

STOCKPORT  
AND SOUTH  
MANCHESTER  
CAMRA

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Issue 8

# OPENING TIMES



FREE

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AUGUST 1999

## WHITBREAD PUNCHED OUT? End in Sight for Pubs Group Battle

**T**he titanic corporate battle for the Allied Domecq estate of 3500 pubs took an unexpected turn last month when Whitbread, tipped as hot favourites to take over the ailing giant's pub estate, were effectively knocked out of the race by a referral of their bid to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Allied, whose pubs trade locally as Tetley, Firkin, Big Steak and Festival Ale Houses, are desperate to be rid of their pubs and with the exit of Whitbread, the way seems clear for their bitter rivals, Punch Taverns, to snap up the estate.

Make no mistake, this would be bad news for local drinkers. Whitbread do offer a range of guest beers in their pubs but Punch has been much more restrictive in the range of beers offered to their pubs. Not only that but many in the industry regard Punch as little more than a stalking horse for Bass. Punch was after all initially formed from the Bass tenanted and leased estate and Punch has a cosy supply agreement with the Burton brewers. If the Punch deal comes off, Bass are also primed to cherry pick the top 600 or so Allied pubs for themselves.

Indeed, so closely linked are the two that Whitbread are demanding an OFT referral of the Punch bid, claiming that Punch and Bass should effectively be regarded as one entity, and also, perhaps a trifle hypocritically, pointing out that the Punch bid would be bad for consumer choice. CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is also pressing for the OFT to step in on the same grounds.

Certainly the presence of Bass in the wings is very bad news for drinkers of real ale as the company increasingly turns its back on cask beer. Its attitude was neatly summed up by Marketing Director Mark Hunter last month. Launching a new advertising blitz for the company's big 'brands' like Carling, he said: "From the retailer's perspective, they don't want a living organism to look after in their cellars. They haven't got the time, they want ease of use and no worries. Basically, with cask ale, you wouldn't want to invest your money personally in it."

However, the Allied pubs may yet escape keg-ridden Bass and its Punch puppet. Not only are the competition issues that surrounded the Whitbread bid just as relevant with the Punch proposals, but at the last minute Allied have indicated that they have received other approaches. As we went to press the position was still unclear but it looks as though this saga still has some way to go.

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## Morlands Mauled

The fate of Oxfordshire brewers Morlands was sealed last month when Abbot Ale brewers Greene King clinched their takeover with an increased bid.

The Abingdon-based brewers of Old Speckled Hen will now close within six months rather than the 18 originally envisaged. Production of the Morlands beers will transfer to Greene King's Bury St Edmunds brewery, although it is probable that only Old Speckled Hen, which has a national presence, will survive. Of more interest is the fate of the Ruddles beers. Unlike Morlands, Greene King has no emotional attachment to these beers and it looks like the once-revered Ruddles County is a premium beer too many in their portfolio.

Once unthinkable, it is highly likely that County, and its weaker Ruddles Bitter stablemate, could be in line for the chop, too. Look out for a progressive running-down of these beers prior to the inevitable 'lack of demand' announcement heralding their demise.

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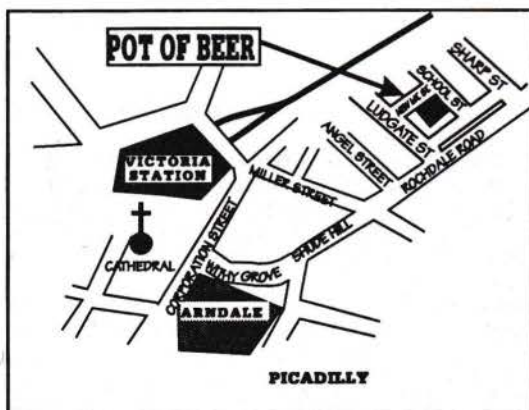
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## IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

The never-ending saga of Allied Domecq's attempt to get rid of its pub estate may draw to a conclusion this month. May is the operative word as it is highly likely that the bid by Punch Taverns will be referred to the Office of Fair Trading and then all bets are off. To complicate matters, it looks as though Allied are now toying with other suitors, too.

No doubt all these shenanigans are great for 'shareholder value' (how I despise those words) but does nothing for the uncertainty of the Allied tenants, leaseholders and managers who still do not know their fate.

More depressing are the views of Bass Marketing Director, Mark Hunter on cask ale. Let's just run his words again, shall we:

*"From the retailers' perspective, they don't want a living organism to look after in their cellars. They haven't got the time, they want ease of use and no worries. Basically, with cask ale you wouldn't want to invest your money personally in it."*

Fair takes your breath away, doesn't it. Apart from being complete baloney, it just confirms what we have been saying about Bass for a long time now. Their final exit from cask ale brewing can't be far off. But what arrogant twaddle Hunter spouts. What a slap in the face for those in Bass who continue to brew cask beer, not to mention those licensees who continue to sell their cask products.

You can also imagine Hunter having quite a lively conversation with, say, Robinson's Chairman, Peter Robinson, or Hydes' Chief Executive Chris Hopkins, or those running any of our local brewers for that matter.

But the message behind Hunter's words is clear. Bass beers are for those who don't have the time, the inclination or the dedication to look after their cellars. 'Bass Brewers the supplier of choice for lazy licensees'. Now, there's a phrase to conjure with!

*John Clarke*

## OPENING TIMES ISSUE 184

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Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. Image height 24cm. NB Advertisers who supply camera ready artwork designed for another publication that cannot be resized to our standard sizes will be charged the equivalent column/centimetre rate plus a surcharge of at least 30%. Adverts that require unusually large amounts of design work will have the extra work carried out by a studio at full commercial rate.

# Pub Of The Month

## AUGUST

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

# 1999



### The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for August is the Railway in Portwood.

At one time this was a very marginal pub, a little too far out of town to attract much trade. It had periods of closure interlinked with various name changes including Cheekies and Byrons. Three years ago, however, this ugly duckling of the local pub scene became the swan that is Porter's Railway.

Just over two years ago it was Pub of the Month for the first time and narrowly missed out on being Pub of the Year.

It is very rare for a pub to have a second Pub of the Month so quickly after receiving its first, but the Railway is being rewarded for its continuing excellence. Porters beers including Dark Mild, Bitter, Rossendale Ale, Porter, Sunshine, seasonal brews and the exclusive house beer, Railway Sleeper are kept in tip-top condition. The pub is a lesson for all those in the industry who believe the drinkers want bland 'smooth' beers and that mild is the drink of the past. It has thrived simply because it sells beers with real taste and low prices. There is no compromise on either front. Mild incidentally is the biggest seller at the pub, which takes virtually all of the brewery's output of this beer.

The Railway would not be a place of such high quality without the dedication of Paul and Bev Stanyer who have managed the pub since it reopened in its current form. Paul has recently appeared in the local press due to his alleged scrooge-like qualities and his response to these tongue-in-cheek accusations by putting Christmas decorations up seven months early. It is not however down to these eccentricities that his efforts have been recognised, rather it is because Paul and Bev have kept the Railway at the forefront of the Stockport pub and real ale scene for over three years. It is difficult enough to achieve such high standards but even harder to maintain them. So, why not join us at the Railway to add your congratulations on the evening of Thursday 26th August. A night of high-class beer is in prospect, as is every night at the Railway. JF.

*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 184:

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Jim Flynn, Phil Levison, Peter Edwardson, Tom Lord, John Cresswell, Dawn Geddes, Brian Carey, Ken Birch, Steve Smith, Ralph Warrington, Geoff Williamson., Paul Moss, John Tune, Mark McConachie.



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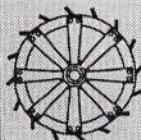
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# STAGGER

with Jim Flynn

## The Reddish Retreat

**T**he big brewers have really got to grips with Reddish. They appear to be using it as a testing ground for their marketing theories and, as you will see throughout this article, it is the local drinker who is suffering.

We used to start at the Pomona in Gorton but, along with the Bulls Head (Bass) and the Railway (Whitbread), it has stopped selling cask beer. We therefore started at the last pub in North Reddish to sell the real stuff, the Fir Tree.

The Fir Tree, however, has largely metamorphosed itself into Mr Q's, with the lounge largely a mixture of large and small TV screens, pool tables and gaming machines. Even in the more traditional vault, the TV screens can appear to be dominant. If you ask for a pint of Tetley Bitter you are offered a choice between cask and smooth. Having chosen the former it was found to be no more than average. Not the best of starts.

Things were going to get worse before they got better. We did not bother to go down Longford West to the Reddish Vale (Bass) as this was also keg. Two out of two - not bad, Bass. Straight on then to the Houldsworth Arms, a large prominent pub in the centre of Reddish. It was strangely empty. Going to the bar and pointing to the Boddingtons Bitter handpump, we were offered 'Poachers Bitter' from a keg font. We were told that after the ongoing refurbishment had been completed, the Boddies would be on 'freeflow'. In other words, nitrokeg only. Two out of two, not bad Whitbread.

