

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES



No:
163

FREE

NOVEMBER 1997

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FREE EVERY MONTH

Short-Pint Scandal Continues

The case for a full pint is overwhelming writes *Ted Bruning*. Customers believe they're paying for a full pint, and they've a right to receive a full pint - without extra charge.

Backing for a fair deal from the licensed trade reaches to the highest level: consumer affairs minister Nigel Griffiths has publicly and irrevocably pledged himself to support backbench MP Dennis Turner's private members bill aimed at ending the national scandal of the rip-off pint.

But the licensed trade refuses to get the message, especially here in the north of England, where pints traditionally come with a big head and where too many skinflint landlords still try to pass off air as ale.

Three official investigations in recent weeks have revealed that publicans and staff routinely ignore Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association guidelines which say that a pint should be at least 95% full before being passed to the customer.

A joint survey by trading standards officers in West and North Yorkshire targeted 214 pubs buying 426 pints.

They found that 87% were short of a full pint, and 14% fell short of even the BLRA guidelines.

Three per cent were 10% or more short, and West Yorkshire chief trading standards officer Martin Wood said: "The results of this survey are no surprise.

"It's time to act. The solution is larger lined glasses which hold a pint and still have room for the head."

In Cleveland, trading standards officers ordered pints in 21 pubs in August and found that only four publicans offered a top-up unprompted, and even after topping-up two of the pints were 10% short.

None of the pubs had copies of the BLRA guidelines.

Chief public protection officer David Thompson also noted that, despite licensed trade protests that honest pints would mean price rises, the average price of pints served in oversized lined glasses as £1.45, while the average price of pints served in brim measures was £1.51.

The worst result came from Liverpool, where trading standards officers tested 60 pubs and found 40 per cent of them serving less than the BLRA-recommended 19 fluid ounces. Only three actually served a pint.

Liverpool City Council consumer protection committee chair Councillor Eileen Devaney said: "Drinkers should get the full pint they are entitled to."

There is good news, though. The JD Wetherspoon Organisation who operate 197 pubs nationwide, and continue to expand, have now introduced oversized lined glasses in all their pubs. Licensed trade hysteria about bar staff not being able to pull pints to the line and even, incredibly, customers not liking larger glasses, has been shown to be the rubbish we always believed it to be. And the 10p-a-pint increase that would accompany any move to lined glasses? Not at Wetherspoons where prices remain the same!

The article originally appeared in *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's national newspaper. Additional material by *John Clarke*.

Firkin Festival

The *Forgery & Firkin* on Mosley St, Manchester will be running a beer festival from 10-14 November. The beers will be supplied by a variety of Firkins and range from the potentially sublime to the possibly ridiculous:

Manchester's *Footage & Firkin* will be supplying *Kiwi Special* (3.5%) - the standard 3.5% brew dry-hopped with New Zealand hops; *Forgery Festival Special* (4.3%) - a very hoppy version of the standard 4.3% brew; *Mutineer Beer* (5%) - flavoured with coconut and chocolate and *Bananabolter* (5.6%) - yup, you guessed, a banana flavoured version of *Dogbolter*.

From Sheffield comes *Black Pearl Oyster Stout* (4.7%) and a *Wheat Beer* (4.7%); Leeds will be supplying a *Satsuma Special* (4.5%) and *Overdraft* (7.5%) while from Middlesbrough there will be a *Honey Beer* (5%) and a *Brown Ale* (4%).

There should certainly be something for all tastes in that lot. Whilst it is easy to raise an eyebrow at some of the more exotic concoctions mentioned, all credit to the *Forgery*, possibly one of the best Firkins that OT has encountered, for taking this initiative.

Carlsberg-Tetley Shake-up Bass Move on Burton

In a move that surprised no-one, Bass have formally announced their intention to buy the former Allied's huge Burton Brewery (next to Bass's own) providing a price can be agreed. This would lead to all Bass brewing activities concentrated on the enlarged site, and therefore the closure of Bass's Cardiff and Sheffield plants.

Win A VIP
Brewery Trip!

Stockport
Mild Challenge
1997

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Guide (1998)
are now
available -
Order Form
on Page 8



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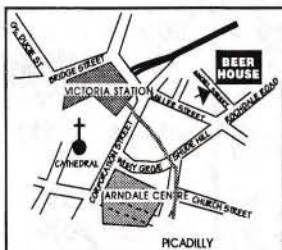
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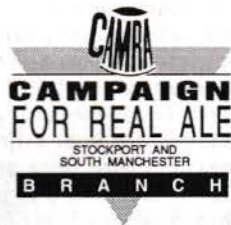
OPEN ALL DAY MONDAY - SUNDAY

**(0161)
839
7019**

Pub Of The Month NOVEMBER

1997

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						



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for November is the Crown, affectionately known as the Corner Cupboard, on Hillgate, Stockport.

The refurbishment by brewers Vaux was well reported in September's Opening Times but that is by no means the only reason for its selection. The award is equally in recognition of the efforts put in by Alan Roebuck, family and friends, in reversing the decline of this excellent little pub. The Crown is in fact Alan's first pub although his family has a long tradition of running pubs and clubs. All this experience was needed when they moved in on July 4th 1996. The Crown had been slowly dying for a some time and was virtually on its last legs but Alan, along with mum Maureen, sister-in-law Lynne, cousin Cath and friends Barbara, Tracy and Troy had already reversed the pubs fortunes before the refurbishment started. This was helped, not only by a return of the old regulars but Alan's darts experience (he's a former young England player) which has seen four darts teams. There's a pub football team as well.

Of course, part of the pub's success is also down to the well-kept real ales, Vaux Mild, Samson and a rotating guest beer are all on handpump and of consistently high quality.

So, it's congratulations all round, not only to Alan and his family but also brewers Vaux who have also played their part in this success story, particularly Regional Director John Wright and Business Development Manager Jim Fallon. As well as rewarding Alan and his family for their success we hope that this award will also send a message of encouragement to Vaux to keep up the good work and take a similar interest in their other local pubs.

The presentation will be on Thursday 27th November which should be a night to remember. **MW.**

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

Contributors to Opening Times Issue 163: John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Phil Levison, Rhys Jones, Peter Edwardson, Stuart Ballantyne, Martin Wzystryk, Tom Lord, Martin Thomas, Jim Bowden, Brian Kemp, Mark Jones, Ted Bruning.

MARBLE BREWERY

TESTING, TESTING.

**THE MARBLE ARCH
FREEHOUSE
73, ROCHDALE ROAD.
MANCHESTER**

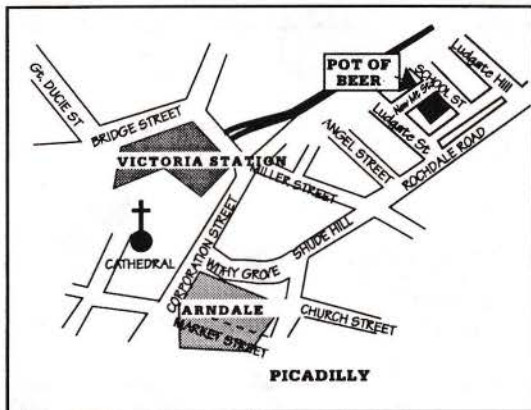
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- ✓ ROBINSONS DARK MILD
- ✓ HOEGAARDEN WHEAT BEER
- ✓ TRADITIONAL CIDER
- ✓ SELECTION OF WINES & MALT WHISKIES



4



FOOD NOW AVAILABLE
12 - 2 pm,
MONDAY - FRIDAY!

IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

No apologies this month for returning to the subject of short-measure.

You'll be hearing a lot more about this when Dennis Turner's private members' bill comes up for a reading in Parliament. What you will hear though, will not be reasoned debate but unrestrained hysteria from the vested interests of the licensed trade as they fight a last ditch battle to defend their right to rip-off their customers.

Many publicans do try and serve a full-measure, but in a busy pub with harassed bar-staff, even the most well-meaning of licensees will see a short measure go over their bars at some time or another. And of course there are the small minority who serve under-measure as a matter of policy. As we report, trading standards officers regularly reveal widespread short measure, with some pubs even flouting their own organisation's guidelines that your pint should be at least 95% beer. Do the various Trade Protection bodies respond positively to these findings? No! All we get are the same tired old arguments and scare stories. Instead of responding positively and trying to offer practical solutions we are told that fair pints mean our beer will go up, bar-staff won't be able to cope, handpumps will be ripped out wholesale and cask beer will die. All of it rubbish. Well we've got a message for all those vested interests. **YOU HAVE LOST THE ARGUMENT AND YOU ARE ABOUT TO LOSE THE BATTLE AS WELL.** One way or another, legislation to make fair pints compulsory is on its way. Stop whinging and start preparing.

