

# OPENING TIMES

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AUGUST 2002 No:220

6,700 CIRCULATED  
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**FREE**

## TWO NEW BARS OPEN AND BOTH SELL REAL ALE

Last month saw the opening of two news bars in Manchester - Kro2 and Arch. Both are stylish, cutting edge and almost certain to appeal to young, fashionable crowds. And both sell real ale.

The long awaited opening of Kro2, younger and larger sibling of the very successful Kro Bar, finally took place on Monday 29 July. Based in a ground floor conversion of the National Computing Centre, right next to the BBC on Oxford Road, Kro2 is a sensational exercise in minimalism on the grand scale and is sure to attract a large, fashionable, media crowd. While the glass extension it occupies was already in place, the interior has been designed by award-winning Manchester architects Stephenson Bell, and features many of their design hallmarks, notably the bar counter itself, with its interlocking slabs of different materials.

Finished throughout with cool marble flooring, the peripheral seating in the glass 'box' itself has an indoors/outdoors feel while the inner eating area, a former lecture theatre, is almost cathedral like, albeit one of stark simplicity. Outside is a huge drinking area, shaded by mature trees and with tables protected from the elements by large awning-like umbrellas which incorporate heaters in their supports which should help guarantee al fresco drinking and dining for large parts of the year.

While there is obviously an emphasis on food, in true Kro fashion there is also a large range of foreign beers available, both in bottle and on draught, together with a prominent bank of five handpumps dispensing a range of cask beers. The beers haven't quite got into their stride yet, but the aim is for the combination of national brands and micro guests which has worked so well in Kro Bar.

The place is already making a name for itself - just one day after opening it hosted a reception for Commonwealth Games media and for the duration of the Games it acted as an exclusive bar for Games competitors, from 8pm each night. Kro's Mark Ruby and Martin Judge are to be congratulated for combining yet another daring and stylish operation with their love for good ales. Next on the agenda is the café bar in Manchester Museum, now due to open in November.

### Arch - Party People and Real Ale

The newly opened Arch on Stretford Road (just before the Hulme Arch) has had a very long gestation period indeed. It's a conversion of the former Red Admiral pub which had lain derelict for some years and was originally the brainchild of Simon James-Gonzales of Sand Bar fame. Apparently pro-



tracted negotiations with Robinson's over the lease have meant that Simon is no longer involved but his stylish legacy remains.

The old pub is largely unrecognisable (no bad thing in itself) and now operates over two floors with a bar on each. Externally, the most striking aspect is the blue-tiled extension and the large decked balcony on the first floor, which makes for a pleasant place to drink in fine weather.

*continued on page 4...*

## FAKE SIGNS LATEST

Yes, They're Still At It

Readers will recall that last year we exposed a number of local pubs displaying signs advertising the presence of real ale when none was sold. Given the level of bad publicity the offenders gained, you would have thought that this would now be a thing of the past, but no. Some pubs are still at it. So, it's name and shame time again.

The last batch we highlighted all took down the signs and one, the Brewers in Ladybarn has now done the decent thing and put in cask beer. Since then we have now come across a further four pubs advertising real ale outside when none is sold within. Did they escape our attention last time or are they new offenders? Who knows? Here they are:


- ⊕ The Sherwood, Claremont Road, Rusholme
- ⊕ The Angel, Wellington Street, Gorton
- ⊕ The Gold Cup, Stockport Road, Longsight
- ⊕ The Beech Tree, Outwood Road, Heald Green

If any of these pubs have taken down the signs or, even better, put in real ale since our recent survey, then apologies and please let us know. We'll be doing a follow-up survey in the next few weeks and remaining offenders will be reported to trading standards.





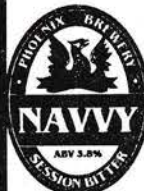



There's another and, to some, more insidious example of misleading signage around too. Many pubs display standard Boddingtons signage. This can include illuminated signs and wall plaques referring to cask conditioned beer. All too often these pubs have long since ceased to sell traditional Boddies and only offer the smooth version. Trading Standards are a bit iffy about these places. Well, we certainly aren't. If Boddingtons Bitter is sold inside, it should be what it promises outside. A photographic record is currently being compiled of the offenders - look out for our new monthly picture series "Boddie Blows".

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**IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..**

No apologies this time for highlighting the few remaining pubs in our area which continue to display misleading signs. Opening Times is occasionally taken to task for this sort of 'negative campaigning' (usually by a disgruntled licensee) but let's not forget, CAMRA is a campaigning consumer organisation and not just a jolly drinking club. It is the policy of both Opening Times (and Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA) to support all that is praiseworthy in the local pub and beer trade. And make no mistake, there is plenty to praise. Good beer, good pubs and good breweries abound in the Opening Times area. At the same time some pubs and breweries will, in our opinion, get something wrong. If they do, we will say so and make no apologies for doing so. After all, if CAMRA and the licensed trade always agreed about everything, one of us wouldn't be doing our job properly!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Traditionalist eyebrows may be raised at our positive coverage of two new café bars in Manchester, Kro2 and Arch. They certainly won't be everyone's cup of tea. They certainly aren't pubs in the sense that most people understand the word. But the important thing is they sell cask beers. If we are serious about the survival of real ale then we have to expand its market. If the people who use these bars also take to real ale then we are winning the battle. Those who think we should give places such as these a wide berth are missing the point. They are also arguably helping sign the death warrant for real ale.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Last month I thought I was being controversial by asking the question - does price matter? Given the complete lack of response, I think the question is answered. No it doesn't.

*John Clarke*

The main reason that this edition is somewhat later in the month than normal was the 2002 Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in London, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Two of the main talking points were the imminent closure of Brakspear's Henley-on-Thames brewery, and the proliferation of keg-only bars in London, with more and more pubs reopening as bland, real-ale-free zones. It is cheering on my return to be able to help publish news of two Manchester bars bucking the trend, what I think is a pretty good Wetherspoons (the Waterhouse on Princess St - tho' did we really need another one?) and the report on a new brewery in Congleton. With the Cains situation seeming to offer fair hope of continued brewing in Liverpool, for once, its LESS grim up North.

*P.B. Hutchings*

**OPENING TIMES ISSUE 220**

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## PUB OF THE MONTH AUGUST 2002

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



**T**he Stockport & South Manchester Pub of the month for August is The Royal Oak on Commercial Road, Hazel Grove.

Built in 1937, it's a well preserved example of pre-war pub architecture. A solid brick built building, comprising a lounge, games room and a vault with function rooms and accommodation upstairs. Basically unmodified over the years yet in a good state of repair and decor. It still retains many of its original features, including an impressive wooden staircase up to its function rooms.

The pub serves as a focal point to the local residents who maintain strong community and family spirits. An impressive trophy cabinet lays testament to its strong links with local sports leagues, most notably the crown green bowling on the excellent green to the peaceful rear of the pub. There is a patio and BBQ overlooking the green, which is set in well-tended flowerbeds and becomes a real sun trap in summer.

Although the only beers served are Robinson's Best Bitter & Hatters - they are both consistently kept well. Top ups are usually given without the need to ask.

Bill & Hilda Torevell have kept this pub in good order for well over 20 years and the pub has always been a popular diversion from the more crowded A6 pubs when the branch does the Hazel Grove stagger. Bill and Hilda will be retiring later this year, so this well deserved award hasn't come a moment too soon! The presentation will take place on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> from 8.00pm. Join us for what should be a great night out. CW.

Getting there by public transport is easy, the 191, 192 and 199 buses stop near the end of Commercial Road every few minutes. From the Stockport direction, get off at the stop after the new Sainsburys store and The Royal Oak is only 5 minutes walk from the A6 along Commercial Road.

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

### CONTRIBUTORS TO OPENING TIMES 220:

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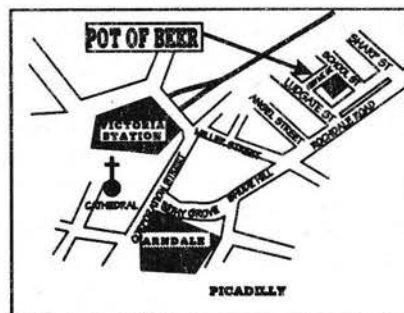
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# STAGGER

with Dave Hallows

## The Didsbury Dawdle

On a pleasant Friday night in April the troops gathered outside the Station on Wilmslow Road for a circuit of the pubs around Barlow Moor Road and School Lane. We felt sure a good evening's drinking was in store.

The Station has been tastefully refurbished and the lounges carpeted. The front bar remains the same in keeping with the now rare street corner door still in use. Everyone tried the Marston's Bitter, which was very well thought of. Unusually, no-one tried the Pedigree although I am told that this is of an equally high standard. Scouts were sent to ogle through the window of the Slug & Lettuce over the road and, unsurprisingly, found no cask beer on sale at all. Nearby, among the forest of café bars and restaurants is the Hogshead. Open-plan and in a café bar format, the Hogshead still continues to offer a wide range of cask beers. Tonight this comprised Wadworth 6X, Marston's Pedigree, Hook Norton Old Hooky, Caledonian 80/-, Boddington's Bitter, Fuller's London Pride, Taylor's Landlord plus two cask ciders. The London Pride was the most widely appreciated, closely followed by the 80/- and Landlord. Opinions were divided about the Old Hooky - some thought it excellent while to me it was just too cold and its hoppy character ruined. The pub itself was packed - in stark contrast to the keg-only O'Neill's next door which was sparsely populated.

