - Monthly branch meeting, the Andrew Arms, Compstall. Starts 8.30pm.

**Monday 3rd November** - Committee meeting, Masons Arms, New Mills. Starts 8.00pm.

**Monday 10th November** - Monthly branch meeting, Sportsman, Mottram Road, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.

*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 events:*

**Saturday 11th** - Trip to Eccleshall (home of Slater's Brewery). Ring Scott French on 01625 617214 for details.

**Monday 27th** - Monthly branch meeting at the Davenport Arms, Marton. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

Claire and Howard welcome all their friends and customers to



THE CITY ARMS



MANCHESTER

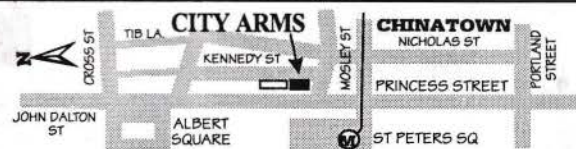
KENNEDY STREET  
**MANCHESTER'S**  
**1st FESTIVAL ALE HOUSE**  
 9 HANDPUMPS - 6 GUEST ALES  
 FOOD 11.30-2.30 & 5-7 Mon-Fri  
 and 11.30 - 2.30 Saturday

Just a few good reasons to visit the

**NATIONAL BEER FESTIVAL**  
 OCT 5 - NOV 2

Coming soon:- Orkney Dark Island, Coachhouse Innkeeper, Thwaites Golden Charmer, Ridley Rumpus, Black Sheep Best, Cains Red Fox... a different range of beers every week for four weeks

8 Single Malt Whiskies Available  
 Special Festival Food



# MANCHESTER MATTERS



**T**wo years after opening the luxuriously appointed Rothwells in a former banking hall, Marstons have unveiled another prestige project in the City Centre - the first North-western branch of their Pitcher & Piano chain of upmarket cafe bars.

So discreetly located that it could prove difficult to find on a first visit, it's set just off Lower Mosley Street at the head of the new arm of the Bridgewater Canal - look for it below the "pebble" outside the Bridgewater Hall. Within, timber floors, warm colours, and a striking painting create an inviting atmosphere. Outside, metal furniture stands on a broad paved terrace in a highly attractive waterside setting where Victorian warehouses, the Bridgewater Hall, and G-Mex all add interest to the view. This is certainly one of the pleasantest places to drink out of doors anywhere in the City Centre. There's a decent-looking menu (though I've not yet eaten there), and just one real ale, handpumped Marston's Pedigree, in decent condition when I called. There's just one snag - Pedigree costs a jaw-dropping £2.30 a pint! Even making due allowance for the place's style and location, this is seriously over the odds, and is likely to put many people off visiting what is otherwise a highly attractive establishment. Elsewhere in the City Centre, the long-keg **Central Park** has closed, while the **Crown & Anchor** on Hilton Street has been re-signed, losing its "Beer Engine" branding - no other major changes here though. The long-awaited brewery at the **Marble Arch** is now, I understand, being installed - could we see the first brew this month? And I look forward to the opening, on October 2nd, of Holt's **Ape & Apple** on John Dalton Street - the name may be silly and contrived, but on past form the pub itself should be well worth waiting for (*see review elsewhere - ed.*). In Fallowfield, **Durty Nellies** has become **Bar XS**. The layout is little changed, the mock Irish theme has gone, and so has the real ale (but there's "smooth" keg Boddies at £1.20 a pint - though this may have been a Freshers' Week offer). There's no real ale either in Rusholme's two new cafe bars. Both on Wilmslow Road, these are the **Sangam Cafe Bar**, which seems to be largely an adjunct to the excellent restaurant of the same name, and **Soak Bar**, a large and sparsely furnished room

by Rhys Jones

opposite the Punjab vegetarian restaurant (Rusholme's cheapest curry - try the pancakes). All in all, real ale has a low profile amongst the trendier bars of the Wilmslow Road corridor just now - here's hoping the arrival of the two new Hogsheads will redress the balance.

Also in Rusholme, **Hardy's Well** (or the Birch Villa as GMPTE's bus timetable compilers still call it) is currently closed for refurbishment, most probably to one of Bass's current "concepts". The same is true of the **Lloyds** in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, which is currently being turned into Manchester's first branch of "Edward's", a newish Bass chain which aims to attract diners by day and "bright young things" by night. Be bright yourself, and go to a pub that's kept its own identity. Recent pub closures in South Manchester are the **Unicorn** in Hulme and the **Midland** in West Didsbury.