By this time desperate for a decent pint we went around the corner to the Thatched Tavern. This really is a smashing, multi-roomed street corner local. I went to the bar and ordered a pint of Tetley Bitter and again was asked whether I wanted nitrokeg or 'traditional'. When I pointed to the handpump, the barmaid pulled off a couple of pints which were poured down the sink. She explained that this was the first pint she had pulled since she had started her shift at 7.00pm and wanted to ensure a decent pint. It was 7.55pm. You have to admire her for customer care but in a pub which was only recently in the Good Beer Guide it is desperately worrying. We went into the beer garden which, with its flowers, climbing plants and hanging baskets is a very pleasant place to have a pint, and contemplated the onward March of that marketer's panacea, nitrokeg beer. The bitter itself was comfortably above average, but how much better would it be without the same badged beer on the smooth pump. An inferior, lifeless product injected with nitrogen is being hyped by the brewery to the point where the real thing is in jeopardy, and nowhere is the effect clearer than in this gem of a pub. We resisted the temptation to visit the Carousel as this too is a keg pub again after a brief flirtation with real ale. So, it was back to Broadstone Road and the Union, the only pub in Reddish owned by a local independent brewer.

Many years ago Robinson's put this pub to the sword, architecturally speaking, but I must say the current licensee is making the best of the hand the brewery have dealt him. The pub has recently been repainted and new curtains, pictures and plants have made the place surprisingly homely. There is a good atmosphere engendered by the friendly licensee and it seems more popular now than it has been previously. The only real ale is Robinson's Best Bitter, which was found to be above average. The Union is increasingly worth a visit these days.

Next door to the Union is the Grey Horse, a large Greenalls (ex-Boddingtons) pub. The interior was obviously opened out some years ago, but still retains a separate lounge and vault. Both are sizeable rooms and we chose to sit in the comfortable lounge. This is a Boddingtons Bitter drinkers' haven, having unsuccessfully

toyed with a guest beer some years ago. The beer was regarded as quite reasonable by our increasing band of drinkers.

Having run out of pubs selling real ale in Reddish - less than half now do so - we progressed down Broadstone Road to the George & Dragon in Heaton Chapel. This was the first pub of the evening selling more than one cask beer with both Boddingtons and Tetley Bitter on offer, although it is a sadness that the guest beers previously found here could not have been brought back following the latest refurbishment. The pub has been opened up further but retains a number of distinct areas and is still a decent place to have a drink. We sat in the no-smoking area and drank our Tetley Bitter, which received a mixed reception but was generally considered good.

Ignoring the temptation (?) to visit the nitrokeg-ridden Chapel House or the hotel bar at the Rudyard, we walked down Manchester Road to the Ash, just over the border in Heaton Norris. There has probably been a pub on this site longer than anywhere else in the immediate area and the present building has quite an impressive exterior. Internally it is rather worn but certainly a lot cleaner than it was a few years ago. The fake Tudor and the 1960s cocktail bar all need ripping out and the whole pub want a serious refurbishment. Unfortunately the beer, Tetley Bitter, was a bit like the pub, a little tired.

We retraced our steps to the only Good Beer Guide pub and by far the busiest on the Stagger, the Hinds Head. With two Pub of the

Month awards in recent years, much has been written in Opening Times about the quality of this pub. While it is relatively open-plan, it still has separate areas and a restaurant in the conservatory. When we called this latter was



full of local New Labour dignitaries, councillors and MPs. There were four cask beers available - Castle Eden Ale, Higsons Bitter (both above average), Tetley Bitter and London Pride, both good with the Pride being best beer of the night. Our only regret was the temporary absence of the Taylor's Landlord, which is always superb. Walking the short distance home, I was left to contemplate how many of the local drinkers had apparently been convinced by the marketing strategies of the big brewers. The credulousness of so many is a little depressing but just like 'old fashioned' kegs and alcopops, smooth beers will fade from the scene. What will remain are quality cask conditioned beers like the London Pride in the Hinds Head.

Meanwhile the four remaining cask ale outlets in Reddish need to hang on in there and wait for local drinkers to realise they have been conned by the advertising millions of the large brewers. The reasons for the decline of both pubs and real ale in inner-city Manchester, such as poverty and depopulation, do not really apply in Reddish - local drinkers need to wake up to the activities of these companies before all choice is gone.

5

## Ye Olde Admiral Rodney

Prestbury

Robinsons Hatters

Mild and Best

Bitter

on handpump

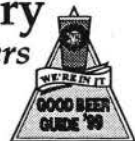
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## LETTERS OPENING TIMES

From Graeme Mitchell, Marketing Manager - Hoegaarden  
I have read an article in the April edition of 'Opening Times' concerning the UK brewing of Hoegaarden.

I am absolutely dumbfounded at the detail of the description of UK Hoegaarden (different taste, look and labelling) versus its Belgian original. The fact of the matter is that Whitbread do not brew and have no plans to brew Hoegaarden in the UK. The product that we distribute and market is brewed in Hoegaarden, Belgium and is the exact same beer that you buy in the Grande Place, Brussels! Furthermore, Cave Direct do not supply Hoegaarden White Beer, although they do supply Hoegaarden Grand Cru and other Belgian beers.

As for your source in 'a retail chain associated with the company', I would have thought it prudent to corroborate your 'evidence' with a source actually responsible for the brand, either here in Whitbread Beer Company or at Interbrew UK. It gets worse when you consider that we are trying to develop a cordial relationship with CAMRA by Hoegaarden sponsoring a tasting at this year's Great British Beer Festival, linking to your website and paying for an advert in The Guardian advertising the event.

No Sir, your ill-informed article is factually incorrect. It damages the Hoegaarden brand in the UK. It damages the relationship between CAMRA and one of the oldest brewers in England. In my view it also damages the reputation of CAMRA, simply confirming the view that many already hold.

I look forward to receiving suggested copy of your apology and retraction to appear in the next edition of 'Opening Times'.

(Oops! I have since spoken to Graeme and while the article was printed in good faith, it is quite clear that Hoegaarden is not being brewed in the UK and we were wrong to suggest otherwise. I am happy to make the position clear and of course offer apologies to all concerned. - ed.)

From: P R Oliver, Offerton:

Last Friday night, July 2nd, my wife (who refuses to divulge her age, but I can tell you is 55) and myself (aged 53), were barred from a pub for the first time in our lives. The pub was Sams Bar in the Market Place, Stockport and the reason - we were wearing trainers!

This was our first (and last) attempt to visit the pub which attracted our attention, firstly because it is often mentioned with acclaim and secondly because it featured in your 'Around the Festival' article in the Stockport Beer Festival programme. I wonder how many other Festival goers had the same experience? I would guess that at least 50% of Festival visitors would be wearing trainers and CAMRA recommends a pub to them where they can't gain entry.

May I suggest that you stop promoting pubs who present real ale drinkers from drinking real ale because of some stupid preconceptions held by the publican, who in this case presum-



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ably thinks that people who wear trainers are either trouble-makers or will clash with the wallpaper.

(I don't think it is fair (or true) to say that OT mentions Sams Bar either often or with acclaim. However, Mr Oliver makes a good point regarding the idiocy of so-called 'dress codes' which OT has long complained about. An experienced licensee with a firm hand on the pub is usually the best guarantee of a trouble free pub. - ed.)

From Richard Cochrane, Manchester (via the internet)  
Many thanks for keeping up the standard of this splendid magazine, and of highlighting so well the goods and bads of the local pubs.

I wondered if it would be possible for you to print the e-mail addresses of those brewers, and their executives involved, which produce some of the awful examples that you illustrate - e.g. no cask ale, despite the advertisement, at the Bromale. People like myself could then e-mail these breweries/people to record out dissatisfaction.

Maybe a comprehensive list of addresses and addressees at the end of the magazine would do the trick.

(They don't go out of their way to advertise e-mail addresses for complaints. Anyone got any other ideas?)

The following letter is a little unusual.

From: Dave Barnett, Manchester, via the Internet

When you have the misfortune to be served beer with an over-large head you may well be in the wrong pub.

If you are prepared to concede the benefit of the doubt as to the landlord's parentage and think that the barstaff may be inexperienced, may I suggest that you request, politely, that the offered serving should be converted into a 'low fart' version? You may need to explain that the excess gas in the head may well pass through the digestive system with unpleasant results later. This should, at least, produce a smile and a top-up. There may, also, be an added benefit of being remembered on future visits and a full glass offered without prompting. If you suffer the indignity of ejection you were definitely in the wrong pub anyway.

## High Peak Sponsored Walk

### 17 Mile, 7 Pub Walk for Chrisite Hospital

The High Peak Branch sponsored walk for Christies on Saturday 3 July was a great success, writes Tom Lord. Forty-six people left the Shepherd's Arms in Whaley Bridge at 11.45am, and made it to the Sportsman in Hyde at around 8.00 that evening, having walked 17 miles and visited seven Good Beer Guide pubs en route.

The pubs visited were the Shepherds Arms; Navigation (Buxworth); Royal (Hayfield); Little Mill (Rowarth); Oddfellows (Mellor); Hare & Hounds (Millbrow - optional!); Travellers Call (Lane Ends) and the Sportsman (Hyde). Good beer in every pub and an excellent choice range over the day. The first two hours were a bit wet but it cleared up for the remainder of the walk and nobody really minded the heavy going; and no-one got lost (we think!).