Some chains, like Wetherspoons, and some far-sighted individual pubs, like Stockport's Arden Arms, are already paving the way. Their moves send a clear message to the rest of the industry: it's time to put your house in order and switch to lined glasses.

John Clarke

OPENING TIMES is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ (0161) 477 1973 (home) and (0161) 831 7222 x 3411 (wk). News, articles and letters welcome. All items may be submitted in most popular WP formats or ASCII on IBM-PC format 3.5" disks (which will eventually be returned!). Articles for publication can be submitted by e-mail to jdclarke@opentime.u-net.com. Compuserve users can mail the deputy editor at 100662,12. Letters to the editor on otletter@opentime.u-net.com. All items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.

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OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From Bob Bromley:

I seem to have rattled Rhys' cage with my last letter (does he write the Curmudgeon column?). I was hoping that my letters would invoke a rational response but I have been disappointed. I would simply point out to Rhys that I would not equate hypocrisy with rationality or stimulation and I would not equate a lack of hypocrisy with political correctness.

From Rhys Jones:

I agree with much of what Curmudgeon has to say (OT, October) about the Firkin chain. However, he fails to recognise that, like the independent microbreweries he praises, a number of Firkins do produce "distinctive, high-quality beers". After a slightly shaky start, "Sutty" at our local Footage & Firkin is now making some very creditable beers; and not so long ago, the respected micro-brewer Bill Bell (of Appleby Brewery fame, for those with longish memories) was appointed brewer at the Philanthropist & Firkin in St Albans.

Time was, it's true, when CAMRA members indiscriminately praised the Firkins. These days, though, they're more likely to attract indiscriminate opposition, only a shade less intense than that afforded to Irish theme pubs. In each case, surely, the better approach is to praise and encourage the good examples - they do exist - while pointing the finger of scorn at the horrors.

From Paul Hutchings (latter-day mature student):

Once again Curmudgeon goes over the top, flogging a dead horse (or in this case Firkin). Not only are both the Manchester Firkins good (if studenty) pubs, serving locally brewed beer, but in many towns I visit, the Firkin is a welcome port of call. The one in Nottingham (though non-brewing) is excellent, both Derby Firkins are good, as is the Philanthropist in St Albans, and the two BREWING Firkins in Oxford - the new Faraday at Clapham Junction makes some of London's best beers, and recently the only unmitigated s***-hole I have found is the Firkin in Slough (come friendly bombs etc...). Whilst they could never be described as standard locals, they manage to attract, in daylight at least, a wider clientele than Curmudgeon seems to think. I think Stockport needs one badly! So come on lad, seek out new targets, new opportunities and boldly leave my Firkin Pubs alone.

From Paul Felton:

Enough is enough. At this year's Stockport Beer & Cider Festival, I was in charge of the glasses stall. During one of the open sessions, someone the identity of whom I cannot remember, asked if they might leave an early Learning Centre bag containing three plastic animals behind the glasses counter. I am reasonably confident that this person was male and a father, and he was almost certainly a fellow member of staff. The animals concerned were a reindeer (brown, 6 inches long by 3.5 at the shoulder), a billy goat (4 by 2.25) and a feral goat (3.5 by 2.5), all with the sort of horn sections James Brown would die for. My enquiries have not been able to discover the identity of this person, so I appeal to the good and gracious readership of Opening Times and ask the fundamental question: WHOSE ANIMALS ARE THEY? Have YOUR children been crying themselves to sleep for the lack of their reindeer/billy goat/mountain goat? I think I should be told. Failure to inform the editor of your identity will result in small pieces of the aforementioned horn sections being sent to Mr Clarke on a weekly basis. This is a final warning; do not delay. (This is too horrible. Will no-one stop this fiend? - ed.)

Letters via e-mail are welcome: otletter@opentime.u-net.com



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CAMRA Pub of the Month

March 1997



5

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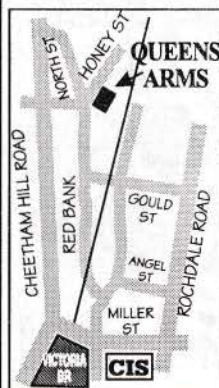


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Stockport Mild Challenge 1997

After a two-year break we have once again teamed up with the Stockport Express Advertiser to bring you another Stockport Mild Challenge. The previous Challenges have been a great success and if you haven't taken part before, try and have a go this time. It's fun and it's easy. It's also a chance to visit some new pubs, try new beers and, of course, to win some great prizes.

The Challenge runs from Saturday 8 November (CAMRA's National Mild Day) to Sunday 7 December and offers every-

one taking part the chance to win some great prizes. **All** completed entries received will win a copy of Viaducts & Vaults 2, the award winning guide to Stockport pubs, together with a free entry ticket for the 1998 Stockport Beer & Cider Festival (to be held 28-30 May). Once again, we are also featuring the **Mild Challenge Extra** - visit a participating pub in 12 different areas, using the headings shown on our list below, and you will win a special Mild Challenge T-shirt; visit **all** the participating pubs and you will win a specially engraved pewter tankard. This year we are grateful to Frederic Robinson Ltd for enabling us to offer an extra-special prize: every completed entry will go into a draw and the first ten pulled out will win a VIP visit to Robinsons Brewery to see how Hatters Mild is made.



* Firstly, get a card. If you picked up this copy of Opening Times in Stockport there should be one either in it or in the holder. You can get one from any of the participating pubs or write to the Mild Challenge address: 30 Lonsdale Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3FL.

* When you buy a pint or a half of cask mild in one of the pubs taking part ask the bar staff to stamp you card. Remember, though, you can only get one stamp from each pub.

* When you've filled in the card (you'll need 12 different stamps from 12 different pubs) then send it to the Mild Challenge address and, after our closing date, we will send off your prizes. Simple isn't it?

Happy Drinking!

6

Local news is BIG news Every Friday

Stockport Express

- The following pubs are taking part:**
- Adswold: Copperfields, Cross Keys
 - Bredbury: Arden Arms, Horsfield Arms
 - Cheadle: Printers Arms, Royal Oak, Olde Star
 - Cheadle Hulme: Church, Cheadle Hulme
 - Compstall: Andrew Arms, George, Northumberland Arms
 - Edgeley: Comfortable Gill, Grapes, Greyhound, Woolpack
 - Gatley: High Grove, Horse & Farrier
 - Great Moor: Dog & Partridge
 - Hazel Grove: Anchor, Grapes, Three Bears, White Hart
 - Heaton Chapel: George & Dragon
 - Heaton Mersey: Crown
 - Heaton Moor: Crown
 - Heaton Norris: Ash Hotel, Bridge Inn, Moss Rose, Nursery
 - Heaviley: Royal Mortar
 - High Lane: Horseshoe, Robin Hood
 - Lane Ends: Lane Ends, Travellers Call
 - Marple: Pineapple
 - Marple Bridge: Royal Scot, Windsor Castle
 - Portwood: Railway
 - Reddish: Carousel, Thatched Tavern
 - Shaw Heath: Armoury, Florist
 - Stockport Centre: Bakers Vaults, Crown, Swan with Two Necks, Tiviot, Unity
 - Stockport Hillgate: Crown, Royal Oak, Spread Eagle, Star & Garter
 - Strines: Sportsmans
 - Woodford: Davenport Arms
 - Woodley: Lowes Arms, Railway

Mild - A History

Mild is one of the oldest enduring beer styles in the world although its origins are obscure. Until the Industrial Revolution from the mid 18th Century and the use of coke in malt kilns, all beer was dark as the malt from which it was made was cured over wood fires.. One of the most popular dark beers of the time was porter, originally a blend of three beers and latterly just one brew that attempted to copy the distinctive, slightly sour taste, of the blend. It was originally known as 'Entire Butt' although its popularity with market porters is one reason put forward for the adoption of the name by which the beer is commonly known today.

