



OPENING TIMES



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GOOD BEER GUIDE 2001

The globalisation of the British beer market is the main theme of the 2001 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. Editor Roger Protz slates Bass and Whitbread for turning their backs on beer – cask ale in particular – but argues that is no reason for welcoming their takeover by Belgian giant Interbrew.

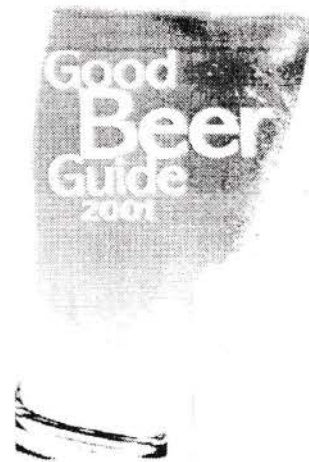
"It may well be that Interbrew will pump new life into the handful of ale brands bequeathed it by Bass and Whitbread," he writes. "But the main thrust of Interbrew's activities will be to maximise the sales of its lager brands. It owns Stella Artois, the leading premium lager in Britain. It will take on the sales of the draught version of another premium lager, Grolsch. And in Carling it controls a massive brand that enjoys a lucrative connection with the top echelon of English football". The declining interest in real ale among the handful of giant brewers offers tremendous opportunities for smaller regional and craft brewers, Roger Protz adds. He quotes Simon Loftus of Adnams who thinks that "strong independent brands will survive and prosper while weaker ones will find the going more and more difficult". Protz also attacks the media for reporting only "doom and gloom" stories about the brewing industry. He points out that dedicated independent breweries continue to perform well. "Fullers and Youngs in London had record years, with sales and profits increased. George Gale of Horndean, Hants, increased turnover by 8 per cent in 1999 and recorded record profits of £30 million. In Cumbria, Jennings of Cockermouth increased profits by a staggering 73 per cent while Timothy Taylor's of Keighley brewed more beer than at any time in their history. "There's life in the old cask yet."

Green Beer Report

Other major features in the Guide include a special "Green Beer Report" that criticises brewers for being slow to respond to consumer demand for organic products. The report says that organic beer will prosper with the news that Horticultural Research International at Wye College in Kent is developing a new hop variety that is resistant to disease, pest attack and needs no chemical sprays. "If the variety is dubbed an organic hop by the Soil Association it could open the floodgates for organic beer in Britain," the report says, "giving brewers a bigger home-grown source of organic hops." At present, most organic malt and hops have to be imported, often from as far away as New Zealand.

Brewers Berated

Award-winning beer writer Lynne Pearce berates the brewers for ignoring women in their advertising and promotions. "Should we take up rugby to get noticed by the brewers?" she asks. She quotes Paul Nunny of Cask Marque, sponsors of the Guide, who says, "real ale is living with its history, rather than focusing on new target groups." Lynne Pearce praises pub group Wetherspoon's for including women in its posters and promotions. But she says that when London brewers Fullers launched a new campaign for London Pride it included only men in its TV commercials. "Today's pubgoers are as likely to be female as male," Lynne says. "Expectations include a smoke-free area, a choice of good food, a welcome for the children – and a decent pint to boot."



On sale now!

FULL MEASURE FIDDLE

Shock figures revealed in a new survey have given CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, a powerful weapon as the fight for a full pint reaches its last stages.

The Government is now ready to start the consultation exercise that will lead to a new weights & Measures White Paper, with luck before the year is out. And CAMRA's case for a pint to mean a pint – 20 fluid ounces of liquid – has been boosted by its latest survey of pubs in four regions: the North-east, the South-west; the West Midlands, and Wales.

CAMRA's survey findings are in sharp contrast to many small-scale investigations carried out by local trading standards departments, which indicate that pubs by and large follow Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association guidelines that say a pint should be at least 95 per cent liquid and that a top-up should be given on demand and with good grace.

But armed for the first time with a defoaming agent which collapses the head on a pint so that the actual amount of liquid it contains can be accurately measured, CAMRA's surveyors found that the average pint of nitrokeg, stout or cask ale served through a tight sparkler fell well outside the guidelines.

The average pint of nitrokeg or stout, CAMRA's volunteer taskforce found, was only 93 per cent liquid after the head had been collapsed. The average pint of real ale puled through a tight sparkler was only 93.5 per cent after the head had been collapsed.

CAMRA Head of Campaigns Mike Benner said the figures were worse than anyone had expected. He said the worst offender was a Cardiff pub where the pints tested averaged 85 per cent liquid and added: "It's completely unacceptable that pubs are routinely serving pints that are an average of 7 per cent short.

"With a pint of beer heading for £2 in many regions, that means drinkers are being ripped off by anything up to a staggering 20p a pint, and the trend towards nitrokeg beers in the last few years has severely exacerbated the problem.

"Drinkers are entitled to ask for a top-up, but in a busy pub that's often impossible. We are calling for urgent action to protect consumers. We believe that if you pay for a pint you should get a pint."

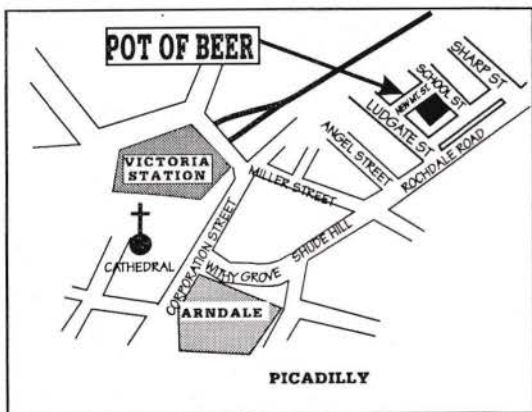
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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

Is a real ale revival under way? Certainly there are the first flickerings of an upturn. While headline figures show cask ale still in overall decline as national brewers and pubcos continue to promote nitrokeg, most independent brewers report healthy increases in cask sales. And now the revival is showing in the pub trade too. An Industry Report in trade paper Publican, while charting real ale's double digit decline for some years, finds that it is increasing in importance for many licensees and performing well in pubs where the licensee chooses to specialise. Indeed, the report says that for some licensees, cask is among their fastest growing products and is getting faster. Real ale fans can also be cheered by the report's finding that nitrokegs, which were rated of more value to pubs than cask in last year's report, have flopped. Licensees now regard cask as more valuable to their business than nitrokeg. There may even be a sea change in the way the national brewers approach cask. Already we have seen Scottish Courage launch a cutting edge campaign, both on cinema screens and also to be on TV, to promote the new Theakston Cool Cask. And Hugo Powell, boss of Interbrew, and hence the man who calls the shots at the Bass and Whitbread brewing operations, has declared it his aim to restore Bass and Boddington to their position as 'great cask brands'. These may be just straws in the wind but for the first time for some years there are at last signs that the nitrokeg tide could be about to turn.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It is not in my nature to gloat or make light of the misfortune of others, and I don't intend to start now. However, the recent events at the Railway, Stockport cannot be allowed to pass without a brief mention. Regular readers will recall the little local difficulty we encountered earlier this year following a decision to leave the pub out of the 2001 Good Beer Guide. The reason was simple - we didn't think the new licensee, who came to the pub with no immediate Good Beer Guide track record, had been there sufficiently long enough for us to be confident that the pub would merit an entry in the Guide. His departure, and many independent comments I have received concerning a perceived decline in the pub over recent months, would seem to have justified that decision. Those who made such a noise at the time may wish to reflect on that.

John Clarke

Normally, in our October issue, we feature the latest issue of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, and this year is no exception. Once again Roger Protz has provided an excellent compendium of pubs and breweries. We also, normally, highlight those of our advertisers that feature in the new edition....well this year some apologies are in order. Due to the administrative heart of Stockport CAMRA's Branch Committee neglecting to retain a copy of the proofs, neither editor has a complete (or indeed any!) list of the pubs included. For those of you missing a new Good Beer Guide flash we apologise. Normal service will be resumed next month. *P.B. Hutchings*

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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). 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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Fight for Consumer Choice in Pubs - Join CAMRA now - see page 23!



PUB OF THE MONTH OCTOBER 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				



The Hinds Head, Heaton Chapel, stands on the corner of Manchester Road, and Denby Lane. On the site in times gone by was the dreadful Poco-Poco club. What a massive improvement has been wrought in creating a fine pub that this month collects its well deserved third CAMRA Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the Month award.

Since taking over as tenants a couple of months after it first opened, Alan & June Preston have built up what amounts to a cracking example of everything a modern pub should be. There is an impressive food operation - so good it features in the current edition of CAMRA's Good Pub Food Guide - that exists as part of the pub, and does not dominate it. There are six real ales of the highest quality - Timothy Taylor's Landlord (the quality of which local CAMRA stalwart Jim Flynn describes as 'awesome'), London Pride, Marstons Pedigree, Thwaites and John Smiths Bitter, and a fortnightly guest beer. No wonder it features in the new (2001) and previous four CAMRA Good Beer Guides.

The pub is friendly and welcoming, there is a large car park, pleasant outside seating, the conservatory restaurant, and a one-room interior, thoughtfully divided into different levels and distinct areas. The pub even boasts an interesting and good value wine list!

In their ten years, Alan and June have successfully fought off attempts by Whitbread to turn the pub into a run-for-profit-only managed house, and unfailingly maintained the highest quality of beer, food and service - and June organises some of the most mouthwatering function buffets I have seen. Comfortable and spacious, it will be a memorable evening when the award is presented on Thursday 26th October at around 9pm. Come along. **PBH**

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

OPENING TIMES ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING RATES: 1/8 page (60mm x 85mm): £30; 1/4 page (120mm x 85mm): £50; 1/2 page (horiz: 174mm x 120mm; vert: 250mm x 85mm): £85; Full page (175mm x 240mm) £140. Surcharges apply for back page. Discounts available on adverts of 1/4 page or above for runs of insertions. Advert design & origination usually free of charge unless large costs involved. Ring 0161 477 1973 for details. Artwork should be submitted as hard copy (positive bromide) or pc compatible *.eps, *.tiff or *.cdr (Corel Draw versions 3, 5 or 7 - please state which AND you MUST include hard copy back-up).

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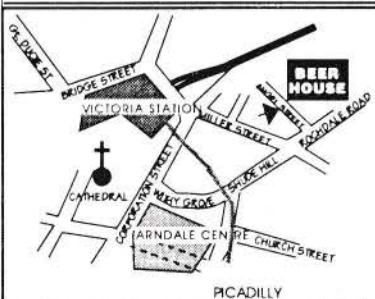
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STAGGER

with guest beer writer Mark McConachie

Good Ales In Edgeley

We began our August Stagger in the pleasant district of Edgeley - a suburb of Stockport, west of the town and comprised mostly of terraced homes within a compact grid format. The area had, until recently, a widespread distribution of cask ale in its pubs. Today, the Castle Street area has seen a number of casualties with the likes of the Bobby Peel, Pineapple and Joseph Worrall going keg and the Prince Albert being boarded up (but now open again - ed(1)). So what would we find? read on....