Continuing down Wilmslow Road, our next billet was the Dog & Partridge. This former Greenalls house is now owned by Scottish & Newcastle and serves a choice of guest ales. The keen licensee carefully rotates the choice of beers with particular regard to what goes down well with his customers and what is in condition. The pub was packed and on offer were Theakstons Best Bitter, Taylor's Landlord, Titanic Triple Screw, Brain's Reverend James and Wells

Bombardier. The Landlord and the Triple Screw were excellent while the Reverend James, though still good, was less well thought of. Over the road to the Nelson on Barlow Moor Road. It now sports John Smith's livery and inside we found the usual Holt's Bitter (the only pub the village centre to sell it) and the rare John Smith's Magnet. At £1.40, the Holt's is still the cheapest beer in Didsbury and while most of us found the beer to be very good or better, one or two dissenting voices were less appreciative. The Magnet on the other hand was universally praised, with one of the party describing it as 'perfect'. The Nelson is perhaps the last proper working man's boozer in Didsbury, and none the worse for that.

Rumours and whispers among the troops told us that there might be cask beer across the road in the Clock Tower, a pub that has changed hands, name and decor umpteen times over the years. An advance party confirmed the rumours - Boddingtons Bitter on handpump. I'm still not sure why we bothered. The décor has the appearance of all the style and quality you get on 'Changing Rooms', the music boomed out (there are also live bands upstairs) and the beer was almost universally considered poor. Theakstons Cool Cask was also spotted on sale. No-one bothered with that. Venturing up School Lane, we looked in at the Pitcher & Piano. Known for vastly over-priced Pedigree, we feared a hand-to-hand assault on our pockets. However, the place was now keg-only, and packed out with Cheshire Set wannabes.

Luckily, it was only a short walk to the Fletcher Moss (formerly the Albert Inn) on William Street. Hydes very successfully refurbished and extended this pub a few years ago and it's not looked back since. On handpump were Hydes' Bitter and, unusually, the extra-dark 'Welsh' mild. Jekyll's Gold should also have been on the bar but, as you expect in Didsbury on a Friday night, the pub was heaving and this had sold out. For such a busy pub, the Hydes' seasonal beers don't seem to have taken off here. Perhaps it's time to give them another go. In any event both of the beers that were on sale were very good indeed, with little to choose between the two. Back on Wilmslow Road, the last call was at the legendary Royal Oak. Recently redecorated and refurbished, it was good to see the pottery spirit casks and water jugs still in place although the unique theatre posters have been moved to the front lounge. On the beer front there was a choice of Marston's Bitter and Pedigree alongside Banks's Original (i.e. mild), all on handpump and all in top form.

Best beer of the night? A difficult decision but we thought the honours were probably split between the Landlord and Triple Screw in the Dog & Partridge, and the Magnet at the Nelson. Having said that, almost every pub visited proved an enjoyable drinking experience with plenty of good cask beers on offer. And of course, this can only be a snapshot of what we found on this particular night; it can't be taken as a once and for all judgement of the pubs or their beers. As ever, why not try them yourself and see what you think.

...continued from front page

## ARCH — PARTY PEOPLE AND REAL ALE

When OT called it didn't seem quite finished, although no doubt everything will be in place for the return of the students, who must surely constitute a large part of the target audience. The décor is a combination of mint green walls and grey industrial-style flooring which at present looks rather bare and stark. Hopefully some contemporary artwork on the walls will soften this to a degree. The furniture is a pleasing combination of traditional-style table and chairs along with low-slung sofas and leather chairs. It looks as though there will also be a food operation with its own counter but appears to be still under development.

With various club DJs playing five nights a week, this won't be for you if you like a quiet pint. What you will be able to enjoy, though, is real ale. This is still a Robinson's tied house and while the bar features only tall, brushed steel pillar taps, one of these dispenses Best Bitter on free-flow. Worth a look, we think.

**COPY DATE FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF OPENING TIMES IS AUGUST 23**



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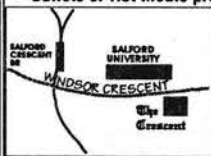
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The Smithy (Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme) has recently been refurbished and given a particularly garish external paint scheme. It still offers real ale - Boddingtons and Theakstons "Best". (Don't all rush at once). It's obviously very much geared towards a younger clientele, with a lack of comfortable seating, and our reporter didn't find it a congenial place to drink.

Lorraine James, formerly of the Crown, Heaton Lane, remarried last month. The lucky chap is Mich Spencer who, along with Lorraine, has spent a considerable amount of time working at the Swan With Two Necks. Double congratulations are in order as Lorraine and Mich have finally got their own pub. By the time you read this they will have taken over the Church Moseley Street, Edgeley. The Church has struggled for some time and lately appears to have suffered from an absence of customers, so this should be something of a challenge. If anyone can turn it round, though, Lorraine and Mich are the ones to do it.

The Victoria, (Ack Lane, Bramhall) seems to have finally broken loose from Scottish Courage, and now belongs to the Noble House Pub Co, a subsidiary of Noble House Leisure which owns hotels and restaurants. Apart from the residents Boddingtons and Theakston's Cool Cask, (which may be going soon), recent guests have been Hydes' Jekyll's Gold, Wells Summer Solstice, Jennings Crag Rat, Youngs Waggledance and Youngers Monk Ale, priced from £1.70 to £1.85. They come from a list of over 50 available beers. But the problem remains whether the locals can be weaned off their beloved Boddingtons, to sample the delicate and diverse flavours and subtle aromas of beers brewed by a wide range of independent family brewers, micro-brewers and regionals.

Bar staff at Bramhall's (Bramhall Lane South), couldn't understand why they were being asked for Pedigree, long after it had all been sold. Then their attention was drawn to May's "Opening Times", and its account of the local "Stagger", which included such comments as "about the best beer so far" and "thumbs up for keeping a good pint". But cask ale sales had been very low, making it almost impossible to keep a decent pint, so the "Staggerers" had been lucky to find the barrel in good condition. A few years ago, Draught Bass and even Highgate Dark Mild were available in Bramhall's Wine Bar - it's changed its name several times since then, and is now part of Enterprise Inns.

As we went to press, the Lamp Tavern on Hillgate, Stockport, was up for sale. Described as being in a bustling location, the freehold is yours for a cool £400,000.

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### Black & Red Currant Sorbet

For my re-appearance after over a year's absence, I have picked an unusual recipe. Unusual in two ways - firstly, sweets with beer are rare in themselves; secondly, this is one where the beer really adds to the dish, instead of being a reclusive subtlety, as it can be in so many sweet dishes. Some may think there is a third unusual facet to this recipe, and this is that I have opted for a cooling dish, which may be foolishly anticipating some kind of summer weather. But who knows? By the time you read this, a sweltering heat-wave could be baking us all. The recipe serves four.

#### Ingredients

- 2 125gm punnets blackcurrants
- 2 125gm punnets redcurrants
- 1 small tub single or double cream
- 1 25cl bottle Belgian cassis (Timmermans or Mort Subite ideally)
- 1-1½ dessert spoons of castor sugar

#### method

Take one punnet of either blackcurrants or redcurrants, or half-and-half, and remove the berries from the stalks. Put the berries in a mixing bowl or freezer dish. De-stalk the rest of the berries and put these and all the other ingredients in a liquidiser or food processor; mash to the consistency of runny jam. Add to the whole berries, freeze and serve. Easy innit?

A quenching sweet (and not too sweet if you only use one spoon of sugar), and not too rich (if you only use single cream); or a yummy over-indulgence if you use the extra sugar and double cream. I produced this dish for the following cost: berries 10p a punnet (last day of sell-by date), cream 10p (again, almost out of date), cassis 95p (bloody dear!). Total £1.45 - great!

## IT'S A HEAVENLY TASTE! IT'S A HELLUVA BEER!

Anthony Firmin goes all Nordic

**R**ecently, I along with Dave Sheldon undertook a short holiday to Scandinavia, not specifically to drink beer but that was certainly going to be on the agenda in the evenings.

Our first visit was to Malmo, Sweden's third largest city and in the evening we ventured to the "Turist Bryan" (roughly translated as Little Square). This is a typical European town square with cafes and bars all around and lots of outdoor drinking areas - on a summer's evening this looked outstanding with lots of local people giving it plenty of atmosphere.

However, a closer examination of the bars told a different story. The first bar we went to served John Smiths Smooth, Fosters Lager and Murphys Stout along with Bishops Finger in bottles - not very Swedish. Most of the other bars told a similar story. We hadn't travelled all this way to drink that!

Closer examination of some bars showed they also sold some national beers. We tried "Norlands Gold" at 5.0% which was a rather uninspiring pilsner. This was followed by "Mariestadts Bryggeri Export III" at 5.3% from a bottle which certainly had a more malty flavour but we felt there was still more. A chance meeting with Elizabeth, an off duty tourist guide, provided us with the information we needed and off we went to the Bishops Arms. Initially I had some reservations about this pub thinking it was just a respite for ex-pats wanting a feel for home. I certainly had to eat my words. It is an English style pub, and rather dark inside, but what a fabulous selection of beers and whiskeys.

At the left hand end of the bar were three handpumps selling Fullers ESB and London Pride and Shep's Bishops Finger. In the middle of the bar was a good selection of fonts dispensing a good cross-section of European beers and the other end of the bar was a fridge with a fine selection of Belgian, US, and British bottled beers along with beers from a local microbrewery - Jantlands Bryggeri.

