

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

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Issue 1

OPENING TIMES

6,600 CIRCULATED
FREE EVERY MONTH

JANUARY 2000

All Change!

New Faces in Top Pubs

A flurry of activity in the last couple of months has seen many high profile Stockport pubs with new faces behind the bar. Perhaps the most surprising change was the departure of Paul and Bev Stanyer from the Railway, Portwood.

However, given the chance to work for themselves as tenants, rather than be managers, they snapped up the chance of taking over at the Swan With Two Necks on Princes Street when licensee Susan Conley decided to leave the trade.

The Swan is a classic inter-wars pub which appears on the National Inventory of Classic Pub Interiors drawn up by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, and, after taking over on 13 December, Paul and Bev set about realising the pub's undeveloped potential. A back room has been restored to public use with new fixed seating and the restoration of a superb parquet floor (which runs throughout the pub, incidentally) and this will be open and available for meetings by the end of this month. The new catering kitchen will also be open for business at the same time. The pub is open for longer, too. It's now open to 6pm on most days and 11-11 Thursday to Saturday.

On the beer front, the quality is what you would expect from licensees with Paul and Bev's track record – and is much appreciated by the pub's customers as evidenced by sales running at twice the expected level since the changeover. The good news is that the elusive Frederics had joined the staple Hatters Mild and Best Bitter and is also selling in sufficient quantities to make it a permanent addition to the range.

Railway Still On Track

Meanwhile, the Railway is also in good hands, with the arrival of new manager Fleming Robb-Brown, a licensee of many years' experience.

Fleming's family have been in the pub trade for years, and Fleming himself has been running pubs since 1973, in the south and midlands, as well as his native Scotland (he hails from Ayrshire originally). He has been carrying out relief work for brewer Dave Porter for some time and when the chance of taking over full-time at the Railway came up, he leapt at the chance, moving up to Stockport from Pevsey in East Sussex. Very much a beer fan, Fleming told Opening Times that it was the 'fine selection of ales' produced by Dave Porter that attracted him to the company. Certainly, the high beer quality for which the Railway is known has continued under the new regime, with a new permanent addition to the pub's range in the form of Porter's Floral Dance, a wonderfully aromatic and hoppy session beer.



Paul & Bev Stanyer behind the bar at the Swan with Two Necks

There has been only one other minor change so far – the pub is now open all day on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Apart from that, Fleming intends to sit back and take stock of the pub's trade before deciding whether he thinks any changes are needed to take the trade forward. Food is still available, by the way, and although the menu is different, the quality has been maintained.

When prominent pubs change hands it can often be a recipe for disaster but here we are fortunate to have effectively gained two good pubs for the price of one, and that's got to be a good way to start the year. **JC**

For details of other pub changes, see this month's Pub News column.

Marston's Campaign

The campaign to save Marston's Bitter continued over the Christmas period, with many local drinkers sending Wolverhampton & Dudley MD David Thompson a Christmas card expressing anger at the axing of this popular brew. One pub, we hear, even got all its regulars to sign a collective card.

It's not only in Manchester where voices have been raised in protest either. Licensees and drinkers as far apart as Leicestershire and North Wales have been equally outraged at Wolverhampton & Dudley's unilateral action. There has also been fierce criticism in the trade and consumer press.

Meanwhile Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA has been exchanging letters with David Thompson. Mr Thompson lays great stress on the company's 'intense interest in customers' views' yet at the same time ducks the question as to why those views are being ignored. Wolves have also supplied some pubs with posters making much of their interest in 'Customer Service'. These posters invite us to call the oddly termed Customer Care Team on 01902 329199. We would encourage all disgruntled customers to do just that, and make your feelings known.

Wolves' have also been suggesting to some commentators that the withdrawal of Marston's Bitter is just a 'trial'. This is stretching credulity but let's take them at their word – and make sure the 'trial' flops. How? Simple – **Boycott Banks's Bitter wherever it replaces Marston's. Hit Wolves where it hurts – in the pocket!**

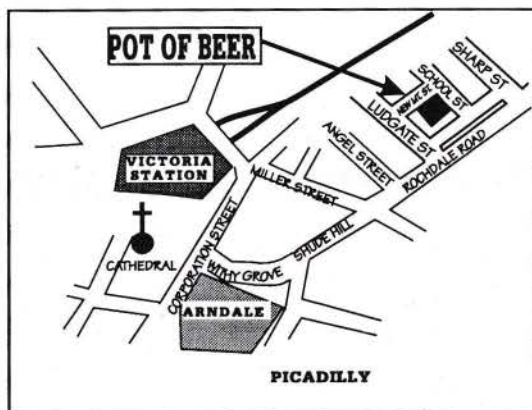
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

Ten years ago, the prophets of doom were saying that the nation's pub stock would have been decimated by the turn of the century (that's now folks) with up to 10,000 pubs closing. Like most pre-millennial scares, nothing on that scale happened of course. While the pub stock in East Manchester has indeed been badly hit, elsewhere in the Opening Times area, pubs continue to flourish.

In fact, as we enter the New Year, the local pub scene is looking decidedly healthy in many ways. Several Stockport pubs are enjoying new leases of life. Old favourites look as reliable as ever. Hydes' and Holt's continue their welcome expansion and we understand J W Lees also have our area in their sights as well. Wetherspoon's continue to bring much needed to choice and variety to areas which badly need it - their welcome venture in Longsight last year will be followed in the coming months by openings in Levenshulme and Hazel Grove.

It's not all good news, though. The withdrawal of Marston's Bitter has been a particularly savage blow, although that particular battle is not over yet. Wolverhampton & Dudley Chairman David Thompson will be addressing Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's branch meeting in March where we hope to finally persuade him of the strength of our case. Turmoil continues in the upper echelons of the brewing industry (Bass are at the centre of latest rumours) and the continued growth of nitrokeg poses continuing threats to the health of our local brewers.

There are many battles still to be fought and you can be assured that Opening Times and CAMRA will be at their forefront. It could well be a bumpy ride - so fasten your seat belts! That however is for the future - for now, let me just wish everyone connected with Opening Times, our advertisers, writers, distributors and readers, a very prosperous and happy new year.

John Clarke

OPENING TIMES ISSUE 189

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. Editors: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley Street, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9HD. ☎ (0161) 477 1973; Paul Hutchings, 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport Cheshire, SK4 2NP. ☎ & Fax (0161) 432 8384. News, articles and letters welcome. All editorial items may be submitted in most popular WP formats or preferably ASCII on IBM-PC format 3.5" disks (which will eventually be returned!) or via e-mail to johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com Adverts or photos should be "hard copy" or in CorelDraw 3,5 or 7 (*.cdr) format or TIFF or EPS files (submit printed proofs for checking and ensure that any "include all fonts" options are on). Letters to the editor on otletter@opentime.u-net.com. All editorial items © CAMRA: may be reproduced if source acknowledged. All Advertising images are copyright the respective design sources (Largely CPPR, but all other copyrights and trademarks acknowledged).

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Pub Of The Month

JANUARY 2000

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	31					



Good local pubs, with good beer and an atmosphere to match are becoming hard to find these days, especially in an area like Heald Green, where pubs of any kind are few and far between. However, situated prominently on the junction of the A34 (Wilmslow Road) and Finney Lane is the Griffin, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's Pub of the Month for January.

The Griffin is an excellent community local in the truest sense – friendly atmosphere, good service, good beer and wholesome, no-frills food. Factors clearly appreciated by the pub's regulars, and evident by the steady trade throughout the day, seven days a week. A dart board, pool table and television are available in a separate vault (another rarity these days), leaving the lounge free for friendly conversation or just a quiet drink.