The 7.30 meeting point was the Grade II listed Alexandra on Northgate Road, a Robinson's house that has suffered some niggling beer quality problems in the past. Inside, you begin to appreciate why this building is listed - four, very tidy rooms (all with original doors complete with their functional names etched in to the glass) radiate from the wonderfully tiled corridor. The former billiard room is reached by a further corridor, this now houses a pool table which appeared to be enjoying some popularity amongst a younger throng. On my arrival, there were already four other staggerers in the front room; the only cask beer sold is Robinson's Best with the general consensus being that it was above average. One of our party who had been the first to be served was somewhat less enthusiastic about the ale, but heyho... Taking our leave we discovered another six crawlers in one of the rear rooms who for whatever reason had failed to notice us.

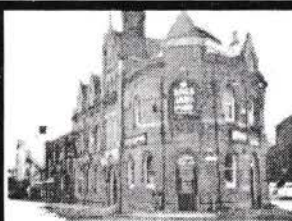
Duly assembled we made our way to Castle Street and the Royal Oak (about a half-mile walk). Styled as a Wilson's house, this pub has not sold any of that brew for some years; instead, the mainstay (beer-wise) is now Holt's bitter. Very busy and boisterous when we arrived (a fellow staggerer likened it to 'a little part of Oldham Street' - I did not agree), the large number of people at the bar and then a barrel having to be changed meant a delay for some, but the Holt's we drank was universally acclaimed as being very good. The style of the Royal Oak is an L-shaped lounge that leads to a large vault done out in a rustic cream. What with the aforementioned delay, the party had become somewhat fragmented now. The mid-point meeting place time beckoned, so we headed straight to the opposite end of Castle Street and into the Grapes Hotel (Robinson's). This is a small, two roomed establishment, compact and cosy, frequented by an established clientele who shun the raucousness of other nearby pubs with their bright lights, loud music and other, so-called, novelties. A collection of cottage teapots adorns the bar top in an otherwise fairly plain room. That said, with nothing to distract the eye, one can enjoy the relaxed surroundings and concentrate on sipping the very good Robinson's Hatters and Best on offer, the latter of the two just edged the scoring in our opinion. Having made our timing point, we made our way back the short distance to the former Vaux house the Jolly Crofter (also on Castle Street). The single cask beer offering here is Boddingtons bitter (with the Vaux brewery now history, gone is the distinctive taste of Vaux Samson). The pub seemed to be quiet for the time of day. Next, it was on to a winner of Robinson's much-coveted Annual Cellar Award scheme, the Church Inn. This sells Hatters and Best, this time unlike at the Grapes, the Hatters was deemed the favoured drink of the party; overall though, the scores were somewhat lower for both beers than those at the Grapes. A corner house this, probably built at the turn of last century. Internally, the paintwork is a pleasant and most calming pale blue, the room layout remains to some extent in that walls are penetrated by large arches to give a more open effect. Going to the back of the pub leads one to a walled yard set out with much garden furniture; a tarpaulin is even available to cover this yard when the season demands it. We were certainly enjoying ourselves as the topic of conversation changed to Liam Gallagher's hairy arse the moment an Oasis track came over the loudspeakers - what can you say?

Across the road from the Church is Greenall's Greyhound. This appears to be fairly modern (50's at a guess) with a small vault in a single storey extension at the front served by a counter-cum-bar, and the largish L-shaped lounge in the main body of the building. Neatly done out with separate tables and chairs in the part fronting the bar, whilst the rear section has more fixed seating. The surprise addition for me was to see a bar billiards table in the rear by the back door - I hope it gets good use and does not get in the way of the back door, too. It is good to see bar billiards in Stockport as I can think of precious few other pubs in the borough that have them. The beers on offer were Boddies bitter, Pedigree and Greenalls mild, the former two were judged to be about average whilst the mild had some people in raptures about it (one of our party giving it a half-hearted maximum).

Out from the Greyhound and down a set of steps leads to Chatham Street and our final port of call the Olde Vic. Is this Stockport's first free house of the modern era (ie. the Seventies onward)? I am not sure, but I do know that it has been serving the drinking community with new and often hard-to-get beers from around the land for a good many years. The Olde Vic is a compact house (only two smallish room areas with a useful beer yard to the rear) set at the bottom of a steep hill at its junction with King Street; it can often give the appearance that it is boarded up... Not so, these are former windows that have been bricked in to give more useable space within. The small bar accommodated a fair number of beers - Greene King IPA, Theakston Cool Cask, Beartown Kodiak Gold, Salopian Amber Jack and Rebellion Smuggler. To add to this choice was Westons Old Rosie traditional cider, surely something for everyone's taste? And so it proved, with almost universal approval for the beers sampled, certainly from the people drinking the Kodiak or the Amber Jack. One of our party was over the moon with the Westons too, so the Vic certainly took the crown for beer and pub of the night in what was a most varied crawl.

CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 198:

John Clarke, Paul Hutchings, Phil Levison, Peter Edwardson, Mark McConnachie, Paul Moss, Tim Jones, Steve Bray, John Hutchinson, John Tune, Terry Kitching, Stuart Revell, Paul Stanyer, Pete Soane.



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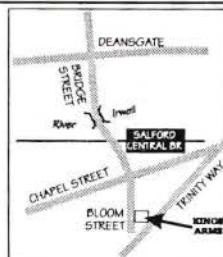
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O PENING TIMES

LETTERS

From Tim Kniveton, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland:

I feel that I have to reply to John Clarke's Editorial in the August edition of *Opening Times*. As a regular visitor to Stockport and Marple I have always been impressed by the quality of the Stockport pubs and, something rarely seen in the Teeside area, a good cross section of ages on a Friday and Saturday evening rather than feeling like an alien if you dare to venture into a pub at that time when in your mid-fifties. Hence I concur with your Editorial that anything which is likely to damage this, such as the opening of a Wetherspoon's, is to be regretted. A Teeside Wetherspoon's which I do visit on occasion has, to my mind, deteriorated badly owing to the large numbers of rowdy older people, mainly unemployed (no offence to the unemployed as I am forced-early-retired) who come in for the cheap Newcastle Brown Ale. Their behaviour becomes more offensive as the afternoon progresses and little is done about it. A Wetherspoon's pub is the only pub in which I have ever been threatened with violence, when I complained about the behaviour to the bar staff by one such person. There is the only pub where staff are liable to walk away from you if they see you approaching the bar and the behaviour of some of the (very) young female staff is rude in the extreme. Also to have the room cleared of chairs and stools from around you to prepare for the Friday night rush is unnerving to say the least. Despite this, a Teeside Wetherspoon's received a Pub of the Season award, albeit voted upon by a very small number of members, although, in fairness, the quality of the beer is usually adequate. My copy of *Opening Times* is avidly read by real ale drinkers on Teeside and is an excellent directory of pubs in your area.

Letters to *Opening Times* are welcome by post to:
The Editor, *Opening Times*, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport.
SK3 9HD or via the internet to johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com

From 'Concerned Drinker' via e-mail:

Can anyone tell me what is going on at the Manchester High Street Hogshead? I ask because I have been served an undrinkable pint on all three of my latest visits. For years we have put up with absurd London-level prices in this pub, and suffered as the beer range gradually became more pedestrian (though through no fault of the local management), but in exchange for this, we expected, and almost always received beer of very high quality. The first pint I tried, in early September (London Pride) was as clear as mud, but was immediately replaced, to be fair, before I could even get a word out, with a slightly below average pint of one of the Batemans seasonals. The second was another fairly consistent regional beer but was like vinegar, and was served by a very young barmaid (on her own, serving a busy pub) who knew zero about beer, was unable to replace it, and there was no manager/assistant available. The last was a pint of Landlord when I was in company of the Beer Monster. Warm - very warm. Very Cloudy. Vinegar. Again one staff member, no management, and no refund. Very, very poor.

'GREEN BEER' FLOODGATES SET TO OPEN

Brewers have been slow to respond to the demand for organic food and drink - but they will lose out to French and German imports unless they change their ways, Roger Protz says in a special "Green Beer Report" in the *Good Beer Guide 2001*, published last month.

GBG editor Protz says that with supermarket chain Waitrose estimating that within a few years 10 per cent of its beer brands will be organic ones, British brewers must throw off conservative habits and hurry to meet the demand.

One problem has been the scarcity of organic raw ingredients, but that problem is changing rapidly, Protz reports. "Such leading maltsters as Crisps, Muntons, Simpsons and Warminster are supplying organic grain. The news on the hop front is dramatic. Horticultural Research International at Wye College in Kent, which researches hop disease and pest attack, and develops new hop varieties that are resistant to these problems, is working on a new hop variety that needs no chemical sprays. If it wins recognition as an organic hop it will give brewers a new home-grown source."

At present most organic hops are imported from New Zealand, while organic malt has come from France and Germany. The cost of importing raw material is a major deterrent to smaller brewers who want to go organic. But with organic malt now readily available and organic hops likely to come on stream within two years, prices of raw material should fall.

At present, the only regular grower of organic hops in England is Peter Hall at Marden in Kent, whose annual crop of Target hops is snatched up by the Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh, whose Golden Promise is the best-known and most successful organic beer brewed in Britain, available in cask-conditioned as well as bottled form.

Golden Promise is a Scottish malting barley but Caledonian now uses a variety called Chariot as the cost of organic Golden Promise proved prohibitive. Caledonian is now working with a whisky distiller and a farmers' co-operative to grow a regular crop of the barley at an affordable price. In spite of the problems facing brewers, several have now gone the extra mile to produce organic beers, Roger Protz reports.

The small Pitfield Brewery in Hoxton, North London, has converted all its beers to organic materials, as has the Marble Brewery based on Rochdale Road, Manchester. "In Cornwall, the new Organic Brewery on the Lizard Peninsula wears its heart on its sleeve," says Protz, "by producing just one cask ale, Lizard Point. It plans to add to the range as more organic material becomes available."

Cask-conditioned organic beers available include:

- ★ Bateman's (Wainfleet, Lincs) Yella Belly (November-December)
- ★ Brakspear (Henley-on-Thames) Ted and Ben (March-April)
- ★ Caledonian (Edinburgh) Golden Promise
- ★ Fuller's (Chiswick, London) Honey Dew (Spring)
- ★ Marble (Manchester), N/4 Bitter, Marble Bitter, Amber Kitchen Ale, IPA
- ★ Organic Brewery (Cornwall) Lizard Point
- ★ Pitfield (London) Bitter; East Kent Goldings; Eco Warrior; Hoxton Heavy; Black Eagle; Shoreditch 1850 Porter
- ★ St Peter's (Suffolk) Organic Ale



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When: Monday, 30 October, from 8.30 p.m.