Jantlands had two bottled beers called Heaven (4.8%) and Hell (5.1%). Heaven was a darker maltier beer with clear hop character

whilst Hell was a paler very hoppy beer - and was truly outstanding. Fortunately, Elizabeth, our unofficial guide was still with us (but only just after several Belgian beers - not the first drinks of the evening for her either) and she was able to translate the bottle labels for us.

Apparently at the Stockholm Beer Festival in 1998 Hell had won the Best Swedish Beer, Best Lager (?) and Best Fresh Beer awards, and in 1999 and 2000 was the Gold Medal

Winner in 8 categories including "best pale, well hopped lager on tap and bottle" and "best beer produced in Sweden all categories, tap and bottle". The beers are brewed in co-operation with two pubs - "Oliver Twist" and "Akkurat" in Stockholm.



It's a helluva beer

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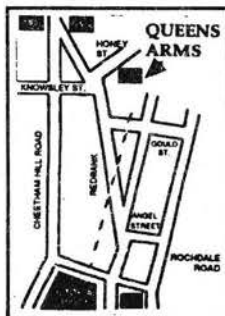
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## THE CASTLE

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Hatters Mild, Dark Mild, Frederics,  
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Cumbria Way  
plus....

STADIUM &  
SNOWDON ALE

A WARM WELCOME IN A TRADITIONAL PUB



The following day we headed north to Norway staying in the little village of Lillestrom 15km north of Oslo. On our first evening we started in the hotel bar where the barman explained that they didn't sell beer as such and we should go to the pub called "Martins" down the road which we duly did. Upon our arrival at the said establishment we were presented with a riotous assembly of drunk and loud young Norwegians and even louder music.

Fortunately for us the bar person had forgotten to serve those waiting so after a short while we abandoned this pub and headed to a pleasant quiet little bar called "Klicks". Here, the barman, who spoke perfect English and had studied at Leeds University, explained that the beer was not as cheap in Norway as it was in England. He wasn't kidding either. As none of the bars we had visited that evening had stocked any local beers of interest we opted for Erdinger Weissbier and an Erdinger Dunkel. The price for these was 188Nkr (£10.25 to you and me). HOW MUCH!!! As we soon discovered Norway is not a cheap place and even Murphys and local beers are a similar price.

The following evening we visited "Pepe's Pizza" in Lillestrom where a large pizza (enough for two) was the oh-so-cheap price of £22.00. Ouch. We tried a beer called "FATOL", a local pilsner that was gassy and not particularly inspiring. FATOL seemed a bargain at £4.25 for 0.4 litres. We were now ready to leave Norway and return to the relative cheapness of Sweden.

Back in Malmo we were greeted with outstanding weather and in the evening we dined outside at an Italian restaurant in the Turist Bryan. We drank "Fredericks", a Czech lager (4.8%), which was very pleasant - the perfect accompaniment to an Italian meal. I wasn't good company for Dave at this point as my attention was completely and utterly devoted to our stunning far-eastern waitress!

After a pleasant walk around Malmo city centre we returned to our local, the "Bishops Arms" for some more "Hell". After Norway we were very price conscious and Hell in a bottle was 54 Swkr (£4.00). Other beers were a similar price.

We attempted to purchase some Hell to bring home with us but off sales are not permitted at pubs - we would have to visit a specialist off-license. Unfortunately it was too late to visit one of these so we just carried on drinking outside on a warm Malmo evening watching the world go by. Absolutely Hellish!!!

## SILVER JUBILEE FOR TRAFFORD & HULME BRANCH

The Trafford & Hulme branch of CAMRA was established in October 1977, when the Queen was celebrating her Silver Jubilee. This year therefore sees the branch's own Silver Jubilee, which will be marked by a celebration party in the Old Market Tavern, Altrincham.

This is where the branch's inaugural meeting was held back in the days of kipper ties, Watney's Party Sevens and other horrors. The date of the celebration is Thursday 3rd October, starting around 8 o'clock. All past and present members of the Branch, and indeed of neighbouring branches, are invited to attend.

The Branch has been rather quiet in recent times but it is now becoming much more active, with regular monthly meetings once again. In a very slight break with tradition, the branch meetings are now on the first Thursday of the month, usually at Altrincham's Old Market Tavern and starting at 8 p.m.

The branch contact is still Dave Ward, tel. 0161 980 1170, or you can contact the new branch chairman, Neil Worthington, on 0161 749 4882.

### Meeting dates, Trafford & Hulme branch:

1st August: at The Old Market Tavern, Altrincham  
5th September: at The Volunteer, Cross Street, Sale  
3rd October: at The Old Market Tavern, Altrincham  
7th November: at The Old Market Tavern, Altrincham

### OPENING TIMES SPECIFICATIONS

Column Widths, single 84mm, double 172mm. Image height 28cm. NB Advertisers who supply camera ready artwork designed for another publication that cannot be resized to our standard sizes will be charged the equivalent column/centimetre rate plus a surcharge of at least 30%. Adverts that require unusually large amounts of design work will have the extra work carried out by a studio at full commercial rate.



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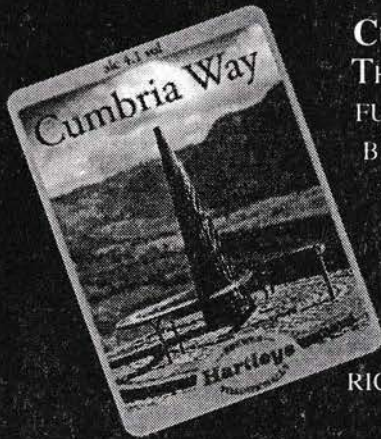
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You can be ready for whatever the British summer brings your way in this month's competition with a Robinson's Golf Umbrella and a Best Bitter T-shirt on offer to the winner.

Congratulations to Stephen Smith of Harpurhey who won a tray of Frederics in the June competition.

To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is answer the following two questions.

1. What is *the* Cumbria Way?
2. What is the significance of the monument on the Cumbria Way pumpelip?

Send your answers by the end of the month to: Robinson's Competition, BHA, 94 Churchgate, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 1XJ

Or by fax to 0161 477-0809  
or e-mail info@barryhook.com  
Normal competition rules apply

**HELP HOLD BACK THE NITROKEG TIDE!  
JOIN CAMRA (PAGE 19) & DRINK REAL ALE**

## Stockie The che

By John Taylor



The Stockport Licensed Houses Super League is now well under way, and with five matches played the league tables is starting to have a familiar look about it. Four teams remain undefeated with the Magnet and Copperfields 'B' having lost just once.

In week two of the fixtures, the Royal Mortar beat Greg St 6-1 away. I mention this result because to date this is the one match that this team has not won 7-0. They are on a mission to regain their Super League crown from Reddish WMC. Top throws on the night were from the young Lancashire star Chris North going out in 15 & 19 darts, including a 180, Tony Daniels (15 & 22), Kevin Weir (18 & 20), Pete Wood with two legs of 22, and Stockport Individual Champion Mark Turner (18 & 23), including a maximum. Well done also to Jason Roberts for the home team; he is the only player this season to have taken two legs off the Mortar.

On the same evening Derek Elliott (21 & 17) and a 113 kill, and Ronnie Davenport (23 & 21), including a great 158 outshot, still could not stop their team, Printers Arms, going down 4-3 to Copperfields 'A', thanks mainly to Cliff Cartwright with two legs of 25 and Trevor Jones (22 & 27). Ronnie must have thought that kill was going to be the standard to aim for, but Andy Proctor for the Nursery Inn had other ideas as he went out in 15 & 24 against the champions and hit a tremendous 161 kill. He was supported by Pete Webb who has made a welcome return to top darts, (24 & 18), and Tony Child (24 & 26), but their brave attempt to cause a big upset fell just short as they went down 4-3, with the champs thanking Dave Beckett (25 & 23) and Mick Allen (24 & 23) for their late efforts in the match.

★ ★

The following week saw the Union Inn win their third match on the trot 6-1, this time against Club Leisure. Brian Adshead (24 & 18) and a 115 kill and brother Dave (22 & 25) were early winners and it also saw England International Tony O'Shea making his first appearance of the season, going out in 14 & 22, yes 22. Tony and the other main star of local darts, Darryl Fitton, have been scouring Europe recently, attempting to pick up ranking points for this year's Embassy World Championship. At present both are on course to make the finals.

★ ★ ★

Week 3 also saw the Bobby Peel continue their good start to the new season with a 6-1 home win against Gregg St. Best darts of the night (20 & 17) were thrown by the pub's ex-landlord John Parkin (Capper), although I am surprised he has enough time to play darts, what with buying flowers all the time for his 'sweetie'. Anyway, he was assisted on the night by Bren Shields (24 & 23) and new landlord Paul Cretney (22 & 27).