Finally to East Manchester, where the Longsight at Belle Vue has abandoned its second attempt to sell Camerons Strongarm - a shame of course, but a wise decision if the beer wasn't selling well enough to guarantee quality. At the **Vale Cottage** in Gorton, recent supply problems with Greene King IPA have seen the temporary return of Theakstons XB as a guest beer. Other guests are also likely to be tried out - I understand a number of the regulars still look to Taylors Landlord as "the guest beer over the water". In West Gorton, the **Nag's Head** has reopened as expected but sadly sells only "smooth" keg beers (from Burtonwood and Boddingtons). And at the **Dolphin**, although skip-loads of material were taken out of the pub in late September, re-opening still looks as far away as ever (though given my recent track record in predicting the Dolphin's openings and closings, that could well mean it'll be open and thriving before this edition of OT hits the bars!)

## New JD's is JP's

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The Manchester region's latest JD Wetherspoon pub is J P Joule on Northenden Road, Sale, just a few yards east of the Metrolink station. The standard Wetherspoon offer holds few surprises, but the local history panels give due prominence to local physicist Joule, who gave his name to a standard unit of energy and also to a Staffordshire brewery which survived until the early 1970's. Unusually, the cider - Westons First Quality - is served from a polycask on the bar rather than by handpump. With Wetherspoons opening in Rochdale in the very near future, plus Oldham and Bolton openings slated for early 1998, soon few major local towns will be without a representative of this fast-expanding chain - as yet, however, they are not known to have any definite plans for Stockport. RPJ.

## APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times162)

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 £14  JOINT MEMBERSHIP £17

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £8

**Steve McCarley, 32 Howden Close, North Reddish, Stockport SK5 6XW**

those wishing to join CAMRA who live in the Marple, Bredbury, Woodley or Romiley areas, should write instead to:  
Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple, SK6 6JH.



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**CAMRA**  
**CAMPAIGN**  
**FOR REAL ALE**  
STOCKPORT AND  
SOUTH MANCHESTER  
**B R A N C H**

At the **Parrswood** in Didsbury, a £200,000 refurbishment was scheduled to start at the end of September, although a delay was anticipated. The refurbishment was expected to include moving the kitchen. This is part of some £11 million to be spent on local pubs by Greenalls. The **George & Dragon** in Heaton Chapel is also due for refurbishment.

Meanwhile at the **Station**, there is a temporary licensee, **Paul**, who will be there for a month or until a new permanent licensee is appointed. Former managers **Gary** and **Saxon** have of course moved on to the **Whitworth** in **Rusholme**. Speaking of which, we understand that the **Whitworth** is to be extended and virtually doubled in size. The extension will be sideways onto the site of the former clothing factory and the aim will be to cater more for the student market. A larger catering kitchen will be included in the behind the scenes changes and everything should be up and running by **Christmas**.

Back in Didsbury, **Ron** and **Norma** Hall took over at the **Royal Oak** on 1 September. They come via a number of **Marstons** pubs - the **Station**, **Didsbury**; **Robin Hood**, **Helsby**; and latterly the **Carters Arms** in **Sale**. "No changes are planned and "continuity is the order of the day". **Marstons** **Head** **Brewers** **Choice** 'guest' beers will continue to feature and the pub is noticeably more friendly with **Ron** and **Norma** busy making old and new customers feel welcome. A nice touch was from former licensee **Arthur Gosling** who sent them flowers to welcome **Ron** and **Norma** to their new pub.

Either the brewery or the **Magic Pub Co** have imposed a 20p price hike on **Boddingtons Bitter** - at the **Hungry Horse** (**Farmers Arms**), in **Cheadle Heath** this would have made the **Boddies** £1.75 a pint. Rather than attempt to sell **Boddies** at this frankly exorbitant price, the licensee is replacing it with either **Draught Bass** or **Courage Directors**.

In **Edgeley**, there are a couple of cask mild losses to report with both the **Sir Robert Peel** and the **Prince Albert** no longer turning over sufficient to make it viable. At the **Prince Albert**, new licensee **Simon Mounkley** has however introduced **Robinsons Best Bitter** as a guest - a beer he will be very familiar with after his long stint at the **Blossoms**.