Where: Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport

Calling all Opening Times readers! As you may know, Opening Times is published by the Stockport and South Manchester branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. But what is CAMRA all about, how do we, the Campaign's local representatives, fit into the picture, and what's the point of being a member?

Briefly, CAMRA has campaigned for many years, at a national and local level, for quality and choice for the British pubgoer. Locally, our campaigning activities are combined with a lively diary of social events. If you'd like to find out more about Camra, we'd like to offer you the opportunity to meet us, and ask us any questions you may have, at an informal "Meet the Branch" evening on Monday 30 October, at the Crown on Heaton Lane in Stockport. Please do come along to find out what we're all about over a pint or two. This is your chance to discover why good beer and good pubs are under threat, and how CAMRA can help.

Best Ever Time To Join

If you're considering joining CAMRA then this is your chance! Come along to the Crown to find out some more about us and if you do decide to join on the night, we're offering £2 off full membership - that's a bargain £12 for your first year. And there's even better news if you're under 26 or a full-time student - concessionary membership is just £8. Not only that but as a CAMRA member you'll be able to buy the new 2001 Good Beer Guide on the night for just £7 - that's £4.99 off the cover price! And if that wasn't enough, we'll treat everyone who joins up on the night to a free pint.

Calling all Camra Members

We'd also be delighted to see any local Camra members we've not already met. Whether you've joined recently, or are a long-standing member who'd like to know more about what we do, please do take this opportunity to meet other branch members.

ALL ARE VERY WELCOME - WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU



He Olde Cock Inn,

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A wide range of guest beers changing weekly

Chef's Homemade specials from £3.95

Food Served: Mon - Thurs 12 - 2.30pm

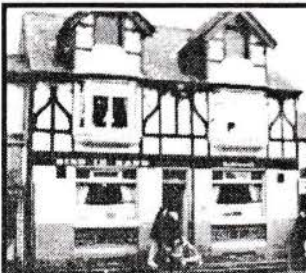
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Dentegems Wit
at £2.40 per pint
Draught Hoegaarden
at £2.40/pint,
also on draught -

Belle Vue Kreik, Leffe Blond,
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Handpumped **British Ales**
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OCTOBER 19 - 22**



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Robbies Latest

Robinson's new seasonal beer, Cooper's Bell is now in the pubs and an emerging consensus is that it even better than the well-received Whistling Will. The 4 per cent ABV beer is described by the brewery as a "fully bitter Autumn Ale" with "a distinctly malty character complimented by a pleasant hop aroma derived from the addition of choicest hops late in the brewing process". It's certainly a good full-bodied beer, but at the same time easy-drinking with a good malt-hop balance and a refreshing dry finish. Excellent.



The name has no connection with the old Bell's brewery, bought by Robinson's just over 50 years ago, but is rather a tribute to George Cooper, Stockport's bell-man, whose fuzzy photograph appears on the pump clip.

This Stockport man, when he was younger, led an interesting and eventful life. In the 1840's he played a leading part in the campaign against the "loom tax", and was active in the "ten per cent" campaign which culminated in an 1853 strike of operatives. He popularised the movement in rhyme and ballads, and was prepared to enter into public debate on behalf of the strikers. He later lived in Canada and the USA, enlisting in the Philadelphia Merchant Troop of Cavalry on the outbreak of the American Civil War. In 1865 he returned to Stockport, and at first helped his brother with his work of bellringing and billposting, then became landlord of the Wheatsheaf Hotel, but gave it up in 1882. He died in 1895.

Many thanks are also due to Robinson's for hosting an evening for this year's Mild Challenge Winners at the end of August. The ten lucky winners drawn out at Stockport Beer Festival, along with friends and partners, were entertained to a very informative and entertaining tour of the brewery by Head Brewer Chris Hellin, and afterwards were able to enjoy Robinson's beers and a buffet in the Unicorn Room at the brewery. Also much appreciated were the 'goodie bags' given to everyone at the end of the evening. Our



picture shows the happy crowd flanking Chris Hellin. Many thanks to Chris and Lea Carr for their efforts on the night.

Minister Refers Bid

Interbrew's takeover of Bass Brewers is to be referred to the UK competition authorities. In a move welcomed by CAMRA, Trade Secretary Stephen Byers, having wrested control of the takeover from Europe, has now referred it to the Competition Commission. He has however allowed the purchase of the Whitbread breweries to go through. The merger has huge implications not just for Bass's real ale brands but also for those of the regional and microbrewers, who could get squeezed if Interbrew starts to use its distribution muscle. The commission is to report back to Mr Byers by 6 December, and an announcement about the fate of Bass is expected before the end of the year.

Micro News

We hear that Porter Brewing Company is negotiating to produce house beers for two City Centre Scottish & Newcastle pubs, the Old Garratt and the Salisbury. One beer is to be a tweaked version of Porter's Bitter, the other a version of Rossendale Ale. Apparently the pump clips will not reveal the point of origin of these beers, thus preserving the brewery's reputation for quality in the event that they are served in less than tip-top condition.





The latest from Pictish Brewery is Green Man, a 4.8 per cent Autumn ale. Amber malt has been used in the brew, giving a good roasty taste. Brewer Richard Sutton is also producing a new beer exclusively for the Crown Inn, Bacup. It's a 3.5 per cent beer, described as being of medium colour, quite heavily bittered and reasonably hoppy. The pub's licensee hasn't yet decided on the name but we are assured it will be available nowhere else. Those wishing to make the trek to try the beer should note that public transport links to the pub are not very good and that it only opens in the evening.

Cheshire's new Paradise Brewery, sited next to Wrenbury Station, is planning what may be a unique event - a Christmas Beer Festival held in the holiday period from 28 to 30 December. The festival will be open all day, with free admission, and apart from a range of Paradise beers, now brewed on site, will feature other British beers and ciders. The Crewe and Shrewsbury Passenger Association are also planning to 'do a Bhurtpore' and have arranged for a train, the 11.33 from Piccadilly, to make a special stop at Wrenbury on the Saturday, with a return service from Wrenbury at 17.05. More next month.



Phoenix Brewery have a whole raft of new beers to tempt the taste buds this month. These include Daddy Longlegs (4.5% - light, honey coloured with multi-dimensional hop flavour); Last Leaf (4.5%); Spinning Jenny (4.3%); Pale Moonlight (4.2% - well balanced, straw coloured, dry hoppy finish and full malt flavour); Uncle Fester (4.5%) and Spooky Brew (4.7% - light brown with fresh hop characteristics throughout). Also being produced is Heritage, a 4.2 per cent beer brewed exclusively for and available at, the Irish Heritage Centre, Cheetham Hill. If the beer proves a success, it may be made available to other Irish clubs.



Not satisfied with the struggle to go Organic, Marble Brewery brewer Mark Dade has decided his products should now be vegan/vegetarian as well, so isinglass finings are out, and, presumably, seaweed is in! The new move means that there has been no marle beer on sale for a week or so, but I am assured the new varieties are to appear on or around the 5th October. I have been advised that the Organic IPA has been brought up to the quality of the other brews so I look forward to trying it, though crystal clarity cannot be expected.



Holts Corner

Since the introduction of Holt's smooth-type mild several months ago, there has been some concern with reference to bar staff dealing with a request for a 'pint of mild, please'. There have been many instances of the bar person rushing off to the smooth dispenser, rather than asking whether traditional or smooth is preferred. Over the last six months or more, Stewart Revell, CAMRA's Liaison Officer with Holt's, has brought these incidents to the attention of the powers that be at the brewery. The company policy has always been to provide the purchaser with the mild of choice. There shouldn't be any Holt's pubs where only smooth is dispensed and the traditional mild handpump unused. After all, it comes out of the same barrel; the smooth takes on extra gas on its way to the bar. Several individuals have been driven to telephone the brewery to complain, which is not the way Holt's like to deal with customer complaints. The most effective way is by (polite) letter, outlining the circumstances - pub name, time of day and what happened. Letters to the brewery should be marked 'For the attention of the Area Manager of..... (pub)'. All area managers have been asked to convey the message about offering a choice of milds to their outlets, so there should be no misunderstanding. By the way, around this time of year Holt's put up their prices, so expect to pay a few pence more for mild and bitter soon.



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Greene King IPA 3.6% abv



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N/4 ABV WORLDS TOUR
19 - 22 October, Manchester N4



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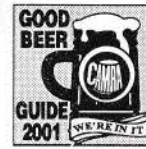
green man abv 4.8%

A complex chestnut coloured ale. Intense smoky aromas prelude rich biscuity flavours which lead to a well balanced finish with coffee notes.

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EUROPEAN WEEK

WEDNESDAY 4 - SUNDAY 8

DRAUGHT (MAINLAND) EUROPEAN BEERS

OCTOBER

GERMAN BEERS

- Greif (Forcheim) Edel-Pils
- Hartmann (Würgau) Edelpils
- Hartmann Felsen trunk Festbier (slightly smoked)
- Mahrs (Bamberg) Ungespundetes Lagerbier*
- St. Georgen (Buttenheim) Anafestbier
- St. Georgen (Buttenheim) Kellerbier *
- Schlenkerla (Bamberg) Rauchbier (smoked)
- Weissbrau (Köln) 'Oktoberfestbier'* (Wheat)

BELGIAN BEERS

- De Koninck Antoon 6.0% abv
- Grimbergen Bruin 6.5% abv
- Liefmans Kriek 6.0% abv
- Straffe Hendrick 5.0% abv
- Timmermans Peche 4.5% abv

CZECH REPUBLIC BEER

- Pilsner Urquell 44%-48%

...PLUS — A Selection of Bottled German & Belgian Beers including several München Oktoberfest Biers

BRITISH ALES, CIDERS & PERRIES

- Ash Vine Hound Dog 4.3% abv
- " " Penalty Point 5.0% abv
- " " Pumpkin Porter 5.5% abv
- Crouch Vale Brewers Gold 4.0% abv
- " " Anniversary Ale 4.1% abv
- Green Type IPA 3.9% abv
- " " Conkerer 4.7% abv
- Harviestoun Hijack 3.8% abv
- Nethergate Scutchers Ale 4.3% abv
- Outlaw Snapper 4.3% abv
- Pictish Green Man 4.8% abv

- Rebellion Draculas Draft 5.0% abv
- Roosters 5 Horseshoes 5.0% abv
- Tring Reap the Rye 4.7% abv
- Wye Valley Ploughmans 5.5% abv
- York Wet & Wild ?% abv

...and possibly more

CIDERS & PERRIES

- Hecks Bramley Cider
- Veryman Cornish Medium Dry
- Franklins Perry
- Hartlands Perry

GERMAN SCHINKEN HAGEN SCHNAPPS + JAGERMEISTER, DUTCH FRUIT JENEVERS EUROPEAN FESTIVAL FOOD AVAILABLE ALL DAY

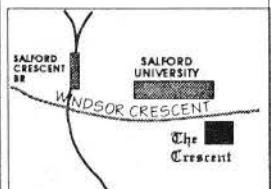
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**SPECIAL OFFER SATURDAYS 11.30 - 2.30
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Putting Beer First

People sometimes complain to me that CAMRA's Good Beer Guide includes many pubs that are at best unappealing and at worst downright awful, and excludes others that in many ways are very good. It's certainly true that it contains a few pubs that probably every reader would not want to visit, but they will be different pubs for different people. Indeed, in reality that is its great strength, that it is the only guide to cover the full spectrum of pubs from the basic inner-city boozery to the family-friendly country inn, from the style-conscious café bar to the saloon bar full of retired military men, united only by the common factor of serving good beer. The Good Beer Guide is the one pub guide that unequivocally puts beer first - which of course was the reason for pubs existing in the first place. Without beer, there would be no pubs, and any pub forgetting that is not worthy of the name. If you read the descriptions carefully you'll get a good idea of what to expect and can choose the kind of establishment that suits you. And, if you do make the effort to visit a few that don't sound like your idea of a good pub, you may be pleasantly surprised and end up broadening your mind.