★ ★ ★ ★

The Copperfields 'B' team have settled well into the Super League and beat the Jack & Jill 6-1 away in Week 4. The Brinnington side has lost a number of players this season, but captain Dennis Kidd continues to win regularly, on this occasion in 24 & 19 darts and a 106 kill. Steve Ridgway (20 & 24) and Stuart Driver (19 & 25) were the best for the Cale Green team. The Union Inn just got by Greg St 5-2 away, with the game of the night going to home stand-in captain George Pike who won his first leg in 18, losing the second to Brian Adshead in 16, but winning the final leg in 17 darts. George also hit a 118 kill.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The revamped North Reddish WMC, with the likes of Paul Yates and John Sainsbury now in their ranks, are having a mixed season, having won three and lost two, although Paul and John are playing well for the team. The Magnet have recovered from losing their opening match to the Copperfields 'B' by winning the next four fixtures. The most recent win was a 6-1 home victory against the Nursery Inn, who, incidentally, are still point-less, along with four other teams. The home winners were Frank Guest with two legs of 24, Mark James (27 & 22), Derek Higgins (24 & 21), Geoff Millward (26 & 18), Dave Tracey (20 & 23) and Alan Riley (19 & 22), who has also made a return to the Super League scene. Who said darts was on the decline, due to the lack of players? Who, me? Never! Well, it's that time again; see you soon - John Taylor





## KHEAN IN CONGLETON

Some new breweries are trailed well in advance. Some appear to spring up overnight with no warning. The Khean Brewing Co in Congleton falls into the second category although this doesn't do justice to the planning that has gone into this new venture.

Ken Newsome has been planning this operation for a couple of years but decided he wanted to be up and running before anyone new about it. He is the ex-Operations Director of a Poteries-based firm of steel fabricators, and indeed still works there one day a week. Keen on beer and brewing, he had visited a number of breweries and always thought that this was something he could do. The idea just grew from there and once Ken had decided on a career change the die was cast. Courses at Brewlab in Sunderland and also at St Helens College followed and a 5-barrel plant assembled. Some of the kit was made by his old firm, and the rest purchased from Polymet, a company which specialises in buying and selling brewery kits. The original intention was to site the brewery at Congleton Garden Centre but problems with the electricity supply led to a quick relocation to industrial premises on Royle Street, close to the town centre. The unusual name, by the way, is a combination of Ken and his wife's initials.



Ken initially drew up profiles for three cask ales and the first to be released is Premium Bitter at 4.4% ABV. This is very pale gold beer brewed using just Maris Otter Pale Malt with a touch of wheat malt. Hops are a blend of Challenger and Goldings and the live yeast has



been sourced from Brewlab. The water comes from the town mains supply but is treated to make it suitable for brewing.

The result is a very quenching and moreish beer, with a slight floral sweetness to start with, developing into a long, citric bitter finish. It's certainly gone down well in the Swan at Kettlethulme where it is almost a regular on the bar. Other outlets include the

Queens Head, Congleton; Congleton Leisure Centre; the Waters Green, Macclesfield; Blue Bell, Kildgrove and the Bee Hive in Stoke. Next in line is a weaker beer at about 3.8%. It hasn't been named yet but may have a cricketing theme, which Ken has been considering for all of his beers. This will be similar to its stronger staminate but with the initial sweetness eliminated. No other beers are yet planned but the third profile Ken drew up was for a dry stout. Now there's something to look forward to!

The Khean Brewing Co is at Unit 4, Royle Park, Royle Street, Congleton, CW12 1JJ. Phone 01260 272144 or Mobile 07720 537521.

## PUB OF THE MONTH JULY 2002 THE NAVIGATION



Angella Lindsay and daughter Chantal holding their well deserved Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month Award at the presentation on July 25th, pictured with their colleagues

## Abbeydale Brewery

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Our beers, in order of strength (not preference) are:

<b>Matins</b>	ABV 3.6%
Fully flavoured but light in alcohol	
<b>Best Bitter</b>	ABV 4.0%
Classic aromatic bitter	
<b>Alchemy</b>	ABV 4.2%
A brand new beer; pale and hoppy	
<b>Moonshine</b>	ABV 4.3%
Pale, balanced premium beer	
<b>Wheat Beer</b>	ABV 4.5%
Crisp and refreshing; citrus hints	
<b>Absolution</b>	ABV 5.3%
Strong, pale beer, sweet and flavousome	
<b>Black Mass</b>	ABV 6.66%
Superb strong stout	
<b>Last Rites</b>	ABV 11.0%
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## Saddleworth Museum

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# 11th Beer Festival

organised by the friends of the museum  
as a fund raising in aid of the museum  
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at the Museum,  
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Open Friday 7pm to 11pm,  
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Saturday 7pm to 11pm.

Friday night music Roger Higgins Blues Band.  
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**10 beers from 8 breweries local to  
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## HIGH PEAK TRIP TO DERBY

Frank Wood goes out and about...

The trip on 20th July was probably our third trip as a branch in as many years, Derby being accessible on a Derbyshire Wayfarer via Sheffield and sharing £12 family tickets between two. For myself, it covered the bus from Glossop to New Mills, train to Sheffield and changing to Derby.

We also got our moneys worth by kicking off with a bus trip to Ockbrook, where we visited the Royal Oak, though Derby Branch members including East Midlands Regional Director Julian Hough, fixed up transport one way by car. The Royal Oak happens to be his favourite pub and with 26 years in the Good Beer Guide, we expected a decent start to the day. However, it exceeded all expectations, the pub being one which goes straight into my personal top ten. Olive Wilson has been the licensee since 1953 and she gave us a potted history of the pub.

Speaking for us all, we highly recommend a detour when in the city. The number 18 bus leaves Derby bus station for Ockbrook at five minutes to each hour and you can get a bus back at 35 minutes past the hour. An old Bass pub still with a large Bass sign, it has several small rooms inside as well as a large function room. It's also free of tie, Olive buying the pub in 1990. Draught Bass is still the regular beer though, along with three guests, one of which on our visit was Boggart Hole Excaliber, at £1.50 - a bargain.

Unusually there are three separate beer gardens, one on the flags immediately at the front of the pub, a second is a little secluded, behind a hedge and has a sign saying for adults only. Then at the side of the pub is a children's garden with swings etc. The Royal Oak was CAMRA East Midlands Pub of the Year in 2000 and has lovely flower displays all round the front with tubs, baskets and window boxes all in bloom. These days Olive is helped by her two daughters who work full time at the pub. A date for your diary if thinking of going - they have a successful Beer Festival each year and this year it is on the weekend of 11th-13th October. The beers are all set up in the function room at the side and apparently it is a highly successful event.

Back to Derby and we kicked off at the Old Dolphin, which has just been voted City Pub of the Year in 2002. A very historic pub, the best feature for me is the flagged corridor between the various rooms. We went straight into the beer garden where Julian told us about another beer festival that was being held here the following week, and which I attended some years back.

Eight beers were on the bar here, varying greatly, myself trying the Piddle in the Hole. Due to me making a quick detour to the Standing Orders on Irongate, to notch up my 58th Wetherspoon's pub (Batemans Dark Mild £1.05), I was not sure what anyone else drank. It would have been easy from here, to cross the road immediately to the Old Silk Mill but we were led by Julian and his friends into a backwater and the Furnace, some seven minutes out of the city. A Hardy Hansons pub where we sampled the seasonal brew, Swallows Return, a pleasant enough pint in a pub which was worth the find and is in the current Good Beer Guide (as were all the pubs we went in apart from my little diversion).

Next another favourite just along the road, the Flowerpot. We have been in here several times before but had not been in the back room, which has a cellar at head height behind the back bar, which

## SAVE THE BEER ORDERS

Beer Consumer Group, the Campaign for Real Ale, condemned Government plans to revoke the 'Beer Orders' in a report published last month. The report accuses the Government of failing to assess the effects of revoking the Orders on competition and consumer choice in the beer and pubs market.

The Government announced its intention to revoke the Beer Orders, the laws enacted in 1990 to overcome the 'complex monopoly' in brewing and pub retailing, in February.

CAMRA claims that, while the orders are not entirely relevant to today's market, they play an important role in helping to prevent mergers and takeovers, maintaining consumer choice and preventing community pub closures.

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications said, "Both the brewing and pub retailing industries are consolidating at an alarming rate and the Government is proposing to scrap the only real legislative barrier to protect consumers. We predict that revocation of the 'Beer Orders' will lead to more mergers amongst vertically integrated regional brewers, larger pub chains buying breweries and a global company buying a pub estate. Any of the above will undermine the intention of the Orders and leave thousands of consumers out in the cold with less choice in pubs."

CAMRA concludes that the Government should leave the Beer Orders intact and launch an immediate investigation into the industry in an attempt to overcome the complex monopolies that now exist in pub ownership and beer supply.

Mike Benner added, "While it's true that the Beer Orders do not restrict the activities or growth of big non-brewing pub chains, the answer is not to throw the baby out with the bath water, but rather to investigate properly the need for a revised set of Orders to curb the power of pub chains and global brewers. Leaving British beer and pubs at the mercy of global market forces will erode our still unique and relatively diverse industry and lead to power falling into the hands of fewer and bigger global players."

was most impressive. I also noted that my friend John Otway was playing there on September 9<sup>th</sup> (the pub has regular weekend gigs. The beer? We were all impressed with the selection of eight beers, but mainly we went for the Whim 'Whim on a Whim' a 3.5% beer which was excellent and beer of the day to many of us (we stopped for another). A long walk across town then, by the river, to do our last two pubs of the day. The Alexandra first, where we again had eight choices. Most of us plumped for the Anglo Dutch 'Sustain up North' before going just round the corner to the Brunswick, where Julian took us for a look upstairs and around this impressive pub. Seven Brunswick brews were on, I tried the Triple Hop, The Usual, Shiny Beer and Triple Gold (only a half of each!). A short walk to the station, the usual train delays and back into Sheffield where we had time to take a walk out to the Rutland Arms, a handy pub if you have time whilst waiting for a train. Everyone went for the Wentworth WPA in here though there was a choice of five on the bar. Back in New Mills, the three of us who got off here were impressed with the guest beer which was from Craig Mill Brewery, Swallow IPA at 4%. Well, another successful social day out, every pub a good one, we missed out some we have been in on previous trips such as the Smithfield but who knows, it may be on the itinerary again in the none too distant future.