Through the pages of Opening Times I would like to thank all the pub licensees en route for their welcome and generosity; plus Bob Matthews and his colleagues from Stockport Campaigners for Christies for their support, advice and encouragement.

Last but not least, cheers to the 46 people, and not forgetting the walk stewards, who made it such a great enjoyable event and who, in the process, have raised about £2000 for such a worthy cause. The cheque presentation night will be on Saturday 4th September at the Sportsmans, Hyde from 8.00pm onwards. There will also be a celebratory social in the Shepherds, Whaley Bridge on 24th September.

Look out for a repeat performance next year - as it has been decided to make this an annual event.

## PHOENIX BREWERY

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Pale coloured bitter, clean tasting session beer with a bitter hop finish.



**BANTAM**  
Pale brown bitter. Slightly stutty, full flavoured beer.



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



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



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



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



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



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

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## Golden Pheasant Reopens

**T**he Golden Pheasant at Plumley reopened on 9 June after a £500,000, three-month refurbishment by local brewers J W Lees. The end-result has been acclaimed as 'wonderfully good' and an object lesson to the less careful hands who are responsible for many theme pubs.

Considerable attention to detail is evident throughout, in everything from the quality of the furniture and décor to the changes in the floor materials. The vault remains but the rest of the building has seen considerable changes and a new fireplace in the restaurant with an h-beam as a mantel is particularly impressive.

The kitchens have been re-sited and re-equipped. The chef and his team of seven cooks promise a wide range of meals and the menu boards indicate a good choice at fair prices. In addition the pub's eight en-suite bedrooms have also been upgraded. Whilst there is a considerable emphasis on the food operation, the Golden Pheasant remains very much a pub with a thriving vault and also the full range of Lees cask beers available. When OT called GB Mild, Bitter, the strong Moonraker and the latest seasonal, Fudger Cream Ale, were all on handpump and in excellent form.

A highlight of the opening was the presence of The Rev. Ken Burghall, vicar of St Oswald's church in Lower Peover, who blessed the pub and declared it officially open, commenting that pubs are now an important part of rural community life. Despite its rural location, The Golden Pheasant is easily accessible from Manchester and Stockport. It is sited virtually next door to Plumley Station which is served by the hourly Chester service. Well worth a visit.



Picture shows opening of the Golden Pheasant (l to r): Richard Lees-Jones, Chairman of JW Lees; Trudy Martindale, landlady; the Rev Ken Burghall; Patrick Martindale, landlord; and Christopher Lees Jones, joint managing director of JW Lees

## Mild Challenge

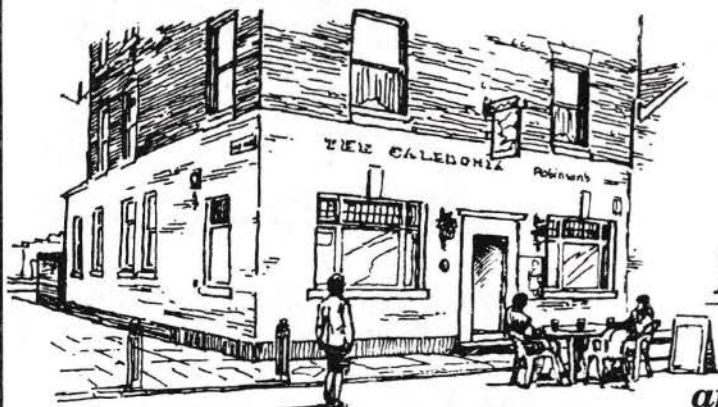
The draw for the Stockport & Manchester Mild Challenge took place at Stockport Beer & Cider Festival. The lucky winners of a trip to Hydes' Brewery on Thursday 2 September have been separately notified. However we are grateful to Hydes for enabling us to also extend the visit to those brave individuals who covered every pub and so won a pewter tankard.

They are: M Boardman, SB, P Griffiths, D Heyes, P Halliwell, A Meynell, D Meynell, M McConachie, A Pearce, J Rowe, J Rigg, S Smith and D Walker. All please meet at the brewery gates at 7.30pm.

8

# Alan and Louise welcome you to the CALEDONIA

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# CURMUDGEON



## Closed and Boarded in Calais

Last month, I visited France, and saw for myself the low beer prices in hypermarkets that are such an encouragement to smuggling. Certainly 33 cl cans of Kronenbourg at just over 20p were pretty startling – and while that is recognised as a bog-standard beer in France, it is about 5%ABV and in England is marketed as a premium lager selling for upwards of £2 a pint in pubs – six times as much. On a more interesting note, good quality German and Czech beers were on sale for less than 50p for a 33 cl bottle – half the off-licence price and a quarter of that in the pub. This is only possible because French beer duty is about 30p a pint less than in Britain. Surely a move to equalise duty would give a major shot in the arm to this country's hard-pressed pub trade. But it isn't quite as simple as that. For a start, look at the situation in France. French bar prices are actually higher than those in Britain, despite the lower duty. Draught or bottled beer typically costs about 20% more than it would here. Of course France has a very different drinking culture, but a large number of bars seem to make a decent living, and the streets of Calais and St Malo are not exactly lined by closed and boarded drinking establishments. And what would happen in Britain if duty came down to the French level? Currently, premium lager – which makes up most of the duty-paid imports sells for roughly £2 a pint in pubs, and £1 a pint at the off-licence. If the duty was cut by 30p a pint, the price would come down by 15% in the pub, but by 30% at the off-licence. £2 to £1.70 isn't that much of a difference, but £1 to 70p certainly is. It would help the domestic take-home trade, but it would actually tip the balance further away from pubs. Anyone who thinks that a duty cut would be a panacea for the pub trade is deluding himself. And, despite the protestations of pub operators, who really believes that they would pass on the full benefit of a cut to drinkers on a permanent basis? Of course duty should be equalised, and it will slowly happen. Beer duty in Britain was frozen in the last budget, and it will be difficult politically to raise it again. But the reason why it should be equalised is to eliminate the incentive for organised crime, not to help the licensed trade, as it clearly wouldn't do that. The best way to help pubs would be to return to the old policy of allowing each person to import a maximum of 50 litres of beer, with anything more having to have duty paid on it. That's more than enough for personal consumption, but low enough to make smuggling no longer worthwhile. Unfortunately, because of the Single Market, that is politically impossible. Maybe the best thing we could do for pubs is to leave the European Union!

## Holts come to Dover

Brewers and pub operators in the south-east, who have been hit hardest by duty-paid imports, also do themselves no favours by their continued policy of high prices. If pubs in Kent and London were charging Hydes or Robinsons prices, let alone Holts, rather than £2 plus for ordinary bitter, they could compete much more effectively. They claim that high prices are due to higher rates and wages, but that doesn't seem to apply to much else on sale in the south-east. Prices at petrol stations and supermarkets are just the same as around here, and so is the price of pub food, where all the same factors presumably apply. The pub operators have got themselves locked into a vicious circle of higher prices and lower consumption, and to a large extent have only themselves to blame if their customers are staying at home drinking 20p cans of Kronenbourg.

**HELP HOLD BACK THE NITROKEG TIDE!**

**FIGHT TO PRESERVE REAL ALE!**

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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison **AUGUST '94**

'Arthur's Back!' was the headline, and there were 'then and now' pictures of the badly fire-damaged Royal Oak in Didsbury and its fully restored state. Sadly much of the theatrical memorabilia had been destroyed, but many of the other artefacts were back, including the impressive collection of pottery spirit barrels which seemed to have escaped the blaze largely unscathed. Licensee Arthur Gosling had been very dispirited after the fire, even wondering whether he would be able to continue. But happily, he was once again ensconced behind the bar, ebullient as ever. Regular Didsbury watchers had reported that the pub seemed to be busier than ever, if that was possible.

There was more good news at the Romper, where the future of the pub had been threatened by a drop in trade caused by the erection of a security gate at the nearby cargo terminal, cutting off a lot of the pub's custom. The airport authorities had agreed to a smaller personnel gate in the security gate – on a trial basis – and the Boddington PubCo had paid for the new gate.

Three more new micro-breweries had been set up. At the Millgate on Ashton Road West in Failsworth (formerly the Failsworth Arms), Brewcare of Bromsgrove installed the brewery. Leatherbritches Brewery at Fenney Bentley Near Ashbourne had installed another Brewcare plant, as had the new Black Bull Brewery, also in Fenney Bentley.

The Boar's Head in Stockport's Market Place had always been closed on a Sunday. The pub was built on Church land, and when it opened in 1811, the church authorities had insisted on a six-day licence. However, historical research by one of the pub's regulars had revealed that the restriction had expired in 1974. So licensee Phil Sharples duly applied for a seven-day licence, and the first Sunday pint for 183 years was served.

'A History Lesson' by Duncan Geddes went back in memory to 1977, and CAMRA's City Centre crawl covering beers from 10 different breweries in nine different pubs. Surprisingly, up to that time there had been little real change in seven of the pubs (Old Garratt, Rembrandt, Circus, Grey Horse, Castle, Burton Arms and Smithfield Vaults). The Castle & Falcon had been lost forever, but the Crown & Kettle, although closed for year was up for sale (as it still is!).