Being a Holt's pub, the beer is very nicely priced and of excellent quality. "The best Holt's Mild I've had for a long time" is one comment heard recently and this reflects the high standards set by Diana Davenport, the licensee. Diane came to the Griffin two years ago from the Angel in Knutsford. This follows successful periods at the Old Monkey in the City Centre, the Griffin, Heaton Mersey; and the Grafton, Chorlton-on-Medlock.

The hard work over the years by Diana and her staff makes the Griffin well worth a visit (and not just on the night of 27 January when this well-earned award will be presented) and shows why it has been voted the first Pub of the Month for the new millennium. PB.

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

Steve James

It is with sadness that we report the death on 27 December, of Steve James, licensee of the Crown, Heaton Lane.

During his tenure, Steve and wife Lorraine, had made the Crown the premier real ale pub in the town, with a never-ending, ever-changing range of guest beers. This achievement is all the more remarkable given the background of uncertainty against which Steve and Lorraine had to operate. The pub was officially up for sale by Greenalls for a long time during which several prospective owners came and went, although they were eventually able to sign up as tenants of the Ale House Pub Company.

Sadly this did not bring the stability that the couple sought, as Steve was dogged by continuing and increasing ill-health. This led to Steve and Lorraine handing in their notice last October, although delays in finding suitable accommodation led to them remaining at the pub. Despite all of this the pub's commitment to choice and quality never wavered, although Steve's appearances became less and less frequent as his health deteriorated.

His contribution to the local real ale scene over the years cannot be over stated and he will be sorely missed. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Lorraine and the children.

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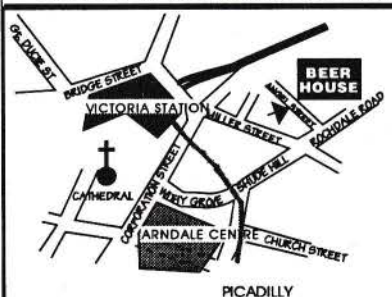
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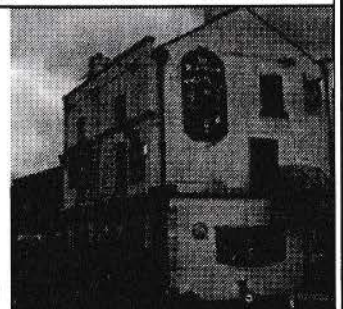
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OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From Rhys Jones, Aberystwyth:

I was fascinated to read in "Five Years Ago" (OT, Dec. '99) that Holt's had produced 220-gallon containers of draught Sixex. These remarkable vessels, more than four times the capacity of a hogshead, must surely have taxed the draymen. Do any examples survive?

(Oops! Just making sure you were paying attention there, folks. We did of course mean 22-gallon containers - ed.)

From Richard Lewis, Grantham:

I read with interest the e-mail from David Howles (OT letters, December). Despite a couple of early teething problems since his arrival at the Beer House, Ian Casson has to be congratulated on a remarkable job in maintaining the standards that Idy and Sal set. I am sure many of us thought is this the end of the Beer House which we have become used to? In such a short time Ian has had two beer festivals, maintained the excellent selection of normal ales, foreign draught and bottled beers, and draught ciders. The food has been maintained and there is now a bar billiards table upstairs.

Quite an achievement, I would say. With the Crescent now enjoying Idy and Sals's improvements, the Beer House, Smithfield Hotel, Bar Fringe, Pot o' Beer, Queens Arms, Marble Arch make it a wonderful area to sample good pubs, good ale and good food. My plea is use them or lose them.

Stop press - the Station at Ashton looks to be back in the fold for good ale and facilities. North Manchester, Stalybridge, Ashton, Marsden, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Leeds, York - what more could you ask for?

(The Kings Arms on Bloom Street, Salford, is also back on form and makes a convenient stop between the Crescent and the Northern Quarter pubs - ed.)

From Paul Watson, Cheadle Hulme:

On Friday 3 December a friend and I decided to spend an evening drinking in Cheadle Hulme. After a pleasant pint in the Church Inn, we decided to venture over the road to Watling Street Inns' Guvnors House. Here we were presented with three cask ales, the house beers Boddingtons Bitter and Courage Directors, and a guest, Shepherd Neame Spitfire. Opting for the Spitfire, the first shock was the price - £2 a pint. The average in the area for a medium strength guest ale is about £1.80. We were then presented with two pints with a head of approximately 30mm. When requesting a top-up we were told by the young barmaid (who was obviously very inexperienced) that this was the way the beer was meant to be served and that she had been told to serve the beer like this. It was only after much complaining that the beers were very reluctantly topped up to a reasonable level, the beer being of good but not outstanding quality.

In many years drinking in Cheadle Hulme in the several pubs serving cask ale, I have never before encountered any resistance to giving a top-up when requested. I am not blaming the young barmaid who was obviously doing as she had been told but it does suggest that the management of this establishment are encouraging their staff to serve short measures.

I can only suggest that discerning drinkers vote with their feet and walk to one of the other fine pubs within easy walking distance where prices are more reasonable and top-ups cheerfully given (usually without being asked).

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Write to: John Tune,

4 Sandown Road, Cheadle Heath,

Stockport SK3 0JF Tel: 0161 477 8363

(According to the Code of Practice introduced by the Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association - to which I am sure Watling Street Inns subscribes - not only should a pint be at least 95% liquid but top-ups should be given when asked and with good grace. Paul's experience seems to fly in the face of all that and, at the very least, must call into question the training practices at Watling Street. Perhaps they would like to respond to this sorry tale - ed.)

From Kim Rampley, Widnes:

I agree fully with Curmudgeon (OT, December) that social drinkers are being more and more ostracised by self-appointed health advisers. I have never seen anyone getting drunk and being silly at a CAMRA festival - in Stockport or anywhere else, nor for that matter in GBG-listed pubs, this in over 25 years of reading said volume.

However, I disagree that cannabis users are looked down upon. "Smoking a bit of weed" or whatever it is called nowadays seems to be thought of as a bit of a laugh - even if caught by the police one is only likely to be cautioned whilst cells may be full of people in trouble for drinks "offences".

Seems to me all this dates back to the 70s when interest in CAMRA and real ale was seen to be fuddy-duddy whereas drug taking was the in thing to do.

One possible side effect of the "prohibitionists" might be sadly that brewers could get away with over the odds prices and increases. A worrying trend and, methinks, one which should be countered strongly.

From Dave Barnett, Withington via the Internet

My local Marston's house (the Red Lion, Withington) has a blackboard advertising "Head Brewer's Choice - Bank's Bitter". Should this not be "Head Accountant's Choice"?

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sweetness in the full bitter palate.
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hops balance the strong fruitiness in
the aroma and taste. The finish is
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THIRSTY MOON
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The slight sweetness 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
A lighter beer. Malty fruity aroma.
Strongly malty and fruity flavour.
A slight sweetness yields to a dry finish.

Kro Bar

A combination of cutting edge style and cask beer are all to rare on Manchester's burgeoning café bar scene. However, the oddly-named Kro Bar, 325 Oxford Road manages to combine the two with a degree of aplomb all too rarely seen nowadays.

325 Oxford Road is a large terraced house built in 1813 and subsequently bought by the Manchester Temperance Society who owned it until 1997 (and who omitted to put in place any restrictions forbidding the sale of alcohol when they sold it!). Over the past couple of years the building has featured as the home to the Okasional Café, a squatters enterprise although it has now been rescued from increasing dereliction by Kro Bar owner Mark Ruby. The building is also listed Grade II so radical change was out of the question, although Mark is at pains to point out that the many original features would have been retained in any event. Indeed Kro Bar is a remarkable blend of the old and new, with Victorian stained glass and regency cornices sitting easily with the clean lines of the polished granite bar and modern conservatory extension. The first floor has also been opened up for public use, and here the décor is in rich red hues, contrasting with the clean light blues and greys downstairs. Old temperance memorabilia, found in the building, decorates these rooms which, in the absence of a bar counter, feature waiter service.