However porter had its drawbacks - it needed a long maturing process and a consequent need for large storage space; this in turn also meant that the beer gave a slower return on expenditure for the brewers. Not only that but the bitter and even acidic taste of the well-matured beers did not suit every palate. This led, in the nineteenth century, to some brewers producing a new brown beer called mild. Although quite a different drink to Porter, being dark, flavoursome and fairly cheap, it began to gain popularity. For the brewers it had the advantage of being easier and cheaper to brew and did not need a long ageing process. For drinkers it was cheap (4d a quart - that's less than 1p a pint) and appealed to workers engaged in heavy manual labour.

Mild's success as the beer of the working man endured for a hundred years or more. Until the 1950's mild was the biggest seller by far in most pubs - a state of affairs which continued even longer in the Black Country - and in the North West many brewers continued to produce two milds until the 1970's. Robinsons and

Hydes' still do. However over the past 40 years there has been a decline in mild consumption nationally due to a variety of reasons - tales of slops being returned to the cask, snobbishness (the cloth-capped 'old man's drink' image), colour preference, higher wages and simply a change in taste. As a result in some parts of the country real mild is a rare find indeed but the North West remains a stronghold of mild drinking, albeit at a lower level than in the past, and Stockport in particular retains a strong mild drinking tradition with many pubs still selling the real thing. JC.

Mild - Facts and Figures

Did you know...

- * Over 135 milds are produced by more than 100 breweries
- * Not all milds are dark beers. Robinsons Hatters and Hydes Light are both examples of good light milds.
- * The term mild has nothing to do with strength but with the fact that fewer hops are used in the brewing process.
- * Milds don't have to be weak. In the West Midlands there was a tradition of strong milds. The Beacon pub in Sedgely still produces Dark Ruby Mild at 6% ABV.
- * The largest producer of real mild is Wolverhampton-based Banks's where their Mild still outsells bitter by more than 2:1.
- * Until very recently, the Highgate Brewery in Walsall had produced only mild for over 50 years.
- * In the West Country, very light bitters were preferred to milds. Due to their low strength, these were known as 'boys' bitters'
- * Strangely named milds include Gravediggers Mild, Magic Mushroom Mild, Old Cock Up Mild, Feather Plucker Mild and Hock.

THE RAILWAY Voted CAMRA Pub of the Month May 97

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Make Mine A Mild!



Mild - Who Brews What

Many of our local brewers still brew real mild and two, Robnsons and Hydes, still produce two. Here we give a run down on the milds available in Stockport and South Manchester with the alcohol by volume given in brackets. Those marked * are available on the Stockport Mild Challenge:

Robnsons: Hatters Mild* (ABV 3.3%) - a light mild with a refreshing dry, malty flavour.

Dark Best Mild* - Hatters Mild with added caramel. Fruity and malty but a very rare find.

Hydes' Anvil: Mild* (ABV 3.5%) - dark and dry, an all malt brew

Light* (ABV 3.7%) - lightly hopped session beer. Refreshing and fruity with a dry finish.

Holts: Mild* (ABV 3.2%) - very dark with a complex taste. Very bitter for a mild with a long satisfying aftertaste.

Porter: Dark Mild* (ABV 3.3%) - rich and full-bodied with a roasty aftertaste.

Vaux: Mild* (ABV 3.4%) - brewed by Wards in Sheffield. Roast malt taste with hint of chocolate. Slightly sweet finish.

Cains: Dark Mild* (ABV 3.2%) - smooth, dry and roasty.

Coach House: Gunpowder Strong Mild* (ABV 3.8%) - full bodied and roasty, malty aroma and full finish. Often available at Crown, Heaton Lane.

Burtonwood: Mild (ABV 3%) - smooth, dark and malty with a good roast flavour.

Banks's: Mild (ABV 3.5%) - often sold as plain 'Banks's', amber-coloured and well-balanced.

Bateman's: Dark Mild (ABV 3%) - complex beer with roast malt aroma and hoppy bitter finish. Available in many Marstons pubs.

Everards: Chesters Best Mild* (ABV 3.5%) - brewed for Whitbread. Dark and rich with satisfying finish.

Lees: GB Mild (ABV 3.5%) - malty and fruity with a dry malty aftertaste.

Morland: Wilson's Original Mild* (ABV 3%) - brewed for Scottish Courage. Thin but refreshing.

Carlsberg-Tetley: Tetley Dark Mild* (ABV 3.2%) - fruity and dark. Less distinctive than it was.

Tetley Mild* (ABV 3.3%) - well balanced taste of malt and caramel with good bitterness

Greenalls Mild (ABV 3.3%) - thin and undemanding

Scottish Courage: Theakstons Mild Ale* (ABV 3.5%) - rich and smooth with a dry hoppy aftertaste.

Websters Green Label (ABV 3.2%) - thin and bland. Sometimes sold as a 'budget' bitter.

Whitbread: Boddingtons Mild* (ABV 3.1%) - refreshing brew with caramel and malt flavours.

Real Mild and Why You Should Drink It

So what is real mild? Like all real ales, real mild is a natural living beer which ferments again in its cask in the pub cellar. This allows the condition and subtle flavours to develop. Do not confuse it with keg mild which is filtered, pasteurised, chilled and served with an injection of gas which will either make your pint gassy and anaemic, or 'smooth' and bland (and usually a few pence dearer than the real thing).

Mild has a lot going for it. There has been a revival in its fortunes in recent times and more drinkers are coming to appreciate its subtle charms. Mild's usually lower gravity is better news for drivers and those who suffer from hangovers. Several pints won't make you fall over and it's good value (even after the recent price rise, Holt's Mild is still only 99p a pint).

Stockport still has a strong mild drinking tradition with many pubs still selling it. Those taking part in our Challenge range from sedate country inns to boisterous town boozers. We think it's right to support this neglected part of our brewing tradition and ensure its survival for years to come.

8

PHOENIX BREWERY

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

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

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BOOK REVIEW

City Life Restaurant, Cafe Bar & Pub Guide to Greater Manchester. 4th Edition Greater Manchester Publications Ltd. 146 pages, £3.

Does this guide have the longest name of any on the market? Following on from its three predecessors, this fourth edition follows what is by now a regular format although this year some of the niggles from the past have been eliminated - at long last there is an index, there is a better selection of maps and some of the more obviously clunking errors have been eliminated (at long last the intro to the pub section has stopped mentioning the non-existent 'Richard Clarke micro-brewery').

Production values remain impressively high with each entry including an excellent thumb-nail sketch which tells you really all you need, and a colour photo. Chinatown and Rusholme get their own introductions but inexplicably, this is the only mention the Rusholme restaurants get. This apart, though there is excellent coverage of the best eateries in both the City and beyond. The cafe bar section is equally comprehensive as far as the City Centre goes which may perhaps call into question the objectivity of the book, can they really all be that good?

The pub section is at the back and this positioning is perhaps indicative of the nature of the book. It's mainly for people who want to eat out (and possibly to be seen doing so...). That said while the featured pubs may hold no surprises for anyone even vaguely familiar with the local drinking scene (other than perhaps the omission of such as the Church at Uppermill, brewing since January, and Porters Railway in Stockport, open 12 months now), the casual reader won't be led far astray with entries which provide quite a decent county-wide coverage.

All in all a good and useful book which is worth three quid of anyone's money. JC.

The Brewing Industry 1950-1990.

Privately published by Anthony Avis. 274 pages, £13

Much has been written about the tidal wave of closures that swept through the brewing industry in the 1950's and 60's but so far virtually everything that has appeared has been written with the benefit of hindsight (and often, it must be said, through rose-tinted glasses). Tony Avis was there, on the ground and in the thick of it. This collection of essays covers his recollections of events seen through contemporary eyes, together with his observations on the brewing scene in general.

While it might be easy to quibble with some of the pieces, and to spot the occasional error of fact, this book presents an invaluable glimpse into what is now a vanished world - that of the private family brewers just after the war, the so-called 'beverage'.

Much of the detail is fascinating, as are the many anecdotes that pepper the text. Avis tells how Richdales brewery in Sheffield, despite an extensive product list, in fact only produced one beer. Some darkened with caramel 'so you had light and dark beers. Then you labelled some strong, some ordinary and some light bitter; and priced accordingly'. He explains how Cases of Barrow had such low wastage rates - the old fermenting vessels were so thin that they bulged when full, and as the Customs only calibrated the first three feet when assessing duty, the brewery gained a number of gallons of duty free beer on each brew. He recalls the astonishing dining habits of the brewery boards, breweries run by 93-year old directors, the animosity and rivalry that convulsed some companies - for example the two brothers, one a brewer and one a bottler, who ran Seth Senior, "the beer passing by pipe under the road to the bottling stores was the sole communication between them".