Finally, there was an item of pub news on the back page, which probably quite unintentionally, gave an indication of the sort of changes that had been taking place in the industry generally. The Magnet on Wellington Road had two milds (that's unusual for a start) – Webster's Green Label from Halifax, and Wilson's from the Morland Brewery. The Magnet was one of many GrandMet houses selling Holt's Bitter at £1.06.

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## THE SPORTSMAN

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The latest craft beer from Hydes' is now in the pubs. This is Centenary Ale, marking the company's 100 years at the Anvil Brewery (formerly Queen's Brewery) on Moss Lane West. The beer is a mid-brown brew at 4.5 per cent alcohol, with a full-bodied malt-accented character. It's in no way cloying, though and has a pleasingly dry finish - and about three-quarters of the way down the glass, you know you want another! One to look out for, and you had better be quick, because it will only be available for 100 days!. Most Hydes pubs should have it as well as free trade outlets like The White House in Stalybridge and Fab Café on Portland Street in the City Centre.

Whim Ales have produced a special beer for the Derby Beer Festival and which is also available in the free trade. This is Bass's Wreck at 5.5 per cent. It's a traditional-style IPA, mid-brown, full-bodied and slightly fruity but with a long-lasting hop finish. This latter comes from the dry-hopping with English Goldings which are also used in the brew. Also currently available is the summer seasonal Snow White, wheat beer, an excellent refreshing beer. Whim beers can be found regularly at The Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport and The Waters Green in Macclesfield. Permanent local outlets include The Sportsman in Hyde and The Beehive in New Mills.

Also with a wheat beer out is Beartown Brewery of Congleton. Their offering is 'Wheat Bear' a five per cent golden beer. Beartown beers are of the highest quality and are well worth sampling. Their beers often appear on the Inn Partnership (ex-Greenalls) guest list and the company now has a couple of regular outlets in Congleton itself, The White Lion on High Street and The Queens Head, which, conveniently, is on Bidduph Road opposite the station.



Up in Bolton, the Bank Top Brewery has just produced Sir Pelinor, the ninth in their 12 Knights of the Round Table series. This month should see something a little different - brewer John Feeney tells us that he hopes to produce a rye beer. He has already obtained stocks of pale and crystal rye malts, and it's just a question of finding time to do it. The provisional name is 'Little Red Rooster' and it should certainly be worth trying. A regular outlet for Bank Top beers is the excellent Bar Fringe on Swan Street in the City Centre.

Holt's have announced that their brewery trips were extremely successful, with all the available evenings being fully booked since the trips were announced. Many groups had to be put on a stand-by list because they could not be fitted in, and it is hoped that these can be accommodated later this year.



## The Waters Green Tavern

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Your Hosts Brian and Tracey  
Bar Meals Served Mon to Sat Lunch  
*This is not a free house*

Several thousand pounds were raised for the Holt Radium Institute/Christie Hospital by the brewery visits, with each of the brewers giving up his own time to show visitors round. Well-known Holt's brewer (and local CAMRA member) Dick Venes has decided to call it a day and leave the firm after 18 years. His first intention on leaving Holt's is to cycle across America and we all wish him well in his future activities.



Local favourite Bridgewater Ales also have a new beer out. This is Ash Blonde (4.2% ABV) and is essentially a lower strength version of the popular Blondie (4.7%). While lower in strength, and slightly paler in colour than its stronger stablemate, the new beer does however still retain all the quenching hop bitterness of Blondie. If all goes according to plan, Ash Blonde will be the summer version with Blondie being reserved for the autumn/winter (although if there is demand, both will be available all year round). One or two lucky drinkers may also have been able to sample the one-off 'Worsley Bitter' a dry malty-ish beer which was in fact the first test-brew from the new plant but which was also made available at the Kings Arms, Bloom Street, Salford.

No fewer than three new brew-pubs could be up and running in Greater Manchester by the end of the year. To the north of the county, both The Railway at Golborne and The Lord Raglan at Nangreaves are intending to brew. At the latter, a micro-brewery is being assembled in the cellar and if all goes to plan this should be up and running in the autumn. Closer to home, the former Hogshead in Altrincham was sold by Whitbread to The Ale House Company (who also own Stockport's Crown, Heaton Lane) and manager Wayne Reece has become tenant of the pub which has been renamed The Old Market Tavern. A micro-brewery is to be installed here, too, with the Altrincham Brewing Company producing Cheshire Cat Ales.

## Competition Time

Last month's competition was one of the most popular we have run with lots of entries. Many thanks to Paul Stanyer of the Railway, Portwood, for both setting the questions and providing the prize. The pubs you had to identify were: Cross Keys; Crown & Anchor; Nursery; Moss Rose; Romper; Oddfellows; Wetherspoons; Waggon (or Coach) & Horses; Dog & Duck; Prince of Wales; Bishop Blaize and Blue Bell. The lucky winner of a gallon of Porter's Porter is Mr S Beard of Compstall.

## August Competition

After the success of last months competition I'm back again with another, this month however I'm expanding a little, with not just local pubs but any pub found in the 1999 Good Beer guide, also as you are now used to the style of the clues I've made them a little harder. The first correct entry out of the bag after 27/8/99 will win a gallon of Porter's Sunshine from the Railway, Portwood.

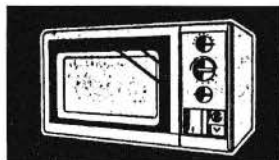
So if "TRACK PATH" is "RAILWAY" what are these?

- 1) Ancient Sheep's coat getting ready for holiday
- 2) Tiny factory
- 3) Sounds like an advert?
- 4) Call of chimes
- 5) Blowing your top or just the leader boiling?
- 6) Pre metric safes
- 7) What is happening at dawn in Japan
- 8) Say "Finished heifer"?
- 9) Early Beetles limbs?
- 10) Swaggering rooster?
- 11) Captain Pugwash sailed her?
- 12) Wimbledon food with eider will give you this

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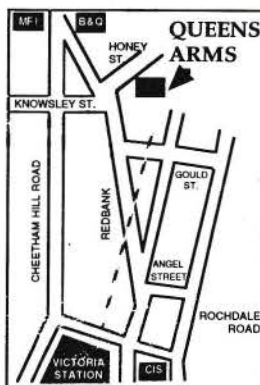
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Taylors Landlord - Bantam Bitter £1.15 a pint  
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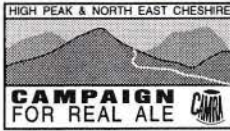
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## August Featured Pub:

### Pavilion Bar, Market St., Stalybridge

A brand new pub in the centre of Stalybridge that looks like it has been there for a long time, The Pavilion was previously a shop. The building has been transformed by its owner into a well thought out and very well furnished bar which only opened its doors to the public in late April.

Narrow fronted, but quite long, The Pavilion has a comfortable seating area to the front with quality fixtures and fittings, including a marble statue. Passing the fireplace, all the walls are wood panelled until you reach the stone-topped bar with a fine back bar. Decoration is still a little sparse, though this is understandable as the pub has yet to find its collecting "theme".

Upon opening, three beers were available - Tetley Bitter, Marston's Pedigree and Morland Old Speckled Hen, though the latter two change regularly, and sometimes the range has dropped to Tetley's only. A high shelf area with stools is available close to the bar to enjoy what have so far been well-kept pints. Also worthy of note are the immaculate and luxurious Gents, which will give The Old Hunters Tavern some competition in the best kept toilet awards. On the down side, the bar is the first traditional-style pub in the town to have bouncers on the door in the evenings.

Overall, the owner is to be congratulated on producing an excellent bar out of nothing, which has felt like a public house since opening, and is deservedly popular.

RW.

**Coming Next Month....Reviews of the CAMRA Pub Food Guide and Beer Bed & Breakfast, The Beer Monster in Bamberg, the outcome (supposedly) of Punch Tavern's bid for Allied Domeq's Pub Estate and of course, all our regular features....**

12

## ARMOURY INN SHAW HEATH



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OLD TOM**

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Times are changing at The Ram's Head in Disley after Greene King recently sold the pub to Clarinbridge. Greene King acquired the 'Ram' a couple of years ago when they bought out the magic Pub Co. They have, however, never shown much interest in the pub and it is no surprise that it has now been sold. The new owners Clarinbridge, are based in Altrincham and own a small chain of local pubs. First impressions indicate a level of interest and enthusiasm at the 'Ram' that has been missing in recent years, and although much effort will be necessary in regenerating trade at the pub, it has superb potential and efforts by owners and staff should be well rewarded. More news will follow when available.

The Plough by the railway arches in Dinting has had planning approval to be turned into offices, with a cleaning company looking like the likely occupants.

On a recent visit to The Station in Ashton the beers were Hydex Bitter, Tetley Bitter and Station Bitter brewed by Phoenix.

The Navigation, on Stockport Road in Marple, has changed landlords and we understand that handpumps will be reinstated. And news of a retiring landlord in another Marple Robinson's pub - Tony Newton of The Travellers Call at Lane Ends, Marple Bridge is to bow out in November. The Friendship in the centre of Stalybridge has now reopened. This ex-Gartsides pub of years ago is however all keg. Demolition in the town will soon see the end of The Talbot, closed for some time, and which sadly will no longer be with us by the end of the month. However, it's not all doom and gloom in the town and on a happier note, The Bridge Inn, by Caroline Street should be opening this month. Having last traded as a pub in 1934 it is awaiting licence approval. Available beers will be a case of watch this space.