Mark Ruby is also a big beer fan (he used to help manage Didsbury's Metropolitan) and so taking pride of place on the bar top is a bank of five handpumps, dispensing Boddingtons Bitter, Courage Directors and Talyors Landlord. Hoegaarden, Krombacher and Budvar are also available. The draught range is accompanied by a small but well thought out range of bottled beers including Leffe Blond, Budvar and four German specialities including Jever Pilsener (the bitterest beer brewed in Germany by a long way), Paulaner Hefe-Weisse, Hof Brau Original Munchener and Flensberger Plisener. There's good food too, with everything from breakfasts to sandwiches, soups, salads, pastries and main courses, the latter ranging in price from £4.95 to £7.50. The breakfast menu is available from 8.30am to 8.00pm and the rest of the menu from 11.00am, again until 8.00pm.

Given the prime location, the students union is across the road, and Jabez Clegg is at the back, Kro Bar is almost guaranteed to be a roaring success - and given its combination of style, tradition and quality it deserves to be in a big way. And that name? Well, Kro is a Danish village pub... and Mark just happens to be Danish.

The Sedge Lynn

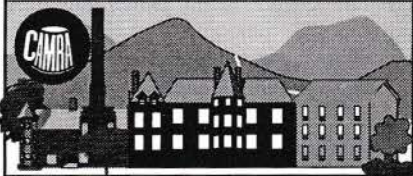
The area's latest Wetherspoon's opened its doors to the public at lunchtime on 2 December. Situated on Manchester Road in the centre of Chorlton, the Sedge Lynn is a conversion of the old billiard hall and takes its unusual name from a former house on the neighbouring site now occupied by the Co-op funeral parlour.

The building itself is Grade II listed and has an interesting history. In common with the funeral parlour, another house ('Halt Croft') initially occupied the site and this was redeveloped in 1907 when the current building was erected by The Temperance Hall Billiard Company, and designed by Norman Evans their company architect. This development is smaller than the Wetherspoon's outlets in the City Centre but the available space has been used to its full advantage, with some typical Wetherspoon's features, including a raised no-smoking area. There has been extensive use of stained glass and the bar area is dominated by a clock tower with its 'face' reversed. There is a history of the building on the walls along with a biography of Chorlton's famous son, Whilton Brown, famous for flying the Atlantic with Alcock.

The pub is managed by Jimmy McFarlane, who comes from the Wetherspoon's in Piccadilly and is clearly an experienced licensee. The usual Wetherspoon's range of cask beers is available, including guest beers (Exmoor Gold when OT visited) and so far business has been brisk, no doubt attracted by Theakstons Bitter at 99p a pint. A welcome addition to the increasingly impressive Chorlton pub scene.

JH.

MACCLESFIELD & EAST CHESHIRE



PUB OF THE YEAR

Waters Green Grabs Top Award

After the successful 'Pub of the Season' awards, Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA have gone on to make a Pub of the Year award. By a unanimous decision, the first pub to receive this prestigious award is the Waters Green Tavern, the popular free house opposite the town's station.

The criteria were that there should always be a good choice of real ales, of consistently good quality (not a pub with a 'Guest Ale' of dubious age), a friendly welcoming atmosphere and reasonable prices. In all a pub which can be relied upon to provide a pleasant drinking experience.

Waters Green licensee Brian McDermott has already received a 'Pub of the Season' award (Autumn 1998) and has maintained the pub's high standards since then - in fact he has even increased the range of beers sold to seven while continuing to maintain high quality throughout. Brian supports the local brewery, Storm, by frequently featuring one of their brews as well as an ever changing range of beers from as far afield as Suffolk, Cumbria, Kent and, of course, from his native Scotland. The beers featured vary from the popular (Abbeylea Moonshine, Kelham Island Pale Rider) to the unusual (Slaters Top Totty, Whim Magic Mushroom) or the seasonal special. Faced with such a choice it could be easy for the unwary drinker to get confused, but Brian knows all his beers and will usually suggest a recommended brew. The bar staff are equally sympathetic to indecisive drinkers - a frequent sight at this bar.

He is of course also an outlet for 'Opening Times' together with 'Out Inn Cheshire', the county's free CAMRA magazine. If you are not one of the drop-in regulars why not make a special journey - the pub is just across the road from Macclesfield railway station and only around the corner from the bus station. A highly recommended pub and hearty congratulations on this well-deserved award.

1999 Stockport CAMRA

Beer of The Festival

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Barton Ale

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7

Ales of True Character

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No1 in the series January - February

"A premium strength ale brewed using traditional techniques which spearheads our programme. Strong in flavour and full in body which King Harold would have definitely kept an eye out for this one!"

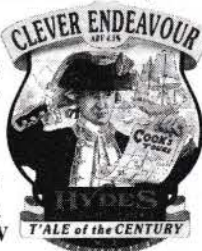
Strength - 4.8%ABV



No2 in the series March - April

"Brewed with a luxurious blend of finest English pale ale and Crystal malt, Captain Cook was probably not fortunate enough to have "discovered" as good a quality ale.

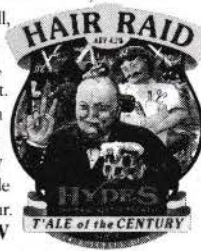
Strength - 4.5% ABV



No3 in the series May - June

"Like Winston Churchill, this Premier Ale is well rounded, full bodied and robust. It's uniqueness has been created by using certain 'top secret' quality ingredients that provide for a fullness of flavour.

Strength - 4.2% ABV



No4 in the series July - August

"Crafted with no less than three hop varieties with the same dedication that "Will" applied to his classics, this masterpiece is crisp, light and refreshing.

Strength - 4.0% ABV



No5 in the series September - October

"Combining quality Maris Otter, Crystal and Cara Malts with English Northdown and Fuggle hops, this beer is resplendent in it's style much like Henry's famous Palace.

Strength - 4.4% ABV



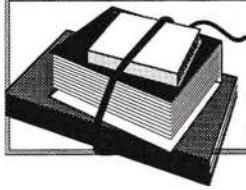
No6 in the series November - December

"This dark delicious ale has been specially 'engineered' using roasted and black malts to provide masses of strength and flavour for those cold winter evenings.

Strength - 5.0% ABV



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BOOK REVIEW



Cider – the Forgotten Miracle by James Crowden, Cyder Press 2, 120pp, £12.95

Hot on the heels of Mark Foot's splendid volume reviewed in December's OT, here is another discursive look at the history and traditions of cider. James Crowden is a published poet, and the final part of the book consists of a sequence of poems inspired by his seasonal work at Burrow Hill Cider in Somerset. Indeed, the book throughout is informed by a poet's eye, and the apple god is invoked from time to time.

But this is no misty-eyed rural idyll. Crowden knows whereof he speaks, from hands-on practical experience, and the nine prose chapters, structured loosely around the rhythm of work at Burrow Hill, contrive to present an astonishing range of information, ranging from folklore through grafting to distilling.

Although the book is firmly rooted in Somerset ("this book was written, designed, printed and published in Somerset"), examples are drawn widely from the world of cider. The way in which a deceptively flowing style conveys varied and recondite nuggets of fact demands frequent re-reading, which will also bring home the sallies against mass-produced cider ("rumour has it that at certain factories, a single cider apple is kept on a red cushion inside a safe in the Managing Director's office...").