Pubs may be excluded for good reasons that are not obvious to the casual punter, such as a recent change of licensee, and equally there are plenty of pubs that have a lot going for them, but fall short in terms of beer quality compared to others nearby that may superficially be less appealing.

If what you want is a guide to comfortable pubs that serve well-presented food and have old beams and roses round the door, then the annual "Good Pub Guide" fits the bill admirably - but it doesn't include many pubs in the Holt's estate, and it will lead you to a lot of lacklustre, overpriced pints. The AA have gone one further and produced a guide to the "Best Country Pubs", which begs the question of why there is no companion volume for towns, and is something of a contradiction in terms, as a pub guide produced by a motoring organisation is by definition hardly going to give the drinker top priority.

Dump the Pubs

Fond as I am of beer, I couldn't really claim it as a necessity of life. The same, however, is not true of road fuel, which last month's protest clearly underlined is, for most of us, most of the time, absolutely essential. So it seems a touch inconsistent that the duty levied on the "luxury" item is about 30% of the base price, while the necessity is taxed at a staggering 300%. Alcoholic drinks, of course, can be fairly easily imported from abroad, legally or illegally, and can also be manufactured at home, neither of which is true of fuel. But the reality is that governments of all colours decide policy on indirect taxation not on the basis of logic, but on what they can get away with, that is until someone pulls them up in their tracks. Nobody is blockading breweries as a protest against alcohol taxation, but, in practice, we are "dumping the pubs" much more effectively than we "dumped the pumps". Every white van that crosses the Channel laden with beer bought in France at less than half the British price represents a few hundred pub visits foregone. So it's hardly surprising that local pubs are closing all over the country, and pubgoing is increasingly becoming a once-a-week special event rather than part of daily life.

Hopefully last month's events will have the result of laying bare once and for all the concept of stealth taxes, and make it much more difficult in future for Chancellors of the Exchequer to constantly ratchet up the rates of indirect taxation, particularly on alcoholic drinks, in the belief that nobody will notice. But don't hold your breath.

Online: www.curmudgeon.co.uk

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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

OCTOBER '95

The front page carried a warning that Britain's block exemption from the Treaty of Rome - which permits brewers to tie their pubs - could be under threat. This block exemption was due for renewal in 1997, and before then the European Commission was to review the tie. But the future of the tie was in doubt due to the action of the Germans - based on a totally different beer market with 1300 producers and no national brewers, they were demanding that the British tie should go. This would have had a catastrophic effect. Regional brewers, the backbone of the real ale revival, would be wiped out. Their present survival, in a market where the Big Four nationals controlled over 80% of the beer market, was due to their ability to brew beer for their tied outlets.

Work had started on the long promised "refurbishment" of the Oxnoble on Liverpool Road, Castlefield. Drastic was perhaps an appropriate adjective - the roof and top storey had been removed, and the remainder of the building appeared to have been reduced to a shell. (Of course, it's been refurbished again this year and is no longer named after a large potato but is now just the 'Ox')

Under the heading "Strange but...true?" was the story of how the Chinese had developed such a taste for beer that their breweries were scouring the world for barley malt to meet the ever-growing demand. Australia normally supplied the Chinese, but droughts down under had caused a shortage - and the inevitable outcome was a huge rise in the cost of the material. So perhaps the Chinese being blamed for a rise in the price of a pint was not so far fetched as it seemed.

No Pub Vandalism Awards were made in 1994, but in 1995 the judges were, sadly, almost spoilt for choice. The Magic Pub Co won the Plastic Leprechaun, for jumping on the Irish pub bandwagon with the silliest names. On the A6, the Midway had become Bidy Mulligans, and this was followed by the Crown, which had become O'Reilly's Tavern. In the City Centre, Sefton's Bar was Paddy's Rat & Carrot, whilst the Rising Sun was Paddy's Wig.

There were another two worthy winners in the award stakes. The Co-op won an "Off Your Shopping Trolley" for undermining the efforts to save the Sportsman's on Market Street, by surrendering the lease to Tesco. The Swinging Sporan had been fighting to stay open, but was up against the combined forces of the building's owners (UMIST), and Scottish & Newcastle, who leased it from them. The boarded up Sporan was a sorry sight - perhaps both UMIST and S&N qualified for a share in the "Writ and Bailiff Memorial Shield". (In 2000 it remains open as a bar, but sadly as the keg-only 'Retro')

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Always in
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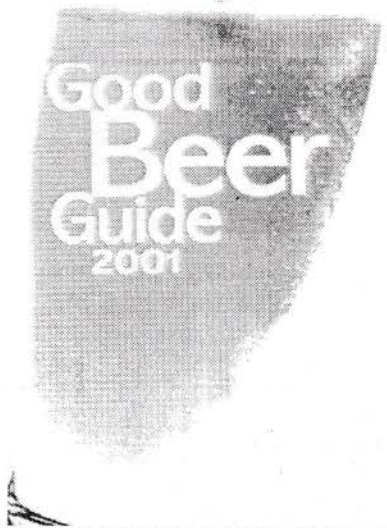
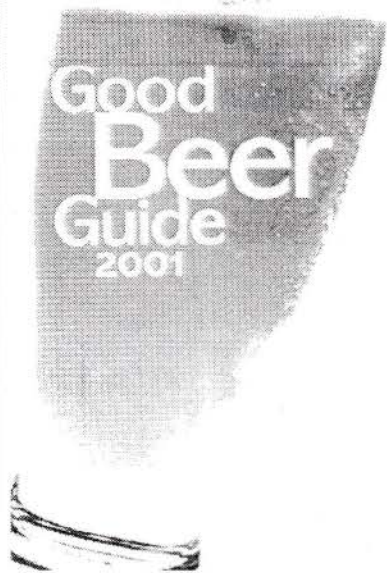
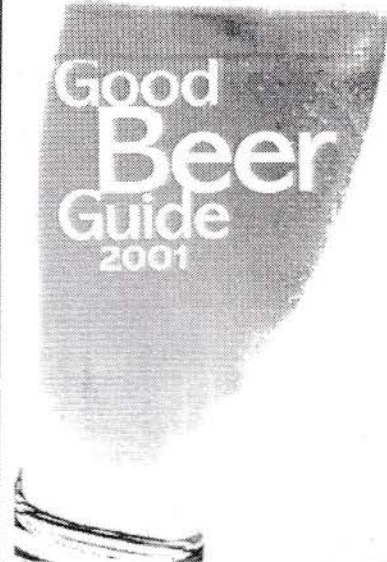
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**GO
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A Beer O

The 28th Good Beer Guide is launched by the Campaign for Real Ale, at the Dome on 18 September. This long-standing CAMRA beer expert Roger Protz's 28th edition promises to be the best ever and in beer-reading the publishing event of the year. It's one of the biggest editions of the UK's leading pub guide with over one million copies since its first publication. While the Guide remains a reference, detailing all the pubs and their beers, it is the heart of the Guide. The members of the Campaign for Real Ale areas: there are no omissions and a pub has to be included in the Guide. East of London, fully mapped and illustrated, from accommodation to family rooms, no-smoking areas, this is a book for everyone. There's plenty to read.

- ★ A Beer Drinkers' Manifesto: demands on government to protect cask ale from takeovers
 - ★ Lynne Pearce berates the government for women in beer advertising
 - ★ Roger Protz presents his report on organic beer
 - ★ Jeff Evans on the best of the featured beers
 - ★ Ted Bruning on the best of the pubs - six of which close
 - ★ Cask Marque, the Campaign for Real Ale's fight for the perfect beer
- With tasting notes and a map, find your favourite pint, the book no beer lover's book and is ideal for holidays in the country or nights on the town.
- Order your copy now by cheque for £11.99 (free), made payable to the Campaign for Real Ale, South Manchester Branch, Jim Flynn, 66 Downhills Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire SK8 6LH.

**OD
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01**
Odyssey...

Beer Guide was CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, at the Millennium member. Edited by Peter Stalwart and Peter Protz, the 2001 Beer Guide was one of the best drinking circles is...

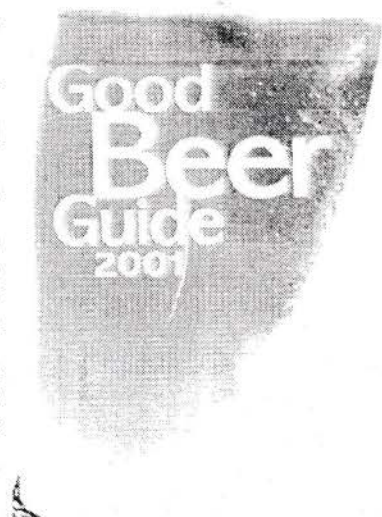
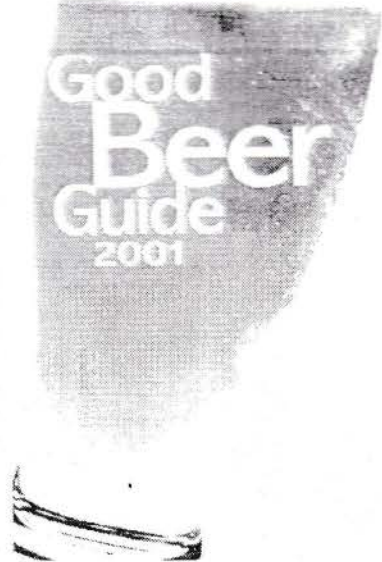
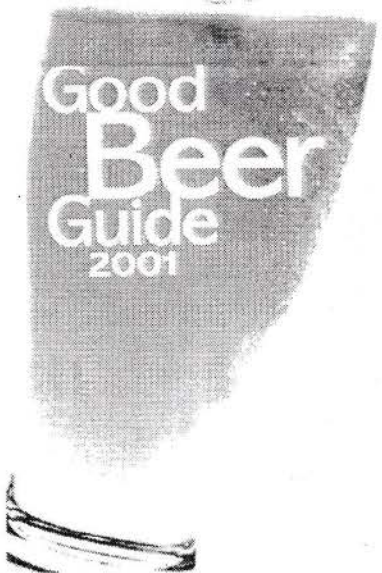
...of the year. Editions of CAMRA's March has now sold over 1 million since it first appeared in 1974. It is an essential work of the country's brewers and 1000 pubs that remain the best are chosen by local people who know their local area - year inspectors in the good all year round to be arranged, county by county with all facilities high quality and meals to families and wheelchair accessibility pub lover. too, including:

...ifesto outlining a series of interviews with brewers to save independent and mergers. It gives brewers for ignoring the good. It gives a special Green Beer...