The ramifications of the demise of Vaux and Ward's Bitter should by now have sunk in and in a month or so we will do a summary of ex-Vaux pubs and report the findings in OT. So far, Tetley Bitter, Stones Bitter and Worthington Best Bitter seem prevalent, but Pubmaster 'guest' beers might change this somewhat. In the meantime however, surely these three beers are not by anyone's standards an adequate replacement for Vaux and Ward's.

News from Glossop and district - new licensees have taken over The Star outside the railway station; there are also new licensees at The Prince of Wales in nearby Milltown. The beehive in Whitfield, which had new licensees two months ago, is now selling Grays Bitter at a good value £1 per pint. The Victoria in Hadfield no longer sells Holt's and has Thwaites beers instead. Next month we hope to report on the new bar developments on the station platform at Hadfield. Again, a question of watch this space.

Two items from Hyde - The Crown & Cushion on Victoria Street, Newton, is now all keg and the deal to buy The Dukinfield Arms at the Hyde end of Cheetham Hill Road appears to have fallen through, and the pub remains empty.

Finally, a forward note for the diary - the annual beer festival at The Royal, Hayfield, appears to be scheduled for the 8th-10th October.

Graham  
welcomes  
you to ...

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6 GUEST BEERS ☆

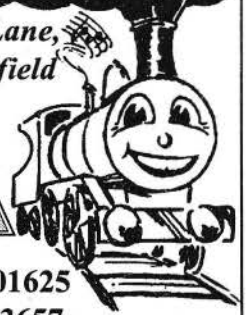
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423657





**PUB OF THE SEASON**

The Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Pub of the Season Award for Summer 1999 has been won by the popular Setter Dog at Walker Barn.

Built in 1740 as part of a thriving farming and quarrying community, the Setter Dog probably began life as a coaching house, and is also reputed to have been the last combined pub and post office in England - an old post collection box remains hidden in the corner of the main room. The name has been corrupted over the years and was originally the 'Setting Dog', that is one which has been set on to fetch or follow game.



It is an intimate, beamed pub with a wood-panelled snug, and a second small room, which doubles as a dining room. Indeed, food is one of the strengths of the pub with 'Geoff the chef' cooking up some excellent food, with meals served all day on Sundays together with weekday special offers (indeed, booking can be advisable). 'Restaurant food at pub prices' is how licensee Graham Smith likes to describe it.

Graham has been at the Setter Dog for four years and during that time has built up its reputation, not only for food, but, more importantly, good ale, too. Guest beers from many micro-brewers feature regularly and Graham is always on the look-out for something different. A recent innovation is 'birthday beers' - if a regular is celebrating a birthday in the pub and wants a particular guest beer to be on that night, then Graham will try and get it for them. This neatly sums up both the attention to detail and the warmth of the welcome that make this such a fine pub. The award will be presented at 1pm on Saturday 28th August although there will also be a celebratory barbecue the previous night. Graham is also hoping to have some particularly interesting guest beers on for that weekend, too. All in all, an event not to be missed.

The Setter Dog is on New Buxton Road (A537) at Walker Barn, three miles east of Macclesfield. Telephone 01625 431444.



First off, I am obliged to eat some humble pie. Hoegaarden is only made in Hoegaarden, Belgium. Not anywhere else. Certainly not in Britain. The product manager kindly informs us of this, and I am sure this is THE TRUTH. I was clearly in error and apologize. So that's straight and you can drink your Hoegaarden with confidence. (Are you happy now, ed?).

I must admit though, that I would have been a tad happier had Graeme Mitchell, Whitbread's brand manager satisfied my curiosity on two points. The first is simple - and I'm sure he has the answer. The theoretical maximum capacity of the relatively small Hoegaarden plant is less than the total output that Whitbread and Interbrew seem - according to production/consumption figures - to be producing. It has long been received wisdom within the trade that other Belgian White beer facilities owned/controlled by Interbrew were helping out - clearly this is NOT the case. So I continue to wonder how its all being made.

Secondly, where did the (a) ghastly orange gunk, and (b) thin lemony gunk, that spewed out of various Whitbread/Hoegaarden pumps in London, the Midlands and Manchester (the limit of my first-hand knowledge) come from? And What was it? I doubt that we will ever know. Certainly all the Hoegaarden I have seen/tasted recently is clearly authentic.

Onto other matters - Real Ale matters. Those readers who are also members of CAMRA cannot fail to be aware of the National Campaign to promote real ale on its merit, to counter the glossy nitro-keg adverts coming out of the national brewers. Members are being asked to stump up a fiver or more to cover the costs of billboards and bus stop hoardings in towns with local/regional real-ale brewers. My fiver is in the post, and I hope it works but I really do not see it. We can never afford to match the TV advertising, and that I think is what 'yooof' are conditioned by.

Reading Curmudgeon last month I was (as ever) annoyed by his attacks on beer spotters (etc.). There is a good point to be made about the fact that really good beers disappear never to be seen again, but I'm not sure how true this really is. The regionals are more interested in producing repeating seasonals, or the odd one-off to generate interest in their own pubs and to lift consumption at 'flat' times of year. The REALLY good small breweries such as Exmoor, Hopback, Freeminer and so on, crank out their flagship beers all year, as well as the oddities, because they are great, fly off the bar even in spotter pubs, and are the very best there is. MOST of the 'spotter' breweries as Curmudgeon calls them are good, but not so distinctive that they can generate huge sales for a couple of beers, on an ongoing basis. Thus they innovate, try to attract new drinkers with new names, mixes and types of beer and wait for the day when they get it absolutely right and they are overwhelmed with repeat orders.

We live (I am told) in the 'brand-name' era. The new cafe-bars have utterly tedious beer-ranges (keg) because the Nike-wearing young think that individuality is expressed in a brand. The branded pub chains are nationalising their menus (branding) and prices and as a result are killing what remains of their food trade in the North. They then blame their lower overall turnover on 'declining beer sales'. Beer has gone down because people on local wages can't afford to eat in them. We must celebrate the diversity of micros while we still have them. I think the branded spotter pubs (Hogsheads, Festival Ale Houses etc) are about to be wiped out by Punch and the branded vandals.



**Alle Biere Co**

Order a Home delivery from the UK's largest selection of German Beers. Try all different beers from regional brewers - over 40 different products from Munich alone.

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Stones Bitter,  
Greenalls  
Mild & Bitter

All Cask Conditioned - Guest Ales  
Your Hosts Ian & Christine  
**BAR SNACKS AVAILABLE**



"I wish to register  
A COMPLAINT!"



**B**ad beer, adulterated beer and short measure still trouble us on occasion. You, the customer, are in the front line and we all know it can be all too easy to do nothing. Remember the point though: if you've paid good money for something which is sub-standard, then you've been swindled - so complain! So how? Opening Times offers a few words of advice and technical points:

- ★ **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 be 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!"

Jo and Pat and the staff from the  
**NELSON INN**  
Didsbury

welcome all their customers old and new  
Fine Cask Conditioned Ales

**Websters & Holts**

Cheapest Beer In Didsbury - Open All Day

Tuesday night Karaoke  
Discos Thursday and Sunday

- ★ **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 that" or that old standby "no-one else has complained". Stand your ground. The law on "full measure" is currently something of a shambles - the head is legally part of your pint but the Brewers Society say that your pint should be 95% liquid and short measures should be topped up with good grace. Trading Standards officers may be prepared to take action if these guidelines are consistently flouted. Beer which is "off" is "goods unfit for the purpose" under the Trades Description Act and you have a statutory right to redress. You could ask for your money back, but a replacement from another barrel is usually the best solution. You should be able to read the price list without binoculars or a stepladder. What do you mean "what price list?"

If you **don't** get satisfaction from the licensee, contact:

**The Trading Standards Officer** (for consistent short measure or missing price list) - **The Environmental Health Officer** (for sour beer or unhygienic practices), **The Brewery/Pub Owner** - (for poor beer in a tied house or poor customer service), **The local branch of CAMRA** (who will certainly check up on any horror stories). Luckily none of the above is relevant in most of the pubs in the Opening Times area.