Aside from a final photograph of "the cider house gang" at Burrow Hill, the illustrations consist of engravings and woodcuts, many of those which mark the chapter headings being taken from 18th

Century Acts of Parliament concerning cider. The chapter headings are also richly supplied with historic quotations on cider which deserve to be quarried by the compilers of CAMRA guides and festival programmes. All these elements combine to create as complete a picture of a confident and self-aware cider culture as you are ever likely to read.

As should by now be obvious, this is not a book that will tell you where to stop off to fill a container on the way back from your West Country holiday. Yet, for confirmed cider drinkers, it should rank as an essential purchase which you will keep coming back to with renewed pleasure. And even those who have not yet discovered that: "Bread is the Staff of Life
But Cider is Life itself"

will surely find it difficult to resist this handsome and inspiring volume, the fruit of much knowledge and love. Very highly recommended indeed. **RPJ.**

Beermat News

Alan Gardner of the British Beermat Collector's Society has been in touch with some news of forthcoming events.

The Society are holding an event at the Crescent, Salford. On Saturday 5th February from 12 noon onwards. As well as beer mats, there will also be pump clips, brewery badges and playing cards on offer. There will also be a charity raffle for Manchester children's hospital and the event will be followed by a walk-cum-pub crawl. Details can be had from Alan on 01772 455536 or Tom Corner on 01457 872022.

There will also be a pumpclip and beermat sale on most Saturday afternoons at forthcoming Crescent beer festivals and again, all money raised will go to Manchester Children's Hospital. When the pub is quiet, collectors will also be able to look through a box of clips and mats held behind the bar. The Society are very grateful to Idy and Sal at the Crescent for making all this possible.

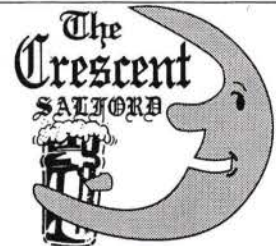
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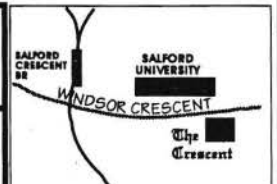
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Spread Your Wings

McDonalds have applied for planning permission to turn the Royal Oak on Altrincham Road, Baguley, into a drive-thru (sic) restaurant. The pub has been closed and boarded for months, and even before that it was run-down and clearly failing. But it has a prominent location on a busy road with frequent bus services, and was probably the nearest pub for several thousand people, many of whom will now have no pub within easy walking distance.

It may be something of a shock to see this happening in Manchester, but it is a story that has been repeated on the outskirts of major towns and cities all over the country, where big, once-thriving pubs have been converted into fast food outlets. The decline of pubs on estates and in suburban areas away from main shopping streets is one of the biggest areas of crisis in the British pub scene. These are pubs typically with numerous chimneypots nearby, and good public transport links, so it cannot exclusively be laid at the door of drink-driving crackdowns, although that does play some part. But of that decline there is no doubt.

The shadow of McDonalds is also rumoured to hang over another prominent, well-known, local pub that is five minutes' walk from a well-served railway station, and right next door to one of South Manchester's major bus interchanges. There are plenty of other pubs in the area such as the Mauldeth, the Kingsway and the Conway in Cheadle Hulme, that currently are clearly falling well short of their potential, despite a large potential customer base.

But help may be at hand. I was interested recently while looking through a list of Wetherspoon's outlets on what is probably the best pub-operator website I have come across (www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk), to spot the recently opened Moon Under Water on Old Fallings Lane, Wolverhampton 10. Now, I don't know that area well, but it's clear from the map that it's in precisely the kind of location I'm talking about. Whether it's a new pub, or a conversion of an existing failing one, I'm not sure, but it may be the harbinger of a new trend.

Wetherspoon's were undoubtedly the most successful pub operator of the 90s. They're not perfect, but they do a lot of things right, and they have brought a breath of fresh air to the pub scene, particularly in places like Longsight. They have also almost single-handedly reclaimed urban pubs for the over-30s. But so far they have in general limited their operations to locations in city and town centres and busy suburban high streets where they can be assured of a heavy pedestrian traffic past the door.

They must now be running out of new sites that fit their exiting business plan, so if they want to expand further, could they not do it by breathing new life into our under-performing suburban pubs? I'm sure that a slight tweaking of the current formula to put a bit more emphasis on food and a bit less on designer bottles, and to make the pubs more welcoming for families, could work wonders. Come on, Tim Martin, what about that challenge? And what about all those huge underused roadhouses on every major route out of Birmingham - all of which have frequent bus services?

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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JANUARY '95

The editorial began "1994 was characterised by continuing upheaval in the brewing industry", and there were comments on the continuing decline of the pub stock in East Manchester. During the year, CAMRA had co-operated with English Heritage to formulate listing guidelines specifically aimed at public houses. No pub vandalism awards had been made, but a Golden Bulldozer Award had been presented to Greenalls on the site of the demolished Tommy Ducks. On the small brewery side, the biggest loss was Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery, although Brendan was expected to surface again in 1995. Probably the biggest gain was Porters's Brewery in Haslingden, which carried off most of the awards at the Stockport Beer Festival. The JD Wetherspoon organisation was coming to Manchester - it was already well known in London and the South East, and their first acquisition in the North West was the old Cannon Cinema on Deansgate. A reported £1.7 million was to be spent on the conversion and "The Moon Under Water" was due to open in June.

There was news of the Snowdonia Brewery - this was originally sited at the Bryn Arms at Gelliliydan, where Martin Barry ran the brewery and the pub. It had been one of the venues for a day out in North Wales for Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA members. But then there were problems and Martin left, finally resurfacing on a small industrial estate at Four Crosses, Montgomeryshire. Although this new situation was some way from Snowdonia, the name had been retained, presumably to avoid customer confusion.

There were comments on three recent refurbishments. The Rudyard Hotel, Heaton Chapel, had reopened after a much-needed refit. The fake Raj theme had gone, and there were three bars, but only one open to the public, selling handpumped Worthington Best Bitter and Draught Bass at £1.40 and £1.65 respectively - high prices perhaps for the area but not unusual for hotels. The Jolly Sailor in Davenport was another pub that had re-opened after an extensive refurbishment by its new owners Scottish & Newcastle - it was billed outside as "the pub for the discerning customer" But with just Theakston's Best Bitter and Courage Directors, no guest beers, and no longer a vault, the thought was that it wasn't really a pub that the discerning customer would go much out of his way to visit.

Rothwell's (formerly Barclays Bank at the top of King Street) had opened in time to catch the Christmas rush. The building was remarkable for its wonderful listed interior. There were mosaic floors, red granite Corinthian columns, marble walls, and two cupolas in the roof - it had been said that Marston's had spent £1.2 million on acquiring the building and remodelling it. The name Rothwell's came from a long-closed Manchester brewery, Rothwell & Co acquired by Marston's in 1961. An intriguing question had been posed - could this be the only pub in Manchester with an electrically operated portcullis?

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Hydes' Latest

Well, it's official! Hydes' have finally owned up to brewing Whitbread Trophy, with confirmation appearing in the trade press late last year. They have actually been brewing the beer for quite a while, in fact although it's all been very hush-hush until now. It's not a bad brew, really, albeit in a light, inoffensive sort of way. What should have rather more oomph is the first in the new range of craft ales, which hits the bars this month. 'Harry Verderci' commemorates King Harold's activities at the Battle of Hastings and is certainly one to keep your eye out for. The company's tied estate has also expanded with the purchase of the Eagle in Buxton, which will be Hydes' first outlet in the town. We believe that other acquisitions are in the pipeline, too. Watch this space!