The book also includes one of the most memorable descriptions of pub refurbishments you are likely to see "...those modernisations beloved of brewery companies, which is to destroy what is worth preserving; replace it with what is not required; and neglect what is most in need of attention..."

This book, which should have a place on the bookshelf of anyone with an interest in the brewing industry, has been privately produced. Only 200 copies have been printed and enquiries should be addressed to Anthony Avis, Thalassa, Gill Bank Road, Ilkley, West Yorks, LS29 0AU. JC

In the next issue, amongst our traditional Christmas reviews will be a report on the new Derby Pub Guide, and the South West London Guide (really local, that one - ed)

The incredibly sought-after Christmas edition of Opening Times will be in pubs from December 12 - so seek your copy out..

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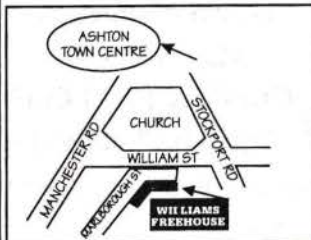
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is unwell. Back with some predictions next month...

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CURMUDGEON



Revenge of the Band of Hope

The anti-drink lobby have had a pretty bad time in the past fifteen years. Licensing hours have been extended, the rate of duty, although still too high, has fallen in real terms, and it has been scientifically proven that moderate drinking is much better for you than total abstinence. But the pro-drink case has a soft underbelly in the form of the drink-driving issue, and the miserable zealots have attacked on this front for all they are worth.

The road safety case for reducing the already low legal limit is at best pretty marginal. And since when have anti-drink campaigners been road safety experts anyway? Indeed, it could well be argued that people who drive to the pub and successfully stay within the legal limit are showing precisely the qualities of self-restraint and careful unit-counting that they are trying to encourage in the population at large. But they know that this is the one issue on which they can still sway public opinion with their tired old message about the evils of drink. They have adopted a line of argument which makes a shameless play on the emotions, rather than being prepared to take part in calm, rational debate.

They know very well that cutting the limit will make little or no difference to road casualties. It will do nothing to deter the hard core who knowingly ignore the current limit. But it will lead to the closure of thousands of pubs, bring about a huge reduction in visits to pubs outside urban centres, and force millions of responsible, law-abiding people to take stock of their drinking habits in a way they never had to before. That is why they are so keen to campaign in favour of it. It may not be Prohibition by the back door, but it would be a definite step in that direction.

The English Ethnic Restaurant

Recently, I've more than once come across an approving reference to pubs serving what is described as "pubby" food, that is, hearty pies, game, lamb chops and suchlike.

The idea of developing a distinctive English-style pub cuisine has its attractions, but in a wider context it may not be such a good idea. In the past generation, our eating habits in this country have changed beyond recognition. There has been an incredible spread of restaurants and takeaways offering various exotic cuisines, so it's now far easier, particularly in urban areas, to eat Indian, Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Thai or Turkish food than "traditional English". More often than not, it's these places, rather than pubs or hotels, that people choose to visit if they want a distinctive, high-quality meal without breaking the bank.

Now, there's much to be said for "traditional English" food, and undoubtedly there are dangers in pubs launching themselves into risky attempts to serve authentic foreign dishes. But it would be regrettable for the future of pubs if they completely closed their eyes to these developments, and interpreted their role so narrowly as to become just one amongst many ethnic dining experiences, in this case Olde English. Pubs, after all, are meant to be all-inclusive and appeal to a wide range of tastes.

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BREWERY NEWS



At the Railway on Great Portwood St, Stockport, regulars were treated to the third of Dave Porter's experimental brews last month. 'Number 31 was in fact Sunshine with three times as many hops as normal, and dry-hopped into the bargain! While Dave professed himself disappointed that the beer was still not bitter enough to be undrinkable (!), it was received with great acclaim and the one cask was drained in a day. Don't be disappointed if you missed out as this one will reappear, primarily because Dave himself didn't manage to try the finished product himself!



No sign of the Lees' seasonal beer in their pubs in the OT area. The next brew 'Ruff Yed' is out on 1 December, watch out for it.



Tuesday 11 November is the date for another rare beer launch. The venue is the impressive Market Restaurant on High St, Manchester City Centre where a bottled 'Market Porter' winter beer will be making its first appearance. Brewed specially for the Market Restaurant, this will be a bottle conditioned dark-ish beer "with a full flavour of hops and toasted malt". The brewer? This is Dave Shelton, Lecturer in Food Technology, specialising in the art of brewing, at Manchester Metropolitan University and the beer will be brewed on the small plant at the "Toastrack" building in Fallowfield. Readers should note however that if you want to try it you will have to go and eat at the restaurant, which, given the quality of the food on offer, should be no great ordeal.

The in-house brewery at the Marble Arch on Rochdale Road in Manchester continues to make steady progress. At the end of October, Brendan Dobbin had started work on installing the brewing plant and it was hoped to have test brews ready by the middle of this month. More news as available.

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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

NOVEMBER '92

The well-known advertising slogan "Great Stuff This Bass" had been changed to provide the front page headline of "Stuff This Great Bass". This was Opening Times' reaction to the appearance of so-called Draught Bass in a can - there was even a handpump on the can. Worthington Best Bitter had made a similar appearance with handpumps featuring on the packaging and advertising. Trading Standards at Burton-on-Trent were understood to be investigating the situation following earlier complaints - Bass had already referred to "cask beer in a can", and an advert showed beer being pulled into a can by a handpump.

Marstons' had announced a variety of changes to their range of beers. The axing of Mercian Mild had already been noted, and it had been replaced in local Marstons houses by Banks's Mild. Further rationalisation had followed, with the discontinuance of the three Border beers - Mild, Bitter and Exhibition - this brought to an end the last connection with the old Border Brewery of Wrexham, which had been taken over and closed down by Marstons several years previously. The loss of these old beers had been offset by the introduction of a whole series of new beers, under the heading Head Brewer's Choice. Paul Bayley, Head Brewer, was to devise recipes for 12 new beers that would go into 400 Marstons pubs - the idea was for customers to choose their favourites, and the most popular would become regulars.

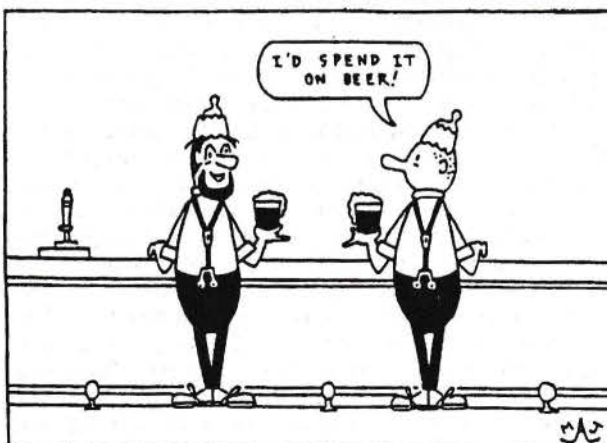
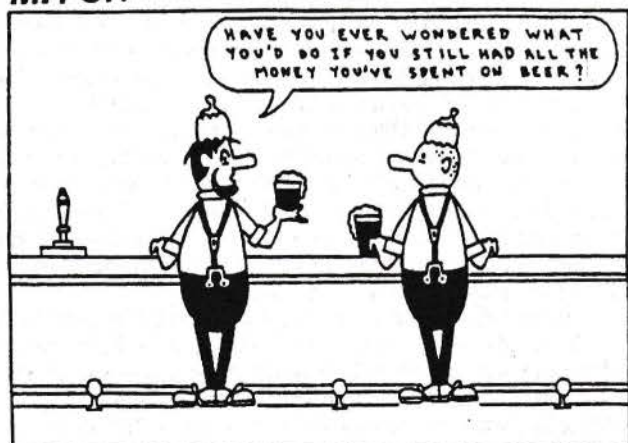
Boddington PubCo's refurbished Old Garratt on Granby Row, off Princess Street had opened again. There had been a previous attempt at refurbishment a couple of years back, but this time there had been major changes both inside and out, in what was obviously a determined effort to change the appearance of a 1960's pub into that of a Victorian local. Cynics would still say it's only fake Victoriana, but done as impressively as this on a pub with absolutely no architectural heritage to call its own, then it was difficult to complain.