**Local Trading Standards Contacts are:**

Stockport - 0161 474 4248, Manchester - 0161 234 5600  
Tameside - 0161 342 3477, Derbyshire - 01629 585858  
Cheshire - 01244 602500, Trafford - 0161 912 2274

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Write to: John Tune, 4 Sandown Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport SK3 0JF Tel: 0161 477 8363

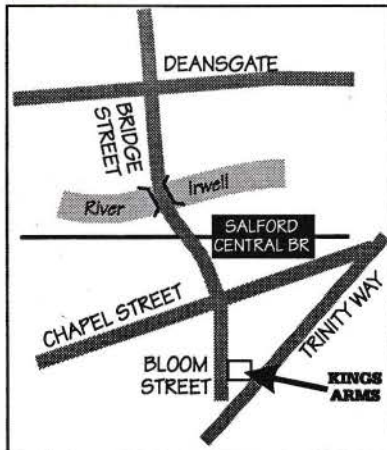


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**Draught Erdinger  
Bavarian Wheat Beer**



**Now Available.  
£1.98 per pint**



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Kings Arms**

11 Bloom Street, Salford M3 6AT  
(0161) 839 4951

**8 EVER CHANGING  
REAL ALES**

Foreign Bottled Beers

**Beers From  
BRIDGEWATER ALES,  
Salford's  
Newest Brewer,  
always on Sale!**

**Bridgewater  
Navigator (3.8% abv)**

a warm welcome from all  
at the Kings Arms

# Fistful of Arrows

By Brian Carey



**S**adly, the staging of the Stewart Minshull Classic, has stirred up something of a controversy. The original idea, of course, was undoubtedly a good one. Stewart always supported local darts, turning out in virtually every tournament staged locally. However, entries for the knock-out established in his name have been appallingly low. This brought a rebuke from the organisers in the local press aimed at the darts players of the area. While I have a certain amount of sympathy with their views, I don't think all the blame should be directed towards darts players. There are many reasons why players don't choose to support a tournament. The venue, the format and family commitments all play their part. Many don't consider themselves good enough players to compete with the best the town has to offer, and this has a negative effect on entries. The problem needs to be addressed if the Friday night knock-out is to survive. This column has in the past offered solutions which have worked in other areas and I don't really want to go back over them in detail. But the following are offered with the best will in the world.

The main problem is that only a few players are likely to win a tournament. We all know who they are, and great players they are too. They have worked hard at their game and it would be a shame to penalise for being the best. But I am sure that they have the good of the game at heart and realise that if local tournaments were to stop, then they would loose out on prize money. Perhaps, there should be a form of handicapping. There are numerous ways of doing this, giving lesser players a start; using the "Champions Choice" board and giving players of a higher standard the task of scoring on the narrower doubles and trebles; or, the most logical of all I feel, would be to hold a "Pro-Am" Pairs tournament. All these are workable, have been proved in the past and should help to keep the Friday night alive and well and living in Stockport.

Most players of whatever standard will at some time have harboured illusions of playing for their country. However, for most of us that is all it is - an illusion. But for one locally based player that honour is now tantalisingly close. Tony O'Shea has been knocking on the doors of the selectors for several years, but so far they have ignored his abilities. The release of last season's Inter-County averages, may have forced the selectors to finally take note of his brilliance. From a table of over 1,000 County "A" team players Tony finished a notable eleventh. The table is one of the factors that the selectors take into consideration and, given that Welshmen Martin Phillips and Richie Herbert finished fifth and tenth respectively, Tony was the ninth highest placed Englishman. In the Home Internationals there are 15 places up for grabs, so Tony must be keeping his fingers crossed for the call. It will be well deserved. Incidentally, Tony topped the Division Two table, next placed was Tom Aldridge (West Midlands) who received an England call up last year. Let's hope that this is a good omen for Tony. For the record two players who have often graced local boards, Ronnie Baxter and Steve Coote, both of Lancashire, occupied the first and second place in the overall table; Darryl Fitton was 48th.

I have often stated that darts needs to look at the brewing industry for sponsorship. I have lost count of the number of times I have been in a pub midweek and the dart teams are the only drinkers to be seen. So it makes sense for brewers and pub owning companies to ensure that the game continues. I am pleased to see that in one part of the country the message is not going unheralded. Britain's biggest darts league, the Oxford and District Darts Association, has confirmed that Morrells of Oxford will support them to the tune of £1,500 for the 1999/2000 season. The Oxford league, 73 years old and having 7,000 registered players, is setting the standard. Let's hope that others nearer to home realise the logic. Finally, it was interesting to see in last month's Opening Times, that the Stockport & District Log End Mixed League were looking for new teams for the winter season. The format of four women and three men should make fixtures interesting. I must admit, that this is a new league to me. I do not know if this is a new venture, or one of darts more closely guarded secrets that has been running for some time. Perhaps someone can enlighten me. Contact me on 0161-286 7762 and let me know. In any event, if your pub use the log end, and you can put in a mixed team, contact Carole Jones on 0161-477 3071.



## Mixed Deep Fried Fish & Vegetables in Beer Batter

Yes! Summer is here (although it may have been and gone by publication date), and bearing in mind the erratic - nay - quixotic sunshine that may or may not bless this sceptred isle this month's recipe is suitable for an indoor meal, or as something different to pop on to the barbecue. This dish need to be prepared a few hours before any intended barbecue, but need not involve too much preparation. The quantities given serve four.

### Ingredients (Batter)

4 oz plain flour (sieved)      ½ pint pale ale  
1 large egg                      Pinch of dry mustard  
¼ pint milk                        Salt and pepper to taste

### Method

Mix the flour with seasoning and the egg in a large mixing bowl. Slowly beat in half the milk using a fork or whisk. Repeat the process using half the beer. Keep slowly adding liquid in this manner until the consistency of thick wallpaper paste is achieved (don't worry, it tastes a lot better). Place in the fridge for ½ hour.

### Ingredients (Fish & Vegetables)

The list is really up to individual taste, and can be all veggie, or include some fruit. Here is a suggested list.

4oz large shelled prawns  
2 large smoked haddock fillets  
2 medium trout fillets  
1 cod steak  
2 courgettes  
1 parsnip  
8 baby sweet corn  
1 fennel bulb (very desirable)  
4 shallots

### Method

Cut the fish into 1½ inch pieces. Peel and top and tail all the vegetables and slice into pieces of the same size, except the fennel, which should be cut slightly smaller. Using a decent vegetable oil (corn oil or sesame oil), heat in a deep fryer to 350°F. Dip the fish and veg into the batter and deep fry for 5 minutes, turning at least once. Drain onto kitchen paper.

Either serve immediately or keep in a sealed container in the fridge ready for use on that barbie.

The fritters are greatly enhanced by dipping into something saucy - try this one. Mix a large yoghurt with 3 teaspoons of crushed garlic, 2 teaspoons of tomato puree and a couple of pinches of cayenne pepper.

Next Month - Beer dips, chutneys and relishes!

## 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





## Glossop Revisited, with Whitfield, Charlestown & Chunal

**L**ast year, I comprehensively covered the pubs in Glossop. With the advent of a new pub in town, I made a brief return with a visit to some of the surrounding community locals.

Inquisitive as ever, my journey began at the Old Glove Works, located in the converted riverside mill on George Street. This pub was recently reviewed by OT, so I'll not beat about the bush and just provide a quick resume.

I found it much as described and a very popular venue with the town's drinkers. A neat and tidy, hospitable establishment with the accent on people enjoying themselves. Up to four television screens dotted about and a disco prevailed. Can accommodate up to six hand pulled ales. A short bus ride out of town (service 361, daytimes only) brought me to the small area of Chunal. The Grouse is situated on the main A624 Glossop road at the junction with Chunal

Lane. It's an excellent, isolated Thwaites hostelry giving good moorland views over the Glossop 'Edges' - a series of rock formations. The whitewashed stone building has been opened out inside around an oblong wood veneered bar. Its low beams create a comfortable atmosphere, offering hospitality to the passing trade. A small room has been created to the left of the entrance, with the main room having rich carpeting and a real fire. Meals and snacks are available lunchtimes and evenings. The menu is interesting with such delicacies as wild boar and venison steaks. Children are allowed but only if well-behaved. Opening hours are 11-3 and 7-11, Mondays to Saturdays; 12-3 and 7-10.30 Sundays. The real ales are Thwaites Bitter (£1.46) and Chairman's (31.60). There is ample outside seating. Returning towards Glossop, at the junction of Charlestown Road (A624) and Turnlee Road (A6016) is the Drovers. It's a smartly laid out

Boddingtons house with the bitter on handpump. There is a separate lounge and vault. Opposite here is the Whiteley Nab, formerly the Commercial and presently being run by Vaux. It's an opened out roadside inn, neatly furnished with lots of brass and copper, ornaments and a real fire. Bar snacks are offered and lunchtimes and evenings. The beers are Samson and Lorimers Best Scotch. Along the same stretch of road is the Nag's Head, a busy Whitbread house with comfortable lounge and vault. Ales include Boddingtons Bitter and Marston's Pedigree. A new extension in recent times has resulted in a restaurant facility.

Going uphill via Whitfield Cross, I encountered the Roebuck, an unpretentious Gibbs Mew place with no real ale. Sitting atop the village is the Bee Hive, a thriving community local. Once again it's been opened out and there are archways, ornaments and pictures in abundance. Badged as a Bass free house, beers available on my visit were Courage Directors, Marston's Pedigree and Stones Bitter. Apart from the 361 bus, which runs approximately every hour, there is a bus service to Whitfield during the daytime. There are no services in the evening but it's not that far out of Glossop to walk to, especially in fine weather.

## Bhurtpore Record

The latest beer festival at the Bhurtpore Inn, Aston, Cheshire, broke all records both in terms of those attending and customers using the nearby Wrenbury Station.