Holt's Hiving Off?

Rumours are circulating that Joseph Holt's are planning to dispose of some low turnover pubs. The brewery are remaining tight-lipped although it is thought that the rumours are in fact true. No news of whether any pubs in the Opening Times area are affected. On the other hand the company continues to acquire outlets and pubs in Bury and West Didsbury will be joining the tied estate soon - the West Didsbury outlet is confidently expected to be the Railway on Lapwing Lane.

The quality control problems that Holt's experienced last year should now be a thing of the past. Large amounts of money have been spent on refurbishing the brewery and a variety of new equipment has been installed. Certainly, the beer in the pubs has been much better of late.

Porter Expands

Dave Porter has added a fifth pub to his expanding empire. He took possession of the Arthur Inn, a former Thwaites house at 95 Bolton Road, Bury, on 6 January. Allowing for a general tidy up and redecoration, the Arthur should be open and selling Porters beers by 12 February. The excellent Floral Dance has now joined the Porters range as a regular beer and is permanently on sale at the Railway, Portwood. The powerful Sleighed (6.9% ABV) appeared over the Christmas period and was much appreciated, as usual.



More Micro News

The ever productive Phoenix Brewery has another crop of seasonal beers coming out over the next few weeks. Jovian (4.2%), Massacre (4.7%) and March Hare (4.4%) will all be in the trade by the middle of February.



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Bolton's Bank Top Brewery produced its seasonal Santa Claws (5%) for the festive season and will be following this up with the latest in the Knights of the Round Table series later this month. Sir Tristram is the tenth in the series and will be launched at Atherton's Bent & Bongs Beer Bash on 27 January. The beer weighs in at 4.2 per cent and will be brewed using New Zealand Green Bullet hops.



National Scene



Turmoil continues. Our old friends Wolverhampton & Dudley are now set to take over the Mansfield Brewery and closure looks to be on the cards. They have pledged to keep it open for two years, though. Mansfield beers often appear locally, rebadged as the Grays beers – it will be interesting to see what happens to those in the event of Mansfield closing. Just as we went to press, Wolves were also reported as funding a huge expansion of the South Wales micro Tomos Watkins, which, allegedly, is to build a new brewhouse and acquire 50 more pubs. Considering Wolves reportedly only own 7% of the Welsh brewer, this seems a might odd thing to do – unless it forms part of some grand corporate plan which is as yet undiscernible.

Bass are also at the centre of take over speculation. There is reliable speculation that Dutch brewing giant Heineken is in talks to purchase Bass's brewing division. If this were to happen, it is unlikely that they would have much interest in the Bass cask ale brands but, given that these are too big to jettison, contracting out would seem to be an option. The obvious place to brew Bass would be Marston's Burton brewery. Could this be why Wolves are so keen to axe Marstons Bitter – clearing the decks to make way for something else?

Contributors to Opening Times Issue 189

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Peter Edwardson, Jim Flynn, Phil Levison, Tim Jones, John Hutchinson, John Tune, Pete Brown, Alan Gardner, Rhys Jones, George Symes

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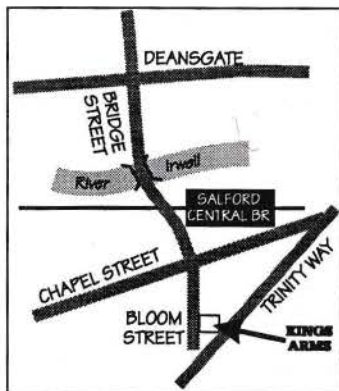
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Whilst the Beer range at the upcoming Manchester festival is geared round the competition (Champion Winter Beer) and the general drinker rather than the out and out beer-spotter (motto: 'never the same beer twice'), this breed should be well catered for this month as both the Beer House (40) and Smithfield Hotel, Swan St (7) have 'new and rare' beer festivals coinciding with the big bash (20 - 22 Jan) so Manchester is certainly going to be the place to be.

On the foreign beer front there is excellent news that Idy and Sal at the Crescent, Salford, are hosting a German Draught Beer Fest in March, which coincides nicely with the launch of the strong Doppelbock seasonal brews - almost impossible to get in the UK. It goes without saying - French lorry drivers/owners/farmers/other Frenchmen permitting - that an interesting draught and bottled range will be available at the National Festival in Castlefield (Jan 20 -22).

The Beer Monster's British Beer of the Month:

Hopback Winter Lightning (5.3%) abv

I occasionally get a little tired banging the Hopback drum, but I never get tired of drinking their beers. I had the very pleasant task in the excellent City Arms (Kennedy St, Manchester) of trying this new seasonal beer side by side with the classic Hopback Summer Lightning (5%). The comparison was very interesting. A truly hoppy IPA (summer) and a rich, darker (though still no darker than a normal bitter), malty but dry winter warmer, with a bittersweet, drying long finish. A memorable experience. Should still be around in the free trade.

The Beer Monster's Foreign Beer of the Months:

Paulaner (Christmas) Festbier (6%)abv

I thought this was going to be an Oktoberfest clone. It was not, being slightly different in make-up (only whole hop flowers used rather than extract) and even dryer, with far more hop flavour in the finish than expected. Truly excellent. (Sand Bar, Grosvenor St). Try also the Monchoff, Tucher and Pyraser Christmas Beers at Bar Fringe.

12

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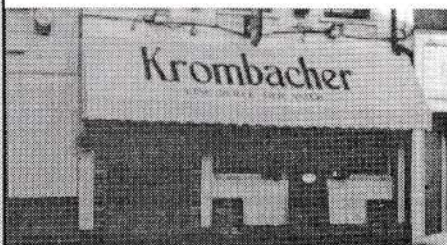
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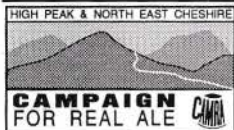
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**January
Featured Pub:
The Caledonia,
Ashton-u-Lyne**

This month we are featuring a pub is Ashton-u-Lyne that has been part of the real ale scene for many years. Whilst other high profile pubs in the Ashton area have burned bright and diminished, the Caledonia Hotel has steadily served Robinson's beers from its prominent location of the corner of Warrington Street and Wood Street.

This section of Warrington Street is semi-pedestrianised and the Caledonia is a welcome refuge from the hustle and bustle of the shopping crowds. Until the recent refurbishment it was a typical down-to-earth town centre boozier serving a varied clientele from workers straight from site to couples later on in the evening. Now, whilst the same mix of customers are catered for, the pub has a much cosier and even more welcoming feel.

Robinson's, after consultation with tenants Alan and Louise Heal, reorganised the layout comprehensively, moving are and (crucially) the stairs. What resulted was a pub with three separate areas beyond the large L-shaped bar. The bar itself is dark stained - typical of many Robinson's houses - with an attractively tiled floor (so as not to put off the "workers" in overalls). Beyond this the other areas reflect the 'Scottish' style with the McLeod tartan prominent. At the front of the pub to the right is a 'snug' with an old fire surround and a large kitchen table which is popular with large parties. This table is quite striking as it is centrally located in the 'snug' and is 'stripped' pale wood. The other two areas are to the left of the bar - at the back a comfortable lounge behind a raised area which is set aside for diners when food is available. And talking of food, Louise recently achieved second spot in Robinson's Chef of the Year Award (1999-2000) and has framed certificates proudly displayed on the walls. Meals are available at lunchtimes (Mon-Sat 11.30-2.30; Sun 12-3) and evenings (5-7 Tues-Thurs; 5-8 Fri and Sat) and are a good mix of the traditional and more exotic.