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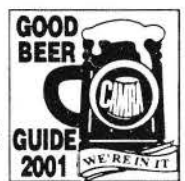
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OCTOBER 19 - 22

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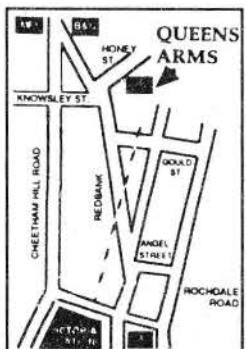
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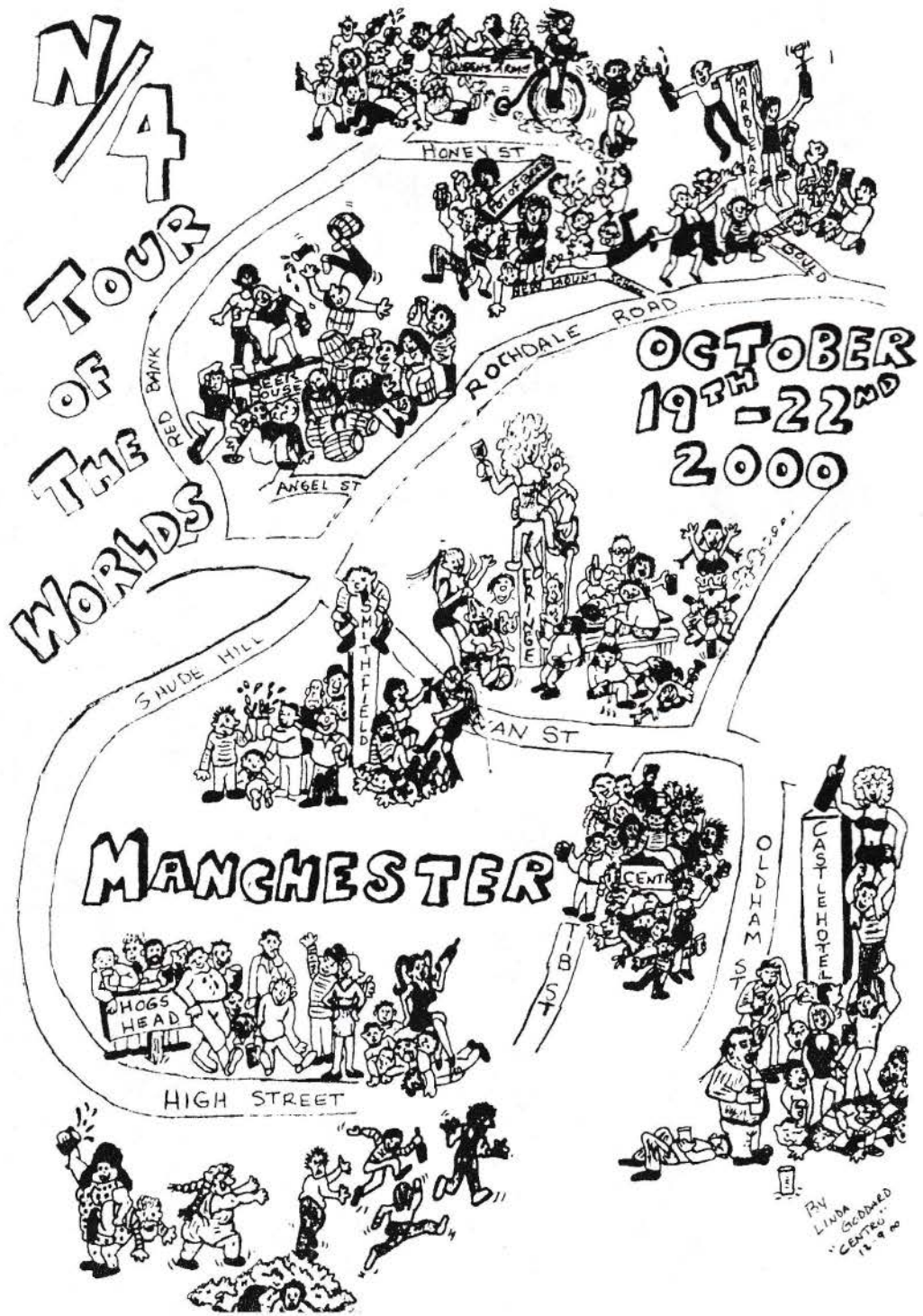
N/4 ABV WORLDS TOUR THURSDAY 19 - SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER 2000



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 ★ Special Prices on BELGIAN BEERS * SPECIAL FOODS ☆

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 ☆ MOULES PROVENCAL * OLD TOM CAKE * AMERICAN BEERS & FOOD *
 SEVERAL CASK ALE FESTIVALS * ORGANIC BEERS

CASTLE HOTEL QUEENS ARMS POT OF BEER



Oktober(fest) kommt

With the Munich Oktoberfest over (actually on the 1st), what are we to look forward to - well in fact a mega-month of excellent, draught, German Beer!

Opening up at the Crescent's European Week (4-8 Oct) no less than 8 draught German Beers will be available, including a 5.5%(ish) one-off special from Koln's Weissbrauerei, and Hartmann Felsenbrun (one of the two 'stone' beers brewed in Bavaria - and only made once a year). The others are all good too! SandBar on Grosvenor Street is celebrating its German Beers (including some guests from Munich's shindig) starting at 7.30 on Thursday 12th October. Then, during the forthcoming N/4 ABV Worlds Tour (Thursday 19 - Sunday 22 - free minibus between venues on Saturday) all six Oktoberfest beers (in both bottled and draught form) should make their appearance at the BeerHouse, together with another seven or eight draught Germans - including Wheat Beers and dark doppelbocks. This should whet the appetite for the 24 or so threatened at the National Winter Ales Festival.

Megatons of Real Ale

Which brings us to the domestic cask stuff. Idy & Sal at the Crescent have 16+ (4-8th October) to co-incide with their European Jamboree. The N/4 ABV tour will see festival beers at Queens, Honey St; Pot of Beer; Smithfield Hotel; Hogshead (High Street), and the Marble Arch. Belgian offerings at Bar Fringe and USA and British ales at Centro. Classic Old Tom Cake (yummy) and Robinsons promotions at the Castle, Oldham Street. The Beer House has a Church End mini festival with 20 of their beers on offer. At the end of the month 25-29, the Stalybridge Buffet bar is hosting a 'Durham Week', but the real megatons of ale (well, nearly) are to be had in Bolton at the Bolton Beer Festival, held at the excellent Howcroft Inn (Pool St, off St Georges Rd) in what seems almost like a tented village laid across the bowling Green. As usual, there will be over 200 real ales on offer, many rare and special, many popular favourites. Always worth attending it is held from the 11th to the 15th (note that there is no lunchtime session during the weekdays), and it is a must on any festival-goers calendar.

Keeping Booze(rs) Off the Streets

In August, the City Council obtained powers for local police to prohibit drinking on the streets of the city centre, through confiscation and fines. Pubs were threatened with retaliation and closure, the spectre of £500 fines for individuals was raised. During September, the rules would start to be enforced. Oh yeah? Tell it to the drunks (many manifestly under-age) roaming up Oldham Street in the daytime or the supporters standing outside pubs on match-days, complete with glasses, bottles and alcohol. I will monitor developments with baited breath.

Cask Ale of the Month

Robinsons Coopers Bell (4.0% abv)

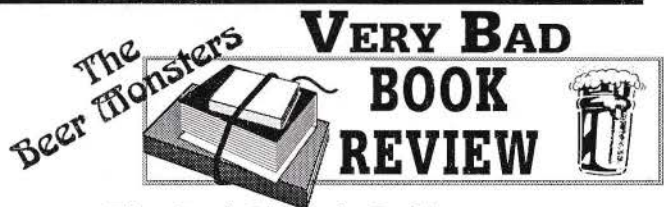
Its certainly a nice beer. Dry and moreish. Very popular in the manor, squire, as they used to say. I have come to the conclusion though that there is some tiny element missing from the taste. The thing is though, I have drunk gallons of the stuff trying to work out what it is, and at time of writing am no wiser. If I have it before the next issue I will impart it, otherwise it is the doom of men that they forget...especially after a gallon of it.

Foreign Beers of the Month

Augustiner Oktoberfestbier Paulaner Oktoberfestbier

Well, it had to be really, didn't it! Certainly they are the pick of this year's bunch, though the more traditional Hacker-Pschorr Marzen has its adherents. The Paulaner is as good as it was two years ago, which was exceptional, with perhaps even more fullness in the pale rich body. And dry. Bone, desert, dry. Truly wonderful.

The Augustiner is simply the best balanced beer I have drunk for several years. This IS pure silk in a glass. Strong, malty, an in-your-face with no compromise, classic beer. Wonderful. Whilst the Augustiner is without doubt the pick of the bunch, my dry palate craves the Paulaner even more. These and the other four Oktoberfest beers can be caught on draught in the Beer House (Angel St, Mcr) during the N/4 ABV Worlds Tour 19 - 22 October, and the Sandbar (Grosvenor St, Mcr) will have some Oktoberfest beers (to be confirmed at press time) from the 12th. Bottles will appear here & there.



The Real Ale Pub Guide 2000
by Graham Titcombe & Nicholas Andrews,
Foulsham Press, 351 pp £9.99

**HEALTH WARNING: DO NOT CONFUSE THIS BOOK
WITH CAMRA'S GOOD BEER GUIDE 2001.**

If the road to Hell is truly paved with good intentions, these lads are on the way there. Back in the mists of time, CAMRA produced a disaster - the Good Beer Guide 1999. Fortunately, Roger Protz took over the editorship, and his experienced hands have produced two memorable (for the right reasons) editions of the Beer Drinkers bible for 2000 and 2001. But just as horrid mistakes often come back to haunt you, so they have here. In the 1999 GBG, Stockport was omitted, and its pubs 'relocated' to Standish - among 300+ other errors. Well, the Crown, Heaton Lane (Stockport) is STILL in Standish, according to this Guide (and they have the effrontery to tell you that this is a 'readers recommendation'). Oh purleeze. If you're ripping off someone else's book, at least choose an accurate one. And what of the rest of Stockport? The Hinds Head gets a 'you recommended' line - but otherwise ZILCH. Mash & Air (now closed, but NEVER selling Real Ale) is listed as a mention and the whole of central Manchester merits four full entries only. It is a (very out of date) listing of brew-pubs with a few other things thrown in. I checked London and Oxford - just as bad and SO, SO out of date. Promotional beer mats for this effort appeared recently in the Crescent, Salford (which IS in). It is a brave, amateur and ultimately doomed attempt by two people, clearly annoyed with CAMRA, to do the job of hundreds of surveyors themselves. I do sympathise (a bit) but sorry chaps - stick to the day job. The book itself is nicely laid out (tho' too much white space), but the content is, well, not very good at all. Avoid.