New licensee at the **Bow Garrett** on **Brinksway**, **Stockport**, is **Steven Bosswell** who arrives from the **Cock of the North** in **Wythenshawe**. Sadly, the **Bow Garrett** no longer sells real ale, thus joining the ranks of that small number of **Stockport** pubs who do not offer their customers the choice of cask or keg.

Not far away, **Scottish Courage** have put the **Hollywood**, **Edgeley** on the market. Since the pub has been seemingly completely neglected since they bought it from **Grand Met**, lets hope that new owners will see much needed investment in the pub and a revival of its fortunes. It would make a great **Holt's** pub...

Staying in **Edgeley**, there are new faces at the **Armoury** where **Ian** and **Margaret Bailey** took over on 22 September. This is their first tenancy, although the couple spent three months running the **Gardners Arms** on **Northgate Road** as a training exercise. Changes so far have been relatively minor (and indeed nothing major is planned). The pub is now open all day on **Saturday** and **Sunday** and the morning opening has been brought forward to 11.00am. It looks as though the **Armoury** remains in good hands and we wish **Ian** and **Margaret** every success.

Last issue's critical comments about the **Moor Top** in **Heaton Moor** brought a swift phone call from new licensee **Simon Eason-Brookes** (who successfully ran the **Bromale** in **Bramhall** some years ago). Real ale is now on sale, and indeed was on when we called, an organisational 'cock-up' meant all the pump-clips had been left turned round in error!. **Simon** tells us that the pub has been cleaned up in every sense of the word and many of the old regulars are returning. The sole cask ale at the moment is **Theakstons Bitter** but if sales continue to improve a guest ale could feature as well. After many years the pub looks to be in good hands at last - it certainly needs them.

Although outside the **Opening Times** area, readers will be interested to know that the once-threatened **Railway** at **Broadheath** near **Altrincham**, now looks to be on the up again. Latest development is the introduction of **Holts Mild** and **Bitter** on handpump at the end of September.

**Lees Bitter** has now made an appearance in some of the **Marie Pub Co** outlets. It has replaced **Holts Bitter** as the guest beer in both the **White Lion** in **Disley** and the **Witton Chimes** in **Northwich**., while in the **Ducie Bridge** in the **City Centre** is now becomes a permanent guest.

In **Longsight**, the **New Victoria** looks set for closure, in rather odd circumstances. It is one of five **Greater Manchester** pubs owned by an outfit called **RBNB** who, it seems, have been reluctant to hand over to the police certain business details, such as who is involved in the company's management and how the business was being run. This is part of standard licensing procedures and the police have now applied for the licenses of all five pubs to be revoked. Apparently the **New Victoria** was due to appeal against the decision but backed out. **RBNB**, which is seemingly connected with the **Barnsley Brewery** (a well-respected micro) bought 35 pubs from **Greenalls** across the country 4 years ago - four of the pubs in **Birmingham** have already been closed down. How very strange.

22

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



**HOPWOOD BITTER**  
ABV 3.5%  
Pale coloured bitter, clean tasting session beer with a bitter hop finish.



**BANTAM BITTER**  
ABV 3.5%  
Pale brown bitter. Slightly nutty, full flavoured beer.



**OAK BEST BITTER**  
ABV 3.9%  
BEST BITTER  
Tawny coloured, with a hint of sweetness in the full bitter palate. A fresh but dry hop finish.



**OLD OAK**  
ABV 4.5%  
Well balanced brown beer. Malt and hops balance the strong fruitiness in the aroma and taste. The finish is malty, fruity and dry.



**THIRSTY MOON**  
ABV 4.5%  
Light brown bitter. Strong hop aroma. The slight maltness is dominated by a full crisp bitterness giving a dry and satisfying finish.



**BONNEVILLE**  
ABV 4.5%  
Light brown bitter. Malty character with a soft rounded hop balance.



**DOUBLE DAGGER**  
ABV 5.0%  
Pale brown bitter. Full flavoured hoppy bitterness. More pleasantly dry and light than its gravity would suggest.



**WOBBLY BOB**  
ABV 6.0%  
Amber beer. Malty fruity aroma. Strongly malty and fruity flavour. A slight sweetness yields to a dry finish.