It had been announced before the previous election that the Government intended to implement section 43 of the 1985 Weights & Measures Act, which meant that from April 1994, the head on a pint would no longer count as part of the pint. The Brewer's Society had condemned the decision, saying that a pint could go up by as much as 14p, because handpumps would have to be ripped out at a cost of £530 million, and Bass were in no doubt that handpumps would disappear. (Now, in 1997, Section 43 still hasn't been implemented.)

**CAMRA CONTACT IN MACCLESFIELD IS JIM BOWDEN
on 0161 483 9311 (wk) & 01625 572221 (h)**

MITCH

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STAGGER

with Peter Edwardson and John Clarke

Our September Stagger around Offerton kicked off at the Golden Hind on the corner of Marple Road and Lisburne lane. This pub has been refurbished since the take-over of the Magic Pub Company by Greene King and few signs remain of its previous incarnation as the Hungry Horse. On the downside, looking at the menus, the meals are no longer particularly cheap. It's a very big pub which has all been knocked through but retains a clear differentiation between vault and lounge sides. The decor in the lounge majored on mirrors and assorted bric-a-brac.

The Greene King ownership was reflected in the presence of Greene King IPA, but the bar staff didn't seem very clear what it was when we asked for it and the beer itself was rather substandard. The Banks's Mild was a little better, other real ales available were Theakstons Best Bitter and Websters Green Label.

We then moved on to the **Strawberry Gardens**, which from the front appears to be a small cottage-type pub with two traditional rooms, a small vault and an excellent wood-panelled snug. However, it has been considerably extended at the rear to form a blander open-plan area. There's also a large garden behind the pub. The only real ale available was Theakstons Best Bitter, which was a little above average. There was another handpump with the pumpclip turned round - we couldn't quite read it, but it appeared to have a lion on it.

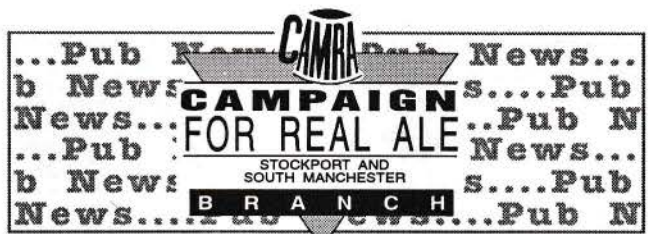
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Next we cut across to the **White House** on Hemphaw Lane, another large pub which has been extensively refurbished in the recent past, retaining the separate vault and lounge but opening up the lounge side. It was busier than the two previous pubs, with a mainly young clientele who were no doubt waiting for the disco which was being set up. The bar was dominated by an array of "Continental" T-bar keg taps and a large font for nitrokeg Theakstons Best Bitter. Handpumps dispensed Websters Bitter, which was about on a par with the Theakstons in the last pub, and Wilson's Mild, for which the pumpclip was turned round.

Doubling back on ourselves brought us to the **Fingerpost**, an impressive red-brick pub on the cross-roads between Hemphaw Lane and Dialstone Lane. Since my last visit, a new toilet block had been added and one or two walls half-removed, but the pub still has a multiplicity of different rooms and areas including a large function room. This was the busiest pub of the night so far, with a traditional community atmosphere and a more mature clientele than the White House. Robinsons Hatters Mild and Best Bitter were available, dispensed by electric meters into oversize glasses, which are always good to see. Both beers were good, with the mild just having the edge over the bitter.

Moving on we came to the **Gardeners Arms** on Little Street a busy 'Boddingtons' pub with a large rambling lounge stretching across the front of the pub and a busy vault at the back. Again the pub was busy, although perhaps less so than the Fingerpost, with perhaps a country feel to the place. Two beers were on handpump, Boddingtons Biter and Flowers Original with both being well received.

Our next stop was the **Emigration** on Hall Street. Past Staggers of Offerton have had little complimentary to say about this pub, and I'm afraid that this is no exception. It's difficult to say exactly what was wrong here. The pub was busy enough, packed even, with people having a good time, even to the extent of dancing on the table in one instance. But even so, despite the bustle, the pub seemed to be totally lacking in atmosphere - perhaps it was the stark walls utterly devoid of decoration that did it (maybe the pub was in the throes of refurbishment, this didn't seem to be the case but if it was, this might be an injustice). The beer, Robinsons Hatters Mild and Best Bitter, wasn't too clever either. One of our party also pointed out that handpumps have replaced meters and brim glasses have replaced oversized ones since the last Offerton



New licensees at the **Station**, Didsbury, are Ann and Les Coates. They are experienced, long-serving licensees, having previously run the Turnpike, Withington; the Sun in September, Burnage and the Vine in Dunham Massey, followed by a period of relief management. No changes are planned at the Station other than the introduction of sandwiches at lunchtime. Whilst at the Sun in September, Ann and Les gained a Pub of the Month award not once, but twice, so it is hoped that maintaining good beer quality at the Station will not be a problem.

Staying in Didsbury, Ye Olde Cock is to undergo a £20,000 refurbishment next January/February. For such a big pub this isn't a lot so the work may involve little more than a redecoration. The pub has also started featuring comedy nights - look for a review in a forthcoming OT.

In Adswold, the **Cross Keys** is to feature in Hydes' quality improvement initiative. The brewery are to locate a management/ licensee training centre in the pub's old function room. Licensee John Maguire told us that this would be a training centre for new Hydes' managers, the purpose of which is to equip trainees with NVQ's in pub management and catering. Hydes' new training manager Heather Kent will be in charge of the initiative supported by John and Jane Maguire and the brewery.

The ambitious timetable to expand the Whitworth in Rusholme and open the new-look pub by Christmas looks to have slipped. Due to contractual difficulties in gaining access to the factory site next door, work has not yet started on the project. It looks as though we will have to wait until Spring 1998 before the new, extended Whitworth is unveiled. Meanwhile it's business as usual.

In Hazel Grove, an extensive refurbishment of the **Horse & Jockey** was about to be unveiled as we went to press. Jim Fallon from Vaux tells us that the work has basically involved 'ripping out the inside of the pub and moving the bar'. Drastic perhaps, but from previous experience of this pub, almost certainly necessary. A full report next time.

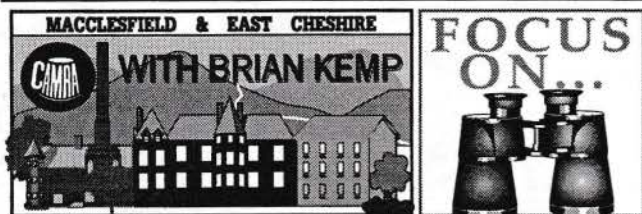
Continued on page 18

Stagger. We understand that this is a Robinsons managed house, if so, they really ought to be able to do better than this (and usually do, in point of fact).

Ever onwards, next was the **Victoria**, also on Hall Street, but by contrast with an excellent pubby atmosphere. A two-roomer with vault to the left and lounge to the right with a plain but comfortable decor, and perhaps a slightly older clientele, the pub was quietly buzzing in the way that well run pubs often seem to be. It's a Greenalls house and as well as Greenalls Mild and Bitter, the pub is taking advantage of the company's guest beer scheme and so offered us Thwaites Daniels Hammer as well, all on handpump. Both Greenalls beers were good but the real star, and as it turned out best beer of the night, was the Daniels Hammer. A superb pint. Stones Bitter was also available but none of us tried this.

Our last stop wasn't in Offerton, but what the hell, it's a cracking pub. This was the **Waterloo** on Waterloo Road. Quite a large Robinsons pub with front lounge, side vault and snug at the back, it was again thriving with a good pub atmosphere and an obviously strong local following. Beers were Robinsons Hatters Mild and Best Bitter served via electric meters. Both were OK but, unusually for this pub, nothing to write home about.

And that was that. An interesting collection of pubs serving, with some notable exceptions, not very interesting beer. Of course this report can only be a one-off snapshot reflecting what a group of us encountered on one particular night. It cannot and should not be taken as a once and for all judgement of the pubs or the beers they sell. As ever, why not try some of them yourself and see what you think.