THE HINDS HEAD

Your hosts Alan and June Preston welcome you to enjoy our range of excellent wines and

TRADITIONAL HAND PULLED BEERS

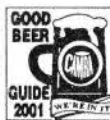
Taylor's Landlord, Marston's Pedigree, Thwaites Bitter

London Pride, John Smith's Cask & Guest Beer

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Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month Oct 2000

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STOCKPORT, TEL 0161 431 9301**



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CAMRA members Discount Sunday Evenings



**Fight for Consumer Choice in Pubs -
Join CAMRA now - see page 23!**



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**MORE CHOICE
BETTER BEER**



1998 International Brewing Awards
Wobbly Bob awarded Silver Medal



This month's Desert Island choice comes from Terry Kitching, a refugee from Swindon and a well known figure on the Stockport pub scene, often to be seen propping up the bar in the Swan With Two Necks or the Crown, Heaton Lane. Already armed with the current Good Beer Guide, the Champion Beer of Britain, Moorhouses Black Cat, and the Champion Winter Beer, Robinson's Old Tom, these are his other five choices:

"Many thanks for allowing me to choose my desert island beers, each beer is selected by one test only: If this is the only beer I have to drink when marooned in a pub miles from nowhere with one ale, do I want to actively go and ask for more after a few days of supping it? Well, all of these meet or exceed this criterion - so here goes..."

"My first beer is **Archers Golden**, from my home town of Swindon in Wiltshire. This is a light coloured premium bitter which drinks deceptively easily for its 4.7%. Archers was a real culture shock to Swindon when it first opened in an industrial unit in 1979. Three superb beers, Best, Village and Golden appeared and saved the town from the (then) sub-standard beer that was Arkells, who really improved their own brewing quality after the arrival of their new competitor.

"Next choice is the 4.3% **Yellowhammer** from the Black Isle Brewery, situated to the North of Inverness. Whilst on a recent trip to the far flung reaches of Scotland I discovered this beer in a pub called Blackfriars in Inverness along with two others from the same stable - Wagtail and Red Kite. After trying these two beers and being less than impressed (kept well but too creamy for my taste) I tried the Yellowhammer - WOW - light, hoppy, and refreshing. I continued to drink this until it all became a little blurred!

"The Yellowhammer is reminiscent of the third beer on my list, the wonderful **Whim Arbor Light**, which is simply the best and most refreshing drink on a summer's day that I have ever tasted, and at 3.6% an easier prospect to drink than Yellowhammer. I find it amazing that with this lowish ABV this beer can have so much taste. "My next choice is not so much one beer as a two beer cocktail, which I was recommended to drink whilst stranded for a week in Coatbridge, Glasgow in the early 1980s. Whilst there was (and still is) good ale available in the City centre, Coatbridge was a different matter. Broughton Greenmantle Ale, whilst nothing special at 3.9% was my friend for a few days until the locals took pity on me and told me to get a half in a pint glass and fill the rest up with Broughton Old Jock. This resulted in a taste explosion of sweet maltiness that was nicely tempered by the balance of the Greenmantle. This had to be treated with respect as I found out the next morning - possibly my worst hangover ever!

"My final choice is the wonderful **Wadworth Old Timer** at 5.8%. Forget the 6X, that's for boys! The Old Timer is a superb, dark, sweet winter ale that keeps a good malty flavour without being cloying or sticky to the palate or being swamped by the sugar. Too many though and again the hangover can be pretty impressive! The beers are in no particular order and there are lots which could be 'Mentioned in dispatches'"

THE CASTLE

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

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Coopers Bell
(4.0% abv)

WARM WELCOME AND FINE
BEERS IN A CLASSIC PUB



FOCUS ON BEARTOWN

Celebrating 5 Years of Growth

Just as a week is a long time in politics, so five years is something of a milestone on the micro-brewing scene. While new ventures still come and go with worrying regularity, the breweries which last the course are those which successfully combine commercial acumen and consistently good beers. Congleton's Beartown Brewery, which was five years old in March, is one such enterprise that has managed to achieve this happy combination.

The brewery opened on 15 March 1995 and just a week later Opening Times made the first official CAMRA visit to report on the new venture. Five years later a return visit was well overdue. The founding partners were Ian Burns and Andy Millican who ran the brewery as a part-time venture from an industrial unit on the outskirts on Congleton.

The unusual name comes from an episode in the town's history and the local bear warden whose job it was to provide bears for local fairs and fetes. One year this unfortunate official had insufficient funds to buy the bear and so raided the town's bible fund, a scandal in those days and one which earned Congleton the 'Beartown' epithet.

At the start just one beer was produced, SB (4.2%) and as Ian relates "we were lucky if we sold a couple of barrels a week". The company also struggled to find regular, local outlets.

Five years later, the picture is very different. Andy Millican has left the business and new partners have injected additional capital, which has enabled substantial expansion to take place. The real milestone was surely the opening of the company's first tied house, the Beartown Brewery Tap, in Congleton last November. This was followed by another pub, the White Bull at Crawshaw Booth in April this year. Two clubs are also run as tied outlets - the Aventus Social Club at Holmes Chapel and, somewhat bizarrely, the Sunnyvale Holiday Camp in Rhyl where Beartown have been asked to manage the bar in a new club being built on the site. Apart from this, another 40 pubs are supplied direct on a weekly basis plus many others occasionally. Ian also cites good business with both Burtonwood and Wetherspoon's, where Beartown has featured on the guest beer lists. The Tap is the company's flagship, though, and is well worth a visit. Steve and Julie King run the pub with an immaculate attention to detail and six Beartown beers are always available.

All this activity has seen production rise to 35 barrels a week, with seven regular beers being complemented by a number of seasonals and one-offs, with brewing now in the hands of Ian's son Ross. The malt is the Maris Otter variety, supplemented by a percentage of wheat malt in all the beers and, in the Polar Eclipse, malted oats, along with various roasted malts in the darker beers. Hops are Challenger and Northdown in all the beers apart from the Wheat Bear which uses Saaz hops only. The yeast is from Robinson's. The flagship beer is probably the premium Kodiak Gold, a regular at Stockport's Olde Vic and a beer that has started to win prizes. It appeared on the Champion's Bar at the Great British Beer Festival and has recently picked up a gong as Beer of the Festival at Wolverhampton.

So what does the future hold? Steady expansion seems to be the name of the game, and certainly more tied houses will be bought should the right pubs become available. The brewery may be on the move, too. This is due to the fact that, having outgrown one industrial unit, it now occupies three - numbers 4, 7 and 9. Not a satisfactory arrangement and as the occupant of number 8 has turned down the suggestion that he swaps with number 4, the need to bring all the operations under one roof means that a relocation to other premises in the town is being considered.

Having weathered its first five years, Beartown Brewery is now a class act which seems set fair for many years of success to come. Lock out for their beers in the local free trade.



Beartown Beers

Goldie Hops (3.5%)	Polar Eclipse Stout (4.8%)
Kodiak Gold (4%)	Black Bear (5%)
Bear Ass (4%)	Wheat Bear (5%)
Bearskinfull (4.2%)	



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Despite reports to the contrary, the Crown in Bollington is to continue as a pub - new tenants moved in recently. However the only real ale on sale is Boddingtons bitter, but I'm told that business has been good so far.

On the down side, the Meridian in Bollington is now closed (the previous landlord moving to a pub in Shaw) and ugly metal shutters have been erected over all of its windows and doors. The Meridian has been struggling to make money for some years now so the fact that the pub owning group have paid to erect the shutters means that the future does not look good for this listed building. When this pub was owned by Boddingtons in the eighties it was then also under threat but a spirited fight put up by local CAMRA members ensured its survival.

On a happier note - Robinson's landlords in Macclesfield continue to try the seasonal beers with a number of pubs currently selling Coopers Bell, which seems to be more popular than the sweeter Whistling Will. Let's hope that Robinson's experiment with a mild soon (*the next seasonal may well be a strong version of Hatters Mild - ed (1)*)

Roger & Rosemarie Weaver took over the Sun in Macclesfield on the 29 August. Roger has 12 years in the trade in the Wolverhampton and Stoke areas. The Burtonwood and Cains beers will be staying with one or two guests depending on demand.

Ken Thompson is retiring from the Bridgewater Arms, near the canal on Buxton Road, Macclesfield, after 18 years. He had Good Beer Guide entries a couple of times in the late Eighties.

Good news from the Dog Inn at Peover Heath where Flowers IPA has been replaced by Hydes' Bitter. This tasty brew from an independent brewer is selling very well indeed to the locals, at the bargain price of £1.35. This is in a pub which replaced the uninspiring Boddingtons with Black Cat Mild, sells Weetwood Old Dog from Tarporley, and a cask cider. The owners clearly know what they are doing - keep up the good work!

The Swan in Wilmslow had had a change of management. Out go the popular team of Ray and Sheena to run the White House and Q in Stalybridge. We know they will do well. In come Mark and Chris, who trained under their predecessors and show every sign of keeping up the Swan's reputation for a wide range of well-kept traditional beers. The pub is being refurbished to emerge as...an alehouse, on the T&J Bernard theme. We wait and see, but I am unclear why the new owners, Scottish & Newcastle, feel that any change is needed.

The Wild Boar at Wincle has now doubled its range of real ales to two. The excellent Robinson's Best bitter has been joined by Hartley's XB for as long as there is a demand, so drink it while you can. The Wild Boar is in the middle of beautiful walking countryside and serves good home made food.

The latest addition to the Congleton pub scene is the Woodlands. On the plus side, this is a real ale gain, with four handpumps on the bar. The food is already developing a good

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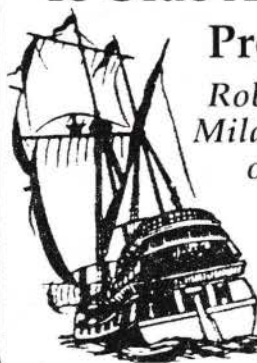
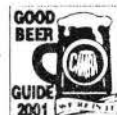
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Robinsons Hatters
Mild and Best Bitter
on handpump



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reputation, the architecture is interesting and the atmosphere very pleasant and refined. Unfortunately, the pub scores a big minus for its imagination in selecting the four real ales: Worthington, Tetley, Boddingtons and Theakston. All of these beers are brand leaders of similar strength and very similar style. This is a real shame in a pub that is looking to provide interesting food and wines. Surely there could be some space for Beartown or Titanic or even Hydes? There seems to be no reason why other beers are not being stocked, so we urge all CAMRA members to ensure that the pub knows that there is a demand for more exciting beer.