10



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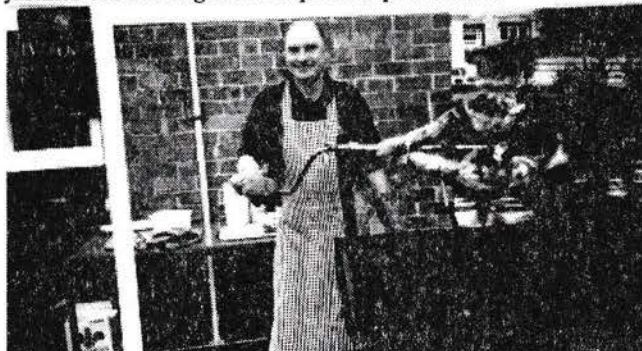
## RECORDS AT WRENBURY

John Cresswell celebrates a beer driven success

The Paradise Brewery and Bhurtpore Inn beer festivals in July were both very successful, with large numbers of ale fans attending both festivals. A number of visitors to Paradise made repeat visits to Bhurtpore the following week.

During the festivals, an almost carnival-like atmosphere prevailed, with the Scarecrow Trail taking place in Wrenbury, entertainment, Morris Dancers and a hog roast at Paradise all contributing. A number of beer festival visitors ventured off on the Scarecrow Trail and also investigated the Dusty Miller and Cotton Arms, both pubs drawing praise.

Speaking as Chairman of the local line user group (Crewe & Shrewsbury Passenger Association), it makes the efforts of Caspa worthwhile in seeing so many arrivals at Wrenbury and also justifies our seeking extra stops on express trains.



Paradise Co-brewer and co-owner Nick Platt lends a hand with the hog-roast

Records were certainly broken. Saturday 6 July saw 42 passengers getting off the 11.33 from Manchester at Wrenbury and 36 used the 17.11 return service. Useful figures but overshadowed by numbers the following week.

On Saturday 13 July, 80 passengers arrived off the 11.33 from Manchester and 41 caught the express back at 17.11. The big surprise, though, were the 76 passengers awaiting the 18.37 Wrenbury-Crewe local service. This was operated by a single car train and was the first time a train has ever left Wrenbury with standing passengers on a full train. The guard on this service asked me if they had evacuated the village!

Well done to all who travelled by train, you are certainly doing your bit for rural transport. My Beers of the Festivals: Paradise - Town House Audley Bitter (3.8%), lovely, hoppy and refreshing; Rebellion Blonde (4.3%), superb; and Paradise Marbury Mild is an excellent beer. Bhurtpore - Dark Star Hophead (3.8%), an excellent, hoppy brew; Salopian Doppelganger, superb. This year the three beer festivals at Wrenbury have seen 935 arrivals at the station, truly making Wrenbury Beer Festival Capital of Britain. Watch out now for the Paradise Brewery 'Oktober Fest' and also the Nantwich Beer Festival to be held at the Civic Hall, Beam Street on Friday 27 and Saturday 28 September. As you may have guessed, we have arranged for the 11.33 Manchester-Cardiff express to stop at Nantwich on the Saturday. To return festival goers, the 17.13 from Nantwich is a regular through service to Manchester.

### Stockport Beer & Cider Festival 2002 Glasses and T-shirts

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0161 432 1816.

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Glasses are £2 each (pint or half pint).

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**Sunday lunch 12 till 4.30pm**

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Roasts in our conservatory Restaurant



Stockport CAMRA Pub of the Month Oct 2000  
**MANCHESTER ROAD, HEATON CHAPEL**  
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Recommended in CAMRA's New Pub Food Guide



11



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I have to admit that I'm quite impressed by the new Wetherspoons on Princess Street (The Waterhouse, off Albert Square and the building whose back is the City Arms on Kennedy Street). It isn't quite a pub exactly, with a number of small rooms that seem themed more for dining than drinking, but it is so unlike all the other Wetherspoon offerings - especially those in Manchester, that it fairly took my breath away. The bar seems too small for busy periods but I will try it and see. The two beers I tried were certainly very good.

Talking of good things, I am well impressed with the food operation at the Pot of Beer on New Mount Street in the Northern Quarter. The new(ish) managers have begun to get a good rep for beer quality but I have to say I am pleasantly surprised by their up-market (though not expensive) food operation. The fact that Phil from the Marble (which itself does very good grub) is a regular eater really says it all. Very well worth trying.

### Olympia 2002

Last month I promised some thoughts on the Great British Beer Festival. So, recently returned, here goes. Its in London. Its verrrry expensive. There are few really new beers. Its held in a glasshouse in August... BUT, the cooling system, surprisingly, is up to the job, and even on hot thundery days the beer comes out cool. Kudos to the bar managers for producing so many clear ales in excellent condition (22 good to one iffy that I sampled) - even if they were a tad green on the tuesday and wednesday. The Irish cask beers are now on the foreign bar (a la Manchester Winter Ales) and included the excellent Porterhouse beers - and there was a reasonable selection of draught foreign beers (they had Tegernsee Spezial, and Keesman Herren Pils - so I was OK) and Belgian/Dutch bottles (the remaining foreign bottles disappointed). New layout meant the customers circulated better, all in all a pretty good 'do' - even if the organiser is a man who only drinks cider! - and has a fest coming up at Nantwich - see this page. (Strangely, I thought the cider/perry selection rather mundane compared to the excellent range at the recent Stockport fest.)

### Cask Ale of the Month

Hopback Tutti Fruitti (4.0% abv) *Tried in the Marble Arch (Rochdale Road)*. Not content with brewing the quintessential real micro-brewery IPA (Summer Lightning), Salisbury brewery Hopback have now produced a flavour-some golden session beer. Surprisingly little citrus on the nose (given the name) it has a floral-hop nose leading to a very creamy, and slightly peachy middle, with a crisp, short, dry finish. A true summer beer. Crisp, fruity, clean and gone. Outstanding. So much so, that I could still appreciate it after a pint of James Campbell's fabulous organic Ginger beer, which is pretty difficult.

Next month: New website details and Summer Pub award.

## Ye Olde Admiral Rodney



Prestbury  
Robinsons Hatters  
Mild and Best  
Bitter  
on handpump



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SEPTEMBER 27-28 (FRI-SAT)

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## STOCKPORT &

## SOUTH MANCHESTER CAMRA

members are currently busy preparing a new  
pub guide to Stockport,  
following on from the success of the award-  
winning *Viaducts & Vaults*  
& *Viaducts & Vaults2*.

To make the next edition even more successful,  
we are seeking your opinions and suggestions  
on the following key features of previous editions:

- Title
- articles/quality/content
- extent of pub information
- balance of content (articles/adverts/pub entries)
- map quality/structure

Please send all comments and suggestions to  
the Opening Times Editor (Ed 1) at  
(45 Bukeley St, Edgeley, Stockport. SK3 9HD),  
or make them verbally at one of the many  
social events listed on page 14.  
Alastair Walker - Guide Editor

## HOLTS PROWL

Dave Hallows goes in search of handpumped Holt's Mild. Not as easy as you might think...

A couple of years ago Holt's introduced 'smooth' mild. Like Robinson's 'real smooth' this is the standard cask-conditioned beer that has mixed gases injected into it on the way to the bar. Company policy at Holts is that all pubs should offer both 'real' and 'smooth' milds - not difficult since they can in fact come from the same cask in the cellar. However, some of their pubs don't seem very keen to offer the choice.

My first call was the **Grove**, Ashton New Road, Clayton. Here there is no sign of a mild handpump in the vault, with just the smooth font visible. There is a mild handpump in the lounge but it seems to be dormant. On my last recent visit, I ordered cask mild, only to stop the bar staff from serving me smooth from the vault as I stood by the dormant mild pump in the lounge.

Next was the **Halfway House** in Droylsden, and I couldn't believe my eyes! Two dormant mild handpumps in lounge and vault - plus a barmaid happy to tell me that it was "just the smooth" on.

Prowling into Withington, I went to the **Orion** on Barlow Road. Same set-up as the Grove, but mild handpump in vault doing nothing at all with the bar staff claiming it wasn't working (I suspect it wasn't connected). Again, the barstaff were happy to serve me the smooth in the lounge when I made it clear that I wanted cask. On to the **Kingsway** in Levenshulme. Here I found no evidence of a mild handpump at all, though I did encounter bar staff telling me the smooth font was a handpump.

Lastly, I visited the **Claremont**, Claremont Road, Moss Side. In the main bar I found two handpumps, both side-by-side, displaying mild clips. Just above them on the bar was the latest Holt's poster celebrating the silver award the brewery won for their cask mild at the recent Brewing Industry Awards. "Officially the best mild in the world" it says. Sadly, when asking for it, I was told it wasn't on. I was then told that the smooth was the same as the cask, "just chilled". "Hasn't it got gas in it?" "Yes, but it is the same".

This unhappy situation only affects some Holt's pubs, but some areas are better off than others. Is the writing on the wall for 'real' Holt's mild? What is bemusing is that not only have Holt's won a much trumpeted award for their traditional cask mild but they have also promised to investigate the offending pubs - yet I haven't seen any progress. What's next - Holt's 'smooth' bitter?