The Festival is always actively promoted by the Crewe & Shrewsbury Passenger Association, and while it may seem odd that a rail user group actively promotes a beer festival, this year's figures illustrate why they are involved. Wrenbury is a small request stop on the Crewe-Shrewsbury line, serving the small villages of Aston and Wrenbury. Usage is healthy but not great but all this changes during the beer festival. A total of 323 passengers alighted at Wrenbury Station during the four days of the festival. 179 arrived on just the Saturday, and when two trains arrived within a few minutes of each other there were some 80 people on the station platforms. The signalman raising the barriers after the trains had left could hardly believe his eyes. He'd been there four years and never seen anything like it.

It wasn't just people that the trains brought to the festival, either. Passenger Association Chairman John Cresswell transported a barrel of beer to the Bhurtpore all the way from Swansea. He was given special permission by Wales & West Railways to carry the barrel from the Tomas Watkin Brewery at Llandeilo on the train to Wrenbury Station. The nine-gallon cask was named North Western WW Dark to mark the railway connection.

Unfortunately for John, though, the beer sold out after just 90 minutes so he only managed a quick taste, despite having lugged it across Wales and Shropshire on the rail network!

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**Ale of the Century**

**CENTENARY ALE**

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# BAR FRINGE CALLING

8 SWAN STREET  
Manchester  
Tel: 835 3815

## August 99

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>** - Trip to the Bar Fringe to make the most of an amazing special offer, 4 pints of Hoegaarden for just £6. Promotion from 6pm promises a good evening for all.

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Lunch time meeting at Bar Fringe. Great value menu to choose from. Recommend toasties washed down with a bottle of Leffe Blond, all for just £3.25.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>** - One of the last chances this summer to enjoy a glass of K6 matured kriel on draught at Bar Fringe. A rich full bodied kriel based upon the original Leifmans Kriel. At 8% and £3.80 pint it is an offer not to be missed.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>** - All CAMRA members welcome to try the extraordinary range of Belgian Beers, both on draught and in bottle, at Bar Fringe. A great atmosphere and not to be missed.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Meeting under a Branch in the beer garden of Bar Fringe. A pleasant surrounding for an in depth discussion.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>** - DON'T FORGET GERMAN BEERS - with draught Krombacher at £2.00 a pint and a range of German wheat beers, yet more interesting insights can be drawn at Bar Fringe.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup>** - Bosched Ales at cheaper rates. Don't miss this opportunity to try draught Kwak (£1.80 per half pint). Served in traditional glassware and chilled to just the right temperature this is an opportunity that should not be missed. Meet at Bar Fringe anytime after 12 noon.

## August 99

*We have also been advised of the following events occurring at Bar Fringe, 8 Swan Street, Manchester, M45JN.*

*Telephone 0161 835 3815.*

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>** - Viaamsch Wit, a traditional Flemish wheat beer is available at £2.10 a pint, in fact it's available at this price all month. For further details on all products contact John (0161 835 3815).

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - BANK TOP BITTER, just because of the great range of Belgian and German beers available at Bar Fringe, don't forget that this month as indeed all months of the year an excellent cask conditioned bitter is available from the Bank Top Brewery in Bolton. Phone for details of the guest available.

*As well as all the above keep your eyes peeled for future events at Bar Fringe, including a September Belgian Beer Festival, and the Manchester Food and Drink Festival Beer tasting in October.*



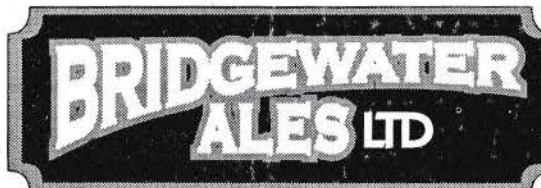
## 1999 Stockport CAMRA Beer of the Festival -

### Delph Porter

5.2% ABV

### Barton Ale

4.3% ABV



### Navigator\*

3.8% ABV

Available Now...

### Blondie

4.7% ABV  
(American style Ale)

Available at Kings Arms, Albert Vaults, & Old Pint Pot, Salford,  
\*and as Willy Booths at The Millgate, Failsworth

**Tel: 0161 831 9090 Fax 0161 950 6561**

The High Peak & North East Cheshire Branch Contact is  
Tom Lord (0161 837 4474 (h) 0161 427 7099 (h))

**JOIN CAMRA NOW! - SEE FORM ON PAGE 19**

# 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, Macclesfield & Trafford & Hulme

Diary

### August 99

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Social: Crown, Didsbury Rd, Heaton Mersey. Starts 9.00pm.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Gothic Bar, Church Rd, Gatley. Starts 9.00pm.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>** - Monthly Branch Meeting: Boars Head, Market Place, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Day out to Leek and Ashbourne. Minibus leaves Royal Oak, Didsbury 10.15am; Crown, Heaton Lane 10.30. Book with John Hutchinson on 434 7177.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** - City Centre Social: 9.00pm Grey Horse; 10.00pm Circus. Both on Portland St.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup>** - Cheadle Hulme Stagger: 7.00pm Old Mill, Mill lane; 8.30 Kenilworth, Cheadle Rd.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Lower Hillgate Mini-Stagger: 8.00pm Sun & Castle; 9.00 Bishop Blaize.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** - Pub of the Month presentation to The Railway, Portwood. From 8.00pm.

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

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Committee Meeting: Lowes Arms, Broomstair Hill, Denton. Starts 8.30pm.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Monthly Branch Meeting:

### August 99

Sportsman, Mottram Rd, Hyde. Starts 8.30pm.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Pub Crawl of Hyde. Meet Lowes Arms, 8.00pm.

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Real Ale Bar, Glossop Rugby Club, Hargate Hill Lane, Charlesworth, Glossop.

*Apart from Macclesfield and Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch cover a large area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have advised us of the following events:*

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Open Committee Meeting: Castle, Churchwallgate, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Monthly Branch Meeting: Ship, Wincle (nearly 2 miles south of A54 Congleton-Buxton road, through Wincle, heading towards River Dane). Starts 8.00pm.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>** - Summer Pub of the Season Award to the Setter Dog, New Buxton Rd, Walker Barn (A537, 3 miles from Macclesfield). Optional walk starts at 10.30pm from the pub car park. Lunch and social from mid-day. Award at 1.00pm.

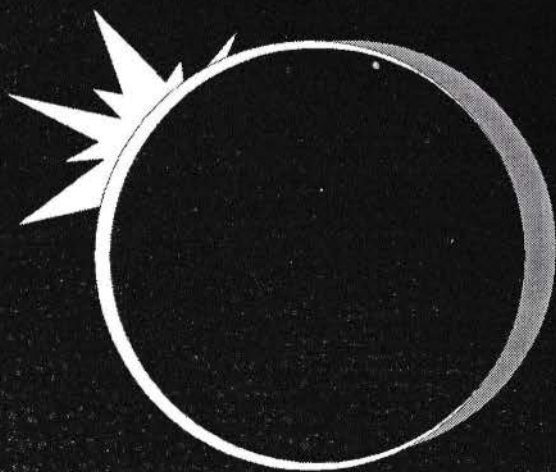
**REGIONAL EVENT Sunday August 15<sup>th</sup>** - 12.30pm

National Winter Ales Festival 2000 organising committee meeting  
Beer House, Angel St Mcr.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

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# Eclipse BEER FESTIVAL



starts August 11  
at the CITY ARMS

Claire and Howard welcome all their friends and customers

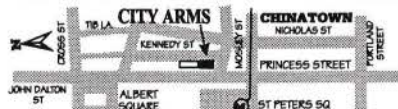
## OUR OTHER AUGUST BEERS

Among our guests:  
Harviestoun Cutlass  
Sharp; Highgate Saddles;  
Caledonian Festival;  
Coach House Summer  
Sizzler; Ash Vine  
Getting Bolshy; Moles  
Barley Mole, Brew 97;  
Bateman's Jollys Round-  
head; Mansfield Wicket  
& Willow; York 100 not  
out; Kitchen Laminated  
Lemon; Hook Norton  
Old Hookey; Maclay  
Bramblebock; Black  
Sheep Wiggwelter;  
Greene King 1799....



## KENNEDY STREET THE CITY ARMS

8 HANDPUMPS  
6 GUEST ALES  
LUNCHTIME FOOD  
11.30-2.30  
and 11.30 - 2.00  
Saturday



EARLY EVENING MEALS NOW SERVED!

# MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

**T**he main news this month is not so much a new opening, but rather a failure to open. Yes, the saga of The Shambles pubs, Sinclairs and The Old Wellington, drags on and continues to live up to its name.

Work on the site, already behind schedule, has now ground to a halt. Manchester Millennium Ltd, the city council's reconstruction task force, has sacked the contractors, claiming they weren't doing a good enough job and taking too long. The pubs were due to open in June (and I hear that Manchester Millennium are having to pay brewers Sam Smiths and Bass compensation for the missed deadline) but with an estimated three weeks work still needed, specialist contractors Watkin Jones & Son, were sacked last month.

Manchester Millennium explained they had acted to withdraw the contractors from the site "because of their persistent failure to perform." They added that they had consistently stated that work had to be completed on time "and that only designs and work of the required quality would be acceptable to the people of Manchester." Watkin Jones, on the other hand, claim that termination of their contract was unjustified and say they are owed £1.4 million. They added that two independent architects had acknowledged their work as being of a good standard and in accordance with the building contract.