The beers, Best Bitter, Hatters Mild and Frederics, are all on handpump and invariably in good condition. The Frederics has

been served continually since its launch, unique in Ashton. As you may have spotted, the Caledonia is a hotel, and this is not just a hangover from previous incarnations as is so often the case. There are three well-appointed rooms upstairs, furnished in the 'Caledonian' style and named after Scottish lochs.

At the rear of the pub, a beer garden has been laid out - always a popular addition during our hot Lancashire summers. Last summer a marquee was erected in the car park beyond this for a 'do' and this could well be a feature in future if you want a private bash. So, as you can see, this unassuming local actually caters comprehensively for most eventualities. The beer's good, the food's good, and if you miss your last bus...

If you haven't already come across the 'Cale' on your staggers between the Station, Witchwood and Wetherspoon's Ash Tree then it really is worth a visit. You can pick up Opening Times as well as a warm welcome. TJ.

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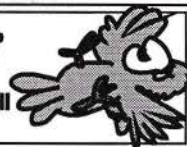
Old Stockport Bitter, Best Bitter,
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A WARM WELCOME
AND FINE BEER IN
A CLASSIC PUB



"I wish to register
A COMPLAINT!"



Bad 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.

★ **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 action if 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 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

Competition Winner

There were a bumper number of entries for last month's competition. As ever, many thanks to Paul Stanyer, now at the Swan With Two Necks, for setting to questions and providing the prize. • The winner of the latest edition of CAMRA's Good Pub Food Guide is Natasha Moorfield from Bury. Well done there! We have no competition this month, but hope to run another one in February.

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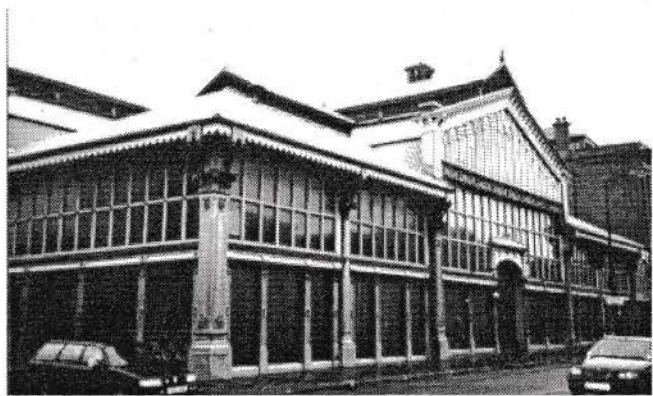
National Winter Ales Festival 2000

This month sees the National Champion Winter Beer Festival come to Manchester for the second year. Once again, the competition will be held immediately before CAMRA's fourth National Winter Ales Festival on the 20th January, at the Upper Campfield Market in Manchester's Castlefield.

The festival moved to Manchester last year, from its original home in Glasgow, and was a runaway success with beer selling out by 7.00pm on the Saturday night. There will be plenty more beer this year to make sure that doesn't happen again and this will be a truly national festival with well over 100 real ales on offer. There will be a huge range of bitters on offer, as well as milds, porters, and stouts from independent brewers all over Britain, and of course the super-strong winter warmers, though these powerful beers will be out in force. The threat of French lorry blockades does pose some threat to the international flavour of the event, but we are confident that last year's spectacular foreign beer bar will be back with an unrivalled range of German and Belgian seasonal specialities plus draught and bottled American Winter beers. A good range of ciders and perries will also be available, this time from an individual bar, though final details of the range were unavailable as we went to press.

This year there will be two food stalls, - Idy of the Crescent running both a hot food bar, and a seperate butty bar., as well as a trolley service throughout the hall

The three day event runs from 20-22 January in the historic Upper Campfield Market, a Victorian market hall in Castlefield, just off Deansgate in the City Centre and only 4 minutes walk from Deansgate BR, and G-Mex Metrolink stations. This really will be an event that no beer lover can afford to miss. Get those dates in your new millennium diaries now - 20-22 January.



National Winter Ales Festival 2000

- STAFFING FORM -

Upper Campfield Market 20 - 22 January 2000

PLEASE USE ONE FORM PER PERSON

(ONLY CURRENT CAMRA MEMBERS ARE PERMITTED TO WORK)

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Phone _____ CAMRA Membership No _____

CAMRA Branch (if Known) _____

Please tick the sessions you are able and willing to work, along with the nights you would like accommodation. Please note - accommodation cannot be guaranteed

	Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19
0900			
1300			
1300			
1800			
	Accommodation Please		
	Setting Up		

	Thu 20	Fri 21	Sat 22
0900			
1600			
1600			
2300			
	Accommodation Please		
	Festival Open		

	Sun 23	Mon 24
0900		
1300		
1300		
1800		
	Accom Please	
	Take Down	

Have You Worked at a CAMRA Beer Festival Before? _____

Please List any special skills you could offer to the Festival

(continue on reverse as necessary) _____

Do you have any current first aid qualifications?

(if yes give details on reverse) _____

Please use the back of the form for any other information you feel could be of use to the staffing officer in allocating jobs at the festival

Send your completed form to: Staffing, Paul Marsden, UMIST PO Box 88 Manchester. M60 1QD. Telephone 0161 200 3325/ 0973 384 333



CAMRA

Mild Challenge 2000

Calling at Stockport and South Manchester licenses! Does your pub sell quality cask mild? If so, your pub can feature in this year's Stockport and Manchester Mild Challenge 2000, the premier mild campaigning event of the year and a great opportunity to market your pub! Contact Jack Lyons on 0161 248 0267 by the end of January for more details.



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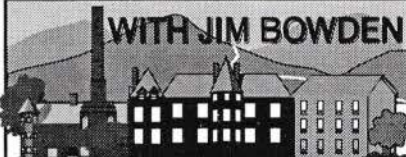
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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CAMRA

In New Mills, The Squirrels, New Town, is closed "due to retirement"(!) and in nearby Hayfield, The Kinder Lodge is also closed but it has been reported that the pub has been sold. Whether it remains a pub appears to be a matter of speculation. More information when known. In Disley, The Rams Head will be refurbished (for a change) in the new year and the owners (Clarinbridge) will announce their plans, when known. Buxton now, and The Eagle (Market Place) is now a fully fledged Hydes' pub with Bitter and Jekyll's Gold available at the time of my visit. I would imagine that a new year refurbishment is on the cards here, too. Also in Buxton, the Banks's take-over of Marston's has resulted in the appearance of Banks's Bitter in The Sun (a phenomenon which has been and will be reported elsewhere). There's a real ale gain in Glossop where The Corner Cupboard now has cask beer having introduced Thwaites Bitter plus one other from the Thwaites range. The Surrey is up for sale and there are fears that this will not be sold as a pub. Finally this month, in Ashton-u-Lyne, a refreshing result of the Marston's/Banks's situation has seen Taylor's Landlord join the range at the Good Beer Guide listed Dog & Pheasant.

MACCLESFIELD & EAST CHESHIRE
WITH JIM BOWDEN



ab News...
ews...Pub
vs...Pub N
ab News...
ews...Pub
vs...Pub N



The Roebuck in Moberley reopened last July with considerable emphasis on the dining trade, and two subsequent visits reveal that the food quality is second to none. The cask beer range has sensibly been reduced to maintain quality and throughput - the Taylor's Landlord and Greene King Abbot have been on sparkling form. The other cask ale choice is the predictable Tetley Bitter, presumably for diners who know very little about tasty beer. What the Roebuck need to make a good pub great is an improved beer range - how about replacing the Tetley with a rotating beer from Cheshire's own Weetwood Brewery and to use the fourth pump for a 'guest beer' at weekends? Just over the road at the Bulls Head, landlady Margaret Traynor has gone, to be replaced by Jenny Wilson from the Bird in Hand, and her partner Ted. We wish them well. The Whipping Stocks in Over Peover has reopened after its closure for refitting and I can report that it looks great. The interior has retained its multi-roomed layout, giving customers a choice of company and atmosphere. Happy to say, there is a no-smoking room. The exterior has been attractively landscaped, and there is an attractive garden for use when the weather improves. Whilst there is a heavy emphasis on eating, cask ale remains in the form of a very tasty pint of Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter.