A brand new Congleton brewery has just completed its first brew. The Khean Brewing Co has been set up by Ken Newsome, local CAMRA member and beer enthusiast in an industrial unit off Royle Street in the centre of Congleton. The first brew - best bitter - is reported to be very good, it is a 4.2% light beer. Two other recipes are planned, including a session stout. Ken already has some outlets planned and is actively seeking more. Watch out for the beer very soon in the Leisure Centre bar, Congleton (see separate feature - Ed.1)

The George & Dragon, Higher Hurdfield is up for sale. This is a current Good Beer Guide pub (it has been for several years) and is one of the few genuine free houses in the Macclesfield area. It will be a shame to see Mollie & Guy leave - all of our best wishes to them.

In Macclesfield the Dolphin is now selling Robinson's Snowdon (alternating it with Cumbria Way).

The licensees of the Barnfield are expecting to move out by the end of August - the best of luck to Peter & Anne in what ever they decide to do next.

The refurbishment of the Nags Head is now complete and what a vast improvement it is. This large pub opposite Macclesfield station must have been an embarrassment to Robinson's for many years but now is something of a flagship.

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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

## AUGUST 2002

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Stagger: University Quarter - meet 7.30 Whitworth, Moss Lane East; 8.30 - Hogshead, Oxford Rd.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Railway, Great Portwood St, Stockport. Starts 9.00pm.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Pub of the Month Award to Royal Oak, Commercial Rd, Hazel Grove. From 8.00pm

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September** - Trip to present Beer of the Festival Award to Durham Brewery. Book with John Clarke on 0161477 1973.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September** - Monthly Branch Meeting: Gateway, Kingsway, East Didsbury. Starts 8.00pm **Guest Speaker - Paul Jefferies, Production Director, Hydes Brewery.**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Social: Rising Sun, Burnage Ln, Burnage. Starts 9.00pm.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup>** - Stagger - Stockport Town Centre (Market area): meet 7.30pm Arden Arms, Millgate; 8.30 Bakers Vault, Market Place.

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

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September** - Presentation of East Midlands Regional Pub of the Year Award to the Quiet Woman, Earl Sterndale. From 8.00pm

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Monthly Branch Meeting: Cown, Glossop. Starts 8.30pm.

## AUGUST 2002

*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 19<sup>th</sup>** - Campaigning Meeting: the Wharf, Congleton. Starts 8.00pm

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September** - Meal & Social: Greyhound, Cow Lane, Ashley. Great food and a guest beer. We should also be joined by members of the 'new' Trafford & Hulme Branch. Starts 8.00pm.

*Trafford & Hulme Branch covers Trafford Borough, Manchester west of the M56/Princess Parkway and a large part of the City Centre. They have notified us of the following events:*

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September** - Social Evening: Volunteer, Cross St, sale. Starts 8.00pm.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Joint meeting and social with Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch: Greyhound, Cow Lane, Ashley. Starts 8.00pm.



To Do Address Molepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

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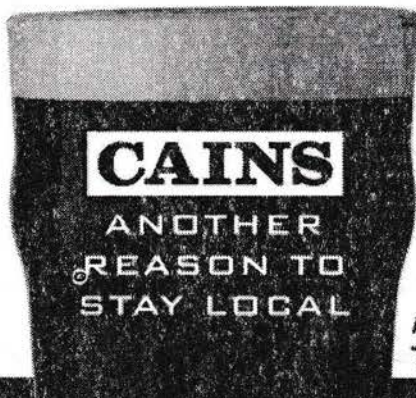


# CAINS

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# 5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

AUGUST 1997

"Caught Red Handed" was the front page headline - the Observer newspaper had revealed that Scottish Courage had been secretly encouraging its pub managers to serve short measures and so help maximise the company's profits.

Former managers for Scottish Courage had described private meetings where they had been urged to keep measures short with large heads, and they had been warned never to discuss these arrangements with customers. The general secretary of NALHM (National Association of Licensed House Managers) was aware of the issue - "with careful pouring you can get 96 pints out of a barrel which actually holds 88. At £1.50 a pint that means an extra £12." Another former manager in the East Midlands said that the brewery could save over £2,000 at a single pub over 6-9 weeks in accumulated "surplus stock".

★ ★ ★

The Ladybrook on Fir Road in Bramhall, owned then by Greenalls, had re-opened after yet another major refurbishment. The vault at the rear of the pub had been retained, but the attractive inglenook furniture around the fireplace had gone, as had the full-size snooker table, which had probably been unique in the area. The overall effect could be described as pleasant and comfortable, but little different from so many others. Real ales were Boddingtons Bitter at £1.53 and Draught Bass at a very reasonable £1.56 - it remained to be seen how long the Bass would survive.

★ ★ ★ ★

CAMRA had welcomed the review of alcohol excise duty announced in the previous month's budget. They were less than pleased that before the review had reported, beer duty was to go up by a penny (and prices in the pub could go up by tuppence). There was a reminder that beer duty in Britain was six times that in France, and 10 million pints a week were imported from there - that represented the beer sales of about 7,300 traditional tenanted pubs. The question had been posed - 'How much longer could this situation continue?'

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Amongst the Brewery News were three items on local breweries. At Hydes' Anvil, head brewer Alan Mackie had left to take up a similar post at Wiltshire-based regional brewers Ushers. Interviewing for his replacement had started in mid-July. Hydes had said that the introduction of Smooth had no impact on cask beer sales but instead it was taking sales from Guinness and cider. Robinson's plans to transfer their cask racking plant to Bredbury were said to be well advanced, with the move due to take place later in the year. They were also investigating a "smooth" beer, and if introduced, it would be interesting to see if it had a similar effect on pub trade as the Hydes' version.

David Porter was going to try some experimental beers, based on his Bitter, Rossendale and Sunshine. He's still at it, too, with "Raspberry No. 4" expected at the Railway in the not-too-distant future.

# CURMUDGEON



## Should Locals go Local?

Many pubgoers are eagerly awaiting the government's long-heralded move to relax Britain's antiquated licensing laws and allow later closing times where there's a demand. However, integral to these plans is a proposal to transfer the responsibility for licensing from magistrates, as at present, to local authorities. This may seem like an extension of democracy, but when fewer than a third of the electorate take part in local elections, and most of them choose how to vote mainly on national issues, it is hard to see the average voter in the pub having much say on licensing policy.

Anyone with experience of local authority decisions in other fields knows that they are often based on narrow political considerations, and can be wildly inconsistent between different authorities. There is also a distinct risk that the licensing process will become bogged down in bureaucracy and political correctness. Far from supporting community pubs, councils are likely further to encourage the creation of "drinking ghettos", by being much more willing to grant extended hours to town-centre pubs than ones in residential areas where there are numerous voters who don't want late-night drunks in their neighbourhood.

Many senior trade figures such as Tim Martin of Wetherspoon's have expressed serious concern about this plan, while Chief Superintendent Simon Humphrey, head of the Metropolitan Police licensing unit, has told an industry conference that he would "rue the day" if the proposed move goes ahead, saying the introduction of politics into licensing could threaten basic human rights.

What the licensed trade needs is a simple, clear-cut regulatory framework that is applied in a consistent and impartial manner, something that non-political licensing benches are far better equipped to provide than local authorities.

## Last Orders for a Classic

Some of my fondest drinking memories are of sampling Brakspear's beers in unspoilt little rustic pubs hidden away amongst the Chiltern beechwoods. Brakspear's is no run-of-the-mill local brewery - they produce some of the finest beers in the country, generously-hopped, but with a truly distinctive bitter-sweet character. Their ordinary bitter, although a modest 3.4% ABV, is widely regarded as the absolute classic of the style. So I was particularly saddened to learn that the Henley-on-Thames family brewer had become the latest to decide to sell out and close the brewery. Drinkers should make every effort to try the beers while they still have the chance.

But this shouldn't be taken to mean that the remaining family brewers are doomed. Several others of a similar size to Brakspear's are thriving, and Brakspear's themselves were brought low not because they had a poor product or an unappealing estate, but because their management ill-advisedly staked too much on supplying national pub companies at knock-down prices. This should be a lesson for any of the newer micro-breweries who want to enjoy a long-term future. The keystone of success is always going to be a strong core of local support, and becoming too dependent on the fickle and cut-throat national free trade is a very risky course.

Curmudgeon Online: [www.curmudgeon.co.uk](http://www.curmudgeon.co.uk)



Graham welcomes you to ...

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The Hare & Hounds, Otterspool, Chadkirk is now a Hydes pub. This increases the range of beer on the fringes of Marple but the centre is dominated by Robinson's.

The Hare & Hounds in Simmondley, Glossop has recently changed hands but the annual beer festivals will be continuing

The Friendship in Glossop no longer has Robinson's seasonal beers, but the Oakwood on High Street West does.

The Robinson's pub, the Devonshire in Ashwood Dale, just outside Buxton is closed and has been sold by the brewery. We have no news of the purchaser.

A new pub (if this is what you call it) called The Fusion Bar has opened in Hyde on Market Street in the former premises of the Dacca Indian Restaurant (point of interest is that the Dacca was the oldest curry house in East Manchester.)

We regret to report that Les Smith, the Licensee of the Royal Oak in Mellor has died after a long illness. The Royal Oak for a number of years featured in the National Good Beer Guide and Les was a strong supporter of CAMRA and the local branch. The Royal has featured in the Mild Ale Trail for a number of years. Our sympathies go to his family and friends.