The Nags Head, Waters Green, Macclesfield

The Nags Head is a large, imposing, brick-built, Robinsons pub standing in a prominent position directly opposite Macclesfield Railway Station next to the touristically photogenic '108 Steps' that connect Waters Green with the historic area surrounding St Michael's Parish Church and Town Hall.

It featured as the front cover of our first local beer guide back in the late 1970's. Several centuries ago Waters Green featured as a large horse and cattle market for the surrounding area and the Nags Head played a role in providing accommodation and sustenance for the visiting traders. It currently sells Best Bitter and Hatters Mild and when Jim and I visited last Sunday lunchtime the beer was excellent. Describing the layout of the pub is not easy as it is so extensive. You enter from the street into what is, in effect, a passageway with the main bar a little further down on the left. At the end of the passage at the back of the pub is a large lounge with its own serving hatch. Immediately on the left as you enter the pub is a vault/games room with its own bar. To the right of the passageway are two small games rooms, another passage that leads to an outside door that opens into the old stable block that must date back to the old market days. Also in this area to the right is an impressive staircase leading to a large upstairs function room. The Nags played an important role in the early days of Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch. We held our inaugural meeting there on 26 January 1976 and for a number of months afterwards used it for monthly branch meetings. To my certain knowledge we have not had a branch meeting there for at least 20 years. But such is local folk-memory I still regularly hear it referred to as the pub where CAMRA always meets!! For four years in the early 1980's we held an annual beer festival in the adjoining stable block. It was an ideal venue that proved very popular but we eventually had to give up because of lack of resources and manpower. The local Round table now produce an annual charity event under canvas at the local Rugby Club which with their business contacts and manpower is a far grander and more extensive event than anything we could ever have aspired to.

So what is my motive in writing this piece on the Nags Head? Regular readers of my little articles will know that I am the last person in the world who would advocate altering and modernising, at great expense, perfectly good ordinary pubs for no good reason. However in the case of the Nags Head it has managed to retain an aura of neglect whilst not retaining any of the charm and character that might have gone with it. I am given to understand that Peter Robinson is believed to read OT from time to time. If he reads this can I enter a plea. The Nags Head is in a prominent position in Macclesfield town centre directly opposite the railway station, only a short walk from the bus station and is surrounded by public car parks. It has a notable local history and the total property is enormous. The present landlord seems to have done a creditable job in the excellent quality of his beer. At the Millstone round the corner, Marstons have spent a fortune in recent years on two major refurbishments, just down the road Holts have put a lot of money into revamping the Queens after buying it from Allied. At a time when rumours are rife in the town that one of the big national pub chains, eg Wetherspoons, may be showing an interest in the old majestic cinema on Mill Street, what about a major investment and redevelopment of the Nags Head? Now I am no accountant and not aware of any structural work that might be needed in a building of this age, but it's just a thought!

If you fancy coming down from Stockport to see whether you agree, the train is the best bet. Give it a try and see what you think!

There are now 43 weeks till the Shambles reopens :)

Lynne and Andrew ☎ 445 4405

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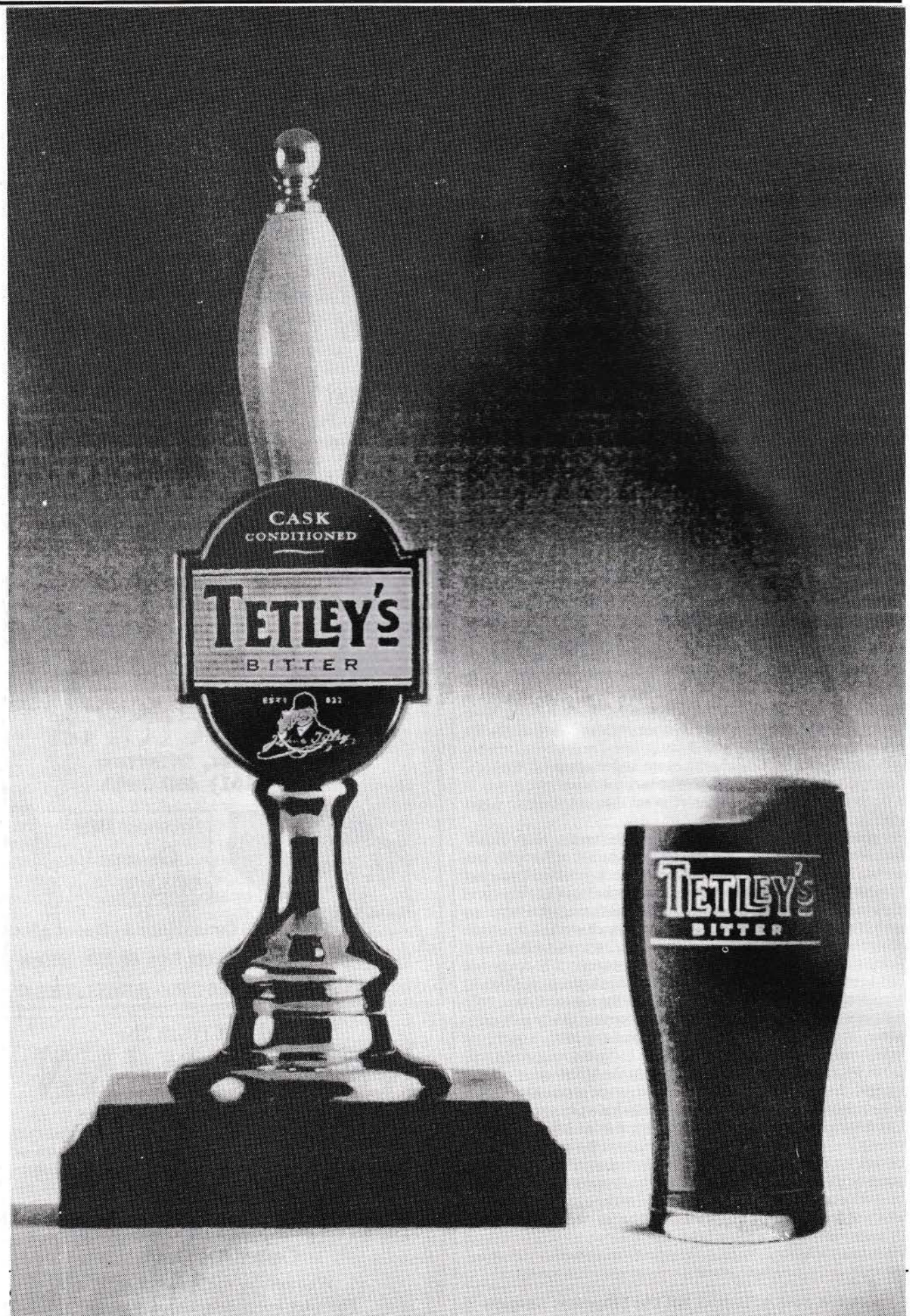
Websters & Holts

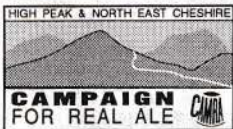
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November Featured Pub: The Bowling Green, Marple

This month we turn our attention to Marple, and to a pub in the village centre, which is unusual in one respect in that it does not sell Robinsons.

This is the **Bowling Green**, a robust local on the main Stockport Road, though the bowling green itself has long-since disappeared. As early as 1778 there are records of an alehouse and brewery on the site, with a history of licensed premises of one sort or another ever since. In 1899 the pub was sold to Showells Brewery of Hempshaw Lane, Stockport, and subsequently became a Walker & Homfrays house and ultimately Wilson's, to whom it still belongs (or whichever group currently owns the old Wilson's pubs!).

Despite a number of internal alterations and additions over the years, the pub still retains the feel of a local and the vault remains thankfully unchanged.

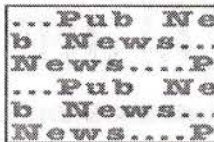
Externally, the pub has benefited from a recent face-lift, and has also been redecorated inside. There are a couple of comfortable lounges one of which has some interesting pictures of old Marple and surrounding area, including Marple Hall which was torn down in the early sixties.

The vault is down-to-earth, unpretentious and is meant for drinking in, and is all the better for it. Vaults like this are disappearing fast. Enjoy it while you can!

The beers available bring much-needed variety to the centre of Marple and are Holts Bitter, Websters Yorkshire Bitter and Wilson's Mild, all on handpump. Bar snacks, sandwiches and meals are also available.