The Builders in Knutsford continues to stock the "Marston's" Head Brewers Choice, although this is a much reduced range following the recent rationalisation of their in-house 'guest beers' by Wolves & Dudley. The pub has already lost some regulars following the perverse decision to replace Bateman's Mild with Banks's Original, and this can only be made worse by the loss of Marston's Bitter. Down the street, the Head Brewers choice has disappeared, possibly temporarily, from the Legh Arms. Banks's Original Mild has appeared in its place. Serious questions must be asked about this company's commitment to choice and variety for its customers.

Staying in Knutsford, the White Bear on the roundabout has lost the Cains Bitter, sadly. Tetley Bitter is no substitute. Nearby, the Good Beer Guide listed Cross Keys closed for a minor refurbishment in November and should now be open again. Cellarman Laurence Gladwell tells us that the excellent beer range will remain a feature.

In Wilmslow, the Parisa Café Bar has put plans for a micro-brewery on hold. The in-house beers are now to be brewed by North Yorkshire micro, Rudgate, it seems. However, given the current absence of any hand pumps on the bar, it does not look as though cask beer features in the plans for this particular site. Eat there by all means, but if you want a decent pint, try the Swan or the Hogshead.



Just before we went to press, the Gardners Arms on Northgate Road, Edgeley, was closed, yet again. Hopefully this will be a temporary measure as the pub did seem to be looking at a much-needed period of stability.

A quick visit to the Hollywood, Edgeley, just after Christmas revealed that the pub still offers nothing in the way of real ale. This is a great shame, as the pub appears to be in new hands and is looking very smart and well-run.

Ructions in Hazel Grove, where Wetherspoon's have applied to turn the former Gateway Supermarket into a pub. There is clearly enough trade in Hazel Grove to sustain this type of operation and it will provide some much needed competition to the other pubs in the area, many of which do seem to have allowed themselves to become a little complacent over the years. Potentially a very welcome addition to the local pub scene.

One Hazel Grove pub that isn't complacent is the Three Tunnes, for long regarded by many as one of the best pubs in the village. The Tunnes changed hands late last year following the departure of Jacky and Pete to the Adswold Hotel. The new licensees are Simon 'Cheeky' Howarth and his father John. Simon previously kept the Horse & Jockey opposite before it was refitted (and when it sold a decent pint of Holt's). The news was very welcome amongst regulars of the Three Tunnes as it means business as usual, given that Simon has on a number of occasions taken charge in Pete and Jacky's absence.

Another Robinson's house changing hands last year was the Unity, Wellington Road South, Stockport, where Tony and Helen Dunn took over on 25 October. Tony is an experienced licensee having spent the previous six years running pubs on Hyde Road in Gorton. Four years were spent at Hydes' Travellers Call, where he gained a CAMRA Pub of the Month award, and this was followed by a two-year spell at Paramount's Nag's Head where he sold a very tasty pint of Burtonwood Bitter. No major changes are planned at the Unity, which has a very well established trade, although Tony has installed new cellar lines to serve the beer just a little bit cooler. The Unity is clearly another pub in very safe hands.

Yet another Robinson's licensee change is at the Flying Dutchman, Hillgate. Dennis and Susan Morrall have taken over at the pub, their first, although Susan has 30-years bar work experience behind her. The couple have successfully completed Robinson's in-house licensee training course, and this was certainly evident in the high quality of the beer sampled recently. A pre-Christmas visit also produced the welcome sight of a cask of Old Tom on stillage behind the bar.

Staying with Robinson's, at the Armoury in Edgeley the old electric metered dispense into oversized glasses has been done away with. Handpumps and brim measures are now the order of the day.

Also in Edgeley, while the Prince Albert on Castle Street remains firmly closed, the Pineapple has, surprisingly, reopened. Now badged "Jonjo Greene's Pineapple" the pub has been repainted and re-signed outside, and refurbished within. The bar has been replaced and moved back to make for a more open-plan feel. The floor has been stripped back to the bare boards and the overall effect is fairly spartan, really. Cask beer has been introduced in the form of Grays Dark Mild and Best Bitter (which in reality are Mansfield Brewery's Riding Mild and Riding Bitter, we understand).

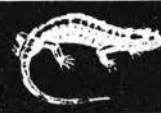
In West Didsbury, it is looking increasingly likely that Holt's have bought the closed Railway on Lapwing Lane. The purchase will almost certainly include the former chemist's shop next door as it is doubtful that Holt's would be interested in a pub as small as the Railway in itself. Look for an announcement soon.

In Levenshulme, the site of the forthcoming Wetherspoon's was still trading as the 'Walk Round Warehouse' in late December, although its closure for redevelopment cannot be long off. In common with its sister establishment in Longsight, this particular branch of the national free house chain is eagerly anticipated, as it should bring some much needed choice and enterprise to the area.

Changes could be in the pipeline for the Bakers Vaults in Stockport Market Place where we understand that long-time licensee Ian Brookes will be leaving this year. Ian has been a fixture on the local pub scene for many years now and he will be sorely missed.

sandbar

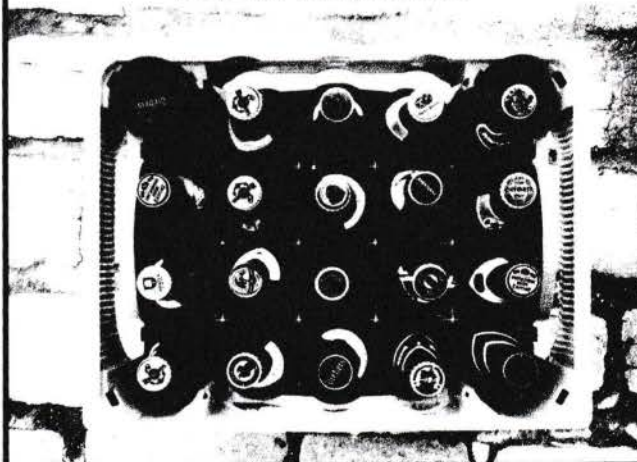
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WHOLESALE AND OFF LICENCE

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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

Diary

JANUARY 2000

Thursday 13th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm. **NB Pub of the Year will be chosen at this meeting.**

Saturday 15th - Annual Branch Anniversary Meal: Nursery, Green Ln, Heaton Norris. Arrive by 7.30pm please.

Monday 17th - Social: Travellers Call, Buxton Road, Great Moor. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 20th - Saturday 22nd - National Winter Ales Festival, Upper Campfield Market, Castlefield, Manchester City Centre. Will everyone please support this event - work if you can - drink if you can't!

Wednesday 26th - Trip to Lees Brewery. Depart Crown, Heaton Lane 6.15pm. names to John Hutchinson on 434 7177 as soon as possible.

Thursday 27th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Griffin, Heald Green. 8.00pm onwards.

Friday 28th - Didsbury Stagger: 7.30pm Gateway, Kingsway, East Didsbury; 8.30pm Olde Cock, Wilmslow Road.

Monday 31st - Social: Red Lion, Wilmslow Road, Withington. Starts 9.00pm.

Tuesday 1st February - Committee Meeting: Armoury, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.