The Crown at Hawk Green Marple looks set to improve now that experienced chef / licensee Phil Moore and Jan from Anglesey have taken over. A general refurbishment is planned for September, meanwhile the Robinson's Best Bitter will be joined by Hatters and possibly a seasonal beer. We wish Phil and Jan success with the pub, which is well known in the area.

Frank Wood adds...

A survey of Charlesworth, during July found that the George and Dragon has Robinson's Best Bitter and Hatters while the Grey Mare across the road sells John Smiths bitter on handpump. However, surprisingly, the little Charlesworth & Chisworth Conservative club (I last called in when I was around 19 years old—was it really over a quarter of a century ago?) had Tetley's Bitter and John Willie Lees Bitter on sale.

Whilst on the subject of Lees, Geoff Oliver of the White Hart at Mottram and the Sportsman at Hyde, has introduced Lees Bitter at both his Good Beer Guide listed pubs as an additional beer to the usual selection. At a reasonable price too - £1.45 at the Sportsman and £1.50 at the White Hart. In addition, at both outlets until the offer runs out, 4 tokens produced at the bar gets you a free pint. At the end of July, the offer was still in its early stages and seems quite a decent night out to me (5 pints for £5.80 or £6, depending on the pub).

The Waggon on Broadbottom Road, Mottram, now has Robinson's 'real' Smooth alongside the real thing, joining an ever increasing number of Robbies houses that have a choice of both, the beers coming from the same barrel, but dispensed differently.

The much improved and refurbished Griffin in Broadbottom, became the Harewood Arms at the end of April and what a great refurbishment it is. Worthy of an article in its own right in next month's issue, the beer range is Boddingtons, Taylor's Landlord plus a guest beer (Adnam's Regatta on my visit on 28 July).

The Hare & Hounds, Simmondley Village, Glossop had their usual annual beer festival in the middle of July, on my Sunday afternoon visit, the 24 beers they originally started were down to 8, —the new licensees being astonished at the amount of trade on the Saturday. Sunday was also busy and whilst I was happy with the beers I tried, each time I went back to the bar, another beer had gone off, such was the success. The new people are planning to increase the interest still more for next year, filling the gaps around the car park with more attractions. Good luck to them, it seems to have improved a lot on this year's showing.

**JOIN CAMRA (PAGE 19) & DRINK REAL ALE**

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## FEATURED PUB The Friendship, Stockport Road, Romiley

This month's featured pub is the Friendship at 77 Stockport Road, Romiley. A Robinson's pub with Best Bitter, Hatters Mild and XB all on hand pumps.

The pub was taken over about eighteen months ago by Steve and Lorraine, both extremely experienced in the licensed trade. Steve will be remembered for his days at The Gardeners Arms in Offerton, the Wagon and Horses in Bollington, the George and Dragon in Heaton Chapel and most recently at the Dog and Partridge at Great Moor on the A6 in Stockport.

The Friendship is a pub with some history. There was a beer house on the site as early as 1840, run by James Swindells, a beer retailer and it apparently had the name Friendship as early as this date. Through the 1800's there was a succession of landlords and in October 1893 the pub was bought by Bells brewery of Stockport and entered the Robinson's tied estate in 1949 when Robinson's acquired Bell's.

From its external appearance you would be forgiven for thinking that the Friendship is a small pub inside but you would be wrong. Apart from the bar area there are four other rooms all either carefully recently refurbished and decorated or in the process of being so. The pub is not in the open plan format and this adds to the atmosphere and, 'local flavour'.

There is a pleasant and well-appointed lounge and two other rooms in which to relax. The vault / games room is airy and spacious and thankfully still has much of the original woodwork and bench seating which Steve intends to maintain and look after.

However the pub's assets not only lie inside. Outside is an excellent beer garden and paved courtyard drinking area with a good floral display. There is also play equipment for children in the beer garden. One of the pub's particular assets is a bowling green, once a common sight with pubs but now really rare and something to be treasured. Steve has seven teams who use the green regularly but it is also open to use by any of his customers.

The outside area at the rear of the pub is completed by a large car park for 45/50 vehicles on which Steve is planning regular car boot sales. Steve and Lorraine are gradually turning the Friendship into a real community style pub. It is currently home to a football team, darts / dominoes / crib teams as well as the bowls teams. It is also used by local groups as a regular meeting place and Steve and Lorraine quite happily handle functions of all types. Children are also welcome.

Monday nights are quiz nights with free entry and Thursday evenings see live entertainment in the form of a regular Jazz band, 'Muted Jazz' which is proving very popular.

By the time this article goes to press the kitchen refit will have been completed and lunchtime meals will be available.

Its location close to the Peak Forest Canal also makes it ideal for boaters and walkers. Romiley railway station is only just up the road and frequent buses pass the pub.

All in all this is an excellent welcoming local pub due in no small part to Steve and Lorraine's approach to running things properly and their understanding that you want customers to have an enjoyable experience and to return again.

**Details: Friendship Inn, Tel No 0161 494 2183**

**Hours of opening: 11.00-11.00 Mon to Sat & 12.00 - 10.30 Sun**

*Transport: Romiley railway station - M/cr Picc - New Mills / Rose Hill services*

*Buses: 383/384 - Stockport / Marple / Romiley / Stockport circular; 386 - Stockport to Greave; 389 - Ashton / Hyde to Marple*

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# O

## OPENING TIMES

### LETTERS

From Graham Mascord, The Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport: I refer to the letter in the last issue of Opening Times from Stuart Hayward - our erstwhile Highbrow Hebrew friend who maybe failed to don his thinking yarmulke before putting pen to paper. Seriously, though, Stuart raises two arguments - which may better have been dealt with by a direct approach to the writer rather than a referral to CAMRA - which it now behoves me to address through the same conduit.

**Cool Cider:** There is a school of thought subscribed to by the erudite John Reek and supported by several of our regular patrons, that cider should be served at ambient temperature. My own research reveals that whilst there are many references to the temperature at which to serve cask ale, I am unable to find guidelines for cider. Stuart contradicts himself by stating that he (a) rarely visits the Crown and a couple of sentences later that he (b) never visit the Crown. This is regrettable in that had he done so he might have saved himself some time, energy and a red face. We are uncompromising on quality but not adverse to compromise, which we have done apropos cider temperature. Our supplier was some weeks ago able to provide cider in a sealed collapsible container within a cardboard box. It is therefore now possible for us to insert ice packs between the inner and outer containers, thus rendering the cider, whilst not chilled, at least several degrees cooler than ambient temperature, and we feel, acceptable to all our patrons. Please check your facts Stuart, before going public on your hobby horse.

**Pricing Policy:** Stuart quotes a couple of local hostellers serving chilled cider - the Navigation and Porter's Railway. It seems this letter is the subject of talking up (I refer to the Stockport Beer Festival programme amongst other things) and the dumbing down of the Crown. Unlike the Crown, these taverns are owned by microbreweries and probably more able to absorb costs and keep cider prices down, which is good news for drinkers. We are owned by a large impersonal pubco with around 1,000 pubs nationwide and our overheads are quite crippling. Stuart knows that our prices for cask ale are clearly on display over the bar and are set according to ABV. This pricing policy also applies to cask cider. Ergo a 6% ABV cask cider is exactly the same price as a 6% cask ale. This policy has been in place since we started to serve cask cider almost two years ago. Stuart seems to want to drink Old Tom at Hatters Mild prices and really needs to get out more. Our prices are comparatively fair. My own - not unbiased - viewpoint is that it is completely and totally unacceptable for him to refer in print to our cider pricing as "scarring" Stockport's reputation. Were it not for the fact that we know and don't dislike Stuart we would have taken legal advice on this point. In closing I reiterate that facts ought to be checked before any criticisms are levelled, particularly if put into print.

From H. Macneill and T C Pearson, Stockport: Not more criticism of a pub trying to be successful. In response to his letter concerning the Crown Heaton Lane, Stockport, if Mr Hayward thinks that the prices are too high he should try some of the "trendy" wine bars or pubs where they sell that disgusting stuff Strongbow which is sold at well over the odds! He should also remember that the Crown has overheads and to run a successful public house which has very good entertainment, least of all on Thursday which features classic rock and some good bands playing at the weekend.

We also point out the Graham and Jeanette have held more of their fair share of charity nights at the Crown. This article should not have been allowed to be printed in its present form because it has the potential to be very damaging. If the Crown does not make a reasonable profit, then it cannot provide the services it does so well now.

If people take notice of Mr Hayward's letter and they do not visit the pub, then it will lose out along with its customers and staff. The Crown should not be barred from being nominated for pub of the month and the author should apologise.

Letters to Opening Times: The Editor, Opening Times,  
45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport. SK3 9HD  
or [johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com](mailto:johnclarke@stocam.u-net.com)

(The Crown has not been 'barred' from being a Pub of the Month and nor will it be. I think OT readers are quite capable of making their own minds up about pubs without being influenced by the contents of our letters page - Ed(1).) From Chris Walkden, Cheadle Hulme:

A bit of news - I was in Manchester over the last weekend and what a fantastic atmosphere. After I had been to the wrestling at GMEX on Saturday, I went to get the 2200 train from Deansgate and thought I would have a final pint in the Knott Fringe Bar. Well no chance - the pub was full to its fire limits and the whole of the Castlefield/ Deansgate Locks area was teeming with people queueing to get into anywhere that sold alcohol. Even the train was standing room only at that time of night - as it was in mid morning when I went into Manchester to do some essential shopping and decided to stay on and watch some of the events where there were still tickets left. Earlier in the day I had visited the Beer House to see if it was as bad as reports I had heard. I am pleased to say that there were 11 cask ales on and the 3 I tried were all in good nick. The range was more limited than in the past - however I did sample a Coach House special called "Commonwealth Gold" which was very hoppy. Wonder if Boddies and the Manchester 2002 were aware of this! 2 handpulled ciders were also in evidence. Whilst there I came across a young Australian couple here for the Games who had popped in to sample some beers. Their guide books included a 2002 Good Beer Guide and the Commonwealth Games Pub Guide in OT which they really appreciated as it gives them a bit of local knowledge. So the effort was all worthwhile!! They were quite impressed with the variety and different flavours to be found in local beers.