The Macclesfield & East Cheshire CAMRA Summer 'Pub of the Season' award went to the Blue Bell at Smallwood, with the award itself being presented on 18 August.

The Blue Bell is a classic former "farm pub". The landlord farmed by day, and then worked in the pub at night. Until last year it had been run for many years by the same couple, and when they retired many people feared that the pub chain that owned it (one of the successors to Greenalls) would turn it into a restaurant. It was also feared that the classic building and delightful garden would suffer in the name of "progress".

However none of these portents of doom occurred, and the new tenants, Sandra and Barrie Sheehan seem determined to run a successful country pub; one serving god ale, in which people can talk to each other in a civilised and peaceful ambience.

CAMRA paid tribute at an enjoyable evening, with Exmoor Gold, Greenalls Bitter and Draught Bass on the pumps. The pub was packed and overflowed into the delightful garden where a barbecue was held. The evening was also honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Congleton Borough, Councillor Ray Lowe.

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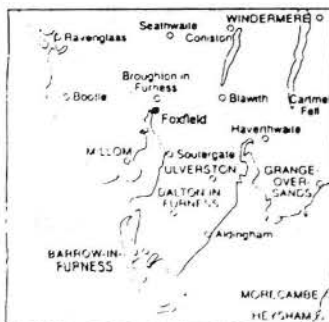
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BEER IS GOOD FOR YOU

Two independent studies have both concluded that moderate beer drinking can be beneficial to the heart, and reduce susceptibility to heart attacks.

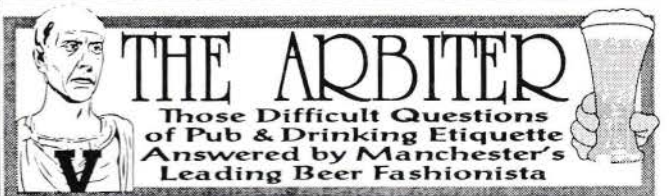
A Dutch study by the TNO Nutrition & Food Research Institute, has concluded that drinking three quarters of a pint of beer a day was found to increase the levels of Vitamin B6 in the blood by 30%. The researchers found that the vitamin prevented the build up of Homocysteine, an amino acid known to cause heart disease. They studied 11 healthy men aged between 44 and 59 for a period of 12 weeks, drinking beer, red wine, gin and water with their evening meal for three weeks each. Homocysteine levels did not rise after beer consumption in any of the "guinea pigs", but rose by 8% on average after three weeks of red wine consumption and by 9% after three weeks of gin drinking. All were less than with just water. Red wine increased the vitamin B6 level by 17% and the gin by 15%, compared with 30% for beer.

So beer is best! The researchers did point out that alcoholics have significantly raised Homocysteine levels, caused by chronic drinking and low vitamin B6 intake, so moderate drinking is the key.

A study of Czech men found that those who drank up to two pints of beer a day had the lowest risk of coronary heart disease, but heavy drinking led to a loss of the protective effect of alcohol. They found that the lowest risk of heart disease was among men who drank daily, and drank between 4 to 9 litres (8 to 16 pints) of beer a week. The conclusion of this study was that the benefits of moderate drinking are related more to ethanol, the alcohol in alcoholic drinks, than to specific ingredients, although beer drinkers seemed to have better protection than either wine or spirits drinkers. Again this is only true of moderate drinking.

It just goes to prove that a little of what you fancy really is good for you, and remember, with real cask conditioned beer there are no nasty chemical ingredients either, only good wholesome natural barley (or wheat), hops, yeast and water.

Happy heart saving! (With acknowledgements to Inn Touch, the magazine of Rotherham CAMRA)



Dear Arbitrator,

I have a friend from Yorkshire who is becoming a bit of an embarrassment. Whenever he goes out, even in company, he insists on drinking out of a dimpled mug glass, rather than the more normal straight or 'sleeve'. Not only does he even occasionally ask for a half pint in one of these glasses, he can get quite irritable if one is not provided. I am becoming quite unnerved by the stares of other pub goers. What am I to do, short of recommending therapy. Is this behaviour indicative of deeper difficulty? The Arbitrator replies: I think I can set your mind at rest about the 'deeper difficulties' you hint at obliquely. In certain parts of the country it is considered quite normal to drink from a handled glass (though not in Yorkshire). Indeed in parts of Europe it is considered quite manly to do so - though I cannot help thinking that the giant handled Litre Krugs (called 'Mass' es for obvious reasons) are popular in certain parts of Bavaria to reinforce their rather wobbly feelings about masculinity (it cannot be completely healthy to parade around in suede and leather shorts even in Winter!). Those suspicions about over-friendly adults offering children sweets in pubs, that we all harbour from our earliest pub memories, and forever associate with pipes, cardigans and handled glasses, are undoubtedly the products of repression, guilt, over-active imagination and News of the World sensationalism, nothing more. I think the answer to your problem is that your friend is a Computer Programmer, and is trying this tactic in a desperate attempt to appear interesting to members of the opposite sex. Clearly such a tactic is doomed to failure. Of course, if you had told me that your friend was Welsh, my answer would have been very different.



This month sees the end of the "Beer Mushroom Risotto" dishes and a return to one-off meals. I toyed with the idea of Polish, Mexican or Belgian beers - with suitable recipes, but in the end opted for a combination of an American recipe using a Belgian beer and a recipe of my own using a Czech beer - so here they are.

Ham with Cherry Beer Sauce - serves 4

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 3oz butter | cup of hot water) |
| 4oz finely chopped shallots | 1 x 33cl bottle of Kriek |
| 1 dozen stoned or tinned cherries | Pinch of ginger, pinch of Cayenne pepper |
| 1 tablespoon lemon juice | 4oz flour |
| 2 tablespoons brown sugar | 1 lb. cooked ham or gammon steak (or 1 per person) |
| 4oz vegetable stock | |
| 2 cubes crumbled into half a | |

Method

Gently melt butter in saucepan, add shallots and sweat until soft, then gradually stir in the flour and blend in, stirring, until it becomes a blond colour. Slowly stir in the lemon juice and stock and later the Kriek, until a smooth sauce is obtained; then add everything but the ham and adjust the sauce with a little milk or water if the consistency appears too thick. Simmer gently for 7 minutes and pour over the ham steaks.

To accompany this dish I have chosen a potato dish which can be used by vegetarians as a main course.

Pommes au gratin et Bier

(potato with cheese and beer)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ingredients Serves 4 | 1 pint milk |
| 6 large potatoes - peeled | 1 tablespoon made English mustard |
| 1 pint Czech beer (Budvar for choice) | Salt and black pepper |
| ½ lb Gouda or Edam cheese | |

Method

Slice the potatoes (about ½ inch thick) and layer in the bottom of a large casserole dish. Grate the cheese; GENTLY warm ½ the beer in a saucepan and add the cheese to the beer, stirring until melted. Remove from stove. Then add half the milk and the remaining beer to the casserole and season and bake in a pre-heated 400degrees (Gas mark 8) oven for 20 minutes - turning the potatoes after 10 minutes. Turn the oven down to 200 degrees Fahrenheit (Gas mark 4) . Return the cheese/beer saucepan to the stove and add the remaining milk and mustard - simmer for 2 minutes.

Pour the beer/cheese mix over the potatoes and cook for another 5 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve.

To wash down both dishes why not try a light wheat beer or an American ale Frankiskeller or one of Roosters low strength brews - Ringo would fit the bill. Happy Gourmanding! (sic. - Ed(2)), Ken



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CAMRA 2001 NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

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Festival Open:
(hours to be confirmed)
Thursday 18 January
5.30 - 10.30pm
Friday 19 January,
12 - 4 &
5.30 - 10.30pm
Saturday 20 January
12 - 4 &
5.30 - 10.30pm



Upper Campfield Market, Deansgate, MANCHESTER

(4 minutes from Deansgate BR & G-Mex Tram stations)

National Champion Winter Ale Competition, MASSIVE SELECTION OF BITTERS, WINTER WARMERS, OLD ALES, STOUTS & PORTERS AND OTHER REAL ALES including many BRAND NEW BEERS TRADITIONAL CIDERS & PERRIES

Unique Foreign Beer Bar featuring: Draught Winter Beers from Germany, Ireland & the USA and an extensive bottled range from Belgium, Holland and Germany



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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

OCTOBER 2000

Thursday 12th - Monthly Branch Meeting: Arden Arms, Millgate, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.

Monday 16th - Social: Red Bull, Hillgate, Stockport.

Friday 20th - Heaton's Stagger; 7.30pm George & Dragon, Manchester Rd, Heaton Chapel; 8.30 Moor Top, Heaton Moor Rd, Heaton Moor.

Saturday 21st - Informal Social at the Northern Quarter ABV Worlds Tour. From 12.30pm, Beer House, Angel St. Mcr. (N/4 minibus available between venues).

Thursday 26th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Hinds Head, Manchester Rd, Heaton Chapel. From 8.00pm.

Monday 30th - Membership Recruitment and New Members Meet the Branch Night: Crown, Heaton Lane. 8.30pm onwards.

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th November - provisional dates to present Cider and Perry of the Festival Awards (staying in Bristol).

Regional Event

Sunday 15th - Planning Meeting for National Winter Ales Festival: Crescent, Salford, starts 12.30pm. All regional members who want to help are welcome.

OCTOBER 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:

Friday 6th - Social: Hayfield Beer Festival, Royal Hotel, Hayfield. 8.00pm.

Monday 9th - Monthly Branch Meeting: White Hart, Mottram. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 14th - Social: Howcroft Arms Beer Festival, Bolton. 2.00pm.

Saturday 28th - Sponsored Walk Presentation Evening: Sportsman, Mottram Rd, Hyde. 8-8.30pm.

Monday 6th November - Committee Meeting: Newborough, Abbey St, Dukinfield. 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:

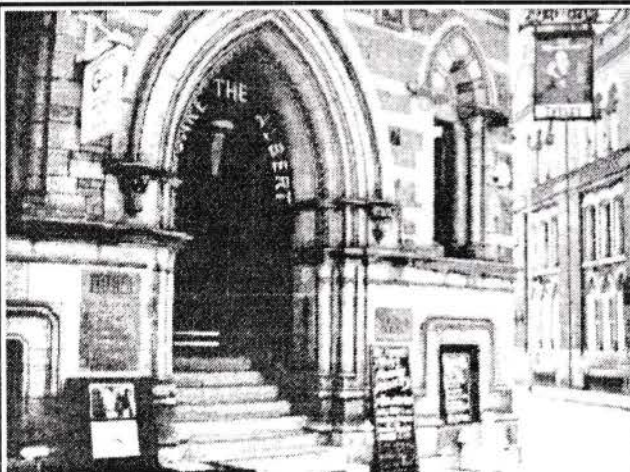
Monday 16th - Business Meeting: Hanging Gate, Higher Sutton. 8.00pm.