NB GBG 2001 pre-selection will take place at this meeting

Monday 7th - Social: Swan with two Necks, Princes St, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm (Tiviot if closed)

Thursday 10th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Gateway, Kingsway, East Didsbury. Starts 8.00pm. **NB final selections for GBG 2001 will be made at this meeting.**

JANUARY 2000

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

Sunday 16th - Woods Walk. Meet at Navigation, Stockport Rd, Marple 9.45am. Details from Frank Wood on 01457 685426.

Monday 17th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Crown, Victoria St, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

Friday 28th - Sunday 30th - Winter weekend away to Exeter. Details from Tom Lord on 0161 427 7099.

Monday 31st - Committee Meeting: Royal Oak, Buxton Rd (A6), High Lane. Starts 8.30pm.

Monday 7th February - Monthly Branch Meeting: White Hart, Market St, Mottram. Starts 8.30pm.

Apart from Macclesfield & Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have notified us of the following events:

Wednesday 12th - Games Evening: Nags Head, Waters Green, Macclesfield.

Monday 17th - Committee Meeting: Dog Inn, Well Bank Ln, Over Peover. Starts 8.00pm.

Saturday 22nd - All Members Social: National Winter Ales Festival, Upper Campfield Market, Deansgate, Manchester City Centre. Noon onwards.

Monday 24th - AGM and Branch Meeting: Baths, Green St, Macclesfield. Starts 8.00pm. **All members please try and attend.**

Sunday 6th - Sunday Lunch at the Poachers, Ingersley Rd, Bollington. Noon onwards.

To Do Address Note/Deposited Anniversary CAMRA 93 Flare/et

18

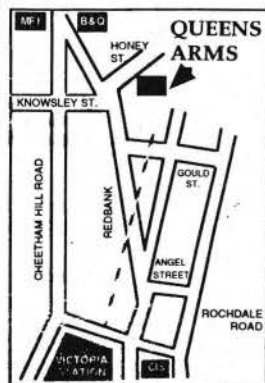
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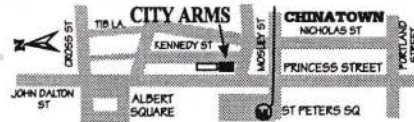
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and 11.30 - 2.00
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EARLY EVENING MEALS NOW SERVED!

MANCHESTER MATTERS by Cityman

The New Year promises a veritable flood of new licensed premises for the City Centre with major developments at the Printworks, Triangle, Great Northern Warehouse, Circus and Deansgate Locks projects all coming on stream. The bad news is that most of the planned new bars are just more outlets of the same old national chains so don't expect much in the way of real ale which can probably only be guaranteed at the Circus's Wetherspoons and, hopefully, Deansgate Locks' Fat Cat Café Bar. Anything else will be a bonus.

Ups and Downs

However, good new real ale outlets continue to appear and December saw two very welcome additions to the City's real ale scene. In Chorlton the latest Wetherspoon outlet, the **Sedge Lynn**, opened its doors on 2 December and on the same night **Kro Bar** on Wilmslow Road in the 'University Quarter' came on stream. Both are reviewed elsewhere but I will say the Kro Bar is for me one of the most stylish new bars to open in the City for a long, long time. However, there's bad news, too. The **Moulders Arms** on Heyrod Street, just behind Piccadilly Station has joined the ranks of former pubs becoming burnt out ruins - a sad end for what is many ways was a unique survivor. Another sad loss is just 'over the border' in Salford where the **Ship Inn** on Chapel Street was demolished just before Christmas. This once-thriving Boddies pub had been in long decline and in truth its fate comes as no surprise. Also closed and awaiting its fate is the **Cotton Tree** on Great Ancoats Street where the upper windows (of this three storey building!) have all been put through.

Elsewhere on the City café bar scene, I'm pleased to see that Hydes' **Breeze Bar** on Peter Street now has pump clips so that you can tell what cask beer is on sale (the initial absence of these must rank high as barmy marketing ploy of 1999). It was Jekyll's Gold just before Christmas, by the way. On the down side, the new **Living Room** on Deansgate is independently run, stylishly executed....and keg only.

Levenshulme & Longsight

I paid a visit to Levenshulme and Longsight recently, just to get up to speed on the pub scene there. It wasn't exactly the most memorable experience of the year, although there were one or two high spots. All of the pubs visited, bar one, are on the A6. The **Levenshulme** just has Boddies Bitter on handpump - in the dim and distant past this was a Good Beer Guide listed Wilson's house with mild and bitter. Oh well, at least it's better than **Fidler's Green** which remains firmly keg and the **Railway** which was

closed until 10 January (according to the hand written note in the window). The **Pack Horse** is also firmly closed, although I have had reports of some activity there. I remain doubtful it will reopen, especially as a Wetherspoons will be opening next door later this year.

The **Union** is as reliable as ever and continues to sell handpumped Boddingtons Bitter alongside the house beer 'Union Bitter'. The presence of a Boddies smooth font on the bar is worrying, though - it would be a major loss if this pub were to go keg. Across the road, **Hennigan's** is now keg although the **Horseshoe** on Chapel Street still serves cask ale, even though it is just John Smiths Bitter. A well-run pub this, which obviously majors on entertainment. The **Church** (ex-Greenalls) was closed and boarded, and the **Ceili House** is still keg. The **Little Vic** was keg for years but ironically is now one of the few cask ale survivors. My spirits rose at the sight of a Lees Bitter handpump but this is no longer sold. The cask offering is in fact 'Whitbread' Trophy (now brewed by Hydes' of course) at £1.30 and not too bad at all. Next door the **Midway** has gone keg, as has the **Farmers Kipper** across the road, where the handpumps remain but are unsigned and disused. Cask beer is still advertised outside, though.

Into Longsight proper, and the **Ceili Inn** also remains keg. Thank God for Wetherspoons' **Sir Edwin Chadwick** just up the road. There were four cask beers on my visit - Boddingtons Bitter, Theakstons Bitter, Courage Directors and a guest, Wychwood Mistletoad. Despite much pulling through, this proved not to be on so I settled for a perfectly good pint of Directors instead. I continue to be impressed by the high standards of service here and the whole pub really is a credit to Wetherspoons'. It seems to thrive, too - which shows that no matter what the location people appreciate good standards, and respect them too. Too many inner-city pubs these days are squalid drinking holes that get the trade, and the customers, they deserve. Roll on the sister establishment in Levenshulme!

Just up from the Sir Edwin Chadwick is **O'Connors**, another good pub still selling cask beer. I only had time to pop my head round the door but noticed not only Tetley Bitter on handpump, but also a second pump apparently selling Coach House Dick Turpin. A welcome departure if this is the case. Across the road the newly refurbished **Bay Horse** is smart, spacious - and all keg. Once again there is a misleading sign outside suggesting otherwise. My journey finished at the **Ducie Arms** where I was expecting all keg but was pleasantly surprised to get quite a decent half of Trophy.

Good Beer Guide 2000

Planning this year's holiday or trips out? Do you want to know more about breweries, beer and pubs? Are you looking for a gift for a beer drinker? Whatever you are looking for in a book about beer and pubs, the Good Beer guide 2000 is the answer. Send a cheque for £11.99, made payable to CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester, to 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 5EG (p&p free).

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APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 189)

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

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

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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.



BEEER



CAMRA 2000 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

Upper Campfield Market,
Deansgate, MANCHESTER

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Thurs 20 January 5.30 - 10.30pm, Fri 21 January, 12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm

Sat 22 January 12 - 4 & 5.30 - 10.30pm

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CAMRA members FREE at lunchtime & Sat Eve, £1 Thurs & Fri Eve

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**20-22 JANUARY 2000
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**



FESTIVAL