Personally, I'm not really interested in the rights and wrongs of the latest stage in this sorry tale. It's been dragging on for so long and larded with so much misinformation as to be almost beyond parody. The Evening News, for example, was still burbling on about the 'brick by brick' reconstruction of both pubs. Why they continue to peddle this, how shall I put it, lie is beyond me. OK, The Wellington was carefully taken down and rebuilt but Sinclairs? The interior fittings were taken out and the building was then just knocked down. The new Sinclairs will be just that, a brand new building. "Brick by brick" reconstruction? Pah! Breezeblock by breezeblock more like.

And when are these pubs now scheduled to reopen? By the 'end of the summer' we are told. Don't hold your breath. The only good news is that both should be selling real ale.

Elsewhere not much has happened over the last few weeks, although it's a case of the lull before the storm. J W Lees' Rain Bar on Great Bridgewater Street is due to open on 5 August and on the same date Hydes' will be unveiling Breeze Bar & Café on Peter Street. Cask ale will feature in both (with some stylish steel handpumps in Breeze, I hear). Also due to open this month (on the 18th) is the new Pitcher & Piano on School Lane in Didsbury. In Fallowfield, The Friendship is in line for a substantial refurbishment, which could see the addition of an enclosed glass veranda.

Always a good pub, this should only improve it further. Also being refurbished is Sam Smith's Sun in September in Burnage. Some work has already been carried out on the vault and the entire pub closed on 19 July with a projected reopening date of 20 August. I hope to review all of these reopenings next time.

Some way off, but with work well underway is the new Wetherspoons in Longsight. Local opinion seems mixed on how this will affect the other local pubs. One thing's for sure, in the long-term none of them will be able to rest on what currently passes for their laurels. Less happy news elsewhere in the east of the City. The Seven Stars on Ashton Old Road was closed when I called in late July. A handwritten note tacked to the front door said 'closed until further notice, sorry'. What can be going on. On Hyde Road, The Wellington suffered a fire a few weeks ago and a lot of the roof has gone. The building is fully secure, though - all the ground floor windows have been bricked up!

My comments last month on The Wheatsheaf and The Shamrock brought a rapid response from Burtonwood's Simon Eyles. Yes, he confirms Burtonwood do still own both pubs. No, he says Burtonwood aren't reluctant to supply their pubs with cask beer. They don't exactly push it either, though. It's up to individual tenants to take whatever style of beer they want, be it keg or cask, and Burtonwood will happily supply it. Given the degree of hype behind nitrokeg these days, I would have been happier to be told that Burtonwood aimed to make cask the beer of choice for their pubs (where trade supported it, of course). However, since they are now essentially a pub company with only a 40 per cent stake in the brewery, I don't suppose they really give a toss either way as long as their pubs are making money for them.

BACK NEXT MONTH  SHAMBLES WATCH!

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MARKET PLACE, STOCKPORT

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including  
**traditional**  
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**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £8**

## APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 184)

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 . . . . . Date of Birth . . . . .

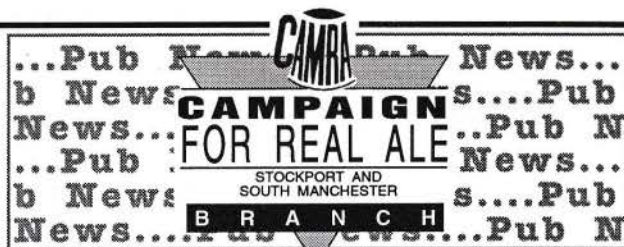
SIGNATURE . . . . . TELEPHONE NUMBER . . . . .

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

UNDER 26 YRS or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £8

**Paul Moss, 60 Adelaide Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 1LU**  
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.





In Offerton, The Strawberry Gardens has been saved from a thorough gutting by Scottish & Newcastle. Although the rear of the pub is fairly undistinguished, it is a listed building with an intact original front layout of two small rooms either side a central lobby. S&N's plans would have seen all this knocked through. Stockport Council refused listed building consent and the matter went to appeal. The planning inspector had no hesitation in throwing this out, advising S&N's solicitors; "Whilst I acknowledge that an open plan layout would suit your client's needs it is my opinion that the creation of such a layout would harm...the special historical interest of the listed building." Common sense prevails! Back to the drawing board, chaps.

Another unspoilt local pub, indeed rather more so than the Strawberry gardens, is Stockport's Arden Arms on Millgate. Last month Rose Senior celebrated the first anniversary of her tenancy at the pub which is now back on the way up after a quite serious decline before she took over. There are folk nights on Sundays, alternating between a live act and a sing around, darts on Monday and a quiz on Thursdays. This month should also see the introduction of more live music. The beer is now top notch, too, and all this in an unspoilt gem of a pub. Well worth a visit.

The Pub of the Month presentation at Paddy's Goose enabled us to meet Adam Waters. A director of Clarenbridge, the company which has bought the pub and others from Greene King. The company now has 55 pubs, mostly in the north west but some further afield. Local outlets include The Ram's Head in Disley, The Wrights Arms in Offerton, The Rising Sun in the City Centre, not to mention an outlet in Southport! The beer policy at Paddy's Goose involves a list of 15 "good" guest ales, which will appear in rotation. The list includes J W Lees, following a recent agreement with that company. The possibility of holding a spring beer festival in the 'barn' of The Ram's Head next year is being considered, too.

The Printers in Cheadle has removed the metered pumps and oversized glasses, replacing them with free flow pumps and brim measure glasses.

The Romper at Ringway has new management, Bill and Mo Eyre. They have previously managed the Barbridge Inn in Nantwich and The Moby Dick in West Kirby. They expect to introduce a range of guest beers as they have done in their previous houses.

We are pleased to welcome David and Dawn Johnson as the new licensees of the Three Bears on Jackson's Lane, Hazel Grove, where they have moved from another of Robinson's newish pubs, Brindley's Lock in Stoke-on-Trent. They do not plan any major changes at this very busy pub which successfully combines a strong local trade with being a popular destination for meals - however Dawn hopes to add to the menu's appeal with some more adventurous and exotic specials. We wish them well in maintaining the high standards set by their predecessors Dave and Kath Bailey, which led to the Three Bears gaining a Pub of the Month award and appearing in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide.



## The New Isle of Anglesey Brewery, Bragdy Ynys Mon

Anglesey now has a new brewery, for only the second time this century - the first one was Gwynedd Brewers of Gaerwen, housed in an industrial unit on a trading estate just off the A5. It was one of the so-called "new wave" of small breweries, which had started to appear during the late 70's and early 80's. It was founded in 1980, and closed in 1984. This latest new brewery has been set up by experienced home-brewer and CAMRA member Martyn Lewis, in an old farm out-building near his home of Talwrn, near Llangefni, Anglesey. The brew-plant has largely been purpose built, with the now familiar stainless steel vessels, insulated by external wood cladding, and also including a hot liquor tank that started life as a Porter-Lancastrian bulk beer storage tank.

The plant originally came from Cockermouth, Cumbria, and it had been transferred to Knowsley, Liverpool, where it had become known as the Cambrinus Craft Brewery. Now, it has moved again, virtually lock, stock and barrel, to Anglesey, where it has found another new home. It has a five-barrel brew length, but an extra fermenter has increased capacity so it can produce two brews a week.

Martyn wears several hats - apart from brewing, he also finds time to be a driving instructor, and part-time Welsh tutor at University. This, of course, is in addition to his commitments as Chairman of the local CAMRA branch - Eryri a Mon, or Snowdonia & Anglesey. In the early days of the CAMRA branch in the mid-90's, they were thought to be the first to produce some of their documents, leaflets etc, in two languages.

Much of the early preparation work for the new brewery was done by Martyn himself, with the aid of technical assistance on the plumbing and electrics, and also help from wife Jenny, who says "It's really Martyn's venture." The actual brewery building has had many uses over the years - dairy, cow-shed, and even a "bull-pen". During up-grading, which included extensive roof repairs and insulation, and improvements to walls and floors, the workers came across the date 1850 in some old plasterwork - this was duly recorded for posterity, and so next year, apart from the Millennium, there will also be a Sesquicentennial to celebrate.

Test brewing is now in progress, concentrating initially on the first beer to be produced, Seiriol, a distinctly "moreish" light brown beer, 4.2 per cent ABV, which has a touch of maltiness and delicate hoppy overtones. The barley used is mainly Maris Otter, a strain generally regarded as the best quality for ale malt, with some crystal malt, and a little torried wheat to help head retention. The hops are "real" Fuggles and Cascade (no pellets or hop oils). Yeast is described as an English ale yeast. A sample of the local Welsh water was sent to a laboratory for analysis - it was reported to be eminently suitable as a brewing liquor, with only a slight mineral adjustment necessary.

So what of the future? There have already been thoughts about other beers, including perhaps a stout or porter, but at present the main objective is to get the first beer established, and lay the foundations of a sound reputation for the fledgling Anglesey Brewery.

Considerable interest is already being shown in the new venture - the local press, the new "beeriocal" The Taste, and branches of CAMRA - visitors will be welcome, but please ring first to make arrangements. Telephone 01248 723801. PL