I tried a Spinning Dog "Mutley's Revenge" at Bar Fringe - this was my winner at a recent festival but it seemed to be lacking condition here. Various friends have also encountered lacklustre beers here in recent weeks.

No such problems at the new Wetherspoons (The Waterhouse). Everything I have tried in there has been spot on and a tip for real ale lovers - don't forget to look for the group of handpumps on the left hand side of the bar which are masked by a pillar - this is where some of the more interesting guests can be found.

I was walking past Kro2 on Sunday morning and noticed that the outside drinking area had been barriered off from the street with 6-foot high opaque metal barriers. Whether this was because of a private function or whether it is something to do with drinking on the pavement I do not know.

(Thanks for the information Chris. After 8pm Kro2 functioned as an exclusive bar for Games competitors and that may be the reason for the barriers. They have certainly been removed now. Ed(1))

### STOCKPORT BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL REQUIRES FESTIVAL CHARITY

After 3 years of success, St Anne's Hospice has bowed out and we are looking for a new charity - hopefully for the years 2003 to 2005. Experience shows that with hard work, the charity can net over £2,000 for its funds.

#### What is required:

- ★ The Charity must be local to Stockport or South Manchester
- ★ The charity must be able to supply at least three members of staff for each of the 5 sessions of the festival
- ★ The Charity must be able to persuade 3 independent or micro-breweries to part with beer to sell.
- ★ The charity must be able and willing to provide the festival with publicity.

Charity Managers or Organisers should apply in writing to: The Festival Organiser,  
66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel,  
Stockport, Cheshire. SK4 5EG,  
setting out their aims and objectives and how the criteria can be met. All submissions must be received by 20 September 2002

# MANCHESTER MATTERS by City

## New Openings

There have been three major openings since the last issue – all quite different and all with real ale. Now, there's a thing! Of the three, only one can be described as a traditional pub, and that's the **Waterhouse** on Princess Street, opposite the Town Hall. This, Wetherspoon's fifth central Manchester outlet, opened for business on Monday 15 July. It's named after Alfred Waterhouse, described as "the leading 19<sup>th</sup> Century architect", who designed the Town Hall (but why did Wetherspoon's drop the "Alfred"?). With a very compact bar area (but including two banks of five handpumps and three seven-head keg dispensers), and a positive maze of small, inter-connecting rooms, it is unlike any of the other Manchester premises.

On the beer front, Wetherspoon's regulars like Theakstons (£1.30), Spitfire (£1.40) and Courage Directors are available, but accompanied by an excellent range of guest beers – Old Hooky, Everard's Tiger, Oakham JHB, Abbott, Summer Lightning, Tanglefoot and Exmoor Gold – all at £1.60. It was a few days before the ubiquitous Boddingtons put in an appearance at £1.40 a pint.

The dark furniture and generally subdued lighting give the whole place a somewhat gloomy appearance, relieved by multicoloured carpeting and bright examples of modern art. Criticisms have already been heard – and I have to say that even with a multi-roomed building at their disposal, Wetherspoon's have still managed to create something that doesn't feel like a pub. Having said that, it's surely superior to their first ventures into Greater Manchester, the Moon Under Water on Deansgate and then the Piccadilly premises.

The other two new outlets, **Kro2**, on Oxford Road and **Arch** on Stretford Road are rather different, being stylish café bar-type outlets. I am told that both are being reviewed elsewhere, but I must go on record as saying that Kro2 is perhaps one of the most stylish new bars that Manchester has seen. Highly recommended.

## What's Doing In The City Centre

The **Nags Head** on Jackson's Row was in the final throes of its refurbishment when I called, and as such wasn't open for business. The work in progress looked quite impressive, though, and it should all be up and running by now. I'll try and pop in for next month's column.

It's good to report that cask ale has been installed at **Galvins Irish Bar** (formerly the Crown) on Deansgate. When I called the excellent new Robinson's Stadium Bitter was on one handpump with Taylor's Landlord due to go on the other. Galvin's is becoming one of my favourite new City Centre watering holes with an excellent relaxed atmosphere.

Nearby is another favourite – **Knott Fringe**. This place just gets better and better in my book, with the excellent Marble beers supplemented by an enterprising selection of guests. When I last called, these included Durham Magus and Roosters Cream. I was only going to stay for a quick half but ended up having a pint of each (well, it would be rude not to, wouldn't it?). However, across the

road we must mourn the passing of **Atlas**. When it was independently owned, it was stylish, elegant and sold some decent cask beer as well. Punch Group now have it and have let it on a long lease so I don't know whether to point the finger of blame at Punch or the new leaseholder. Either way, it's now a garish shadow of its former self with no real ale, either. One to avoid, now, I'm afraid.

There's good news, too, at the **Hogshead** on High Street. This is now owned by, I think, Enterprise Inns, who have let it to Jeff Bibby. Jeff is about to embark on a major refit of the pub that will see it turned into **The English Lounge**, opening mid-September. There should be half a dozen cask beers on handpump, with eventually up to ten. I hope to have a word with Jeff in time for next month's column.

## Out & About

On the way to **Arch**, I took the opportunity to have a look at other bars in the area. My favourite pub around here was the **Lloyds Arms**, a very basic pub that used to sell vast quantities of Bass Mild. It closed years ago and I was saddened to see that it's now been knocked down. However, the **Salutation** is still doing the business in a shabby, well-worn sort of way, with Tetley Bitter on handpump. **Clynes Wine Bar** has disused handpumps on the bar and is keg-only; **Czech Bar** is closed for the summer break so I don't know whether the range of Czech beers is anything to write home about, or indeed whether any are sold at all; finally, **O'Shea's 2**, appears to be defunct and was operating as a bar for Commonwealth Games technical staff when I passed. To complete the round-up, the **Forgery & Firkin** appears to be closed and undergoing a refurbishment. It certainly needed it.

In Ardwick, the **Kings Head** on Chancellor Lane has been resigned and now sells Tetley Imperial on handpump alongside the bitter. It seems as if this pub is back on the up, which is good news. There's some good news in Longsight, too. The **Gold Cup** and the **Ducie Arms** are keg only (despite the sign on the Gold Cup suggesting otherwise) but the **New Victoria** is a pub transformed. It's owned by a rather mysterious company called RBNB based in Barnsley. They've had some run-ins with the licensing authorities because they wouldn't reveal the names of the shareholders, which resulted in some pubs having their licences withdrawn. The New Vic was one of these but the dispute has now been resolved in RBNB's favour and the pub reopened several months ago, since when I've been meaning to call. The interesting thing about RBNB is that they also run a brewery, the Oakwell Brewery in Barnsley. Not only that, but all of their pubs tend to serve that brewery's cask beers, and so it is with the New Vic. 'Barnsley Bitter brewed at Oakwell' was on handpump with the clip for another of their beers, Old Tom (a sort of mild) reversed. The pub has been cleaned, tidied and redecorated and gave the impression of being a very well run operation. God knows, Longsight needs some decent pubs, and now it looks as though it's got another one. I'll certainly be dropping in again, that's for sure.



**REMEMBER!  
IF IN DOUBT -  
ASK IF IT'S CASK**



**COPY DATE FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE  
OF OPENING TIMES IS AUGUST 23**

## APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(Opening Times 220)

I / We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by its rules.

NAME (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) . . . . . Date of Birth . . . . .

PARTNER (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) . . . . . Date of Birth . . . . .

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POSTCODE . . . . .

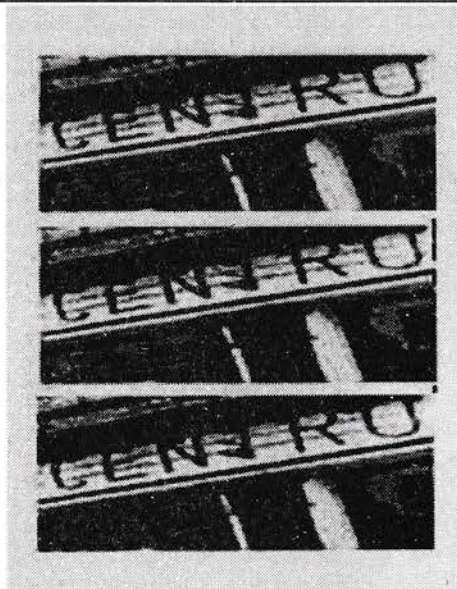
TELEPHONE . . . . . SIGNATURE . . . . .

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO CAMRA

SINGLE £16  JOINT £19  UNDER 26 / OAP: SINGLE £9  JOINT (both must qualify) £12

**Send To: Karen & Chris Wainwright, 173 Shearwater Rod, Offerton, Stockport SK2 5XA  
(Marple & High Peak Area to: Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple SK6 6JH)**





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