The Bowling Green is a lively, noisy, busy local, serving a need which so many of its type do; often without the recognition they deserve.

The Stockport-Marple buses (383/384/358/363/359) pass the door and Rose Hill railway station is only a few minutes walk up the main road. TL.



The **Oddfellows** in Mellor no longer sells Banks's Mild, due to low sales. It has been replaced by a further guest bitter, Adnams at the time of writing. The **Bowling Green** in Marple now has Wilson's Mild on handpump, a welcome alternative to the diet of Robinsons Hatters Mild in the centre of Marple.

Exciting news in Buxton where the **Sun Inn** reopens on December 5th as the **Union Taps**, the first in a new national chain of freehouse-style operations run by Marstons. The full beer range is as yet unknown but we can confirm that one beer from the Burton Bridge Brewery and one from Whim will always feature. A full review will appear in January's Opening Times.

The **Star Inn**, in the centre of Glossop, has been closed for repair work but is due to reopen shortly though it is anticipated that the beer range will be a pale shadow of what it used to be.

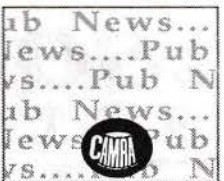
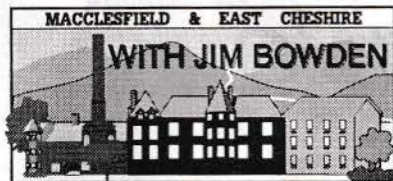
The **Moon & Sixpence**, again in the centre of Glossop, has again started to restock guest beers, with Batemans XXXB as what appears to be a regular.

The **Little Mill** at Rowarth now has Barnsley IPA which the landlord assures us is selling well.

We believe that the **Pineapple**, Market Street, Marple, is approaching Robinsons Brewery enquiring about the possibility of being supplied with Dark Best Mild. If this is accurate then one can only applaud this attempt to further the cause of milds.

The **Grey Horse** on Stockport Road, Romiley, is now serving 'Old Tub Thumper', alongside Boddingtons Bitter and Theakstons. Unfortunately this writer did not have time to enquire about or sample it!

In Disley the **Plough Boy** has undergone a major refurbishment and was set to reopen on 17 October. A full report next month. Finally, the **Vernon Arms** in Poynton is now serving Cains Bitter, alongside Boddingtons and Old Speckled Hen, and the **Boars Head** at Higher Poynton now has Marstons Pedigree.



The **Ash Tree**, Butley, the **Cock & Pheasant**, Bollington, the **Ivy Leaf**, Macclesfield and the **Unicorn**, Dean Row, Handforth, all Greenalls pubs, are all closed for refurbishment.

The landlord of the **108's**, Waters Green, Macclesfield, a Vaux house, has left.

The **Jolly Sailor**, Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, has closed and is boarded up.

Your Hosts
Graham &
Vera welcome
you to ...

THE RAILWAY VIEW

Byrons Lane,
Macclesfield

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PLATFORM ONE

6 GUEST BEERS ☆
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☆ BAR GAMES ☆ ☎ 01625

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beers that combine old favourites
with new and special festival brews.

STALYBRIDGE STATION

ORIGINAL BUFFET BAR

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

November 97

Monday 10th - Social, Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 13th - Monthly branch meeting at the Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.

Monday 17th - Membership recruitment night - Student Special. Details from Steve McCarley on 432 5906.

Friday 21st - Abbey Hey Stagger. Starts 7.00pm Vale Cottage, Croft St (behind Lord Nelson on Hyde Road); 8.30 Hamlet, Abbey Hey Lane.

Monday 24th - Membership recruitment social, Railway, Great Portwood St, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 27th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Crown, Hillgate, Stockport. See article elsewhere.

Friday 28th - Minibus tour round some of the better pubs in East Manchester. Leaves Crown, Heaton lane at 7.00pm.

Monday 1 December - Social, Grafton, Grafton St, Chorlton-on-Medlock. Starts 9.00pm.

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

November 97

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

Friday 14th - Social at Bury Beer Festival. Meet at Festival at 2.00pm till 3.00pm, then afternoon pub crawl round Bury, then back to beer festival for evening session.

Sunday 16th - Branch Walk. Start Andrew Arms, Compstall at 10.00am. Circular route over Werneth Low to Sportsman, Hyde and back.

Saturday 22nd - train trip to Riverhead Brewery, Marsden. Depart Manchester Victoria 11.55am, Ashton 12.06, Stalybridge 12.10. Arrive Marsden 12.27.

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:

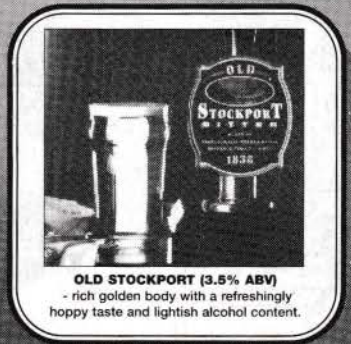
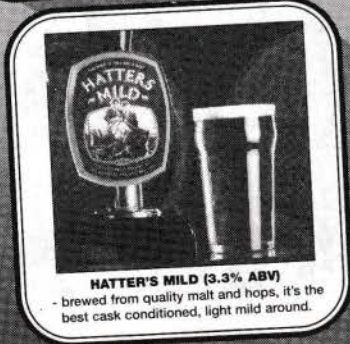
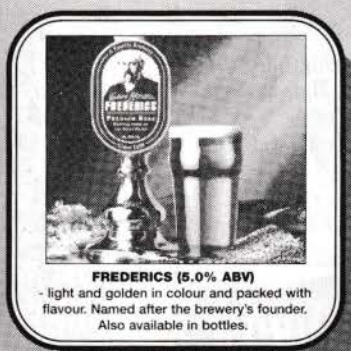
Saturday 8th - Macclesfield Mild Crawl. Meet 1.00pm, Waters Green Tavern, Macclesfield. More details from Simon Scott on 01625 617214.

Monday 24th - Monthly branch meeting, Nags Head, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner



THE Robinson's COLLECTION



C H O I C E B E E R S

MANCHESTER MATTERS



A new City Centre cafe bar is nothing special - but one with four cask beers is!

Bar Beristo on the corner of Peter Street and Museum Street, is run by the Unicorn Inns Division of the aggressively expansionist Oxfordshire brewer Morlands, brewers of Old Speckled Hen and (under contract) Wilson's Mild, and recent purchasers of the famous Ruddles Brewery. It's an up-market affair with wooden floors, wood panelling,

by Rhys Jones

and an attractive indoor gallery, and invites comparison with Marstons' nearby Pitcher & Piano - while it lacks that establishment's stunning location, it gains on both range and price. The handpumps dispense Old Speckled Hen, Marstons Pedigree, Worthington Bitter and a guest - normal price is £1.95, but happy hours in the early evening (and, I suspect, other times as well) reduce this to a reasonable £1.50. When I called, the guest was Everards' Tiger, which was perfectly fine after a few minutes' warm embrace to bring it to a suitable temperature. Food is prominent, but it's mainly snacky stuff - you'd be pushed to find anything more substantial than chilli or a burger. To my amazement, the place is closed on Sundays - what was all that about cafe bars leading the way to the 24-hour city? The 7-day city would be a start! The centre's other new cafe bar opening is **Dome**, not far away on the corner of Southmill Street and Lloyd Street, which **does** open Sundays but unfortunately follows the pack in selling only keg beers - or "bieres a la pression" as it calls them in its oh-so-sophisticated Frenchified way. Elsewhere in the Centre, the **Pot of Beer** now sells a varying real cider on gravity from the "upstairs cellar", while **Nickleby's** is due for closure having been sold for non-licensed use. Already closed, of course, are **Sinclairs** and the **Wellington**. There is perhaps little I can add to what has already appeared in these pages on these two pubs, except to say that I took care to visit them before the move. Even if the relocation proceeds "successfully" to plan, they will not be the same. There's a new pub in Levenshulme, the **Ceili House** on Stockport Road, almost opposite the Little Vic. With a name like that, "politically correct" CAMRA opinion might well damn it for a fake Irish bar. Not for the first time, though, politically correct CAMRA opinion would be wrong - for this is incontestably a genuine community pub, with a warm Irish welcome for a largely Irish clientele. Described as a "family bar and lounge" with a high standard of service (and, despite the name, little emphasis on music), this former hotel suffers just one drawback - no real ale. Isn't it ironic that, just as cask beer brewing seems to be regaining a toehold in the Republic, and cautiously expanding its small presence in Northern Ireland, so many Irish bars this side the water don't sell the real stuff?