Monday 23rd - Branch Social: Egerton Arms, Astbury. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



Albert Square's ONLY
Cask Ale House Proudly Presents
A Choice of SEVEN Cask Beers
Tetleys, Marstons Pedigree,
Taylors Landlord
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REAL ALE in REALLY
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AT THE SQUARE
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Food Served
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Claire and Howard welcome you to
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Among Our OCTOBER BEERS:

Titanic Captain Smith;
Old Mill Halloween
Surprise; Harviestoun
Hijack; Caledonian Trick
or Treat, Deuchars IPA;
Ridleys Caddies
Quencher; Batemans Miss
Saucy, Jollys Octopussy;
Shepherd Neame Spitfire,
Cantebury Jack;
Robinsons Frederics,
Coopers Bell;
Thwaites Reward,
Chairmans Choice;
Smiles Old Russ Ale;
Goose Eye No Eye Dear;
T Wood Bomber County;
... and many more



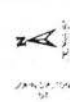
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ALBERT SQUARE

CHINATOWN

PRINCE STREET

ST PETER'S SQ

Great Food from Our Menus & Specials Board

MANCHESTER MATTERS *by Cityman*

Not Much Doing

Despite a month's gap, there's still little to report from the City Centre, although there is still a trickle of new bars opening.

The Hard Rock Café is the first of what promised to be an avalanche of new openings in the Printworks development and, much like those to come I imagine, sells no real ale. I've had a look at the revamped Hogshead and Moon Under Water on Deansgate and it's fair to say that despite some decorative changes, both continue much as before. The Hogshead has gone for a more modern image away from the bare brick and timber 'ale house' look while the Moon has basically just had a lick of paint. The service was still terrible on my visit.

This month there are also two closures to report, both on Canal Street. Mash is following Air into oblivion, although the concept may well return elsewhere in the City, minus brewery, and Whitbread's Abbaye is also closing. I can't say that this overpriced Belgian theme bar will be missed - those in the know have always preferred to take their Belgian beers in Sand Bar and Bar Fringe, not to mention the Beer House.

On the real ale front, it's some you win and some you lose. The Rat & Parrot on Old Bank Street looks to have gone keg - the handpumps remain but there are no clips - while Squizzy Taylor's on Oldham Street has taken to selling the real thing, with Theakston XB and John Smiths Bitter on handpump. To paraphrase my predecessor on this column - it might be Squizzy but it's no longer fizzy!

Close by, on Swan Street, Bar Fringe owner John Henley has handed his licence over to his partner Carmen (Charlie). The kitchenette has been improved, and there have been some changes on food and beer fronts. Hydes bitter now joins a Bank Top rotating guest as permanent beers (Centro on nearby Tib Street is now an outlet for Hydes Jekyll's Gold, and Hydes seasonal beers), and the third handpump will be used for a changing selection of micro-brewery guests.

The forthcoming ABV (alternative beer venues) Worlds Tour of nine Manchester northern quarter pubs remains a bit mysterious as we go to press. It is happening from Thursday 19 to Sunday 22 October, the Beer House is hosting a British Ale festival and a German Oktoberfest (with 12-15 draught German beers included, complete with all 6 Munich Oktoberfest beers), the Marble will be promoting its vegan, organic beers as well as some guests, Centro has American beers as well as British Guests, The Fringe is promoting Belgian produce, the Castle majoring on Old Tom and Robinsons new Seasonals...there are rumours of curries at the Queens, but Ken at the Pot of Beer and the Smithfield are keeping their counsel, and as the High Strret Hogshead will just have finished a festival we await things with anticipation.

Earlier in the month, Salford's Crescent is holding a European week (4 - 8 October) with ranges of European beers and spirits - including, I am told by my friend the Beer Monster a "staggeringly good" German Draught range, as well as a 16 beer mini British Ale Festival, and not to be outdone, the Sand Bar on Grosvenor Street in the University area has a promotion of German and Oktoberfest beers starting on Thursday 12th, of which I am sure the Beer Monster will have more details.

Out and About

There are mixed reports from the suburbs, I'm afraid. In Gorton, the excellent Traveller's Call on Hyde Road seems to be prospering under new tenants who are now aiming for a more mature, beer drinking, clientele. Smooth Hydes' Black has replaced cask mild, but the handpumped bitter was on tip-top form when I called.

Elsewhere down Hyde Road, there's less good news. The Imperial on Birch Street remains keg, the Lord Nelson has gone keg, and Tony Dunn's departure from the Nag's Head has also seen the loss the solitary real ale, Burtonwood Bitter. Tony, of course, is now at the helm of the excellent Unity in Stockport. The heaviest blow, however, is the closure of the Coach & Horses on Belle Vue Street. Under the long-term tenancy of Beryl Lavelle this pub was a byword for quality Robinson's beers and a fixture in the Good Beer Guide. Her successors seemed to have maintained that quality, certainly if my visit a couple of months ago was anything to go by but now the pub is in darkness with a 'Tenancy To Let' sign. Let's hope Robinson's find someone to take it on in the near future as the pub's permanent closure is an unthinkable prospect.

Further down, while the Plough, Vale Cottage and Waggon & Horses seem to be thriving, the Friendship is another pub which seems to be struggling. OK this is a snap judgement based on one visit, but what else can you say about a pub that had three customers at 10.15 on a Friday night?

Meanwhile in Levenshulme, both the Church and the Pack Horse have reopened. The Church is much as it was before and, perhaps surprisingly, cask ale remains. For how long, though, may be open to conjecture given that the two cask beers on sale when I called were Theakston Old Peculier and Greene King Old Speckled Hen, hardly high volume session beers. The Pack Horse, meanwhile, has had a thorough revamp and has been done out in traditional style with some impressive wood panelling; they have even replaced the missing etched windows. Sadly there's no real ale to complement this, although there is a disused handpump on the bar so perhaps cask ale may put in an appearance at a later date. The new hanging sign's quite good, though.



APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 198)

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

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £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.





The major news, of course, has to be the changes at the Railway (Portwood, Stockport). As far as we can establish, licensee Fleming Robb-Brown was sacked by brewer Dave Porter early last month. The reasons for this are unclear but we have heard one report that beer sales at the pub had allegedly taken a severe dip. The pub is currently being run by an assistant manager from another Porter pub, the Griffin in Haslingden, pending the appointment of a permanent replacement. Rumours also continue to fly concerning the pub's future and again there does seem to be a question mark over this. Again, hard and fast facts are hard to come by but as far as we can establish, some time in 1999, Porter Brewing Company came to an agreement with a developer for the sale, and ultimate demolition, of the pub at some point over the following two-year period. If this is the case then presumably the pub will be closed by the end of next year, assuming of course that the disposal actually takes place.



In Gorton we bid a slightly belated welcome to Alan and Janice Plimmer who took over at the excellent Travellers Call on Hyde Road in early August. Neither are strangers to the local pub trade, having run the Junction further down the road until 9 or 10 years ago. They have set about attracting a more mature, beer drinking trade, and certainly the pub was pleasantly busy when Opening Times called recently. The pub has been spruced up and Alan and Janice have also obtained a series of photographs detailing the former pubs on Hyde Road, which will be framed and mounted on the walls, with brief details of their history. The one cask beer is Hydies' Bitter, which was on top form when sampled.

In Edgeley, Ruth Hayes has succeeded Pete Burns at the Church. Ruth was previously barmaid there so obviously knows the pub and its customers. No major changes are planned. Staying in Edgeley, the Prince Albert on Castle Street has reopened. The public areas have been extended and opened up slightly to create a more spacious feel, while the standard of décor is very high indeed. The pub probably now looks better than it has ever done. There is just one cask ale, though - the fairly dull Websters Green Label.

Now reduced to the status of pub companies (well, almost), Whitbread and Bass are starting to offload what they perceive to be their underperforming pubs (or those that aren't suitable for whatever grisly theme is flavour of the month). In Levenshulme, Whitbread's Railway has been put on the market for £275,000 freehold. Bass, meanwhile, have confirmed the disposal of a 'substantial proportion of the smaller unbranded outlets' - thought to be anything between 300 and 1500 pubs which could sell for as much as £500 million.

The Yates's Wine Lodge Group is also hitting the disposal trail with the sale of its subsidiary Watling Street Inns. One of the seven pubs, the Samuel Finney in Wilmslow, is to be retained while the others, which include the Governor's House in Cheadle Hulme, are expected to fetch over £10 million.

Departing for pastures new are David and Theresa Bailey of the Old Monkey (Portland Street, Manchester). David is to leave the trade apparently, so Theresa will be taking on a quieter pub in the Holt's estate. We wish them both well.



We are slightly surprised and unsettled to hear that a number of pubs in the Heaton have recently been the target of armed raiders at or around closing time. Hopefully the gang/gangs will be hunted down soon by the appropriate authorities.

Last, but by no means least, we can report that the long-anticipated food operation at the Arden Arms (Millgate, Stockport) has now swung into operation. The menu looks very impressive and a full review will follow shortly.



OPENING TIMES OCTOBER COMPETITION

Sponsored by The Beer Seller

Grovelling apologies to one and all - for the second month running we missed a square out of our grid! That didn't deter many of you, though, as there was still a good response to the competition.

The beers and breweries you were looking for were: Yellowhammer; Ruthven Brew; Waitress; Schiehallion; Northern Lights; Snowbound; Destroyer; Regatta and Amadeus. The winning entry, picked out at random, came from Sally Heaven of Macclesfield. Sally wins an Old Speckled Hen T-shirt and wall clock, kindly supplied by the Beer Seller.

This month we have some more brewery related goodies, again from the Beer Seller.

The competition has once again been set by Paul Stanyer of the Swan With Two Necks and this time you are just looking for breweries, all of which appear in the 2000 Good Beer Guide. As usual complete the grid in a clockwise spiral - we have given you the first letter.

Entries to OT Competition, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9HD by 27 October please.

- (1) Turn base metal into gold at this Surrey brewery
- (2) You can't Stonewall this brewery
- (3) TEK ELK in Cornwall
- (4) It's no Easy Rider to this Yorkshire brewery (2 words).
- (5) Be a Canny Lad and repeat this brewery for the pink panther theme tune!
- (6) NOMINATE OHM N will give you Ivory Stout (4 Word Anag).
- (7) Umble Magna in Suffolk? Get it here!



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- (8) Eat currant cakes in the lobby and you may see some Top Totty
- (9) Do they all wear Belt 'n' Braces at this brewery?
- (10) Send your driving license here?