# CARRINGTONS

TEL. 0161 446 2546.

688 WILMSLOW ROAD DIDSBUY MANCHESTER.  
(ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE CLOCK-PLEASE PARK  
OUTSIDE ON THE DOUBLE YELLOW AS THEY ARE NOW VOID.

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- BRAUER/OECHSNER PREMIUM PILS £1.48
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- & PLENTY OF RESERVE PLAYERS

**Pilsner Urquell**  
660ml  
**£1.50**  
LIMITED STOCKS AT THIS PRICE

BEER SHOP IN MANCHESTER IS?

P.S. SOME KNOW WHO THE BEST PRODUCERS

LEADS OF BELGIANS!

OF BOTTLE CONDITIONED BEERS ARE - DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE BEST

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WINTER BREW  
WICKED WINTER  
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89p EACH / 79 x 6  
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FROM PETE'S MICRO BREWERY  
ST. PAUL, MINN. USA

ALL OFFERS STRICTLY SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER PRICES WITHOUT NOTICE. E&OE.

**BRITISH BOTTLES**  
OLD SPECKLED HEN  
500ML BOTTLE £1.25  
CHARLES WELLS  
5% FARGO £1.15.

HAND LORDS & BARS. YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR THAT WE OFFER A FULL (7 DAYS) WHOLESALE SERVICE FOR ALL YOUR CASKS (KEGS, BOTTLES, SPIRITS ETC). TEL: 832 5646

**GUEST ALES**  
FREE 1 LITRE TAKE HOME CONTAINER - SIMPLY THE BEST BRITISH CASK CONDITIONED BEERS CHANGING WEEKLY

THE CAMRA-GUARDIAN BOTTLE CONDITIONED BEER OF THE YEAR. ALL 3 MEDAL WINNERS NOW  
HERE.

SOON TO OPEN: CARRINGTONS WINE (& BEER) CELLARS. NO 9 CORPORATION ST. M.C. JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM THE BEER HOUSE.

### TOTAL DISCOUNT PRICES

CATCHY HEADLINE, AND OUR PRICES REALLY ARE AMONG THE LOWEST YOU WILL FIND ANYWHERE. BUT, THEN A LOT OF STORES WILL MAKE CLAIMS LIKE THAT IN THEIR ADS. WE HAVE OVER 1,800 CAREFULLY CHOSEN CUTTING EDGE FINDS HIGH SCORERS, & BLUE CHIP LABELS TO CHOOSE FROM, ALL AT GREAT PRICES. BUT THE BEST WAY TO SEE WHAT WE'RE REALLY ALL ABOUT IS TO DROP IN TO ONE OF OUR SHOPS. OUR COMPETITORS DO! FOR US, LOW PRICES ARE JUST ONE STRONG POINT ALSO, AS YOU CAN SEE, FANCY ADS AREN'T.

DUNKERTONS ORGANIC CIDERS ALWAYS IN STOCK!

WE'VE GOT CHIPS

THE  
PARK



PUBLIC HOUSE  
Newbridge Lane  
STOCKPORT

WIN UP TO

**£1500!**  
*Happy Hour every Friday 8.30-10 pm*  
DISCO every Saturday starts 8pm  
plus! Bottle BONANZA

HOT & COLD FOOD AVAILABLE MON - FRI  
11.30am - 2pm

**OPEN ALL DAY**  
Tel: 0161 480 2275



**THE ONLY PUB IN STOCKPORT WITH FREE POOL & JUKE BOX**



**The White Lion**

135 BUXTON ROAD, DISLEY  
Tel: 016663 765290

Alf & Kay Carter  
Welcome New & Existing Customers.

**NOW OPEN AFTER  
MAJOR REFURBISHMENT**

**NEW LARGE GAMES  
ROOM  
POOL, DARTS  
DOMINOES, CRIB**

**FULL FOOD MENU  
FROM MON 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**

The  
**Ducie  
Bridge**



THE "MARIE" PUB CO.

**Manchester**

Opposite CIS Building

**CLOSE TO NYNEX ARENA  
FINE RANGE OF WINES,  
SPIRITS, CIDERS, LAGERS &  
TRADITIONAL CASK ALES**

**SUPERB MENU  
OPEN ALL DAY**