Take **McNallys** in All Saints. This has been a fake version of many things in its time, but since the outside wall facing Oxford Road now bears the inscription "Green", I suppose it now qualifies as fake Irish. Certainly the beer's all keg, as it is also at the **Bay Horse** in Longsight. Just down the road from the Bay Horse, the **New Victoria** is closed and

boarded, as predicted in last month's OT. Thank goodness for **Robinski's** (no longer **Wallet**), on Wilbraham Road in Fallowfield, which has bucked the studentland "smooth keg" trend by re-introducing real ale in the form of Draught Bass on handpump. I'd never really thought of Bass as a "studenty" beer, but it seems to be going well, no doubt helped by fair pricing at £1.55 a pint.

Finally to Gorton, and a warm welcome to new licensees Tracy and Paul at the **Friendship**. It's their first pub, though they have considerable experience of pub work round the area, and when I called recently the Batemans Mild was as good as ever.

PS - my prediction last month that Rusholme's **Hardy's Well** would be turned into a Bass theme bar was off-beam. It's still **Hardy's Well**; the back room has been knocked through to create a single L-shaped drinking space; the place has a smarter feel with higher quality furnishings; and handpumps dispense Worthington Bitter and - shamefully - keg Cidermaster cider.



"I wish to register
A COMPLAINT!"



- ★ **Be Polite** - if you create a conflict, you've lost - the licensee has home advantage!
- ★ **Be Discreet** - no licensee wants to draw attention to a problem
- ★ **Be Reasonable** - if the beer has reached the end of the barrel, you can tell at once. The landlord may not be drinking and unaware of this.
- ★ **Be Diplomatic** - "I think this might have gone" is less of an insult to the cellarman's craft than "this tastes foul!"
- ★ **Be Sensible** - a tiny shortfall in volume isn't worth the fuss, but nearly an inch is worth a polite request to "squeeze a drop more in".
- ★ **Be Decisive** - bad beer should be returned promptly. Struggling valiantly through 3/4 of a pint will undermine your case.
- ★ **Don't** - complain to an outside body (see below) without first trying to gain satisfaction in the pub.
- ★ **Don't** - accept the guff that "real ale is supposed to look like oxtail soup and taste like vinegar" or that old standby "no-one else has complained". Stand your ground.

**If you cannot get satisfaction - Local Trading Standards
Contacts are: Stockport - 0161 474 4248 & Manches-
ter - 0161 226 8283.**

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

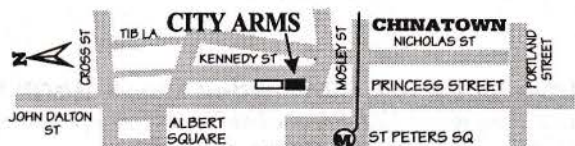
A WARM WELCOME
AND FINE BEER IN
A CLASSIC PUB



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friends and customers to



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





At Carringtons in Didsbury, draught beer is once again on sale alongside the vast bottled range. When OT called towards the end of October the beer on offer

was **Taylor's Landlord** - and very good it was, too. Good news at the **Old Mill** in Cheadle Hulme. Manager Jon Laidlaw tells us that after a twelve month break (and a change of area manager!) his guest beers are now back with a vengeance. He has been given freedom to source these at will and hopes to feature five at any time (alongside regulars Tetley Bitter and Burton Ale), getting through six or so a week. Among those featuring as we went to press were Spinnaker Raindance and Spinnaker Buzz from the Brewery-on-Sea at Worthing. To mark the return of the guest beers, Jon is also intending to run a beer festival before too long - full details will of course appear in OT. More news of pub developments in Didsbury. Already in the pipeline is a new Hogshead, possibly to be called The Clocktower, on the old station site and now we hear that another new pub is in the offing. This will occupy the site of the former Rainbow Trust Charity Shop on School Lane. More details as we get them. Monday 10 November is National Curry Day. Curry and beer always see to go together but not quite perhaps to the extent of merging the two! However, to mark the day the **Footage & Firkin** will be attempting this with a special one-off version of Dogbolter flavoured with curry spices! The name, inevitably, will be Dogbalti (groan!).

A new range of ciders seen locally comes from Saxon Cider of Huddersfield. Saxon is run by Gioliti



Bartolomeo, who after 20 years working for Taunton Cider moved to Yorkshire to make the Oakmoor range of ciders in association with the now-closed Blackmoor Brewery. His new operation is intended to meet the growing demand for traditional cider in pubs, initially in the North of England but eventually nationwide. Regrettably from the traditionalist's point of view, the ciders are believed to be made entirely from apple concentrate (as were the Oakmoor ciders). And indeed, the four ciders in the range are in truth just one, which is made to the legal strength limit of 8.4% alcohol and diluted as necessary to produce the weaker qualities. The 6% Platinum Blonde has been the quality most frequently seen in the Manchester area, and perhaps reflecting the compromises made with tradition, its fortunes have varied - the Beer House's sales have been slow, with many customers finding the drink too sweet and a re-order consequently unlikely, but at Salford's Dock & Pulpit it's sold like hot cakes (apparently the pub's regular customers for Broadoak Moonshine appreciate it as a lower-strength alternative for midweek sessions). While the reservations expressed above may dissuade the dedicated "real cider" drinker, the Saxon range can be cautiously recommended as a gentle introduction to more-or-less traditional cider for those who think (as who does not) that "there must be something better than Strongbow". Saxon ciders are currently being marketed by Westrays of Stoke-on-Trent. **RPJ**.



Come And Join Us!



Until the end of the year CAMRA, that's the Campaign for Real Ale, is making three great offers for new members.

Join before 31st December and

* Try CAMRA membership **FREE** for four months - no strings attached - or -

* Pay only **£13** - £2 off the standard rate (from January 1998)

* Get **£3.50** off the 1998 Good Beer Guide if you join CAMRA

And if that wasn't enough, join at one of the two special Membership Nights being organised by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA and you'll get a free pint plus a Good Beer Guide for just **£7** - that's **£3.99** off the cover price.

So, "Why join?" you may ask. After all, the fight for real ale's been won hasn't it? Well, no actually. True there's a lot more of the stuff around these days but much of the real ale produced by the big brewers is bland and undemanding and is under constant threat from the big push behind the new-wave nitrokeg 'smooth' beers. Big discounts on these beers are also pushing many of the smaller brewers out of the free-trade market, and so threatening choice even further. There is also a constant threat to our pub heritage. Many historic pubs have been lost and many of those remaining face the threat of tasteless

refurbishment and theming which often results in the whole character of the pub and many of its features being lost forever.

In a nutshell our continuing fight is to protect consumer choice of good quality real ale in decent pubs and a fair deal for all. We have just exceeded 50,000 members for the first time ever so why not join now and add your voice to what has been described as "Europe's most successful consumer organisation".

Locally in Stockport & South Manchester we pride ourselves on being amongst the most active campaigning branches in the country, with a social side to match. If you don't want to be active, your membership fee will bring you our national paper, *What's Brewing*, packed with pub, beer and CAMRA news; you will get discounts on CAMRA products and reduced, and sometimes free, admission to our beer festivals. Most of all you will help us stand up for the rights of ordinary drinkers. Please join today - or come along to one of those Membership Nights which will be on **Monday 17 Nov - Student Special** - details from Steve McCarley on **432 5906**, **Monday 24 Nov - the Railway**, Great Portwood St, Stockport, **Mon 1 Dec, Grafton, Grafton St. Mcr, Mon 8 Dec, Hesketh, Hulme Hall Rd, Cheadle Hulme**. All start at 9.00pm.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 163)

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~~ **£13** JOINT MEMBERSHIP **£17**

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED **£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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Knockout
November
Issue

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PRODUCED DRIBBLE) SO GET IN THE PICTURE WITH:

- TOMLINSONS THREE SIEGES LIQUORICE STOUT 5.6% - £1.50
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NOVEMBER ISSUE

- A NEW CASK BEER FROM HOOKNORR
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- DALESIDE MONKEY WRENCH
- OLD LEG OVER. TIM TAYLORS
- LANDLORD. WOODS SHROP-
SHIRE TAD. FREE 1 LITRE
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